

# Your Town

[Weather](#) | [traffic](#) | [transit](#)

search  [GO](#)

[< Back to front page](#)

Text size [-](#) [+](#)

BACK BAY, DOWNTOWN

## Prototype of Digital Public Library of America to launch in Boston this month

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 3, 2013 01:53 PM

[Print](#) | [Comments \(\)](#)

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The beginnings of the first public, national, on-line library will soon be unveiled in Boston – home to the country’s first publicly supported municipal library.

A prototype of the [Digital Public Library of America](#), or DPLA, will launch during a two-day event, which will include a series of events April 18 and 19 at the Boston Public Library, according to leaders of the digital library.

The project’s primary focus is to make materials from the United States available through its on-line platform. Initially, the project will concentrate on written records – books, magazines, manuscripts, digital text – and eventually hopes to include other media, like images, movies and audio.

Over the past couple of years, much of the work to create the digital library has been happening nearby, at Harvard University’s Berkman Center for Internet & Society.

The project has been linked to Google’s efforts to digitize print through Google

### BostonShops »



Let the shopping begin. Get exclusive promotions and sales from your favorite retailers. And never miss a great deal again.

[SEE A SAMPLE](#) [SIGN UP NOW](#)

### BACK BAY REAL ESTATE »

**324**  
Homes for sale

**903**  
Rentals available

**50**  
Open houses this week

**1**  
New listings this week

FEATURED AGENT

FEATURED PROPERTY

ADVERTISEMENT

The project has been likened to Google's efforts to digitize print through Google Books, which in recent years has been criticized for, and settled lawsuits over, alleged copyright infringement.

DPLA leaders have said their effort is different because it will be run as a public, not-for-profit endeavor.

"It became clear, as Google's project evolved, that it would be a commercial enterprise, and in fact an enterprise attached to a gigantic monopoly," Robert Darnton, director of Harvard University's library system, told the Globe in 2011. "A monopoly, perhaps, with the best intentions, but that would not necessarily serve the public good, because of course Google's primary responsibility would be to its shareholders."

Visions of a public, national digital library have been talked about since the early 1990s, but tangible planning did not begin until late 2010, according to the DPLA.

"The Digital Public Library of America will make the cultural and scientific heritage of humanity available, free of charge, to all," its leaders wrote a year ago in a [memo](#). "By adhering to the fundamental principle of free and universal access to knowledge, it will promote education in the broadest sense of the term.

"That is, it will function as an on-line library for students of all ages, from grades K-12 to postdoctoral researchers and anyone seeking self-instruction; it will be a deep resource for community colleges, vocational schools, colleges, universities, and adult education programs; it will supplement the services of public libraries in every corner of the country; and it will satisfy other needs as well—the need for data related to employment, for practical information of all kinds, and for enrichment in the use of leisure," the memo added.

The DPLA says it will be "an open, distributed network of comprehensive online resources that would draw on the nation's living heritage from libraries, universities, archives, and museums in order to educate, inform and empower everyone in the current and future generations."

At the two-day prototype launch later this month in the Central Library in Copley Square, the DPLA says it "will celebrate the groundbreaking work of hundreds of librarians, innovators, and other dedicated volunteers in our



Waiting for Twitter to feed in the latest...

[Follow other Boston.com Tweets](#) | [What is Twitter?](#)

collective effort to build the first national digital library.”

The launch will include a meeting to highlight the digital library project’s “progress and potential,” presentations on that look at the technology used to create the digital library and a series of interactive exhibits showcasing content from the project’s partners.

Speakers will include: Darnton; Boston Public Library president Amy Ryan; Maura Marx, a fellow at Harvard’s Berman Center who has helped lead the DPLA’s community-building efforts and started the digital services program at Boston’s library system; Dan Cohen, the DPLA’s newly-appointed executive director; Emily Gore, content director at DPLA; John Palfrey, president of the DPLA board and head of school at Phillips Academy in Andover; and Amy Rudersdorf of DPLA.

For more information about the events, including to register to attend, [click here](#).

To read past coverage of the DPLA, [click here](#) and [here](#).

*E-mail Matt Rocheleau at [mjrochele@gmail.com](mailto:mjrochele@gmail.com).*

--

*For the latest updates about your community, follow some of our local neighborhood, city and town Twitter accounts, [here](#).*

---

◀ Previous entry

Next entry ▶

