

Project Overview, Background, and Funding

The Archive of Wisconsin Newspapers was a coordinated project of the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC), Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS), Wisconsin Newspaper Association (WNA) and WiLS. As of Summer 2022, the coordinated effort to digitize and add new content to the Archive of Wisconsin Newspapers was placed on hold. **As of December 2023, the WPLC Historical Wisconsin Newspapers Project has concluded with no plans to coordinate the addition of further titles to the archive.**

In 2015, WPLC undertook a pilot project to provide proof of concept for a centralized point of access to digitized historical newspapers from Wisconsin communities. WPLC partnered with the Wisconsin Historical Society, WiLS, and the Wisconsin Newspaper Association to select, reformat, and provide access to approximately 85,000 pages of historical newspapers from 12 communities across the state. Funding for the pilot project was provided by WPLC as well as Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds awarded to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction by the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

A review of the pilot and recommendations for next steps in the project were presented to the WPLC board at their February 2016 meeting. Since then, several large batches of content have been scanned from microfilm by Wisconsin Historical Society and loaded to the Archive by the Wisconsin Newspaper Association. The costs for this work have been contributed by individual Wisconsin libraries and supplemented by additional LSTA funds distributed by DPI.

An LSTA grant from 2019 supported the creation of METS/ALTO metadata files for scanned newspaper pages by a third-party vendor, Digital Divide Data (DDD), converting existing content into a more interoperable and standardized form. WPLC's role in the project is governed by the Historical and Local Digital Collections Committee.