Chapter 1
Library Collaborative Networks Forging Scholarly Cyberinfrastructure and Radical Collaboration

Laurie N. Taylor
University of Florida, USA

Ben Walker
University of Florida, USA

Suzan A. Alteri
University of Florida, USA

E. Haven Hawley
University of Florida, USA

Valrie Ila Minson
University of Florida, USA

Chelsea S. Dinsmore
University of Florida, USA

Rebecca J. W. Jefferson
University of Florida, USA

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 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 data management needs, with librarians in the humanities having vital information and expertise to share in developing sustainable data management programs.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of digital collection development in the UF Libraries to show how the infrastructure developed with and for librarians, scholars, archivists, and many others. The UF Libraries began digitizing for preservation in the early 1990s, building to today with over 800 digital collections representing over 30 million files for UF and partner institutions, and numerous digital scholarship and DH projects (*UF Digital Humanities Projects,* 2015; *UF Digital Collections*, 2015). UF's digital collection development success was made possible through the close collaboration among subject, functional, and technical specialist librarians, along with partners from many fields. By 2010, the UF Libraries had centralized servers in UF's state-of-the-art data center, gaining all the benefits of cloud computing without the risks associated with external agencies.

The UF Libraries continue to build on this robust core, developing full socio-technical supports (people, policies, technologies, communities) for digital scholarship and DH, especially with the creation of the DH Library Group—a librarian-focused group to complement the campus-wide DH Working Group—to focus on library needs for inclusion and support or DH with the majority of participants being librarians. UF librarians built from this foundation, developing innovative new projects and services, all the while working to further innovate and extend on activities, especially through new opportunities with DH. The overview of this process illuminates the importance of contributions from and collaboration with librar-

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