

Project Partners

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Arts & Letters
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College of Education
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Digital Sources Center

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Center for Spoken Language Understanding at
the University of Colorado at Boulder

Chicago Historical Society

H-Net: Humanities &
Social Sciences OnLine

History and Politics Out Loud
Oyez, Oyez, Oyez
Northwestern University

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The National Gallery of the Spoken Word



www.ngsw.org

The National Gallery of the Spoken Word (NGSW) will create a significant, fully searchable, online database of spoken word collections that span the 20th century – the first large-scale repository of its kind. The NGSW will provide storage for these digital holdings and public exhibit “space” for the most evocative collections. From Thomas Edison’s first cylinder recordings, to the voices of Babe Ruth and Florence Nightingale, and Studs Terkel’s timeless interviews, the collections of the NGSW will cover a variety of interests and topics. The NGSW is designed as an expansive repository of aural resources. Over time, it will grow to include many more collections from partnering institutions across the country.

Building upon the latest research and development of methods for digitally preserving sound and delivering it via the WWW, the NGSW will be designed to serve the diverse needs of high school teachers, college professors, students at all levels, government officials, journalists, and engaged citizens worldwide. By bringing the spoken word across the Internet and into living rooms, classrooms, research laboratories, libraries and government offices, this project has the potential to create worldwide virtual communities through the transformative power of language, rhetoric and speech.

Gallery Collections

Drawing from the rich collections of the Chicago Historical Society, Michigan State University’s Vincent Voice Library, the MSU Museum, and Northwestern University, collections within the NGSW will include:

N e w s a n d N e w s m a k e r s

Drawing primarily on the holdings of MSU’s Vincent Voice Library, this collection will include selections of speeches by Theodore Roosevelt, Eugene V. Debs, and Buffalo Bill Cody, as well as news broadcasts and special events from 1940 through the 1980s which are currently housed as part of the Historical Voices and Janak Collections at MSU.

2 0 t h C e n t u r y I n v e n t o r s a n d S c i e n t i s t s

From Thomas Edison’s first cylinder recordings to John Glenn talking about exploring space, this collection will include recordings that are historically significant both because of their content and their speaker, as well as the technical achievements discussed. These holdings are currently located in the Vincent Voice Library at MSU.

A m e r i c a n L i f e

Using the oral interviews on which Studs Terkel based his books, and which are owned by the Chicago Historical Society, this collection will broadcast a broad range of American experience and stories that span social, political, and cultural life in the 20th Century.

C h i c a g o N e i g h b o r h o o d s

Owned by the Chicago Historical Society, this collection includes family genealogies and oral histories conducted in several Chicago neighborhoods by local high school students. These recordings provide a detailed account of urban life, and offer a full range of neighborhood accents for linguistic study.

F o l k L i f e a n d L o r e

This collection is composed of taped interviews with a variety of American folk artists. Recorded stories of Native American quilters and Mexican American folk artists from across the Midwest are a special strength of the collection. These holdings are currently housed at the MSU Museum.

H i s t o r y a n d P o l i t i c s O u t L o u d

Voices of U.S. Presidents, secretaries of state and other government officials make up the vast majority of this collection, which is housed at Northwestern University.

S u p r e m e C o u r t D e c i s i o n s

U.S. Justices and a range of court cases can be heard in these recordings, providing a far greater range of experience to listeners than reading the transcripts alone. This collection is also provided by Northwestern University.

W o r l d W a r I I

Including a selection of broadcast news from the Ripps collection at the Vincent Voice Library at MSU, this collection includes broadcast news recorded from 1940 to 1945, from Pearl Harbor to the dropping of the atomic bombs.