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## Google to Digitize Newspaper Archives

By [MIGUEL HELFT](#)

SAN FRANCISCO — [Google](#) has begun scanning microfilm from some newspapers' historic archives to make them searchable online, first through Google News and eventually on the papers' own Web sites, the company said Monday.

The new program expands a two-year-old service that allows Google News users to search the archives of some major newspapers and magazines, including The New York Times, The Washington Post and Time, that were already available in digital form. Readers will be able to search the archives using keywords and view articles as they appeared originally in the print pages of newspapers.

Under the expanded program, Google will shoulder the cost of digitizing newspaper archives, much as the company does with its book-scanning project. Google angered some book publishers because it had failed to seek permission to scan books that were protected by copyrights. It will obtain permission from newspaper publishers before scanning their archives.

Google, based in Mountain View, Calif., will place advertisements alongside search results, and share the revenue from those ads with newspaper publishers.

Initially, the archives will be available through Google News, but the company plans to give newspapers a way to make their archives available on their own sites.

"This is really good for newspapers because we are going to be bringing online an old generation of contributions from journalists, as well as widening the reader base of news archives," said Marissa Mayer, vice president for search products and user experience at Google.

But many newspaper publishers view search engines like Google as threats to their own business. Many of them also see their archives as a potential source of revenue, and it is not clear whether they will willingly hand them over to Google.

"The concern is that Google, in making all of the past newspaper content available, can greatly commoditize that content, just like news portals have commoditized current news content," said Ken Doctor, an analyst with Outsell, a research company.

Google said it was working with more than 100 newspapers and with partners like Heritage Microfilm and ProQuest, which aggregate historical newspaper archives in microfilm. It has already scanned millions of articles.

Other companies are already working with newspapers to digitize archives and some sell those archives to

schools, libraries and other institutions, helping newspapers earn money from their historical content.

The National Digital Newspaper Program, a joint program of the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) and the [Library of Congress](#), is creating a digital archive of historically significant newspapers published in the United States from 1836 to 1922. It will be freely accessible on the Internet.

Newspapers that are participating in the Google program say it is attractive.

“We wouldn’t be talking about digitization if Google had not entered this arena,” said Tim Rozgonyi, research editor at The St. Petersburg Times. “We looked into it years back, and it appeared to be exceedingly costly.”

Mr. Rozgonyi said that the newspaper might be able to generate additional revenue from the digital archives by producing historical booklets or commemorative front pages. But he said that increasing sales was not the primary objective of the digitization program.

“Getting the digitized content available is a wonderful thing for people of this area,” he said. “They’ll be able to go to our site or Google’s and tap into 100 years of history.”

Pierre Little, publisher of The Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph, which has been published since 1764 and calls itself “North America’s Oldest Newspaper,” said many readers visit the newspaper’s Web site to look for obituaries and conduct research on their ancestors.

“We could envision that thousands of families would be attracted to our archives to search for people who came over to the New World,” Mr. Little said. “We hope that will be a financial windfall for us.”

*Brad Stone contributed reporting.*

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