

ACH Roundtable, Friday June 20

[“Ethics of Digital Stewardship in Digital Projects: A Roundtable”](#) Friday, June 20, from 2:30p to 3:45p.

Transcript of our presentation

More session materials: [Crow at Association for Computers in the Humanities \(ACH\)](#)

Shelley Staples: What kind of data do you work with? Where does it come from?

Bradley Dilger: What do digital projects owe participants who are agreeing to be involved?

Shelley Staples: What are some ways project leaders can be responsive to needs of participants (people working on the project, people participating in the project)

Aleksandra Swatek: What kinds of ethical concerns or issues have informed your project from inception to present day?

Bradley Dilger: How does the project team contribute to or otherwise inform the approaches your project takes?

Session talking points

We worked from these notes to give our presentation

1. **Shelley Staples: What kind of data do you work with? Where does it come from?**
 - a. We work with textual (Corpus) and multimodal data (repository)

- i. Crow is **learner** corpus + repository of artifacts that shaped writing in learner corpus
 - b. Data from FYW classes at Purdue, Arizona, NAU
 - c. Collated into web-based corpus with offline option, including metadata about demographics, curriculum, and context
 - d. Wide variety of assignments, purposes, participants
 - e. Used for research in applied linguistics, second language studies, rhetoric & composition
- 2. **Bradley Dilger: What do digital projects owe participants who are agreeing to be involved?**
 - a. Respect work of others (students, teachers, Crow team)
 - b. Respect identity of others -- don't reveal identities in relation to other data points (e.g., proficiency scores, places of origin)
 - c. Respect time — if they participate it should not be a lot of work for them
 - d. Imagine interactions with participants as learning from their writing not harvesting it
 - e. Be sustainable: don't ask people to do work then throw it away by creating something which is abandoned
 - f. Be innovative: take their work and do something cool with it
 - g. Share back results/findings with them (e.g., materials developed using data)
 - h. Careful oversight of access to data: each person who uses corpus is accepted by us (it's not automatic at this point)
- 3. **Shelley Staples: What are some ways project leaders can be responsive to needs of participants (people working on the project, people participating in the project)**
 - a. This should really be baked in to the project, especially for folks who work on the project, so we'll say more below too
 - b. Key Crow innovation is interdisciplinary applied linguistics and tech comm that enabled us to make attention to user experience fundamental since day one — so we've always sought to understand how everyone involved actually wants to use the thing — from Crow platform itself to infrastructure participants use to contribute to internal infrastructure
 - c. A couple examples:
 - i. Platform is more geared towards teachers than researchers since this is a neglect/need, and is also more reflective of participant population
 - ii. Crow Writing Contest — we drew from participants at Arizona to recognize writing in the corpus, with their permission <https://writecrow.org/crow-writing-contest/> —
 - iii. Crow Fellows — grant funded support for writing teachers looking to use corpus methods <https://writecrow.org/crow-fellows/> — also allows us to learn from these teachers how we can modify the Crow interface to suit their needs
 - iv. Grant writing focus — we realized how much attending to grant writing could help researchers professionalize by learning how to write, learning key genres, and then winning their own grants

- v. Worked with teachers to develop materials based on the corpus (extensive rounds of feedback, piloting, responding to feedback)
- 4. Aleksandra Swatek: What kinds of ethical concerns or issues have informed your project from inception to present day?**
 - a. Deidentification: maintaining anonymity has been crucial for inception.
 - i. Computational (web scraping) issues/commercialization concerns
 - ii. We don't want the student writing in Crow to be sucked into a paper mill or some other big data system run by jerks
 - iii. We don't want student participants to worry that their FYW paper (with their name on it) will show up on the internet and be used unethically
 - b. Asset-based approach as ethical treatment of participant data.
 - c. We want to ensure folks who work for Crow derive direct value for their research — we want both intellectual rewards and practical too e.g. \$\$\$
- 5. Bradley Dilger: How does the project team contribute to or otherwise inform the approaches your project takes?**
 - a. Crow leadership ask all team members to take an active role in shaping project direction by discussing their research and teaching interests frequently
 - b. Pls learn about student interests and discuss with each other to identify
 - c. This is also embedded in our approach to mentoring, "[Constructive Distributed Work](#)"
 - d. One of our best practices is: "Prioritize individual learning even when new skills and competencies don't directly benefit the team."
 - i. Examples: coding takes a lot longer when we're teaching it as we're going
 - ii. Grad students brought in to give feedback to teachers in Crow Fellows, which required a lot of mentoring/modeling
 - e. Use instrument called [The Matrix](#) to make these check-ins more formal and visible to team members — understand individual needs and ensure we support them
- 6. Closing**
 - a. Thank you! More on <https://writecrow.org/>
 - b. Come see our poster [Saturday at 1:00pm EDT #18A](#)

Session timeline

2:30 to 2:35 — Dr. Froehlich introduces the roundtable

2:35 to 2:45 — Colored Conventions

2:45 to 2:55 — Crow

2:55 to 3:05 — SUCHO

3:05 to 3:45 — Q&A

Presenter bios

Dr. Shelley Staples (she/her/hers) is Associate Professor of English Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition and Teaching at University of Arizona. Her research focuses on corpus analyses of speech and writing, particularly for applications to student writing.

Dr. Aleksandra Swatek (she/her/hers) is an Assistant Research Professor at the Scholarly Communication Research Group at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland 🇵🇱. Her research projects encompass the areas of second language writing, corpus linguistics, and English for Academic Purposes.

Dr. Bradley Dilger (he/his/Dilger) is Professor of English and Director of Writing at Purdue University. His research engages writing programs, networked writing, and writing transfer.

