

## THE COLLECTIVE

Knoxville, TN

### Doing DH Library-Style

February 19, 2015, 2:45-3:45 PM

Hilton Sequoyah 3

### **Presenter(s)/Moderator(s)**

Ashley Maynor, University of Tennessee

### **Brief Description/Abstract from Program**

What does Digital Humanities mean in a library context and how are the so-called Digital Humanities being done in library settings? How do these projects/services/spaces serve users and their library's mission? Hear from a handful of different librarians about their practice and then join us for a quick introduction to some DH tools! Participants will come away with ideas, considerations, tips, and best practices for implementing DH projects at their libraries.

*Estimated Attendance at the Session: 38*

### **NOTES FOR SESSION**

**Our slides are on LibraryBox and Dropbox--please download!**

### **Chelcie Juliet Rowell and Kevin Gilbertson**

Central question: "Can collaboration & consultation with others who are building scholarly digital projects be cast as 'doing dh'?"

build.zsr

- mention of Trevor Munoz and definitions of DH, saying that DH is not a service but instead methodology, an argument, etc.
- DH can be simple as liaison librarian referring patrons to appropriate contact/person with skillset
- all diff ways to provide support for DH show that it is hard to provide DH infrastructure when you're not even sure what you're 'infrastructuring'
  - approached this question using design methodologies
  -
- to start designing service, wanted to understand context of question
  - 'library is not just a bookshelf, it is space for active creation of new knowledge'
  - recognizing this claim and starting there - we are changing initial context, changing terms of interaction, of what problems the library can solve and how they can help
- framing problem of DH support on campus

- mention on Jennifer Vinopal and Monica McCormick at NYU (will get name later) article on what is faculty website
- what a website can be changes - wiki, blog, etc.
- also - discussing questions around support, is it an open-ended commitment for support? all of this together constitutes faculty website problem
- continuum: technician to collaborator
  - faculty have said 'just a technician'
  - we're hoping to build something where we are full-fledged collaborator, can share in process and outcome
  - challenge is in not being cast as just a technician - that first impression can carry on beyond we want
- missed opportunities:
  - library didn't have infrastructure in place to help guide faculty through a process, so end result was PDFs being mounted online
  - this structure being put into place now tries to address these missed opportunities
- alternatively, some missed opportunities have led to more fruitful collaborations
  - example of writing faculty asking for a website for class
  - she was actually asking for ongoing publication to which students from diff semesters would contribute works on local community
  - because the librarians had good relationship with this faculty member, they could propose that perhaps she should have a mobile-first, responsive web design site
  - this does raise questions of who pays for cost of customization, but was kind of opportunity that they wanted to be able to create and follow through on
- re-framing the creative process and product
  - we want to define roles explicitly so we're not just cast as technician or collaborator
  - with this, they want to get into ground floor, reposition themselves, have a better ability to be part of DH as facilitators, builders
  - in depth studies, interviews done with people in design professions asking what was successful and not interactions with clients?
  - one theme that emerged: always more satisfactory when client involved early in process, when they were involved with shaping question and space
  - this characterization of involving designer early in process was useful framework for seeing possible librarian-scholars-technologies collaborations
- in developing build.zsr - 3 service tiers
  - simple provision (i.e. here's a Wordpress site, here's some code)
  - customization (hands on for all involved - library provides individual support for faculty member, has cost recovery model bc an infinite number of these projects can't be supported)
  - creation ('premier tier': where we build things from scratch, the joy of creating)
    - something selected for this would need to be strongly in alignment with library and university's strategic directions

- project charter:
  - borrowing idea from Emory Center for Digital Scholarship
  - title of project, project owner, team members, bulleted list of deliverables, and things like 'end-of-life' issues
  - benefit of charter: ability to cultivate consensus with faculty member, other stakeholders
- last two slides: references, appendix - check dropbox <http://bit.ly/libcolldropbox>

#### Digital Librarian: DH as a Leadership and Pedagogical Skill set - Kaetrena Davis Kendrick

- Discussing how panel mirrors her career, also mention of working at smaller institution
  - 'its about the quick and dirty'
- Brett Bobley's definition of DH
  - Librarian's are already DHists
  - there are easily mapped to ALA Core Competencies Statement
- Slide including map of core competencies to DH
  - 'L in Digital stands for Librarians'
  - You're already doing DH, just calling it something else, not naming it
- DH work - speaker did not come to DH through library work, but through KPOP
  - KPOP Collective: study of music, film, culture; study group based at Elon
  - Speaker is now senior fellow of this group
  - Started in Wordpress, now using Omeka because they realized they needed curation
  - They collocate scholarly information, articles, database-mined info, they get it together on Kpop
  - People appreciate this because gives them information to show that Kpop can be scholarly
  - Also speaker heads a digital documentation project in KPop using screencastomatic, seeing how website and so fans change over time
    - sites get different utilities to see what fans ask, how they engage
- Tools mentioned for use in DH work, Kpop scholarly and public work
  - mindomo, academia.edu, omeka, google drive, evernote, scoop.it, surveymonkey, youtube, piktochart, screencastomatic, savevid.com, creative commons, dropbox, wikispaces
  - mention of tools used for training students on work remotely, collaborating remotely
- DH for leadership and pedagogy
  - small campus - 2 librarians, a lot of opportunities on this
  - Omeka mentioned as use for professor who didn't want to use Wordpress blog site
    - this forced the users, students, to think about what they are taking pictures of, how to describe
  - Text to Mindmap used in classes, other tools for recording sessions with students

- this gives students to listen to sessions twice - once live, second time is the recording latter
  - LoC says average website lasts 44 days, how long is a semester?
    - tools mentioned to help students save these sources, point back to them

Scholar's Lab at University of Virginia - Purdom Lindblad, Jeremy Boggs

- scholars lab started as merger of stats/gis lab and etech center - merged into wing of library
  - two parts: open, collaborative space, computers with software; other part is feral librarians in makerspace
  - all of the staff in scholar's lab see themselves as scholars
  - core foundation of scholars lab is that everyone that walks in door, they are considered research and development people first, then whatever else second
  - anyone who stops by gets to sit down with staff, map out goals, paths, tools of a project
  - the staff at scholars lab wants patrons to own their own projects, to have skills that they need to manage their own project after they leave, and they can come back as much as they need to the scholars lab for guidance and support
- scholars lab is a small department - ten people - in big campus, so they don't try to do everything
  - they do try to help with idea incubation - formulate question, enumerate main goals - sometimes you don't need a digital object to obtain these
  - they try to not propose too much customization because can be heavier burden on the patron who will maintain project
- Geospatial scholarship
  - part of legacy structure of scholars lab - they have 1 geospatial librarian who provides important component to scholars lab
  - he often inserts himself into relevant classes
- Graduate training
  - when PhD is in dissertation writing phase, they can apply for fellowship to help them build scaffolding for their digital component of research
  - another program: Praxis program - brings together 6 people across departments to scope out and build a digital tool
    - goal is to teach them whole scope of what they can accomplish, what skills are needed, being able to review/judge tools
    - also project management and collaboration
    - instead of project charter they are asked to team charter - what will they deliver to each other as well as to the world
    - asking humanities students to learn something new is really hard, especially since we are asking them to do it in public in our Praxis program
- Scholars lab is not so much DH but instead 'Experimental Humanities'
  - Just past fall scholars lab opened new makerspace

- anything on physical computing, 3d modeling/printing, sewing - anything experimental, they can come in, learn how to do this in an intellectually safe space
- playground philosophy of 'loose parts' - kids learn better if toys are bolted to the ground, people can reorganize, tinker
- intellectual safespace: something is really challenging for Humanities faculty, they feel like they need a groundbreaking idea before tinkering with something like an arduino, but is hard to do that intellectual work with first playing with basics, i.e. making an arduino blink
- using XKCD.com/1053/ comic to show approach to working with people in this space -- how you can't make fun of the 10,000 people who don't know how to do the thing that we assume "everyone" knows how to do
- Charter:
  - technical stuff is relatively easy to do
  - what is hard is cultural, social, time, economic stuff that gets in way of learning how to do technical stuff
  - Scholars lab public charter: [scholarslab.org/about/charter](http://scholarslab.org/about/charter)
  - mention of accountability - 20% research time for staff, and this is made possible by attending to fact that they are accountable for that time
  - accountability also goes to point that if there is anything they could be doing better, they want folks to let them know about it

#### Interactive/Question part of session now

- Question: Interested in hearing more about different possibilities and models for collaborations - example is professor who wants to build teams of people, 1 faculty, 1 librarian, 1 tech, 1 community member - idea seems good but curious to know about collaboration models:
  - Answer: Not sure if model, but building off scholars lab comments - they try to set an example for how to collaborate. They try to value everyone's input equally. They are also very keen in sitting back and listening to people talk, not interrupting.
  - Answer: Another recommendation is to talk early and often for shared credit - importance of credit for different stakeholders is all different; each person will describe contributions and value of differently. Also talk clearly and early about time commitments.
  - Answer: Encourage faculty members early on when librarian sees seeds of goals in conversation, in ideas - and large part is to be there, be seen, be supportive
  - Answer: refer to staff as facilitators, help with training people to learn tools themselves - help with people getting credited, help with mentoring,
  - Answer: mention of hackerschool manual - good way to learn how to teach people technology with empathy
- Question: How to support inclusiveness, accessibility, diversity - how to reach out to other audiences into DH work, folks who may be left out on technology side

- Answer: Interesting question - but working at small institution means not many get left out. Success story: history professor who is frequent user of reserves, print resources, but librarian couldn't get him to bring in class for library instruction. Well, librarian thought about his topic - history - his projects, and creating a timeline.js for his class and his particular topic. Presented this to faculty member asking can librarian train your students? Faculty member now has brought 4 classes in. So librarian will be teaching information literacy and but the professor will not 'know' it.
  - tl;dr: takes some time to figure out how to approach someone, what topic/tool is best fit to bring someone in. There is a tool for everything, and everyone is interested in something but perhaps not forthcoming in library about it.
- Question: Looking at tools, audience member thought some where tools, just things we use or have to deal with. So, are we going to get to a place where people understand tools, they are second nature, then we have to reinvent our DH tools/missions?
  - Answer: One panelists firmly believes that what the scholars lab does is to help humanists to think about questions and tools they are using - tool could be anything, print or digital. This is not about being a proficient coder, building something in code is not alone DH, but instead thinking critically about questions and tools and how to work at intersection. We want people coming out of scholars lab to build frameworks that are kind, iterative, collaborative, thoughtful - it is not about tool as the tool will change. We want them to be able to think critically about tool.
  - Answer: Panelist does question all the time the technology stack being used - it is a struggle to decide what is best combination to use, but being critical and thoughtful about adding tool to project, and this is constant/important.
  - Answer: When working as embedded librarian in certain courses, one panelist encourages faculties to not just think about written or digital component, but also reflective component - what does this technology contain or constrain for certain lines of inquiry? Also, a struggle at Wake Forest is to recognize that there are people doing projects that can qualify as DH but they don't call themselves digital humanists. How to bring together? Mention of digital humanities kitchen - changing topics for members of digital humanities community, and there can identify people doing interesting things and invite them to lead the kitchen instead of just to attend it.
- Question: Thoughts about involving subject librarians when working with faculty or departments? Do you think about this and is it intentional?
  - Answer: 1 panelist was a liaison librarian before they came to scholars' lab, so now working in scholars lab they ... (sorry missed this)