2014 DLF Forum

Catastrophic Success: The Challenges and Opportunities of Supporting Digital Scholarship at Liberal Arts Colleges

Monday, October 27, 1:30-2:30pm
Salons 4,5,6, Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center

Session LeadersLA
Kelcy Shepherd, Amherst College
Laurie Allen, Haverford College
Eric Luhrs, Lafayette College
Gina Siesing, Bryn Mawr College
Jennifer Vinopal, New York University

Notes

Context: Oberlin 17 group survey on resources and challenges on digital scholarship support and digital initiatives services at LACs. Conclusions:
- Joanna DiPasquale (Vassar): "It takes a lot of work to get to 1 FTE... We're all doing everything at once."
- LAC faculty are asking for functionality, tools, and services that are similar to counterparts at research universities, but LACs don't have the staff to work one-on-one with scholars and their projects.

Possible solution to challenges: LACs develop shared systems and services.
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Laurie Allen, Haverford College
Summer 2011 - Digital Scholarship Team formed, 3 staff, 40 hrs of student workers, interns in the summer to work full time with faculty
5 servers, 1 geoserver, ...
what's on them?: Omeka, drupal, dspace, multispace wordpress instance, stand alone place holder uses flex, xml, xslt,
this semester: 7 courses: 3 are using Omeka, 2 are doing close readings with TEI, 2 are byo technology

Kelcy Shepherd, Amherst
3 FTEs, ½ time grad student, hire students, mostly for scanning though starting to integrate
1 postbac position shared with English department

digitization, scholarly communications, visual resources
LGBT rights project, collect crowd sourced and linked data in LGBT rights,
- sentiment analysis on the websites concerned with LGBT rights
"We need to flirt with, even embrace catastrophic failure…If we say No now, we will not have the opportunity to say Yes later"

Gina Siesing, Bryn Mawr College
Digital History of Women's Education (Greenfield Center, Seven Sisters partnership)
The problem of finding engines or models that can be repurposed at scale.
Involved folks scattered throughout institution.
How do you do a thing that involves depth at the same time as doing a thing that involves breadth?

Eric Luhrs, Lafayette
Digital Library Services 6(7?) FTE; responsible for the entire lifecycle of digital objects
"driving the research projects of the faculty" [?]
Using Islandora

Partnerships
● integrated into everything at Amherst.
● Using metadata services expertise not just for metadata but also as to how to integrate metadata into the instructional setting.
● Heavy collaboration with IT
● Collaboration with scholars (recruitment of faculty for collaboration)

Focus on instruction (esp. undergrad);
● Blended learning (flipped classroom); impact across the entire curriculum
● Provide context for the tools, it's not just about achieving competency with the tools themselves.
● The value of getting comfortable with ignorance.

Q - what about preservation of the content created in classes?
● Amherst - some of these projects in Omeka are ephemeral. More about the experience of creating an exhibit.
● Sometimes projects are done in conjunction with archives, better focus on long term.
● Nancy McGovern's training on digital curation

Q - what are we doing about professional development?

- Can't plan something before we need to know it. These are all learning opportunities.m

Q - What are your negotiating strategies to get staffing/funding?
- Success breeds success
- Strategic conversion forward of positions into those that are meaningful for the future can be helpful - but this in tension with the current climate of tightened belts.
- Demand can drive the case.

Q - SPeak to the ebb and flow or participants in a program having tensions with the expectation of students to learn from full time faculty.
- working with faculty.
- one community different roles.