



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Penn Libraries and Kirtas Technologies team up to make more than 200,000 books available for research and purchase**

TOOLS OF CHANGE CONFERENCE, NEW YORK CITY, FEBRUARY 11, 2009 – Since 2001, Kirtas Technologies has worked with the world’s most renowned libraries to bring rare, out-of-copyright books into the digital age, making centuries-worth of books available to the world.

Today, Kirtas announces a partnership with the University of Pennsylvania Libraries to make over 200,000 titles available to the public in a unique way.

Using existing information drawn from Penn’s catalog records, Kirtas is able to offer out-of-copyright books for sale through its own retail site, [www.kirtasbooks.com](http://www.kirtasbooks.com). What makes this initiative unique is that the books can be offered for sale before they are ever digitized, so there is no up-front printing, production or storage cost.

"This partnership allows us to gauge reader interest in on-demand digitization and printing services," said Carton Rogers, Vice Provost and Director of Libraries at the University of Pennsylvania. "That frees us from difficult selection decisions and lets the digital collection grow in response to user demand. The model is efficient and minimizes the risk as we develop new ways of addressing information needs."

Through [www.kirtasbooks.com](http://www.kirtasbooks.com), customers will be able to search for a desired title, and when found, place a "digitize for me" request. The desired book will be pulled from Penn’s shelves, digitized, processed by Kirtas for optimal reading and printing, and a newly-printed copy will be shipped to the initiator. Or, the customer can purchase access to an online-only version of the book. Once the book has been digitized, it is returned undamaged to the library shelf.

"The Penn Libraries have been delivering digital content from their collections for over a decade," said David McKnight, director of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. "We started with extremely rare material, and now we will have the capacity to digitize nearly any book in our collection that’s in the public domain."

Public Domain books are those that are out of copyright, essentially any title published before 1923. It is estimated that there are several million such titles in existence.

To illustrate the “popular” titles that might be requested through the kirtasbooks.com partnership, a collection of vintage teen-reader books have been selected for initial digitization. Titles such as *Caroline at College*, by Lela Horn Richards (printed in 1922) and *The Baseball Boys of Lakeport: or, the Winning Run* by Edward Stratemyer (printed in 1908). "These books are charming," said McKnight.

Through this unique partnership with Kirtas, the Penn Libraries will also earn income on orders of its books. Distribution rights are non-exclusive so the books can be made available through the Penn Libraries, as well as other distribution channels.

“We’re honored to have collections from an institution as distinguished as the University of Pennsylvania as part of the launch of this program,” Kirtas Founder and CEO Lotfi Belkhir said. “It’s a radical approach to digitization in that it eliminates the guesswork involved in selecting the books that will sell.”

### **About Kirtas Technologies**

Kirtas Technologies has pioneered and perfected the technology used today in quality, high-speed, nondestructive mass book digitization. A proven workflow ensuring superior image quality, advanced search capabilities, unique archiving technology, and extensive metadata enabling multiple output options that stand the test of time are what set us apart and keep Kirtas at the forefront of the digital revolution. Learn more at [www.kirtas.com](http://www.kirtas.com)

### **About University of Pennsylvania**

Founded in 1750 to support the College, Academy, and Charitable School of Philadelphia, the Penn Libraries comprise one the nation’s oldest academic library systems. The early collection was assembled by Benjamin Franklin and other prominent figures of the College.

Today, the Libraries rank among the largest research libraries in North America. Their collections and staff serve the full range of teaching and research programs at Penn, with more than six million volumes, some 52,000 electronic journals, and a distinctive group of special collections, with particular prominence in early modern manuscripts, the English Renaissance, Judaica, and the papers of contemporary authors and artists. Penn is also home to a sophisticated digital library that represents the equivalent of a multi-million-volume print collection, and includes the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Image, which will take the lead in this digitization program.

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