

Chapter 1

Library Collaborative Networks

Forging Scholarly Cyberinfrastructure and Radical Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

Academic libraries and teaching departments sometimes treat Digital Humanities (DH) as radically new. While DH is radically new in terms of collaborative practices and methods, it is also fundamentally rooted in the humanities and intricately connected to core activities by librarians, especially for collaboration. In this chapter, we explain how the UF Smathers Libraries leveraged the library digital collections—with rich technical features and content, and a robust underlying infrastructure—to create the necessary scholarly cyberinfrastructure to then support the DH

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community for an environment of radical collaboration. To do so, we show how librarians leveraged the new DH opportunities to fundamentally enrich and improve existing, seemingly more traditional work, including collection development, library scholarly councils, collaboration among libraries for print and digital collections, outreach and instruction, and more.

INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries and teaching departments sometimes treat Digital Humanities (DH) as radically new. While DH is radically new in terms of collaborative practices and methods, it is also fundamentally rooted in the humanities and intricately connected to core activities by librarians, especially for collaboration. This chapter explains how the UF Smathers Libraries leveraged the library digital collections—with rich technical features and content, and a robust underlying infrastructure—to create the necessary scholarly cyberinfrastructure to then support the DH community for an environment of radical collaboration. To do so, UF librarians undertook new DH activities as opportunities to fundamentally enrich and improve existing, seemingly more traditional work, including collection development, library scholarly councils, collaboration among libraries for print and digital collections, outreach and instruction, and more.

The overall chapter shows how collaboration to support integrating DH with existing operations, can support aligning DH with existing needs and using DH to extend and build into new areas specifically by working with and from librarians' existing skills and expertise. In doing so, the chapter shows librarians are critically important collaborative partners for DH activities. As Maron and Pickle explain in "Sustaining the Digital Humanities" factors for success and good practices in the Digital Humanities includes "Invest in people" and "Knit deep partnerships among campus units" including the libraries (2014, page 49-50). Further, DH activities are critically important for librarians for growing skills and, importantly, because DH activities present opportunities that are directly relevant to all academic library concerns in the digital age, and for coming needs with the age of big data. By focusing on specific projects, this chapter shows how collaboration among many librarians for DH resulted in measurable benefits. Included with the different projects covered are reviews of different ways of setting up collaborative team activities for best capitalizing on all expertise for project success, and for the longer-term needs associated with transforming positions, roles, and ways of working. The end of the chapter concludes with a set of recommendations and considerations for undertaking DH successfully for specific projects, for longer-term success with changed roles for librarians and changed ways of working, and for how DH can inform and support

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