# NYU Seed Grant

Due March 7, 2021

## Website:

<https://nyuhumanities.org/call-for-proposals-in-the-digital-humanities/>

## Description of the Grant:

The Digital Humanities Seed Grants are intended to fund the initial development of new research projects that will analyze digital sources, apply algorithmic methods to humanities data, or create digital publications, exhibits, or websites. The program will fund the initial steps of projects that may go on to receive greater funding from other sources or otherwise build NYU’s institutional capacity in Digital Humanities work. Grants may range in size between $5,000 and $20,000. Collaborative projects are encouraged, but must include at least one NYU faculty member in the humanities.

## Components of the Grant:

### Call for Proposals

The Research Technology Faculty Advisory Board (FAB), in partnership with the Center for the Humanities and NYU Libraries, invites applications for a second series of Digital Humanities Seed Grants. These grants are intended to fund the initial development of new research projects that will analyze digital sources, apply algorithmic methods to humanities data, or create digital publications, exhibits, or websites. The program will fund the initial steps of projects that may go on to receive greater funding from other sources or otherwise build NYU’s institutional capacity in Digital Humanities work.

Grants may range in size between $5,000 and $20,000. Collaborative projects are encouraged, but must include at least one NYU faculty member in the humanities.

### Eligibility

Proposals must include at least one full-time NYU faculty member working in the humanities; collaborative projects are highly welcome. There are no restrictions on school, department, or rank, but proposals from faculty in interdisciplinary departments may wish to identify how their research identifies with the humanities. Graduate students seeking funding should apply under the summer fellowship program.

Equal Opportunity Statement: NYU-funded programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. For more information, please visit [**https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/equal-opportunity.html.**](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/equal-opportunity.html.)

### Review Process

Applications will be reviewed by a faculty committee with experience in Digital Humanities projects. Projects will be judged on scholarly potential, technical feasibility, sustainability of any scholarly outputs produced, and their potential to serve as the foundation of some longer-term research project. The review committee will meet in Spring 2021 and awards will be announced in April 2021.

The application period for this grant closes on March 7, 2021; we anticipate a third series will be solicited next year.

### Schedule

* January, 2021: CFP Circulated
* March 7, 2021: Applications due.
* March, 2021: Review panel meets for evaluation period.
* April, 2021: Decisions announced, funds available for summer work.
* May 20 2021: Funds available.
* August 31, 2021: Funds must be transferred to the receiving department.
* August 31, 2022: Project end date, funds must be spent down.

### Obligations

1. Prior to availability of funding, project members will consult with appropriate staff at Research Technology or NYU Libraries about their plans for creating and sustaining any digital resources.
2. Grantees will give two short presentations to the NYU committee, either as part of a panel at the Center for the Humanities or in some other agreed-upon setting. The first will be a work-in-progress talk after the grant period is underway; the second is after its completion and will be accompanied by a short white paper outlining the project’s successes, failures, and future potential.

### Deadline

Applications must be received by March 7, 2021, 11:59 pm, EST.

### Application Process

**Proposals should not exceed three pages, plus a single-page budget summary, and any necessary letters of commitment**. Successful projects will generally address the following elements:

#### **Abstract** summarizing the project in 200 words; this may be used in funding announcements.

The Zine Union Catalog (aka ZineCat or ZineCat) is a union catalog dedicated to zines. A union catalog is a resource where libraries can share cataloging and holdings information. ZineCat lets researchers discover zine holdings by searching a single catalog, helps librarians copy catalog records to eliminate duplication of cataloging effort, and facilitates lending across libraries. ZineCat serves educators, researchers, librarians, archivists, and anyone in the general public with an interest in zines.

Zines – self­-published literature that often features counter cultural, political, and artistic content – are an increasingly important primary resource for humanities, social sciences, and other scholars, but due to the diverse standards and practices among the libraries, archives, and community organizations that collect and maintain them, accessing them through traditional research means is difficult.

The initial [prototype](https://zinecat.org) was developed by Lauren Kehoe (Librarian @ NYU) and Jenna Freedman (Librarian @ Barnard) in their MA Digital Humanities program at the City University of New York Graduate Center using 25 records from three libraries with different metadata schema: MARC, Dublin Core, and a spreadsheet-based standalone schema to a [Collective Access catalog](http://collectiveaccess.org/). The prototype has grown to include over 31,000 zines from six collections.

#### **Research agenda**, including an intellectual justification of the project and its significance to humanities research.

Zines are self­-produced and self­-published literature that often feature counter­cultural, political, empowering, and artistic content. Zines are produced in small runs and are often distributed directly by the creator(s) or through “distros” (i.e., specialized distributors of alternative publications). Unmediated by editors, publishers, or parents, zines provide primary, personal, and documentary accounts of social, political, and art movements that provide evidence of knowledge production and dissemination within alternative communities.

Because zines exist in a counter-­cultural space, they have historically been collected and circulated by independent zine libraries. Over the last fifteen to twenty years, public libraries, special collections, and academic research libraries have begun collecting zines as both scholarly resources and as part of leisure reading collections. This hybrid environment of zine collections translates into dispersed, often erratic mechanisms for access. Zine descriptions and metadata, and thus discovery of zines, is scattered across library catalogs, archival finding aids, standalone databases, spreadsheets, and online platforms such as LibraryThing. This situation poses impediments to finding and using zines in aggregate for research, teaching, and learning in the humanities. The Zine Union Catalog (ZineCat) seeks to aggregate metadata from these disparate sources.

ZineCat is designed to be:

* A cross­-repository resource for zine research, providing access to metadata about as many zines, and in as many ways (Linked Open Data, links to digital content, etc.) as possible.
* A collaborative platform for cataloging zines and creating authority files for their creators, by persons both within and external to the library profession.
* A hub for zine research, where partners can seek inspiration and collaboration.
* A promotional and educational resource for the zine genre.

ZineCat, as a reference resource for the zine genre, will contain three primary components:

* Catalog records for zine titles (descriptive metadata), which give both identifying (e.g., title, creator name, production date and locality) and contextual information (e.g., subjects, genres, abstracts, biographical and historical details)
* Holdings information (details about libraries that hold specific issues, and how to access them)
* Digitized and/or digital content when available

The [ZineCat prototype](https://zinecat.org/) contains a sampling of records from six zine libraries, with a limited number of metadata fields represented in each record: creator, title, non-normalized date, non-normalized publication location, collection(s) holding the zine, subjects, and language. When ZineCat is fully realized, contributions will be opened to any library, and the scope of the ZineCat will grow to represent zine collections and more robust zine metadata from across the globe.

The zine library community, sharing niche expertise, is a close, warm, and supportive group. Jenna Freedman, Curator of the Barnard Zine Library, Librarian for Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Interim Librarian for American Studies, Personal Librarian for transfer students and Lauren Kehoe, Accessibility & Accommodations Librarian at NYU’s Division of Libraries, have deep ties in the community, including to identity-focused libraries that include the POC Zine Project, the Queer Zine Archive Project, and no-budget community libraries around the Anglophone world. Recently, having participated in the International Zine Librarians unConference, we have expanded our relationships to include non-native English-speaking zine librarians in Austria, Belgium, Chile, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia. The Zine Union Catalog will eventually host holdings from any and all collections that wish to participate. ZineCat membership from libraries beyond our previous scope will allow for a wider range of voices to attain visibility on their own terms. Control over one's words, images, and ideas is a hallmark of zine culture. Our effort to keep ZineCat weird by harmonizing metadata rather than standardizing it is crucial to its responsibility to the zine community and respecting its originators.

#### **Environmental scan** describing similar or model projects to the one proposed here.

The Zine Union Catalog was originally imagined like WorldCat--a catalog of catalogs of print and other media zines. WorldCat is a huge cooperative cataloging effort, with member libraries paying to participate. We anticipate that ZineCat will also have a dues-paying membership model. This tool provides ZineCat with a model for standardizing metadata and building a collectivized community of contributors to ZineCat so that users (researchers, scholars, students, zinesters, etc.) can discover information about zines, and zine collections, closest to them and in the world at large. WorldCat contributors typically add records directly into WorldCat via an application called Connexion or batch upload records from their local integrated library system (ILS). It is important to note, though, that ZineCat will never be as large as WorldCat, so the scope is quite different.

Another model for ZineCat is the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). DPLA is a discovery tool that provides information from libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural institutions about their digital collections. In DPLA, batch uploads of metadata, with links to digital assets stored locally, are ingested by localized regional hubs who have been trained to upload large batches of metadata. It would be great to establish a hub model for ZineCat in order to minimize data errors and to coordinate training so that not all individual zine librarians would need training--they could coordinate the metadata ingestion through a ZineCat hub partner. However, there’s a big difference between DPLA and ZineCat: the majority of ZineCat's holdings will not include links to digitized zines, whereas the DPLA’s model is to link out to the cultural organization’s digital item at the local holdings level.

A final model for ZineCat is the Queer Zine Archive Project (QZAP). They use the same digital asset management system as we do, Collective Access (CA), and QZAP provided the framework for ZineCat’s setup during early prototype development. However, they use their CA to display a single collection of digital zines from one institution while ZineCat has to grapple with multiple collections from multiple institutions.

We aren't competing with WorldCat or DPLA--for one, we couldn't, and for two, we have a different mission and scope than they do. However, we're adopting the most useful aspects of each.

#### **Work plan giving a timeline** of the agenda to be pursued, including key dates and milestones.

* June - July

#### **Human subjects plan** if the work would require [**IRB**](https://www.nyu.edu/research/resources-and-support-offices/getting-started-withyourresearch/human-subjects-research.html) (note that most humanities research will not).

* N/A

#### **List of participants**, clearly spelling out their names, roles, and qualifications. In cases where a role is defined but no individual has yet been identified (e.g., ‘web developer’ or ‘undergraduate research assistant’, please provide a one-paragraph description of the person’s role.)

* Lauren Kehoe, Zine Union Catalog Project co-Manager, Accessibility & Accommodations Librarian, Assistant Curator NYU Division of Libraries; MA Digital Humanities (CUNY Graduate Center) and MS Library and Information Science (Pratt Institute)
* Jenna Freedman, Zine Union Catalog Project co-Manager, Curator of the Barnard Zine Library, Librarian for Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Interim Librarian for American Studies, Personal Librarian for transfer students; MA Digital Humanities (CUNY Graduate Center) and MA Library and Information Science (University of South Florida)
* Developer - provide support in back end Collective Access database set up and guidance on improving the user interface of ZineCat.
* Graduate Student intern - provide support in documenting workflows and community outreach.
* Metadata Specialist - I think definitely helping to configure the collective access system to accommodate a variety of metadata with different schemas (perhaps, thus, harmonizing the metadata). Support cleaning the metadata would be huge. And then helping us document workflows for sharing with the zine librarian community how to contribute their own metadata to zinecat. I don't think entering the metadata would be the biggest part of it, but we'd definitely need to orient them to how the metadata is ingested into Collective Access.

#### **Sustainability plan**

where relevant, explaining how digital assets created by this project will be managed and preserved. For a sense of full sustainability plans, see statements from [**NEH**](https://www.neh.gov/) and [**IMLS.**](https://www.imls.gov/) Applicants are encouraged to consult with [**Digital Scholarship Services**](http://library.nyu.edu/departments/digital-scholarship-services/) about the feasibility of any plans. A preference will be given to projects that make any resources (scholarship, code, or data) openly available unless they give a justification here of the ways such openness would be detrimental to individuals or communities.

Digital assets from this project will be openly available to the fullest extent possible. ZineCat maintains a [GitHub repository](https://github.com/zinecat/zinecat.org) where assets and documentation will be maintained. The Zine Union Catalog is free and open for anyone to search. It is possible that some organizations contributing to ZineCat will put restrictions on sharing their metadata outside of discovery in the Catalog, but ZineCat will advocate for the open sharing of any assets related to the project. ZineCat also prioritizes the use of tools that provide open access, such as Collective Access which is a free, open-source software for cataloguing and publishing museum and archival collections.

#### **Future agenda**

describing the goals for this project beyond the granting period. This may include relevant granting programs for a larger version, a description of the impact or future use of resources created in the grant period. Projects will be given preference that hold promise to expand NYU’s institutional capacity to support and create high-quality Digital Humanities research. How do you plan to sustain the results of the project beyond the funding period?

The project is in the prototype phase. The end result will be a fully formed union catalog for discovering, cataloging, and lending zines globally. The project will continue to grow as more zines and zine collections are added to ZineCat. We have records ready to go from an academic library in Toronto, a community library in Nova Scotia, and a dozen others interested in participating in future phases. Participation in ZineCat is sought out by and brought to the attention of the current project leads. We prioritize identity-focused community libraries and public libraries serving marginalized communities, as well as libraries with unique data standards, in selecting which holdings to include next. As the project develops, the process for contributing to ZineCat will evolve, too. Upon further development of ZineCat there will be fewer barriers to participation and will thus be easier to invite more institutions to contribute.

Initially, project leads have ingested all of the metadata records from the contributing institutions (through CSV or XML catalog exports), but the goal is to have a system in place where contributing institutions can upload their own collections of metadata to ZineCat. Representatives from ZineCat will be available to support the ingestion of the records, but ultimately, the responsibility for contributing metadata records to ZineCat will belong to the contributing institutions. The process will be modeled on the method used by the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) for ingesting massive sets of metadata records from disparate institutions. DPLA provided support in standardizing the metadata to match its discovery system and provided the framework (i.e. crosswalk or ingest map) for inputting the metadata on a semi-regular basis per their hub agreements with institutions in their region. Like DPLA, we hope to provide training, support, and oversight for others to complete the ingest processes.

#### **Single page budget**.

Grants may range in size between $5,000 and $20,000. Permissible expenses include course buy-outs, partial summer salary, student stipends, and specific equipment, server time, or hosting. Personal computer purchases are not permitted. Funding for professional development and skill-building may be included (including travel\*), but should be conceived with justification to a particular project. Final award amount is given at the discretion of the evaluation committee. [\*Because of the ongoing pandemic, applicants are discouraged from requesting travel funds for calendar year 2021.]

* Developer
* Graduate student intern
* Metadata specialist