

INTERIM PERFORMANCE REPORT for Grant Award Number: LG-05-05-0197-05
“SmartFox: the Scholar’s Browser for Digital Collections”
May 29, 2008

Executive Summary

We are delighted to report excellent continued progress and user base growth at the Zotero project (begun as the SmartFox project) at the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. With over 700,000 new users since our last report and scores of innovative features, we believe that Zotero is changing the way that research is done—far beyond improving the management of citations and note-taking.

Use and Coverage

Since last October, Zotero has already reached the milestone of an active installed base of over 1.1 million users (as of May 29, 2008, measured by unique IP addresses per month, the solid metric we decided on at the IMLS seminar), well over double the number of users we had at our last report six months ago. We anticipate continued strong growth during the remainder of the grant.

In the first half of its second year, Zotero again received numerous awards and positive reviews. For a second time, *PC Magazine* declared Zotero one of the "Best Free Software" applications in February 2008. In the same month, Zotero also won CiteFest, a "head to head matchup of citation software" hosted by Northwestern University, besting commercial competitors like Endnote and RefWorks. Zotero continues to earn rave reviews, averaging a perfect score of five stars at Mozilla's add-ons page and garnering praise from *Wired Magazine* as "the handiest Firefox extension ever." Zotero has also been the subject of over 7000 blog posts (according to Google Blog Search), nearly half of those coming in just the last six months.

Users and developers have been vocal in their appreciation of Zotero and their commitment to the project. Usage of the Zotero community forums on our website is extremely active—to date there have been over 12,000 posts and we regularly receive over 50 new posts a day. Dozens of developers continue to contribute new code to the project, ranging from the large (like Vertov, a cutting-edge new video annotation plugin), to the medium (an ever-widening corpus of translators to make websites Zotero-compatible), to the small (bug fixes). Community users have also worked diligently to make Zotero accessible in other languages: 35 user-translated language localizations of the interface ship with Zotero, and another four are in production; our user documentation and tutorials are now available in nine languages thanks to our users.

New Features and Compatibility

We continue to add support within Zotero for new library and museum sites on a weekly basis. Zotero's site translators now cover every major library software system (making over 90 percent of online library catalogs compatible), as well as scores of research databases (including recent additions ARTstor, Cambridge Journals Online, Cornell University Press, OAIster, PubMed Central, and Scopus) and dozens of newspaper sites and other websites. We have particularly strong representation in the humanities and are also expanding support with other media with translators for YouTube and Flickr. Zotero currently includes 211 translators (nearly double in number since last October's report) that provide compatibility for thousands of sites. To guide translator development, we rely on our web forum's very active thread suggesting new sites, which are then put into a queue for translator creation.

Users of Zotero can now format citations in dozens of new styles, based on our open and XML-based standard called CSL (Citation Style Language). In addition to common formats like Chicago Manual of Style, APA, and MLA, Zotero now supports over 70 other styles tailored to specific disciplines and journals. Custom styles can also now be served to Zotero clients from any web server, not just the Zotero site. A web-based citation style "wizard" is currently under development which will allow any user to create a style quickly and easily.

Zotero has also been rewritten and extensively tested in order to provide full compatibility with Firefox 3, the latest version of Mozilla's browser due for release later in 2008. Firefox 3 will offer Zotero users distinct advantages in terms of performance and functionality. Because we have already completed the modifications necessary to work with the new browser, all Zotero users will be able to move to Firefox 3 seamlessly without any need to update their Zotero software.

Dissemination

In response to our intensive outreach program, over 80 universities now recommend the use of Zotero by their user communities. Since October 2007 we have continued to deliver presentations and demonstrations at dozens of research institutions and organizations, including the National Institutes of Health, the National Council on Public History, the National Gallery of Art, University of Washington, American University, and the Modern Language Association.

We are extraordinarily grateful for IMLS's support of the Zotero project, and would be happy to discuss the contents of this interim report in greater depth with IMLS staff.

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