

2014 DLF Forum

Digital Public History: Community Connections and Collaborative Teaching Initiatives

Tuesday, October 28, 1:30-3:30pm

Salons 4,5,6, Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center

Session Leaders

Sarah Shreeves, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Moderator)

Harriett Green, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Christine D'Arpa, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Joseph Hurley, Georgia State University

Kathryn Michaelis, Georgia State University

Jen Wolfe, University of Iowa

Matthew Butler, University of Iowa

Jennifer Weintraub, University of California, Los Angeles

Todd Grappone, University of California, Los Angeles

Sharon Farb, University of California, Los Angeles

Martin Klein, University of California, Los Angeles

Notes

Georgia State University:

Planning Atlanta: Overview, how people are engaging with content, ease of teaching with this material

It is: encourages new perspectives on Atlanta; engaging because it easily allows people to see how Atlanta's social and built environment has changed over time. Very large collection; diverse types of materials including over 3000 georeferenced maps, demographic data sets. planning pubs, photographs, oral histories. Not just digitizing material but doing more with it - georeferencing maps, not just posting them; connect content of collection with current events. Promote the collection by writing blog posts that specifically connect collections with current events. One blog post got 12,000 unique visits, was used in teaching.

University of Iowa

Undergrad curriculum project: crowdsourcing transcription

<http://diyhistory.lib.uiowa.edu>

Closing in on 50,000 pages transcribed; deep level of engagement that volunteer transcribers

experience. One major failure was not much use on campus - has changed thanks to collaboration with Rhetoric faculty. As junior faculty, they were aware that the college classroom wasn't keeping up with 21st century tech. Create engaging curriculum. Created "Archives Alive" - a four-week curriculum model. Lesson plans, assignments available online to adapt for a variety of disciplines. Biggest challenges relate to technology. The work for the students is "uncomfortable but not paralyzing." Students are connecting with the documents and their writers through the assignment.

- Archives Alive! Lesson Plans: <http://idealuiowa.edu/projects/archives-alive>
- Undergraduate digital humanities scholarship: <http://mcclurken.blogspot.com/2008/01/uncomfortable-but-not-paralyzed.html>

University of Illinois

Digital Public History course; interest in archival education

Course in GSLIS at Illinois. Redesigned course to fill gap in LIS education that has resulted in fewer opportunities to work side by side with LIS professionals while in the program. Created opportunity for students to get hands-on experience. Web-based expression a familiar venue for students and public history projects are especially well-suited to this environment.

Rosenzweig argued digital tools or any tools serve the needs of our users; engage with technologies so they become tools for enlightenment...

Mixed online and face to face environment; online, day-long in person workshop on copyright, Omeka, etc. Used omeka.net - using it as a project platform; challenge for grad students of translating research into multi-media narrative.

UCLA

Community connections: from international to hyper-local

Collecting international digital ephemera and cultural history of city of Los Angeles. Students learn about world events; students help with transcribing...

Capturing content that is geographically relevant to world events; social media tweets from Egypt during protests, cell phone videos from Iranian Green Movement, etc. Then, students are used to curate this material.

Collecting Los Angeles; literary map, LA Unified School District Board of Ed records, etc..

Working with faculty who are doing advanced capstone projects who assign students to create captions for social media content; often based on their own experience, language

Called SOLOGLO - Social Local Global

Using local population to curate, collect, engage undergrads and grads in using library content in their classrooms

Questions:

Experience with training graduate students in public history, building out more infrastructure

around this:

Illinois working with grad students, getting them to think as historians and information professionals; biggest challenge was translating archival research into new platform. Students had most trouble with metadata, how to construct a site that could be useful.

UCLA: Celebrated 10th anniversary of Center for Primary Research and Training; strong practice there that could be used anywhere. Matches student scholars and trains them; has sometimes inspired people to switch focus area from subject area to metadata, archival...

Illinois: Challenge of building contextual information around digital objects and how to present them.

Iowa: REgarding grad students started a pilot class with Honors class, but now taught by grad students who are teaching the transcription project; helpful having the grad students review the project afresh

SOLOGLO project question - social media collections locally curated - how do you find good ways to curate things that large?

There is a lot of content - goal in using students on campus is making sure what gets translated is done accurately; a lot of what is collected are first-person perspectives on the news; try to apply controlled vocabularies to large chunks of the content; out of the box with a couple of tags per file, make some assumptions based on metrics they've developed; also began with thematic collections, collecting is already selective based on themes/thematically linked.

Are your approaches to these projects scalable?

Iowa looking to develop scalability into assignment - idea to create once and re-use.

Challenge in providing reference support. A ref librarian wrote a blog-post step by step on history databases to use, but need more. Thinking of creating mini-mooc for each reference source to make it more engaging for students.

SOLOGLO is scalable; continue to grow and add partners; have infrastructure and set of processes that let them scale. Used both locally for collecting LA, and for international ephemera of all types.

Ensure that whatever special project is underway is also replicable. Make sure course materials produced could be used for other courses as well. Challenge is creating a citable reference for something that could be 100,000 things.

Illinois: A similar collaboration with undergrad course, scalable as far as dev'ing curriculum and working with faculty, but if lots of people wanted to do this would engage with fellow librarians to scale it up.

Planning Atlanta: All is documented; set up so it's always able to be used in multiple ways, used as a data set, etc.

Building community based data sets around different cities, are you in conversation with each other about how these could be used in DPLA, etc..? Sounds like opportunity.

Atlanta: Pushing content into DPLA; with maps have plans to add them to Old Maps Online; DPLA best suited to aggregate everything.

UCLA: Also DPLA member and pushing it out, but also engaging with various partners around the world. Urban-based digital library collections are often about the local perspective, The power in what we're doing is about bringing perspective to the collections. Don't want to lose the fact that it's about communities building collections.

Shreeves: Interesting to look at how similar events in different cities had meaning in those cities (stadium examples in Atlanta, LA, etc)

For those working with more traditional special collections, how has your approach been different in teaching/using in the classroom?

Illinois: Using the material is the beginning of a narrative that a student is constructing; this is something they struggle with - how much of the narrative are they responsible for? Are they opening doors for researchers, are they themselves scholars? (Yes) And what is their relationship to the materials.

Iowa: With students and others, there is something magical about transcribing and interacting with the materials; important to be doing something with the materials, helping tell the story of the past.

Interesting how important the metadata is...(steak and bread /smell metaphor) Need good metadata to find what you're looking for.

Illinois: Rediscovery of question of what public services are for libraries. Awareness of importance of metadata came after the fact of evaluating websites and getting a sense of what the whole was.

LA: For born-digital, it's a matter of getting as much of the file as possible in order to extract as much metadata from that as possible. Looking to build tools to enhance that.

Iowa: Crowdsourcing semantic markup, turn books from "object with content" to *recipes* (for cookbook project).

Related collections - Washington University collection documenting protests in Ferguson. Asking about outreach efforts in getting people to contribute content.

Atlanta - people have been good about contacting them.

UCLA: Digital ephemera project began by collecting traditional ephemera; did an article for student newspaper on ephemera project but some people who read it didn't know what ephemera meant and they started to approach them with their own collections that the community had put together - and thought that's what was meant by the article. But this started the collecting for UCLA. Also did a couple of press releases and interviews with local paper.

Illinois: A journalism professor at Mizzou challenged students on objectivity - but said no, you have to be involved in the community in which you work. The connections we have help us bring new materials into our institutions.

Q: Amherst in planning grant for digital atlas of Native American traditions. Looking for partners to help put together intellectual content, create visualizations, etc. If you have related collections, they want to talk to you.

Q: Historiapolis project (History of Minneapolis); recovering racial covenants, etc. Not an institution-based project; run by public historian. Guantanamo public history project; Working on building archive of Minnesota hip-hop, but materials are something that the artists are making their livelihood on...Mixing community and copyright.

UCLA: Collect a lot of contemporary collections. Don't just want to collect old things. Some take longer than others in terms of the readiness of the people you are collecting from...Just need to pay attention to how they make their living and balance bringing in their materials - preserve, conserve, make portion available, etc. Encourage to move ahead in collecting and look at multiple avenues.

Iowa: Comes up a lot with OA ebooks, studies show if people know about stuff free online they are more apt to order a copy. Iowa public library pays an honorarium for artists to put their stuff online to be checked out. Sign agreement for two years that can be renewed.

Q: Faculty perspective - how has community engagement affected faculty's teaching (and research)

Class that looked at UIUC history, the teaching shifted to giving students more agency over their projects; students worked more collaboratively as a class; evaluated each others' sites, gave each other feedback. Collaboration, agency for students

Atlanta: Doesn't change the way instructors teach, but it's being used in the classroom. One teacher teaches the book *Sula* and uses a map that shows a neighborhood that was erased. For research, lots of impact - an NEH proposal out there that uses a lot of the content.

UCLA: Faculty working directly with these collections in lieu of textbooks. Working with students to curate content for online publication rather than handing them a textbook.

Illinois: working with the materials directly removes a certain amount of self-consciousness about using the materials, doing research.

UCLA: social media about certain perspectives, students get to hear different voices about world events. Then show them what the newspapers said. Changes paradigm that history belongs to the victors. Aspect of perspective and perception is powerful.

Q: Re; privacy issues with community records

Iowa: Had to develop Omeka based platforms, moved researchers into different roles in order to make certain collections open only to limited use; create different user roles to accommodate. Archivists open to putting collections online when they are old/civil war. But recently with 20th century collections, more wary as some people mentioned might still be alive. Carefully went through first.

UCLA: Privacy is a challenge with certain kinds of collecting. UCLA has collected activist perspectives; work during acquisition re: issues of personal security. Clause to work together to both redact and address privacy concerns. Mentioned Boston College oral history case. If

UCLA felt they couldn't protect, would be reluctant to take them in. Work with counsel if you need to.

What they did right, what they'd do differently.

Illinois: right - help students understand what it means to do standard archival research and then what it means to do that online. Challenge - translating to the digital tool, making time to match steps of building in digital tool with doing the historical research. Was an abrupt adjustment for them. At end of class vote on group or single project - they all voted on individual projects. But if teaches again, will still do group project.

Atlanta: Were right that people would be interested in the project; one thing to improve was getting copyright permissions from local entities, should have first gone for creative commons licensing rather than permissions. One thing that was a challenge is that there was already a set of stuff to digitize at beginning but finding a lot more as project goes on and getting those additional permissions can be a bottleneck. Diversity of material types is another thing done right.

UCLA: For collecting social media tweets in particular - embedded media in tweets disappear. If you get a corpus of tweets its almost too late. The next step is to get embedded resources right away. Twitter doesn't help by shortening URLs, so you can't look them up...diversity of formats - how to overlap to tell a compelling story (tweets, server logs that show that there were attacks on the servers delivering, for example). Right - a lot of work is faculty-driven. Building collections in way that faculty want to use them. Flexibility in kind of collecting they are doing; were able to take giant left turn that was productive.

Iowa: Right - find faculty collaborators interested in innovation and taking a risk. Digital pedagogy projects can go wrong, after all. Faculty collaborators are lecturers, not on tenure track. Gotten a lot of uptake on assignment from graduate student teachers; not much uptake from tenure-track professors. Do different - made a sample screencase for students to use as a model, wanted to give them something to aspire to; did really well to keep project scope tight and user-centered; would do differently from a systems standpoint - public, lots of security issues, accepts anonymous input; needs to be planned carefully before you even start developing one line of code.

Abstracts of Each Project:

Georgia State: Joe Hurley, Kathryn Michaelis

Engaging Students in their Local Environment through the Planning Atlanta Digital Collection

The Georgia State University Library is connecting and engaging students with their local Atlanta environment through a new and innovative digital collection of over 1000 historical city planning maps, 1000 photographs, 500 city planning publications, local population and housing datasets, and oral histories. Designed as an educational digital humanities platform, “Planning Atlanta: A New City in the Making, 1930s – 1990s” is currently being utilized in courses across a wide spectrum of disciplines including Geography, History, Sociology, Public Policy, and English. Built to be an interactive digital collection for research, educators, and the general public, all maps in this collection can be viewed in both Google Maps and Google Earth. When these maps are viewed in Google Maps or Google Earth, neighborhood and city-wide change become readily apparent by comparing current satellite images with the georeferenced historical planning maps. The Planning Atlanta collection provides a vivid portrait of the city’s built environment and depicts structural conditions of buildings, segregated neighborhoods, and land use patterns. These planning maps and publications, most of which relate to and build upon each other, form a more complete depiction of how Atlanta’s physical and social landscape changed over time. The photographs in the collection are from the GSU’s Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photograph Archive. These photographs also depict planning activities and many include the associated AJC newspaper article. Through this dynamic platform students, educators, and the public are discovering new connections about Atlanta’s built and social environment and are changing their perception of Atlanta in ways that would not be possible without the aid of this digital collection.

University of Iowa - Jen Wolfe, Matthew Butler

Crowdsourcing in the Classroom: Developing a Digital Humanities Curriculum Project for Undergraduates

Crowdsourcing has been posited as a “silver bullet” for incorporating digital humanities tools and practices into the undergraduate classroom. Students can experience the same benefits that motivate typical crowdsourcing participants: engagement with historic documents; challenging, hands-on tasks; and the opportunity to make real contributions to scholarly research. For instructors, it can provide a low barrier of entry for experimentation in digital pedagogy without the overhead of setting up their own DH projects. Crowdsourcing can also circumvent ethical questions about using free student labor in the classroom to further faculty research [[“Crowdsourcing, Undergraduates, and Digital Humanities Projects”](#) by Rebecca Frost Davis, Sept. 3, 2012]. But how can instructors most effectively employ these projects to meet learning objectives, and what can librarians do to help?

The University of Iowa presents a successful case study that integrates [DIY History](#), its collaborative manuscript transcription project, into first-year Rhetoric courses. In partnership with faculty from the [Iowa Digital Engagement and Learning \(IDEAL\)](#) initiative, librarians

helped develop Archives Alive!, a curriculum module that teaches research, writing, and presentations skills through a series of assignments incorporating digital tools and methods. Over a four-week period, undergraduate students transcribe a handwritten letter or diary entry online, research its historic context, and perform a rhetorical analysis of its content; they then share their findings via blog post essays, open-access video screencasts, and a public presentation. Designed for re-use and scalability, Archives Alive! incorporates mini-instructional videos created by library staff in lieu of classroom visits. These videos, along with the assignment document and student work samples, are made available on the IDEAL website to allow any instructor to use and adapt in their own coursework.

University of Illinois - Harriett Green, Christine D'Arpa

Digital Public History and Collaborative Teaching Initiatives

Our presentation discusses and critically examines the experience of collaboration between students, instructor, librarians, and archivists for a course on digital public history (DPH) offered to library and information science students. DPH is a field of inquiry related to, but distinct from, digital humanities: it is a practice where questions of evidence, authority, and audience intersect; a practice that engages issues of new media strategies and digital resources; a practice that is collaborative and challenges LIS professionals to rethink collections and collecting, services and resources for researchers with various levels of experience and knowledge, and to evaluate opportunities and responsibilities for information organizations in all phases of DPH including conception, production, dissemination, and preservation.

We will discuss our collaborative experience in teaching an online synchronous Digital Public History course offered by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois that sought engage LIS students with issues raised by DPH for scholars/researchers and LIS professionals. The two librarians who collaborated with the course instructor contributed their expertise in digital humanities tools (e.g., Omeka and digital archives) and issues (e.g., copyright and digital preservation). Students approached the study of DPH wearing two hats as scholars/researchers and as LIS professionals, and the physical and virtual manifestations of the UIUC library and the LIS professionals were essential to the success of the course. The authors will discuss how the librarians helped create a learning environment that challenged students to gain scholarly skills and professional perspectives in engaging with digital content and scholarly research services. Ultimately, this experience made the library, in the words of Katharine Sharp, “a laboratory, a workshop, a school” to be exploited, examined, and reconsidered.

UCLA- Todd Grappone, Martin Klein, Sharon Farb, Jennifer Weintraub

Community connections: from International to hyper-local. Mixing social and mobile with local and international collections for new perspectives on research collections and connections.

Personal technologies including mobile phones and social media have enabled new collection modes and sources for news and information that complement and offer contrast to traditional sources. While much of this content is relevant to research libraries around the world, most of it does not get deposited into library collections. Therefore, libraries need to be aggressive about seeking it out, both by soliciting contributions from numerous participants and scraping content off social network sites. At UCLA we have begun collecting both digital and physical materials from sites of conflict and revolutionary movements around the world as well as from our own city. We have partnered with international political activists and our community to develop a unique assemblage of ephemera as well as more traditional collections. UCLA has more than 25 centers and programs that promote multidisciplinary research and educational opportunities in virtually every region of the world. The multiethnic population of Los Angeles, where more than 90 different dialects and languages are spoken. This confluence of collections, scholars and community offer a unique opportunity to create interfaces for discussing perspective, how diasporatic digital library collections sparks interest and insider descriptions that are authentic record of history.

The presentation will cover the technologies we are using in expanding our repository and its contents, how we are organizing and collecting this disaggregated collection and how it's being used for teaching and research. The discussion will cover the International Digital Ephemera Project, an international grassroots approach to collecting and Collecting Los Angeles, a more traditional digital library collection from our local community. We will also cover the challenges of working with new kinds of materials and communities, including decisions and ethics about privacy, metadata and capacity building within a research library.