REVEAL Announcement

Ransom Center Initiative Provides Free Access to More Than 22,000 Images of Collection Materials

To lower barriers to use of its collections, the Harry Ransom Center, a humanities research library and museum at The University of Texas at Austin, has adopted an open access policy, removing the requirement for permission and use fees for a significant portion of its online collections believed to be in the public domain.

In conjunction with the release of the policy, the Ransom Center launches Project REVEAL (Read and View English and American Literature), a year-long initiative to digitize and make available 25 of its manuscript collections of some of the best-known names from American and British literature of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the authors represented in Project REVEAL are Joseph Conrad, Hart Crane, Thomas Hardy, Vachel Lindsay, Jack London, Katherine Mansfield, Robert Louis Stevenson and Sara Teasdale.

The Project REVEAL initiative generated more than 22,000 high-resolution images, available for use by anyone for any purpose without restriction or fees. The Ransom Center does, however, ask for attribution alongside the use of its images.

“I am delighted that the Ransom Center has joined other world-class institutions such as Harvard University, Yale University and Cornell University in opening up material,” said Peter B. Hirtle, fellow at Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet & Society and a senior policy advisor at Cornell University Library.

Future efforts will involve removing restrictions for other materials believed to be in the public domain and making them available through the Ransom Center’s digital collections portal.

“Removing barriers to the use of the Ransom Center’s collections is one way we can extend the useful life of our collections,” said Ransom Center Director Steve Enniss. “We hold these collections in trust for students, researchers and the public everywhere.”

The project is intended to facilitate and encourage creative re-use of these materials.

“I am pleased to be at the Center during this time of transformative change,” said Liz Gushee, head of digital collections services. “Having the images of Project REVEAL freely available is a significant step toward enhancing the online experience of the Center’s patrons who seek to explore and use its wealth of collection materials.”

Additional information and frequently asked questions about the Ransom Center’s policy on access to digital reproductions of works in the public domain is available.