

Ithaka
Research Assistant
Part-Time
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Supported by the Mellon, Hewlett and Niarchos Foundations, Ithaka is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping accelerate the adoption of productive and efficient uses of information technology for the benefit of the worldwide higher education community. Our initial focus is on helping promising not-for-profit projects develop sustainable organizational and economic models. Ithaka is affiliated with JSTOR and ARTstor, and is currently incubating three new initiatives: Portico, an effort to build a trusted and reliable archive of born-electronic journals; Aluka, a project with an aim to make primary source material from the developing world more widely available in digital form; and NITLE, an effort to help smaller colleges make full use of new electronic and networking technologies to support teaching and research. We are a small, growing entrepreneurially-minded organization that values teamwork, a collegial spirit and collaboration.

Ithaka supports the affiliated and incubated entities through the provision of three types of services: 1) strategic services, through which we offer strategic advice based on our combination of experience and access to a unique network of relationships with leaders in higher education, philanthropy, business and technology; 2) shared services, which includes provision of administrative, financial and technical services. The objectives of the shared services are to lower costs and increase effectiveness for the affiliated and incubated entities while enabling them to focus on mission-specific activities; and 3) research, which is dedicated to supporting the cost recovery goals of affiliated and incubated entities while also informing the general higher education community of the impact of new technologies.

Ithaka's research group works on behalf of its family of affiliated organizations to develop and share knowledge both among our Affiliates and with the broader community. Research projects are generally commissioned by our affiliated entities to meet specific strategic or operating needs. Some broad areas of work include economic, historical, and sociological perspectives on the transition from traditional formats to electronic media for scholarly communications and studies of resource usage, user preferences and behavior, and citation patterns. Often, our projects may have relevance to other efforts in the higher education and scholarly communication communities, and in those instances we work to find appropriate ways to share findings.

One important project for 2006 and 2007 will be a study on the effects of digitization and online availability on various aspects of the scholarly communications system, focusing specifically on scholarly journals. Working with principal investigators at Georgia Tech and Dartmouth, we will study how the effects of digitization and online availability may differ by original year of publication and by discipline. Much of the core data for this project has already been gathered, but in order to proceed to data analysis there is a substantial amount of contextual/supplementary data that must be collected.

Ithaka seeks to hire a part-time Research Assistant, to be based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to play a critical role in gathering supplementary data for the project. This is a position on a complex project involving a number of individuals based in different parts of the country; as such it requires strong organizational skills, enthusiasm, flexibility and a willingness to adapt and learn new skills. The position will report to a supervisor in New York and have only limited local support in Ann Arbor.

This part-time term position is expected to begin on July 1st. It will occupy 40 hours per week for the summer and 10-20 hours per week during the fall. This position is expected to terminate in the late fall or early winter.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Identify appropriate contacts at journal publishers, journal digitizers, and journal aggregators and provide contact information to the researchers, who will in most cases make the initial contact with journal publishers and aggregators.
- Working with appropriate contacts at publishers and aggregators, and undertaking independent library and internet research,
 - Investigate journal publication histories
 - Investigate journal digitization histories
 - Investigate journal and aggregation subscription/licensing histories
- Input/import this historical data into appropriate spreadsheet/database software and organize it effectively
- Track and manage alternative names, such as non-standard abbreviations and name-changes, for a set of scholarly journal titles

Required Skills and Experience

- Basic familiarity with the journal publishing sector, including commercial publishers, university presses, scholarly societies, and aggregator services, allowing you to identify and address problems in the data
- Good familiarity with standard office software, with a special focus on MS Excel
- The successful candidate needs to be very sharp, error-free, and willing/able to follow a strict schedule on a complex research project
- A Bachelor's degree is required; the ideal candidate will be enrolled in a Master's or PhD program in library/information science
- Excellent communications skills are required, for interactions with numerous individuals outside the project team
- Because the position will report to a supervisor in New York, the successful candidate must be able to work relatively independently, with most contact taking place by email and telephone.

Preferred Skills and Experience

- Familiarity with statistical software such as SAS
- Demonstrated experience gathering statistical data from businesses, including commercial entities, for scholarly research purposes
- Demonstrated experience working as a research assistant for a primary researcher based remotely