

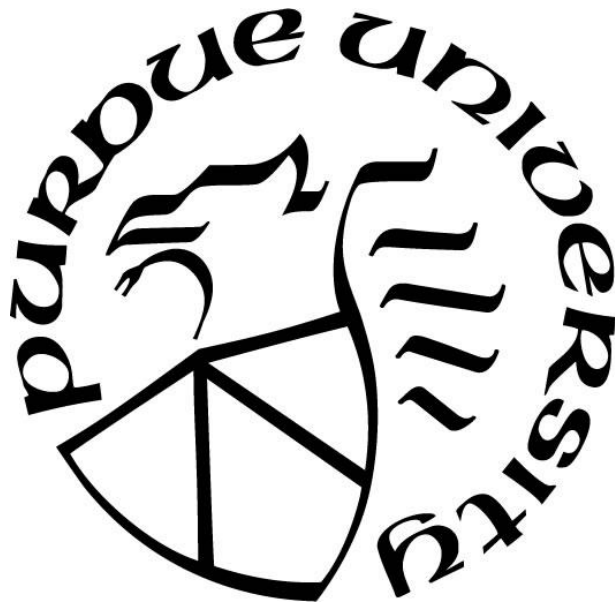
**CONVENTIONS OF THE COMMONS: TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION
AND CROWDSOURCED DIGITAL PUBLISHING**

by
Amelia Chesley

A Dissertation

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**THE PURDUE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

Dr. Patricia Sullivan, Chair

Department of English

Dr. Jenny Bay

Department of English

Dr. Michael Salvo

Department of English

Dr. Richard Johnson-Sheehan

Department of English

Approved by:

Dr. S. Dorsey Armstrong

Head of the Graduate Program

for me

*for all my admirable, book-loving family—parents, sisters, nieces, nephews, brothers—
and for husband Jeremiah and Wesley the pug, who both help keep me from working too hard*

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ABSTRACT

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Title: Conventions of the Commons: Technical Communication and Crowdsourced Digital Publishing

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This project traces the digital publishing history of the audiobook archive LibriVox.org, examining how its volunteers manage, control, and negotiate procedures and policies for their ongoing collaborative work. Examples of public knowledge work like LibriVox illustrate the value of professional and technical communication in accessibly digitizing knowledge and culture for use now and in the future. I investigate and theorize how groups of diverse and transient volunteers create and engage with the tools and documentation they use to manage their crowdsourced audio digitization work. The example of LibriVox can help us better recognize and value the invitational care work embedded in the professional and instructional documents we create, circulate, and consume.

As both researcher and participant with LibriVox, I interrogate conventions of crowdsourced digitization and sharing in the public domain, recover some of the technological and social history upon which LibriVox was built (and is still being built), and explore how LibriVox and its volunteers are preserving crucial modes of openness and access with regards to public culture. Crowdsourcing models of production are proliferating in professional, social, and scholarly contexts. Understanding how individuals contribute to such projects can help us understand the implications such models have for the future of collaborative work and distributed workplaces. As social production and digitization efforts become more supported

across sectors, these models offer and allow for many unique collaborative learning opportunities. The complex, often transient, extra-institutional communities that emerge around the activities of socially sharing knowledge are valuable for what insights they may offer into the future of information access and the future of distributed work arrangements. I aim to extend what we know about technical communication in public, open, volunteer spaces. How we organize and preserve content—whether old, new, or re-imagined—matters to how we and others access and use that content, both now and in the future.

LibriVox is an example of a digitally-based volunteer-run community of practice engaged in public, crowdsourced social production. With this project, I begin to document how the LibriVox's initially ad hoc and somewhat chaotic processes have (and have not) congealed into a more stable, yet still idiosyncratic, protocol. I find LibriVox volunteers managing their ongoing work using documentation, instruction, and interactions that are marked by a generous, patient invitational rhetoric. For digital knowledge projects like LibriVox, the invitational and instructional roles of documentation become especially important for stewarding a transient, multicultural, digital community of practice.

The LibriVox project's clarity of purpose and open, welcoming processes demonstrate possibilities for pluralism and inclusiveness in terms of work, culture, and knowledge curation. Such a project makes a useful potential model for future collaborative, online media projects. The implications of this successful, sustainable, commons-based, digital publishing model may help prompt important, democratizing shifts in the future of multimodal and open scholarly publishing. Understanding the nuances of LibriVox practices will also help us to better prepare students to intervene effectively in other similarly distributed, ad hoc organizations and to face the shifting and uncertain futures of 21st-century work.

Volunteers at LibriVox are digitizing and preserving certain types of available human culture in particular ways that afford near limitless access, re-distribution, and re-use. The ways LibriVox and other archives, digital curation projects, and public collections manage themselves make a difference for how (and perhaps whether) cultural knowledge is preserved, not only into the future, but for access now, across platforms and across user groups with varying abilities. I contend that investigating the example of LibriVox and what it means for how we conceptualize and make use of human culture and knowledge can help us in formulating and answering important questions about the lasting value of LibriVox and of other open knowledge projects.

CHAPTER 1: THE ABUNDANCES AND IDIOSYNCRASIES OF LIBRIVOX AND DIGITAL RESEARCH

The dream of the talking book—of a Gutenberg for the phonograph—
existed long before the technology to make it a reality.

(Rubery, 2016, p. 54)

LibriVox wants all books in the public domain to be available, for free,
in audio format, on the internet. We ask volunteers to record chapters of
books in the public domain in digital format; all you need is a computer,
some free recording software, and your own voice!

(McGuire, 2005b)

The volunteer audiobook project LibriVox has a name with many meanings.
'BookVoice,' 'free voice,' 'Library of Voices,' and 'child of the voice' are among those listed by
Hugh McGuire, founder of the LibriVox project, as possible etymologies or translations for the
pseudo-Latin term. Along with this flexible word history, LibriVox also comes with a
multiplicity of pronunciations, just as it comes with a multiplicity of functions. There is no
single, "correct" way of pronouncing the project's name,¹ just as there is no single mode or
method of volunteering for LibriVox or making use of its free audiobooks.

LibriVox volunteers from around the world find their own unique ways of contributing to
the mission of the project—to produce free audio versions of public domain texts—while
collaborating openly with other volunteers and also working independently, on their own terms.
For these many volunteers, LibriVox functions foremost as a platform and network that

1. My own pronunciation leans most often toward "Lee-bruh-vox," with the occasional shorter-voweled "Lih-bri-
vox" coming through instead. Visit <https://librivox.org/reader/10603> to access an array of recorded examples.

welcomes and supports an open, modular system of audiobook production. At LibriVox, the invitation to collaborate extends to all corners of the internet-connected world, and diverse volunteers come together asynchronously to share the work of recording and to help each other make sense of the tools and processes needed to accomplish that work. For the listeners and audiences who access their finished audiobooks, LibriVox is a source of free entertainment or educational content—a public digital library and archive containing thousands of texts, from novels, plays, and poetry collections, to cookbooks, textbooks, and even government documents. On their website, LibriVox outlines five fundamental principles:

- Librivox is a non-commercial, non-profit and ad-free project
- Librivox donates its recordings to the public domain
- Librivox is powered by volunteers
- Librivox maintains a loose and open structure
- Librivox welcomes all volunteers from across the globe, in all languages (LibriVox, n.d., About LibriVox)

These principles frame the project's central purpose, serving as philosophical guidelines for the future of LibriVox's policies, procedures, and community conventions.

Since its founding, more than 8,000 LibriVox volunteers have contributed to producing more than 11,000 public domain audio editions in more than 90 different languages. The project and the archive both become spaces for the re-enactment (and sometimes the re-re-re-enactment via replays and via repeat recordings) of these texts. Readers' voices enliven the words of old public domain texts in various styles, and nearly all readings, all performances, all interpretations of a text are welcomed as equally valid and valued—even the imperfect, novice, somewhat messy or non-fluent readings. While eventual listeners may have more discerning opinions about

the relative value of one narration over another, the prevailing sentiment within the LibriVox community is that even “flawed” or difficult-to-understand recordings are preferable to none at all. Given its ultimate mission, LibriVox’s conventions of eschewing all subjective standards of quality recording are preferable and more useful for the project. Their welcoming philosophy is part of an open, public, invitational stance the project’s earliest members have safeguarded from the beginning.

The principle of including any and all recorded readings of a text, or “choice of voice,” is a core characteristic of how the community project has chosen to run itself. If seventeen readers independently decide to each record their own necessarily unique audio version of *War and Peace*, and they have the time and dedication to do so from a public domain copy of the book, why should anyone stop them? In a 2010 personal blog post, LibriVox volunteer and admin Cori (or Cori Samuel² in her recordings) summarizes this view, saying, “it’s an extremely central tenet of LibriVox that ALL readers are welcome. As long as they are able to record themselves audibly and stick to the text, it doesn’t matter about age, gender, accent, ability to ‘do voices’ or even whether they understand the book” (Samuel, 2010b). Because listener complaints may scare off otherwise willing and able volunteers, the community very carefully safeguards against negative feedback with a strict policy of “no un-asked-for criticism.” Referring to his very first, founding LibriVox contribution, Hugh McGuire reframes its relatively poor quality as a meaningful symbol of how even a novice can make something useful and share it with the world (Samuel, 2007; Gonzalez, 2012a). The making and giving away of these digital audio files is

2. My practice throughout this dissertation will be to refer to LibriVox volunteers primarily by the names they use within the LibriVox forums, following the capitalization and other formatting chosen by each user. In many cases, as I’ve done here, I will add parenthetical references to individuals’ “real” names when known. In my reference list, authors’ last names are cited when known and forum names cited otherwise. An exception to this pattern is made for Hugh McGuire, to whom I refer primarily by last name throughout. In case my reader is curious, McGuire’s forum name is simply “hugh.” His most recent post to the LibriVox forums as of 18 April, 2018, was posted on April 30, 2013—almost exactly five years ago.

meaningful in itself as a statement of generous, courageous creativity, as are the many other connections volunteer participants share as they coordinate their multiple audiobook-making processes.

I am especially interested in LibriVox because its inner workings can teach us about community-led spaces and organizations that are motivated by non-market, extra-institutional forces, outside the paradigm of economically-measured efficiency and innovation where so many commercial, for-profit institutions locate themselves. My project seeks to understand the systems and modes of professional and technical communication that emerge when everyday people join together outside of formal workplaces to use their leisure time and resources in helping each other figure out how to do technical things. With a flexible ethnographic approach, I investigate what LibriVox is and does as an unfinished, multifaceted assemblage of digital technologies, ideologies of social production, and thousands of varyingly enthusiastic, book-loving volunteers.

The concept of *assemblage* is one borrowed from several scholars who find it useful for understanding the kinds of active, ongoing, provisional, flexible associations within and among entities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988; Law, 2004; Latour, 2007; DeLanda, 2006; DeLanda 2016). I appreciate Law's (2004) articulation of assemblage as "an uncertain and unfolding process" and not merely "a state of affairs or an arrangement" of things (p. 41). Law recognizes (via Deleuze and Guattari, in turn via a 1995 Verran and Turnbull piece) that an assemblage is "ad hoc, not necessarily very coherent, and it is also active" (p. 41). In researching an assemblage, we need to have patience with its "tentative and hesitant unfolding," understanding "that is at most only very partially under any form of deliberate control" (p. 41-42). Likewise, with Adams and Thompson (2016), we must recognize that in our explorations of digital objects, our "vision is necessarily partial, and too, included by our devices" (p. 111). In my case, I first learned how to engage with

LibriVox as a volunteer using a 2012 MacBook Pro laptop. The browser (Safari), the microphone (a built-in omnidirectional mic), and recording software (GarageBand) available with that laptop, not to mention the other material contexts of my participation and research, shaped the particular LibriVox assemblage I initially experienced and engaged with.

Using Apple's GarageBand software put me in the minority at LibriVox, where most LibriVoxers use the free, open source program Audacity. During my first years as a volunteer, I needed to filter out most of the the Audacity-centric instructions and advice from other volunteers and seek help from non-LibriVox sources when I needed to learn more about using GarageBand. When I later invested in a new non-Apple laptop, I took time to learn and use Audacity for my LibriVox work. Many of the community's norms became clearer to me in light of the markedly different practices Audacity's interface required. In GarageBand I'd become accustomed to recording over my mistakes and editing the audio project as I recorded. In Audacity, editing during recording is much more difficult. Understanding this at a practical level helped me make sense of the ways LibriVox members discussed their post-recording workflows.

My particular mediated experiences with LibriVox and the assemblage of technologies, protocols, and conventions that gather around and within it have affordances and limits, shaped as they have been not only by my own attention and choices but by those of the countless human and non-human actors among which I engage as part of the ongoing unfoldings of 1) the LibriVox project, 2) my dissertation project about LibriVox, and 3) many other circumstances that surround or are adjacent to those ongoing unfoldings. While I am contributing in deliberate ways to a handful of LibriVox audiobooks-in-progress, I am not fully, perhaps not even very much partially, in control of how my contributions may change the assemblage of LibriVox today, tomorrow, or ten years from now.

While assemblage theory is one way of characterizing and imagining the LibriVox project and its actions, I recognize and draw on many others as well. We might consider LibriVox as a social and technical actor-network (Latour, 2007), a digital habitat or community of practice (Wenger, White, & Smith, 2009), or a meshwork (Ingold, 2007; 2011). Each lens offers us a slightly different conceptual experience and foregrounds differing elements of the LibriVox project, its participants, media, and priorities. The metaphor of *assemblage* highlights the interactive, co-functioning nature of LibriVox as a project of volunteers—a project which emerges over time, always in-process, from parts and pieces in relation to each other. As an *actor-network*, LibriVox becomes a series of connected, collaborating human and non-human actants, all working together as the material affordances and constraints of their collaboration might dictate. Conceptualizing LibriVox as a *digital habitat* or *community of practice* brings into focus the practical, personal, and interpersonal aspects of the space, centering on individuals within groups who create and share knowledge for a purpose. Applying the metaphor of the *meshwork* leads us to prioritize new and especially repeated movements, traces over time across or within the organizations, groups, and places. Many of these metaphors are similar, and all offer avenues toward insightful analysis of complex cases.

Throughout this project, I turn toward and engage with all of these metaphors to varying degrees, recognizing the ways they seem to overlap, diverge, and support each other. I take up assemblage when it is important to watch for wholes emerging from various parts; I take up meshwork when recognizing the tracks and residue that even small and simple actions leave behind for other actors to then either repeat or erase. In sections where practices of sharing and making are in the foreground, theories of communities of practice provide clear and useful frames. Taking an additive, invitational stance, I hold open the definitions and imageries that

attend the terms *assemblage*, *network*, *community*, *habitat*, and *meshwork* and use them to layer multiple equally-interesting and equally-productive understandings of LibriVox. With my research and its presentation in this document, I do not wish to impose a single frame, but instead invite readers to follow as I draw connections and follow threads among the abundances and idiosyncrasies of the LibriVox archive and its volunteers.

I turn to the example of LibriVox to investigate what we know about amateurs creating documentation with the dual purpose of sharing technical information and building community. How do groups of people—especially those working within a digitally-mediated crowd, without external managerial oversight or institutional precedents—create particular user experiences for themselves? How do group members create particular experiences for each other, keeping in mind both current and potential future members of a project? The generous ways in which LibriVox volunteers invite, include, and manage themselves as a global community and as a digital publishing organization exemplify a form of invitational stewardship combined with technical instruction. I find that as volunteers at LibriVox read, perform, and record public domain texts into digital audiobooks, they are preserving and transmitting human culture, history, and knowledge in ways that are patient, open, and welcoming of multiplicity. The policies and ideals of LibriVox also afford near limitless access, re-distribution, and re-use of the material they produce. In small but focused ways, LibriVox is influencing how human culture and knowledge are (or aren't) and can be collected, digitized, and preserved, not only into the future, but for access and circulation now, across platforms and across user groups with varying abilities.

Defining LibriVox

Writer and web developer Hugh McGuire founded LibriVox in 2005 as an experiment, inviting anyone willing to join him in recording and podcasting audio versions of public domain texts. The project’s mission (or “prime directive,” as some volunteers call it) is “To make all books in the public domain available, for free, in audio format on the internet.”³ This may be an impossible goal, but as the Complete Frequently Asked Questions post in the LibriVox forums states, “what's wrong with trying? Like world peace, we think it's a worthy objective,” and even if it “takes 1,000 years, well, nothing could make us happier” (McGuire, 2005c). Though LibriVox volunteers are not acting as digitization experts, textual scholars, nor (in most cases) as professional vocalists, their work makes extensive swaths of human culture more widely accessible to more people. The collective influence of that work is difficult to fully measure.

For most of its existence, LibriVox has functioned with no budget and no formal organizational hierarchy.⁴ Volunteers collaborate without central institutional sponsorship and without much official direction or management beyond what grows from within its own transient, global, online community. LibriVox activity centers on the reading of texts and recording of audio files for the LibriVox catalog, and most other activity directly or indirectly supports this reading work and its eventual distribution. Together, LibriVox volunteers perform the labor of curators, copyright sleuths, digital content managers, voice artists, project managers, mentors and instructors, researchers, translators, audio producers, and technical writers. Over

3. McGuire’s originally more fanciful phrasing of this mission is attached as an alternate tagline at the bottom of the LibriVox website: “Acoustical liberation of books in the public domain” (LibriVox.org).

4. In 2010, LibriVox ran a two-week fundraising initiative to collect \$20,000 for increasingly expensive hosting costs. Two years later, they received a grant from the Mellon Foundation, which supported a new database and catalog redesign (which I touch in Chapter 3). Another year later, Hugh McGuire again reached with a plea for support and a stated goal of raising \$50,000 by the eighth anniversary of LibriVox. Since that year, a “Donate to LibriVox” link has been present on the website.

time, the LibriVox community has delineated several specific roles that make sense for the workflow of a typical recording project, and they may modify or share these roles as the circumstances of each project dictate/afford.

Volunteers adopt and adapt technologies such as audio recording hardware and software, internet forums and databases, web-based and desktop audio applications, and multimodal file formats as they revel in, remediate, and share the cultural riches of the public domain. They manage their work via a set of forums where they can post potential project suggestions, form teams for collaborative reading projects, claim solo projects, or sign on as “prooflisteners” to check others’ work. As part of their efforts, volunteers generate an incredible wealth of technical writing for each other. Many LibriVox discussions feature LibriVoxers new and old sharing how they work, what tools and techniques they use, and what methods and processes they’ve built up for their own basic recording studios, and none of it is the same as anyone else’s.

The collected documentation across LibriVox sites reflects this abundant variety—it is eclectic, haphazard, sometimes redundant and sometimes unfinished, often un-updated. In a more traditionally institutional context, such a state would likely be seen as a problem to be solved. At LibriVox, the prevailing sense is that this plethora of information for the most part makes the processes of audiobook production more likely to be accessible to more volunteers, not fewer, creating avenues via which an entire distributed crowd of potential volunteers might be invited to join. Willing and eager volunteers from around the world are still able to learn and participate, and rather than being forced to puzzle out “the right way” of working with LibriVox, they find and develop their own innovative and personal ways of doing things.

The LibriVox project seems to cultivate an atmosphere of possibility and an ethic of patience, empathy, and generosity. At LibriVox, there is plenty of work to go around and near-

endless possibility for contribution and collaboration. Such possibility and openness spark a sense of excitement and enthusiasm in me, but also some trepidation and uncertainty. Will my voice actually be appreciated? Will anyone truly be interested in the contributions I want to make? My work with LibriVox has made me somewhat vulnerable. I am invested in my own LibriVox contributions to an extent that when others disregard or find fault with those contributions it stings a little. Coordinators, prooflisteners, and dozens of more experienced volunteers have the opportunity, as soon as I post to the forums with a curious question, a suggestion, or an idea for a new LibriVox Community Podcast episode, to respond with reasons why my question is unimportant, with counter-proposals or reasons why it might not make sense to try that idea, or—worst of all—with an uninterested, dismissive silence.

In some ways, LibriVox seems to be a model community, a model of access and openness, with high levels of tolerance and low levels of friction. In other ways, LibriVox's conventions and values can and do limit the kinds of contributions and participation that are welcomed. Not every proposed contribution will be embraced and celebrated by every established member of LibriVox. Though all volunteers are officially welcomed, there is no magical guarantee that those entering the community for the first time will feel at home or at ease with the way LibriVox functions.

At times, even the core activities and processes collaboratively developed by LibriVox volunteers seem in tension, vacillating between a set of emergent, amorphous values that cannot simultaneously prioritize the free-for-all “anarchy with an iron fist”⁵ openness of their public, inviting, but highly focused community and at the same time actively attempt to meet all audiences' expectations for accessible and consistently high-quality recordings. Considering

5. This phrase comes up in LibriVox Community Podcast Episode #130, where volunteer bobgon55 (Bob Gonzalez) interviews Hugh McGuire about the origins of the project (Gonzalez, 2012a).

listeners' tastes and preferences is variously important for some volunteers, while strictly limiting "quality control" for the sake of keeping volunteers from getting discouraged is a much higher priority for others—especially administrators.

Persistent, low-key controversies and questions arise as volunteers navigate and negotiate the conventions and expectations of this open, public project. Should content warnings be added for books that contain language or ideals that 21st-century listeners may find unconscionable? What if a volunteer reads very poorly—can LibriVox add ratings or a voting mechanism to make this transparent to potential listeners? Should English-speakers with very heavy non-British accents be allowed to read classic British authors like Charles Dickens or Jane Austen, or non-American speakers to read revered American writers like Emerson or Mark Twain? Why not license LibriVox recordings under Creative Commons labels to prevent or at least discourage entrepreneurs from selling copies of these free audiobooks via eBay or Audible? These and other questions percolate through the transient LibriVox community, to be debated, dismissed, and deliberated on again and again. LibriVox consensus is more settled on some of these issues than on others. And behind the discussions, the reading and recording work at the core of LibriVox steadily continues.

Amateur Experts and Distributed, Crowdsourced Work

Crowdsourcing projects and commons-based peer production models allow almost anyone—from novice to expert—to join and sustain grand social efforts to curate, digitize, publish, and share content across many disciplinary contexts. Understandings of the term crowdsourcing are somewhat contested and its usage occasionally controversial. Brabham (2016) defines the term to mean "an online, distributed problem-solving and production model that

leverages the collective intelligence of online communities to serve specific organizational goals” (p. xix).⁶ In Chapter 2, I delve further into this term’s history and implications with regard to the development of LibriVox in late 2005. Here, however, I approach the ambiguities of the term with openness toward its relatively more popular/colloquial usage and connotation, rather than adhering to a more precise but also much more limited definition.

Decentralized digital technologies and networks allow for the resources and responsibilities of broad knowledge-sharing and publishing efforts to be shared by multiple institutions, initiatives, or individuals; such distribution can potentially facilitate much more inclusive, collaborative, and public action than traditional, institution-bound processes. An example of such inclusive public action can be seen in how “information resources such as repositories, databases, and archives are increasingly being crowdsourced to professional and nonprofessional volunteers” (Rotman, Procita, Hansen, Parr, & Preece, 2012, p. 1092). Demand for digital curation skills is also growing, along with recognition of the economic value and societal benefits such skills can provide (National Research Council, 2015). Popular and valued crowdsourced initiatives like Project Gutenberg and Wikipedia (both precursors to and inspirations for LibriVox) have encouraged consistent and relatively visible/transparent public participation in knowledge-production outside of typical economic contexts (Benkler, 2006; Jemielniak, 2014). Public-facing crowdsourcing projects and commons-based peer production models have become increasingly supported in professional and non-professional contexts.

According to Benkler (2006), because open-access models allow for free (or freer) circulation of

6. Brabham also insists that this definition does not cover “any large group of people doing anything.” For Brabham, open source projects and commons-based peer production projects like Wikipedia are “not technically crowdsourcing because the commons is organized and produced from the bottom up and its locus of control is in the community” (p. xxi). I disagree with the implied premise that serving “specific organizational goals” must mean serving only the goals of established corporate business or government institutions. A community-based organization, however lowly, temporary, or small, is still an organization.

information, such models can be more efficient, welcoming more democratized, accelerated, and innovative forms of collaborating, sharing, and remixing overall.

Along with Benkler and others (Lessig, 2004; Boyle, 2008) who take a legal perspective on emerging networked technologies and the economies they support, many scholars in rhetoric and composition and writing studies have noted these shifts in scale and connectedness and the potential they bring to the ways communication work can be managed and shared. The influence of crowdsourced digitization and public knowledge-making efforts have formed the basis of much research and critique in writing studies and elsewhere (Rosenzweig, 2006; Purdy, 2009; Kill, 2012; Graban, Ramsey-Tobienne, & Myers, 2015; Yancey, 2016). Much of the value of such social production and digitization stems from the collaborative learning opportunities these practices allow and the complex, often transient, extra-institutional communities that emerge around the activities of sharing knowledge (Wenger, White, & Smith, 2009; Kimball, 2016; Spinuzzi, 2015; Phlugfelder, 2017). By investigating how LibriVox employs its own iteration of a flexible crowdsourcing model, I build on this research in order to extend what we know about technical communication in public, open, volunteer spaces. How we organize and preserve content—whether old, new, or re-imagined—matters to how we and others access and use that content, both now and in the future.

Practicing Archives and Communities of Documentation

The collected archive of LibriVox audio is a product of countless hours of amateur volunteer curation, reading, recording, editing, and other digital modes of making. Beneath the outward-facing archive, the digitally-mediated volunteer platform of LibriVox is an unfolding complex of activity, an ad hoc assemblage of a digital publishing organization (Law, 2004;

Latour, 2007; Spinuzzi, 2015). It is the motion and transience of a crowd or a swarm, the tracing and retracing of a meshwork of discursive connecting lines (Ingold, 2011), and a shifting set of interlocking communities of practice using technology to learn and teach across far distances (Wenger, White & Smith, 2009). For Wenger, White, and Smith (2009), regular instances of mutual teaching and learning define any community of practice. A digital community of practice, such as LibriVox, is often fully distributed, networked across multiple locations and gathered in sites such as forums, emails, and other media spaces where collective knowledge-making, curation, and circulation happen regularly and rapidly.

The community and archive of LibriVox includes not only finished, published audiobooks but also traces and records of the processes by which those finished products came into being. We can consider with Wysocki (2017) that this project—as all archives are—is an “ongoing rhetorical achievement.” Similarly, Rice and Rice (2015) argue in “Pop-up Archives” that “We must shift from thinking of archives as spaces (physical or digital) of preservation to thinking of them more as an action that happens between two or more users. Archives as collections of material are, thus, simply the conduits or the materials that allow for this archiving action to take place” (p. 251). The materials and materiality of an archive matter, and so too do the movement or action of its materials and users. Giannachi (2016) also recognizes the “apparatus of the archive” and calls attention to the active, embodied, strategic characteristics of using archives as tools for mapping and for being ourselves. Combining an understanding of archives as ongoing processes with Giannachi’s (2016) conception of experiential, automatically-updating digital archives gives us a way to think about how elements of technical communication within the LibriVox archive provide conduits for cultivating experience and

community, just as much as they scaffold and support the technical activities involved in making audiobooks.

Technologies and community members alike play crucial roles in spurring and sustaining the work of a project like LibriVox. Both are necessary components of crowdsourcing spaces and production models, facilitating, mediating, and performing distributed work. As technologies and communities continue “evolving in interwoven ways even more than before” both will continue to transform and influence each other as concepts and as material entities (Wenger, White, & Smith, 2009, loc 175). Wenger, White, and Smith (2009) write that using a communities of practice perspective as a theoretical lens “helps us focus on how communities use technology, how they are influenced by it, how technology presents new learning opportunities for communities, and how communities continue to assess the value of different tools and technologies over time, and even how communities influence the use of technologies” (loc 545). The many kinds of discursive, rhetorical, and technical work happening within and across such large, interwoven distributions of communities and technologies may require more expansive definitions and theories of technical communication. My project contributes to expanding this definition by thinking through and pinpointing the ways technical communication within the LibriVox archive have provided conduits for cultivating experience and community, just as much as they have scaffolded and supported the technical activities involved in making audiobooks.

Ethnographic Method Assemblages

Following and attending to the ways LibriVoxers manage themselves affords useful, nuanced insight into at least one example of the increasingly-common crowdsourcing models of

production. In this research I draw on a range of overlapping research tools to match the overlapping roles and functions of my research site(s). In doing so, I acknowledge, with Law (2004), that my own experience and situation, along with the material contexts of my research, unavoidably form parts of the “method assemblage” that comes into play. In retracing my own entry into the LibriVox volunteering community, I invoke and emulate a feminist, invitational rhetoric and offer a partial account of my own experiences with the many sites, practices, and archived cultural artifacts of LibriVox.

Because the LibriVox project is so open and inviting to all potential volunteers, I have been able to engage with its community and artifacts as both researcher and as participant. This double role has been rewarding and enjoyable; I have always loved the feeling of reading aloud other writers’ nicely written sentences. Since January, 2016, I have been actively volunteering in the LibriVox forums as reader, prooflistener, and project coordinator. I am also a (mostly lurking) member of the LibriVox Readers & Listeners Facebook Group and occasional contributor to and host of the LibriVox Community Podcast. As participant and researcher in these dynamic spaces, I combine ethnography and autoethnography (Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce, & Taylor, 2012; Hine, 2015) to unveil and recount how LibriVox and its volunteers function. I make particular efforts, as Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce, and Taylor (2012) emphasize throughout their handbook *Ethnography in Virtual Worlds*, to not only “do no harm” but also to “take good care” of the communities in which I work. I have shared my status as a researcher openly when relevant, and my contributions to the project and community over the last few years begin to fulfill a duty of reciprocity.

My direct experience with the LibriVox community has allowed me to observe and document many (but of course not all) manifestations of the individual and collaborative day-to-

day work involved in making free audiobooks. Immersing myself in LibriVox processes has been crucial for learning more about the experience, norms, and nuances of belonging and contributing to this community. Hine (2015) asserts that in online spaces, the “standard ethnographic repertoire of learning-by-doing, observation, recording activities and archiving documents, and interviewing key informants still applies within ethnographic studies of diffuse, multi-sited, and multi-modal activities, but some creative adaptations may be required” (p. 16). As I have learned-by-doing at LibriVox, I have also investigated adaptive ways of observing, studying, and interviewing the key informants (human and otherwise) of this community. The LibriVox Community Podcast has afforded a community-centered interview space and given me opportunities to invite and include volunteers’ voices and input while making parts of my research more transparent to LibriVox participants.

I’ve also followed Adams and Thompson (2016) in attending to and “interviewing” digital objects, materials, interfaces, practices, and micropractices by “listening to things, observing them in action, discerning their co-constitutive influences, as well as relations with other entities and beings around them” (p. 17–18). Making these observations has involved taking stock of interplay among various LibriVox spaces and artifacts, particularly those records gathered by the catalog database and web interface, and those archived within the LibriVox forums. I follow the digital traces left behind by actors and actants at LibriVox as closely as they and my particular circumstances have allowed, drawing on principles of actor-network-theory to inform my approach (Latour, 2007; Potts, 2009). Some of LibriVox’s growth and evolution is clearly visible in the records of the community—primarily its forums and website. Some, however, is more hidden, inaccessibly tucked away in old email accounts or on the dormant servers of early, no-longer-active LibriVox volunteers. Some history has been lost in

misunderstandings about intellectual property or overwritten with shifts to updated database systems or new forum technologies, ultimately making a full recovery of this digital history of distributed labor impossible.

Despite the challenges of fully tracing all layers of the project's digital history, I take seriously the imperative from Star (1999), to look beyond the surface ecologies of LibriVox and find "the relatively unstudied infrastructure that permeates all its functions" (p. 379). In doing so, I follow the advice Star provides on "reading" infrastructure: particularly in bringing to the surface some of the invisible, underlying forms of work that support the more obvious, visible forms. This has involved looking for "processes in the traces left behind by coders, designers, and users of systems," "going backstage," "and recovering the mess obscured by the boring sameness of the information represented" (Star, 1999, p. 384–385). In my LibriVox research, this reading and looking backstage has meant gathering together partial stories and fragmented records from decades-old discussions in text and audio form, reckoning with the meaning of broken hyperlinks, and attempting to reconstruct some of the lost context that would have accompanied now-outdated documentation.

I cannot write here about everything I have encountered as a researcher and participant within the LibriVox community; I can only take up bounded examples and limited segments of the content and activity that make LibriVox the sprawling crowdsourced endeavor that it is. Documenting my navigation through the thousand corners of LibriVox's "backstage" and appropriately excluding the many small stories that won't fit into this project has been a difficult methodological challenge. Fortunately, as Law (2004) reflects, it is sometimes "not only impossible, but counter productive" to focus narrowly on one approach or one straightforward narrative (p. 78). Law also reminds us nothing is fixed, and all things are enacted, partially

connected, partially skewed, always depending on the moment. From this perspective, my work in describing LibriVox cannot escape its limitedness, and the explorations and findings in the following chapters are potentially in contradiction. This resonates with King's (2014) notes on navigating complex structures from the inside, where she admits that "writing obliquely is sometimes a necessity" (p. 3). Allowing for this idiosyncrasy of method leaves space for what we call LibriVox to be more than one thing and more than one process, far beyond what the beginnings of my research can describe and discuss here.

Origins, Evolutions, and Implications

My next chapter situates LibriVox.org and its origins within various existing systems and meshworks—other crowdsourcing projects, digital archives and digitization efforts, volunteer movements, and instances of online technical communication. My focus follows public, open source projects and the movements behind those projects, highlighting the interests and roles technical communications scholars might take up within them. This work establishes LibriVox as an example of how the digital preservation and circulation of media, history, and culture involves responsibilities that matter to technical communicators and technical communication scholars. Whether made by professionals or amateurs, consciously or unconsciously, decisions about how public media projects like LibriVox are managed make a difference to the ultimate shape and accessibility of knowledge in digital forms.

In Chapter 3, I explore the development and evolutions of LibriVox's infrastructure, artifacts, and discourse over time, in order to understand the evolving workflows of the project. Through surveying the pasts and presents of the LibriVox community, I identify technological, ideological, social, and cultural traces that persist through the project and document some of how

LibriVox's initially ad hoc processes have (and have not) congealed into a range of more stable, yet still idiosyncratic, protocols. To focus this exploration, I take up the example of L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* and use eight LibriVox versions of this story as stages through which to trace the processes by which the artifacts of LibriVox come into being. This tracing begins to make visible the ongoing negotiations of standardization within the community, noticing the values present in and those potentially omitted from the subtly shifting ethos of the LibriVox project.

The fourth chapter distills insights from my survey of several examples of LibriVox's scattered and diffuse documentation. I find that the artifacts of technical communication created by and for the audiobook-making users of LibriVox not only provides technical instruction but also guides volunteers in choosing and navigating the multiple roles available to them within the community. I argue here that digital documents and artifacts, when preserved and circulated in ways that align with community values, become especially important for stewarding sustainable and resilient digital communities of practice.

My concluding chapter opens up potential avenues for future research into other crowdsourcing projects and digital volunteer communities. I invite additional questions about how we might best understand the value of so much labor, time, and creative output undertaken voluntarily across multiple digital spaces, and I suggest more nuanced ways of categorizing the kinds of labor that go on within the various facets of LibriVox and projects like it. I also emphasize in this chapter the importance and value of open, decentralized models of cultural production. Inclusive and sustainable models of publishing are attainable and important for preserving, distributing, and making accessible as many human cultural artifacts as possible.

CHAPTER 2: LIBRIVOX HISTORIES, THE DREAM OF UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE KNOWLEDGE, AND THE STAKES FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

LibriVox was inspired by [...] the ‘books on tape’ I used to listen to as a kid on long drives with some family friends and all those crusaders for free and equal access to the cultural and communication foundations of our world, who have worked, and continue to work tirelessly to make possible all the infrastructure for this project.

(LibriVox, 2005, para 8)

On August 10, 2005, Montreal-based writer and web developer Hugh McGuire launched LibriVox, announcing the idea both on his own blog and on the brand new <http://librivox.blogspot.com>. His inspiration for this hopeful project was drawn from his own experience and interests in open free culture and from the many new possibilities of digital technology. The introductory LibriVox blog post listed some of these inspirations, and McGuire’s personal blogging from that year were also steeped in the ideals of free/open culture and Web 2.0 aspirations. He posted often about Creative Commons, free software and the open source movement, Wikipedia, and the general excitement of participatory digital media and communities. Alongside these unfurling thoughts, nestled in between a July post reviewing Montreal’s copyright2005 conference and a November post on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, sits the brief and simple announcement that brought LibriVox to the world. The post is titled “LibriVox—public domain books for your ears,” and begins “I’ve just launched a little experimental project, let’s see how it goes. It’s called LibriVox...”

And so LibriVox was begun: announced with a new blog, a few hopeful and explanatory posts, and a few emails reaching out to online friends and acquaintances, asking if they might be

willing to collaborate on the first LibriVox audio recording of Joseph Conrad's 1907 novel *The Secret Agent*. A little more than twelve weeks later, all 13 chapters were uploaded for listeners around the world to download for free.

This chapter begins to unravel some of the context surrounding the overlapping histories of LibriVox and the various Web 2.0 movements that have informed and supported McGuire's vision and the innovative LibriVox project he began. I explore how LibriVox fits (and doesn't) into larger cultural movements and philosophies, drawing on scholarship related to crowdsourcing, social production, common-pool resource management, and feminist rhetorics. Following this, I trace and review some of the ways technical communication scholarship has responded to the movements and visions that drive projects like LibriVox, while questioning how the field might continue to attend and respond to the growing importance of public, amateur forms of professional and technical communication across many kinds of communities.

Scattered Digital Artifacts as Meshworks

The history and activity of LibriVox is distributed across a constellation of blog posts, discussion forum threads, and podcast episodes. Details from the beginnings of the LibriVox project are housed within several online spaces, across and among the memories of a vast global network of actors (both human and nonhuman). To some small degree it's sheer luck and randomness that McGuire's personal blog and its early LibriVox-related posts still exist in some form, that they haven't yet been lost among the general ephemerality of so many other decades-old web artifacts. But more likely, we can also tie what seems mere good fortune to the fact that McGuire has the expertise and the financial and social resources to sustain a rather consistent web presence for almost 15 years. Why some web content survives and other content doesn't is a

large and complex question; the implications of this complexity and of the internet's general ephemerality have had consequences for my research. Not all pieces of LibriVox's early history have been preserved exactly as they were when they came into being: some artifacts have been taken down and purposefully removed from public view; several sites have been forgotten or haven't been maintained. But many pieces do remain as evidence of McGuire's and other early volunteers' contexts and motives. In tracing the records and residues of their dreams through LibriVox history and through those projects that preceded and inspired LibriVox, I've necessarily had to pick and choose which threads to follow and which to leave alone for now.⁷ I do not claim to construct the single most complete and correct account of this group's history; rather, I hope that future projects will allow me a reason to engage more completely with other edges and corners of the constellation.

The LibriVox community's ongoing discourse, its procedures and policies, and its infrastructure—all having evolved alongside LibriVox as a digital audiobook collection—are also scattered among various digital records, metadata, and audio files. As touched on in the previous chapter, there are countless metaphors we might use in describing such a diffuse, distributed mediascape. I have settled on both *network* and *constellation* in the paragraph above, but many others (collection, configuration, archive, habitat, ecology) could be just as evocative, accurate, and/or useful. The additional metaphor of *meshwork* is one I discuss further here as a way of synthesizing perspectives from existing scholarship on digital knowledge projects, from the digital histories of such projects, and from the history of LibriVox itself.

I am drawn to the concept of the meshwork, from Ingold's (2007, 2011) anthropological theorizing, for the ways it underscores ongoing, reifying motion and action across time and

⁷ See Appendix A for a Timeline of LibriVox history constructed from details in the forum archives, catalog records, community podcasts, and various other sources.

space. The term is particularly useful given the historical lines along which this chapter proceeds. As a conceptualizing term, meshwork brings to mind intersecting, entangled paths formed by movement across/within a supple, somewhat organic organization. More than a network of nodes linked together, meshworks are planes where acting, moving, doing, and being take place over and over again (Ingold, 2007, p. 80; 2011, p. 63). I find this concept useful in how it emphasizes the ongoing material and physical motions that define places, artifacts, and other evidence, along with the ephemeral fragility of such contingent, dynamic structures. Ingold's descriptions of meshworks help us to keep in mind the potential for erosion, fraying, and decay, as well as gradual wear and tear that rubs away and erases sections of the pattern. The layerings and dissolutions of meshworks might happen in partial ways, lines criss-crossing here but not there, tightening together and loosening apart, threads tangling around certain activities, falling away along others. If we envision actors/agents (McGuire, other invited volunteers, microphones, websites, iPods, listeners) weaving paths and patterns of vocal expression, hypertext, media, etc., into the various meshworks of 2005, we will also need to notice and accept places where that meshwork has broken, detoured, been cut, been woven-over with new material, and so on.

To recreate in 2018 what the LibriVox of 2005 may have looked and acted like—to fully reconstruct the state of the meshwork as it could have been during a set of lost-forever moments—is impossible (and perhaps not even desirable), but to follow the traces accessible to us now may still yield helpful insights into the practices and interactions that led from those moments through to our own experiences now and in the future. In this spirit, I use information gleaned from what threads of still-accessible evidence and other digital residue, including 147 podcast episodes and over a decade of archived forum threads, to construct a timeline overview

(Appendix A) of as many key moments in LibriVox's history as the available evidence has allowed me to pinpoint.⁸

While the original “about page” of the old librivox.blogspot.com site no longer is live,⁹ its content can be unearthed via persistent navigation through cached copies of early versions of the site in the Wayback Machine at archive.org (Appendix C). There, McGuire explains the basic concept of LibriVox, offers brief instructions to potential volunteers, and provides links to the various projects and movements and ideas that inspired him to found the LibriVox project in the first place. He writes, “LibriVox is a hope, an experiment, and a question: can the net harness a bunch of volunteers to help bring books in the public domain to life through podcasting?”

Because of his central role in LibriVox's origin story, I have begun this chapter's account by following Hugh McGuire as an important instigating actor. However, as tempting as it is to revere McGuire above all others for his innovation and influence in giving life to a project so many now love and enjoy so very much, my scholarly attention cannot be focused alone on his role, no matter how central it may have been. McGuire alone does not create or sustain LibriVox, though his voice was the first to have been donated to the project. McGuire's reflections at the time and later on invite us to also recognize some of the many precursors and prerequisites without which LibriVox could not have come into being.

8. I also engage further with LibriVox's growth from 2005 to 2016 in chapter 3, where I discuss the material consequences and implications of an open crowdsourcing project driven by volunteers who each bring vastly varying experience levels, values, and preferences to bear on their work with this public domain audiobook project.

9. The blogspot.com blogging platform is also no longer working; only a defunct placeholder page is left at the original domain. Accessing even cached copies of librivox.blogspot.org via the Wayback Machine is made difficult by a redirect response code in place on the old original site. When LibriVox set up its new website at librivox.org in October 2005, this redirect pushed visitors from the original site to the new one, probably rather seamlessly. The same code still redirects visitors within the Wayback Machine, too.

For the hope and experiment of LibriVox to exist, many other things needed to exist first. This late-summer-2005 moment of inspiration and call-to-volunteers didn't come out of nowhere. Before LibriVox, others were already podcasting¹⁰ and publishing audiobooks from the public domain or creative commons. Alex Wilson's *TellTale Weekly* and *The Spoken Alexandria Project* are examples, along with the LiteralSystems audio project (now known as Verkaro Audiobooks). McGuire specifically cites two other digital audiobook projects as direct inspirations— a serialization via blog and podcast of D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover* by Urban Art Adventures and a collaborative audio edition of Lessig's *Free Culture* organized by the blogger and theologian A. K. M. Adam. (See Appendix I for materials related to these and other related audio projects.) A commenter to the introductory LibriVox post moved to add the audioblogging platform Odeo to McGuire's list as well, and McGuire replied with the admission that he hadn't heard of Odeo before starting LibriVox; McGuire counted its concept and potential influence on the spirit of the times as "retroactive inspiration" nonetheless.

The current persistence and stability of LibriVox continues to rely on several related and interlocking/networked systems. Recordings produced with LibriVox are based on texts from many other digital collections such Project Gutenberg, Hathi Trust, and The Internet Archive, and occasionally printed texts from physical private and public libraries. Just as they arrive from a multiplicity of sources, LibriVox publications circulate into and end up in all kinds of other creative contexts, too. Listeners may burn audio files onto CDs or save them to USB drives and

10. Podcasting was still emerging as a medium and genre of communication at the time. Farivar's (2014) *Ars Technica* article reviews the history of the podcasting boom, from the first indie, tech-centric podcasts that debuted in 2001 to the shift made by larger broadcasting companies in distributing radio shows like *This American Life* and other popular programs in podcast form in the mid-oughts (2005 and 2006). Farivar (2014) reports that the iPod Nano was released in 2005 too, and explains, "While iPod sales weren't pushed by podcasting, making smaller, cheaper, and better hardware devices was certainly appealing to podcast fans. By the end of the year, 'podcast' was declared Word of the Year by the New Oxford American Dictionary" (Farivar, 2014, p. 2). Though the broader history (and growing popularity) of podcasting is relevant to LibriVox's story, including much more than this footnote is beyond the scope of my project.

mail them across the world, or they may facilitate streaming the files over television, telephone, or radio. Some make video arrangements to be posted on YouTube. Others have remixed the readings into musical compositions of spoken-word art.¹¹

On the Dream of Universally Accessible Knowledge

The hope and experiment of LibriVox was tied to a much larger dream: that somehow, by applying digital technologies to the wealth of information already being made available all over the world, universally comprehensive and universally accessible collections of knowledge could be produced, preserved, and shared with everyone. Such a dream has captivated librarians, archivists, and encyclopedists for centuries. Could the ease of copying and storing digital information combined with ever-increasing speeds of transmitting that information one day lead to the creation and maintenance of universally accessible stores of knowledge for the general public? The innovators and advocates behind Project Gutenberg, the Internet Archive, Wikipedia, and other public knowledge projects believe so, and are working toward making it happen.

Michael Hart's Project Gutenberg was perhaps the first step towards creating a free and open digital library. Hart (1992), looking back to the earliest computer systems of the '60s and '70s, observed that "the greatest value created by computers would not be computing, but would be the storage, retrieval, and searching of what was stored in our libraries." Hart created Project

11. Not all reuse is accepted without qualm by all LibriVox volunteers. Volunteers occasionally discover repackaged and sometimes even edited versions of their LibriVox recordings for sale or in other monetized contexts. It is not uncommon for LibriVoxers to bring their concerns about this seemingly unethical repurposing to the LibriVox forums. Most of the time, those who are familiar with longstanding LibriVox policy will commiserate but also remind volunteers that public domain means that anyone can repurpose LibriVox recordings for anything, and LibriVox is financially unprepared to monitor and challenge commercial re-use even if it wanted to (Chesley, 2018b).

Gutenberg in 1971, drawing on texts in the public domain and digitizing them into the simplest ASCII text formats possible, in order to ensure that the greatest number of devices and systems could access them. The Project Gutenberg mission statement declares, “We want to provide as many eBooks in as many formats as possible for the entire world to read in as many languages as possible” (Hart, 2004). Over the nearly 50 years it’s been in operation, Project Gutenberg and its volunteers have collectively digitized more than 56,000 books, the large majority of which are made freely downloadable in several formats (plain text, html, epub, mobi/Kindle versions). LibriVox began by drawing directly from the digital library shelves at Gutenberg.org and still relies primarily on Gutenberg digitizations as source texts for many of the audiobooks they produce.

Extending the dream of a comprehensive universal library beyond existing print and analog material, Brewster Kahle founded The Internet Archive in 1996 as a central space for saving and storing copies of webpages (the Wayback Machine). A decade later, the Internet Archive had grown to include book scanning and digitizing services, a catalog of free digital books in the Open Library, and growing archives of radio, television, and magazine content. Today the non-profit organization functions almost as a platform or service to be used by institutions such as public libraries, museums, and activist organizations, or “anyone with a free account” who may have media in need of archiving. The Internet Archive allows members of the general public to contribute user-generated and user-curated content to their own personal digital collections. With help from various sponsors, volunteers, and partners, the Internet Archive purposes to catalog as many kinds of content and culture as possible, and offer use as widely, freely, and openly as possible.

Another massively influential open digital knowledge project took off as the new millennium arrived: Wikipedia. Much about Wikipedia's beginnings and influence has been written already (Purdy, 2009; Lih, 2009; Kill, 2012; Jemielniak, 2014). One of the project's founders, Jimmy Wales, in his introduction to Lih's *The Wikipedia Revolution* (2009), writes, "Imagine a world in which every single person is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing" (p. xv). Wales describes the wiki technology that runs Wikipedia as quite simple and insists that the project is much more a social revolution than a technological one. Wikipedia and its philosophy of community online, is "about leaving things open ended, it's about trusting people, it's about encouraging people to do good. These communities, I believe, are going to be the norm on the internet" (Lih, 2009, p. xviii). According to Wales, the Wikipedia philosophy and platform empower crowds to do "good work, cooperatively." The free, open, publicly editable, and (surprisingly to some) relatively reliable/accurate encyclopedic content on Wikipedia has arguably changed the digital world and contributed significantly to new ways for networked humans to create and manage general knowledge.¹²

Hart, Kahle, and Wales, each in their own ways, embrace the logistical and technical possibility of making all human knowledge public, and take different approaches to achieving at least a small portion of that grand vision. Of course, these men's legacies are only a few of the more well-known digital knowledge projects, and they happen to appear prominently in the digital records of LibriVox history. Many other approaches also exist, spearheaded and

12 The Wikimedia Foundation, Wikipedia's parent non-profit organization, has since 2003 expanded to include organized collections of much more than publicly produced encyclopedia entries. The Foundation also hosts collections of quotations at Wikiquote, free travel advice at Wikivoyage, public domain books at Wikisource, collaboratively written textbooks and manuals at Wikibooks, images and audio at Wikimedia Commons, and dictionary and thesaurus content at Wiktionary. Recently, the Wikimedia Foundation released an open letter introducing a new report about "Freely Sharing the Sum of All Human Knowledge" (2018a, 2018b).

sponsored by institutions and individuals with various priorities and focuses. Google began digitizing print sources in 2002 and officially named the project now known as Google Books in 2005. Various academic consortia and commons have been established for the collection and dissemination of digital copies of scholarship across disciplines (Hathi Trust, ArXiv, MLA Commons, Humanities Commons, etc.). Clearly, networked digital tools and media are making the dream of universal access to all knowledge newly and differently possible than it has ever been before. Groups working in many corners of the internet continue to find ways of realizing and constructing and maintaining their own unique facets of this universal-knowledge dream.

In February 2005, McGuire posted on his blog a link to a podcast episode of the show *IT Conversations* featuring Brewster Kahle speaking at the 2004 Web 2.0 Conference in San Francisco (Kahle 2004; McGuire 2005a). Kahle, who almost ten years prior (in 1996) had founded the Internet Archive, used his conference talk to discuss the practical realities and possibility of making all human knowledge, across media and format, universally accessible. He argues that this is possible by listing out the specific amounts of digital storage it would take to save all extant copies of artifacts within various common media forms—text, video, music, images, and software. Kahle (2004) posits that mere storage space is the simplest of the hurdles involved, and issues of legality and accessible preservation will be much more daunting challenges. Storage of content is so easily managed, according to Kahle, that he felt able to make an open-ended public offer: for anyone engaged in curating or digitizing public domain or creative commons content, the Internet Archive will provide free hosting for their project. Roughly a year later, McGuire brought the LibriVox project to Kahle and made arrangements for all finished audiobooks to be hosted on Internet Archive servers.

Kahle concludes that the answer to whether or not we *can* preserve all the human culture and media ever created is definitely yes. Whether we will accomplish the dream or not remains more uncertain. Safely stored and preserved content is not necessarily the same as usable, accessible content, much less universally accessible. Realizing even a portion of the dream of universally accessible knowledge collection and curation will require integrated efforts across sectors of government, business, and education.

On Social Production + Crowdsourcing

As Wales, Kahle, and McGuire all recognize and seek to apply in the projects they helm, the attainability of open, universally accessible knowledge collections must involve the engagement and cooperation and labor of many diverse stakeholders. This sentiment and hope for cross-collaboration mirrors the kind of non-market work that Benkler (2006) analyzes so carefully in *The Wealth of Networks*. Distributed systems of information sharing and knowledge production facilitate and welcome the involvement of more and more diverse participants, whose projects can then function in markets or outside of markets, while serving unknown audiences/users with motives beyond the economic/profit-based kind that seem to drive so much of human activity. The hyper-connected digital contexts of 21st-century communication have increasingly afforded a near-constant exchange of near-limitless amounts of information among humans and machines, within communities both long-lasting and transient. Such affordances are changing how work and production happen.

Jeff Howe introduced the term crowdsourcing in a June 2006 *Wired* article, where he observes, “Just as distributed computing projects like UC Berkeley’s SETI@home have tapped the unused processing power of millions of individual computers, so distributed labor networks

are using the Internet to exploit the spare processing power of millions of human brains” (p. 1). In his book on the same topic, Howe (2008) links the successes of crowdsourcing models linked to a dynamic combination of “cheap production costs” and the DIY ethos of amateur, dabbling enthusiasts feeding into the rise of “prosumerism” (p. 4, 5-6). In a more recent treatise on crowdsourcing, Brabham (2016) builds on Howe’s work in his taxonomy of crowdsourcing projects and principles, summarizing the impact of these changes:

On one level, the Internet has allowed people to connect because the speed and reach of the Internet break down the barriers of geography and time, bringing people into conversation with one another. But on a more profound level, the Internet has lowered barriers to information, pulling back the curtain on bodies of professional knowledge and increasing access to useful tools that were once inaccessible. (p. 14)

Because the financial and temporal barriers to acquiring equipment, learning how to use it, and participating in a community of like-minded enthusiasts have dropped, almost anyone can be a content creator and publisher, to any degree they may feel comfortable doing so. Howe particularly notes that “breaking labor into little units, or modules, is one of the hallmarks of crowdsourcing” (p. 49).¹³ Members of the crowd don’t need to engage with a project for the long-term, or even have a full understanding of the broader initiative; participation can be as incidental as voting on which uploaded design or artwork is the most attractive or sharing data about a hobby one already spends plenty of time and attention on.

13. Howe (2008) references this modularization as the “antithesis of Fordism” in that it offers opportunities for individuals “to excel at more than one vocation and to explore new avenues for creative expression” (p. 14) and posits that crowdsourcing models have “the capacity to form a sort of perfect meritocracy” by sidestepping issues of gender, age, race, and so on (p. 13). I find these claims to be interesting but problematic, and in Chapter 5 I note opportunities to engage further with the implications of crowdsourcing projects on the futures of work and waged labor.

Howe cites examples of crowdsourcing that are transforming business and industry, as in the case of stock photography or t-shirt design, as well as more academic disciplines like ornithology. These emerging models of sharing information and labor, he predicts, will “change the nature of work and creativity” (p. 18). Similarly, Brabham (2016) points out that “the Internet has long been a place for participatory culture to flourish, but in the early 2000s, we saw for the first time a surge of interest on the part of organizations to leverage the collective intelligence of online communities to serve business goals, improve public participation in governance, design products, and solve problems” (p. xv). The economic value and business implications of crowdsourcing are prominent and unignorable, and both facets will likely have wide-ranging impacts on the future of work and waged labor. However, monetary incentives and financial profit are not the only values at play in community-based production models. The potential for crowdsourcing to “improve public participation” and to support brilliant collective problem-solving efforts is an exciting, but not guaranteed, future outcome.

No matter the optimism inspired by the empowering openness of crowdsourcing, its real-world implications are not always positive. Howe (2008) briefly acknowledges the capacity for open spaces to incubate influential (and perhaps unproductive, undesirable) instances of mob rule, but for Howe this is a worthwhile price to pay in exchange for more inclusive, accessible cultural production models (p. 246). For others—particularly those groups who might find themselves, without recourse, at the mercy of a destructive crowdsourced mobocracy—the price might be too high. In a keynote talk at the 2018 Creative Commons Global Summit, Bourg points out that the greatest benefits and the greatest risks of participating in open projects are “unevenly distributed in patterns that match existing systems of oppression” (para 51). Pointing toward the recent works of scholars like Eubanks (2018) and Noble (2018), she soberly

recognizes that “for marginalized people especially, a very real danger of being open on today’s internet is the danger of being targeted for abuse, and harassment, for rape and/or death threats, and the danger of being doxxed” (Bourg, 2018, para 49). The technologies we so often tend to celebrate may bring us ways of making the world a better place, but they also often make way for old and new social problems to proliferate and fester. Despite generally lower barriers to participation and expanding modes of public discourse, there are still limitations on who can practically, profitably, or safely contribute to emerging crowdsourcing economies and open social production models.

Technology has always been a factor in opening, closing off, and changing the kinds of opportunities we have for connecting with each other and sharing things. Communities and their members in turn push back against and mold the development of sharing/publishing technologies. In Howe’s view, crowdsourcing is all about community—communities of amateurs, sharing knowledge with each other. This new way of accomplishing things is not just a short-term fluke, or a novelty, but a full movement, a significant wave of new production practices, emerging organically “out of the uncoordinated actions of thousands of people” (Howe, 2008; p. 13). For Howe,

Crowdsourcing capitalizes on the deeply social nature of the human species [and] uses technology to foster unprecedented levels of collaboration and meaningful exchanges between people from every imaginable background in every imaginable geographical location. Online communities are at the heart of crowdsourcing, providing a context and a structure within which the “work” takes place. (p. 14)

Similarly, Clay Shirky in his book *Cognitive Surplus* argues that the social, human element is more central to this explosion of online participatory content-creation than any set of

technological innovations in hardware or software. Shirky (2010) defines social production as “the creation of value by a group for its members” and makes a thoughtful distinction between this and more “traditional” and institutional models of production and making: public models (how most roads get built), private models (how most cars get built) and social models: “the world of friends and family” and “how most picnics happen” (p. 118). Before the rise of digital networks, social production was limited to relatively local spaces. With the internet, a group (whether made of family, friends, strangers, or all three) can do a lot more than throw a lovely neighborhood picnic. Our human desire to share, coupled with the affordances of storage and copying that attend digital information technologies, could have the potential to assemble and sustain a global knowledge picnic—or several. And potentially anyone can bring and contribute something to the shaping of such projects.

The impulse to connect and share with our fellow humans is not new. Social production models like crowdsourcing cannot be considered solely a technological change. While as Brabham (2016) says, “The speed, reach, rich capability, and lowered barriers to entry enabled by the Internet and other new media technologies make crowdsourcing qualitatively different from the open problem-solving and collaborative production processes of yesteryear” (p. 10), we are reminded by the work of Shirky (2010), Howe (2008), and others, that the new opportunities offered by new technologies grow along with the same kinds of human desires for connection we have always had. Shirky relates this well in *Cognitive Surplus* (2010), recognizing that new technology doesn’t transform humans into totally new creatures with totally new habits—the technology opens new avenues for tendencies that probably were already there, for desires that humans and groups of humans already have. The scope and implications of those desires may be brand new and uncharted, potentially risky and/or world-changing. But despite all the excitement

and the technological differences, this spirit of connection and collaboration is old. The reality of groups of humans sharing resources, giving and taking and spreading out responsibilities has roots deep within the history of public land management and the concept of common-pool resources.

The Public Domain and the Commons as Cornucopia

Looking toward the study of common-pool resource management provides points of contrast and connection among our conceptions of the material and the digital in terms of scarcity versus abundance. Early conceptions of the public commons mainly include the shared material resources in the natural world—the land, forests, rivers, wildlife, etc. used by multiple groups/stakeholders, owned not by any particular private interest but held in common and shared by those who might use them. Ostrom’s (1990) work seeks to address the lack of robust empirical knowledge about how groups of people collectively manage environmental commons such as grazing land, fisheries, and other natural resources. After reviewing prevalent theoretical models, Ostrom discusses their limited application to real world common-pool resources and presents several case studies of successfully and unsuccessfully managed commons.

According to Ostrom, theorists tend to assume and promote broad brushstroke solutions to the problems presented by pre-existing models of the commons: either the government must manage and police use of the resources in question, or private interests must negotiate strict contract-based uses. Importantly, Ostrom calls for recognition of the fact that “institutions are rarely either private or public— ‘the market’ or ‘the state’ ,” but more often a complex, difficult-to-classify mixture of both:

A competitive market—the epitome of private institutions—is itself a public good. Once a competitive market is provided, individuals can enter and exit freely whether or not they contribute to the cost of providing and maintaining the market. No market can exist for long without underlying public institutions to support it. In field settings, public and private institutions frequently are intermeshed and depend on one another, rather than existing in isolated worlds.

(loc 562)

Ostrom also argues that in all cases, exclusively state- or market-based philosophies of managing the commons are based on a false assumption that the potential users of the commons are helplessly trapped within a “prisoner’s dilemma” model of use, with no choice but to trust others and be taken advantage of, or to betray the community themselves to gain some advantage. In either scenario, someone is expected to eventually exploit the commons, inevitably ruining its resources. Breaking free of this assumption, Ostrom questions and proposes a more nuanced “theory of collective action” that will more realistically and helpfully explain why “some efforts to solve commons problems failed, while others have succeeded” (loc 556). In effect, Ostrom is studying the social sector—the world of friends and family and picnics that Shirky (2010) describes with regard to crowdsourced sharing and production. This is a sector where communities are free to create their own rules and regulations without direct pressure from any outside economic/for-profit interests or relatively rigid, politically-interested third parties. Ostrom’s work illuminates the possibilities and constraints of community-managed common pool resources, paving a way for us to understand the analogous possibilities for socially managing the cultural commons and the public domain as well.

The public domain is a legally-protected common-pool resource, and thus reliant on some state-based rules, somewhat similar in concept to a national park or protected wildlife preserve. An easy and prevalent distinction between physical and cultural commons is that the physical/environmental commons is much more at risk of ruin by overuse, as Ostrom acknowledges and as Hardin discusses in his well-known 1968 article “The Tragedy of the Commons.” Hardin (1968) traces the inevitable depletion of physical resources caused by open, unregulated access and even occasional abuse by irresponsible actors. In contrast, a commons made of cultural artifacts and creative output rather than of earth or water, while still in many ways material, is not subject to the same tragedy. The ease of making digital copies and backups of information means that rather than a commons that risks material ruin by those granted unmanaged public access, our cultural commons can be improved and made more useful if more people are able to use it, even if their use may be unpredictable.

Software developer Dan Bricklin counters Hardin’s metaphor using just such observations. Bricklin (2006) introduces the concept of “the cornucopia of the commons”: a scenario when the public, widespread use of a shared resource tends to increase the shared usefulness of that resource. Bricklin’s primary examples are music sharing databases that allow users to edit, add, and manage tags and metadata, thereby “increasing the value of the database by adding more information,” which he says “is a natural by-product of using the tool for your own benefit” (p. 1) In such systems, Bricklin continues, “No altruistic sharing motives need be present, especially since sharing is the default” (p. 1). In a post–Web 2.0 age, interactive and connected sets of resources, like the peer-to-peer networks Bricklin celebrates, afford an almost infinite copyability, malleability, add-to-ability, and re/distributability. More and more public, social involvement in the collection and organization of that cornucopia of content, even if

relatively unmanaged or minimally regulated, will often add usefulness and increase the reach, accessibility, and generally beneficial affordances of those resources.¹⁴ An example from the LibriVox world might be the many instances of third-party developers building applications that recycle and re-circulate work from the LibriVox catalog. Their use copies and extends that content for others.

LibriVox processes themselves are another, larger example of a digital cornucopia. Volunteers who love to read add their recorded readings to a public database. Any other willing individuals are then able to access the collection, share what they find, and/or contribute their own readings. LibriVox constitutes a point of making and connection among members of a crowd of volunteers. These volunteers draw on publicly available work and add to it, enriching the cultural commons even further. The highly inclusive and open workflow established within the LibriVox organization allows and indeed encourages any volunteers willing to propose, manage, and complete audiobook projects or other related, public domain projects to do so, and others help lead or collaborate on these projects as they are willing and able. Within this project, community can grow, disperse, and grow again and again as its members arrive, engage in producing new additions to the cornucopia, and perhaps leave (temporarily, or forever).

LibriVox policy welcomes all voices and contributions, inviting even repeat recordings of the public domain works that are most popular (Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, and other classic authors boast some of the highest numbers of works in the LibriVox catalog, for example). As volunteers select existing public domain works, remediate those works into new

14. Some scholars, including the textual studies scholar Peter Shillingsburg (2006; 2014), critique this proliferating abundance as a problematic affordance of digital technologies. They foresee that high quality, scholarly content added to the digital commons of is likely to drown in the sea of mediocre amateur and novice productions. Shillingsburg's (2006) arguments to this effect in *From Gutenberg to Google: Electronic Representations of Literary Texts* were part of what initially pushed me to consider the crowdsourced efforts of public digitization projects like LibriVox as undervalued forms of work.

audiobooks, their production and curation work multiply the cornucopia, providing to others plenty of new ways to access audio versions of the public domain and all the commonly shared culture it contains.

The “loose and open structure” and the public, volunteer-based policies maintained by LibriVox—limited for the most part only by how the public domain is legally defined in the US—means that each individual LibriVox participant can directly choose and influence what gets added to the audio cornucopia (and to a much more limited degree, what won’t get added yet). The values guiding any given volunteer could be anything from a love of a favorite childhood story to a sense of religious devotion or a desire to learn something new from a previously unknown author or subject of scholarship, and so on. Individual motives and values guide much of the day-to-day work of LibriVox readers, and they also feed into and influence the conventions and values of the broader LibriVox community.

All LibriVox recordings are made from previously-published public-domain texts, and thus the work of LibriVox volunteers becomes a blend of both content curation and content creation. This work of creating new audio content is closely entwined with curation work. Scholarly attention to this type of work has been lacking, according to Rotman et al. (2012); the authors report that scholars tend to focus on content creation communities much more often than on curation communities. While Rotman et al. (2012) claim that “curation and creation are fundamentally different activities” (p. 1093), LibriVox volunteers are inevitably doing both at once. The curational work of selecting a text for LibriVox is attended by the creative labor of interpreting and reading, recording and editing, writing plot summaries, designing cover images, and so on. No matter how neutral a volunteer may claim to be, no collection of knowledge or cultural artifacts ever stands separately from the values and biases of those who

build that collection; all libraries, archives, and databases enact particular ideologies and values (Bourg, 2018; Chuøn, 2018). To gather and curate a collection also involves creating the system and context within which that collection is accessed.

At LibriVox, though most volunteers firmly uphold a convention of never editing, abridging, censoring, or changing an author's text in any way, many LibriVox projects require at least some minor interference that could be considered editing or abridging. When volunteer coordinators gather various short works or poems about a particular topic into a collection, the public domain texts they transform are given a completely new context and setting than they may have ever had before. If a volunteer finds a public domain text that was originally published serially in a journal or magazine, they must edit its sections together in audio form, sometimes creating new section breaks, often leaving behind the specific details of the texts original publication and circulation. In one LibriVox audio production of short works originally published in 1910, volunteers ended up grouping a mandate from Pope St. Pius X alongside fiction by Jack London, P.G. Wodehouse, and L. Frank Baum (Various, 2010). For the 13 volumes of Shakespeare Monologue Collections, dozens of volunteers have chosen to vocally perform and record their favorite segments of Shakespeare's plays in various languages. Volunteers' choices about what to read and record constitute a dual form of creative performance and non-scholarly, public (perhaps indiscriminate and somewhat wild) curation.

Within the scope of my current research, I will not be tracing the many different motives that lead volunteers to join LibriVox and to record one kind of text instead of another. Such questions would be difficult to trace and answer fully (nevertheless, Chapter 5 does explore the potential value of pursuing this question). What I do focus on are the modes of production used

by volunteers once they have made their choice to read, the policies and procedures codified by volunteers that guide that production, and what difference those make within the community. The ways these and other archives of knowledge and culture are constructed does influence what will persist, what will be lost, and matters for who accesses those artifacts and how.¹⁵

Sharing, Offering, and Invitational Instruction

In building a frame in which to understand the evolving volunteer community that is the subject of my research, I draw on the concepts of inclusive care work and other feminist rhetorical principles, most particularly Foss and Griffin's (1995) discussion/proposal of an invitational mode of rhetoric, as a more inclusive, gentle, and community-centric alternative to what they describe as the more patriarchal, at times domineering persuasive goals of "traditional" rhetoric. Specific features of invitational rhetoric include the communicative practices of "offering" without expecting or angling for another's agreement, making space for full and free expression of individual perspectives, and the incorporation of personal narrative. What Foss and Griffin describe as invitational rhetoric is a very mutual process, shared among all rhetors and audience members, open to all contributors and contributions, so that "rhetor and audience alike contribute to the thinking about an issue so that everyone involved gains a greater understanding of the issue in its subtlety, richness, and complexity" (p. 5).

This goal of mutual understanding not only of the issue at hand but of each other as fellow beings seems especially important and valuable in an online space, where strangers come

15. I am not (yet) studying in any detail who does access LibriVox audiobooks and how, though Chapter 5 will engage somewhat with what this research could do. This question is a relevant one for eventually measuring what impact this and other public knowledge projects may have on their audiences. Because the mediated interactions and processes of the LibriVox project are more relevant to my field of professional and technical communication, my current work focuses on LibriVox from this more internal perspective.

together from disparate cultures/locations/backgrounds to discuss and deliberate work processes. In an invitational rhetorical situation, Foss and Griffin explain, “Individual perspectives are articulated [...] as carefully, completely, and passionately as possible to give them full expression and to invite their careful consideration by the participants in the interaction. This articulation occurs not through persuasive argument but through offering—the giving of expression to a perspective without advocating its support or seeking its acceptance” (p. 7). This method of communicating by offering and inviting others into one’s own experience/perspective does not involve seeking to displace, subsume, replace, or overcome any other point of view, but rather seeks to add to it—similar to how the small participatory actions of individual members of a crowd can accumulate together, none of them necessarily canceling any of the others out. In Chapter 4, I discuss more specifically the features and implications of invitational rhetoric in this crowdsourcing context.

More people involved in collecting more kinds of content make the dream of universal, comprehensive knowledge collections even more tantalizing, interesting, and more feasible in allowing for the effort of collection and organization to be increasingly shared and distributed. But collecting all of this content is only part of the dream—the other half hinges on making all the knowledge and content of the universe accessible and available to everyone else, anywhere in the universe. These dreamed-of knowledge collections will need to be meticulously well-preserved and well-managed cultural commons. But what do “well-preserved” and “well-managed” mean, and how do/should/will we go about doing the work of preservation and management?

A Snapshot of 2005 Technical Communication Scholarship

Scholars within the field of technical communication have long been responding to the many ways distributed networks and digital technologies contribute to globalization and progress and change in the circulation of knowledge. More distributed forms of work, including volunteer, crowdsourcing models, are changing the ways writers and communicators must prepare and engage with content, audiences, and each other. The activities of workplaces and non-workplaces blur, morph, and overlap in new ways. Connections and collaborations across these kinds of boundaries are more and more common, more and more expected and supported in professional and non-professional digital contexts, giving scholars, practitioners, and novices exciting opportunities to expand or reimagine the definitions of communication work. The particular versatility of the field of professional and technical communication in addressing such changes is a large part of what drew me to it as a student.

On August 10, 2005, I was oblivious to the emergence of the LibriVox project, enjoying the last few weeks of summer before beginning my final year of an undergraduate degree.¹⁶ As a senior majoring in professional and technical writing at Utah State University, I was signed up to take classes about document design, graphic design, professional editing, modern rhetorical theory, and web design and production (Chesley, 2005). As a very newly emerging technical/professional writer, I knew only faintly of the larger scholarly fields of rhetoric and technical communication. Though I was hardly aware of it at the time, my professional and

16. As I began tracing how the field of technical communication has responded to and engaged with the many open knowledge movements, free culture and open source philosophies that are working toward the reality of “universally accessible knowledge,” I found myself drawing somewhat loosely on Derrick Mueller’s research technique of the “choric worknet,” which involves looking at the voices and happenings coinciding around a certain time and/or place. I was introduced to the concept in an episode of Eric Detweiler’s *Rhetoricity* podcast (Detweiler, 2017). In the article discussed with Detweiler, Mueller defines choric research practice as one that “explores coincident objects and events from popular culture in the interest of enlarging context,” and he foregrounds the potential value of “listing corresponding moments, even though they may at first seem an odd assortment” (Mueller, 2015). Throughout this chapter, I have positioned August 2005 as a choric touchstone.

technical writing professors were working on books and articles about the many kinds of professional, personal, and scholarly collaborations made possible through digital networks. They researched and presented and published about online writing and online education (Cargile Cook & Grant-Davie, 2005; Cassorla, Ball, & Hewett, 2005), about gaming and learning in virtual environments (Moeller & Moberly, 2006), about new media and digital publishing (Ball 2004; Ball, 2006; Moeller & Ball, 2007; Ball & Rice 2006), and also in new media with their own professional websites, blogs, and digital academic publishing venues like *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*.

The 2005 ATTW Bibliography (as it happens, the last version to have been produced in print, before the series moved to online-only distribution) lists a plethora of publications in article and book form covering similar topics. Among the most common recurring themes that stood out to me as I perused the list are:

Blogging

Distributed and virtual teams, particularly in global/international contexts

E-publishing practices

Internet and electronic information technologies as research tools

Internet technologies, their influence on workplaces, politics, pedagogy, collaboration, and language

Internet use among various fields, communities, and groups

Mobile devices, their impact on composition, language, and relationships

Online communities

Online education

Spyware

Teaching with technology (blogs, computers, hypertext, software, etc) in the classroom

Technical communication scholars have paid plenty of attention to the technologies and cultural changes that unfolded with the new century. Everywhere we find evidence of how those

technologies and the sociocultural changes that accompany them and feed back into them have changed workplaces and changed the jobs of technical communicators. Such changes provide ample opportunity for scholarly and critical engagement. Titles from the late-2005 issues of the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, *Technical Communication*, *Technical Communication Quarterly*, the *Journal of Business Communication*, the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, and *Computers and Composition* (see Table 2.1) also demonstrate clear interest in online interaction, virtual community, digital rhetorics, forms of new media production, and the future of digital texts and other communication forms.

Much of this 2005 research addresses questions about what 21st-century professional and technical writing is, or can be, or should be. Scholars of the time are concerned with how so much rapidly changing technology will impact the practice and teaching of communication. Less scholarship appears to grapple directly with how the growing feasibility of storing and distributing massive collections of information and knowledge should matter to technical communicators and technical communication scholars.

Public/amateur professional and technical writing is emerging as important to not only distributed workplaces, but also to the broader, more public spaces of our lives where we socialize, entertain ourselves, and consume media. The field of technical communication has begun attending to how technical content is shared online in many kinds of community-led spaces and non-institutions, many of which include or overlap with crowdsourced models of content production. Along with Howe and Shirky, Kimball (2016) too emphasizes the deeply human impulse to share knowledge and how much that impulse has seemed to grow as the means of sharing have become more available to more people. He writes, “At no time in human history have more people [...] been involved in helping to accommodate each other to technology and to

Table 2.1 Themes in Technical Communication Scholarship, 2005

Journal Title	Article Title (Author/s)
The Journal of Technical Writing and Communication 35.4 (2005)	Social topography in a wireless era: The negotiation of public and private space (Humphreys, 2005) A sounding board for the self: Virtual community as ideology (Sorin Adam Mate, 2005) The human side of the digital divide : Media experience as the border of communication satisfaction with email (Ish, 2005) A meta-analysis of journal articles intersecting issues of internet and gender (Royal, 2005)
Technical Communication (Aug. 2005) Special issue on the future of Technical Communication	The future of Technical Communication. (Hayhoe, 2005) The future of Technical Communication: The perspective of a management consultant (Hackos, 2005). Organizational Implications of the Future Development of Technical Communication: Fostering Communities of Practice in the Workplace (Fisher & Bennion, 2005) Re-negotiating with Technology : Training Towards More Sustainable Technical Communication (Clark & Andersen, 2005) From Wordsmith to Communication Strategist : Heresthetic and Political Maneuvering in Technical Communication (Moore & Kreth, 2005) Do Curricula Correspond to Managerial Expectations? Core Competencies for Technical Communicators (Rainey, Turner & Dayton, 2005) Technological Skill as Technological Literacy : An Argument for the Value of Writers' Skill with Information Technology (Slattery, 2005) The Future is the Past : Has Technical Communication Arrived as a Profession? (Pringle & Williams, 2005)
Technical Communication Quarterly 14.3 Special issue on the rhetoric of science and technology at the beginning of the twenty-first century.	Guest Editor's Introduction (Gross & Gurak, 2005) Reception Studies in the Rhetoric of Science (Harris, 2005) A Hard Look at Ourselves: A Reception Study of Rhetoric of Science (Ceccarelli, 2005) "I Knew There Was Something Wrong with That Paper": Scientific Rhetorical Styles and Scientific Misunderstandings (Reeves, 2005) Rhetoric of Science: Enriching the Discipline (Fahnestock, 2005) Revisioning the Origin: Tracing Inventional Agency Through Genetic Inquiry (Campbell & Clark, 2005) Reclaiming Rhetoric of Science and Technology: Knowing In and About the World (Collier, 2005) Rhetoric, Action, and Agency in Institutionalized Science and Technology (Kinsella, 2005) Interdisciplinarity and Bibliography in Rhetoric of Health and Medicine (Segal, 2005) Digital Rhetoric : Toward an Integrated Theory (Zappen, 2005) Looking to the Future: Electronic Texts and the Deepening Interface (Warnick, 2005) Technical Communication and Physical Location: Topoi and Architecture in Computer Classrooms (Welch, 2005)

Table 2.1 continued

Journal of Business Communication 42.4	<p>What Motivates Employees to Transfer Knowledge Outside Their Work Unit? (Burgess, 2005)</p> <p>Genre Analysis of Corporate Annual Report Narratives: A Corpus Linguistics-Based Approach (Rutherford, 2005)</p> <p>The Discretionary Use of Electronic Media: Four Considerations for Bad News Bearers (Timmerman, 2005)</p> <p>Communicating with stakeholders during a crisis: Evaluating message strategies (Stephens, 2005)</p> <p>Charting Managerial Reading Preferences in Relation to Popular Management Theory Books: A Semiotic Analysis (Pagel, 2005)</p>
Journal of Business and Technical Communication 19.4	<p>A Time to Speak, a Time to Act (Artemeva, 2005)</p> <p>The Rhetoric and Politics of Science in the Case of the Missouri River System (Graham & Lindeman, 2005)</p> <p>From Writers to Information Coordinators (Jones, 2005)</p> <p>Meeting the Challenges of Globalization (Starke-Meyerring, 2005)</p>
Computers and Composition 22.4 (2005)	<p>Movement in the Interface (Skjulstad & Morrison, 2005)</p> <p>Database e-portfolio systems, A Critical Appraisal (Kimball, 2005)</p> <p>Teaching Composition Online: Whose side is time on? (Reinheimer, 2005)</p> <p>Comparing grades in online and face-to-face writing courses: Interpersonal accountability and institutional commitment (David Alan Sapp, James Simon)</p> <p>Narratives of Digital Life at the trAce Online Writing Centre (Thomas 2005)</p> <p>NOTE: Issue 22.3 of Computers and Composition was a special issue focusing on “Second Language Writers in Digital Contexts”</p>

accommodate technology to their own ends. They instruct, they demonstrate, they hack, they modify, they tweak ... and almost compulsively, they share with the entire world how to do what they did” (p. 12). Kimball (2016) also recognizes that “a significant proportion of the content people author on the Internet is technical communication. Many people have grown so adept at using technologies that they do not use or need corporate-designed technical documentation; instead, they make technical documentation themselves to share with other users” (p. 11). Howe recognizes this importance of this element as well: “Cheap tools would be meaningless without access to information on how to use them. Just a few years ago an aspiring director or cinematographer would have to enroll in film school or night classes to learn how to practice the craft. Now tutorials can be found for free on the web” (p. 77). In this information environment,

Howe (2008) observes, everyone—strangers, new friends, or anyone at all— “can enrich everyone’s experience by critiquing one another’s work and teaching what they know to less experienced contributors” (p. 14). A significant portion of the work involved in building a cornucopia of useful knowledge online will in fact demand technical communication skills in some form or other.

The work of transforming every printed piece of the public domain into free audio certainly involves a broad range of professional and technical communication among volunteers from around the world. An ongoing assemblage of actors has woven and continues to weave in and out of LibriVox since its beginnings. In considering these actors, their movements and practices and processes and preferences, we must take care to account for how their decisions and actions, whether unintentional or intentional, matter, and for whom. It is worth paying close attention to the obvious and the subtle communication choices being made by those who claim to be participating in this and other kinds of public digitization work. The amateur technical communicators involved in this work are making countless small, everyday decisions that affect not only the current state of LibriVox for those who participate and access their audiobook archive today, but also the future shape of that archive and what will be available for generations beyond our own.

The Material Limits of Dreams

Whether or not truly universal and universally accessible knowledge collections are possible, a multitude of versions of this “universal knowledge” dream seem to have countless proponents, each working to make at least some part of the dream a reality for at least some section(s) of humanity. Many professional and technical communication scholars, even those

sympathetic to the humanistic/philanthropic impulse behind the dream of making all knowledge equally accessible to all humans across the globe, would rightly problematize the assumptions underlying this vision. Most problematically, the dream of universally accessible knowledge also rests on a presumption that human knowledge could ever be so singular as to be summed up and stored in a static form. The understanding that knowledge is embodied and constructed, not self-evident and merely “out there,” is increasingly relevant and increasingly supported by research into human cognition (Clark, 2008; Hayles, 2012). Given the importance of situated, embodied interactions in producing and retaining knowledge, we must recognize that any knowledge collection will be necessarily limited by the physical, material contexts in which it is built and accessed.

Similarly problematic is the issue of what counts, and to whom, as “accessible knowledge.” The innovative thinkers and sponsors behind the more popular efforts at creating universal knowledge collections often seem to presume a set of material conditions where every adult in the universe has access to a computer, reliable and consistent internet connectivity, and the literacies necessary to engage effectively or productively with the formats and content and platforms and tools through which universal knowledge collections are most often made available. The inevitability of these conditions is by no means certain. If somehow they were, would it even then be possible to assume that any human, present or future, from any conceivable culture, would be equally served by such a collection? Professional and technical communication scholars are realizing that there is no “universal user” independent of a real-world context for whom we can tailor a collection of tools or information and then forever assume that all other users in every other context will be equally able to engage with it. Both knowledge and accessibility are too situated to consider in any general or isolated sense.

It can be tempting, and perhaps feel normal, to think of access in terms of a provider/consumer dichotomy, where institutions such as publishers or libraries or broadcasters offer content, and audiences consume that content from the other side of whatever medium. However, the rise and spread of social production and the opening up of publishing methods and processes to more people has meant that public access to cultural content means much more than mere consumption. Access can and does also mean participation in creation, curation, preservation, and distribution of content by crowds, outside of institutions, without sponsorship, beyond the divide of creator/consumer. In similar dichotomous arrangement, digitization projects are often focused around existing collections, archived physically somewhere already by experts and scholars. Museums digitize. Libraries digitize. Publishers with large stores of resources and trained staff digitize content, and they design particular institutionally-based systems in order to help them do so. In contrast, Project Gutenberg volunteers built a system so anyone could collaborate in digitizing a book. Wikipedia made an encyclopedia anyone could edit. And LibriVox is a place where anyone can help make an audiobook. Social, commons-based production is a mode where everyday people can work to create collections however they might want to, without a museum or a library or a scholar directing them to what's "important" or nudging them away from what's not.

Inspired by the open-source software movement and emerging forms of crowdsourced content-creation, the globally-distributed community of LibriVox has developed a flexible yet resilient system of open, collaborative publishing. In exploring and pondering the work LibriVox is able to do, I do not mean to suggest or imply that all organizations, or even all volunteer-run crowdsourcing organizations should work like LibriVox does. Understanding LibriVox in context of its various interwoven inspirations and influences allows us to consider

this project on its own terms, just as we ought to ultimately consider the work of other public knowledge projects. My purpose is to draw our attention to the fact that whatever their context or production model, all knowledge-work organizations, whether crowdsourced or volunteer-based or not, are making decisions like the small, individual decisions LibriVoxers are making. Such decisions are rhetorical and they are instructional; they have everyday implications for collections, curations, digitizations, and many other venues and methods of preserving human knowledge(s). Such small, sometimes idiosyncratic and personal decisions have subtle but sometimes lasting implications for the shape of communities and for the types of archives that grow up with and around that community.

In the following chapter, I trace and retrace some of the evolving procedures LibriVox volunteers have shared with each other as they've worked little by little toward the ambitious LibriVox mission of making the public domain available and accessible via multiple audio performances. This work is ongoing, complex, and consistently marked by instances of digitally-mediated knowledge-sharing, individual and collective decision-making, and diffuse/distributed community technology stewardship.

CHAPTER 3: EVOLUTIONS OF PROCESS, MANAGEMENT, AND INFRASTRUCTURE AT LIBRIVOX

I found those early days to be quite thrilling. It was exhilarating to be part of something so new and different and so important and so much fun. It was all very experimental. We didn't know if it would work.

(Kara Shallenberg, qtd in Gonzalez, 2012a)

But everything starts because one person thought it was a good idea.

(Samuel, 2012)

The LibriVox project has grown and evolved in surprising ways, partially in response to technological developments and partially as a result of volunteers' changing levels of engagement and literacy with regard to what LibriVox is about. In this volunteer-driven system of social production, individuals from around the world have a chance to influence the larger trajectories of the LibriVox catalog and process. As they consistently and collaboratively record hundreds of free public domain audiobooks every year, volunteers also collaboratively navigate, negotiate, and reinforce the conventions and policies involved in managing their work and their community. By tracing the evolution of LibriVox practices and processes over the history of the project, we can begin to understand the evolving workflows of this public, open digitization work and to make visible the work that has gone into establishing a functional, productive collaboration across cultures, languages, and media. Examining how volunteers have managed and negotiated procedures and policies for their ongoing collaborative work allows us to begin to see and value the intricate, unique, digitally archived experiences of these volunteer audiobook makers, while acknowledging that there are myriad ways in which volunteers' efforts can never fully be accessed or quantified.

In this chapter, I explore and interrogate how LibriVox processes have changed, along with some of the influences behind that change. Drawing from twelve years of archived LibriVox discourse and documentation, I specifically follow and interrogate digital traces of the processes by which eight audio versions of *Anne of Green Gables* have come into being, watching for moments where certain volunteers' values and preferences are encouraged or privileged, and eventually codified into LibriVox policy. I selected *Anne of Green Gables* as a useful touchstone for this exploration because all eight versions were created over a wide range of time periods (2005–2016). These also represent a range of project types (collaborative, individual, and one in the style of a dramatic performance). This particular set of projects also held interest for me given my personal involvement with the most recent collaborative version. Delving in to four particular *Anne of Green Gables* versions, I note specific changes in file storage and retrieval, recording protocol for all audio sections, and in behind-the-scenes infrastructure. Through these example cases, I observe that LibriVox's emergent, community-made procedures variously accommodate and at times resist the changing expectations of the project's volunteers and its outside audiences.

The ways LibriVox persists and evolves as volunteers with varying experience and backgrounds join and influence the project offer us interesting examples of how media practices so often grow out of past practices, leaning and building on previous technologies with affordances rooted in older contexts/situations. As Ong (1971), drawing on McLuhan, describes, “the advent of newer media alters the meaning and relevance of the older. Media overlap, or, as Marshall McLuhan has put it, move through one another as do galaxies of stars, each maintaining its own basic integrity but also bearing the marks of the encounter ever after” (p. 25). As discussed in the previous chapter, LibriVox came about during a particular time, in

response to a combination of existing media, new technological affordances, and new possibilities. The serial nature of podcasting in a sense mirrors and is reinforced by (while also reinforcing, re-inscribing) the serial and linear nature of book chapters stitched together within a codex. Without the material analog precursors of print publishing systems, libraries, and archives, in combination with willing volunteers with backgrounds and expertise in such fields, the practical and infrastructural beginnings of LibriVox may have looked very different; its catalog would not retain traces of already established library catalog categories and sub-categories, for example. The conventions for file naming and labeling works may not have been as orderly or systematized.

As LibriVox has expanded, its volunteers, as well as third parties outside of the project, have brought in additional layers of media and practice to influence how LibriVox audiobooks can be understood and appreciated. When communities and cultures take up and innovate with existing media and tools, that innovation also leaves marks on the social conventions and practices surrounding the creation, circulation, and use of such technologies. The initial idea to release each LibriVox production as part of a podcast series, as other public audiobook projects had done, was eventually overtaken and transformed by an overwhelming abundance of willing volunteers and content. Many volunteers soon realized that their audiobook productions would be better organized and made available via the medium of a searchable database. The evolutions of database technologies have continued to impose on and influence LibriVox ever since.

LibriVox and its processes can claim roots in the media and technologies that pre-date the project, including not only other digital audio content, but also much older cultural practices and forms of elocutionary performance, such as reading aloud among groups of family or friends (Williams, 2017), and “talking books” (Rubery, 2016). Some of the encounters, movements, and

moments of growth involving the advent of the audiobook as medium and technology are explored in depth in Rubery's (2016) *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*. Here Rubery asks how various overlapping audio technologies and evolving social conceptions of those technologies have influenced what "books" and "reading" mean. He revisits social debates about the possibilities and realities of audiobooks as new media, tracing back to the very first methods of recording sound, the phonograph, and on up to cassette tapes, compact discs, and digital recording and audio streaming services.

The confluences of the internet and of podcasting as a genre have added to and refracted what an audiobook can be, what audiobook production can be, and how audiobooks can be distributed. Recording technologies and early 2000s internet culture—with and its sense of endless possibility—make up the most immediate and recognizable backdrops to the LibriVox project, other pre-existing cultural and technological facets feel just as important to touch on. Without the digital precursors of internet technologies, web pages, hypertext, e-books, mp3 files, podcasting, and the many Web 2.0 structures and infrastructures (such as blogs, wikis, forums, and so on) that inspired and supported the growth of LibriVox, it could not have taken root and flourished in the ways that it did. The influences of these things, cascading through various media themselves, all leave marks on what LibriVox has grown into, and what it—along with other public knowledge collections—is still growing into.

Aside from Hugh McGuire's experimental idea and central vision, there was no plan to direct how LibriVox would grow. Those who joined needed to experiment individually and collectively to find tools and negotiate processes that what would work. LibriVox expanded relatively quickly in its first few months of existence as new members brought suggestions and ideas that would impact the project's trajectory. Many of these early volunteers have shared via

the LibriVox Community Podcast that their initial excitement was accompanied by plenty of uncertainty. No one was sure if the LibriVox system would work, if it would last very long, or if the ultimate impact of their participation would amount to anything truly useful for anyone else (Starlight & MermaidMaddie, 2006; Gonzalez, 2012a). The founder of the project, Hugh McGuire, also reflected with some amazement on LibriVox's early development in a 2007 blog post:

...as an open project, the whole thing – the system – evolved like an organism, getting more complex in response to environmental challenges. More readers, more books, more languages, more projects required a slow evolution of a management from “Hugh collects the files and then uploads” to something very different. (McGuire, 2007a)

McGuire himself had spearheaded the first handful of audiobook projects at LibriVox, but soon realized he couldn't and shouldn't run everything. This and the sheer growth of LibriVox were unexpected for McGuire and for other volunteers. In a 2012 LibriVox Community Podcast, volunteer kayray (Kara Shallenberg)—a founding member who still remains active in the project—explained some of the haphazard beginnings of LibriVox: “We made up the whole darn thing. There was no model to follow, so we were on our own. Hugh's plan was to make free, volunteer-read public domain audiobooks. All of us early volunteers joined in because we thought that sounded like a terrific idea, so there we were, we needed to invent a way to make it happen” (Gonzalez, 2012a).

Early LibriVox volunteers made the project happen together, building up somewhat haphazardly from the basic functionalities of the free blog McGuire had started and the audio recording tools available at the time. Volunteers with relevant experience

donated server space for hosting in-progress works, programming talents for managing an initially hand-coded catalog, and not least of all hours of their time to the demands of the project. Many drew on expertise from other arenas such as systems management, computer programming, or library and information science. A few of the first eager and excited LibriVoxers pushed for the project to invest in a stand-alone domain name: librivox.org. Once the project had attracted more volunteers than could be coordinated via blog posts and email, they established a set of LibriVox forums for organizing their work. Volunteers soon populated these new forums with orderly sections and helpful structure (See Appendix F). It is from these forums that I've primarily gathered data concerning the history of LibriVox and the *Anne of Green Gables* versions I take up as cases in this chapter.

Assembling and Reassembling Individual Motives

LibriVox currently hosts eight finished audiobook versions of Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*. The newest of these was produced relatively recently, during the spring and summer months of 2016. The volunteer coordinators who spearheaded this project did so not in response to any great need for another digital audio version of the book, but explicitly because such a well-loved story would be an unthreatening and fun way for newer LibriVox volunteers to learn and engage with the production processes of the LibriVox community. At the time, the coordinator of this collaborative recording project wrote: "I hope that we can revisit a number of these wonderful books so that readers who have (more) recently joined LV can share in the joy of reading them as a group" (Spiegel, 2016). Another children's classic, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, was also being re-recorded in its fourth LibriVox version at the time, and several

more experienced, longtime volunteers recognized the popularity of these works as potential gateways through which those less familiar with LibriVox might have fun learning, engaging, and becoming more familiar with the community's audiobook-making process. I had been volunteering with LibriVox for only a few months at that time, and I eagerly signed up to read a favorite section (Chapter 25: "Matthew Insists on Puffed Sleeves"). Along with me, thirteen other readers volunteered to read one or two or three chapters, and roughly four months later, the thirty-eight-chapter audiobook was complete. LibriVox's Version 8 of *Anne of Green Gables* was added to the catalog in July of 2016.

Altogether, the eight LibriVox versions of this first *Anne* story contain contributions from at least 51 individual volunteers who filled roles as readers, coordinators, and prooflisteners.¹⁷ All of whom, whether they still volunteer with the project or not, count as part of the distributed global assemblage, meshwork, and diffuse community of LibriVox. This global community of actors comprises volunteers and potential volunteers coming and going, ebbing, flooding, and trickling away again like tides washing over tidepools or crowds at busy tourist sites, leaving marks of their action and participation behind. Each has made a contribution not only to the archived audiobooks they have lent their time and voices to, but also to the relatively ad hoc organization and infrastructure of LibriVox itself. No matter how long they have or haven't been volunteering, all volunteers in some way shape the evolving conventions of LibriVox practice. It may be impossible to pinpoint all the many decisions or directions that have shaped the overarching evolution of LibriVox as a community of practice; yet single suggestions, idiosyncratic habits or preferences, and small actions all contribute to the gathering of general

17. I contacted all 51 of these volunteers as part of planning and producing LibriVox Community Podcast Episode #147. See Appendix L for a copy of the message I sent. I received responses back from 15 participants, and five ultimately submitted contributions that were included in the finished podcast episode (Chesley, 2018a).

consensus and the solidifying of certain “ways things are done.” Particular kinds of stewardship and slow, collaborative innovation along with the ongoing productive, busy, shared work of producing audiobooks all combine in fostering the growth and momentum of the LibriVox community.

Incarnations of *Anne of Green Gables* at LibriVox

While there are other popular, classic texts for which LibriVox has provided many multiple audio versions (Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* comes in 10 versions, for example; Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* boast 6 versions each), the eight versions of *Anne of Green Gables* offer a more even range and distribution of recording types (three collaboratively read, four solo versions, and one collaborative dramatic reading) from an overall broader time period (2005–2016). By reviewing a range of audio production examples that span eleven years of LibriVox history, I begin to uncover, recover, trace, and retrace what evidence is and is not left behind by volunteers as they contribute to the living archive of project documentation and public digitization work at LibriVox. Each of these fully volunteer-driven projects has left behind traces of both the individual and collective efforts involved in transforming alphabetic texts into accessible audio content. The residue of past work appears in catalog metadata, in archived project threads, in other threads scattered around the LibriVox forums, and at times within the audio recordings themselves. Some of these traces reveal a great deal, while some are much more inscrutable, raising more questions than they are able to answer.

As discussed in Chapter 1, I am engaged with the LibriVox project as a volunteer, taking on a role as participant-researcher and auto/ethnographer in addition to various volunteer roles

for particular audiobook projects. Part of my involvement has also included contributing to and hosting a handful of episodes of the LibriVox Community Podcast—a volunteer-led podcast series where enthusiastic volunteers discuss the work and play and everything in between they do as part of LibriVox. Listening to the archives of this LibriVox side project, contributing to new episodes, and volunteering to organize and produce new episodes myself has afforded me a chance to interview volunteers and give voice to the exploratory research questions and curiosities that I have about LibriVox as a whole (Kangaroo, 2016; Chesley, 2017; Samuel, 2018; Chesley, 2018a).

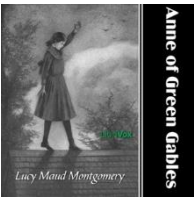
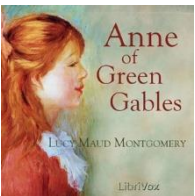
In addition to examining and engaging with these community interviews, my research has involved clearly articulating and representing the activities and actions of LibriVox volunteers as I retrace and untangle their past and present practices. Using what evidence that remains of those practices, I must “inventively reconstruct anecdotes from a variety of sources in order to provide a more co-constitutive account of humans thinking, dwelling, and building with and through their nonhuman surround” and “gather observational threads and interview snippets, then carefully weave human and nonhuman storylines back together” (Adams & Thompson, 2016, p. 29). Importantly, this postmodern methodology “means letting a thing retain its silence” even “while gently coaxing it into the light, giving it time and space to speak so that we might take notice” (Adams & Thompson, 2016, p. 18). The iterative process of coaxing LibriVox artifacts into the light has involved tracing and re-tracing my steps through the digital archives of this idiosyncratic community, cross referencing dates and events that have been partially documented across forum posts, podcast episodes, website updates and blogs, and catalog entries.

My investigation used a range of LibriVox records and documentation to trace the work each set of volunteers took on as part of their contributions to these projects, while imagining

potential traces when clues were scarce or obscured. Most evidence I have drawn on comes directly from the LibriVox Forum project threads for each version. These threads include information about how each audiobook project was set up and organized, along with the back-and-forth updates and conversations about each version's progress over time. I also reviewed each version's public catalog pages (as they appear on both librivox.org and on archive.org), and I listened to selected audio files from all eight *Anne of Green Gables* versions. I organized my observations and collected data into a set of charts similar to Table 3.1, below. The Notes column includes some detail on the unique features and contextual factors of each project.

Following a brief survey of all eight versions, I next include a more detailed review and discussion of four particular *Anne of Green Gables* versions, more closely inspecting their project threads and catalog pages and gathering insight from some of the volunteers who produced these works. With further discussion of versions 1, 4, 6 and 7, I use these cases to illustrate and unpack a few of the significant ways in which LibriVox's internal management systems have grown and solidified over time.

Table 3.1 Details from eight LibriVox versions of *Anne of Green Gables*, for comparison

Version Details	Date Begun	Total time in production ¹⁸	Run time (hh:mm:ss)	Notes
Anne of Green Gables https://librivox.org/anne-of-green-gables-by-lucy-maud-montgomery/				
 <p>2006</p>	<p>Collaborative, 12 readers</p> <p>1,647,911 Views¹⁹ 30 Favorites 1 Review</p>	<p>4 December 2005, 5:48 pm</p>	<p>114 days (~3.5 months)</p> <p>153 forum posts</p>	<p>10:30:11</p> <p>The first LibriVox ‘edition’ was completed under the direction of Betsie Bush, who (like all volunteers at the time) was brand new to the LibriVox community. Interestingly, the cover art (by volunteer Janette Brown) for this version was not created until 2011.</p> <p>This version has the most views according to Internet Archive, perhaps because it has been available the longest.</p> <p>Project thread: https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=319</p>
Anne of Green Gables (version 2) https://librivox.org/anne-of-green-gables-by-lucy-maud-montgomery-2/				
 <p>2006</p>	<p>Solo by rachelellen</p> <p>391,259 Views 13 Favorites 5 Reviews</p>	<p>10 October 2006, 2:52 am</p>	<p>70 days (~2.5 months)</p> <p>140 forum posts</p>	<p>9:34:43</p> <p>Rachelellen began this project with some worry that she was unnecessarily duplicating the concurrently in-progress solo that would become Version 4. However, she was encouraged by the community to continue anyway, in line with the LibriVox principle that readers should what they love.</p> <p>Project thread: https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=3810</p>

18. Time in production calculated using <https://www.timeanddate.com/date/duration.html>

19. These totals are taken from the LibriVox catalog as hosted at archive.org and are current as of 10 March, 2018. They do not include a count of any downloads or streams of LibriVox content via any third-party apps, torrents, or other mirrors or interfaces. The Internet Archive algorithms consider a “view” to be any interaction with any form of content in their collection; thus one view could reflect someone’s streaming a brief clip of a short story, or someone downloading an entire .zip file of a 31-hours-and-44-minutes-long recording of Ulysses. The most recent Internet Archive statistics appear to include views from May 2008 to the present.

Table 3.1 continued

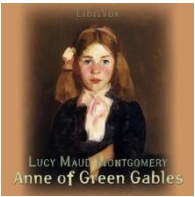
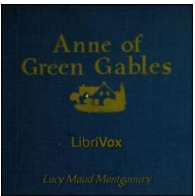
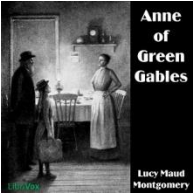
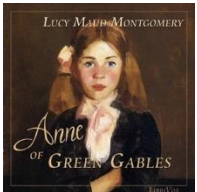
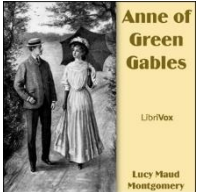
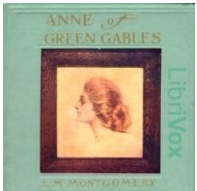
Anne of Green Gables (version 3) https://librivox.org/anne-of-green-gables-by-lucy-maud-montgomery-3/					
 2007	Solo by gypsygirl (Karen Savage) 1,629,084 Views 35 Favorites 5 Reviews	2 June 2007, 7:48 am	10 days 62 forum posts	8:37:32	Very little discussion attended this version. Of the eight, it boasts both the shortest production time in the LibriVox forums and the shortest total running time. The soloist, Karen Savage, also recorded several other Anne books in the series, all of which seem quite popular. Project thread: https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=8890
Anne of Green Gables (version 4) https://librivox.org/anne-of-green-gables-by-lucy-maud-montgomery-4/					
 2008	Solo by LibraryLady (Annie Coleman Rothenberg) 115,344 Views 4 Favorites	3 August 2006, 1:34 am	754 days (2+ years) 22 forum posts	10:52:22	Though this solo was started second, Versions 2 and 3 were completed sooner. Sounds of LibraryLady's material context as a reader, such as pages turning, are present in this recording. Various wordings also evidence evolving LibriVox policies regarding the introductory disclaimer. Cover art for this edition was also created by volunteer Janette Brown, in 2012. Project thread: https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=3083
Anne of Green Gables (version 5) https://librivox.org/anne-of-green-gables-version-5-by-lucy-maud-montgomery/					
 2009	Collaborative, 11 readers 50,978 Views 1 Favorite	10 November 2009, 5:12 pm	14 days (2 weeks) 75 forum posts	9:31:36	This version was created as a special Christmas project, and so required a much quicker turnaround. Regular LibriVox guidelines for timing and flexibility were superseded by the coordinator's requirements. Project thread: https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=22359

Table 3.1 continued

Anne of Green Gables (version 6) Originally: https://librivox.org/anne-of-green-gables-by-lucy-maud-montgomery-5/ Later updated: https://librivox.org/anne-of-green-gables-version-6-by-lucy-maud-montgomery/					
 2013	Solo by Woolly Bee (Sarah Parshall) 161,219 Views	10 January 2013, 8:14 pm	202 days (~6 months) 191 forum posts	11:06:45	Initially, this project was (most likely mistakenly) cataloged as Version 5. A significant database overhaul took place around the time it was finished in late summer 2013, and apparently that shift affected the project's metadata and final URL. Project thread: https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=43837
Anne of Green Gables (version 7) (dramatic reading) https://librivox.org/anne-of-green-gables-dramatic-reading-by-lucy-maud-montgomery/					
 2010	Dramatic, 20 readers 530,383 Views 6 Favorites	8 December 2010, 4:48 pm	55 days (~2.5 months) 244 forum posts	9:39:29	The major roles for this dramatic reading were pre-cast by the coordinator—that is, she invited particular volunteers to take on those parts before opening the project to the community as a whole (Lipshaw, 2010; Chesley, 2018). This practice has been discussed within LibriVox Community Podcast episodes as somewhat controversial (Algy Pug, 2012). Version 7 may not have originally been labelled with a version number; none is included in its URL, and the mismatched cataloging with 2013's version 6 suggests that the "(version 7)" may have been added during later updates. Project thread: https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=30001
Anne of Green Gables (Version 8) https://librivox.org/anne-of-green-gables-8-by-lucy-maud-montgomery/					
 2016	Collaborative, 14 readers 5,658 Views 1 Favorite	23 March 2016, 1:03 pm	118 days (~4 months) 196 forum posts	10:20:51	This recording was specifically undertaken as a way of familiarizing new volunteers with the ins and outs of LibriVox. Project thread: https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=60342

Taking these audio editions together, I note the range of production patterns and practices they demonstrate and some of the historical circumstances within which those practices have been grounded. It is women who have primarily volunteered to create audio versions of this text.²⁰ Some ambitiously take on the work of recording the full text themselves, while others choose smaller reading assignments for themselves. Some volunteers seem to have the time and energy to quickly complete the work of recording and editing their sections and/or projects, while others take their time over months and years. Additions of cover art and metadata sometimes take place long after recordings are added to the catalog. Though these and other small details may not matter to most listeners, the ongoing processes of digital archiving embedded within LibriVox can potentially track many of them anyway. This makes it possible for future volunteers, listeners, scholars (like myself), or anyone else with an interest in doing so, to at least partially re-trace such details as part of understanding the digital and textual histories of the content LibriVox is working to preserve and distribute.

The textual provenance of most LibriVox audiobooks seems fairly straightforward. All eight versions of *Anne of Green Gables* appear from their catalog pages to have been recorded from the same public domain source text at Project Gutenberg—digitized for inclusion there by David Widger and Charles Keller and released on the site in 1992 (Montgomery, 1992). However, the reader for Version 4 seems to have read directly from a printed and bound copy. The inclusion of a unique dedication prior to the first chapter’s text and the sounds of pages turning have left audible traces in her recordings, though no other concrete clues are present as to

20. Given the story’s main character, its appeal to women readers may be unsurprising. In any case, my experience with LibriVox has shown that more women than men make up the active volunteer community there, generally. When dramatic readings are being set up, coordinators almost always specify “gender neutral casting”—in part to allow women the chance to read even when female characters are few, and in part to avoid the difficulty of finding sufficient male voices to fill the project.

which print edition she must have held in her hands as she read. In her case, the catalog's link to Project Gutenberg's e-text could be a convenient shorthand, seeming to overwrite the true provenance of her performance.²¹ This instance in which the situated and embodied practice of an individual LibriVox volunteer is hidden behind a screen of metadata and project management convention, is one among many.

Highlighting Paths and Points of Evolution

Large and small changes in the workplace practices of LibriVox mark and are marked by volunteers' individual and collective actions. A closer review and analysis of four of these *Anne of Green Gables* projects shows how this diverse community of volunteers has gradually established their own principles, standards, and procedures over time, sometimes in clear cooperation with others, and sometimes working more or less on their own. Gradual and sudden changes in the social and technological infrastructure of LibriVox have left traces across many of the artifacts associated with these four versions. Details from the project threads of these four particular versions highlight particular shifts, additions, or other developments in LibriVox's tentative, collaboratively-generated infrastructure, procedures, and policies:

- The very first version (2005–2006) includes in its project forum thread several traces of the original, transient, decentralized nature of LibriVox's infrastructure, such as broken

21. Only later in LibriVox's history were readers regularly given instruction by project coordinators to read from a specific digital text and only that text. Reading from print editions seems relatively rare at LibriVox given the convenience and availability of digital editions. However, some readers print from digital copies in order to have paper pages to read from, and some (in cases of difficult-to-find or not-yet-digitized texts) may make use of library or personal print editions. Although most readers follow the guideline to read only from the text specified by each project's coordinator, it would still be difficult to know for certain which text (or in which format, browser, or on which type of screen, etc.) an individual reader read from.

links to temporary file storage sites or donated server space where works-in-project were often hosted.

- Throughout the two-year period (2006–2008) during which LibraryLady (Annie Coleman Rothenberg) worked on Version 4 of *Anne of Green Gables*, her solo project was influenced by changes in the policies and procedures of the still-evolving LibriVox community—most notably a revised sequence for including the introductory LibriVox disclaimer and the introduction of prooflistening. Though relatively small, such changes are manifestations of the collective thought and consideration happening regularly within LibriVox.
- A multitude of voices and volunteers came together for the most labor-intensive version of the text—the dramatic reading version, completed in 2011. The individuals and voices present and not present in the project thread compared to those present (and not present) in the finished catalog entry for this version illustrate nuances within the LibriVox principles of community, openness, patience, and flexibility.
- *Anne of Green Gables* Version 6, originally mis-cataloged as Version 5, and more accurately the 7th LibriVox version, was actually completed three years after what is currently labeled in the catalog as Version 7 (the dramatic reading). These quirks and inconsistencies in metadata and content management highlight deep complexities within the catalog’s database infrastructure and its management/re-management over time.

LibriVox volunteers navigate the material, technological, and social milieus in which their audio recording and editing work takes place in flexible, sometimes idiosyncratic ways. Attending to the ways in which this collaboration happens, moment by moment, yields insight into how

volunteers' efforts both influence and are influenced by the infrastructures and policies of a living, evolving digital project of this kind.

2005–2006: Scattered Seeds of Digital Infrastructure

The enthusiastic coordinator who opened the very first collaborative *Anne of Green Gables* project for LibriVox, known as thistlechick on the forums, had been a member for only a week when, in December of 2005, she began inviting contributions to this collaborative reading. thistlechick (Betsie Bush), she had joined LibriVox with some previous experience and interest in podcasting literature. According to her section of the first anniversary podcast, thistlechick had been researching podcasting for a library school project, considering how podcasting might matter to libraries (MermaidMaddie & Starlight, 2006). Her library background would later prove significant for LibriVox, as the community transitioned from simply blogging each new audiobook release to using a more organized, searchable catalog database. While the *Anne of Green Gables* project was in progress, thistlechick hosted the finished chapters in unofficial “preview” form on a section of her personal website (Figure 3.1)

Willingness to share or donate personal resources (such as time, skills, or server space) and the technical savvy to do so were important factors in helping LibriVox grow and settle into the robust volunteer space it has become. Several early LibriVox coordinators, like thistlechick, donated their own server space as temporary storage for any projects-in-process, and others used third-party file transfer sites such as *yousendit.com* or *megaupload.com*. Hyperlinks to these

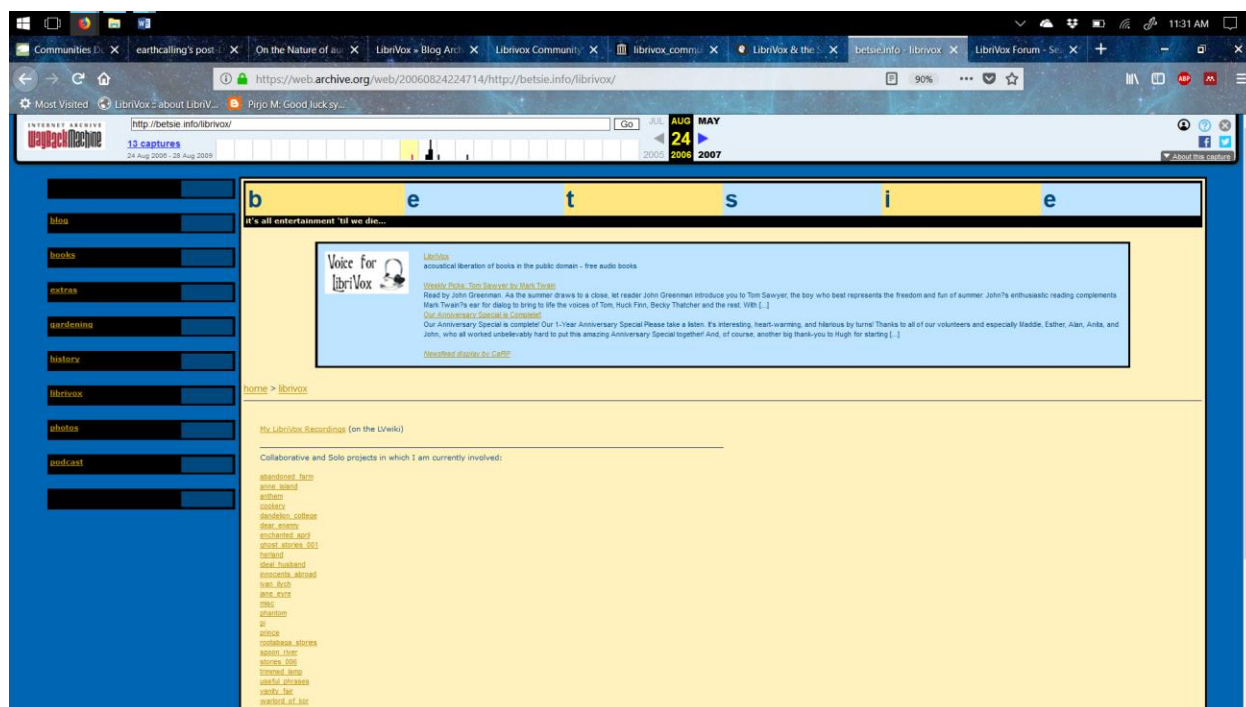


Figure 3.1 An archived version of thistlechick's (Betsy Bush's) personal website at <http://betsie.info/librivox/>. In-progress LibriVox audio files were temporarily hosted here in the early days of LibriVox. The site is no longer active; this page was archived by The Wayback Machine in August 2006.

temporary sites of storage are still present, but in most cases broken, within many early LibriVox project threads, including the first *Anne of Green Gables* project.

The practice of relying on outside temporary file storage, whether from third-party sites or from generous volunteers with their own server space, continued for several months. It wasn't until nearly two years later that LibriVox could claim its own (also generously donated) central server space. A single, central space for handling project files was an exciting prospect for volunteers. For LibriVox's second birthday in August 2007, a brand new LibriVox uploading tool was released. The code and server space for this tool were also donated to the project, and this hosting space was also meant to be temporary. While files added via the uploader would remain hosted there for as long as a project remained actively in progress, the finished, cataloged audiobook files would be transferred to a more permanent home at archive.org.

The temporary nature of works-in-progress at LibriVox has persisted through to today (Figure 3.2). Because the central LibriVox file storage space is limited, files hosted there are continually overwritten with new test recordings and new works-in-progress as previous works are finished and moved to their final catalog spaces. The forum threads of all completed projects at LibriVox leave behind regular patterns marking the ad hoc transience built in to the process. The hyperlink evidence of these in-between phases of project work is not meant to remain functional, but still it points to past infrastructure (or lack thereof) and gradual infrastructural development over time.

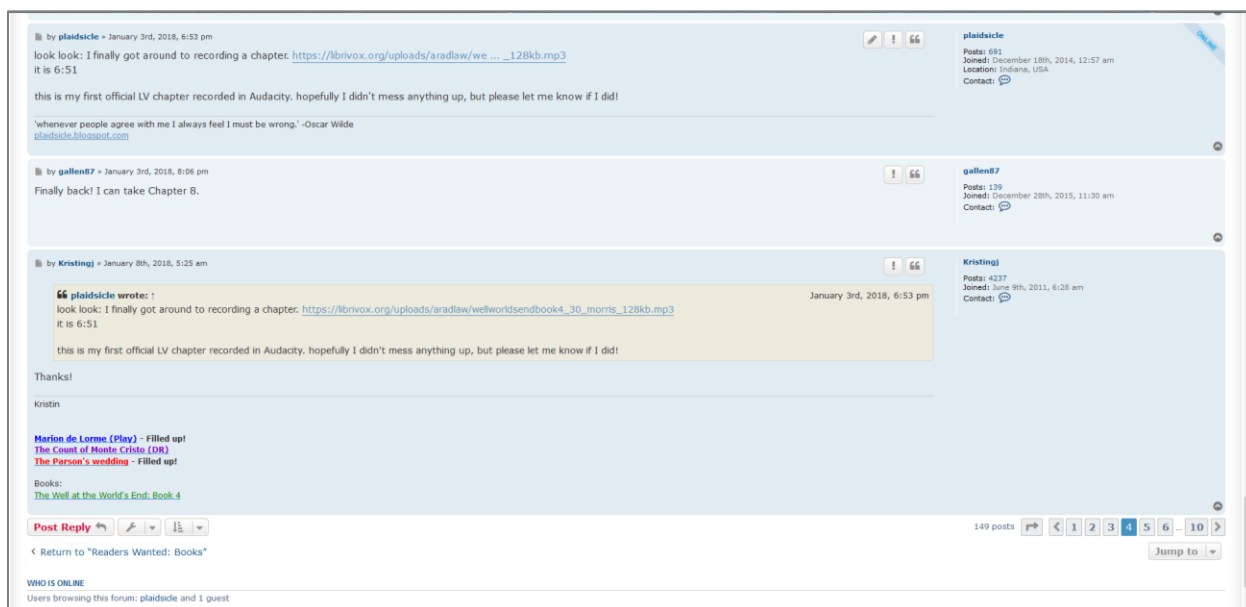


Figure 3.2 Screenshot example of temporary links to audio files for works in progress, posted in the forums for prooflisteners' and coordinators' convenience. (<https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?p=1426236#p1426236>)

Though no longer meaningful as paths to the works-in-progress they once were, these broken links leave traces that evidence volunteers' generosity, savvy, and resourcefulness in the early days of LibriVox. As is true of many, if not all, forms of volunteer work, individuals and groups who are sufficiently resource-rich, whether in terms of material/financial resources, education and expertise, or free time, are most likely to engage and to benefit from donating their

labor or resources (Musick & Williams, 2008). While this research has not specifically delved into individual volunteers' motives and backgrounds, I know from my own experience participating at LibriVox that the process requires a significant amount of time. In order to read for LibriVox, volunteers must have

- a reliable internet connection,
- access to a computer, microphone, and headphones
- sufficient literacies to navigate the forums and other spaces of LibriVox, to locate digital texts to record, and to use and troubleshoot the software involved.

Another prerequisite for volunteering that I did not consider until after volunteering myself was the value and privilege of quiet and solitary spaces. Being able to reliably find a consistently quiet, calm space in which to make clear audio recordings may not be readily available for everyone who wishes to offer a recording to the LibriVox project. The material circumstances of who can afford to volunteer make a difference in what will be recorded and what might not be. The privileges listed above, and other privileges involved in volunteering are often overlooked or unconsidered. However, it is important to notice that many of the material circumstances that allow volunteers to perform the volunteer work they do are not universal. Acknowledging this will make it easier for us to recognize and credit these prerequisites for the roles they play in shaping communities of public knowledge work, in determining who participates and who does not.

While the basic prerequisite privileges listed above will likely remain in place for most current and future LibriVoxers, in some ways the community has grown and shaped itself to be more accessible to volunteers. The technical skills and digital literacy involved in building uploader tools, hosting and managing forums, designing websites, or constructing a database and

catalog—skills that so many of the earliest LibriVox volunteers brought to the project in its early months—are no longer in as high demand as they once were. The LibriVox project and system has become more established and developed more standardized, centralized procedures, and thus has become increasingly inviting to those who may lack the same levels of technical expertise that early volunteers were quite likely to need.

As the first *Anne* project was being finished, LibriVox volunteers began discussing the pros and cons of enforcing a “prooflistening” process for all LibriVox submissions. After much debate about whether the practice’s potential for inviting criticism would prove too discouraging to future volunteers, a prooflistening phase was introduced in January 2006, and gradually became a requirement for all projects. Prooflisteners were instructed to only evaluate recordings as objectively as possible, noting only whether the volume was within a comfortable range, and pointing out any glaring mistakes or truly distracting background noises (Gesine, 2009).²² LibriVox has always insisted that prooflisteners should never critique reading style, pacing, pronunciation, or any other subjective quality. This remains the case. However, in my 2018 LibriVox Community Podcast episode, volunteer TriciaG reflected on her sense that listeners have grown more sensitive as time and technology have progressed:

I think listeners [...] are much more picky now than they used to be. Things almost need to be word perfect now, when before, the PLs²³ didn't read along with the text at all when

22. Today, two distinct “levels” of prooflistening have been established. Unless volunteers specify a stricter level of prooflistening, prooflisteners only need to listen for glaring mistakes or truly distracting background noises when checking recordings. If “word perfect” prooflistening is requested, prooflisteners will check the recording against the text to make sure even minor mis-readings can be caught and fixed.

23. “PL” is common LibriVox shorthand for “prooflistening”—listening to check for obvious errors in an audio recording. A PL is any individual prooflistener, and PLing is the act of prooflistening generally; a DPL is a “dedicated prooflistener” who signs up to PL all sections in a book project.

listening [...]. Microphones and software have gotten much better over time, so now a low-toned hum or static in the recording isn't tolerated as much as it used to be. Which way is better? I am undecided. I'm glad technology has gotten better, but I hope all our instructions to newbies to make their recordings better don't overwhelm them right at first and send them for the exit door. (as incl. in Chesley, 2018)

The dilemma Tricia notices between maintaining an open, welcoming process and producing the highest quality recordings is one LibriVox volunteers, particularly coordinators and administrators, are continually asked to keep in mind. Both written and unwritten community guidelines and conventions have developed around the ways volunteer prooflisteners are expected to communicate feedback to readers. From my own earliest prooflistening experiences, I know that it takes a degree of trial and error, plus feedback and patience and straightforward advice from more experienced volunteers/coordinators, to learn how to prooflisten carefully and consistently yet generously.

2006–2008: Negotiating and Enacting LibriVox Policies

By the time the next recording of *Anne* was begun by volunteer Annie Coleman Rothenberg, prooflistening had become standard for all LibriVox works, but this new requirement was not the only instance of LibriVox policy changing in response to volunteers' discussion and debate. During the two years Annie Coleman Rothenberg spent gradually recording what would become Version 4 of *Anne of Green Gables*, another small but significant change was successfully argued for and implemented—one that would subtly mark several chapters of her solo rendition of the text for LibriVox.

As a crucial signal of their public domain status and their origin from within the LibriVox project, all LibriVox recordings begin with the following introductory disclaimer and invitation to listeners:

*This is a LibriVox recording. All LibriVox recordings are in the public domain. For more information or to volunteer, please visit librivox.org.*²⁴

In the beginning, this set of LibriVox introductory phrases was nothing more than a signal to listeners that LibriVox existed, retained no copyright in its audio files, occupied a findable space on the internet, and was open to additional willing volunteers. Over the first few months of LibriVox's existence, it shifted and morphed in small ways, just as the LibriVox project was shifting and settling into what it wanted to be. By October 2005, the disclaimer had mostly solidified into its current state, taking on specific legal and social importance for the project and trading the original *librivox.blogspot.com* URL for the more permanent and official-sounding *librivox.org*. Since then, the official disclaimer stayed more or less the same in wording and in length. Occasional debates concerning this introductory audio element did pop up throughout 2005 and 2006; various volunteers had questions and ideas of their own about its precise wording, about its relative length, and about its specific placement within each recorded text.²⁵ Most of these had little influence on the precedent LibriVox volunteers had already set.

For the first year or so of LibriVox production, volunteer readers would pronounce the standard disclaimer, and then go on to specify the title, author, and chapter details of the section

24. The earliest LibriVox volunteers mainly followed McGuire's lead on pronouncing some form of this disclaimer before any recording. The first published LibriVox audiobook, Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* featured at least three variations. From the beginnings of the project, volunteers seem to have worked from an at least vaguely shared understanding of the purpose of such a disclaimer, though some took more liberties than others with it. As LibriVox's community of practice developed and made records of volunteers' practices, the wording of the disclaimer solidified into the basic form displayed here.

25. A shorter form of the disclaimer for poetry has been used, first suggested in November 2005 by kayray (Kara Shallenburg) for a group recording of one very short R. L. Stevenson poem. The shortened disclaimer was put into practice for many weekly poetry projects, and eventually became standard for all poetry collections.

to follow. And so it continued for the majority of projects until December 2006—roughly four months after LibraryLady began her version of *Anne of Green Gables*—when another volunteer, DSayers (Denny Sayers), related the following in a new thread in the “Suggestions, Comments, News, & Discussion” forum at LibriVox:

As I'm listening to my iPod Shuffle (admittedly, with no screen) with shuffling switched off, it [*sic*] takes a full 30 seconds to find out what track I am on.

It would be helpful if we could say right away, “Chapter 30 of Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*. This is a LibriVox recording, etc., etc. ...”

That way those without screens (and there are many at the screenless Shuffle level, especially in schools and school libraries) can quickly know where they are. (Sayers, 2006)

This comment reflects the material and technological detail of this volunteer's situation, accessing LibriVox audiobooks on an mp3 player without a display screen. Screenless listening devices seem much less popular and less common now, given the ubiquity of smartphones that double as music players, but many users might still rely on screenless players to listen. Many may also listen while engaged in tasks that prevent useful, convenient engagement with a display, such as driving, washing dishes, and so on. For the sake of listeners without immediate visual access to the list of chapters or sections on a display screen, LibriVox volunteers, prompted by one volunteer sharing their experience, agreed to modify the order of chapter/section numbers and the introductory disclaimer. Audio files for new projects would no longer begin directly with “This is a LibriVox recording...” but would instead first mark the section number or chapter number of the text being recorded to that file. Volunteer coordinators and admins adopted this policy change gradually over the next months, modifying instructional

documentation and project template forms along the way to make the new process clear to the community at large.

The evolution of this particular piece of LibriVox policy is only visible in bits and traces. Discussions on the topic took place across somewhat ephemeral media (email, blog posts and comments, forum threads),²⁶ where much of the contextualized evidence of the decision is archived. One other barely-noticeable trace of the change in disclaimer placement exists in the first few seconds of the finished audio files of LibraryLady's *Anne of Green Gables*. The first 22 chapters, recorded between August 2006 and March 2007, begin with "This is a LibriVox recording...", according to the LibriVox convention of those early years. The very next chapter gives listeners the updated, more immediately informative introduction, with "Chapter 23 of *Anne of Green Gables*" first, and "This is a LibriVox recording..." second. The remaining fifteen chapters of the book all follow this new pattern. The audible evidence of this collaborative decision about recording protocol—a decision that percolated gradually throughout LibriVox projects until it became standard—manifests only as a sudden, easily-missed change between adjacent chapters of the novel. It may have been missed by Rothenberg herself, merely an unconscious switch borne out of a growing habit. In response to one volunteer sharing their particular listening experience, the LibriVox community accepted and shared the discursive labor of negotiating this change, of shifting their established recording habits, and of updating documentation across the LibriVox community to match.

²⁶ In fact, volunteer mshook (Michael Shook) posted with a suggestion very similar to DSayers' in January 2006. Only a handful of other volunteers replied to the post, with some confusion about whether the file-naming conventions or recorded disclaimer was under discussion. The suggestion seemed to be dismissed, and no action was taken to change existing LibriVox convention at the time (Shook, 2006).

2010–2011: Adapting *Anne of Green Gables*

The planning, preparation, recording, and editing of a dramatic reading entails extensive work. For the dramatic reading version of *Anne of Green Gables*, coordinator wildemoose (Arielle Lipshaw) estimated it might take a full year to complete the project. The reading required volunteers for twenty-four speaking roles, including Anne herself as narrator. As it happened, more than twenty-four volunteer readers were invited to participate and professed interest in joining this project, but not all of them are ultimately credited in the catalog as collaborators. Only twenty individual volunteers are listed in the “dramatis personae” metadata and audio-preface accompanying the audiobook proper, though at least twenty-seven expressed written intentions to join in the work. The flexible workflow and contingent collaboration style of LibriVox overall allow for partial and unfinished contributions at any point in the production process, leaving spaces through which volunteers might drop away from the project when their circumstances change.

At various points during the production of this adaptation, seven particular volunteers, all but one apparently brand-new members of the forum who had never posted before, arrived in the project thread to claim roles. All seven of these, for reasons that now remain invisible and unknown, later disappeared completely from the project, leaving their lines unfinished. One of these seven, a volunteer with forum username AmateurOzmologist, did submit two chapters’ worth of Mrs. Rachel Lynde’s lines but disappeared from the thread with no public explanation before the project’s end. AmateurOzmologist’s work with this text and project, because it was incomplete, is entirely unacknowledged and absent in the finished audiobook. The files she submitted are no longer stored with LibriVox, and other than the evidence of her posts within the

old, now completed and inactive project thread, all traces of her intended contribution have been erased.

Similar unexplained disappearances happened in the cases of the other six volunteers, too, for the most part much more suddenly. When sections or roles are claimed but not completed in a timely manner,²⁷ the convention at LibriVox is to “orphan” those sections and open them up for other volunteers to claim and take over. Over the course of this dramatic reading of *Anne*, not only Rachel Lynde’s lines, but also those of characters Diana Barry, Jimmy Glover, Carrie Sloane, Moody Spurgeon MacPherson, and Mrs. Blewett were orphaned at least once each. In most cases, it didn’t take long for more experienced readers to record (or re-record) the orphaned sections and help complete the project.

Orphaned sections are a common occurrence at LibriVox. The project threads of all the collaborative versions of *Anne* (1, 5, 7, and 8) show evidence of at least one or two abandoned sections, where original claimants’ intended or partial contributions were either never received or ultimately overwritten by those from other, more available volunteers. As a crowdsourcing volunteer project, LibriVox requires no previous experience and no lasting commitment. To tolerate so readily the apparent “failure” of seemingly earnest volunteers may seem something of a burden to the volunteers at LibriVox who do complete their work. However, examples such as these where work is claimed, or even begun, but ultimately not finished are evidence of the ideals on which LibriVox was established. Three of the five fundamental principles of LibriVox

²⁷ As of Spring 2018, the time allotted for volunteers to finish and post their recordings is usually two months, but this could change based on coordinators’ specifications.

relate very closely to this double-edged flexibility:

- Librivox is powered by volunteers
- Librivox maintains a loose and open structure
- Librivox welcomes all volunteers from across the globe, in all languages

Tied up in this loose, open, volunteer-only structure is the clear possibility (and risk) that volunteers will disappear as quickly and easily as they arrive at LibriVox. This risk, of course, is an unavoidable facet of LibriVox's great potential to attract new floods of volunteers. The project's open flexibility has been rewarded thus far with an impressive quantity of donated recording hours. This openness makes the project's overall potential output theoretically infinite, although its quantifiable productive output currently (as of 2017–2018) adds up to a usual average of close to 100 projects per month. LibriVox has room for the dozens of recording attempts with flaws that are never corrected, and for the invisible, impossible-to-count, yet-to-be-donated contributions from would-be members of the project. Perhaps if they are too busy this time, they will eventually come back to volunteer next year, or the year after that. The volunteers who come to a project and drift away from it, whose un/recorded voices or other prospective efforts may not ultimately make it in to the final catalog still matter as part of the underlying foundation that make the measurable output of the LibriVox project possible. By inviting everyone to give what time and attention they can and allowing them also to fade away if they can no longer give, LibriVox fosters an ethos of individual autonomy and a sense of generosity and patience with regard to other volunteers' time and abilities.

2013: A Time-Traveling Anne and the Impact of Major Catalog Upgrades

WoollyBee's (Sarah Parshall's) solo version of *Anne of Green Gables* was begun in

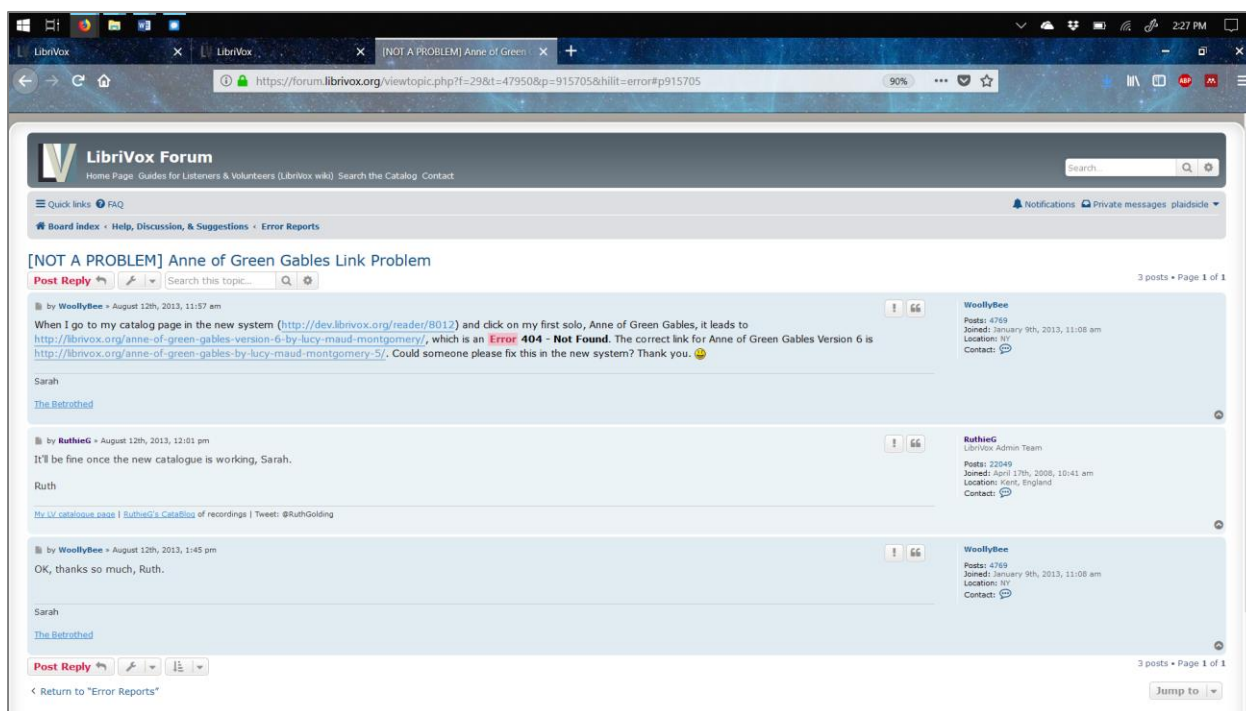


Figure 3.3 Screenshot of WoollyBee's (Sarah Parshall's) post concerning an apparent mistake in the cataloging of her 2013 solo *Anne of Green Gables* project. Initially, coordinators cataloged the project at <https://librivox.org/anne-of-green-gables-by-lucy-maud-montgomery-5/> (See Figure 3.4). This version's current, correct URL is <https://librivox.org/anne-of-green-gables-version-6-by-lucy-maud-montgomery/>.

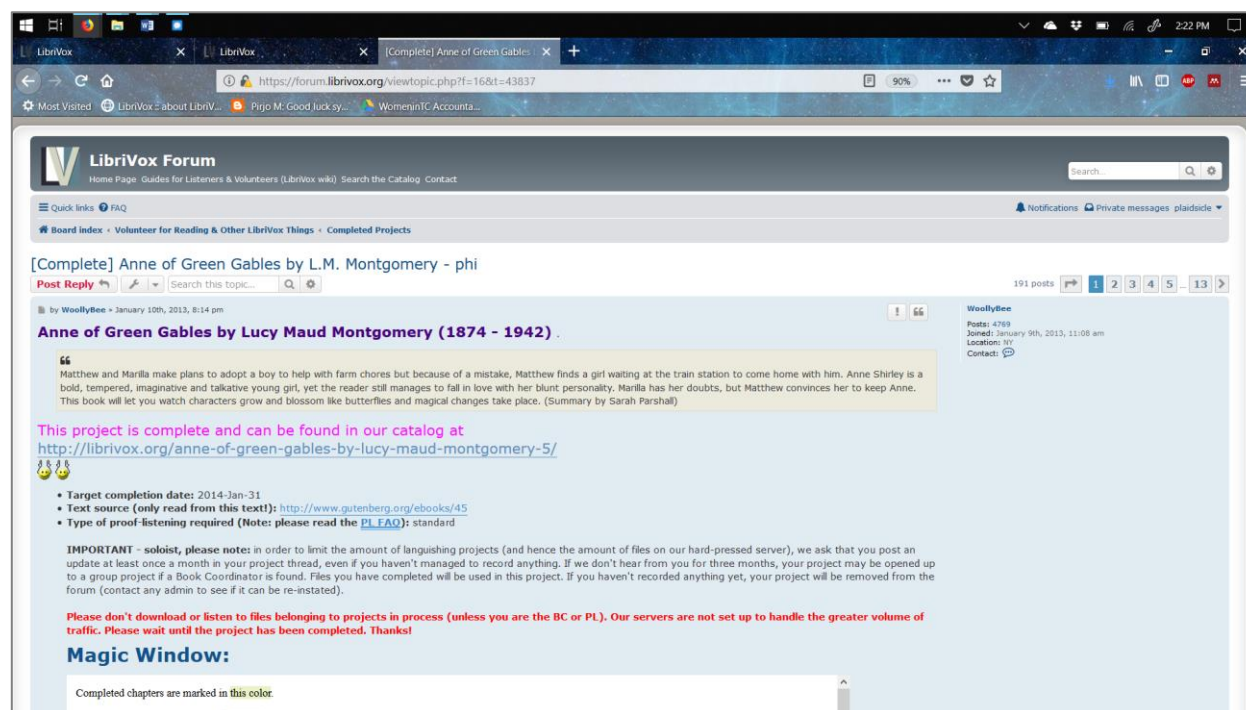


Figure 3.4 Screenshot from the archived forum project thread of Woolly Bee's 2013 *Anne of Green Gables*. The coordinator, philchenevert (Phil Chenevert) edited the first post to include a (now broken) link to the cataloged project.

January of 2013 and cataloged in July of 2013, placing it squarely between Version 7 (the dramatic reading completed in 2010, discussed above) and Version 8 (the most recent collaborative reading, completed in 2016) in terms of chronology. The reasons for the confusing and oddly anachronistic tagging of both the solo recording and the dramatic reading are only partially made clear in the LibriVox records I have investigated. Very likely, the aberration was an indirect result of a major catalog update that took place during the summer of 2013. During the transition from old system to new in the first half of August 2013, handfuls of error reports cropped up intermittently in the LibriVox forums, including one from WoollyBee herself. She posted concerning an apparent error with her finished *Anne of Green Gables* solo (Figure 3.2). Hers and most other reports during this period contain confident responses from administrators that the issues would be fixed as the new catalog replaced the old. While no projects appear to have been lost in the switch, at least a few discrepancies in metadata may still persist throughout LibriVox catalog records. It remains unclear how the update could have also affected the previous cataloging of the 2010 dramatic reading of the text.

When WoollyBee first began recording what later came to be labeled as Version 6, she was new to LibriVox and especially enthusiastic about recording a beloved children's classic with which she identified so strongly. As of spring 2018, she has sixty-seven projects to her name, with a total of 261 sections recorded. Reflecting in LibriVox Community Podcast Episode #147 on this, her very first project, WoollyBee cites it (technically correctly) as the "seventh version" of *Anne of Green Gables*. Her favorite memory of working on this project is of "racing" a fellow narrator to see who would finish her solo first. She recalls the catalog updates of 2013 positively:

The most notable physical change that I've seen happen to LV during the time I have been volunteering here is definitely the huge update that happened maybe 3, 4 years ago. Once everything was updated there was definitely a huge learning curve, but I like our new system so much more. It's so much easier to be a book coordinator now... it's just a much better system all around. (as included. in Chesley, 2018a)

Like WoollyBee, many other veteran volunteers look back on the changes LibriVox has been through with gratitude and a sense that such developments equate to progress and positive growth for the community. At several points over the course of LibriVox's history, volunteers have looked back in wonder at the exciting amount of work they have accomplished together and how surprisingly well LibriVox facilitates that work. Founding members of the LibriVox project often reminisce about the earliest "wild west days" of collaborating as a small band of passionate volunteers, of patching their audiobook work together via email and one simple blog (Gonzalez, 2012a). The sense of nostalgia expressed by so many longstanding volunteers for LibriVox's early workflow and tedious-but-simple cataloging process is a testament to the fact that change, however positive in the long-term, always involves a degree of loss. As LibriVox has grown, the tight-knit social dimension that was enjoyed by the first hundred or so active volunteers who worked together from 2005 to 2006 to build the project has been unavoidably diluted. Digital collaboration among several dozen volunteers at a time is vastly different from the kind of collaboration that can happen among more than several hundred. Growth in any direction involves an inevitable shifting of community practices over time, accompanied by both benefits and costs. Sometimes, whether via conscious efforts to adjust processes or via more passive

interactions with other types of change, we may erode, erase, and transform past technologies, social structures, legacies, traditions, and values.

Through this seventh version of *Anne of Green Gables*, and through many other LibriVox recording projects, community relationships are made variously visible—seeming at times tenuous and at other times deeply rooted. Volunteering with LibriVox requires and allows moments of connection, disconnection, and a flexibility in navigating between the two. That flexibility may mean dealing patiently with orphans and uncertain newbies, or it may mean making time for intense but friendly competition among a cohort of like-minded volunteers. Such connections at LibriVox can be as meaningful as any relationship among passionate collaborators but are also often tentative. In many ways the diffuse, participant-led design of the LibriVox community especially allows for these pseudo-professional interpersonal connections to be tentative, breakable, easily lost track of. These realities are part of the inviting, practical modularity of LibriVox as an open, crowdsourcing project.

Redefining Workflows, Redefining Community

Audio recording practices and community management practices at LibriVox have grown out of past practices, which at times are linked to small, ad hoc, idiosyncratic, or makeshift decisions influenced by the material circumstances, constraints, and affordances of the project's context overall and volunteers' contexts individually. As individuals learn and build themselves into the LibriVox project, the project expands and grows too, both single members and community accommodating each other. In some cases, as we saw with the discussion about re-ordering the LibriVox disclaimer, a single person's observation about the potential needs of a group can eventually scaffold a whole new set of protocols. Even if only one volunteer notices

and cares that something is done to serve a subset of the community in a new or different way, their influence can spread. In a 2012 forum discussion, volunteer Cori observed that “everything starts because one person thought it was a good idea. LibriVox itself, and all the processes and tasks within it” (Samuel, 2012). Hugh McGuire initially hoped and trusted that strangers around the world might want to use the internet to help each other make free audiobooks, for fun. And they did. Along the way, other small, seemingly idiosyncratic ideas and hopes and experiments have been proposed that continue to shape the LibriVox project and its future.

As Wegner, White, and Smith (2009) note, “Unlike the trajectory of a team that’s planned from the start, communities unfold over time without a predefined ending point. Communities often start tentatively, with only an initial sense of why they should come together and with modest technology resources” (loc 540). This was undeniably true of the LibriVox community, whose beginnings were equal parts bold and tentative. The time and effort donated to LibriVox by everyone involved, whether regularly or sporadically or somewhere in between, not only supports and maintains the project’s infrastructure, but becomes part of that infrastructure itself, reinforcing the initially uncertain or unexpected purposes that have brought and continue to bring volunteers together.

As these volunteers and the technologies they use move in and out of the LibriVox meshwork, the infrastructure they use will also continue to evolve. In discussing the tentative beginnings of so many communities of practice, Wenger, White, and Smith (2009) observe that once established, “Then they continuously reinvent themselves. Their understanding of their domain expands. New members join, others leave. Their practice evolves” (loc 540). Stewardship of all parts of the community is necessary for keeping it alive. Constant technical and infrastructural change and the agility to navigate such change are common realities and clear

requirements for public knowledge work in the 21st century. The processes of LibriVox have required a careful, continually re-calibrated balance of values. The priorities of maintaining an open, inviting community while also aiming for clear, accessible, and consistently high-quality recordings from all volunteers can occasionally seem at odds. Negotiating and accommodating both values is something each individual volunteer must find her own ways to do. Each will confront and negotiate her own sense of balance within that tension, and along the way, subtly reinforce or undermine the current (and always subject to change) status quo within the wider project.

LibriVox workflows, to repeat Wenger, White, and Smith's words, have unfolded over time across multiple online and offline spaces. From its humble, ad hoc beginnings, LibriVox volunteers have developed their processes democratically and pragmatically, using what resources, systems, and tools that were accessible and available at the time. Many volunteers use the open source recording software Audacity, but as one might expect with such a large, ongoing project, individual volunteers have found and continue to find their own ways to contribute to the ambitious audiobook project. No two volunteers will have the same recording space or environment, nor will they adopt exactly the same processes. As new or returning volunteers (re)learn and (re)assimilate into the community by noticing what others have done and are doing, they change the meshwork of LibriVox by at the very least contributing new voices and/or additional efforts. Potentially, they effect greater changes to the community's culture and established workflows.

In retracing the archived conversations of LibriVox and in re-articulating with its volunteers some of the organization's changes over time, I've begun to make more visible the extent of those volunteers' collaborative thinking, rethinking, and working. Often the work of

organization, networking, planning, meta-writing, and other foundational behind-the-scenes activities that are part of any community project can be easily erased or made less visible; such work easily blends into the shapes of larger tasks that leave deeper, more obvious traces. Impressive finished projects can eclipse the smaller, more thinly-spread negotiations and interpersonal work taken on by multiple volunteers across weeks or months or years. Circumstances of material privilege can very easily be erased or overlooked, made invisible by the assumptions we make about the open, egalitarian nature of digital technology and distributed networked communities. This ethnographic case, though limited, begins to explain and interrogate what is and has been happening in the several pieces/instances of this project, anticipating somewhat the future work and collaboration that will continue to happen in similar yet still idiosyncratic, adaptive ways for as long as there are public domain texts and available technological and social infrastructure to allow this work to keep happening.

CHAPTER 4: INVITATIONAL TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION FOR, BY, AND WITHIN THE CROWD²⁸

...learning a practice is learning how to be a certain kind of person with all the experiential complexity this implies: how to ‘live’ knowledge, not just acquiring it in the abstract.

(Wenger, White, & Smith, 2009)

In the case of LibriVox, providing audio books to the public is almost an incidental fringe benefit to the real thing we do, which is help people record audio books.

(McGuire, 2007b)

Distributed digital networks welcome innovative and accelerated modes of collaborating, sharing content, and fostering community. The spread of such networks mean that many diverse people and groups and users/audiences can interact and be involved in the creation and preservation of the kinds of content that are important to them. This has meant an explosion of content creation and curation across media and across cultures, along with an attendant rush of knowledge sharing and community management. Digitally-enabled crowds are able to approach and participate in projects previously unimaginable. In pursuing the overarching question of how such groups learn to function in commons-based initiatives like LibriVox, I also want to ask how individuals situate and manage themselves and their contributions among the many other participating agents and contributions of the crowd as a whole.

²⁸ A shorter version of this chapter was previously published in the 2017 *Proceedings from the 35th ACM International Conference on the Design of Communication* (Chesley, 2017a).

This chapter reports on my survey and analysis of LibriVox's scattered documentation as it appears across the community, noticing how this content, with its creators and its users, guides volunteers in choosing and navigating the multiple roles available to them within the community. I also explore the concept of digital stewardship in combination with actor-network-theory, arguing that digital documents and artifacts, when preserved and circulated in ways that align with a community's values and priorities, become especially important for stewarding sustainable/resilient communities of practice.

Commons, Communities, and Stewardship

In their book *Digital Habitats: Stewarding Technology for Communities*, Wenger, White, and Smith (2009) recognize the emergence of the role of technology steward as “a natural outcome of taking care of a community that's using technology to learn together” and a role anyone can take on (loc 831). The authors define and explain the emerging (but not brand new) role of technology steward as one that involves noticing and understanding what technologies can and will work for a community, and in some way taking responsibility for a community's technology resources. Wenger, White, and Smith ask,

How does technology enable sustained mutual engagement around a practice? Can it provide new windows into each other's practice? What learning activities would this make possible? Can technology accelerate the cycle through which members explore, test, and refine good practice? Over time, can technology help a community create a shared context for people to have ongoing exchanges, articulate perspectives, accumulate knowledge, and provide access to stories, tools, solutions, and concepts? (loc 525)

Technologies like wikis, audio recording software, internet discussion forums, and podcasting, in combination with the documentation developed and shared by LibriVox volunteers, have done these things and more for and within the LibriVox community. Moving beyond these questions posed by Wenger, White, and Smith, I also want to ask how technical communication—as a process and technology itself—helps make possible the persistence of crowd-based digital communities of practice.

For Wenger, White, and Smith (2009), technology stewards generally are “members of the community they serve” who “just happen to pay attention to technology issues in the community’s life” (loc 840). Wenger, White, and Smith discuss the growing importance of technology stewardship, noting that the practice “has been around as long as there have been communities, but it has become more important and complex as community and technology interact more deeply” (loc 1039). They also write,

... in many cases, technology stewardship is a critical part of community leadership, facilitating a community’s emergence or growth. It becomes a very creative practice that evolves along with the community and reflects the community’s self-design—the process *by which a community designs itself* as a vehicle for learning, which includes use of technology. (loc 854, emphasis added)

Communities of practice are formed and sustained in many contexts—in traditional institutional businesses and workplaces and in non-institutional groups of hobbyists or enthusiasts for reasons that are social more than economic. Research into the kinds of professional and technical writing happening outside of traditional workplaces or other institutionally/officially-labeled “professional” spaces has been touched on by several scholars within the field. Kimball (2016) notes, “we are truly living in a Golden Age for technical communication—in the sense that more

people than ever before are engaging in sharing know-how as part of their everyday lives. We need to understand this new mode of discourse” (p. 5). Within and across fandoms, Do-It-Yourself and Do-It-Together movements, amateur societies, and other online groups, human and non-human entities share and circulate knowledge of many kinds, in many modalities, across the platforms and media that are available to them. They do this in coordinated, semi-coordinated, and relatively uncoordinated efforts, creating technical documentation, often collaboratively, often in user-owned and user-defined spaces. Pflugfelder (2017) calls these contexts “the wilds of technical communication,” and finds them fruitful examples of agile, tactical public communication work.

We might consider these digitally-mediated wild spaces as commons of the sort Lessig (2004), Boyle (2008), Benkler (2006), and Bricklin (2000) describe, predicated upon interactions that are, almost by default, open, shared, sharable, public, and potentially enriching to society as a whole. The ideologies underlying such spaces and the innovations they potentially contribute to can powerfully change the world; Kimball (2017), for example, remarks on the power of the internet for compounding individual actions into strategies with broad impact. He means “not just the essential capabilities of the internet to share information, but the focus of radical sharing on how to do things.” Kimball insists that “Radical sharing is profoundly connected to technical communication. It’s not about what happened, but about making things happen. If anything, rather than citizen journalism, radical sharing is ‘citizen engineering’” (p. 4). The concept of radical sharing and openness is especially inspiring when the social engineering of citizens and making-things-happen are based in communities where members, or citizens, are empowered to shape themselves according to their own priorities and values.

The concept of users' experiences with stewarding documentation is a part of how I approach the LibriVox system and the ways this system facilitates participation in a distributed digital community. Public amateur technical documentation of and on distributed networks can play a crucial role in shaping, managing, expanding, controlling, and sustaining online communities of diverse and often transient volunteers and groups. Involving users as participants in design processes has long been a core principle of effective user experience design, though naturally the types and scopes of such involvement vary a great deal depending on available resources and prioritized values. Potts (2015) makes a case for empowering users as productive participants, designing beyond basic content-delivery for more active experiences that users might engage with and ultimately help to shape. When end-users participate in the design of tools and interfaces, those tools are more likely to satisfactorily meet users' needs. Thinking similarly about maximizing user agency and participation, Stolley (2016) calls for deep, critical, and direct engagement and with tools of digital making. He insists that "Any given digital artifact needs to be constructed not as a final resting place for an idea or some information, but as a pause in a stream of further, unfettered access and revision" (point 2, para 5). He argues that "audiences should get ... flexible, open formats" (point 2, para 3). In other words, users should be able to do more than merely consume, and content creators should honor and prepare for those possibilities. Working toward a world where people are able to do more than accept or reject the content, tools, or interfaces they encounter is one way of enacting and promoting a free and open public information commons.

LibriVox, while it does function as an archive or "final resting place" of audiobooks for user-listeners and other audiences, and as a fun volunteer project designed to attract maximum participation from willing user-readers and other volunteers, is also—like many other ad hoc

digital communities—a process and community designed primarily by its members for themselves. This is both fascinating as an example of the possibilities of digital collaboration and publishing work and instructive for any aspiring digital collaborators, influencers, or activists interested in the preservation and transmediation of culture on a global scale.

The Roles of Nonhuman Agents in Technology Stewardship

When contingents of community members work together in temporary or ad hoc arrangements, and the strict hierarchical frames of more traditional organizations are not available to structure community members' work, a plethora of documentation artifacts participate more heavily in the stewardship of digital community. Here, I extend the concept of technology stewardship as defined by Wenger, White, and Smith (2009) and apply it to cover both the practices enacted by human experts and the roles taken on by nonhuman actors within distributed, networked organizations where activity and interaction are heavily mediated. Using the case of LibriVox and its many multimodal sites of volunteer-produced documentation and instruction, I argue that in such transient, online crowdsourcing organizations, the mediating roles and community-building contributions of artifacts (documentation, tutorials, etc.) become especially valuable.

The contributions of LibriVox documentation in modes of tactical, invitational stewardship become especially valuable to volunteers who may only be able to work on the project at irregular times as their “real” lives and other obligations allow. The invitational roles of non-human actors in this community are even more important given a context of transient coming-and-going volunteers from varying backgrounds and with all levels of technical knowledge. Documentation—its creation, its preservation, and its circulation—offers and opens

up to transient crowdsourcing communities a method of managing and being responsible for their own and others' work, compensating for the ways in which digital stewardship may be lacking from human agents.

As an open crowdsourcing project, LibriVox offers many opportunities to its audiences and to its current and potential volunteers. Any listener may remain only a listener, or they may take up the work of recording and become contributing makers. And many types of volunteer making are available: from reading, recording, and editing to a plethora of support roles, artistic roles, management roles, roles as leaders, teachers, friends, mentors, comrades, or even 'merely' a fellow-human, a generous stranger out in the world with whom to share one's love of reading. Though volunteers are certainly welcome to (and often do) find a LibriVoxing niche they enjoy above all others, none of the volunteer roles at LibriVox are strictly separate or distinct—the roles of user, maker, and user-maker ebb and flow into each other, much like the roles of reader and writer, or teacher and learner. For technical communicators, appreciating the malleable and sometimes messy parts we might play as users, makers, participants, practitioners, producers, or citizens (to invoke Johnson, 1998), and everything in between, is an important stepping stone toward understanding and mediating multiple views among many potential users/audiences.

Through surveying four central sites of user-generated LibriVox documentation—the website, forums, wiki, and podcasts—I have learned more about how this decentralized, self-designed community offers its volunteers multiple and flexible paths toward valuable instances of user-as-maker agency and pursue the question of how crowds of volunteers collaboratively mold their own unique user experiences by engaging at various levels with multiple malleable sites of amateur technical documentation. For the sake of keeping within a practical scope, I do not include the catalog itself, any LibriVox social media sites, or the LibriVox blog. These

excluded sites sometimes contain or reference technical information and documentation, but their primary purposes are more limited to directly serving and promoting LibriVox audiobooks to outside audiences.

The Sites and Purposes of Invitational Instruction

The public discourse and documentation of LibriVox shapes and is shaped by many other pieces and functions of the project, including its values, ethos, and ongoing activity and identity. As I touched on briefly in my first chapter, minor-but-persistent controversies cycle through the LibriVox community with some regularity, mainly regarding subjective concerns such as reading style, recording quality, and the ethics of reusing public domain work (Chesley, 2018b). For the most part these controversies are considered non-issues in terms of the main central mission and work of the project. LibriVox has come up with fairly standard responses to each. Given their perennial nature and the limited subjectivity of any proposed solutions, framing these issues as “problems” almost does not seem accurate or helpful. What some may see as problems with LibriVox are in fact almost integral features of how LibriVox has developed, and despite their perceived potential downsides, the underlying values that allow for varying listenability and for unexpected re-uses of recordings are more important to the community. The free-for-all “anarchy with an iron fist” approach means that only rarely is anyone strictly held to account for anything. People can and do disappear. People can and do disagree.

The problems that manifest themselves more clearly and consistently as core problems for the LibriVox project are relatively few. These involve barriers and difficulties that prevent those who wish to do so from making audiobooks out of available public domain texts. For example:

- unavailable or hard-to-find source texts, including difficulty determining public domain status
- occasional legal issues²⁹ with source texts or other distraction/confusion³⁰ about the boundaries of LibriVox
- technical inexperience or hang-ups with the recording and editing process.

In addressing these problems—in particular the third and most consistently prevalent—LibriVox community members have developed a mass of documentation and shared knowledge meant to make the process of volunteering for LibriVox as clear and accessible to everyone as possible.

Volunteer-generated LibriVox documentation in many ways exemplifies the characteristics outlined by Foss and Griffin (1995) in their discussion of feminist invitational rhetorics. Foss and Griffin define invitational rhetoric as not necessarily persuasive or imperative, but more overtly marked by open, non-judgmental offering of experience, centered in shared goals, constructed in and for communities. A significant characteristic and technique within invitational rhetoric is what Foss and Griffin, citing Gearhart (1982), describe as “being available [...] without insisting,” as a “presence” or an “offering” (p. 7). Invitational exchanges include each participant’s “vision of the world,” their stories, opinions, perspectives, and

29. For example, in the early days of LibriVox, volunteers recorded both of the only two Agatha Christie short stories published before 1923—*The Mysterious Affair at Styles* and *The Secret Adversary*. Soon after, the Christie estate threatened legal action against LibriVox, arguing that since LibriVox was founded by a Canadian, Canadian copyright laws should apply to these texts. In response to incidents like these, LibriVox volunteers err on the side of extreme caution. Both recordings were taken down and are being saved for release until 2027, when they should be squarely in the public domain for both US and Canadian audiences.

30. Potential distractions from LibriVox’s core mission are something admins seem cautious about. When new, exciting, tangential, or even very relevant but time-consuming new proposals for extra work or side projects are proposed, admins cite the “prime directive” and point to the potential for side projects to drain resources and make LibriVox less fun for volunteers. All suggestions are discussed case by case. Some turn out to be really useful (the APIs and bittorrents, the MB4 files), or at least fun enough for everyone to remain engaged in (like the community podcast). Some are rejected right away as completely extraneous. And some have been justified in creative ways, but ultimately redefined out of the current boundaries of the LibriVox project (like the two collaborative LibriVox NaNoWriMo projects).

solutions, all, according to Foss and Griffin “articulated as a means to widen options—to generate more ideas than either rhetors or audiences had initially” (p. 11). Rather than envisioning or reaching for a single consensus, invitational rhetoric welcomes multiple co-existing views, or enactments/re-enactments of activities and events.

Volunteers at LibriVox often take time to share how they have individualized the process of recording. Their posts covering basic instructions on using Audacity filters and effects or on avoiding plosives and sticky mouth-sounds include narrative and documentation together as an offering, as plenty of other user-generated online instructions tend to do (Van Ittersum, 2013;). While these posts are semi-instructional, the information often takes on less of an imperative tone and more of an invitational tone, as if each volunteer acknowledges their own voice as one among many. These contributions, or offerings, take the form of guides and guidelines—still instructional, but almost gentle, not insistent.

Though Kimball (2017) does not connect his own work overtly to Foss and Griffin, his discussion of radical sharing and tactical, extra-institutional and community-based technical communication in some ways echoes and extends the concept of invitational rhetoric into a digitally mediated context. Kimball clarifies, “By *radical sharing*, I mean our newfound individual capability of sharing our tactics with people the world over at great speed and with great effect. With a small investment in time and money, we can reach a multitude of people in situations similar to ours and share our own approaches and techniques for everyday living” (p. 4). Whether or not our sharing is consciously intended to influence or persuade, the visions embedded in such offerings of our own “approaches and techniques” to making, being, and life have the potential to change others’ visions. At the very least, offering even a small contribution

to the multitude of perspectives shared in this way may expand another's vision to include and allow for greater pluralism, diversity, and freedom.

Examples of invitational rhetorical modes show up in many LibriVox documents. One example is the email sent to all forum members when they register for a new LibriVox account. I submitted my request to join LibriVox at some point after midnight during finals week of the Fall 2014 semester. My first email from the LibriVox Admin Team, with the subject line "Action required to activate LibriVox forum account", arrived shortly thereafter, timestamped by my email program with "THU, DEC 18, 2014 AT 12:57AM." Following a handful of fairly direct statements about the email's subject, including reasoning for this instance of gatekeeping ("We are having a lot of trouble with spammers lately...") and clear instructions ("In order to activate your account, please send an email to..."; "BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR FORUM USERNAME!"), the message becomes softer as it invites prospective volunteers to make their introduction:

please tell us something about yourself, how you discovered LibriVox, and why you are interested in becoming a part of our forum community. Be as detailed and specific as you can, so we know you are a real volunteer.

I responded to this invitational email ten minutes later, with one sentence about my enjoyment of reading aloud and one sentence about my academic interest in "all the new cool ways of publishing things digitally" (See Appendix K for a full copy of this email exchange). The next morning, a member of the LibriVox admin team sent an official welcome email. Its opening lines were:

Welcome to Librivox.

This is a form letter; I really do read every intro email, but so many new volunteers^[31] register every day that I can't possibly send each of you a personal welcome.

If you only wish to listen to our books, you don't need a forum account (though you have one now anyway, in case you change your mind). Just visit our catalog and download whatever you wish. <http://librivox.org/search>.

If you have questions, please post in the “Need Help” forum:

<https://forum.librivox.org/viewforum.php?f=23>

And now, here's your ‘welcome’ email filled with helpful links! (personal communication, 2014; See Appendix K.)

The email goes on to include additional links to specific sections of the wiki and the forums, and a listing of helpful volunteer-created videos. Many of these are offered to the reader conditionally, just-in-case, leaving open the choice of where to start: “If you speak a foreign language, have a look at...”, “You may like to introduce yourself to the community in the ‘introduce yourself’ forum...”, and “If you wish to try your hand at recording, the place to start is the Newbie Guide to Recording...”. Each eager, brand-new volunteer is given a collection of links in the form of an introductory hub of information from which they can then chart the beginnings of their own LibriVox adventure.

My research and engagement with the LibriVox sites I study in this chapter did not begin strictly with the email described above. I had been familiar with some of these sites already, from

31. The rate of volunteers registering fluctuates, often correlated with times and places where LibriVox is mentioned in regional news or other publications. There is always a chance that newly registered volunteers may never post or contribute to the forums at all. Of the 63,999 users listed in the LibriVox Forum directory as of April 2018, 41,604 (65%) have never posted at all and only 8,514 (13.3%) have volunteered to read; 55,776 users (87.1%) have posted 5 times or fewer. For a rough comparison, I have posted 671 times since joining the forums in December of 2014. Other users who joined around the same time and have also been active at least once some point during March 2018 have post counts ranging from 62 up to 595.

an exploration of various public digitization projects I'd worked on earlier during my Fall 2014 Professional Writing Theory course. However, my direct experience as a LibriVox volunteer and participating member of the community did begin with this email, stewarded by a helpful administrative team and the many documents acting on their behalf to welcome and invite me into the community. In retracing my own entry into the LibriVox volunteering community, I again invoke and emulate a feminist, invitational rhetoric and offer a partial account of my own experience encountering the range of LibriVox sites I have chosen to focus on. In doing so, I necessarily embrace the limits of my own perspective and encourage readers to imagine a range of volunteer experiences beyond the one available through my individual lens.

In line with the auto/ethnographic approach I have used to study the LibriVox project, I follow myself as an actor and user engaging with the community's website, volunteer-run forums, LibriVox wiki, and LibriVox Community Podcast archives, noticing the plethora of roles each site and its collected documentation opens up to volunteers. To varying degrees, the community's website, volunteer-run forums, LibriVox wiki, and LibriVox Community Podcast archives all contain rich examples of multi-faceted invitational and instructional documentation.

LibriVox.org

The LibriVox website serves as a simple, minimalist entry point to the catalog (for listeners) and to the forums and other volunteer-centric spaces (for readers and other volunteers). In serving these two audiences (see Figure 4.1), the site covers basic information about the philosophy of the project and how to get involved, news and updates about finished LibriVox

audiobooks, and brief help pages for downloading audio and searching the catalog.³² On the “Volunteer for LibriVox” page of the website, LibriVoxers claim to have “flipped traditional hierarchy upside down”:

The most important people in LibriVox are the readers, and everyone else works hard to help them make more audiobooks. We encourage everyone to do as much or as little as they like, and mostly if you have an idea and want to implement it, you’ll find lots of support. Here is a list of people you will run into and what they do (note: they are all volunteers):

readers: record chapters of public domain books

book coordinators: manage production of a particular book

meta coordinators: catalog completed books on the web

moderators: help the forum run smoothly

admins: try to make sure everyone has what they need. (LibriVox, n.d.).

Not mentioned in this simple list are a handful of additional named and implied roles that volunteers take up as part of the LibriVox project, some more central than others. These include the roles of prooflistening, editing multi-reader audio files together, and making covers from public domain artwork to accompany each audiobook’s catalog page.

My first interactions with this site were as a listener, and then my gradually shifted to potential researcher and volunteer. The website has served as an important intersection for my repeated transversals of the LibriVox meshwork. I access the site primarily as a volunteer, checking my reader page and the claimed sections of in-progress audio projects

32. Documentation help for listeners is relatively minor part of the website. Some resources are provided here and on the wiki about how to access LibriVox recordings via different devices. Because my project focuses on the volunteers at LibriVox and their processes, I do not focus much on documentation aimed at listeners only.

listed there. As a researcher, I access this site when tracing through LibriVox history via the catalog, old blog updates, and other static informational pages like the “About” page or “Volunteer for LibriVox” page.

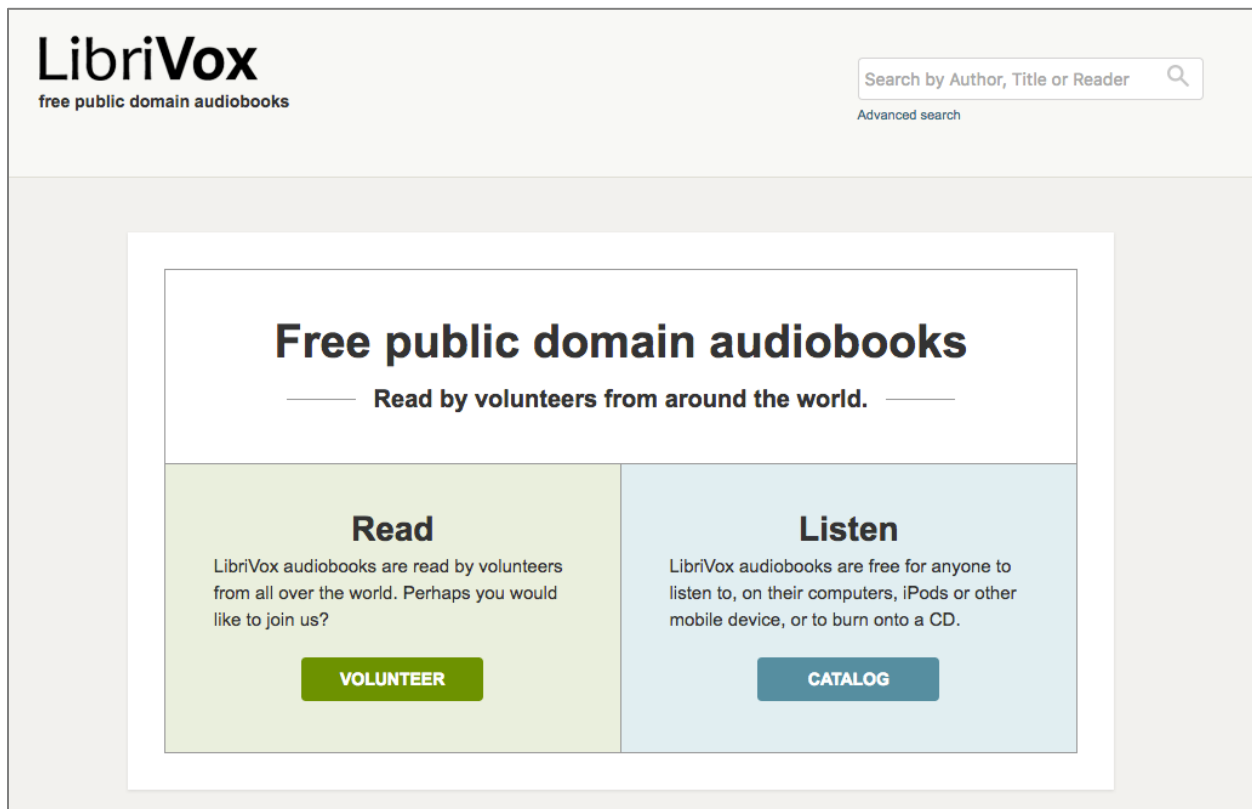


Figure 4.1: Screenshot of the LibriVox.org homepage

Every LibriVox audio file invites listeners to this index page at librivox.org. The website continues the invitation, pointing to all the ways you can volunteer with the project if you would like to. Content on this site demonstrates most directly the immediate potential for user-reader and user-listener roles to converge or diverge according to individual interest. This main website is also a site where LibriVox’s meshwork has frayed and disintegrated most obviously. Software and database updates have moved and/or erased several pages that other archived LibriVox content continues to link to.

Forum.LibriVox.org

The LibriVox Forums (Figure 4.2) constitute a deep and detailed public record of volunteers' work on all audiobook projects. More importantly, these spaces facilitate and sustain the community, serving as a central platform for collaboration, connection, and learning. While other spaces at LibriVox have been overwritten, moved, and updated in ways that make retracing their full content and context nearly impossible for an outside researcher, the forums have remained intact as an archive of LibriVox volunteers' work, negotiation, and collaborative decision-making.

Forum threads offer documentation tailored to each user-maker according to their experience levels, their physical and technological contexts, and the specifics of the projects they have chosen to work on. As an example, I might turn to the project thread for a solo recording I am currently working on. Volunteer JorWat (Jordan Watts), my Dedicated

The screenshot shows the LibriVox Forums board index. At the top, there are navigation links for Home Page, Guides for Listeners & Volunteers, Search the Catalog, and Contact. Below this, there are utility links for FAQ, Search, Members, User Control Panel, new messages, and Logout. The main content area displays a table of forum threads, categorized into 'About LibriVox' and 'Books (Volunteer for Reading & Other Things)'. Each row includes a forum title, a description, the number of topics and posts, and the last post information.

Forum	Topics	Posts	Last post
About LibriVox			
What is LibriVox & FAQ Frequently Asked Questions	11	11	November 24th, 2014, 7:48 am Carolin
New Here? Introduce Yourself Get to know your fellow readers and tell us a little about yourself	11491	44781	Today, 2:26 pm Starfire
Books (Volunteer for Reading & Other Things)			
Book Suggestions Suggest and discuss books to read (all languages welcome!)	1614	7817	8 minutes ago Newgatenovelist
New Projects Launch Pad Post ALL new projects here (solos, books, short works/poetry collections, drama -- in any language.) Please read the stickies first	6	33	Today, 8:08 am HollyJenson
Readers Wanted: Short Works (Poetry & Prose) Short Poetry Collections, Short Story Collections, and our Weekly Poetry Project	67	5445	14 minutes ago GerwinKramer
Readers Wanted: Books Every work here needs a reader! Please sign up and help us complete these books. The symbol ~ means that Proof Listeners are needed	98	6690	5 minutes ago Lynnet
Readers Wanted: Dramatic Works Plays and other dramatic works	43	11001	38 minutes ago Hamlet
Readers Wanted: Languages other than English Deutsche Projekte, Nederlandstalige Projecten, Proyectos en español, projets en français, Projekty po polsku, 日本語のプロジェクト	29	2509	55 minutes ago BeniaminoMassimo
Readers Found Upcoming books fully-subscribed with readers. Check progress here, too	39	4179	9 minutes ago miss stav
Going Solo Upcoming books being recorded by a solo reader	265	11967	less than a minute ago Newgatenovelist

Figure 4.2. Screenshot of the LibriVox Forum Board Index

Prooflistener, has included incredibly helpful tips on pronunciation and word-meanings, all specifically tailored to me and the ambitious project at hand. Both of us are enjoying the challenge of grappling with the sixteenth-century English spellings and vocabulary of an 1899 facsimile edition of *The Arte or Crafte of Rhetoryke* (Cox, 1899). When I first opened the project thread, JorWat kindly offered to consult the Oxford English Dictionary in the case of any confounding obscure words. With his notes on one of my first recorded sections, he added, “I believe that ‘apeyreth’ of ‘greatly hyndrethe and apeyreth his clyentes cause’ is pronounced ‘uh-PAIR-eth’ (‘appaire’ is an obsolete word meaning ‘to make worse’, connected to ‘impair’)” (Watts, 2018). Offerings like this are common across many sections of the LibriVox forums, particularly when volunteers ask for such feedback. Most often this feedback is also attended, as JorWat’s comment was here, with a note that correcting the audio for minor pronunciation issues is optional and not at all required.

Wiki.LibriVox.org

The LibriVox wiki (see Figure 4.3) as a whole is titled “Guides for Listeners & Volunteers.” The wiki, which has been through several iterations (as is common of wikis in general), hosts user-generated and user-editable explanations, help documents, tips, and other resources, even including preparatory quizzes about various volunteer activities. Some wiki content is outdated legacy material, while some remains highly relevant to training and orienting new members. In August 2007, volunteer a.r.dobbs (Anita Roy Dobbs) spearheaded what they called the “August Docurama” to encourage a focused effort on improving the documentation and help files across LibriVox sites, especially the wiki. Everyone was invited to point out places that needed clearer instructions, more logically

organized content, and/or additional navigation (Dobbs, 2007). During this project, Hugh McGuire noted that the wiki is “a wonderful resource, but really for the advanced user,” moreso “a good place for someone who is already doing LV stuff and needs to figure out more info” than an introduction for brand-new potential volunteers (McGuire, 2007c).

The screenshot shows the LibriVox Wiki main page. At the top, there are tabs for 'page', 'discussion', 'view source', and 'history'. The 'LibriVox' logo is in the top left. Below it is a sidebar with 'librivox' links (Home Page, Catalog, Forum), 'wiki navigation' links (Main Page, Community portal, Current events, Recent changes, Random page, All Pages, Help), a search box, and a 'toolbox' with links like 'What links here', 'Related changes', 'Special pages', 'Printable version', and 'Permanent link'. The main content area is titled 'Main Page' and contains a 'NOTE' about editing, a 'Contents' table of contents, and sections for 'LibriVox' (with sub-sections: About, Policies, Copyright), 'Listening', and 'Finding Audiobooks'.

Figure 4.3. Screenshot of the LibriVox Wiki main page

Currently there seems to be somewhat limited public engagement with the wiki. Today, only administrators and volunteers who specially request access may contribute to this site of documentation. Such restrictions were put in place when, after attacks of spam and vandalism on the wiki became overwhelming, volunteer administrators migrated the wiki to a brand-new platform in 2009. Perhaps in part because of this much existing wiki content has not been kept up-to-date. Aside from a few pages that are referenced often in the forums—the Newbie Guide to Recording and the 1-Minute Test instructions most of all—

the bulk of the wiki is legacy content from past LibriVox eras. Volunteers created and shared profile pages to showcase their own LibriVox contributions and other interests, pages to host volunteer-produced promotional material, collections of bloopers, and lists of “interesting forum threads.” Though much of this may not be used in the everyday work of making audiobooks at LibriVox, it is valuable still for preserving evidence of how the community has developed.

The LibriVox Community Podcast

Once produced weekly and now only occasionally, the LibriVox Community Podcasts³³ chronicle the progress and evolution of the LibriVox project, from the volunteers’ perspectives. These cover everything from interviews with LibriVox members to in-depth technical discussions about recording equipment and technique.

At some point during the second year of my research and participation with LibriVox, I discovered the community podcast and listened to several semi-recent (at the time) episodes, including a series created by volunteer bobgon55 (Bob Gonzales), all about “the pioneer days” of LibriVox. In this series, bobgon55 interviews several veteran volunteers and asks them to reflect on what the project has grown into since they first joined. Upon realizing the insights available through this podcast archive, I posted a thank-you note in the planning thread for the community podcast, and on the same day, posted enthusiastically in the then-current thread for the podcast-in-progress that would become

33. The dedication of the first volunteers who worked on the LibriVox community podcast—jimmowatt (Jim Mowatt), ductapeguy (Sean McGaughey), and a handful of others—gave the side project significant momentum and kept it going on a weekly basis for almost three years. Other volunteers have rotated into the role of podcast host every so often, in between intermittent lulls. Cori (Cori Samuel) took over as host for a several months, as did bobgon55 (Bob Gonzalez).

episode #143, “LibriVox Firsts.” Seeing and hearing others add to the community and archive of LibriVox history, instruction, and community inspired me to find ways of doing the same. For LibriVox Community Podcast episode #143, I recorded just over 2 ½ minutes of reflection on what drew me to LibriVox, my first experiences in the community, and what I struggled with during my first recordings. Since then, I have hosted two Community Podcast episodes of my own (and hope to coordinate more).

Roles for Volunteers and Roles for Documentation

These four distributed sites of LibriVox invite and support amateur, volunteer engagement by providing multiple points of access to varied and dynamic sources of invitational instruction, examples, and documentation. This material is made available across many platforms and at many levels of the project. LibriVox procedures and policies, as well as the discussions and negotiations that surround those policies, are scattered across various digital records, including audio files, images, video, and metadata. Related tutorials and documentation are also spread across several platforms—the result of multiple, overlapping and collaborative efforts to address a specific yet diverse audience. Technical information and helpful instructions for current and future LibriVox volunteers appears in YouTube videos, wiki documentation, “sticky” forum posts and FAQ pages, and ad hoc “just-in-time” help via forum messages. Table 4.1 outlines major and minor volunteer roles, along with notes on each role’s unique responsibilities, whether there is any recommended pre-requisite experience, and what sites/sources of LibriVox documentation pertain to each role.

I compiled Table 4.1 primarily during June 2017, making minor updates and additions in more recent months. As the LibriVox community grows and changes, new and different roles

Table 4.1 Volunteer roles, responsibilities, and resources across LibriVox.org

Volunteer Role	Responsibilities	Experience recommended	Prominent Documentation Sites
Reader	read and record chapters of public domain books	A 1-minute test recording, for checking technical specifications	“Volunteer for LibriVox” and “About Recording” pages on the website; “Newbie Guide to Recording,” “How LibriVox Works,” “How to record and submit a 1-Minute Test,” and many other tutorials on the wiki; boilerplate/template information in every forum project thread; general FAQ pages, 2 “help” forums and 1 “discussion” forum; Podcast episodes 51, 54, 58, 76, 83, 84, 87, 93, 96, 99, 103, 115, 134, 135; video tutorials linked from the forums, wiki, and elsewhere.
Prooflistener	listen to all submitted audio files, checking for proper volume, audio quality, and general understandability	None specified	“Volunteer for LibriVox” on the website; “Guide for Prooflisteners,” “Prooflistening Tips & Quiz” on the wiki; boilerplate/template information in every forum project thread; “Listeners & Editors Wanted” forum; “Prooflistening Template and FAQ” in the forums; Podcast episodes 37, 38, 107; videos linked from the forums, wiki, and elsewhere
Editor	help other volunteers clean up audio files as needed; edit together parts for dramatic readings and plays	Prooflistening	“Editing Audio,” “Editing a Dramatic Work” on the wiki; Podcast episodes 49, 53, 55, 58 [NOTE: Most Readers take on their own editing, so editing instructions and tutorials are very often an inextricable part of Readers’ resources.]
Cover maker	create .jpg and .pdf files to be used as thumbnail images in the catalog and downloadable CD covers	None specified	“Volunteer CD Covers” and “Covermakers Chat Thread” on the forums; templates linked from the wiki and forums; Podcast episode 112
M4B maker	convert .mp3 files into usable .m4b files (a standard audiobook container format with chapter markers and bookmarking capabilities)	None specified	“How to Make M4B Files” on the wiki; “Audiobook File (M4B) Availability & Production!” on the forums
Podcast host and/or contributor	submit content for, organize, edit, and/or produce community podcast episodes	None specified; reading/recording are implied prerequisites	“Librivox Community Podcast” on the wiki; “LibriVox Community Podcast Planning” and many other threads on the forums; Podcast episodes 44, 117, 118

Table 4.1 continued

Distributor	share LibriVox recordings, seed torrents, burn CDs, or any other method	None specified	“Teachers and LibriVox,” “How To Create Torrents,” “Donating LibriVox CDs,” “LibriVoxAPI” on the wiki; and various threads about bittorrenting, API development, and Alexa/Google Voice on the forums.
Forum member	participate and share on the forums	None specified	Introductory registration email (See Appendix ___); general FAQ pages on the forum; “Forum Guide” on the wiki; boilerplate/template information in every forum project thread; Podcast episode 97; videos linked from the forums, wiki, and elsewhere
Book coordinator (BC)	manage production of a particular book or project	Reading/recording, prooflistening	“How to Become a Book Coordinator,” “Tips for Book Coordinators,” “BC Readiness Quiz,” and forum template code on the wiki; Podcast episodes 39, 42
Meta coordinator (MC)	supervise and mentor book coordinators, catalog completed books	Reading/recording, prooflistening, book coordinating	“How LibriVox Works” on the wiki; “MC Drama Cataloging Notes” on the wiki; Podcast episode 40
Moderator ³⁴	welcome new members, moderate the forums when needed, help the forum run smoothly	Reading/recording, prooflistening, book coordinating, meta coordinating	“Volunteer for LibriVox” on the website; “How LibriVox Works” on the wiki
Recruiter	help locate and invite new volunteer readers	None specified	“Promotional Material” and “Banners and Buttons” on the wiki
Admin	mentor moderators and coordinators, manage LibriVox email and social media, and “make sure everyone has what they need”	Reading, recording, prooflistening, book coordinating, meta coordinating, wiki editing,	“How LibriVox Works” on the wiki; Podcast episode 50

emerge as important, and/or some of those that are clear today could fade. An example of just this kind of shift is clear in the role of podcast host. During 2006-2009, podcast host was a highly visible and demanding role in the community. In 2010, another volunteer took up the reigns and produced regular podcasts for a few months. Today, this role is much more intermittently filled, and seems to come with less of the ethos that it once seemed to.

34. The role of “moderator” is listed and described briefly on the “Volunteer for LibriVox” page, and mentioned on the wiki, but the term is not often used in day-to-day LibriVox forum activity. “Admin” or “MC” (Meta Coordinator) are the much more common terms, and the Admin role seems to subsume both other roles, at least in LibriVox practice as of spring 2018. “Recruiter” is mentioned in wiki documentation, but also not a very distinct role in the community, as informal word-of-mouth advertising for the project is sufficient.

The notes in Table 4.1's "Prominent Documentation Sites" column demonstrate that instructions and examples for volunteers are almost always located in multiple places.

Volunteers may stumble across or be directed to this material by many other volunteers along the way as they engage with the project. In drawing on and contributing to this wide-spread collection of shared resources, LibriVox members learn and decide together how the work of audiobook production can or should be accomplished.

Each volunteer encounters these resources (and potentially many others outside of LibriVox) in their own way, uniquely accessing and engaging the collaborative knowledge-making and knowledge-sharing work of LibriVox. As they manage their LibriVox contributions (on their own terms), volunteers adapt or "hack" the tools and knowledges available to them. Volunteers then work together asynchronously to inspire and empower each other at various levels of engagement and participation.

The intricacies of the LibriVox network are built around maximizing agency for the core user-maker group: the readers. These participants are supported above all other groups because they contribute most directly to what LibriVox is. As LibriVox founder Hugh McGuire writes,

the real impact of LibriVox is not about who downloads our books, but that we have enabled thousands of people across the globe to participate in a project together that does something important. we have provided a platform to let people read audiobooks (something, it turns out, a number of people wish to do). (2007c)

In participating together in this important public domain audiobook project, LibriVox volunteers create and sustain inviting, empowering user-as-maker experiences for each other. Part of this involves producing, circulating, and allowing free access to existing project documentation, and to open methods of developing and sharing new documentation on top of what others have done.

This trove of user-generated records and instructions, based on each user's own unique experiences, can then be organized for sharing across as many platforms and within as many layers of LibriVox as possible.

Generally, any volunteers willing to propose, manage, and complete audiobook projects or other related, public domain projects are encouraged to do so, and others help lead or collaborate on these projects as they are willing and able. All but the roles of meta coordinator, moderator, and admin are more or less "entry-level." New volunteers may choose to take on any or all of these entry roles. As they gain experience with the LibriVox project, volunteers might gradually choose to shoulder more responsibilities, or be asked or invited to take them on. Once during my own volunteering experience, I was invited to expand my role on a particular project. The original book coordinator for the play *Caliban and the Yellow Sands* had stopped responding to messages for several months, and the administrator and meta coordinator for the project, MaryAnnSpiegel (MaryAnn Spiegel), felt it would be best to find a new coordinator. I had been acting as dedicated prooflistener, and nervously but excitedly took on a coordinating role when it became necessary. Coordinating the final stages of this project involved contacting volunteers about sections they had claimed, reassigning "orphaned" sections, and eventually editing each act of the play together. The experience began to prepare me for any future coordinating roles I may adopt, whether for similar dramatic reading projects or other less complicated projects.

My analysis of available engagement opportunities within LibriVox seeks to make visible the dynamic roles taken on by volunteers and by the user-centered/user-generated documentation they create, maintain, and circulate. Table 4.2 begins to categorize and take stock of the roles some of this documentation plays in terms of stewarding the community of LibriVox.

The role(s) of “expert” at LibriVox are shared and circulated among volunteers and mediating documents alike, shifting as participants join, learn, practice, and add their own experiences and documentation to the spaces of LibriVox. LibriVox members draw on others’ tools, construct knowledge with and/or around those tools, and build their contributions, with others’, into whole movements. Suggestions for a new project featuring a particularly interesting old public domain text begin to gather volunteers from disparate locations and backgrounds into temporary, transient collaborative pools. At the same time, the volunteers within these projects work to steward those old texts, and all the scaffolding material and metadata connected to them, into new media using their various literacies, voices, and other expertise. LibriVox documents and volunteers in a sense steward each other within the project.

The level of choice LibriVox volunteer users are able to offer each other is something admirable and potentially worth emulating in other digital culture projects and crowdsourcing production models. I connect this work to the principles of feminist ethics of care (Gilligan, 1992; Ess, 2014) and generosity—ethics that come through in LibriVox’s many invitational modes of instruction, knowledge-sharing, and learning together. Every member brings their own expertise(s) and their own naiveté(s) to the work. In affording this, LibriVox as a community safeguards and values an incredible sense of pluralism and multiplicity. It is understood that there is no “one right way” to work towards LibriVox’s goal of creating audiobooks from all public domain material, but many ways that all need their own nurturing, sustaining, and stewarding.

Table 4.2 Overlapping roles played by selected LibriVox documentation artifacts

Selected Artifacts	Rhetorical approach(es):				Notes
	Invitation	Teaching/ instruction	Community Management	Archiving, preserving	
Introductory registration email	X	X	X		Welcomes new members, pointing them to volunteering opportunities and recommending potential starting places (See Appendix K).
“Volunteer for LibriVox” page on the website	X	X			Explains how LibriVox works, offers suggestions for how to learn more and get started volunteering.
Project templates/ boilerplate	X	X	X	X	Covers basic instructions for joining a project and setting up for recording. Also links to resources for those interested in recording, prooflistening, and eventually listening (See Appendix H).
“How LibriVox Works” on the wiki	X	X	X	X	Reviews the kinds of volunteer activities needed to help LibriVox keep going, including administrative roles. Also available in Portuguese.
“Newbie Guide to Recording,” on the wiki	X	X		X	Covers the many options volunteers have for getting started at LibriVox. Available in seven languages.
“How to record and submit a 1-Minute Test”	X	X	X		The 1-minute test is strongly recommended for all new volunteers. This page provides a suggested script and instructions for uploading and posting your test for feedback.
“Guide for Proof-listeners” on the wiki	X	X			Defines prooflistening and the conventions of providing feedback at LibriVox. Includes examples of good prooflistening notes.
“Editing Audio” on the wiki;	X	X		X	Outlines advice for editing in Audacity; includes links to other tutorials and alternative editing practices from other volunteers.
“Volunteer CD Covers” on the forums	X	X	X	X	A continuation of an older thread, all centered on sharing the process of making cover images for finished audio projects. Includes some instruction and helpful templates for volunteers to use.
“Audiobook File (M4B) Availability & Production!” on the forums	X	X	X		Explains the characteristics of the MB4 format, provides helpful links and templates. Primarily a working project thread where volunteers manage production and cataloging of MB4 files.

Table 4.2 continued

Selected Artifacts	Rhetorical approach(es):				Notes
	Invitation	Teaching/ instruction	Community Management	Archiving, preserving	
“How to Make M4B Files” on the wiki		X		X	This page presumes the invitation to help with M4B files has already been made and accepted.
“LibriVox Community Podcast Planning” on the forums	X		X		Seeks to welcome more podcast contributors and to organize and streamline the podcasting schedule and process. Primarily used for brainstorming topics and seeking help in creating new podcasts.
“How To Create Torrents,” on the wiki	X	X		X	Brief instructions for setting up and distributed LibriVox audio via torrents. Marked obsolete as of 2015, since the Internet Archive now automatically provides torrents for all projects.
“LibriVoxAPI” on the wiki		X		X	Older versions provided links and some instructions for using the few LibriVox APIs that had been developed, but assume plenty of previous API experience. In 2013, API information moved to https://librivox.org/api/info and discussions take place on the forums occasionally.
“Forum Guide” on the wiki;	X	X	X	X	Reviews the basics of navigating forums for those who may be completely new to the interface. No updates since 2013; could be considered legacy documentation.
“How to Become a Book Coordinator” on the wiki	X	X	X		Defines the role of book coordinator, lists main responsibilities, links to other helpful resources, and anticipates volunteers’ questions.
“Tips for Book Coordinators” on the wiki	X		X		Shares details and anecdotes from an established coordinator’s experiences.

In a crowdsourcing project, large numbers of variously-informed people join in and add layers onto the work of those who came before. Volunteers at LibriVox are to a large extent willing to accommodate the often messy, redundant, diffuse arrangements of content that come

with such an abundance of participants, content, and digital storage options. Even when all participants are highly invested and engaged, the challenges of working in groups of varying experience levels, backgrounds, languages, and cultures with so much diversity can be great and daunting. Seeing and interacting with fellow community members who are generous with their skills, time, knowledge/expertise, and other resources can ease the frictions of collaborating in distributed crowdsourcing arrangements.

Paths toward Multiplicity and Generosity

New media and the growing prevalence of crowdsourcing are creating new and complex contexts for user-generated documentation meant to serve users in many overlapping, distributed roles. As crowdsourcing models of work continue to grow more common and more variable, understanding how these arrangements impact not only end users but also user-makers and other stakeholders, too, will be important for nurturing ethical commons and communities for users, makers, and user-maker networks. This in-depth look at the user roles and experiences available at LibriVox provides needed insight into how crowdsourced and crowd-managed professional and technical communication afford agile, wide-ranging amateur engagement and participation.

There is value in examining more closely the places where users' experiences filling multiple roles might converge, diverge, and overlap. Kimball (2017) calls for more study into these public forms of knowledge work and sharing, urging instructors of professional and technical communication to think about our duty to train students for contexts beyond those solely focused on helping students earn their places as effective, diligent workers. He writes, "We also must teach our students how to navigate a new landscape with grace, so that where they put their feet creates a path that will benefit many and harm few" (p. 5). Professional and

technical communication has far-reaching influence beyond traditional workplaces in private business or government offices. This is not to say our teaching of communication should focus on social responsibility and public activism alone—as we saw in Chapter 2, this strict dichotomy of private and public is too simple (Ostrom, 1990; Shirky 2010). Students should be trained and empowered to intervene as agents and knowledge-makers across, among, and in between the communities and sectors they hold stakes within.

Our available opportunities for engaging with, modifying, or supplementing networked systems of production will affect how we, whether as user-consumers or user-makers or something in between, choose to opt in or opt out of those systems. LibriVox in its processes and the technical documentation that evidences some of those processes seems to embody a broad, accepting generosity. In so many ways, this type of documentation stewards and acts to invite further action within this community, influencing not only the learning-together-with-technology of everyone involved, but also influencing the larger ideology of LibriVox the project, the archive, the crowd, and the community.

CHAPTER 5: REFLECTIONS ON THE PRESENTS AND FUTURES OF RESEARCHING DIGITAL CROWDSOURCING COMMUNITIES

One of my favorite things about recording PD material for LV is imagining the author sitting by my side, talking with me, thanking me for keeping their memory alive and for interpreting their words in lively fashion.

(Fry, 2018)

Some of us are making a stand about public, non-commercial space, about public domain, about the importance of efforts outside the pervasive commercial framework that dominates our world. But some of us are just reading because we like it. [...] Both are valid, both are important.

(McGuire, 2005c)

My participation and research within the world of LibriVox has taught me much (but not everything) about the project, its volunteers, its values, and also a few things about me, my expectations, and how everything can so gradually and unexpectedly change. In the years since I posted my very first, flawed test recording to the LibriVox forums in January 2015, at least 1,865 newer-than-me readers have signed up and 3,243 additional new audiobook projects have been finished, including works in four new-to-LibriVox languages (Spiegel, 2015; Groeneveld, 2018). The small list of projects I have directly contributed to has also grown— my voice is or will soon be included in 48 total projects ranging from cookbooks to children’s fiction, including one

completed solo (Longinus's *On the Sublime*), one dramatic work (Percy MacKaye's *Caliban and the Yellow Sands*).³⁵

My motives for participating with LibriVox were originally tied to a palpable intellectual and sensory enjoyment of reading aloud. Recording for LibriVox is fun and interesting for me, but it also oscillates between feeling like fun play and feeling like work. Making time for recording is not always easy. Arranging for the apartment, my husband, and our snoring little pug to remain suitably quiet during recording sessions is sometimes a challenge. Listening and re-listening to sections as I rerecord stumbled passages or edit out background traffic noises can be tedious and frustrating at times. Reading aloud to a machine in a quiet room also feels very different—somehow slightly *less*—than reading aloud to a live audience of family or friends. When I began volunteering, I didn't expect this specific material and emotional difference.

Despite the unexpected sense of emptiness that sometimes accompanies participation in LibriVox work, I value all of my experiences as a reader and volunteer. Reflecting on my volunteer work with the project thus far, I feel a combination of accomplishment, excitement in learning about stories and ideas I didn't know before, and a thousand warm fuzzies related to feeling included in something so generous and lasting. I also hold memories of feeling obligated or pressured, impatient, dismissed, embarrassed, and even irritated at various points during my LibriVox work, though these less-than-pleasant memories are far outweighed by nicer memories of feeling grateful, appreciated, proud, hopeful, and connected. To varying degrees, I've bonded with my fellow volunteers, built new collaborative relationships, and made new friends via this

35. As mentioned briefly in Chapter 4, I currently have another solo in progress, based on the 1899 facsimile edition of Leonard Cox's *Arte or Crafte of Rhetoryke*. There is also a short list of projects I'd like to complete with LibriVox someday: Alexander Hamilton's (1786) "The Reynold's Pamphlet"; perhaps Thoreau's essay "Wild Apples," from *Excursions* (1862), if not the full collection; the lengthy *English Prose: A Series of Related Essays for the Discussion and Practice of the Art of Writing* (1913), edited by Frederick William Roe and George Roy Elliott; and eventually a fascinating-sounding text by Dan McKenzie (1916) called *City of Din: A Tirade Against Noise*.

platform and project. To contribute meaningfully and enjoyably in a medium of storytelling and performance that I so appreciate as a listener feels rewarding and happy. In addition, I've made use of the LibriVox project as a case for valuable professional and technical communication research as well as semi-academic service and engagement. My appreciation for my place as a community member and the sense of accomplishment I feel in contributing is intertwined with the value I see in the project as a site of professional and technical communication scholarship.

I have approached the case of LibriVox with a deep curiosity about what such a project could or should mean for professional and technical communication and for digital publishing and circulation broadly. With this project, I've traced how LibriVox has grown from a particular set of moments, principles, and ideals. In noticing how its community practices have emerged from and been shaped by existing conventions and affordances, I've also explored how small and subtle decisions over time have further shaped those practices and conventions. I see volunteers at LibriVox practicing, sharing, and maintaining forms of invitational technical instruction that in turn help to maintain volunteers' relationships and participation across distances and cultures. Amid this practicing and sharing, volunteers carefully navigate and manage myriad tensions and disconnects that come up between LibriVox's established ideals and a somewhat idiosyncratic, collaborative workflow that relies heavily on volunteers' own individual ways of envisioning the public good.

As this exploration has shown, LibriVox volunteers take on many interlocking and variously visible types of work, from selecting and preparing texts to be read and recorded as audiobooks, to checking and managing audio contributions from dozens of fellow volunteers around the world. The accumulation of this work has helped volunteers establish and settle into a functional, productive collaboration across cultures, languages, and media. The attitudes and

values of this community welcome multiplicity in content, language, accent, workflow, and circulation. The case of LibriVox begins to extend what we understand about distributed groups creating documentation with the intertwining purposes of sharing technical information and building/sustaining a community.

The questions posed in my first chapter have influenced (while also being influenced by) the details and experiences I have attended to most during my study. How do LibriVox volunteers collaboratively create particular user-maker experiences for their past, present, and future members? They do so in diffuse and multiple ways, primarily in the LibriVox forums but also across other media (wiki, video, audio, social media). The many mediating components of volunteers' experiences are distributed in time and digital space, differently assembled and reassembled for every volunteer. What can we learn from this specific example of community-led, non-market production? We learn that the documentation and instructional material that amateurs create together in mediated, non-workplace environments can play important roles in inviting and stewarding a sense of digital community. Understanding and appreciating the invitational nature of technical communication in this community-based digital project should prepare us to recognize and value invitational technical communication elsewhere, expanding and re-defining professional and technical communication as needed. Furthermore, expanding our definitions of technical communication to include such open, public modes of community management and knowledge-sharing can also help us better prepare students to engage critically within the shifting and uncertain futures of 21st-century work.

Future Corridors of Research

My engagement with and research into LibriVox as a commons-based site of crowdsourced digital production and public professional and technical communication work has laid some groundwork for continued research into the histories and futures of this and other social digitization efforts. The questions that have so far guided my project, along with the beginnings of their answers, have always been tangled/imbricated with further questions. My curiosities about LibriVox have in many ways only deepened as I've engaged with this research and theorizing. Many more questions are waiting to be asked: What might the LibriVox project look like after 20 years, or 50 years? If the project persists for that long, or longer, what changes will future volunteers and future innovations in digital technology or recording equipment bring to how the project functions? And what influence will LibriVox's volunteer productions of free audiobooks continue to have on the processes and shapes of digital knowledge collections in general?

In this concluding chapter I again reckon with the inescapable limitations that prevent any fully accurate, comprehensive, comprehensible description of LibriVox, gratefully remembering Law's (2004) claim that attempting to collect a single straightforward narrative is sometimes "not only impossible, but counter productive" (p. 78). And so, in a spirit of concluding productively and generatively, rather than with any pretense of finality, I gesture now to a series of potential corridors through which I might extend my present research.

Volunteers' Values and Experiences

Perhaps the most attractive door we might open toward future research involves considering volunteers' particular experiences within the LibriVox project, investigating (via

additional podcast interviews, forum discussions, volunteer focus groups, or surveys) the ways in which individuals approach LibriVox and value their contributions. Volunteers' unique experiences are likely layered and varying, which is one reason I haven't yet attempted to access or explain them; however, gathering multiple volunteer perspectives could reveal patterns behind what aspects of the project, its processes, and its output volunteers collectively find most important. The personal/political rhetorics of volunteering work matter.

I expect volunteers at LibriVox would report a tangled multiplicity of overlapping motives, ranging from the especially personal to the most publicly-minded. One recurring and common narrative at LibriVox centers on contributing to a lasting legacy—recording beloved stories as if for one's grandchildren to enjoy someday. Others couch their motives in more global, political terms, almost to the point of considering their LibriVox contributions as subtle forms of digital activism. Both attitudes relate on some level to Musick and Wilson's (2008) observation that the act of volunteering in itself functions rhetorically, allowing volunteers to engage in "witnessing," "embodying a message" about what matters to them (p. 84). Many of the volunteers at LibriVox could be said to embody a message about literacy and the value of reading in their work. A more specific example of LibriVox volunteering as public, rhetorical activism was recorded in LibriVox Community Podcast Episode #109, "Looking Forward to 2010," where volunteer Availle (Ava) expressed a goal of only recording books on scientific topics until the number of books about science surpassed the number of books about religion in the LibriVox catalog (Iyer, 2010). This simple personal goal, grounded in a particular ideological stance, illustrates how the relatively undirected work of amateurs and volunteers can make small but meaningful differences in how the world's knowledge and information is stored and preserved and passed down across media and across time.

Like Availle, most LibriVox volunteers work on recording the texts that are meaningful, interesting, or attractive to them. Through the results of the choices they make, little by little, volunteers at LibriVox collectively influence what kinds of human culture and knowledge are being (and will be) collected, digitized, preserved, and consumed by global audiences. In turn, the kinds of culture available to people make a difference in who they are: the education they are allowed or able to access, the views they can discover, the histories they have available to consume or to contribute to, and the creative or economic or vocational decisions they can make. As Hyde (2010) writes, “our practices around cultural property allow us to be certain kinds of selves; with them we enable or disable ways of being human” (p. 213). LibriVox is engaged in a particularly open and inclusive project of cultural preservation, but its work and its catalog are not neutral, no matter how much LibriVox might try to be. Despite prevailing LibriVox policies that disallow censorship, bowdlerization, and abridgement, an almost invisible kind of macro-censorship takes place within the project anyway, driven naturally by what volunteers have so far chosen not to read. The perspectives and values of the volunteers who are driving this process deserve to be understood and studied further.

Content and Reception

Another broad avenue of future research will involve exploring what has so far been collected within the LibriVox audio archive and what hasn't, potentially tracing the archive's reception and circulation (and re-mix) beyond the tidepool of LibriVox itself. Some of my curiosities about the value and meaning of LibriVox and other crowdsourced digital publishing projects have been prompted by the sense of scholarly alarm I have sensed in some of my reading about digitization, digital humanities, and online culture (Shillingsburg, 2006; Helprin,

2009). Such concerns often take root in a persistent but relatively unhelpful dichotomy between the ultimate value of “quality” content versus quantity of content. How to handle (in terms of storage and in terms of structure/navigation/evaluation) the abundance of material being produced in digital form is a big and complex question, one which might invite scholars to interrogate the methods and approaches of other digital knowledge projects such as The Internet Archive, Project Gutenberg, or Wikimedia projects for what insights or answers they may offer to the challenge. Leaving aside subjective philosophical debates about quantity versus quality of digital texts, it is well within our realm of responsibility as technical communication scholars and practitioners to think about and experiment with ethical and productive ways of organizing and providing access to the vast and ever-accumulating cornucopia of digital content that exists. Whether that content is scholarly or popular, its preservation and accessibility matter for the communities of the future.

Pedagogical Implications

I look forward to experimenting with ways of bringing lessons from digital crowdsourcing communities into professional and technical writing classrooms. Looking to examples like LibriVox and other digital crowdsourcing projects can help us make students aware of crucial rhetorical relationships among people, documents, and media, especially in digitally mediated communities of practice. Such examples afford opportunities for students to observe and analyze public forms of professional communication among diverse audiences. Sites such as LibriVox also provide spaces where students can practice digital research methods using both primary and secondary sources. Students of professional and technical communication might also use digital project histories (similar if simpler in scale to those Chapters 2 and 3

attempt) to reflect on the practical and ethical dimensions of digital collaboration, whether “professional” or hobbyist, or somewhere in between. Attending more critically to the ways online communities are formed and how online projects can work may prepare students to understand and intervene in other distributed, potentially unstable workplace situations—for example, industries in process of being “disrupted” or transitioning toward a gig-based model.

As we recognize and think about volunteer, crowdsourcing projects like LibriVox as increasingly established institutions of digital publishing and public digital humanities work, we also remind ourselves and our students that all institutions were once new, contingent, and shaped by the small decisions of regular humans making things happen as best they could with what was around. Even the most longstanding and institutionally-supported projects—those with plenty of funding and tradition and scholarly prestige—likely began in the same ways LibriVox has—“because one person thought it was a good idea,” and because dedicated and generous individuals with a shared passion were able to add momentum to that idea, donating their time and resources; debating, developing, and documenting policies; and collaborating with the systems they developed in order to create something they believed in.

The Futures of Work

Building on existing scholarship surrounding work and shifting workplace norms (Spinuzzi, 2007; Weeks, 2011; Spinuzzi, 2015; Richardson, 2017), we might use the LibriVox project to continue interrogating various ideas about the future of work and workplace organizations. The rise of crowdsourcing projects and their surprising effects on professional institutions have been discussed in Howe (2008), Brabham (2016), and to a lesser extent Shirky (2010). These and other writers (Duffy, 2016; Beck, 2017; Richardson, 2017) have commented

on the blurring and even the erasure stark lines between the roles of consumer and producer. As these roles continue to shift and evolve, so too will the economies and labor conditions of future work and play.

LibriVox is not anyone's workplace. In many ways the organization seems to almost exist beyond capitalist frames altogether. LibriVox volunteers do not as a rule measure their success based on output or hours of productivity; their work is much more likely to be categorized as pure hobby or leisure, valued for the experience, memories, and feelings it engenders. However, as I reflect above, LibriVox and other social spaces of production are sites of legitimate labor. I do not mean to claim that such labor deserves monetary compensation, nor indeed any of the recognition we tend to assign to work in a traditional sense. Defining and valuing this type of public labor requires more nuance. As Star and Strauss (1999) discuss, what is "counted" as work may be marked by a "gamut of indicators"—physical, social, legal, and so on, and "All along this continuum, the visibility and legitimacy of work can never be taken for granted" (p. 15). How we conceptualize work, whether in terms of waged labor, expected community or institutional service, or amateur, "prosumer" endeavors, is not static but an ongoing negotiation. Volunteers' ongoing efforts within the LibriVox project prompt deeper thinking about the implications of what forms of work people are willing to take on, and why.

According to Beck (2017), such new reconfigurations of roles can contribute to the shifting of our digital habits and environments toward those that are more open, free, and welcoming/supportive of critical digital literacies across academic and non-academic communities. However, there are uncertainties and costs to account for, alongside the idyllic digital democracies we are often tempted to envision. Beck acknowledges, as do other scholars, how problematic it can be to expect or encourage users to perform the labor of content creation

or circulation just “for fun,” or because they are passionate about something (Beck, 2017, p. 43; Duffy, 2016; Duffy & Wissinger 2017). LibriVox does not expect, only invites its volunteers. This is in contrast to many social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest that profit from user-generated content and thus organize every interface to encourage it, in many cases without any offer of consistent compensation. Rhetorical impacts of these platforms are being considered already by scholars interested in the rhetoric of platforms (Edwards & Gelms, 2018; Gruwell, 2018; West & Pope, 2018; Faris, 2018; Trice & Potts, 2018; Hocutt, 2018). The nuances of distinguishing between inviting and expecting, and the ultimate implications and effects of either rhetorical approach, deserve further research, as do the roles of technical documentation, platforms and interfaces, and other non-human actors. Paying closer attention to these elements of our working relationships and meshworks will be crucial for understanding the conditions of labor that exist for volunteers, crowdsourcing participants, contractors in the gig economy, and others in non-traditional or contingent positions.

Practicing a Future

If our thinking-about and creating-with the cultural artifacts at our disposal can influence our modes of being, then having access to a greater multiplicity of perspectives has the potential to afford greater freedom and critical choice about those modes. The ways LibriVox has afforded open, public engagement, re-enactment, and re-circulation of cultural artifacts in audio form seems to most readily enable and encourage a generous, appreciative, almost celebratory mode of creative being, replete with an argument for the value of and for understanding each human voice as one among many, differently-beautiful voices. There is a sense of resilient solidarity

among volunteers, despite the fact that not many have ever met, and despite how some among them might feel about the way others' pronunciations or reading style.

The case of LibriVox offers a lens through which to examine the requirements for a sustainable digital volunteer-based publishing project. I recognize, with Fitzpatrick (2017), that “Real sustainability, after all, isn't just about revenue generation and cost recovery. It's about relationships, about personal and institutional commitment, about the willingness to work together toward long-term means of ensuring that the platforms we build today will not just survive but evolve with our technologies and the people who use them” (para ##### 1). The past, present, and ongoing collaboration happening at LibriVox offer valuable and practical lessons about platforms, technologies, and people successfully evolving together in the face of unexpected challenges. Despite the limitations and frictions that beset the LibriVox project from time to time, the community remains focused and committed to the contributions they've set out to make to the future of the public domain.

Involving more people in the processes of preserving human culture across new media will mean that more kinds of culture, more perspectives on and from that culture, and more embodied experiences with that culture will also be preserved, safeguarded, and made available to future generations. Invitational technical communication takes seriously the role of helping others envision and understand the richness and complexities of more potential future worlds. The roles of the stories and perspectives offered within the instructional documents we create contribute to this; such offerings can invite others to collaborate in offering their own experience and in ultimately building safer, more open, and more inclusive worlds. This observation resonates with another thought from Law (2004) on how un-fixed our present and future realities can be. “There is no universal reality,” he writes. “Realities are not secure but instead they have

to be practiced” (p. 15). What kinds of digital worlds and realities should we, as rhetoricians, scholars, and technical communicators, be practicing? As powerful corporations seem to be investing relentlessly in centralizing content and constraining the ways individuals can access, engage with, and share that content, the decentralized and distributed model of LibriVox works to preserve crucial modes of openness and access not only in its finished product, but also in its workflow and production processes. The LibriVox project and all those engaged with its diverse, transient crowd of book-lovers are practicing toward a world full of free audiobooks. This is not the only worthwhile brand of future to practice—it is one among many multiple and differently good kinds of future. Although sustaining as many elements of multiplicity as possible within public digitization projects may not be easy, practicing our best to do so for a free and diverse future is something very much worth doing.

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APPENDIX A. LIBRIVOX TIMELINE

The following chronology has been compiled using information primarily from LibriVox.org, from the LibriVox forums, and from all available episodes of the LibriVox Community Podcast. Other sources include Hugh McGuire’s personal blog archives at hughmcguire.net, a handful of other podcasts and websites. Along with notable moments and milestones from within LibriVox, I have included a few significant LibriVox-adjacent happenings. In late April 2018, several LibriVox volunteers reviewed a draft of the timeline. Many of their suggestions and corrections are now also included.

Table A1. Chronology of events relevant to LibriVox, 1997–2018

Year	Month / date	Notable happenings
2000		Precursors and prerequisites to podcasts emerge, particularly audio recordings distributed via RSS (Farivar 2014).
2001		Creative Commons is founded. Apple’s iPod is announced.
2003	July	Christopher Lydon and Dave Winer record the first podcast to be known as such: <i>Radio Open Source</i> (Farivar, 2014).
	September	Steve Gillmor and Doug Kaye begin producing the podcast <i>IT Conversations</i> (Farivar, 2014).
2004	February	Alex Wilson launches <i>Telltale Weekly</i> , a podcast and catalog of “cheap-now, free-later recordings” from the public domain. See Figure I1. http://alexwilson.com/telltale/ http://alexwilson.com/telltale/podcast/the-glove-and-the-lions/ http://alexwilson.com/telltale/justin-meckes/stories-from-asheville/
	March 26	Blogger AKMA initiates a small-scale crowdsourced audiobook version of Lawrence Lessig’s new book <i>Free Culture</i> , initially produced and hosted by volunteers, later uploaded to archive.org (See Figure I2). https://web.archive.org/web/20040401175406/http://akma.disseminary.org/archives/001253.html http://akma.disseminary.org/2014/03/we-started-something/ http://akma.disseminary.org/2004/03/lets-start-something/ https://archive.org/details/free-culture-audiobook
2005	January	Mainstream broadcasters including the Canadian Broadcasting Company, the BBC, and NPR begin distributing programs as podcasts (Newits, 2005; Farivar 2005).

...2005	May 9	Blogger Jan begins using her website <i>Urban Art Adventures</i> to host a serialized audiobook version of D.H. Lawrence's <i>Lady Chatterly's Lover</i> (see Figure I3). https://web.archive.org/web/20050525171232/http://blog.urbanartadventure.com:80/
	July 23	Blogger and eventual LibriVox Volunteer e (Eileen) launches The Public Domain podcast and blog, with goals similar to those LibriVox will take up a month later. http://publicdomainpodcast.blogspot.com/2005/07/welcome.html
	August 10	Hugh McGuire introduces the LibriVox project at <i>librivox.blogsome.com</i> (See Appendices B and C). https://web.archive.org/web/2008011213936/http://hughmcguire.net:80/2005/08/10/librivox-public-domain-books-for-your-ears/
	August 11	The first LibriVox book project, <i>The Secret Agent</i> , is announced and volunteer readers sign up for all 13 chapters.
	August 23	Paula Bernstein interviews McGuire for her podcast <i>The Writing Show</i> . https://web.archive.org/web/20101222032409/http://writingshow.com/podcasts/2005/08232005.html
	Sept 12	A post about LibriVox over at <i>BoingBoing</i> attracts several more volunteers (see Appendix D). https://boingboing.net/2005/09/12/public-domain-books.html
	Sept 15	LibriVox reaches out and begins negotiating more official partnerships with both Project Gutenberg and The Internet Archive. https://librivox.org/2005/09/15/news-of-note/
	Sept 26	LibriVox forums are established, donated by volunteer kri (Kristin LeMoine). Six audiobooks are in progress. See Figure G1. https://librivox.org/2005/09/15/news-of-note/
	October 15	Volunteer kayray (Kara Shallenberg) completes and catalogs the first LibriVox solo recording, L. Frank Baum's <i>The Road to Oz</i> . https://librivox.org/the-road-to-oz-by-l-frank-baum/ https://librivox.org/2016/08/01/milestones/
	October 16	The second LibriVox solo project, <i>The Mysterious Affair at Styles</i> by Agatha Christie, is cataloged. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?p=7475#p7475 And https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=39 Due to copyright claims from the Christie estate, the recording is no longer available at LibriVox. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?p=95005#p95005 (2007) https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=3219 (2006)
	October 22	The project announces a move from its original home at <i>librivox.blogsome.com</i> to a new blog at <i>librivox.org</i> . Hosting and technical support for the new <i>librivox.org</i> site are donated by digisage (Dan Parsons), who was married at the time to volunteer kayray (Kara Shallenberg).

...2005	October 25	LibriVox is invited by The Internet Archive to attend the Open Library launch, an event sponsored by the Open Content Alliance. At that event McGuire shared the project's status as of Oct 18, 2005: There were 65 volunteers, 27 of whom had recorded something. There were 4 books completed, 7 solos complete or in progress, and the project's goal was to have 20 finished projects by the end of 2005; 100 finished by the end of 2006. https://librivox.org/2005/10/27/report-on-open-library-launch/
	October 28	Washington Irving's <i>Old Christmas</i> is cataloged. This seems to be the first full LibriVox project to reference "librivox.org" in the disclaimer, rather than "librivox.blogsome.com." https://librivox.org/old-christmas-by-washington-irving/
	November 3	Volunteers begin discussing a database-driven system to manage recording projects and sign-up readers. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=22&t=157
	November 4	Chapter 13 of <i>The Secret Agent</i> is completed and posted to the LibriVox blog. https://librivox.org/2005/11/04/secret-agent-chapter-13/
	November 5	Volunteers begin brainstorming and discussing the design and structure of a searchable catalog.
	November 12	LibriVox produces the first round of Weekly Poetry, with "In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae. https://librivox.org/in-flanders-fields-by-john-mccrae/
	November 16	An uploader tool specifically for LibriVox coordinators is made available —The Validator, written by volunteer tis (Chris Goringe). (McGaughey, 2007c).
	November 20	First official Weekly Poetry project begins: Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Cow." This is the first project to include a shortened form of the LibriVox disclaimer.
	December 20	Proposals for a "rating" or "voting" system for listeners to judge recordings are discussed and ultimately rejected. ³⁶ https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=454
	December 23	The first non-English recording is published: Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei, by Friedrich Engels. https://librivox.org/manifest-der-kommunistischen-partei-von-karl-marx-und-friedrich-engels/

36 The idea of rating or judging readers' performances according to subjective measures is commonly suggested and consistently rejected by LibriVox members. Additional examples of these discussions can be perused in the following threads: <https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=23&t=11408> (2007)
<https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=16045> (2008)
<https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=21411> (2009)
<https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=20041> (2009)
<https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=17868> (2009)
<https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=31977> (2011–2018)

	December 26	In the “Happy New Year with LibriVox” podcast, McGuire tells Paula Bernstein of <i>The Writing Show</i> that LibriVox has completed 12 or 13 full projects, with 60 or 70 more in progress; there are 195 active volunteers and around 25 new volunteers seem to join every week (segment included in Mowatt, 2007b).
2006	January 5	Discussions about instituting prooflistening begin https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=669
	January 8	The prooflistening forum “Listeners & Editors Wanted” is opened. Volunteer Gesine adds a helpful “read this before posting” thread to the top of the Readers Wanted: Books forum. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?p=6427
	January 29	First LibriVox project in Latin is cataloged. https://librivox.org/biblia-sacra-vulgata-psalmi-xxii/
	February 1	The first German solo project is recorded and cataloged at LibriVox: Wilhelm Raabe’s “Die Schwarze Galeere.” https://librivox.org/die-schwarze-galeere-von-wilhelm-raabe/
	February 6	The first Short Story Collection is cataloged. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=606 https://librivox.org/short-story-collection-001/
	February 13	Standards for sample rates are established and other technical specifications are reiterated: “Bitrate MUST be 128kbps Sample rate MUST be between 44100Hz and 22050Hz Bit Depth 16” (kayray, 2006). https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=1356
	February 14	New LibriVox catalog-in-development is set up via sourceforge.net
	February 16	A new LibriVox wiki is unveiled at http://librivox.org/wiki , set up by volunteer Squiddhartha (Mark Bradford).
	March 4	The first Japanese recording is cataloged. https://librivox.org/oku-no-hosomichi-by-matsuo-basho/ https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=1586
	March 12	The first Wikipedia entry for LibriVox is created by Wikipedian WAS 4.250. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=LibriVox&oldid=43503544
	March 16	The 100th LibriVox book, a collaborative recording of Walt Whitman’s <i>Leaves of Grass</i> , is cataloged.
	March 29	The first Russian text, a poem by Alexander Pushkin, is cataloged. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=1847 https://librivox.org/krasavitse-by-alexander-pushkin/
	May 2	The first Hebrew project is cataloged. https://librivox.org/the-bible-the-book-of-genesis
	June 3	A new forum member suggests creating CD cover images to accompany LibriVox audiobooks. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=22&t=2500

...2006	July 10	https://librivox.org/short-poetry-collection-009/ First Spanish recording is included in a short poetry collection
	July 17	The first collection of French recordings is cataloged: https://librivox.org/epigramme-by-francois-maynard/
	June 19	Volunteers begin discussing how to celebrate the 1-year anniversary of LibriVox. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=2650 This thread includes many memories and copied artifacts from the very beginning of the project.
	June 23-24	McGuire attends the first Podcasters Across Borders conference in Kingston, Ontario http://www.podcastersacrossborders.com/previous-pabs/pab2006/ and invites 40 other conference attendees to record versions of Dickenson's "Life: Poem XXI A Book" https://librivox.org/life-poem-xxi-a-book-by-emily-dickinson/
	July 28	The first "bloopers" thread is opened in the LibriVox forums. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=3020
	August 2	LibriVox notices someone selling LibriVox content on CD via ebay https://librivox.org/2006/08/02/librivox-on-ebay/ . ³⁷
	August 7	LibriVox volunteers complete their first dramatic work, Oscar Wilde's <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> : https://librivox.org/2006/08/07/librivox-milestone-our-first-play-is-complete/ The second completed dramatic work, a German play called <i>Leonce und Lena</i> by Georg Buchner, is cataloged the same day. https://librivox.org/leonce-und-lena-by-georg-buchner/
	August 10	LibriVox celebrates its first anniversary, having completed 256 published audiobooks and attracted 1992 registered forum members (Mowatt 2007d). Volunteers MermaidMaddie and Starlite (2006) organize and produce a special First Anniversary Podcast incorporating memories and reflections from many others on how much the project has grown in just one year. https://librivox.org/2006/08/12/our-anniversary-special-is-complete/ https://archive.org/details/lv_anniversary_2006
	August 25	<i>The New York Times</i> publishes a profile of LibriVox, some of its volunteers, and various other public domain audiobook projects (Silverman, 2006). https://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/25/books/25audi.html
	September 14	The first Italian solo recording is cataloged: https://librivox.org/le-avventure-di-pinocchio-by-c-collodi/
	September 15	Volunteer Jim Mowatt spearheads the LibriVox Community Podcast series https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=22&t=3615 (Figure F5).

37 This issue and its ethical, legal, and practical implications is brought up fairly regularly at LibriVox. Further examples of discussions on this topic can be accessed in these threads:

<https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=23&t=15313>

<https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=4571>

<https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?t=6091>

The gist of LibriVox's usual response is covered by blogger Jesse Willis (2008) here

<http://www.sffaudio.com/commentary-librivox-makes-being-cool-look-easy/> and on the LibriVox blog here

<https://librivox.org/2008/05/14/blogdesk-librivox-ebay/>

...2006	October 5	LibriVox adds its 300th completed project to the catalog.
	October 6	Project Gutenberg begins adding links to LibriVox audio to their listings https://librivox.org/2006/10/06/librivox-listed-on-gutenberg-pages/
	October 22	Volume 1 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights is released in 21 languages, including Latin, Esperanto, Walloon, and both American and British Englishes. https://librivox.org/the-universal-declaration-of-human-rights-by-the-united-nations/
	November 2	Several LibriVox volunteers, under the direction of Gesine, begin collaborating to complete the National Novel Writing Month challenge and record their work for LibriVox as a "promotional piece." https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=3892 https://librivox.org/2006/11/02/the-librivox-nanowrimo-project/ https://librivox.org/the-librivox-nanowrimo-novel-2006/ The text of the novel is compiled here https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aQXmgRQcWxuYqzSb6SWnrLSAz_Go1ggQMwoxFdCFGt4/edit?pli=1 The completed audio version is eventually cataloged in February 2007.
	December 3	Volunteer DSayers brings up the issue of screenless mp3 players and the order of the disclaimer. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=4410 "[Chapter/Section] of [Book title.] This is a LibriVox recording. All LibriVox recordings are in the public domain. For more information, or to volunteer, please visit: librivox DOT org" is proposed. The issue had previously been brought up and dismissed in January of 2006 https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=1141
	December 5	LibriVox and an interview with Hugh McGuire are featured on the Creative Commons blog https://creativecommons.org/2006/12/05/librivox/
	December 6	New instructions for intro/disclaimer are added to project templates; the policy of reading chapter/section numbers first applies to new projects.
	December 18	The first LibriVox Christmas Carol Collection is published. https://librivox.org/christmas-carol-collection-2006/
	December 18-27	Volunteer earthcalling (David Barnes) proposes a collaborative recording of Shakespeare's <i>King Lear</i> to be completed in only one week's time, to be ready for the 400th anniversary of the play's original performance on Boxing Day 1606. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=4679&p=77429
2007	January 3	A new searchable catalog database is unveiled, including genre categories such as Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Dramatic Works, etc. The update also allows for "magic windows" (embedded iframe code) to be added to each project thread, streamlining the project management process. (Drake, 2007). https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=4995
	January 16	The LibriVox blog is hacked due to out-of-date Wordpress security and exposure to malware; temporarily out of commission. https://librivox.org/2007/01/16/we-got-hacked/

...2007	January 20	A rare (at LibriVox) internet troll argues to “eradicate the disclaimer” on all LibriVox recordings. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=5417
	January 29	Lewis Carroll’s “Jabberwocky” breaks a record for most readers participating in weekly poetry: 34 total. https://librivox.org/jabberwocky-by-lewis-carroll/
	February 22	The “UK chapter” of LibriVox gathers for the first time. Volunteer earthcalling (David Barnes) hosts PeterWhy (Peter Yearsley), jimmowatt (Jim Mowatt), and Cori (Cori Samuel), who record some poetry together. (Mowatt, 2007a).
	February 24-25	Volunteers ducttapeGuy and Hugh McGuire attend Podcamp Toronto (McGaughey, 2007a). https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=5158 McGuire presents “How to get 2475 people reading audiobooks” and reports that LibriVox has completed 450 books, with 350 books in progress. (McGaughey, 2007b)
	March 4	LibriVox kicks off a month-long push to finish as many projects as possible, calling it “March Maddness” Volunteers post personal goals for what the hope to complete during the month. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=6377
	March 15	LibriVox attracts fifty thousand unique visitors in one day, boasting more traffic than the popular site BoingBoing. (Mowatt, 2007b).
	March 19	The 500th LibriVox project is cataloged: https://librivox.org/the-getting-of-wisdom-by-henry-handel-richardson/ The Getting of Wisdom by H. H. Richardson. This project took about one year to complete. (Mowatt & McGaughey, 2007).
	March 22	Project Gutenberg’s band of Distributed Proofreaders completes its 10,000th proofread text.
	March 27	A LibriVoxateers song is written and posted by earthcalling (David Barnes). The song is featured in LibriVox Community Podcast episodes 32, 44, 93, 100, and 104. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?p=110943#p110943
	March 31	71 total projects are cataloged during the month of March—at the time 18% of the entire catalog. http://hughmcguire.net/2007/04/01/70-works-march-madness/ https://librivox.org/2007/04/01/march-madness-70-works-cataloged/ (Drake & McGaughey, 2007).
	April 5-14	LibriVox recordings are featured in New York City’s Chelsea Art Museum http://hughmcguire.net/2007/04/13/librivox-in-nyc-art-gallery/ http://cailun.info/index.php?/archives/242-Touch,-Listen-2007.html http://cailun.info/index.php?/archives/239-10-Years-Running.html
	April 11	Volunteer Starlite (Esther) posts the 100,000th forum post. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=7369 https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?p=113972#p113972

...2007	April 14	Jon Udell contributes a handy script allowing listeners to subscribe to LibriVox books via iTunes. https://blog.jonudell.net/2007/04/14/podcast-feeds-for-librivox/
	April 18	Jon Udell's interview with McGuire for the IT Conversations podcast is published (Udell, 2007). http://web.archive.org/web/20130729204730/http://itc.conversationsnetwork.org/shows/detail1783.html
	April 23	A total of 1,000 volunteer readers have donated their voices to the catalog.
	April 24	<i>Reason</i> magazine profiles LibriVox in an article about "Classic texts, amateur audiobooks, and the grand future of online peer production" (Erard, 2007). http://reason.com/archives/2007/04/24/the-wealth-of-librivox
	May 2	The VoxForge project reaches out to LibriVox seeking raw audio files for use in developing and testing open source speech recognition tools. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=8265 http://www.voxforge.org/home/forums/message-boards/acoustic-model-discussions/librivox-data
	May 4-6	Several volunteers organize meet-ups around the world (McGaghey, Eastman, & Starlite, 2007). https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=5158
	May 7	Volunteer Gesine amends the new project generator template to include information about authors' death dates, since this matters for determining public domain status outside in places outside the US—particularly Europe, Canada, and Australia. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=7508&p=121173#p121173
	June 16	LibriVox publishes an exceptional, quirky collaborative recording of James Joyce's <i>Ulysses</i> for Bloomsday: a "chaotic performance of Joyce's chaotic work" https://librivox.org/2007/06/16/james-joyces-ulysses/ http://hughmcguire.net/2007/06/16/happy-bloomsday/ https://librivox.org/ulysses-by-james-joyce/ https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=199
	June 22-24	McGuire presents again at Podcasters Across Borders 2007 http://www.podcastersacrossborders.com/previous-pabs/pab2007/ on "How Podcasting will Save the World" http://hughmcguire.net/media/pab2007/img0.html
	July 2	Volunteer cloudmountain (Alan Drake) compiles the first "New Releases" podcast, which runs bi-monthly for the next year or so. https://archive.org/details/LibrivoxNewReleasesPodcast https://librivox.org/category/new-releases-podcast/
	July 13	First solo in Esperanto is cataloged. https://librivox.org/dr-esperantos-international-language-introduction-and-complete-grammar-by-ll-zamenhof/
	July 31	At the end of a "Jumping July" clean-up month, volunteers have completed 77 projects—a new record. Volunteers look forward to another clean-up month in October (Mowatt 2007c).

...2007		The suggested “peter piper” test script for 1-minute tests seems to have been added to the wiki between June and Aug 2007, according to the edit history of the page.
	August 2	a.r.dobbs (Anita Roy Dobbs) announces the August Docurama (Mowatt 2007d). Volunteers organize with a goal of cleaning up the how-tos and other documentation in the forums and the wiki. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=9792
	August 10	LibriVox celebrates a second anniversary, with 802 total completed projects and hopes to triple that number by the end of Year 3.
	August 30	A new central LibriVox uploader tool is made available, courtesy of volunteer and sever administrator digisage (Dan Parsons): http://upload.librivox.org This tool provides a link for project files that stays the same across the life of the project (Scott & Ticktockman, 2007).
	September 6	The LibriVox Community Podcast celebrates 1 year of weekly episodes (LibriVox Volunteers, 2007).
	September 13	<i>PC Magazine</i> features LV on a Top 100 undiscovered websites (Scott & Ticktockman 2007b). http://www.pcmag.com/slideshow/213919/top-100-undiscovered-websites/45?backTo=213919
	October 2	LibriVox joins twitter @librivox . http://twitter.com/librivox
	October 4	Volunteer Robert Scott solicits input for custom LibriVox recording software (Scott, 2007). Ideas for such a program don’t really go anywhere, unfortunately.
	October 30	The 1000th LibriVox audiobook, read by volunteer reynard (Reynard T. Fox), is published: Edgar Allen Poe’s <i>The Murders in the Rue Morgue</i> (Samuel, 2007; Hughes, 2007). http://librivox.org/the-murders-in-the-rue-morgue-by-edgar-allen-poe/ https://librivox.org/2007/10/31/librivox-reaches-1000/
	November	Volunteers again participate in a collaborative NaNoWriMo project https://librivox.org/2007/11/01/librivox-nanowrimo/ https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=10442 https://librivox.org/the-yellow-sheet-by-librivox-volunteers/ cataloged the following January.
	November 15	The 100th non-English project is added to LibriVox (Barnes, 2007).
	December	Creative Commons turns 5 years old (McGaughey 2007d).
2008	January 6	After some updates to the database, Dedicated Prooflisteners (DPLs) are now officially credited in the LibriVox catalog. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=11998
	January 19	Jon Udell speaks at the 2008 Canadian University Software Engineering Conference and mentions LibriVox as an example of social production. https://librivox.org/2008/01/23/jon-udell-on-librivox-the-noosphere/ https://blog.jonudell.net/2008/01/23/hacking-the-noosphere/ http://jonudell.net/talks/cusec/cusec.html

...2008	January 31	Amazon acquires audiobook publisher Audible. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=12328
	February 20	Volunteer Sibella (Sibella Denton) has recorded 1000 total sections for LibriVox, the first volunteer to reach that milestone. ³⁸ https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?p=215543#p215543
	February 25	LibriVox is featured in the Toronto Star (Geist, 2008) https://www.thestar.com/business/2008/02/25/canadians_are_playing_key_role_in_books_20.html
	March 2	Volunteer DotL (Dorothy Lieder) passes away at the age of 92. It is likely she was one of the oldest LibriVox volunteers (McGaughey 2008). https://librivox.org/reader/1592
	March 14	The first 50 digits of pi are recorded and published in various silly styles for pi day (3/14). https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=12324 https://librivox.org/the-first-fifty-digits-of-pi/
	March 20	There are 1300 completed LibriVox projects, and more than 400 more in progress (Cori 2008a).
	March 22	LibriVox is selected as a finalist for the 2008 Stockholm Challenge—a contest open to projects “that use ICT to improve people's social and economic conditions and their environment.” (See Appendix J) https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=13086 (In-thread links to the award details and LibriVox’s entry are no longer working; limited information is accessible via the Wayback Machine).
	March 26	Debate arises concerning LibriVox’s principles of “no unasked-for criticism” and “everything stays in the public domain.” Hugh posts a few wise words in this thread: https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?p=226651#p226651
	April 6	Volunteer Great Plains posts lyrics to a LibriVox Song to the tune of “I’m Henry the 8th I am” https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=22&t=13306 Versions are later included in podcast ep. 80, 82, and 83 (Samuel, 2008c; Samuel, 2008d; Pilsbury, 2008).
	April 29	LibriVox surpasses 1400 completed recordings. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=13670
	May 18	The LibriVox London chapter meets, with Hugh as a guest. Cori, Carl, David, Graham, and Phillipa are also in attendance (Samuel, 2008c).
	May 21	Hugh McGuire and D.E.Wittkower attend the Stockholm Challenge as representatives of LibriVox. Their travel is funded in part by donations via Project Gutenberg. https://librivox.org/2008/05/14/librivox-the-stockholm-challenge/

38 As of Spring 2018, Sibella’s catalog page tallies 2,926 total sections, with the most recent having been cataloged in 2013.

...2008	May 29	The 1500th audiobook is added to the catalog. https://librivox.org/2008/06/03/librivox-115-and-1500/ https://librivox.org/four-great-americans-by-james-baldwin/
	May 31	LibriVox sets a new record for most audiobooks cataloged in a single month—115 projects total.
	June 29	Another LibriVox Song is composed, this time to the tune of “I Love the Mountains.” https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=22&t=14580&p=256078
	July 12	LibriVox surpasses 1600 completed projects and 750 completed solos (Pilsbury, 2008).
		The Second Life Literary Foundation includes a selection of LibriVox works in a virtual library within the game Second Life. https://librivox.org/2008/07/16/the-second-life-literary-foundation/
	July 24	200 total non-English projects are completed, including works in 21 different languages (Starlite 2008).
	August 10	Year 3 anniversary of LibriVox (Samuel, 2008e). https://librivox.org/2008/08/08/librivox-community-podcast-86-our-3rd-anniversary/
	November 5	LibriVox and Hugh McGuire are featured on the O’Reilly Tools of Change for Publishing blog. https://librivox.org/2008/11/06/librivox-on-oreilly/ http://toc.oreilly.com/2008/11/open-source-community-and-audi.html
	November 12	Volunteer Gesine explains where the term “Magic Window” came from. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=16524
	December 31	The 2000th LibriVox work is cataloged—Gibbons’ <i>Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire</i> (or maybe it was the Love Letters of Abelard and Eloise. Depending on whether you look at the LibriVox.org or the Archive.org version of the catalog (Samuel, 2009a). https://librivox.org/2008/12/31/librivox-reaches-2000/
2009	January 22	A LibriVox Facebook groups is created https://www.facebook.com/groups/46088852996/
	February 19	LibriVox celebrates the completion of 1000 solos. https://librivox.org/2009/02/20/librivox-community-podcast-098/ (Samuel 2009b).
	March	McGuire presents “LibriVox: Time, Love & Books” at the 2009 BookNetCanada Tech Forum. https://youtu.be/z-jHdHqQJKI https://librivox.org/2009/06/23/librivox-time-love-books/
	March 5	A special and unique knitting project is cataloged with accompanying photos of knitting projects completed using the patterns. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=16&t=10579 https://librivox.org/exercises-in-knitting-by-cornelia-mee/ http://www.knitting-and.com/wiki/category/exercises_in_knitting/

...2009	March 11	The Creative Commons organization announces the CC0 (Creative Commons Zero) waiver, meant to designate works donated to the public domain. https://creativecommons.org/2009/03/11/expanding-the-public-domain-part-zero/
	April 16	The 100th community podcast episode is released (Samuel, 2009c). https://librivox.org/2009/04/16/librivox-community-podcast-100/
	April 22	Cataloging progress is delayed due to changes at The Internet Archive (Samuel, 2009d). https://librivox.org/2009/04/22/project-cataloging-temporarily-delayed/
	July 23	The 2500th LibriVox audiobook is completed. https://librivox.org/2009/07/23/librivox-community-podcast-105/
	August 10	LibriVox celebrates its 4th anniversary (Starlite 2009). https://librivox.org/2009/08/10/librivoxs-fourth-anniversary-and-community-podcast-106/
	August 19	McGuire, with others, proposes a panel to the 2010 SXSW conference https://librivox.org/2009/08/19/sxsw-panel-when-every-book-is-connected/ . It's not apparent whether it was accepted.
	November 30	At the end of a clean-up month, 145 projects are completed, making this the most productive month of all time so far (Samuel, 2009e).
	December 19	Another Christmas Carol Collection is published for 2009. Additional carol collections have been catalogued every December since then. https://librivox.org/christmas-carol-collection-2009/
	December 26	The 3000th LibriVox project is cataloged: <i>The Red Planet</i> , by William John Locke. https://librivox.org/2009/12/27/librivox-3000/ http://librivox.org/the-red-planet-by-william-john-locke/
2010	January 16	Documentation to help coordinators use the Magic Window interface is created. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=23533
	February 24	LibriVox launches its first fundraising drive, with a goal to raise the \$20,000 needed to cover expenses for a couple of years. http://librivox.org/2010/02/24/librivox-needs-your-help/
	March 9	Fundraising efforts successfully raise \$23,000 (Samuel 2010a). http://librivox.org/2010/03/09/funding-goal-achieved-thank-you/
	April 25	A new way to collect thank-yous from listeners is introduced. The "thank a reader" function, organized by volunteer Gesine (Samuel 2010c; also ep 113 Gesine 2010). In this system, listeners could email thankyou@librivox.org with appreciative messages for particular readers, and admins would pass them along via the forums + private message. https://wiki.librivox.org/index.php?title=Thank_You&oldid=3224

...2010	August 10	<p>LibriVox celebrates its 5th anniversary. For the occasion, volunteer RuthieG (Ruth Golding) invites contributions to a special 5th anniversary collection—any short works with “five” in the title, in any language, were welcome. The collection expanded into three volumes (Perry, 2010). https://librivox.org/librivox-5th-anniversary-collection-vol-1-by-various/ https://librivox.org/librivox-5th-anniversary-collection-vol-2-by-various/ https://librivox.org/librivox-5th-anniversary-collection-vol-3-by-various/ https://librivox.org/2010/08/10/librivox-turns-five/ https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=22&t=27198&p=497189 The tradition of anniversary collections has continued every year since.</p>
	September 25	<p>Various Dutch LibriVox volunteers gather in Utrecht and record “Natuurlijke Historie voor de Jeugd” together. https://librivox.org/2010/09/25/dutch-fifth-anniversary-meeting/ https://librivox.org/natuurlijke-historie-voor-de-jeugd-by-de-schoolmeester/</p>
	October 7	<p>An interview with Hugh McGuire is posted on the Open Knowledge Foundation’s blog. https://blog.okfn.org/2010/10/07/interview-with-hugh-mcguire-founder-of-librivoxorg/ https://librivox.org/2010/10/10/open-knowledge-foundation-on-librivox/</p>
	October 15	<p>A new “bloopers” thread is created as continuation of its earlier and very long counterpart. This is the active thread for sharing bloopers as of 2018. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=28787</p>
	October 17	<p>Hugh McGuire’s commercial audiobook project Iambik launches, built on similar principles to LibriVox but for in-copyright material. See Figures I10 and I11. http://hughmcguire.net/2010/10/20/announcing-iambik-audiobooks/ https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/digital/content-and-e-books/article/44896-audiobook-publisher-iambik-launches.html</p>
	December 2	<p>“The Battle of Marathon” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning becomes the 4000th completed LibriVox project. https://librivox.org/2010/12/02/4000-projects/</p>
2011	April 28	<p>LibriVox volunteer tiz (Chris Goringe) works to update the LibriVox API to meet the new Open Digital Publishing System specifications. https://librivox.org/2011/04/28/librivox-api-ops/</p>
	May 1	<p>Hugh McGuire is interviewed by David Wilk for a WritersCast podcast series called Publishing Talks http://www.writerscast.com/publishing-talks-david-wilk-interviews-hugh-mcguire/ https://librivox.org/2011/05/04/interview-on-publishing-talks/</p>
	May 17	<p>LibriVox has now produced just over three full years of audio content https://librivox.org/2011/05/18/three-years-of-librivox/</p>
	May 23	<p>Volunteers suggest a European branch of the LibriVox project, hosted outside the US to allow for more public domain material to be recorded. Discussions begin that ultimately lead to the creation of Legamus.eu site and forums.</p>
	May 26	<p>LibriVox forums are hacked. https://librivox.org/2011/05/27/librivox-forum-hacked/</p>

...2011	May 27	The forums at legamus.eu open for prospective volunteers.
	June 4	Several server issues crop up over the next month, causing the catalog and forums to be taken offline intermittently for maintenance. https://librivox.org/2011/06/04/catalog-down-for-maintenance/ https://librivox.org/2011/06/24/librivox-forum-and-catalog-down/ https://librivox.org/2011/07/05/sorry-the-forum-is-down/
	August 3	LibriVox is featured in an essay by Michael Hancher (2011) in Rubery's edited collection <i>Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies</i> . An essay by LibriVox volunteer d.e.wittkower (Dylan E. Wittkower) is also included. ³⁹ https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=34920 https://www.routledge.com/Audiobooks-Literature-and-Sound-Studies/Rubery/p/book/9780203818039
	August 10	LibriVox celebrates a 6th anniversary (Golding, 2011). https://librivox.org/2011/07/31/happy-birthday-librivox-2/
	August 30	LibriVox servers are migrated to new systems over the next few weeks. https://librivox.org/2011/08/30/librivox-serversystems-migration/ https://librivox.org/2011/09/27/problems-with-newly-catalogued-items/
	September 11	The founder of Project Gutenberg, Michael Hart, dies at the age of 64. https://librivox.org/2011/09/07/rip-michael-hart-founder-of-project-gutenberg/ http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Michael S. Hart
	October 28	<i>Roderick Hudson</i> by Henry James was the lucky 5000th completed LibriVox project (Gonzalez, 2011). https://librivox.org/2011/10/28/5000-projects-in-the-catalog/ http://librivox.org/roderick-hudson-by-henry-james/
2012	April	LibriVox receives a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The money will allow for the hiring of developers to overhaul the catalog database and other behind-the-scenes LibriVox tools. https://librivox.org/2012/04/05/100-million-downloads-and-a-mellon-foundation-grant/ https://librivox.org/2012/04/05/jobs-were-hiring-a-tech-project-manager-and-a-developer/ https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=39186
	May	LibriVox hires Jeff Madsen as developer, Artom Lifshitz as system administrator, and Valerie Bock as project manager to take stock of the https://librivox.org/2012/04/05/jobs-were-hiring-a-tech-project-manager-and-a-developer/ https://librivox.org/2012/09/25/librivox-mellon-grant-update/

³⁹ The Call for Papers for this collection was circulated on the LibriVox blog. <https://librivox.org/2009/01/20/call-for-submissions-the-audiobook/>

...2012	June	<p>Work begins on the database overhaul, supported by the Mellon grant money received earlier in the year. The redesign work will continue for the next year (Gonzalez, 2012b).</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2012/06/25/librivox-mellon-grant-project-gets-underway/</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2012/09/25/librivox-mellon-grant-update/</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2012/12/12/rebuild-librivox-mellon-grant-project-update-2/</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2013/03/06/upgrades-coming-very-soon-to-our-forum-wiki-website/</p>
	August 10	<p>LibriVox turns seven (Gonzalez, 2012b).</p>
	October 2	<p>LibriVox catalogs its 6000th completed work: <i>The Princess Aline</i> by Richard Harding Davis, read by volunteer Carolin (Carolin Kaiser).</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2012/10/03/librivox-hits-6000/</p> <p>http://librivox.org/the-princess-aline-by-richard-harding-davis/</p>
	November 28	<p>LibriVox sites are taken down for a few days as everything is moved from Syntenic servers to Internet Archive servers.</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2012/11/27/librivox-will-down-for-maintenance-wed-nov-28-fri-nov-30/</p>
	December 19	<p>The first LibriVox audiobook in Ukrainian is published.</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2012/12/20/ukrainian-at-librivox/</p> <p>https://librivox.org/fables-by-glibov/</p>
2013	January 14	<p>Hugh McGuire commemorates the legacy of one of the public domain's "most gifted and passionate advocates," Aaron Swartz.</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2013/01/14/aaron-swartz-1986-2013/</p>
	March 7	<p>At a Thursday at 10am EST, LibriVox servers are taken down for major upgrades.</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2013/03/06/upgrades-coming-very-soon-to-our-forum-wiki-website/</p>
	July 3	<p>A second round of fundraising begins, with a goal of raising \$50,000 by the eight-year anniversary.</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2013/07/03/librivox-needs-your-help-2/</p>
	August 10	<p>LibriVox turns eight years old, with more than 5000 volunteer readers and close to 7000 completed audiobooks (Golding 2013).</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2013/07/13/librivox-languages/</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2013/08/10/librivox-8th-anniversary-podcast-new-beginning/</p>
	September 6	<p>A brand new LibriVox website design is unveiled. See Figures E11 and G8. This design has persisted since 2013.</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2013/09/06/new-site/</p>
	September 11	<p>The 7000th LibriVox project is cataloged: a German translation of several short works by Guy de Maupassant.</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2013/09/11/7000th-project-completed/</p> <p>https://librivox.org/ausgewaehlte-novellen-by-guy-de-maupassant/</p>

...2013	November 4	The 1000th non-English project is cataloged at LibriVox: Paul Keller's "Ferien vom Ich," read by volunteer GardnerofStars (Rebecca Braunert-Plunkett). https://librivox.org/2013/11/08/1000th-non-english-project/
	November 14	LibriVox admins address a trademark dispute with German media distribution company Libri GmbH. https://librivox.org/2013/11/14/librivox-libri-de/
2014	August 10	LibriVox turns nine. https://librivox.org/2014/08/10/librivox-ninth-anniversary-podcast-no-137/ (Golding, 2014).
	September 20	The 8000th LibriVox project is cataloged: an anonymous text called <i>Invention And Discovery: Curious Facts And Characteristic Sketches</i> , read by David Wales (Nater, 2014). https://librivox.org/invention-and-discovery-curious-facts-and-characteristic-sketches-by-unknown/ https://librivox.org/2014/09/29/librivox-community-podcast-138/
	November 6	An update to The Internet Archive's website design causes a mild ruckus among LibriVox volunteers. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=54224
	December 4	The Nominet Trust includes LibriVox in their annual list of 100 inspiring projects "using tech to change the world for the better." Others on the list include Black Girls Code, Freecycle, Maker Faire, and MinecraftEdu. https://librivox.org/2014/12/04/librivox-chosen-for-2014-nominet-trust-100/ https://www.socialtech.org.uk/nominet-trust-100/2014/
2015	January 14	Volunteer plaidisicle (Amelia Chesley, the creator of this document) posts an introduction post to the Introductions forum. https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=17&t=55066
	August 10	LibriVox celebrates 10 years (Golding, 2015). https://librivox.org/2015/08/01/our-10th-anniversary/ https://librivox.org/2015/08/10/librivox-19th-anniversary-podcast-no-140/
	August 19	The 9000th LibriVox project is cataloged: Darwin's <i>The Origin of Species</i> , read by Michael Armenta. https://librivox.org/the-origin-of-species-by-natural-selection-by-charles-darwin/ https://librivox.org/2015/08/19/librivox-completes-its-9000th-project/
2016	August 8	LibriVox reaches a total of 10,000 projects in the catalog, including 5,556 solos and 1,349 non-English recordings. https://librivox.org/2016/08/06/another-librivox-milestone-10000-projects/ https://librivox.org/strange-stories-from-a-chinese-studio-volume-1-by-songling-pu/
	August 10	LibriVox turns 11! For the first time, no celebratory LibriVox Community Podcast is created to mark the occasion.

...2016	October 14	<p>A server breakdown issue erases one month of in-progress work on the LibriVox forums. All volunteers' work uncatalogued work on projects from September 15, 2016 to October 14, 2016 is irrecoverably lost.</p> <p>https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=62480 https://librivox.org/2016/10/15/temporary-server-failure/ https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=62481 https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?t=62490</p>
2017	August 10	<p>LibriVox turns 12 (Chesley 2017b).</p> <p>https://librivox.org/2017/08/17/librivox-12th-anniversary-podcast-no-145/ https://librivox.org/2017/08/01/in-memoriam/</p>
2018	January 4	<p>The LibriVox forums get an updated look with some new features and different functionality.</p> <p>https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=23&t=68700</p>
	January 20	<p>YouTuber TheOdd1sOut made mention of LibriVox in a video. His large following caused a spike in traffic to LibriVox sites.</p> <p>https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=68937</p>
	April 1	<p>Volunteer Cori (Cori Samuel) spearheads April Adventures—an effort to get readers reading new genres outside their usual LibriVox fare.</p> <p>https://forum.librivox.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=69788</p>
	May 18	<p>Volunteer plaidisicle (Amelia Chesley) successfully defends this dissertation to four faculty members with Purdue University's Rhetoric and Composition graduate program.</p>

APPENDIX B. HUGH MCGUIRE'S LIBRIVOX ANNOUNCEMENTS

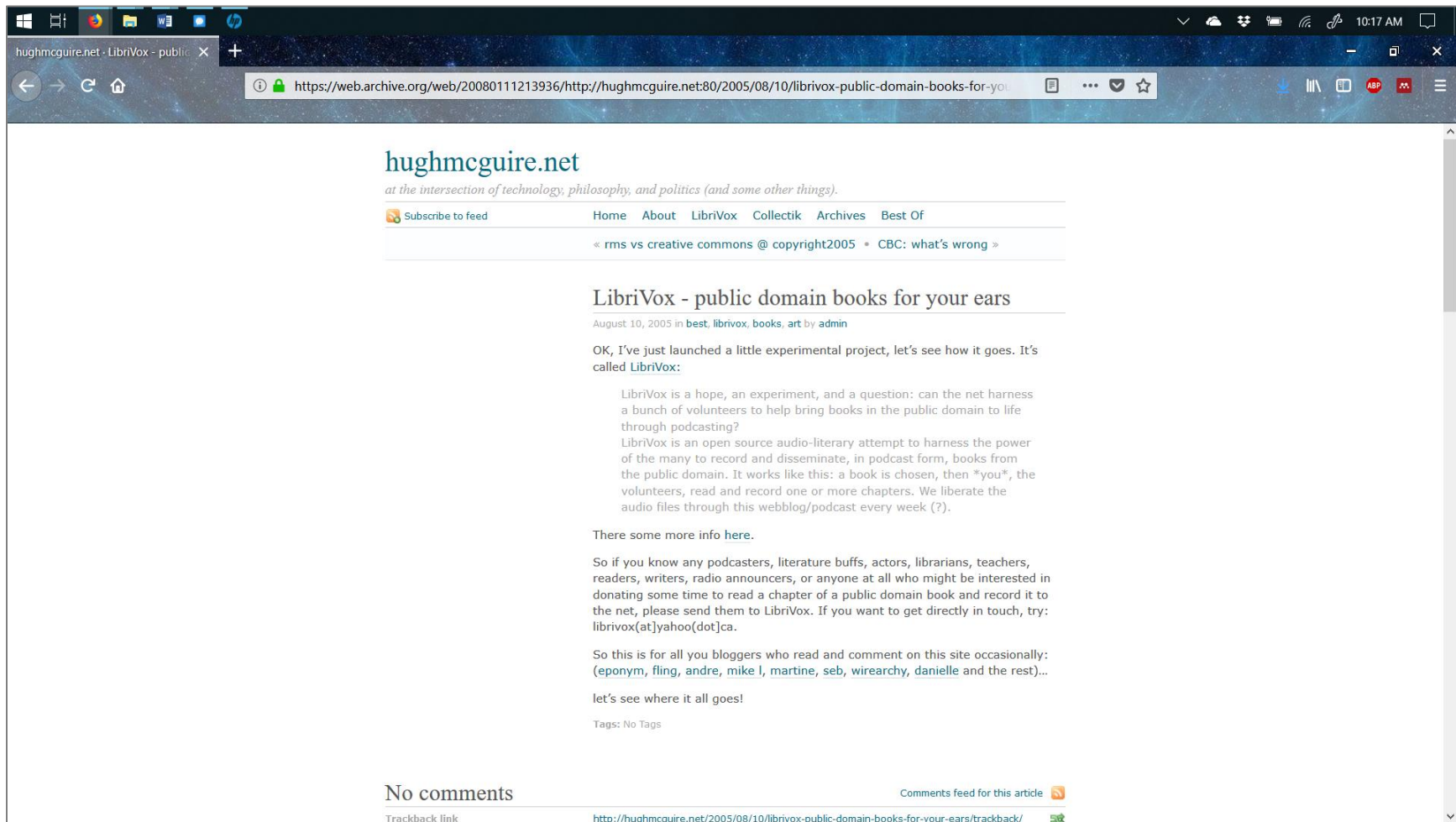


Figure B1. Hugh McGuire's announcement about LibriVox on his personal blog, August 2005.
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20080111213936/http://hughmcguire.net:80/2005/08/10/librivox-public-domain-books-for-your-ears/>)

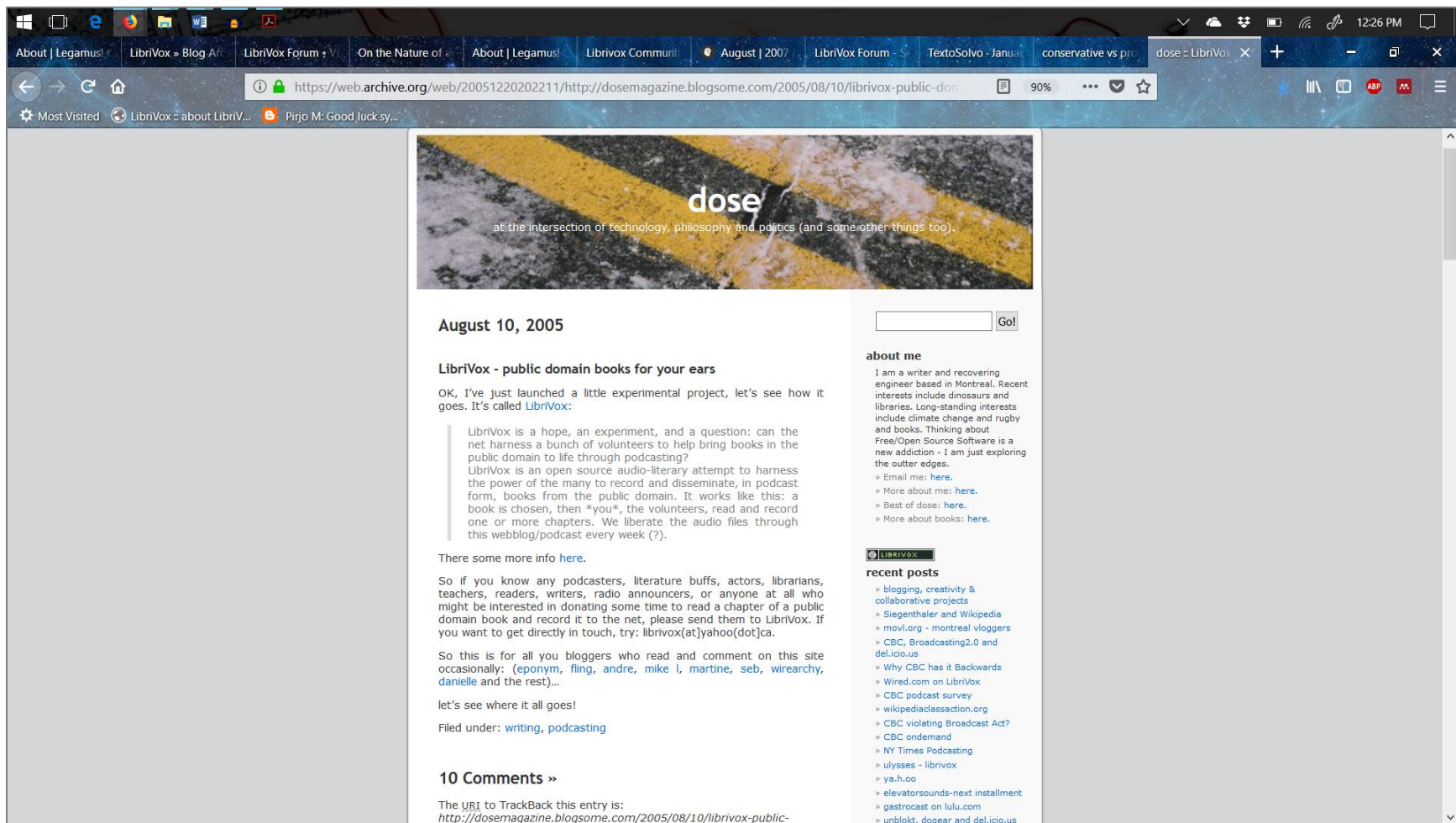


Figure B2. Hugh McGuire's duplicate announcement of LibriVox on the blog Dose.
 (<https://web.archive.org/web/20051220202211/http://dosemagazine.blogspot.com/2005/08/10/librivox-public-domain-books-for-your-ears/>)

APPENDIX C. SCREENSHOTS FROM ARCHIVED VERSIONS OF LIBRIVOX.BLOGSOME.COM



Figure C1. Archived version of the “Welcome to LibriVox” post at librivox.blogspot.com, August 2005



Figure C2. Archived version of the original “About LibriVox” page at librivox.blogspot.com

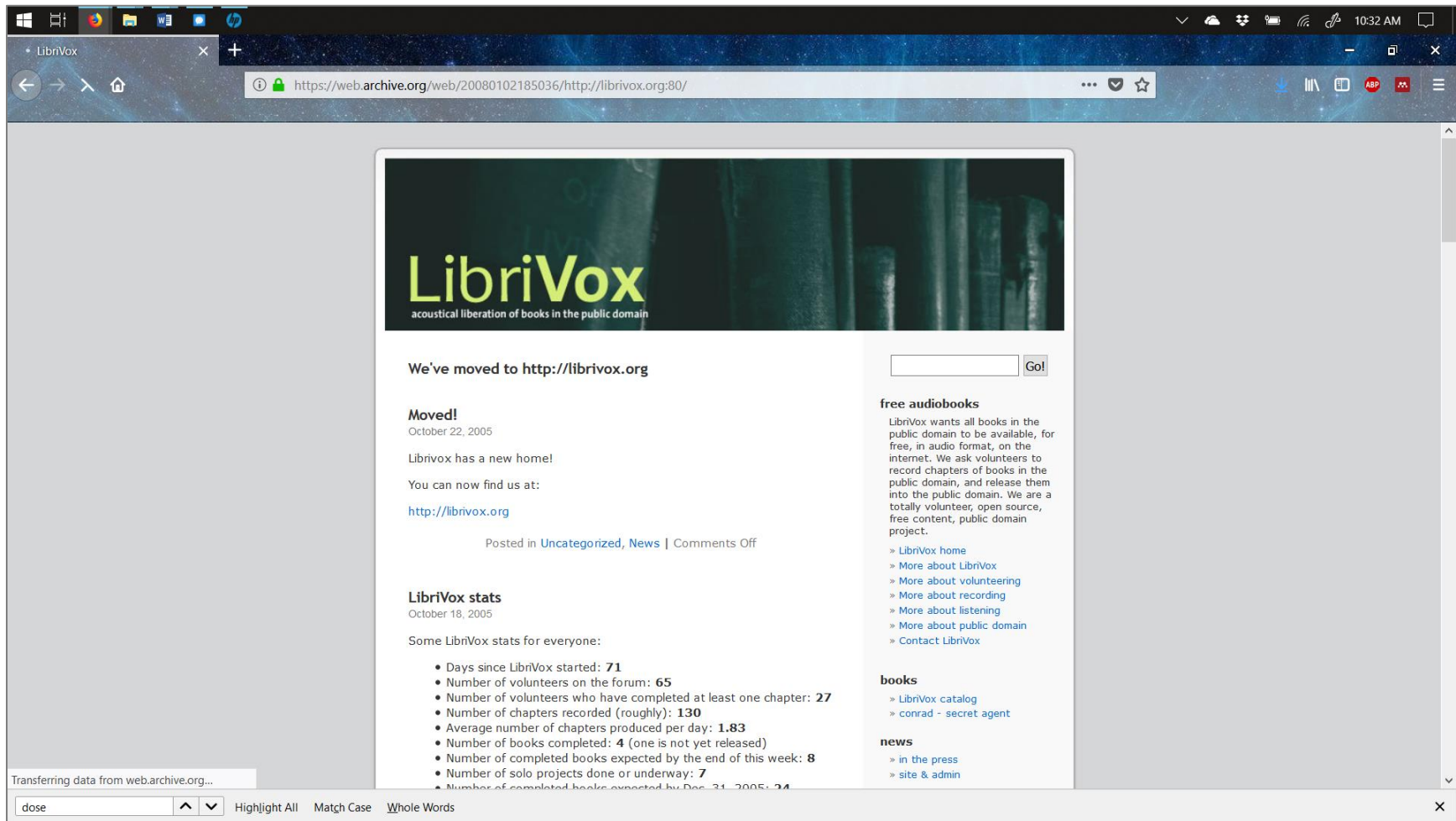


Figure C3. Archived version of the homepage at librivox.blogspot.com, October 2005, with a final “we’ve moved” post at the top and early LibriVox stats below. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080111213936/http://librivox.blogspot.com/>)

APPENDIX D. LIBRIVOX'S FIRST MENTION ON BOINGBOING

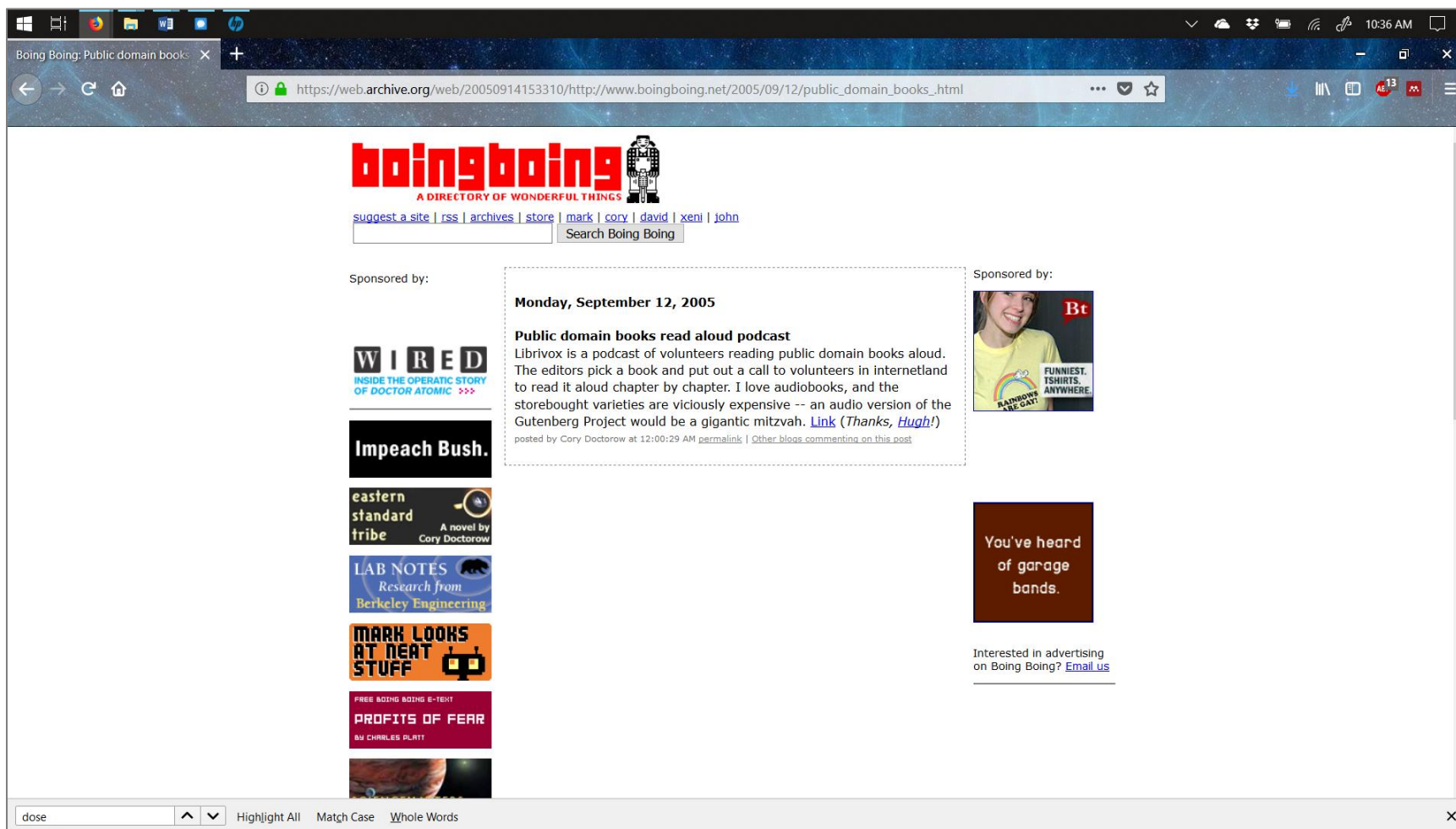


Figure D1. The first mention of LibriVox on Cory Doctorow's popular website BoingBoing, Sept 12, 2005. (https://web.archive.org/web/20050914153310/http://www.boingboing.net/2005/09/12/public_domain_books_.html)

APPENDIX E. SCREENSHOTS FROM ARCHIVED VERSIONS OF LIBRIVOX.ORG

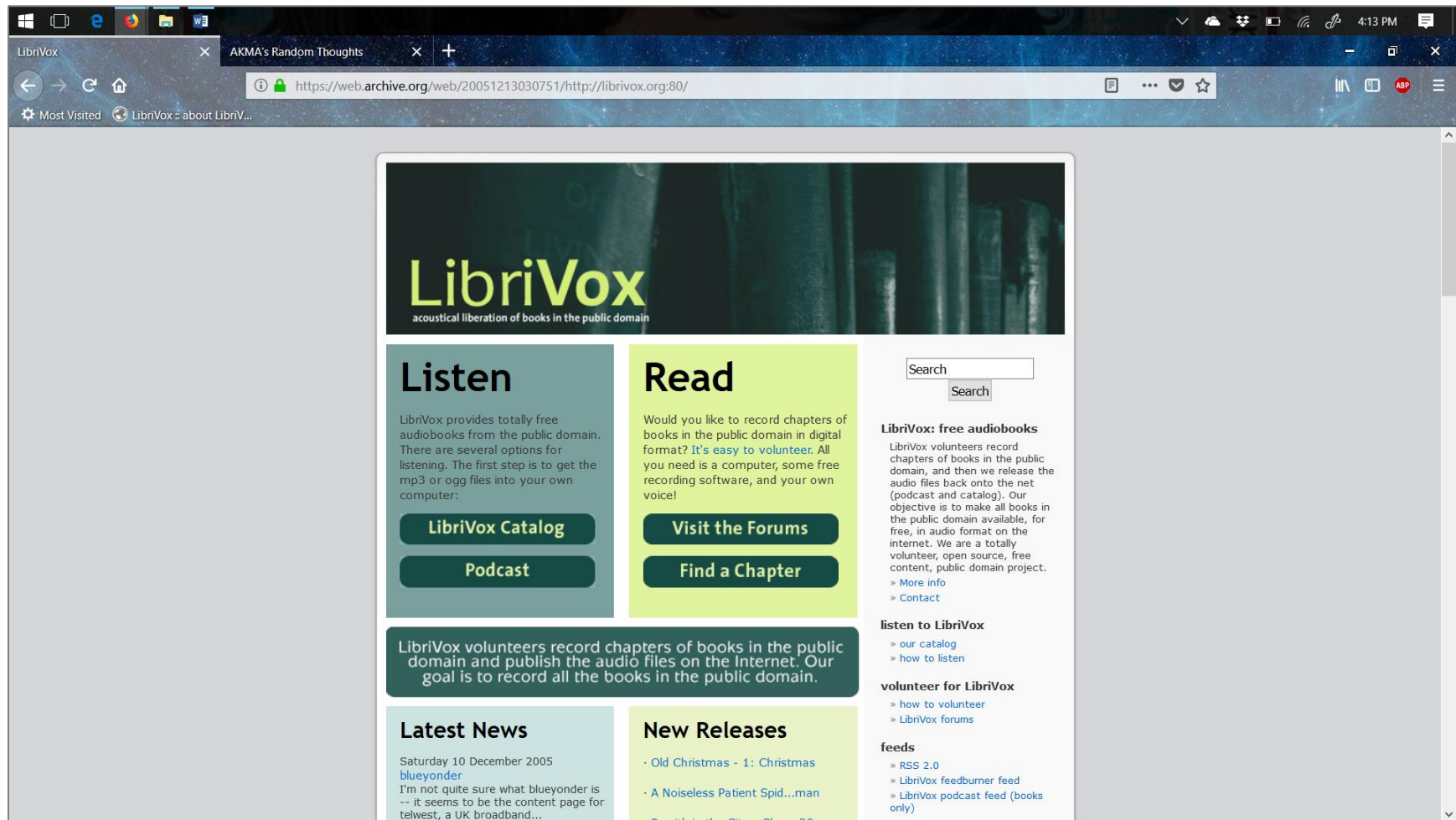


Figure E1. The LibriVox.org homepage as it looked when brand new in October 2005.



Figure E2: The “Volunteering for LibriVox” page as of October 2005.

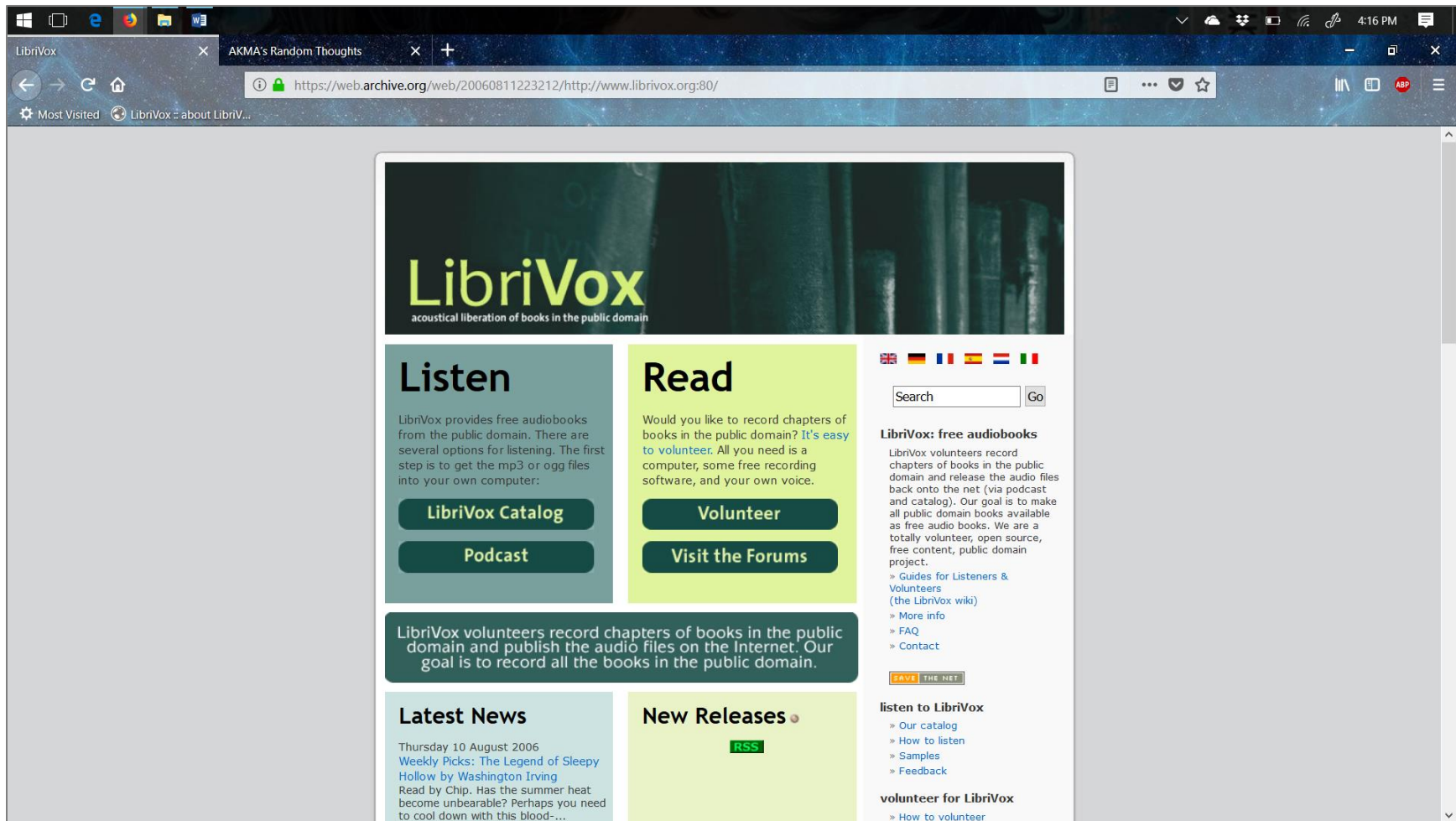


Figure E3. The LibriVox.org homepage as of August 2006, with pages offered in English, German, French, Spanish, Dutch, and Italian languages.

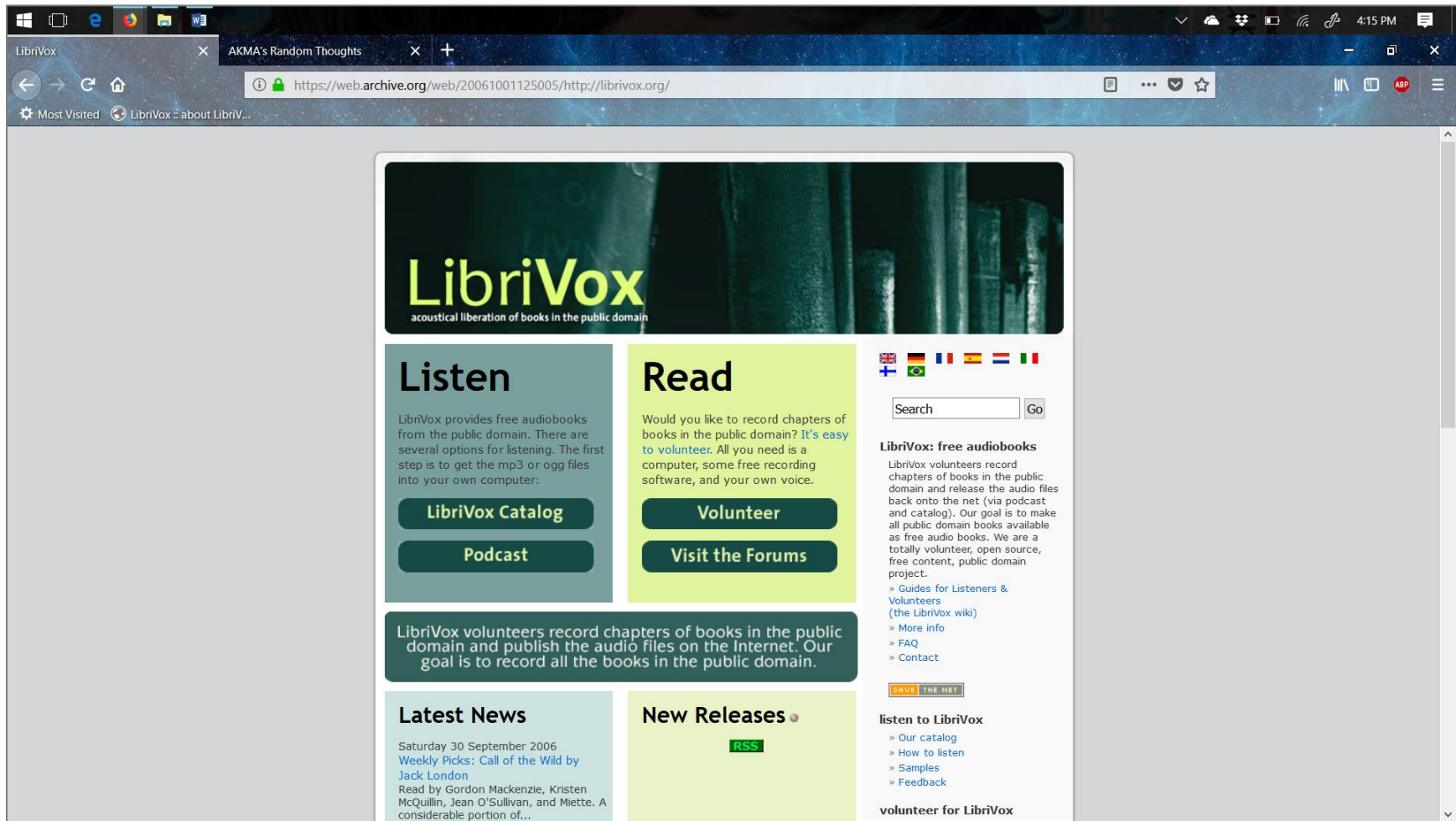


Figure E4. The LibriVox.org homepage as of October 2006, with Portuguese and Finnish languages added.

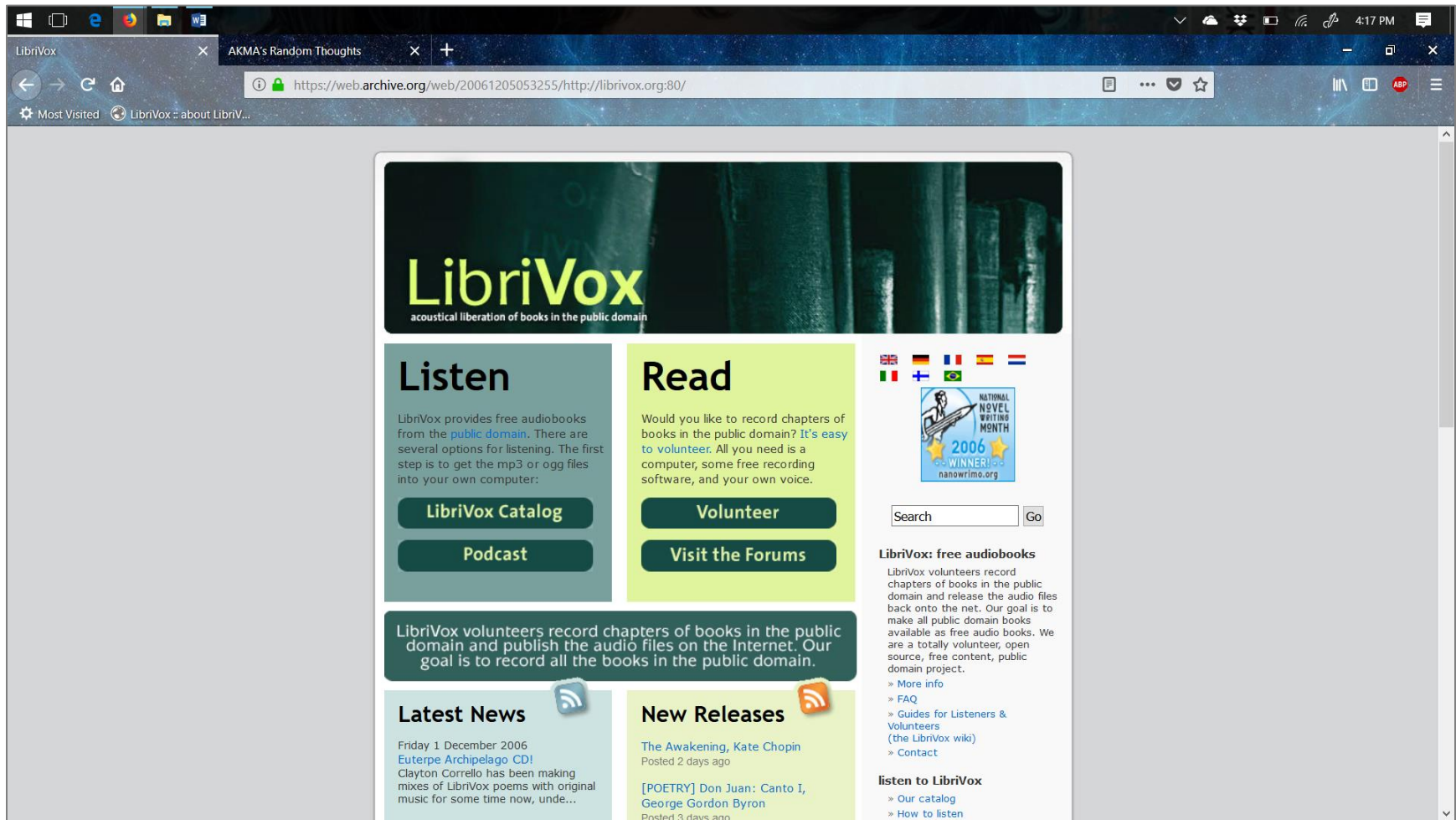


Figure E5. The LibriVox.org homepage as of November 2006, displaying a Nanowrimo badge.



Figure E6. The “old” LibriVox.org catalog page as of February 2007.



Figure E7. The new, searchable LibriVox catalog page as of February 2007.

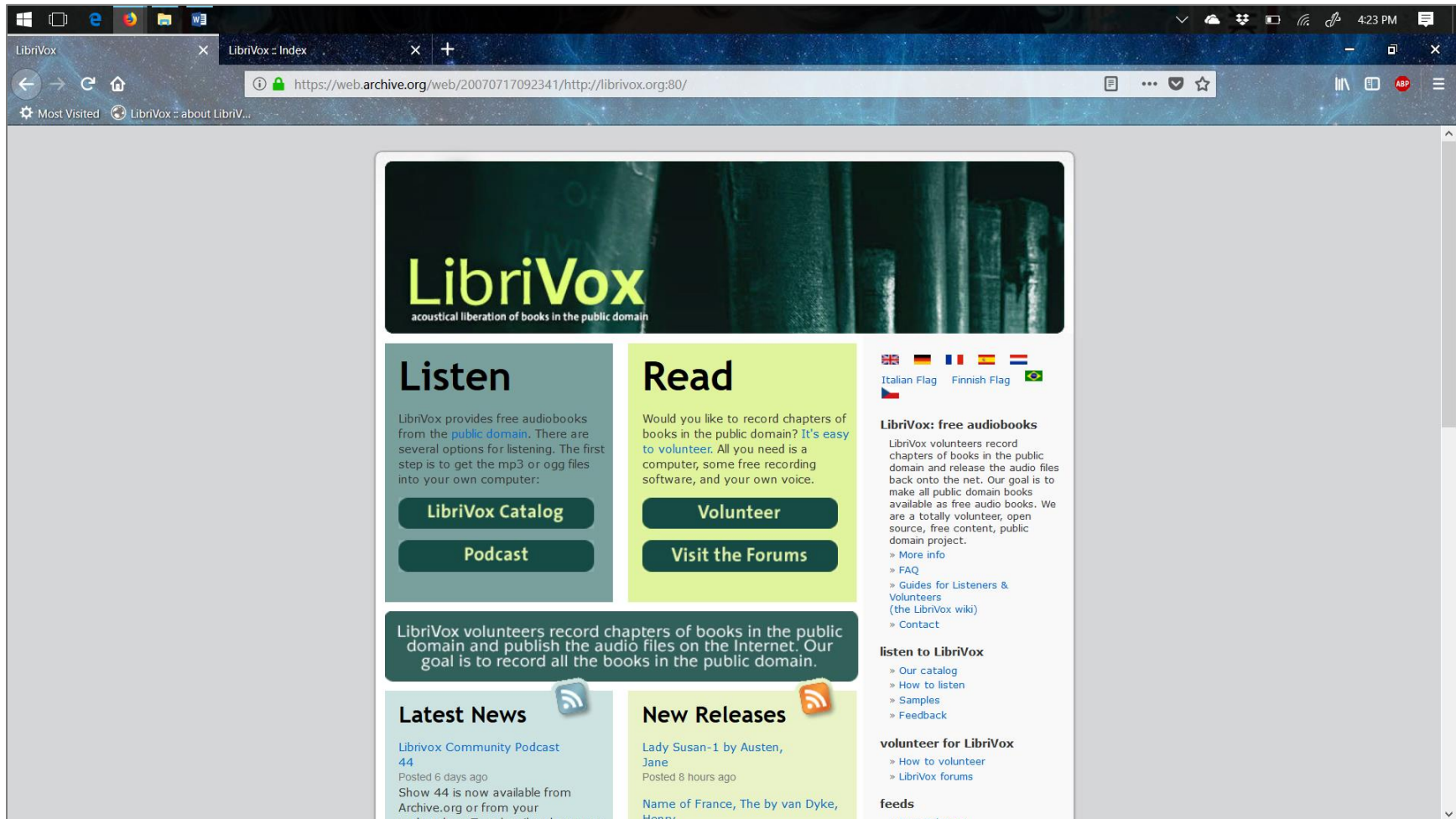


Figure E8. The LibriVox.org homepage as of July 2007, with Czech languages added.

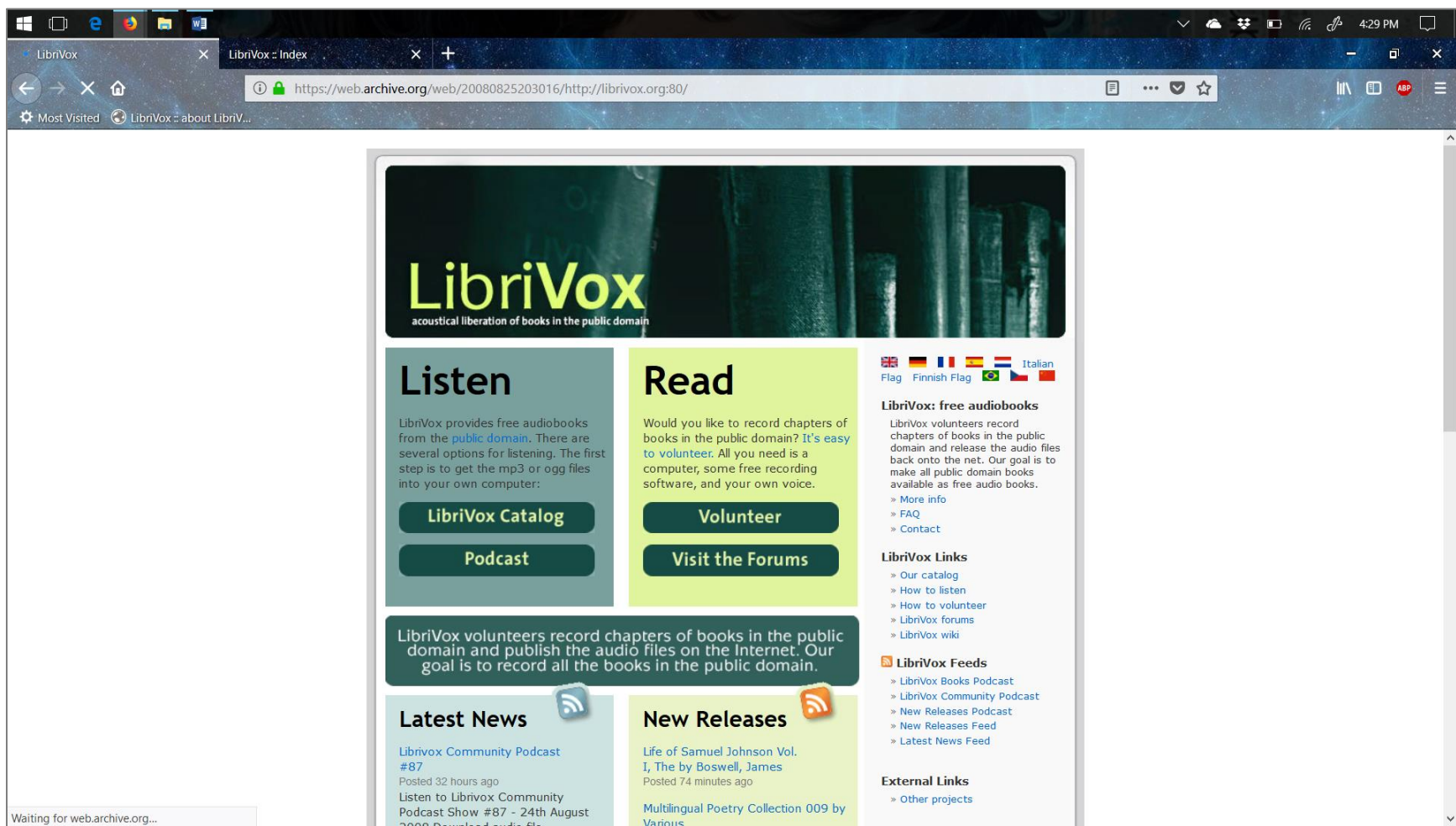


Figure E9. The LibriVox.org homepage as of August 2008, with Chinese added.

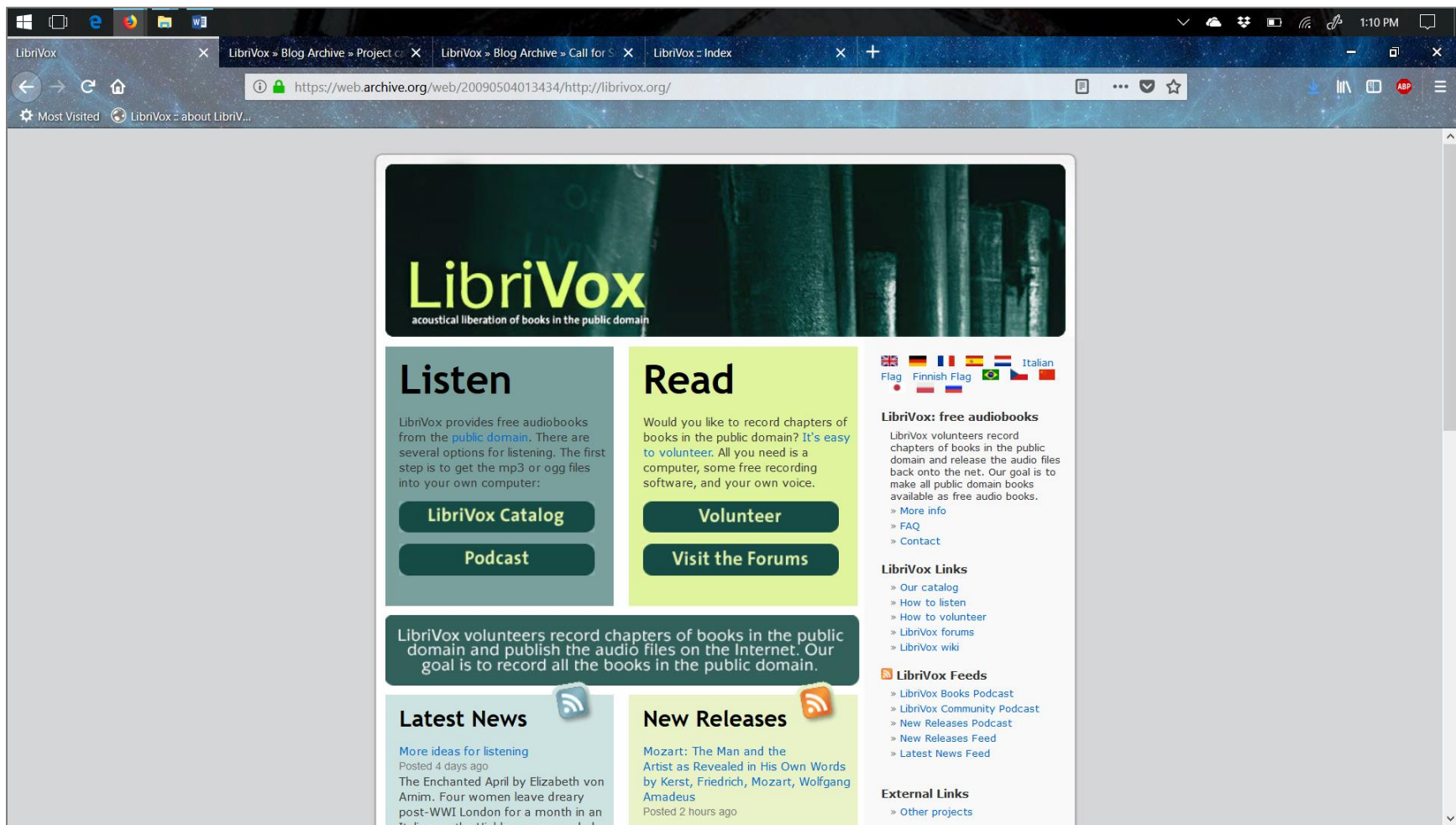


Figure E10. The LibriVox.org homepage as of May 2009, with Japanese, Polish, and Russian languages added

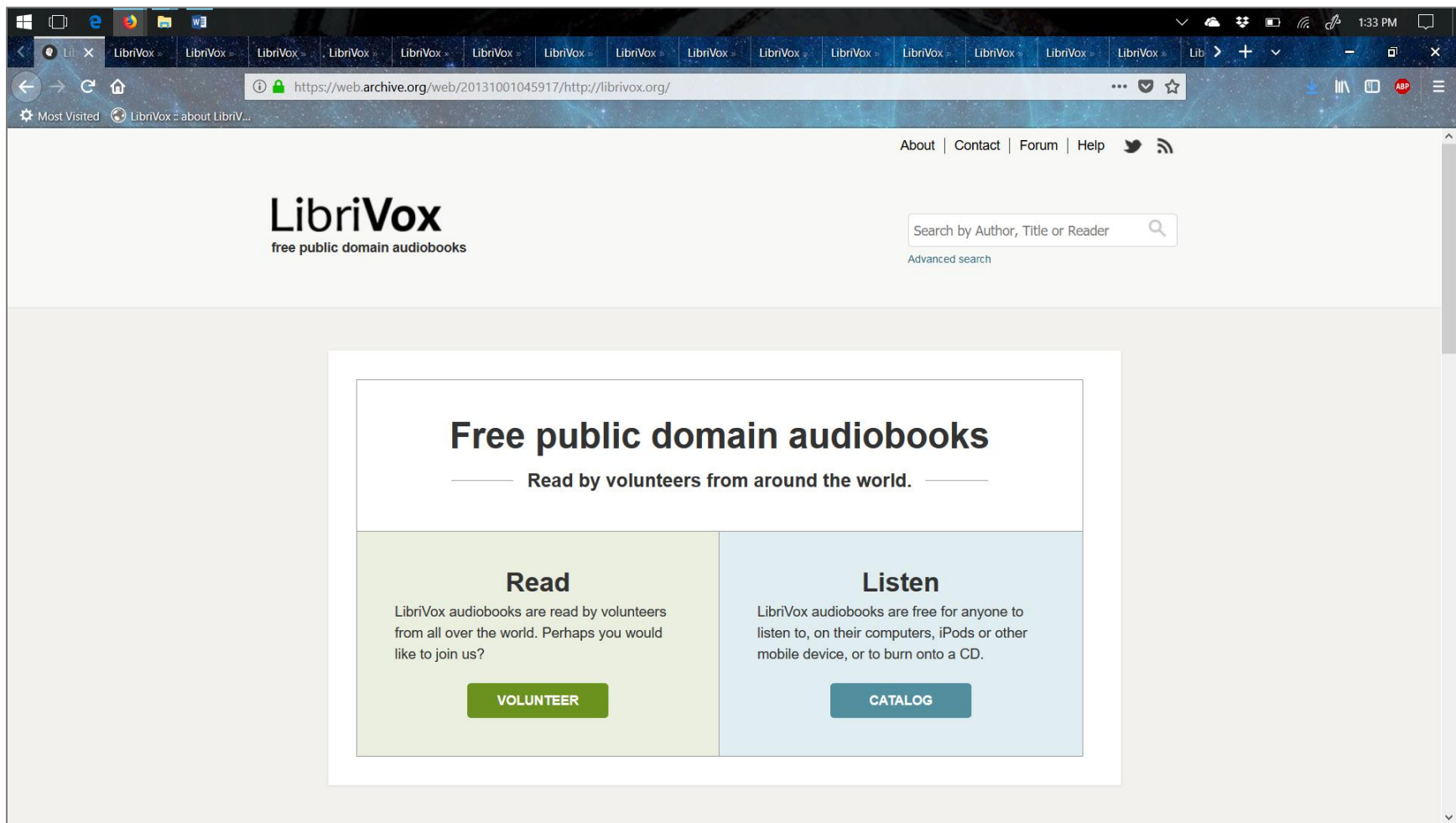


Figure E11. The LibriVox.org homepage as of October 2013. This design is still in use as of June 2018.

APPENDIX F. SCREENSHOTS FROM ARCHIVED VERSIONS OF THE LIBRIVOX FORUMS

LibriVox
discussions on reading, recording and more: [LibriVox](#)

[FAQ](#)
[Search](#)
[Memberlist](#)
[Usergroups](#)
[Register](#)
[Profile](#)
[Log in to check your private messages](#)
[Log in](#)

The time now is Tue Nov 01, 2005 1:32 am
[LibriVox Forum Index](#) [View unanswered posts](#)

Forum		Topics	Posts	Last Post
About LibriVox				
	What is LibriVox? acoustical liberation of books in the public domain	1	1	Sun Oct 02, 2005 12:29 pm admin →
Books				
	Next Books Suggest and vote for the next books to read	12	74	Mon Oct 31, 2005 1:49 am alexfooster →
	Readers Wanted Upcoming titles...sign up to read a chapter or two	10	169	Mon Oct 31, 2005 2:58 pm pberinstein →
	Readers Found Upcoming books fully-subscribed with readers. Check progress here, too.	14	121	Mon Oct 31, 2005 11:37 pm pberinstein →
	Going Solo If you want to record a whole book on your own, post it here.	19	81	Sun Oct 30, 2005 12:20 am hugh →
	Schedule and Admin What's due to be podcast and other messages from the book curators.	4	26	Fri Oct 28, 2005 1:37 pm GordMackenzie →
Tips & Tricks				
	Reading Performance Share your ideas (or ask for help) on how to read well.	13	67	Sat Oct 29, 2005 1:18 pm miette →
	Recording Technical details, how-to information, & questions	4	25	Tue Oct 25, 2005 7:14 pm hugh →
	Editing How (and why) to post-process your recording	4	10	Wed Oct 19, 2005 4:55 pm kayray →

Figure F1. LibriVox Forums as of November 2005, most likely as they looked in the very beginning.

The time now is Tue Dec 20, 2005 11:24 am
LibriVox Forum Index

View unanswered posts

Forum	Topics	Posts	Last Post
About LibriVox			
What is LibriVox? PLEASE READ THIS THREAD BEFORE POSTING	1	1	Sun Oct 02, 2005 12:29 pm admin →
New Here? Introduce Yourself! Get to know your fellow readers and tell us a little about yourself.	75	332	Mon Dec 19, 2005 11:34 pm LibraryLady →
FAQ Frequently Asked Questions	2	14	Mon Dec 19, 2005 12:12 pm Gesine →
Books			
Next Books Suggest and vote for the next books to read	41	249	Tue Dec 20, 2005 12:54 am Gesine →
Weekly Poetry A different poem every week, everyone invited to do their version.	5	66	Tue Dec 20, 2005 4:09 am kayrav →
Readers Wanted Upcoming titles...sign up to read a chapter or two	22	470	Tue Dec 20, 2005 5:10 am wredgit →
Readers Found Upcoming books fully-subscribed with readers. Check progress here, too.	12	512	Tue Dec 20, 2005 7:30 am Vlooi →
Going Solo If you want to record a whole book on your own, post it here.	48	261	Mon Dec 19, 2005 4:21 pm kayrav →
Completed Books Solo or group efforts that are fully available for listeners	26	428	Mon Dec 19, 2005 10:58 pm thiatechick →
Schedule and Admin What's due to be podcast and other messages from the book curators.	5	38	Wed Dec 14, 2005 5:06 pm pberinstein →
Tips & Tricks			
Reading Performance Share your ideas (or ask for help) on how to read well.	19	126	Mon Dec 19, 2005 3:56 pm BradBush →
Recording Technical details, how-to information, & questions	16	111	Mon Dec 19, 2005 8:41 am Gesine →
Editing How (and why) to post-process your recording	7	44	Tue Dec 20, 2005 3:37 am lis →
Listeners etc.			
Comments and Suggestions Help us improve LibriVox by telling us what you think.	25	114	Tue Dec 20, 2005 9:57 am Gesine →
Discussion			Fri Dec 16, 2005 5:04 pm

Figure F2. LibriVox Forums as of December 2005. A Weekly Poetry section has been added. A LibriVox Tech section exists during this time, but not after January 2006.

LibriVox forum

Home Page - Guides for Listeners & Volunteers (the LibriVox wiki)

[FAQ](#)
[Search](#)
[Memberlist](#)
[Usergroups](#)
[Register](#)
[Profile](#)
[Log in to check your private messages](#)
[Log in](#)

The time now is Wed Dec 06, 2006 2:27 pm
 LibriVox Forum Index

View unanswered posts

Forum	Topics	Posts	Last Post
About LibriVox			
What is LibriVox & FAQ Frequently Asked Questions Moderator: Mods	10	15	Fri Jun 30, 2006 11:52 pm huah
New Here? Introduce Yourself! Get to know your fellow readers and tell us a little about yourself. Moderators: ysa, Peter_Why, ChipDoc, Mods	694	4071	Wed Dec 06, 2006 3:17 am huah
Books (Volunteer for Reading & Other Things)			
Book Suggestions Suggest and discuss books to read (all languages welcome!) Moderators: kv, earthcalling, Mods	257	1976	Tue Dec 05, 2006 7:40 pm Starlite
Readers Wanted: Short Works (Poetry & Prose) Short Poetry Collections, Short Story Collections, and our Weekly Poetry Project (projects may be in any language) Moderators: LibrarLady, thistlechick, Fox in the Stars, Mods	24	1556	Wed Dec 06, 2006 1:13 pm Prospero
Readers Wanted: Books Every work here needs a reader! Please sign up and help us complete these books (projects may be in any language) Moderators: ravnor, kv, jimmowatt, Mods	51	3455	Wed Dec 06, 2006 11:05 am anna
Readers Wanted: Dramatic Works Plays and other dramatic works (projects may be in any language) Moderators: a.r.dobbs, earthcalling, Mods	18	1934	Wed Dec 06, 2006 2:26 pm Jestermedia
Readers Found Upcoming books fully-subscribed with readers. Check progress here, too. Moderators: LibrarLady, jimmowatt, Mods	52	5428	Wed Dec 06, 2006 9:46 am anna
Going Solo If you want to record a whole book on your own, post it here (projects may be in any language) Moderators: kavray, ravnor, kv, jimmowatt, Mods	204	3989	Wed Dec 06, 2006 9:19 am anna
Listeners & Editors Wanted help check audio files, and provide editing services Moderators: Gesine, a.r.dobbs, Mods	44	1218	Wed Dec 06, 2006 1:29 pm a.r.dobbs
Completed Projects Solo or group efforts that are fully available for listeners Moderators: kavray, thistlechick, Fox in the Stars, Mods	359	16859	Wed Dec 06, 2006 3:23 am simarky
Volunteers Wanted: Other Projects non-reading projects need your help too! Moderators: kv, earthcalling, Mods	62	3124	Wed Dec 06, 2006 1:23 pm a.r.dobbs
Help, Discussion, & Suggestions			
Need Help? Got Advice? post your questions & get help from friendly LibriVoxers Moderators: Peter_Why, Gesine, ceastman, kv, ChipDoc, Mods	390	3822	Wed Dec 06, 2006 2:15 am huah
Suggestions, Comments, News & Discussion Comments about LibriVox? Suggestions to improve things? News? Moderators: ysa, kv, Kymmmz, Mods	375	4842	Wed Dec 06, 2006 9:25 am huah
Off-Topic			

Figure F3. LibriVox Forums as of December 2006. The FAQ section has been combined with the What is LibriVox section.

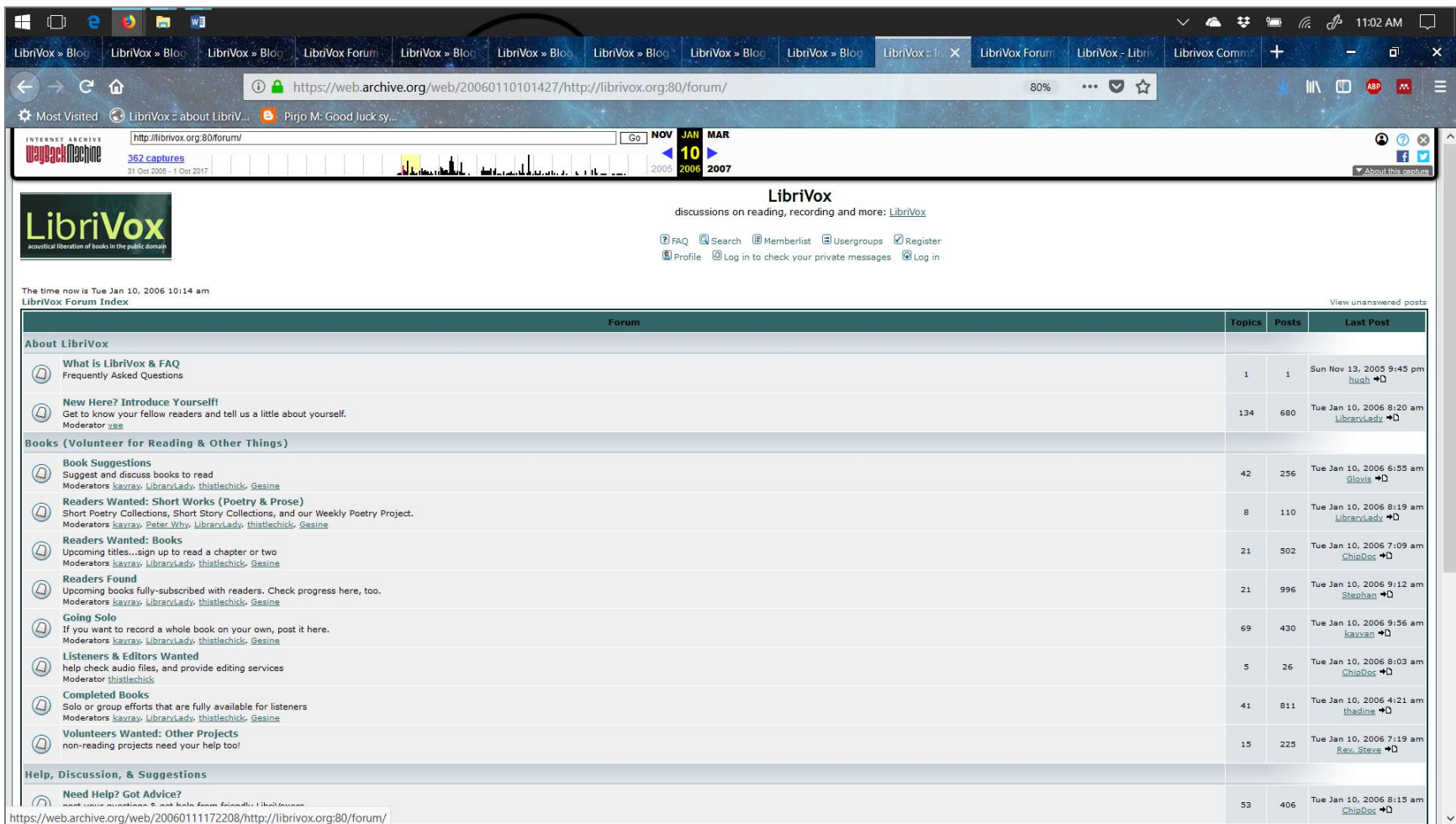


Figure F4. LibriVox Forums as of January 2006, with sections organized very similarly to current (2018) arrangements.

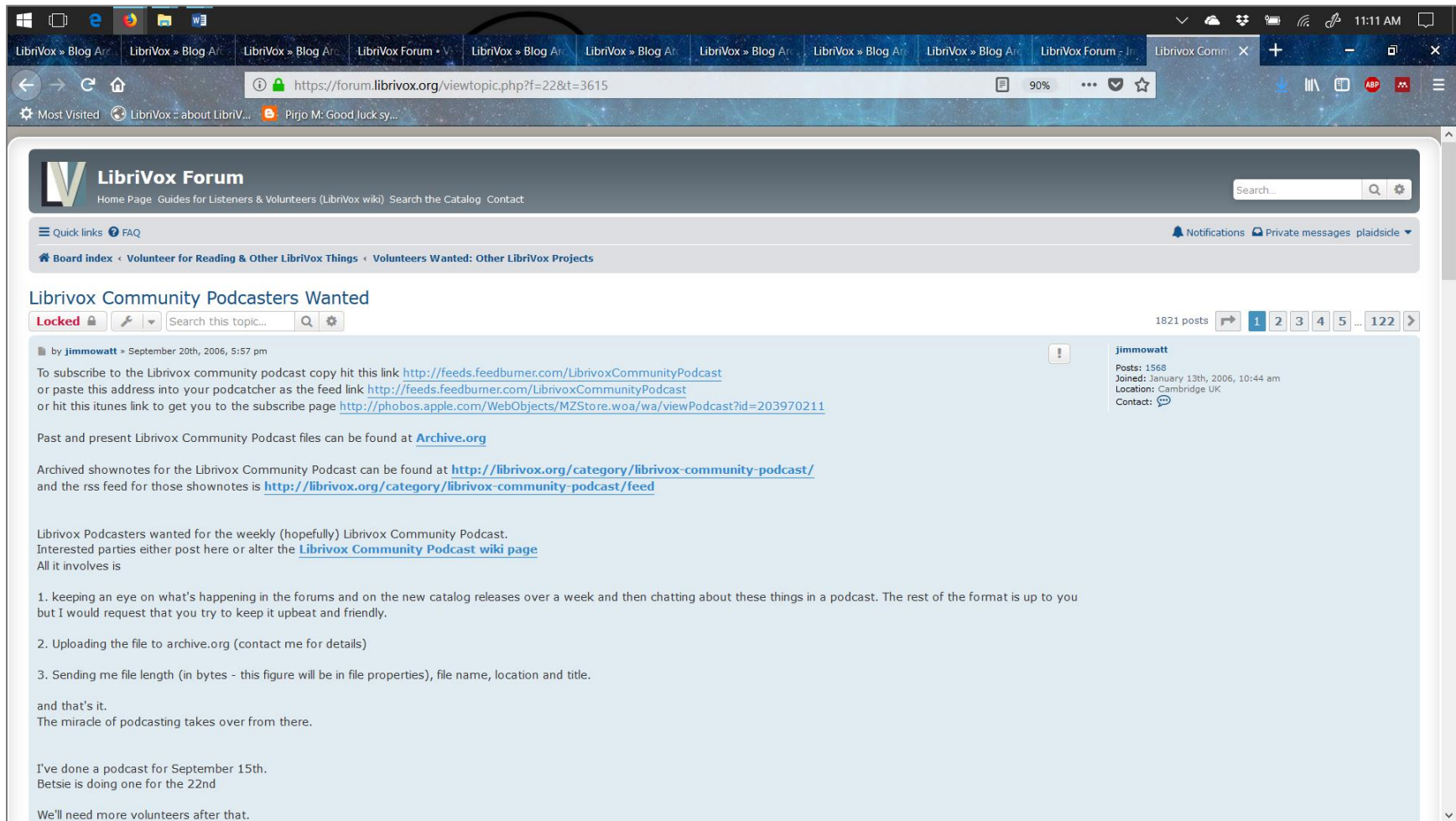


Figure F5. A LibriVox Forum thread announcing the LibriVox Community Podcast, Sept 20, 2006

LibriVox Forums

Home Page - Guides for Listeners & Volunteers (LibriVox wiki) - Search the Catalog - Contact

FAQ

Last visit was: Mon May 02, 2011 4:51 am It is currently Mon May 02, 2011 4:51 am

[Board index »](#)

	Forum	Topics	Posts	Last post
About LibriVox				
	What is LibriVox & FAQ Frequently Asked Questions	10	14	Fri Jun 18, 2010 9:57 pm Cori
	New Here? Introduce Yourself! Get to know your fellow readers and tell us a little about yourself	5753	25844	Sun May 01, 2011 9:16 pm k80
Books (Volunteer for Reading & Other Things)				
	Book Suggestions Suggest and discuss books to read (all languages welcome!)	1349	8825	Mon May 02, 2011 1:52 am Rab
	New Projects Launch Pad Post ALL new projects here (solos, books, short works/poetry collections, drama -- in any language.) Please read the stickies first	13	67	Mon May 02, 2011 1:47 am m8b1
	Readers Wanted: Short Works (Poetry & Prose) Short Poetry Collections, Short Story Collections, and our Weekly Poetry Project (projects may be in any language)	33	2231	Mon May 02, 2011 4:21 am megooode
	Readers Wanted: Books Every work here needs a reader! Please sign up and help us complete these books (projects may be in any language)	116	9038	Mon May 02, 2011 4:14 am IssaDeasVoice
	Readers Wanted: Dramatic Works Plays and other dramatic works (projects may be in any language)	39	6309	Mon May 02, 2011 3:55 am Martykrz
	Readers Found Upcoming books fully-subscribed with readers. Check progress here, too	57	7942	Mon May 02, 2011 3:52 am davesiberia
	Going Solo Upcoming books being recorded by a solo reader	255	8841	Mon May 02, 2011 4:08 am chocoholic
	Listeners & Editors Wanted Help check audio files, and provide editing services	210	1045	Mon May 02, 2011 4:02 am chocoholic
	Completed Projects Solo or group efforts that are fully available for listeners	4488	336985	Mon May 02, 2011 12:55 am TriciaG
	Volunteers Wanted: Other Projects Non-reading projects need your help too!	173	10253	Mon May 02, 2011 4:22 am KathrynD
Help, Discussion, & Suggestions				
	Need Help? Got Advice? Post your questions & get help from friendly LibriVoxers	3077	23015	Sun May 01, 2011 3:43 pm knotyouraveragejo
	Suggestions, Comments, News & Discussion Comments about LibriVox? Suggestions to improve things? News?	1621	20565	Sun May 01, 2011 10:30 pm BellonaTimes

Figure F6. LibriVox Forums as of May 2011. This version of the forums was assigned a new URL (forum.librivox.org instead of librivox.org/forum) and new skin as of November 2010.

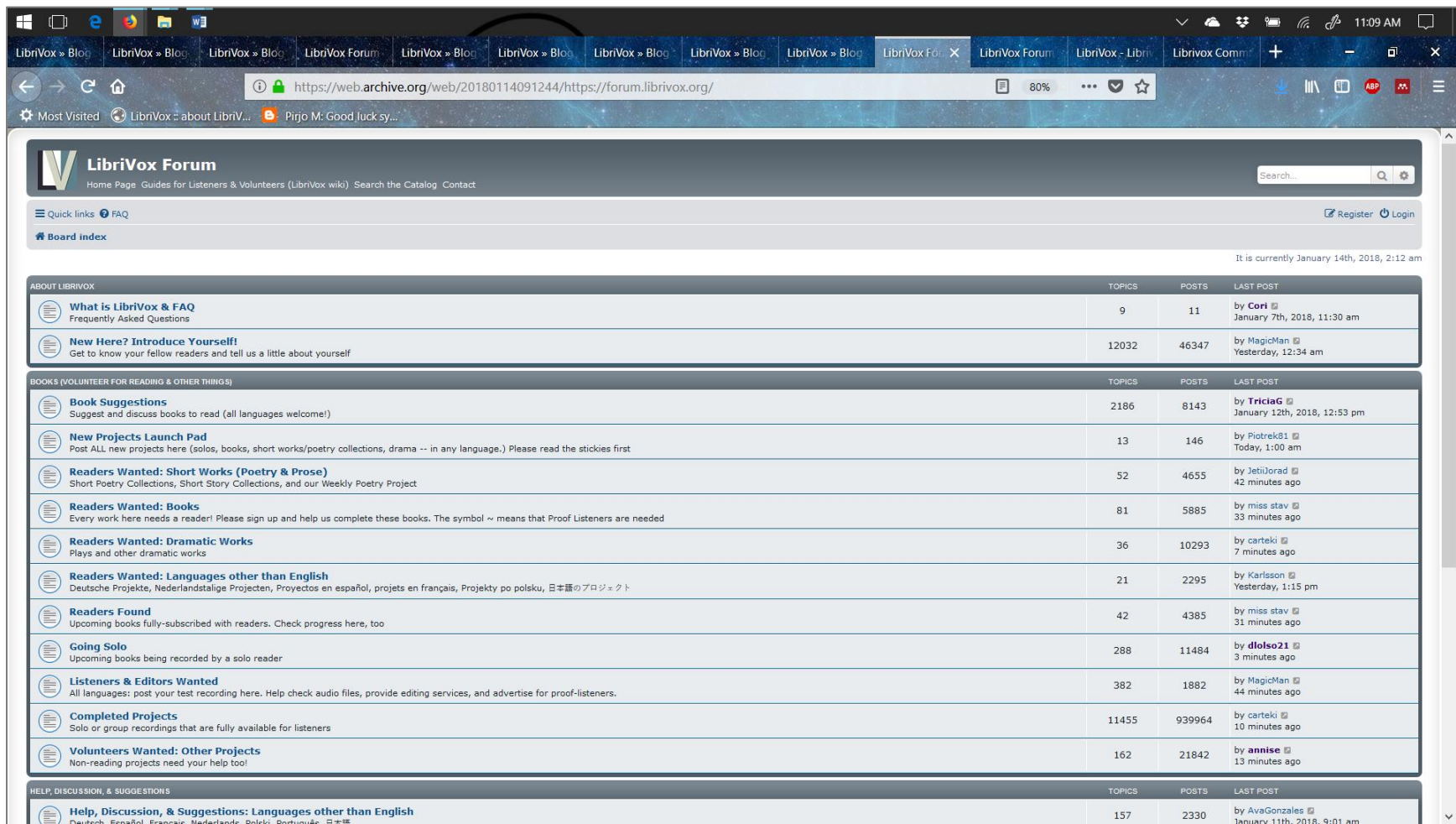


Figure F7. LibriVox Forums as of January 2018. This update brought security updates, changed the design of the forums, and added/removed a few functionalities of the forums.

APPENDIX G. SCREENSHOTS OF NOTABLE POSTS FROM THE LIBRIVOX BLOG



Figure G1. LibriVox blog post announcing the availability of the forums, Sept 2005. Volunteer kri (Kristen LeMoine) was instrumental in providing this resource to the LibriVox community.



Figure G2. LibriVox announcement of the first fundraising drive, February 2010.



Figure G3. LibriVox celebrates its 5th anniversary, Aug 2010.



Figure G4. LibriVox completes 5,000 audiobooks, October 2011.

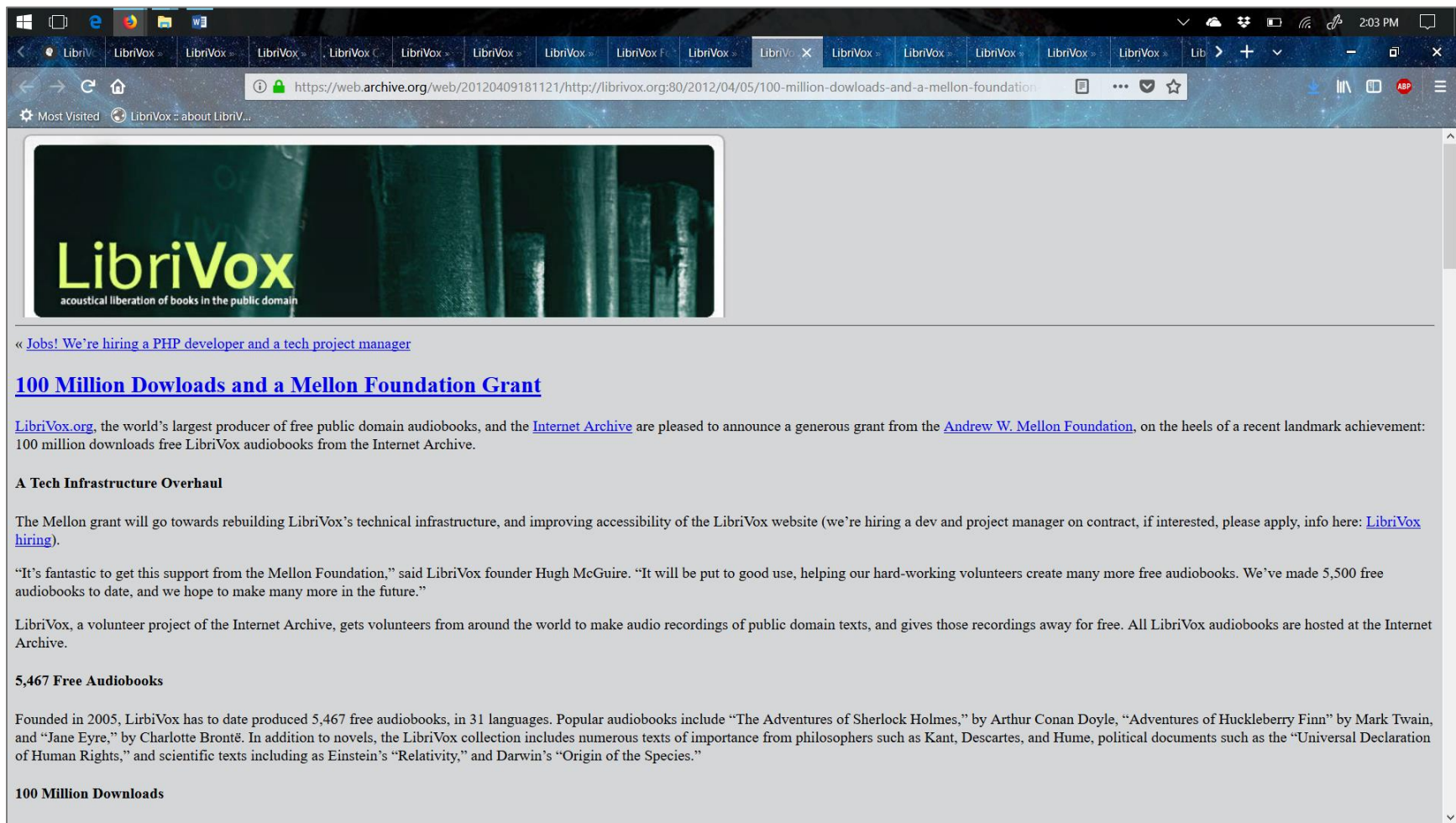


Figure G5. LibriVox receives a grant from the Mellon Foundation, April 2012
(<https://librivox.org/2012/04/05/100-million-downloads-and-a-mellon-foundation-grant/>)



Figure G6. LibriVox announces major upgrades, March 2013 updates/upgrades

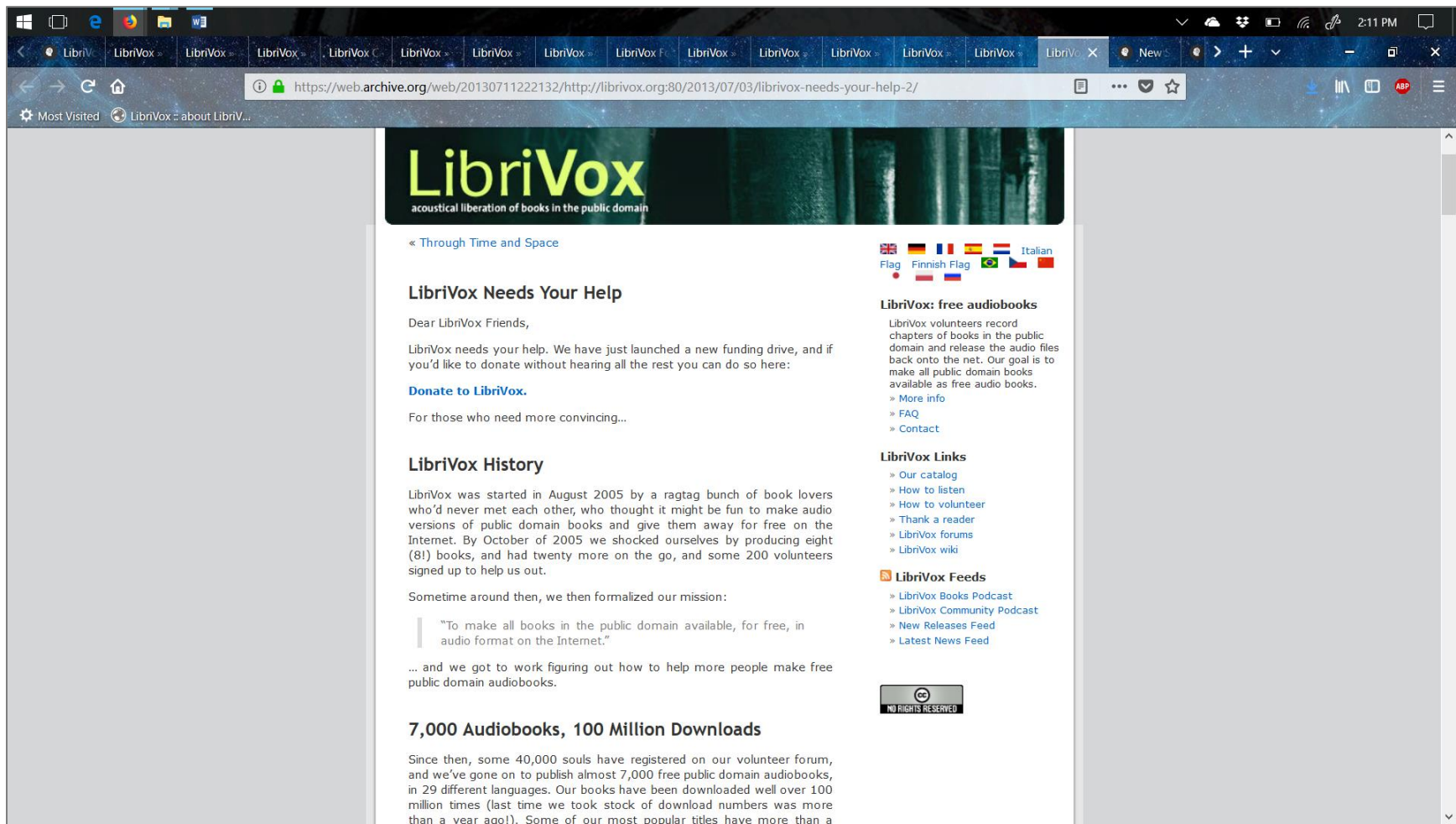


Figure G7. A second round of fundraising begins, July 2013

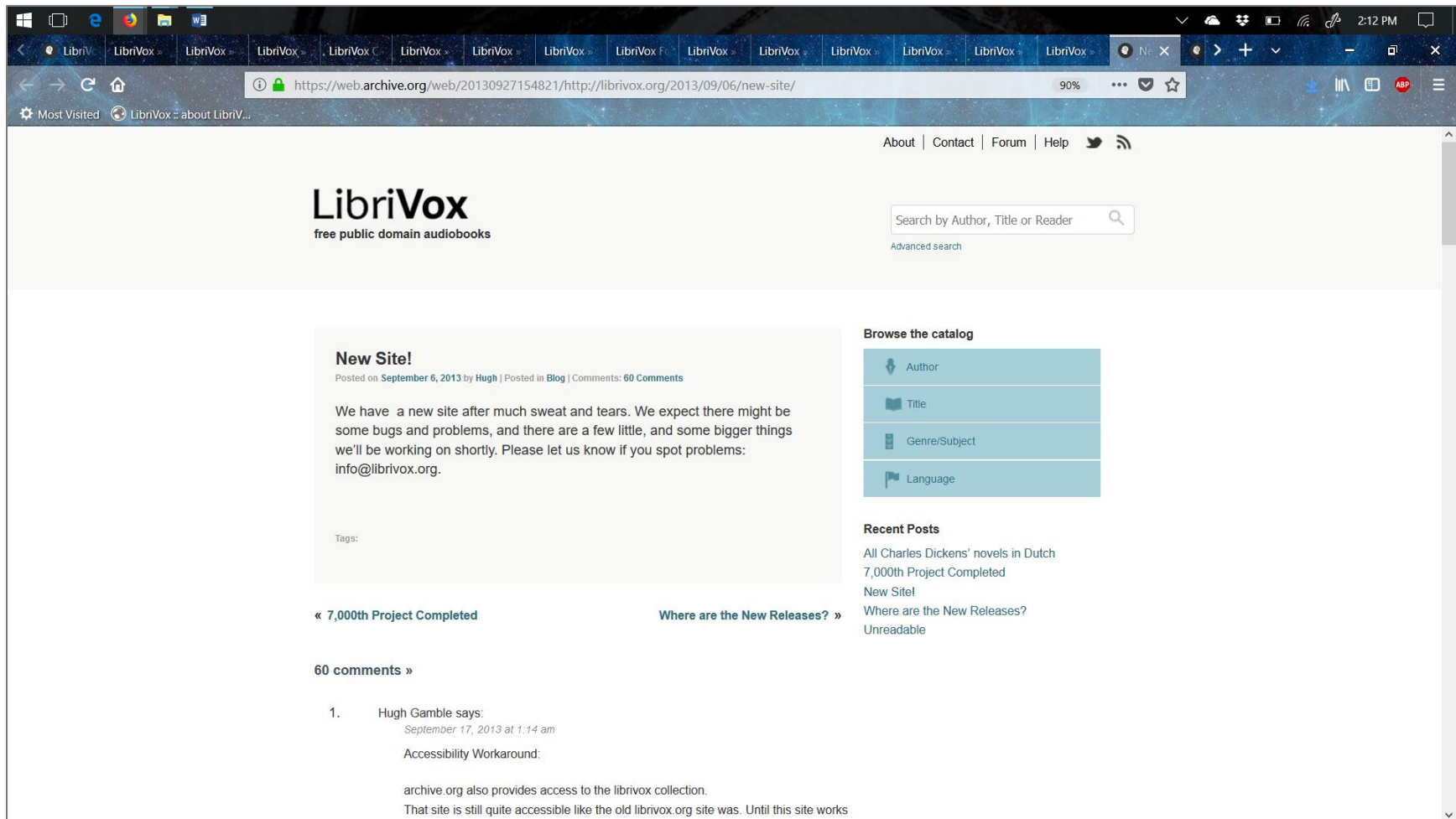


Figure G8. The brand new LibriVox website and catalog design is announced, September 2013

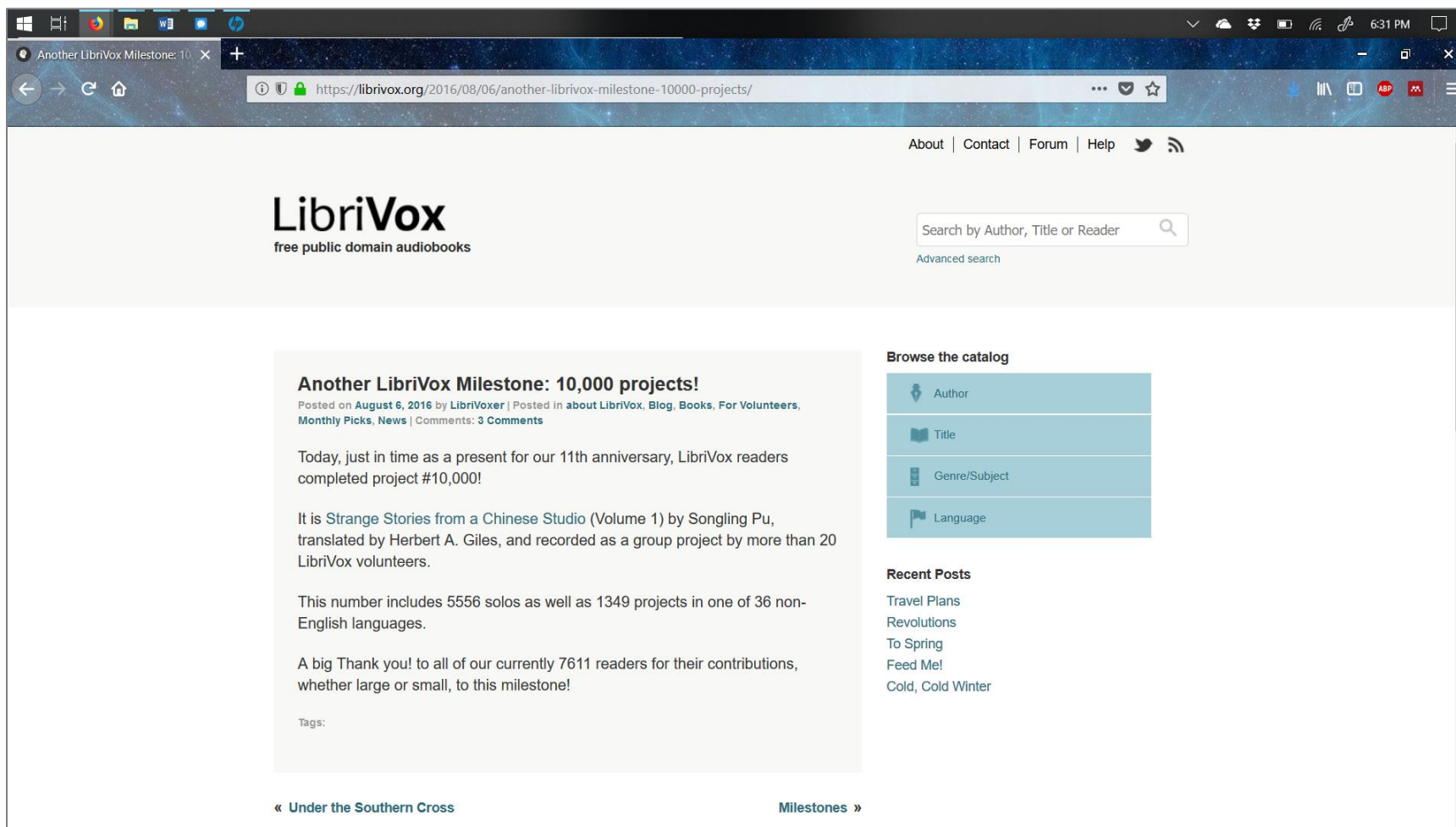


Figure G9. LibriVox completes 10,000 audiobook projects, just in time for the 11th LibriVox Anniversary.

APPENDIX H. SCREENSHOTS OF LIBRIVOX PROJECT TEMPLATES AND OTHER TOOLS

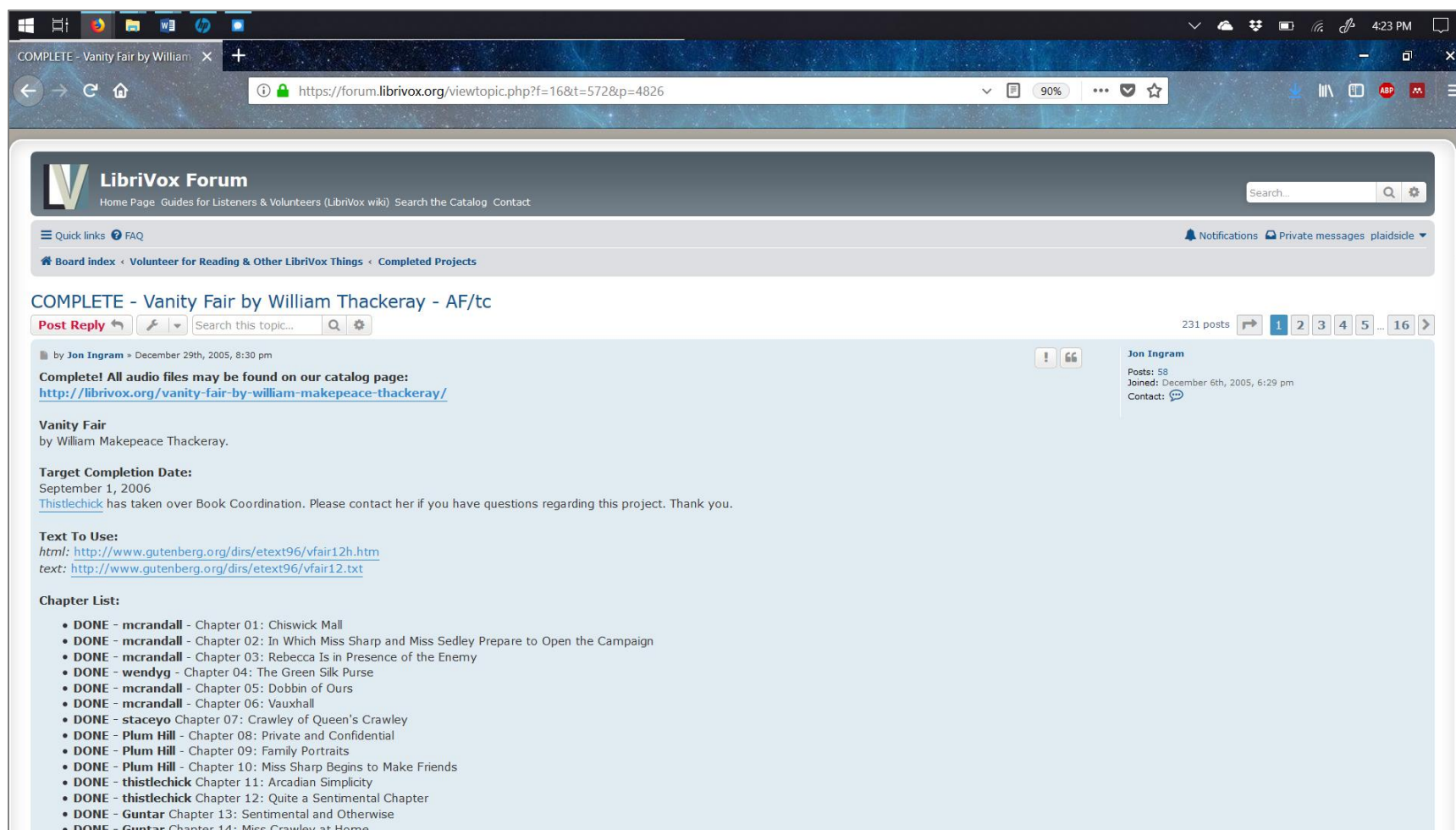


Figure H1 (a). An example of the forum-based “project template” and boilerplate information used to manage LibriVox projects, January 2006

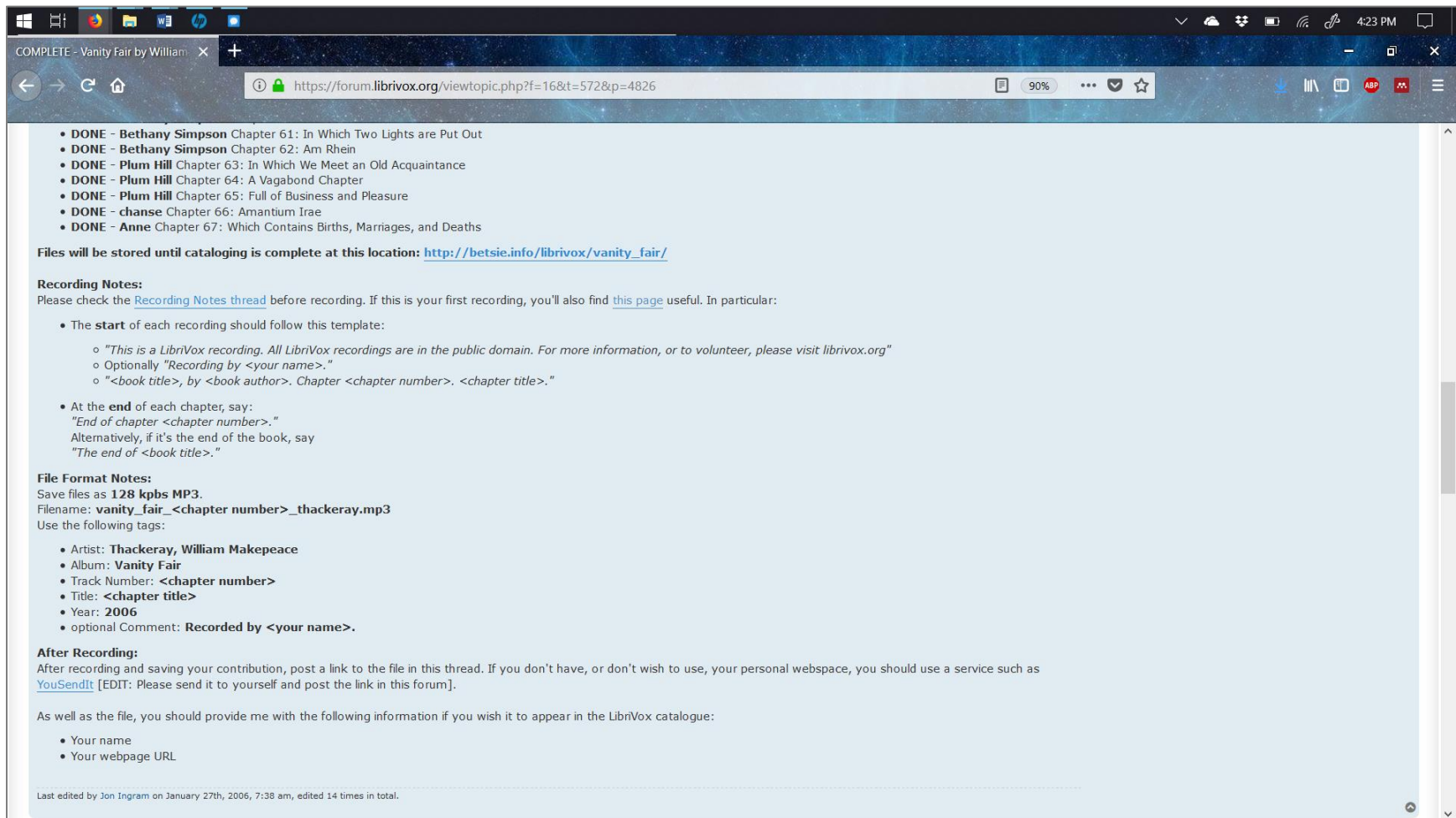


Figure H1 (b). An example of the forum-based “project template” and boilerplate information used to manage Librivox projects, January 2006.

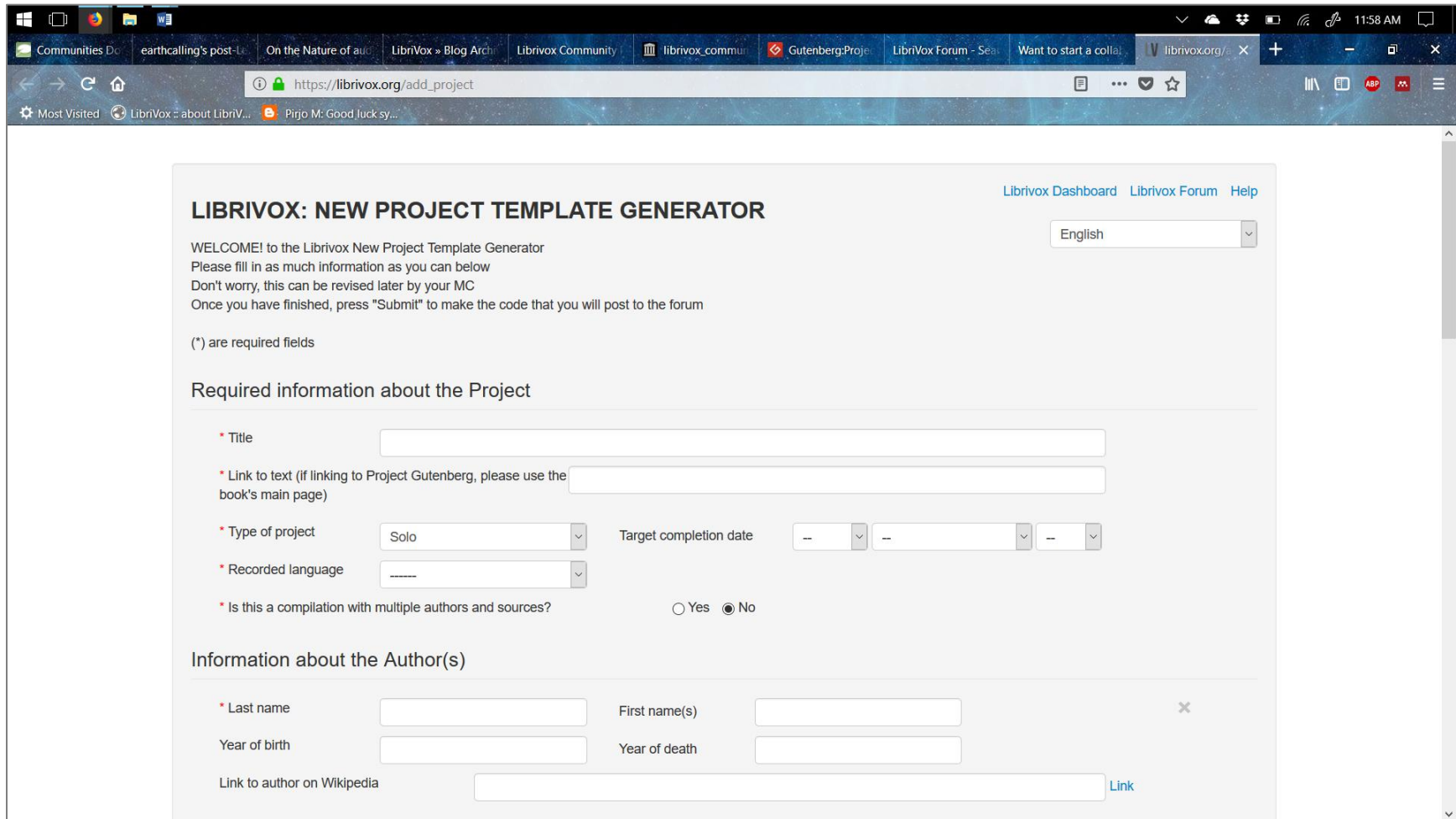


Figure H2 (a). Screenshots of the database-driven LibriVox project template generator, current as of June 2018

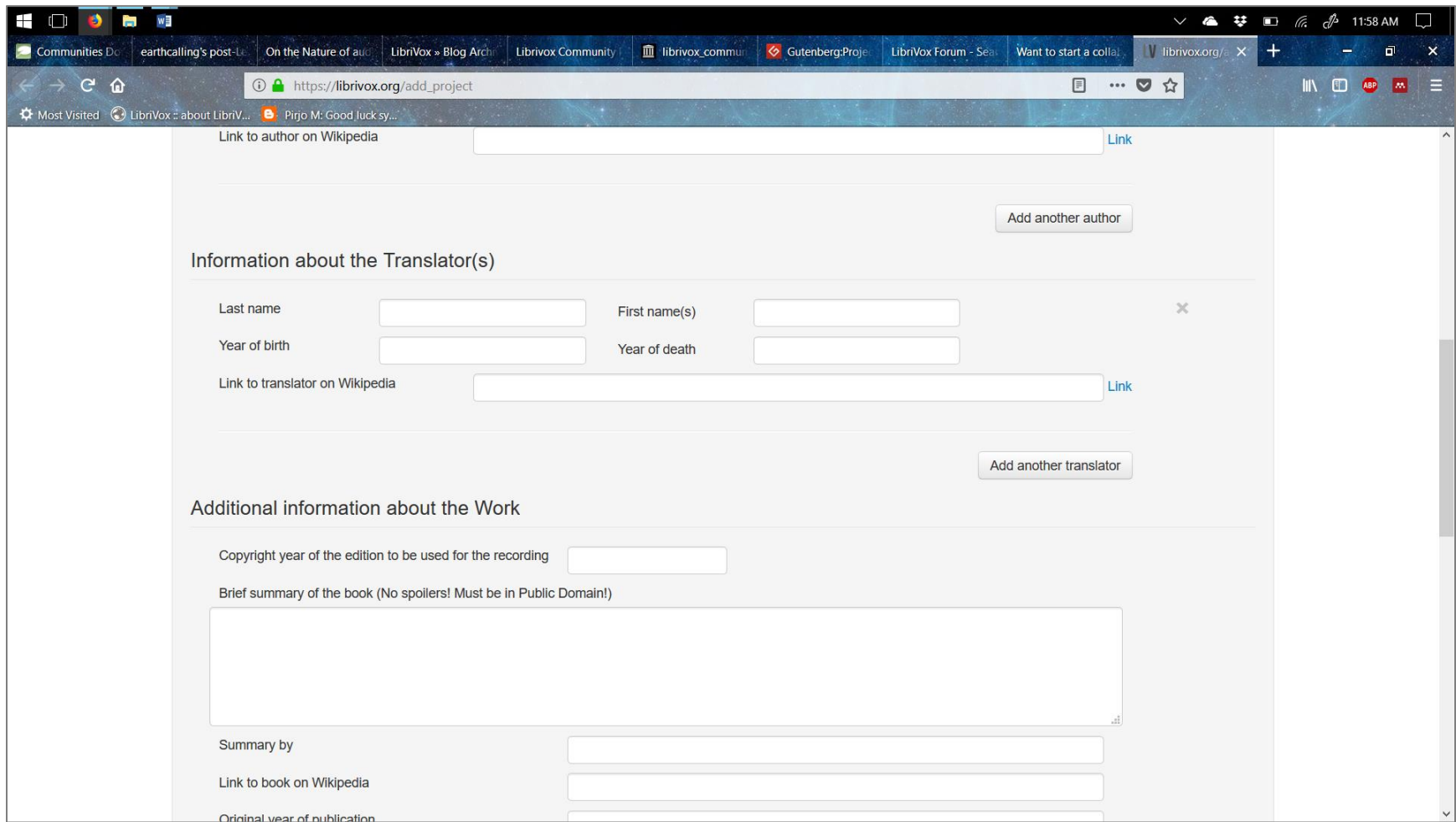


Figure H2 (b). Screenshots of the database-driven LibriVox project template generator, current as of June 2018

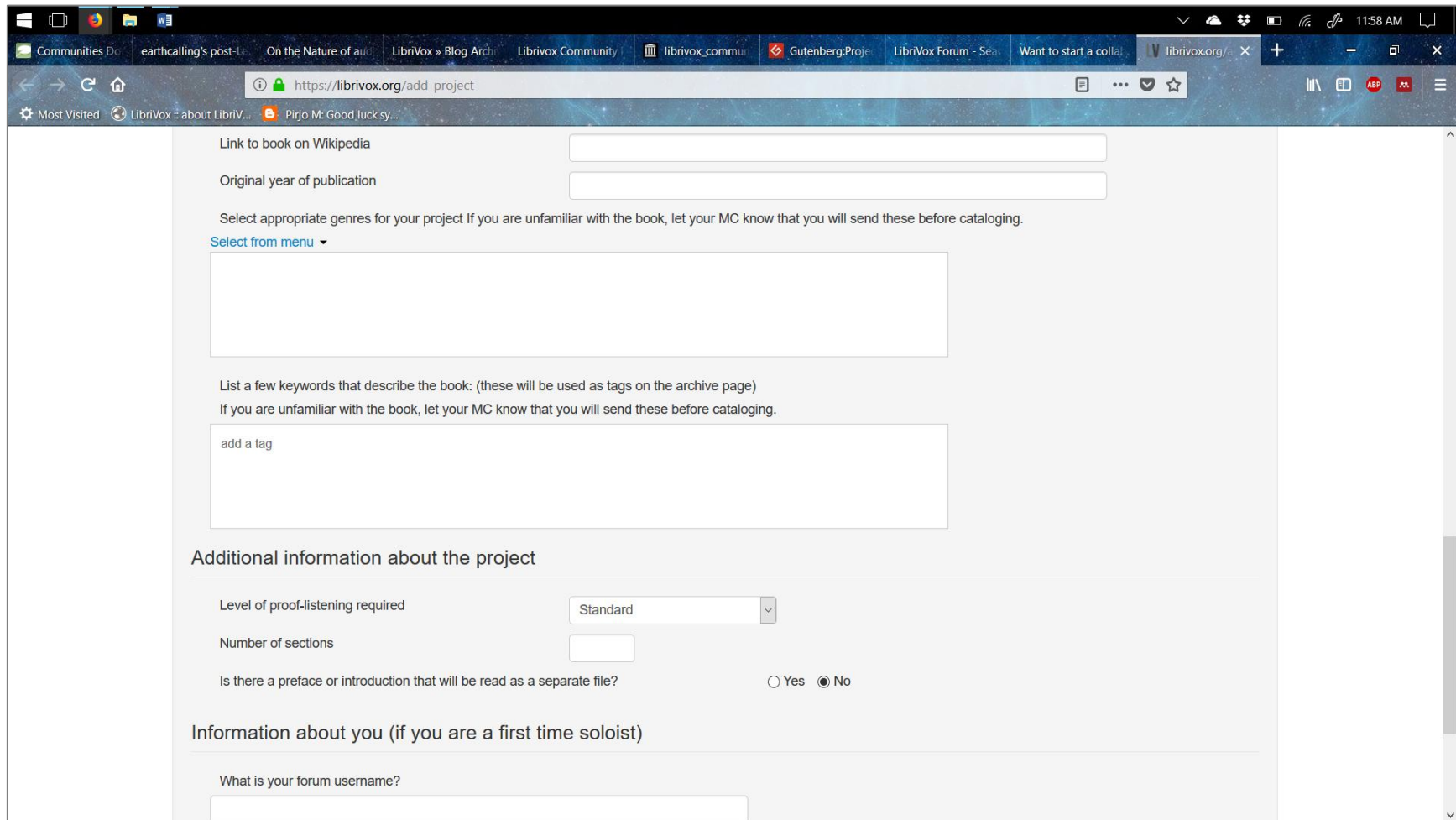


Figure H2 (c). Screenshots of the database-driven LibriVox project template generator, current as of June 2018

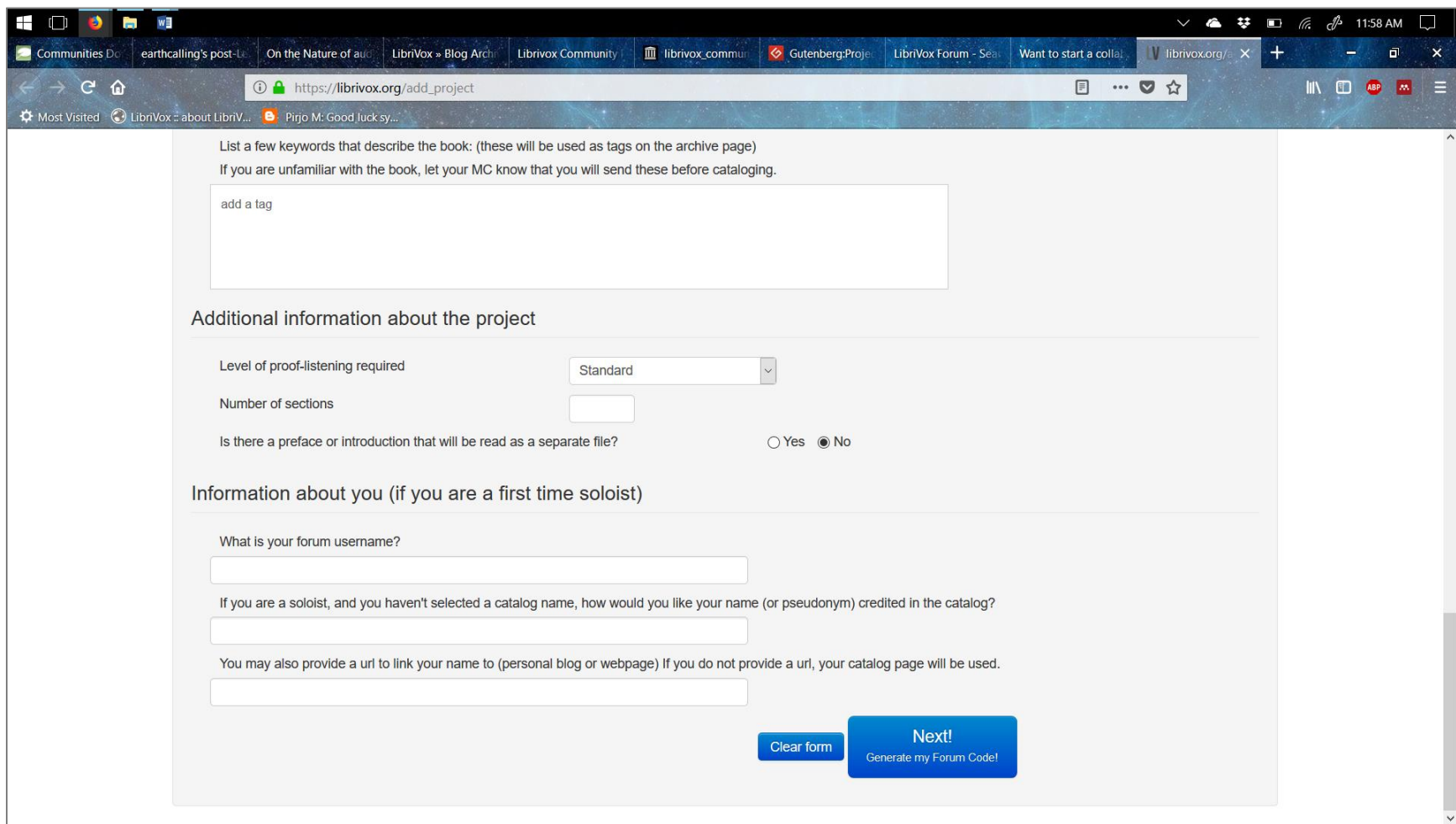


Figure H2 (d). Screenshots of the database-driven LibriVox project template generator, current as of June 2018

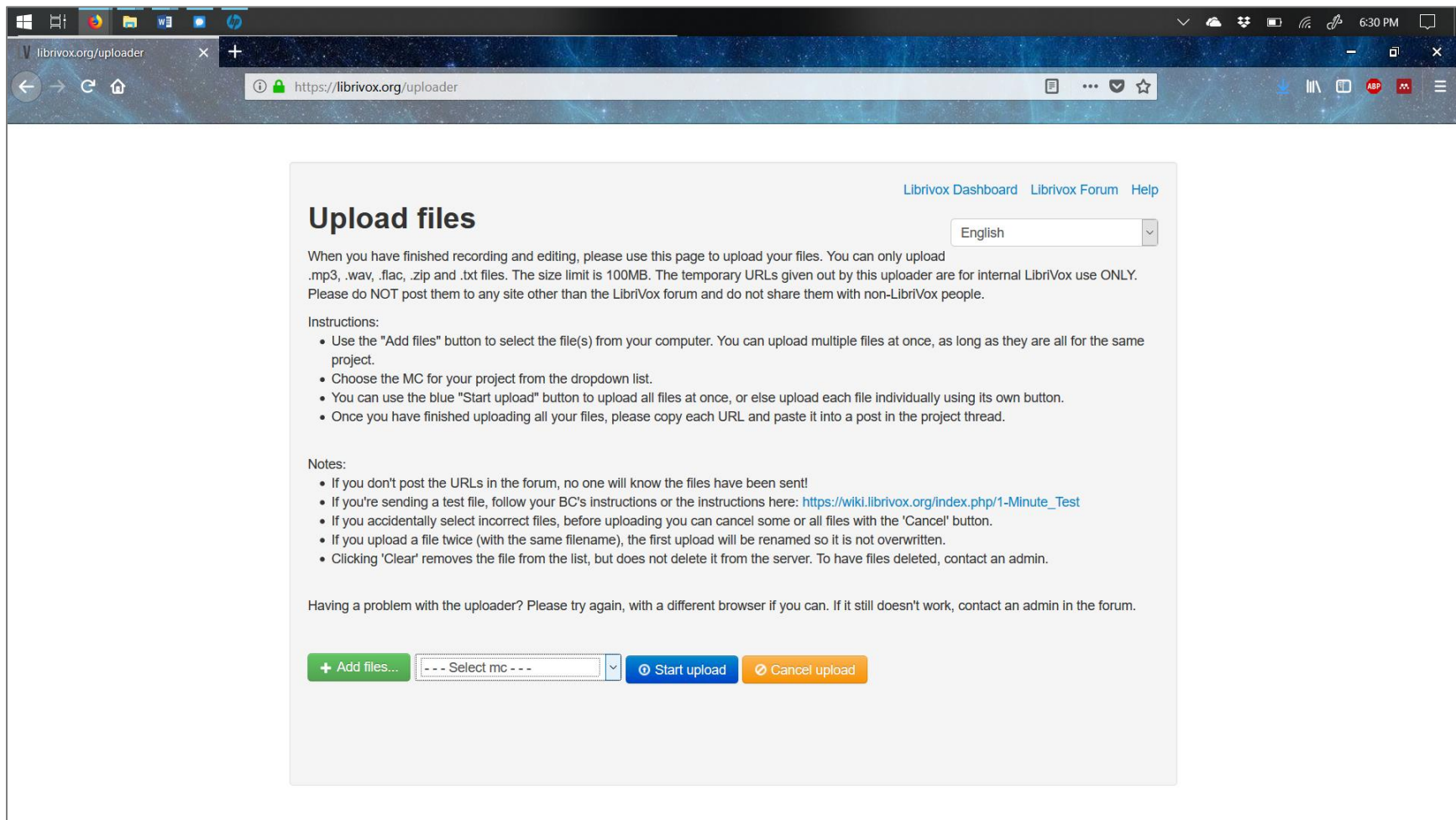


Figure H3. LibriVox uploader interface, current as of June 2018.

APPENDIX I. SCREENSHOTS OF RELATED AUDIO PROJECTS, PAST AND PRESENT

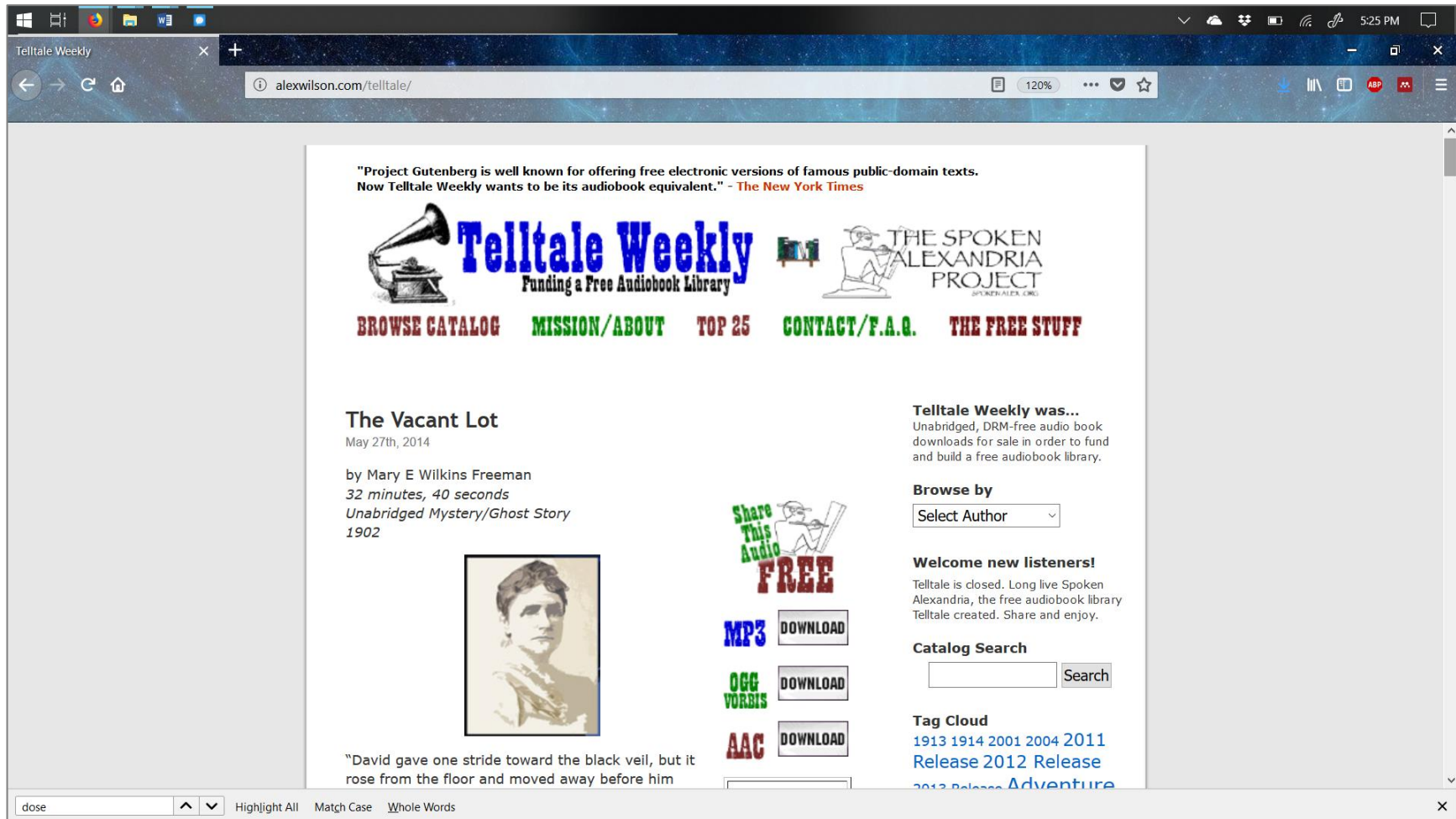


Figure I1. Screenshot of the Telltale Weekly/Spoken Alexandria Project website. (<http://alexwilson.com/telltale/>). It isn't clear exactly when this project was founded, or whether it is still in operation. The earliest posts accessible at this site (<http://alexwilson.com/telltale/podcast/the-glove-and-the-lions/> and <http://alexwilson.com/telltale/justin-meckes/stories-from-asheville/>) are dated late February 2004.

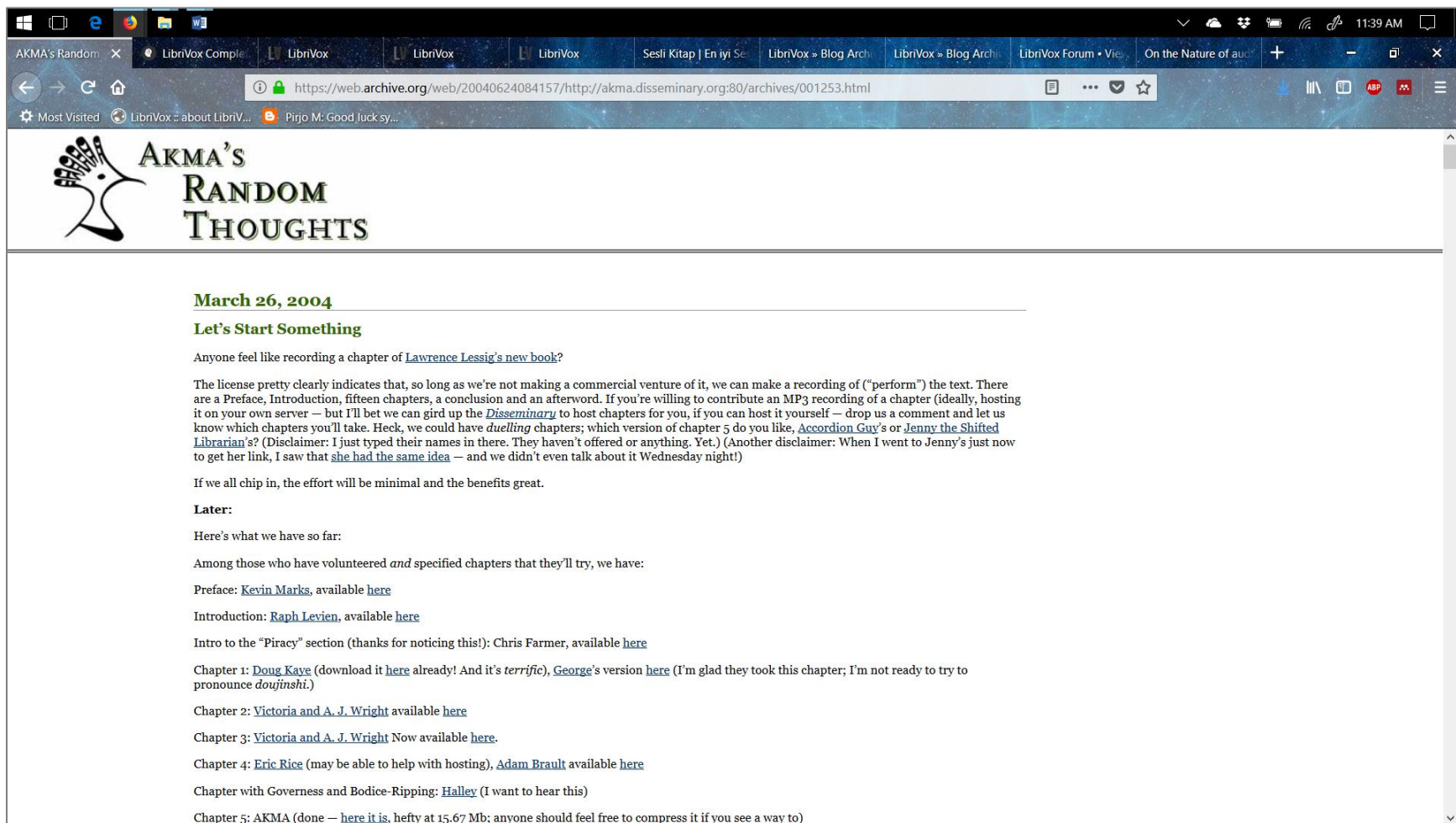


Figure 12. Archived screenshot of AKMA's post kickstarting a collaborative audio version of Lawrence Lessig's (2004) *Free Culture* (<https://web.archive.org/web/20040401175406/http://akma.disseminary.org/archives/001253.html>). A version of this post with an updated layout is available at <http://akma.disseminary.org/2004/03/lets-start-something/>. AKMA's reflections on the project years later are posted at <http://akma.disseminary.org/2014/03/we-started-something/> and the finished audiobook can be accessed at <https://archive.org/details/free-culture-audiobook>.

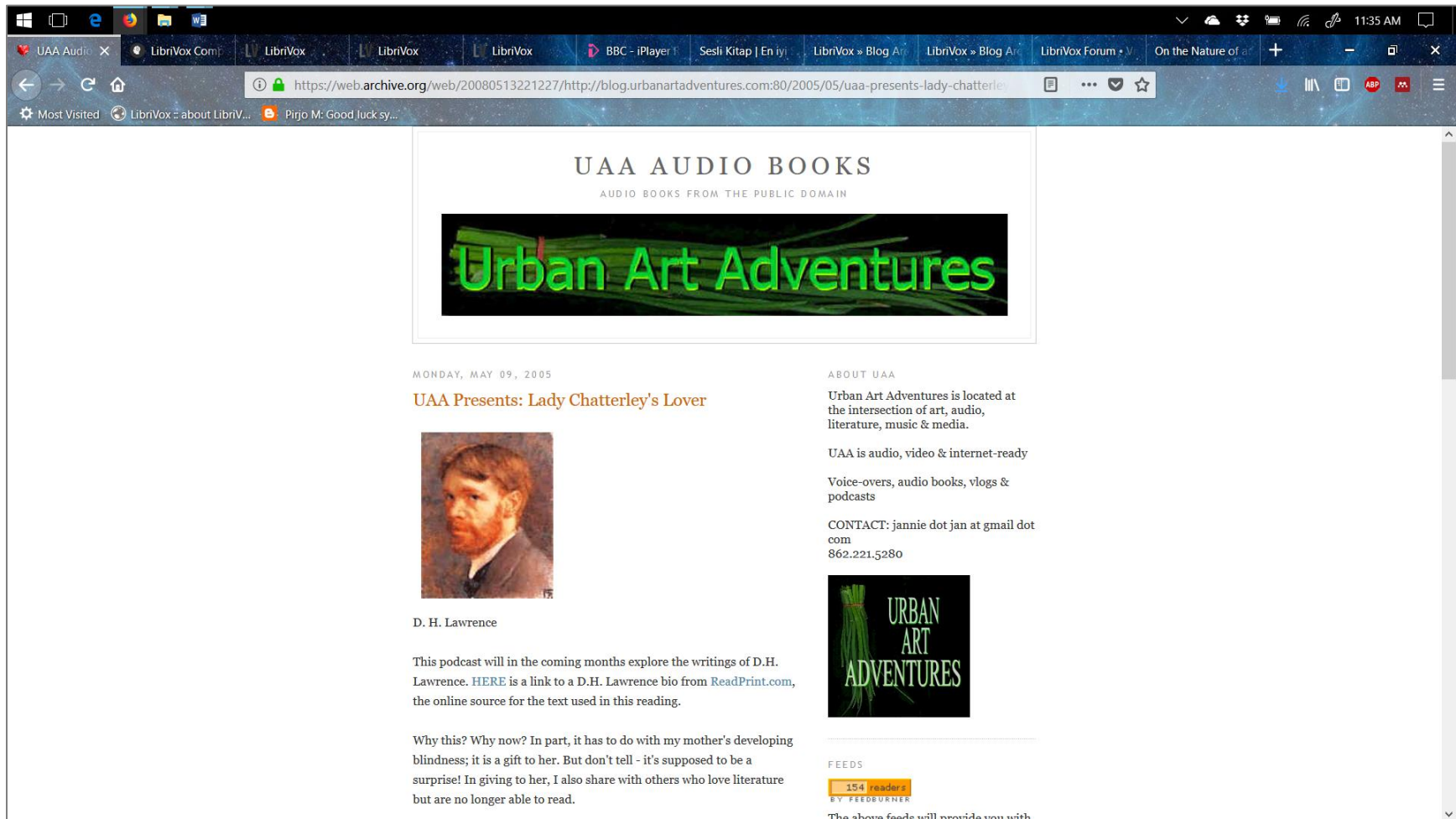


Figure I3. The Urban Art Adventures blog as of May 2005. Here, blogger Jan begins posting recordings of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.



Figure 14. An Italian blog announces their own version of LibriVox, November 2005.

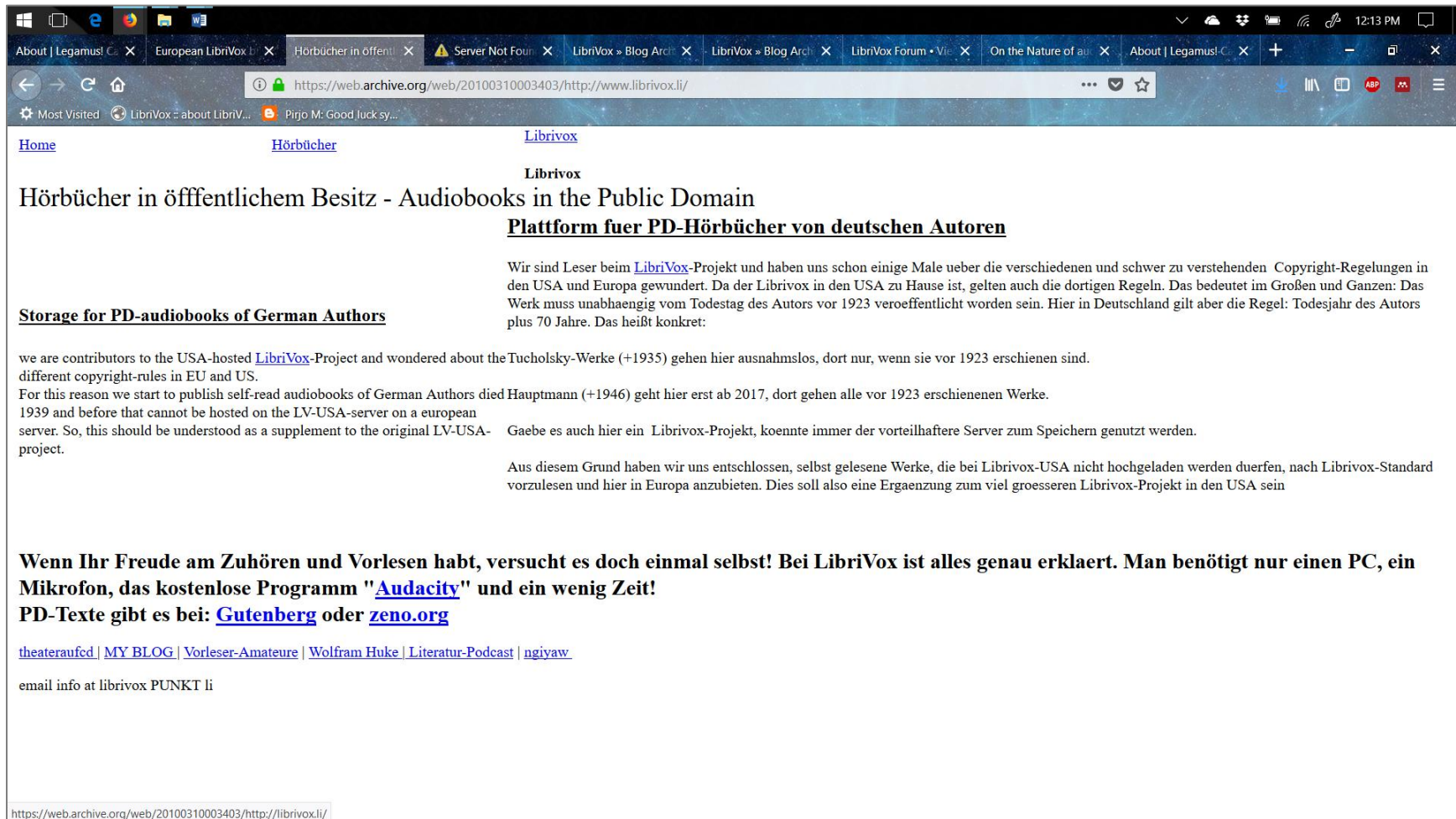


Figure 15. A German version of LibriVox at LibriVox.li, March 2010

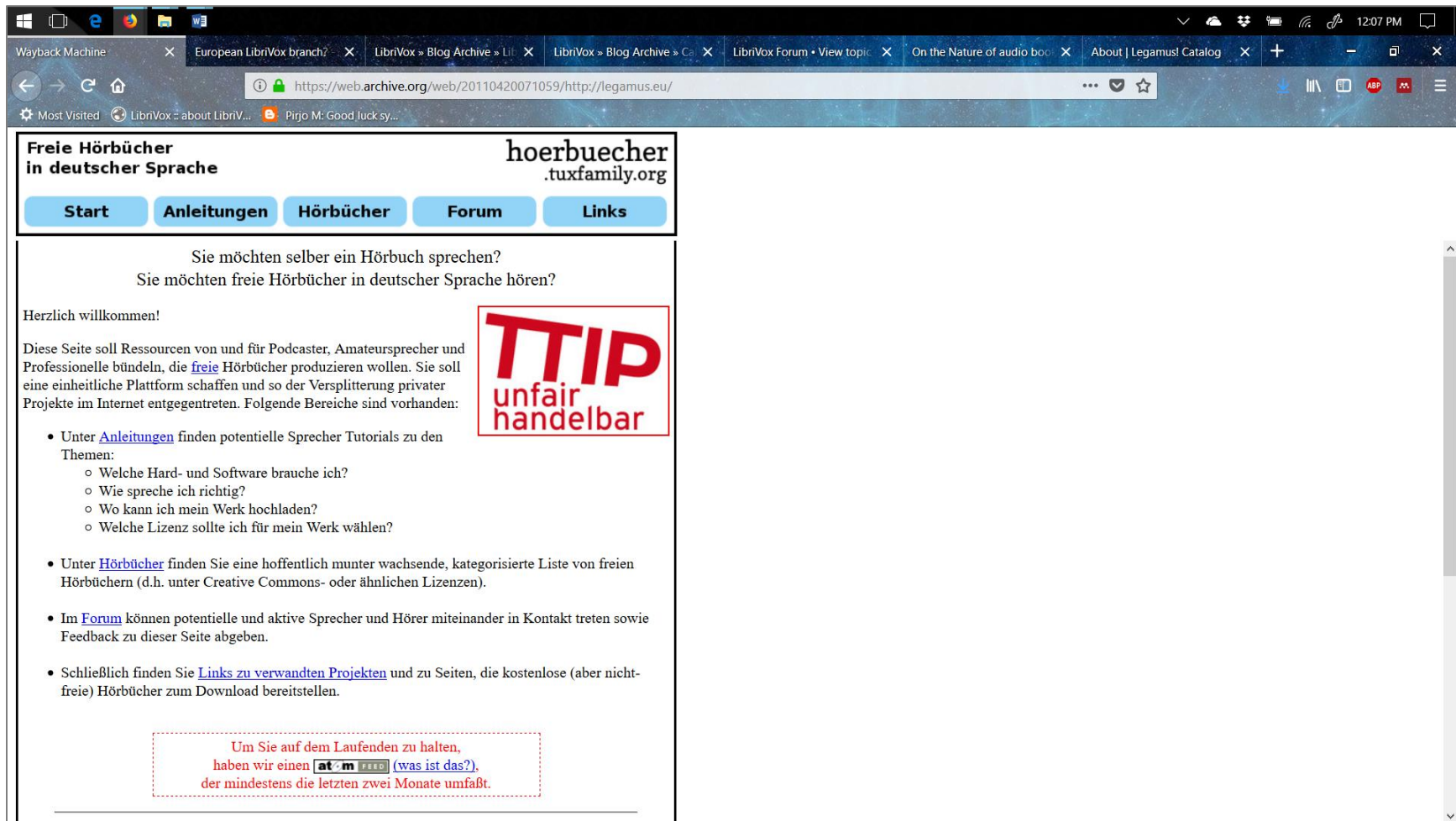


Figure I6. Another German site hosting free, public domain audiobooks at Legamus.eu, as of April 2011. This site later becomes an multilingual analog to LibriVox in Europe.

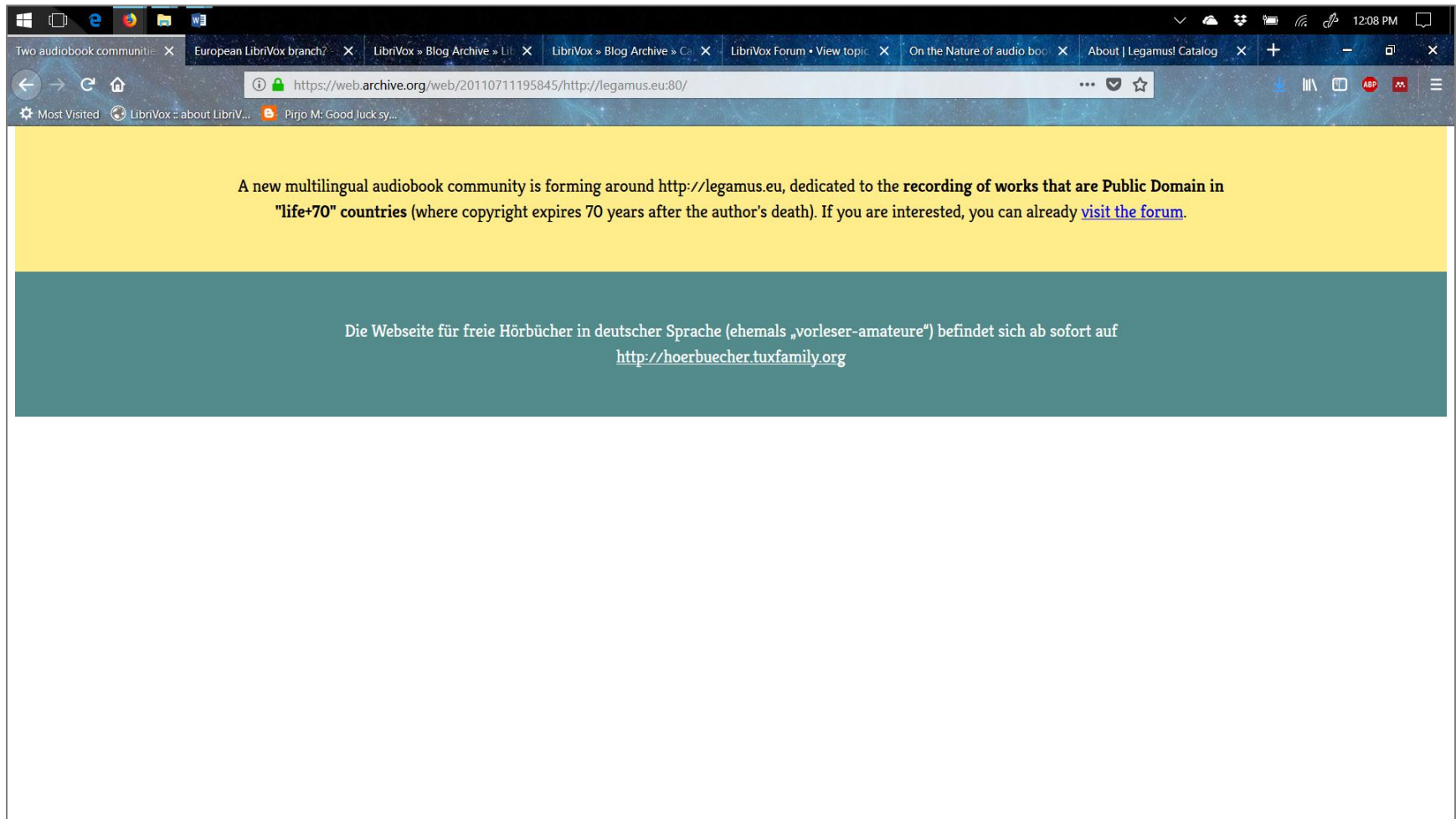


Figure I7. The free audiobook site at Legamus.eu as it transitions toward functioning as the European version of LibriVox, July 2011.

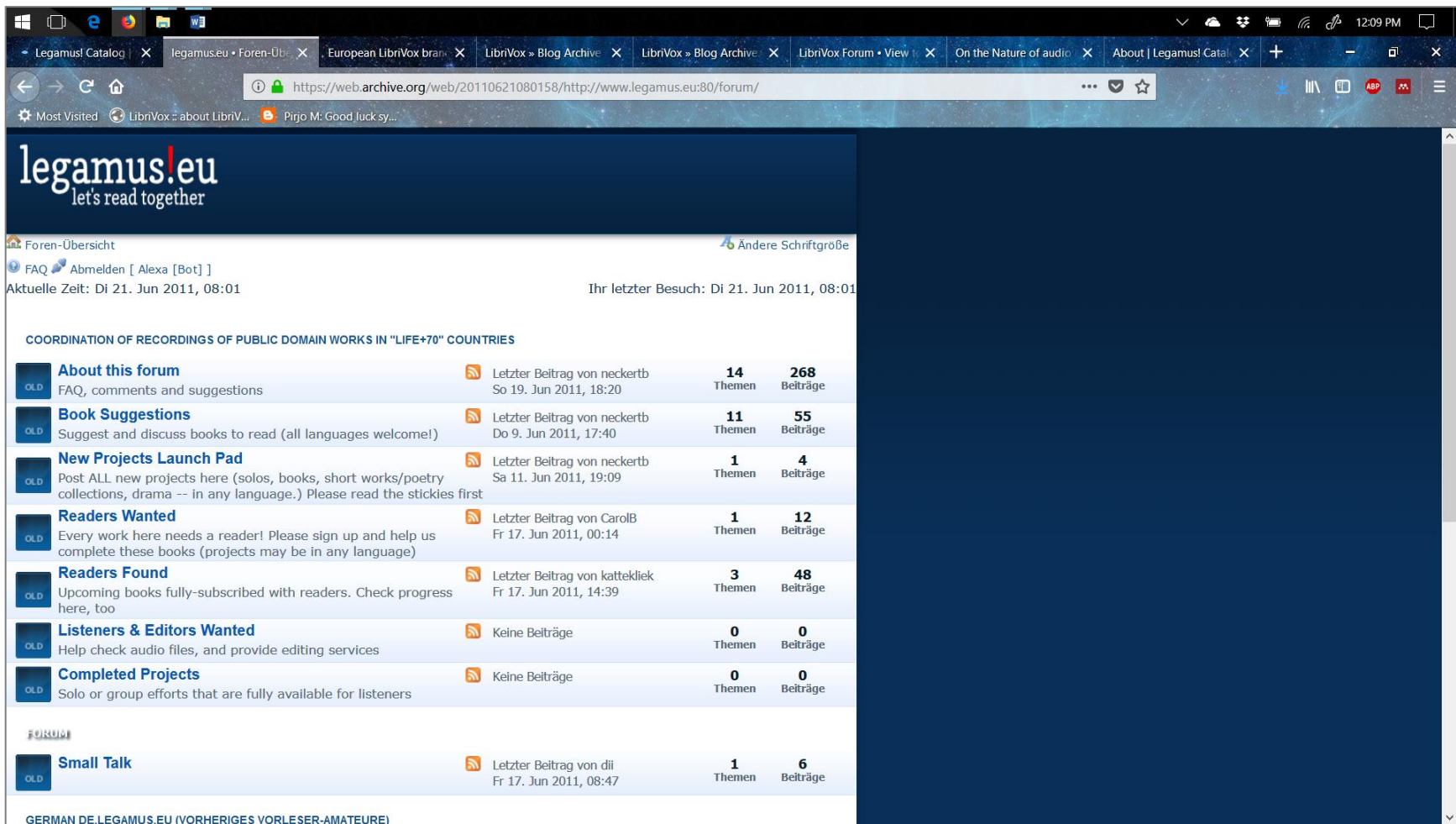


Figure 18. The new Legamus forums as of June 2011.



Figure I9. The Legamus.eu front page and blog as of April 2012. The design of the site has remained very similar since that year.

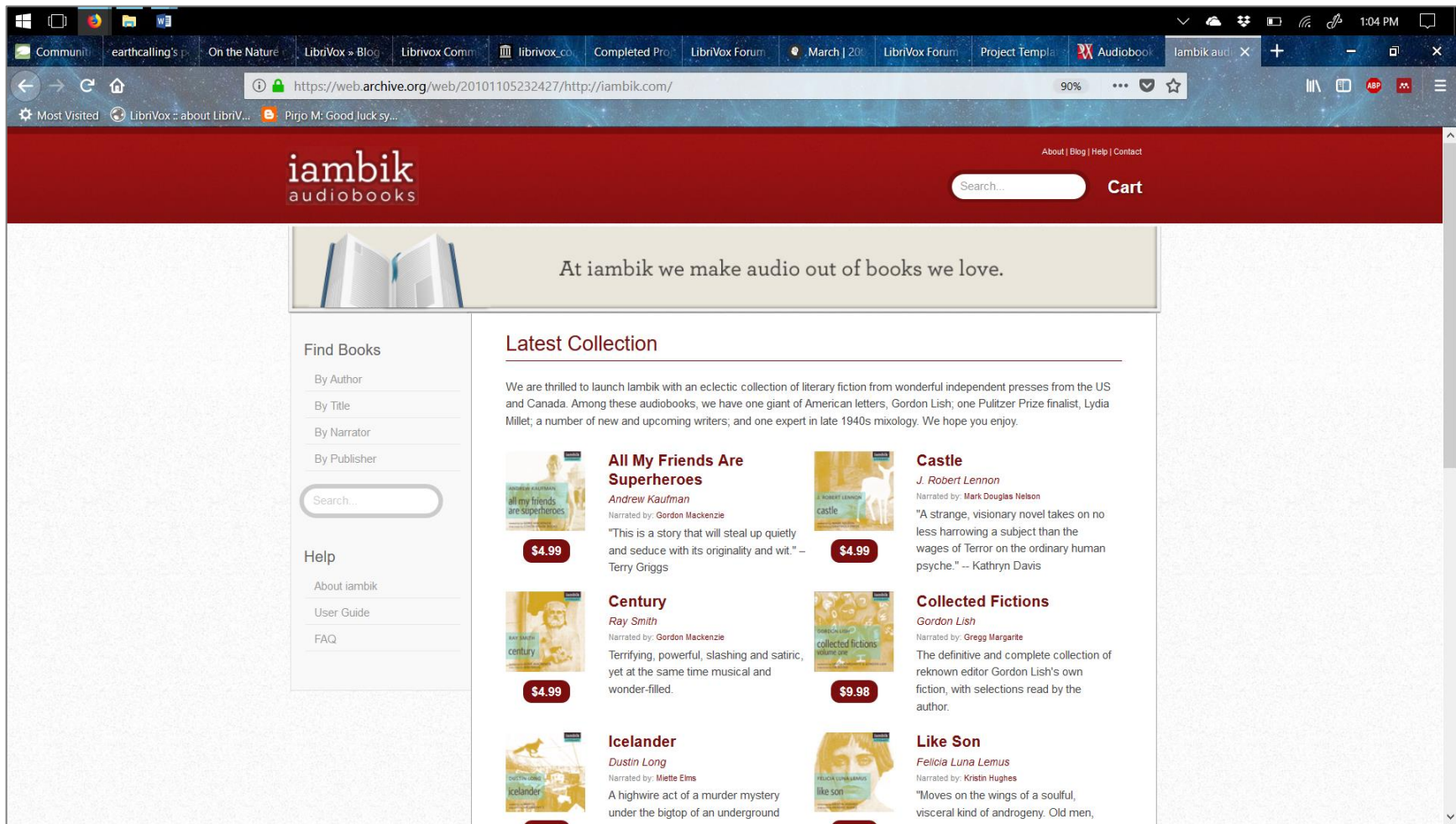


Figure I10. Archived version of Iambik’s website, as of Nov 2010. Hugh McGuire founded Iambik as a commercial analog to LibriVox.

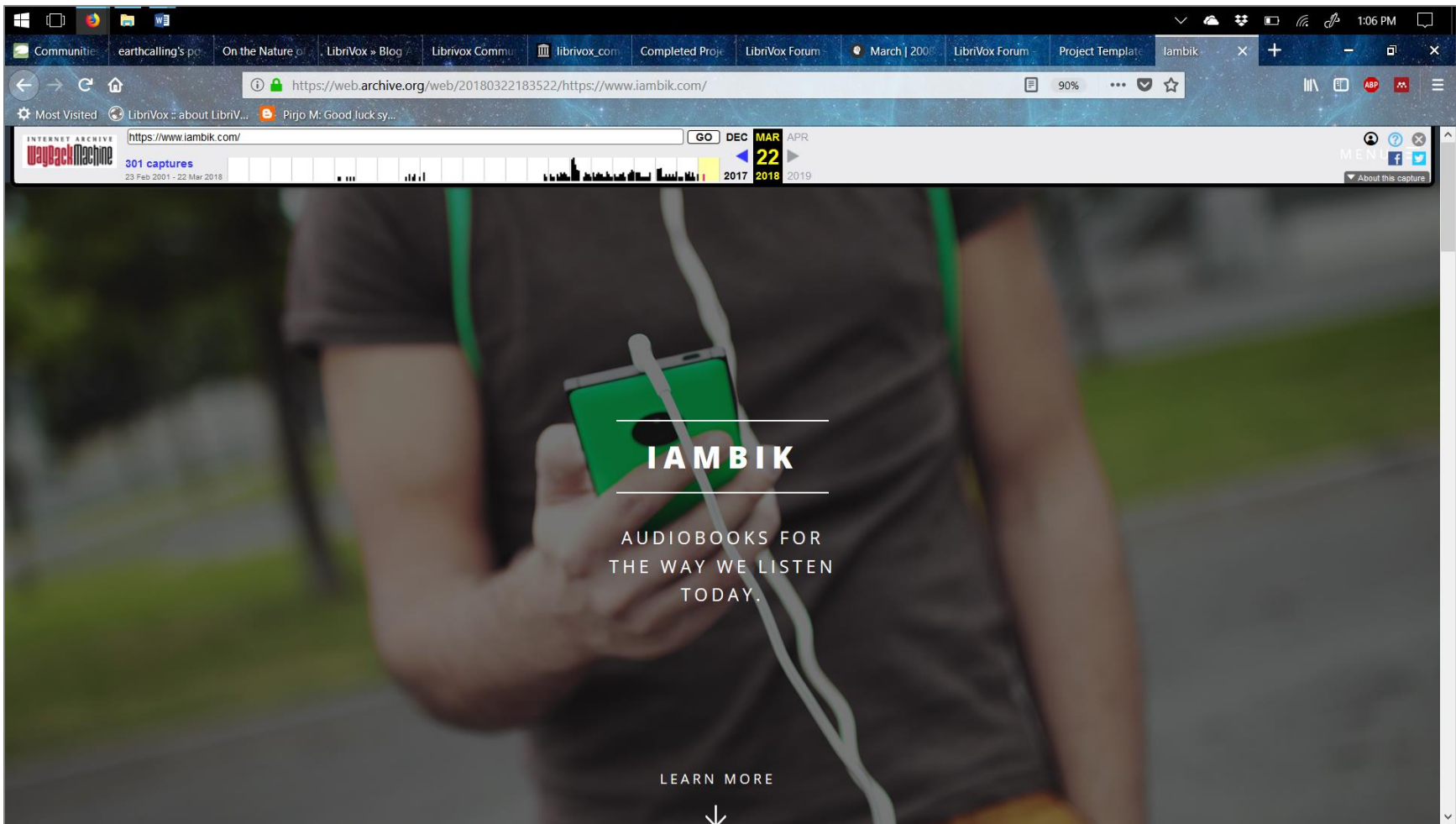


Figure I11. The Iambik website main page as of March 2018

APPENDIX J. SCREENSHOT OF THE ARCHIVED STOCKHOLM CHALLENGE WEBSITE

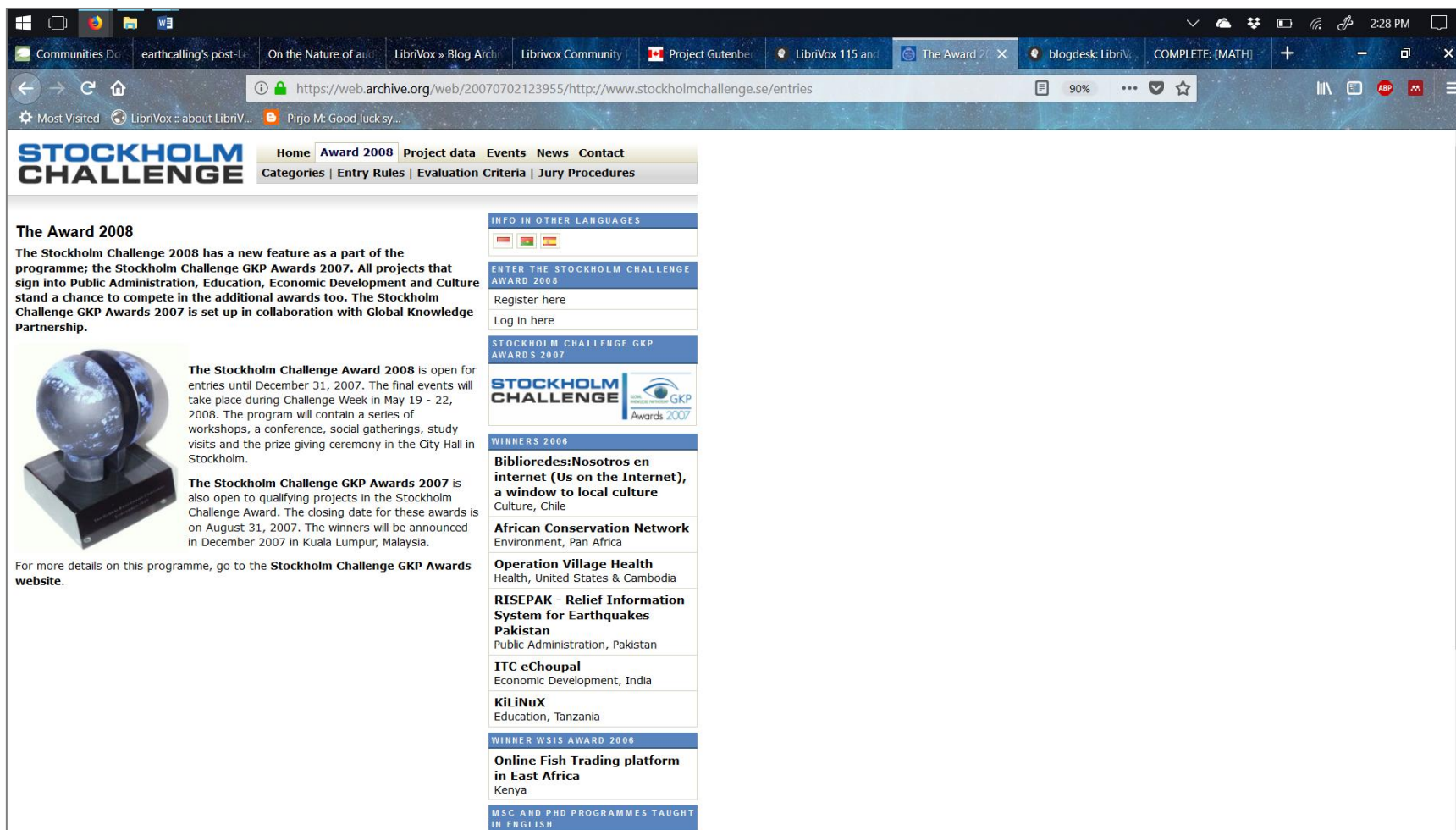


Figure J1. Archived version of the 2008 Stockholm Challenge website.

APPENDIX K. COPY OF MY WELCOME TO LIBRIVOX EMAIL

Gmail - Action required to activate LibriVox forum account

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=f5ea8aea84&jsver=nz7oc4z...



a chesley <plaidisicle@gmail.com>

Action required to activate LibriVox forum account

3 messages

noreply@librivox.org <noreply@librivox.org>

Thu, Dec 18, 2014 at 12:57 AM

Reply-To: noreply@librivox.org

To: plaidisicle <plaidisicle@gmail.com>

We are having a lot of trouble with spammers lately, and are taking extreme measures to protect our forums.

In order to activate your account, please send an email to librivox.forum@gmail.com.

BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR FORUM USERNAME!

Also, please tell us something about yourself, how you discovered LibriVox, and why you are interested in becoming a part of our forum community. Be as detailed and specific as you can, so we know you are a real volunteer. We will review your email and notify you when we activate your account.

Thanks,

Librivox Admin Team

Username: plaidisicle

amelia <plaidisicle@gmail.com>

Thu, Dec 18, 2014 at 1:02 AM

To: librivox.forum@gmail.com

hi Librivox,

I'll go by plaidisicle in the forums. real name: Amelia.

I love reading books aloud to family and friends, so the whole idea of Librivox seems really attractive. I hope I can figure out the process and contribute in some useful way!

I am also interested from an academic perspective-- I'm working on a phd in rhetoric and composition, and all the new cool ways of publishing things digitally is one of my big research interests.

thanks for your help, and happy Wednesday.

-amelia aka plaidisicle

[Quoted text hidden]

librivox forum <librivox.forum@gmail.com>

Thu, Dec 18, 2014 at 10:30 AM

To: amelia <plaidisicle@gmail.com>

Gmail - Action required to activate LibriVox forum account

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=f5ea8aea84&jsver=nz7oc4z...>

Welcome to LibriVox.

This is a form letter; I really do read every intro email, but so many new volunteers register every day that I can't possibly send each of you a personal welcome.

If you only wish to listen to our books, you don't need a forum account (though you have one now anyway, in case you change your mind). Just visit our catalog and download whatever you wish. <http://librivox.org/search> .

If you have questions, please post in the "Need Help" forum:
<https://forum.librivox.org/viewforum.php?f=23>

And now, here's your "welcome" email filled with helpful links!

Thanks for taking the time to introduce yourself! I have activated your forum account; you should be able to log in now.

If you speak a foreign language, have a look at: http://wiki.librivox.org/index.php/Quickstart_for_non-English_Users

You may like to introduce yourself to the community in the "introduce yourself" forum: <http://forum.librivox.org/viewforum.php?f=17>

An overview of how LibriVox works can be found here: http://wiki.librivox.org/index.php/How_LibriVox_Works

There are numerous ways to volunteer here. An important one is proof-listening, which consists of checking someone's recording for errors. If you'd like to give that a try, you can find lots of information here: http://wiki.librivox.org/index.php/Guide_for_Proof-listeners

If you wish to try your hand at recording, the place to start is the Newbie Guide to Recording: http://wiki.librivox.org/index.php/Newbie_Guide_to_Recording, which tells you how to set up your computer to record.

We urge you to make a "1 Minute Test" for review before you start actively recording. This is NOT an audition, but a way to check to make sure all your technical settings are correct, your volume loud enough, etc. You will find the information for the 1-Minute Test Recording here: http://wiki.librivox.org/index.php/1-Minute_Test. The instructions also tell you how to upload your test and then post in the Listeners and Editors Wanted forum so someone can give you feedback on it.

One of our volunteers has created a number of videos that you might find helpful to learn more about the workings of LibriVox. You can find a listing of those here: <http://wiki.librivox.org/index.php/User:Philchenevert>

Also to point out to professional (or aspiring) Voice Over artists, all our recordings are put back into the public domain which means sometimes they are sold on ebay, etc. Have a look at this page which describes our Public Domain policy: http://wiki.librivox.org/index.php/Copyright_and_Public_Domain

We hope you have fun!

Kayray
Librivox Admin Team
[Quoted text hidden]

**APPENDIX L. COPY OF MY INVITATION TO
ANNE OF GREEN GABLES PARTICIPANTS**

Dear [name],

Hello! I'm writing to invite you to participate in an upcoming episode of the LibriVox Community Podcast. I'm hosting one about one of the most-recorded texts at LV: *Anne of Green Gables*. You were part of the [version] in [year], and I am hoping you'll be willing to share any memories of your experience then.

Depending on what is easiest for you, you can either record yourself answering the questions/prompts below, or you can type out answers and I can read them for the podcast. I'd like to receive all contributions by November 1 at the latest.

Here are a few questions/prompts to start with:

- What memories can you share from the Anne of Green Gables project(s) you have been a part of?
- What memories do you have from your very first LV project? Tell us about that project.
- What is the most recent LV project you've worked on (or are working on)? What differences stand out between the work of this more recent project compared to your first LV project?
- Do you have a favorite memory of working with LibriVox?
- What are the most notable changes you've seen happen at LV since you joined?
- How important is it to you that you are credited for the work you donate to LibriVox?

Please feel free to share anything else about your experience of learning how to LibriVox, and/or skip any questions that don't apply or that you don't care to answer. The community podcast themes are very flexible and so am I. If you have a lot to say, we can always make more than one episode, too! The forum thread about this episode is at viewtopic.php?f=22&t=67769, in case you have any thoughts you'd like to post there.

I may also use some of what I learn in this podcast adventure for my PhD research. I'm writing a dissertation about how LibriVox is an awesome example of digital collaboration and public audiobook production, and hearing from other volunteers will help me understand LibriVox that much more. My own experiences volunteering are not the only experiences, after all! I want to hear as many perspectives as I can.

As a thank-you and a small incentive, I want to offer a gift to the first 20 people who respond to this mini-interview request. I can offer either...

- a \$10 Barnes & Noble gift card or Amazon gift card (your choice),
- or a \$10 donation in your name to LibriVox or another non-profit cause (also your choice).

Please let me know if you're willing and able to participate in this little podcast/research project, and feel free to ask any questions.

Thank you so much, and I hope to hear from you soon!

-Amelia (aka plaidisicle on the forums)

VITA

amelia chesley

ameliachesley.com | chesleya@nsula.edu

education**Doctor of Philosophy in English, Rhetoric and Composition** – August 2018

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Areas of Emphasis: Professional and Technical Writing, Digital Rhetorics

Dissertation: *Conventions of the Commons: Technical Communication
and Crowdsourced Digital Publishing*

Committee: Dr. Patricia Sullivan (chair), Dr. Jenny Bay, Dr. Michael Salvo,
and Dr. Richard Johnson-Sheehan

Master of Arts in English, Technical Communication – May 2013**Graduate Certificate in Publishing and Editing** – May 2012

Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Bachelor of Science in English, Professional and Technical Writing – May 2006

Utah State University, Logan, Utah

Minor: American Studies

International Education

Abertay University, Dundee, Scotland, UK. Postindustrial Technical Communication. Summer
2014

Texas Tech University Study Abroad in Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Austria. Human Geography.
Summer 2012

University of Plymouth, Exmouth, Devon, UK. 2003 – 2004

academic appointments

Assistant Professor of English, August 2018 – present

Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies

Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana

Graduate Research Assistant, July 2015 – July 2018

Purdue Polytechnic Institute
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Graduate Instructor, August 2015 – May 2018

Professional Writing Program
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Assistant Director, Fall 2015 – Summer 2017

Rhetoric and Composition Graduate Program
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Graduate Instructor, August 2013 – May 2015

Introductory Composition Program
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Graduate Instructor, August 2012 – May 2013

First-Year Writing, Department of English
Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

publications

- Chesley, A. (2018) A brief history of crowdsourced digital publishing at LibriVox.org. Proceedings of the Annual Computers & Writing Conference Vol. 1, 2016 & 2017. WAC Clearinghouse. <https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/proceedings/cw2016/chesley.pdf>
- Chesley, A. (2017). Users as makers: User experience design for and by the crowd. Proceedings from the 35th ACM International Conference on the Design of Communication. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3121113.3121201>
- Chesley, A. (2017). Computers & Writing Keynote 1: Techne Needs Praxis. [Review of Computers & Writing Keynote 1 by James Porter.] Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative <http://www.digitalrhetoriccollaborative.org/2017/06/26/cw-review-of-keynote1/>
- Chesley, A. (2017). Computers & Writing Workshop 4: We Wrote an E-book (in First-Year Composition!) and Your Students Can Too. [Review of Computers & Writing Workshop 4 by Ashley Hall.] <http://www.digitalrhetoriccollaborative.org/2017/06/26/cw-workshop-4-we-wrote-an-e-book-in-first-year-composition-and-your-students-can-too/>
- Chesley, A., Mentzer, N., Laux, D., Parupudi, T., Kardgar, A., & Knapp, S. (2017, June), Assessing the impact of an interdisciplinary First-Year Experience program. Proceedings

- from the 2017 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference & Exposition. <https://peer.asee.org/27626>
- Kardgar, A., Mentzer, N., Laux, D., Chesley, A., & Whittinghill, D. M. (2017, June), Developing strategies for instruction and assessment of infographics for first-year Technology students. Proceedings from the 2017 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference & Exposition. <https://peer.asee.org/28150>
- Parupudi, T., Knapp, S., Chesley, A., Mentzer, N., & Laux, D. (2017, June), Comparing team member effectiveness in integrated and non-integrated first-year introductory Design courses. Proceedings from the 2017 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference & Exposition. <https://peer.asee.org/28054>
- Coots, M. W., Knapp, S., Chesley, A., Mentzer, N., & Laux, D. (2017, June), An evaluation of STEM integration effectiveness by artifact analysis. Proceedings from the 2017 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference & Exposition. <https://peer.asee.org/27557>
- Chesley, A. (2017). Indexing it all: The subject in the age of documentation, information, and data, by Ronald E. Day. [Review of the book Indexing it all: The subject in the age of documentation, information, and data, by Ronald E. Day.] *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 26(1), 97–99. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2016.1258268>
- Chesley, A., Mentzer, N., Jackson, A., Laux, D., & Renner, M. (2016, June), Integrating Technology, English, and Communication courses for first-year Technology students. Proceedings from the 2016 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference & Exposition. <https://peer.asee.org/25414>
- Chesley, A. (2012). Review of *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age* by Kenneth Goldsmith. [Review of the book *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age* by Kenneth Goldsmith.] *Journal of Electronic Publishing*, 15(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/3336451.0015.105>
- Chesley, A. (2012). The hows and whys of technical editing. [Review of the book *Technical Editing*, 5th ed. by Carolyn D. Rude and Angela Eaton.] *Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators' Communicator*. Spring 2012, 52–53.

works in progress

- Chesley, A. (abstract under review, draft in progress). Invitational technical communication and public knowledge work in online crowdsourcing communities.
- Craig, S.E. and Chesley, A. (draft in progress). Informal WAC and interdisciplinary integration programs: Supporting instructors and administrators.
- Chesley, A. (abstract accepted, draft under review). The in/visible and in/audible labor of digitizing the public domain.

- Baniya, S., Chesley, A., Mentzer, N., Bartholomew, S., & Moon, C. (abstract accepted, draft in progress). Establishing reliability among multidisciplinary judges without calibration using Adaptive Comparative Judging (ACJ).
- Knapp, S., Chesley, A., Coots, M. W., Mentzer, N., & Laux, D. (revise and resubmit). The impacts of integrating Composition, Communication, and Design Thinking.
- Unger, D., Wallin, J., Vealey, K., Marino, N. P., Liddle, D., Chesley, A., Craig, S. E., & Gerding, J. M. (revise and resubmit). Pedagogy-in-progress: Continuing James Berlin's cultural studies approach to writing instruction.

presentations

Public Technical Communication

- Digital technology stewardship in the LibriVox community. To be presented at the 2018 Thomas R. Watson Conference on Making Future Matters. October 2018. (Regional Conference)
- Working with sound: Audiobook projects, podcasts, and pedagogy. Panel/mini-workshop presented with Patti Poblete, Lauren Malone, and Megan McIntyre at Computers and Writing. Fairfax, Virginia. May 2018 (National Conference)
- Crowdsourced digital technology stewardship at LibriVox. Ignite Talk presented at Purdue University's Professional Writing Showcase Ignite Session. April 2018 (Local Symposium)
- Users as makers: User experience design for and by the crowd. Paper presented at the ACM Special Interest Group on the Design of Communication. Halifax, Nova Scotia. August 2017 (International Conference)
- Tracing and valuing free, crowdsourced Digital Humanities work. Paper presented at Computers and Writing. Findlay, Ohio. June 2017 (National Conference)
- The making-public of All The Things. Ignite Talk presented at Purdue University's Professional Writing Showcase Ignite Session. April 2017 (Local Symposium)
- Tending to the multilingual, transmedia, crowdsourced cultural commons of LibriVox.org. Presented at Cultural Rhetorics. East Lansing, Michigan. October 2016 (Regional Conference)
- Negotiating standards for open, collaborative, Digital Humanities projects. Presented at the Graduate Research Network Workshop at Computers and Writing. Rochester, New York. May 2016 (National Conference)
- The open-sourcing of Tech Comm: DIY sites and Technical Communication pedagogy. Panel presented with Miles Kimball and Tim Elliot at the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Indianapolis, Indiana. March 2014 (National Conference)

Pedagogy + Interdisciplinarity

- Supporting instructors and administrators in informal WAC/Writing Integration Programs. Panel presented with Sherri Craig and Nathan Mentzer at the 2018 International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference. Auburn, Alabama. June 2018 (International Conference)
- Interdisciplinary pedagogy, integrated curriculum, and professional development. Panel presented with Aidan Holtan, Christi Eden, Shawn Farrington, and Tejasvi Parupudi at the American Society for Engineering Education Illinois/Indiana Section Conference. West Lafayette, Indiana. March 2018 (Regional Conference)
- The labor of interdisciplinarity: Teaching, learning, and research in an Integrated First-Year Experience Program. Panel presented with Lindsay Macdonald, Joseph Forte, and Ron Erdei at the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Kansas City, Missouri. March 2018 (National Conference)
- Assessing the impact of an interdisciplinary first-year experience program. Paper presented at the American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference & Exposition. Columbus, Ohio. June 2017 (National Conference)
- Developing strategies for instruction and assessment of infographics for first-year technology students. Paper presented with Asefeh Kardgar at the American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference & Exposition. Columbus, Ohio. June 2017 (National Conference)
- New directions in engagement pedagogy: Bridging gaps between stakeholders via digital tools and techniques. Panel presented with Trinity Overmyer and Erin Brock Carlson at the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing Conference. Portland, Oregon. March 2017 (National Conference)
- Design, communication, and writing: Interdisciplinary integration for first year technology students. Poster presented at the ACM Special Interest Group on the Design of Communication Student Research Competition. Silver Spring, Maryland. September 2016 (International Conference)
- Integrating Technology, English, and Communication courses for first-year Technology students. Poster presented with Andrew Jackson and Asefeh Kardgar at the American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference & Exposition. New Orleans, Louisiana. June 2016 (National Conference)
- Feminism, rhetoric, and writing: ‘Yogas’ of the university space. Panel presented with Whitney Myers and Jackie Hoermann at Feminisms and Rhetorics. Phoenix, Arizona. October 2015 (National Conference)

Digital Media + Intellectual Property

- Retracing Blogging Experience as Digital Phronesis: Two Multicultural Microhistories. Poster presented with Sweta Baniya at Computers and Writing. Fairfax, Virginia. May 2018 (National Conference)

- On the ownability and openness of creative work. Presented at Intellectual Properties: Archive, Canon, Clone, Copy. University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 2014 (Regional Conference)
- Data and cliques: Recipes as representative, instructive practice. Presented at the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing Conference. Indianapolis, Indiana. March 2014 (National Conference)
- Digital authorship and voyeurism on Pinterest. Presented at Writing Research Across Borders III. Paris, France. Université Paris–Ouest, Nanterre, La Défense. February 2014 (International Conference)
- Food, community, and copyright: Recipes as invitational, communal, and open-source argument. Presented at the 29th Annual All-University Conference: Women and Global Change: Achieving Peace through Empowering Women, Part II. Texas Tech University. Lubbock, Texas. April 2013 (Regional Conference)
- Authorship/ownership/curatorship on Pinterest and other social networks. Presented at the Research Network Forum of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Las Vegas, Nevada. March 2013 (National Conference)
- The forms and functions of food photography on Pinterest. Presented at the Southwest/Texas Pop Culture and American Culture Association Conference. Albuquerque, New Mexico. February 2013 (Regional Conference)

courses taught

(sections where I taught as instructor of record are indicated with *)

Department of English at Northwestern State

Rhetoric and Composition I (ENGL 1010), 1 section* – Fall 2018

This course engages students in college-level writing, helping them practice the reading and writing skills needed to produce a well-reasoned argumentative essay. Students learn to recognize and apply rhetorical strategies appropriate for a variety of audiences and situations.

Technical Composition (ENGL 3230), 2 sections* – Fall 2018

Students in this course are asked to think about and analyze the kinds of writing that occur in the workplace, considering the audiences and purposes relative to business and technical writing. Students will also practice using technologies related to writing and sharing information in various media.

Technical Composition Online (ENGL 3230), 1 section* – Fall 2018

Students in this asynchronous online course will engage with and practice producing the kinds of writing that occur in the workplace. They consider various audiences and purposes relative to business and technical writing. As part of their work in the course, students will use and critique information technologies related to writing and sharing knowledge across various media.

Professional Writing at Purdue

Internship in Professional Writing (ENGL 488, for PW majors), 1 section* – Spring 2018

As part of this course, students take on internships with local organizations and also meet weekly for an applied seminar on professional writing and rhetoric. The seminar is an opportunity for students to discuss observations, problems, and accomplishments in context of their professional writing education and aspirations for the future. Each student works toward developing a professional portfolio of their internship work and other professional writing artifacts.

Syllabus: <http://www.ameliachesley.com/s/English488-Spring2018-Syllabus.pdf>

*Online Business Writing** (ENGL 420Y), 3 sections* – Summer 2016, Fall 2016, Fall 2017

In this fully asynchronous course, students engage with the rhetorical and ethical challenges of communicating with multiple professional audiences. The course is managed primarily using the Slack messaging platform (<http://slack.com>), which provides students practice collaborating professionally in distributed, digital environments. I ask students to practice composing and designing documents that address real-world situations or problems; in one section, students prepared unique marketing materials and proposals to share with two local businesses.

Sample syllabus: <http://www.ameliachesley.com/s/Chesley-Fall2016-English420YSyllabus.pdf>

Intro. to Research for Professional Writers (ENGL 203, for PW majors), 1 section* – Spring 2017

This course gives students opportunities to practice critically reading and conducting various types of research relevant to their future work as professional writers. Students selected an online community as research site and completed in-depth investigations into the digital contexts of professional writing. In teams, we also partnered with the local public library to research and propose an updated structure and design for the library website.

Syllabus: <http://www.ameliachesley.com/s/Chesley-Spring2017-English203Syllabus.pdf>

Technical Writing (ENGL 421), 1 section* – Spring 2016

Students in this course learn to present technical material in user-centered and context-appropriate ways. The course aims to prepare emerging experts to communicate professionally and effectively in their chosen fields and beyond. I asked students in this section to research a range of non-profit or non-governmental organizations related to their majors and then to compile a customized, researched technical proposal addressed toward an improvement or initiative that organization should consider.

Syllabus: <http://www.ameliachesley.com/s/Chesley-Spring2016-English421Syllabus.pdf>

Business Writing (ENGL 420), 1 section* – Fall 2015

This course gives students experience producing effective business letters, memos, reports, proposals, and other professional documents. In this section, students completed research into several non-profit organizations related to their academic or personal interests. As teams, we then conceptualized and proposed specific cause-related marketing campaigns involving partnerships between one non-profit or non-governmental organization and an appropriate for-profit company.

Syllabus: <http://www.ameliachesley.com/s/Chesley-Fall2015-English420Syllabus.pdf>

Introductory Composition at Purdue

Purdue Promise Learning Community, Intro. Composition (ENGL 106R), 1 section* – Fall 2014

This course, part of a program designed to increase retention and academic engagement among first-generation college students, gave students opportunities to analyze and compose complex texts across many media. Students completed in-depth rhetorical analyses and critical research reports on topics of their choice, reflecting carefully about their writing processes along the way.

Syllabus: <http://www.ameliachesley.com/s/Chesley-Fall2014-English106R42Syllabus.pdf>

Introductory Composition (ENGL 106), 3 sections* – Fall 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015

In this course, I asked students to interrogate the ways they navigate and contribute, as writers, readers, and consumers, to a world full of communication. Using a range of technologies (word processing, image editing software, slide presentations, audio and video recorders, and video editing software), students composed in various modes and genres, from posters, editorials, and personal reflections to formal reports, presentations, and proposals.

Texas Tech University First-Year Writing

Advanced College Rhetoric (ENGL 1302), 2 sections* – Spring 2013

In this course, students closely and carefully analyze sources, arguments, and proposals in order to understand their rhetorical components and effects. The core assignment of this course is a sequence of research including an annotated bibliography, literature review essay, and persuasive argument paper.

Essentials of College Rhetoric (ENGL 1301), 2 sections* – Fall 2012

This course introduces students to methods of rhetorical analysis and critique. Students learn to recognize rhetorical appeals as they engage purposefully and meticulously with the audiences and purposes common to academic writing.

Russell Ridge Center, Maple Valley, Washington

Beginning Web Design, 1 section – Spring 2007

This course introduced students from ages 8 to 16 to the basics of HTML, CSS, and evolving web standards. We practiced using MicroSoft FrontPage and basic text editors to compose web artifacts and hyperlinked pages. Each student crafted their own website to showcase at the end of the term.

invited talks & workshops

Teaching in the Integrated Freshman Experience: Lessons learned from Fall 2017. Workshop presentation for instructors on interdisciplinary integrated teaching and research. January 2018

On organizing the LibriVox online community. 10-Minute Tech Comm Podcast with Dr. Ryan Weber. <https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/10minute-tech-comm/e/51294591>. August 2017

The Integrated Freshman Experience: Lessons learned from 2016–2017. Workshop presentation for instructors on interdisciplinary integrated teaching and research. August 2017

Stitching community: Quilt crafting as a construction of technology, meaning-making, and digital life. Workshop presented with Sherri Craig and John Sherrill. Cultural Rhetorics. East Lansing, Michigan. October 2016

The Integrated Freshman Experience: Lessons learned from 2015–2016. Workshop presentation for instructors on interdisciplinary integrated teaching and research. August 2016.

Academic citations: MLA and APA styles. Purdue Writing Lab Workshop. Purdue University. West Lafayette, Indiana. July 2015

Resumes. Purdue Writing Lab Workshop for Project Stepping Stone of Indiana. West Lafayette, Indiana. June 2015

Research writing for general audiences. Purdue Writing Lab Workshop for Journal of Purdue Undergraduate Research student authors. Purdue University. West Lafayette, Indiana. April 2015

Editing and mentoring student authors. Purdue Writing Lab Workshop Series for Journal of Purdue Undergraduate Research student editors. Purdue University. West Lafayette, Indiana. February 2015

Designing research posters. Workshop on poster preparation for the Next Generation Scholars Fair. Sponsored by Purdue Graduate Student Government Academic and Professional Development. Purdue University. West Lafayette, Indiana. October 2014

Online portfolios. Workshop presentation for the Society for Technical Communication, Intermountain chapter. Weber State University–Davis. Layton, Utah. November 2009

tutoring, editing & other experience

Writing Tutor, Fall 2014 – Summer 2015

Purdue Writing Lab, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

ESL Conversation Group Leader, Spring and Summer 2015

Purdue Writing Lab, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Content Developer, Fall 2014

Purdue Online Writing Lab, West Lafayette, Indiana

Editorial Assistant, August 2011 – August 2012

Texas Tech University Press, Lubbock, Texas

Library specialist, October 2009 – August 2011

Salt Lake Community College, South Jordan, Utah

Graphic designer and print manager, May 2006 – December 2006

Kopy It & Scrapbook Supply, Gallatin, Missouri

Writer, web developer, and graphic designer, May 2006 – December 2006

The Parent Help Resource Center, Gallatin, Missouri

Editorial Assistant and webmaster, September 2004 – May 2006

Isotope: A Journal of Literary Nature and Science Writing, Logan, Utah

community engagement work

LibriVox.org, global public domain audiobook project, January 2016 – present

Book Coordinator, November 2016 – present

The Arte or Crafte of Rhetoryke, by Leonard Cox (in progress)

Caliban by the Yellow Sands, by Percy MacKaye,

https://archive.org/details/caliban_1712_librivox (Dec 2017)

On the Sublime, by Longinus,

https://archive.org/details/on_the_sublime_1705_librivox (May 2017)

Community Podcast Host and Contributor, December 2016, August 2017, January 2018

Reader (48 projects) and Prooflistener (11 projects), January 2016 – present

West Lafayette Public Library, Spring 2017

Coordinated 4 undergraduate research teams in evaluating, testing, and recommending design changes for the library website.

Main Street Books, Fall 2016

Worked with store owner to draft a flexible, marketing-focused Request For Proposals; supervised and consulted with undergraduate students on marketing and design proposals for the bookstore.

Laughing Learning Loving Family Child Care, Fall 2016

Worked with business owner to draft a flexible, marketing-focused Request For Proposals; supervised and consulted with undergraduate students on marketing and design proposals for the facility.

Purdue Musical Organizations, Fall 2014, Spring 2016, Fall 2016

All Campus and Community Chorale – performing member

Blue Moon Rising Choir, Fall 2016

Performing member and volunteer

Tippecanoe County Women, Infants & Children, Fall 2014

With the support of a community engagement pedagogy grant, fellow graduate students and I planned and carried out research with WIC clients, including drafting and circulating a brief survey, organizing and conducting site observations, and consulting with WIC professionals. The results of our research were presented to WIC in the form of a formal proposal and revised informational materials for clients.

Food Finders Food Bank, Summer 2014

Volunteer

Lafayette Civic Theatre, Fall 2013 – Fall 2014

Performer, volunteer

service

Women in Technical Communication

Summer Writing Group facilitator, Summer 2017 and Summer 2018

Conference on College Composition and Communication

Stage 1 Reviewer for CCCC's 2019 proposals, May 2018

Stage 1 Reviewer for CCCC's 2018 proposals, May 2017

ACM Special Interest Group on the Design of Communication (SIGDOC)

Stage 2 Reviewer for conference paper submissions, May 2017

Stage 1 Reviewer for conference proposals, February 2017

Introductory Composition at Purdue

Writing Showcase Judge, April 2014 and April 2015

Digital Humanities Lab, Texas Tech University English Department, Lubbock, Texas

Transcriber for the Texas Manuscript Cultures project, Fall 2012 – Spring 2013

Letterpress Lab, Texas Tech University English Department, Lubbock, Texas

Press Devil (cleaning, organizing, distributing type), Fall 2012 – Spring 2013

Material Book Cultures (YouTube series for and by book history students), Spring 2012

technical skills

Course management using Drupal, Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle

Content management using Blogger, Wordpress, Squarespace

Audio/video production in Adobe Captivate, Quicktime, iMovie

Audio recording and editing in Audacity, GarageBand

Graphic design for print and web using Adobe Creative Suite, Open Office Suite, GIMP

Editing, proofreading, transcription, manuscript preparation, some typesetting

Qualitative coding and analysis in NVivo

Print production and some bookbinding

Web design using HTML, CSS, some XML

Basic scripting in javascript, PHP, and Ruby

professional memberships

National Council of Teachers of English
 Association of Teachers of Technical Writing
 Association of Computing Machinery

honors & awards

Promise Graduate Student Research Award – Purdue University College of Liberal Arts
 \$1,500 to support research + international conference travel for graduate students, based on application.
 Received June 2017

Graduate Summer Research Grant – Purdue Research Foundation
 \$3,332 in support of 2 consecutive months of summer dissertation research, based on application.
 Received April 2017

Pedagogy Travel Grant – Grad Student English Association & Introductory Composition at Purdue
 \$200 toward conference travel for presenting pedagogical presentations, based on application.
 Received April 2017

Research Methods Workshop Scholarship – Association of Teachers of Technical Writing
 \$200 toward conference registration and accommodations, based on application.
 Received March 2017

Promise Graduate Student Research Award – Purdue University College of Liberal Arts
 \$500 to support research + conference travel for graduate students, based on application.
 Received September 2016

Best Research on Writing at Work or Play + Best Use of Design Visuals
 Rhetoric and Composition Graduate Program Empirical Poster Session
 Received May 2015

Ross Fellowship – Purdue University English Department
 ~\$24,000 stipend and tuition waiver for the recruitment of outstanding PhD students.
 Received for the 2013–2014 academic year

Texas Tech University Press Graduate Publishing & Editing Assistantship
 ~\$30,000 stipend and tuition waiver for graduate studies in publishing & editing.
 Received for the 2011–2012 academic year

relevant coursework

Rhetoric + Composition

Postmodernism and Composition Studies, Spring 2015 (Dr. Michael Salvo)
 Gender, Rhetoric and the Body, Spring 2015 (Dr. Jenny Bay)
 History of Rhetoric: Modern Period, Fall 2014 (Dr. Patricia Sullivan)
 History of Rhetoric: Classical Period, Spring 2014 (Dr. Richard Johnson-Sheehan)
 Teaching Introductory Composition II, Spring 2014 (Dr. Richard Johnson-Sheehan)
 Teaching Introductory Composition I, Fall 2013 (Dr. Thomas Rickert)
 Introduction to Composition Theory, Fall 2013 (Dr. Jenny Bay)
 Intercultural Communication, Spring 2013 (Dr. Rich Rice)
 Written Argumentation, Fall 2012 (Dr. Amanda Booher and Dr. Joyce Carter)
 Rhetorical Theory, Fall 2012 (Dr. Ken Baake and Dr. Amanda Booher)
 Visual Rhetoric, Spring 2012 (Dr. Miles Kimball)

Professional + Technical Writing

Professional Writing Theory, Fall 2014 (Dr. Patricia Sullivan)
 Institutional Rhetorics, Fall 2013 (Dr. Patricia Sullivan)
 Usability Studies, Spring 2013 (Dr. Brian Still)
 Technical Manuals: Instructional Development and Design, Spring 2012 (Dr. Craig Baehr)
 Foundations of Technical Communication, Fall 2011 (Dr. Kelli Cargile Cook)

Digital Rhetorics

Computers, Language, and Rhetoric, Fall 2015 (Dr. Samantha Blackmon)
 Rhetoric, Games, and Play, Spring 2014 (Dr. Samantha Blackmon)
 Digital Studio: Memory Practices and Technoscience, Fall 2013 (Dr. Nathan Johnson)

Publishing + Textual Scholarship

Advanced Problems in Literature: History of the Book, Spring 2012 (Dr. Ann Hawkins)
 Research Methods in Lit. and Language: Bibliography, Fall 2011 (Dr. Ann Hawkins, Dr. Jennifer Snead)
 Publications Management, Fall 2011 (Dr. Brian Still)

Research Methods

Empirical Research Methods, Spring 2015 (Dr. Patricia Sullivan)
 Field Methods of Research, Spring 2013 (Dr. Rebecca Rickly)

Languages + Linguistics

World Englishes, Spring 2016 (Dr. Margie Berns)

Intensive ESL Tutor Training, Spring 2015 (Dr. Vicki R. Kennell)

German for Reading Knowledge, Spring 2014 (Prof. Claudia Mueller-Green)