

An open-source rival to Google's book project

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When it comes to digitizing books, two stories appear to be unfolding: One is about open source, and the other, Google.

Or so it seemed at a party held by the Internet Archive on Tuesday evening, when the nonprofit foundation and a parade of partners, including the Smithsonian Institution, Hewlett-Packard, Yahoo and Microsoft's MSN, rallied around a collective open-source initiative to digitize all the world's books and make them universally available.

Google was noticeably absent.

Yahoo and MSN Search are notable members, given their investments in Web search and driving traffic to their proprietary services. The two companies boasted the openness of the project Tuesday night, but their allegiance to the open-source project surely is a strategic counterbalance to Google's project. In the end, the open-source library will also be searchable using MSN Search and Yahoo.

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