

Chapter 5

Models for Partnering with Faculty and Supporting Digital Scholarship

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ABSTRACT

Libraries have grown with Digital Humanities and they have evolved their support structures and developed the expertise required to partner with faculty. This chapter explores the library models that have been established at major research universities by surveying directors of public services of libraries who are members of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC). The results of a survey of CIC Libraries are discussed and the findings are shared. The chapter offers a literature review of digital humanities which the authors refer to as digital scholarship or DS, discusses and describes models for partnering and supporting digital scholarship, and illustrates how large academic libraries at research universities are meeting challenges associated with DS services.

INTRODUCTION

As academic libraries have long been at the forefront of innovations that change and improve the practice of documenting, creating, and preserving new knowledge, they have also more recently been engaged as active partners and dedicated supporters of new forms of research and digital scholarship. Libraries have grown with Digital Humanities, evolving their support structures and developing the diverse expertise required to partner with faculty. This chapter illustrates and explores library participation at major research universities as reported by directors of public services for members of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC). The CIC represents a range of interests and academic strengths, comprising both public and private institutions. CIC institutions extend east from Rutgers University and the University of Maryland to the University of Nebraska Lincoln in the West, and their libraries predictably differ

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widely. Some CIC library systems have established faculty status with tenure for their librarians, while others have staff status with annual contract renewal, and a range of other options along that continuum. This survey has gathered information from libraries about how these organizations have built the expertise to both manage digital scholarship projects, and to support DH initiatives on their campuses. The survey has also gathered information about challenges libraries face in meeting the growing needs of digital scholarship. This chapter shares information about the approaches that CIC Libraries have taken to partner with scholars and support digital scholarship.

BACKGROUND

The context for this chapter assumes broad definitions for both Digital Humanities and digital scholarship. A cursory look at current scholarship and conversations reveals that these concepts are routinely the focus of discussion, uncertainty, and varying interpretations. The American Council of Learned Societies Commission on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities & Social Sciences has delineated digital scholarship to comprise building collections; developing tools for collection building, studying, and analysis; using collections and tools to create scholarship; and developing tools for scholars (Welshons, 2006).

Ayers, has suggested that digital scholarship “emanating perhaps from digital humanities most frequently describes discipline-based scholarship produced with digital tools and presented in digital form” (2013, p. 26). This definition that looks ahead to a “greater impact if it takes fuller advantage of the digital medium and innovates more aggressively,” moving far beyond digital representations of traditional print bound research to develop new forms and “vast and varied” audiences (2013, p. 30). More concisely, Scholarly Communication Institute 9: New-Model Scholarly Communication: Road Map for Change has characterized digital scholarship as “the use of digital evidence and method, digital authoring, digital publishing, digital curation and preservation, and digital use and reuse of scholarship” (Rumsey, 2011, p. 2).

Digital Humanities is similarly the topic of much conversation regarding definitions, astutely described as being “vexed from its inception” (Golumbia, 2013). Kirschenbaum has suggested that there is such an ongoing conversation among digital humanists about Digital Humanities that articles discussing this topic have become “genre pieces” (2013, p. 196). Lincoln Mullen has suggested convincingly that all humanists in one way or another now are using digital tools, and it can be a slippery slope from using Word to text mining, alluding to a future in which the term Digital Humanities is no longer necessary. Ramsay has chosen a broadly inclusive angle by which to explain Digital Humanities:

the term can mean anything from media studies to electronic art, from data mining to edutech, from scholarly editing to anarchic blogging, while inviting code junkies, digital artists, standards wonks, transhumanists, game theorists, free culture advocates, archivists, librarians, and edupunks under its capacious canvas. (2011, para. 2)

Explored further, however, his description continues:

Digital Humanities is not some airy Lyceum. It is a series of concrete instantiations involving money, students, funding agencies, big schools, little schools, programs, curricula, old guards, new guards, gatekeepers, and prestige. It might be more than these things, but it cannot not be these things. (2011, para. 5)

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