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CREDO, A New Online Repository of Digital Collections: Launch Party

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The UMass Amherst Libraries officially open Credo (<http://credo.library.umass.edu>), an online repository containing the digital collections of Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA). SCUA presently houses more than 30,000 linear feet of archives and rare books, the vast majority of which are available only to users who are able to visit the Du Bois Library. In an effort to make these unique materials more widely and freely accessible, the Libraries began to develop Credo in 2009, with the goal of making the repository a central hub for exploring SCUA's collections from anywhere at any time.

With the generous support of the Verizon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, SCUA simultaneously embarked upon the massive project of digitizing the complete papers of the African American intellectual and activist, W.E.B. Du Bois. When Credo launches, more than 40,000 digital objects from the Du Bois Papers will be available, with the remaining 60,000 items to follow in the next two years. The Library is planning a launch celebration for October 27, 2011 at 10 am, on the Lower Level of the Du Bois Library.

“Du Bois's papers will now be available to anyone, anywhere, anytime, from a Parisian activist with a laptop to a Ghanaian teenager on a cell phone or a sixth grader in a computer lab in Springfield,” says Rob Cox, Head of Collections, Special Collections and University Archives.

For example, a basic search in Credo for information on the Niagara Movement reveals hundreds of items that can be sorted by date, creator, or title. These documents help illuminate the organization founded by Du Bois in 1905 and named for the “mighty current” of change he wished to unleash in opposition to racial injustice. The Niagara Movement was a precursor to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which Du Bois helped found in 1909. Credo also contains thousands of pivotal documents on the early history of the NAACP that will prove invaluable to researchers and historians.

SCUA will add significant content to Credo in the coming years both digitized and born digital, representing the breadth of its collecting interests from university history to social change, the history of New England, and innovation and entrepreneurship. Credo eventually will house all digital collections in SCUA.

The name chosen for the repository pays homage to W.E.B. Du Bois. First published in 1904, Credo is a powerful statement of Du Bois's philosophy for achieving racial equality, standing in contrast to the approach taken by many other civil rights activists at the time. Credo speaks to peace, liberty, education, and patience: qualities that run throughout the Libraries' many social change collections.

For more information, contact Rob Cox, Head of Special Collections and University Archives (413-545-6842, rscox@library.umass.edu). SCUA welcomes comments about Credo: credo@library.umass.edu.