ARL Digital Scholarship Institute

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</> Introduction

2014 & 2015 Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) hosts large-scale workshops on establishing and supporting digital scholarship centers; articulates a need for academic librarians to incorporate digital skills and methodologies into practice.
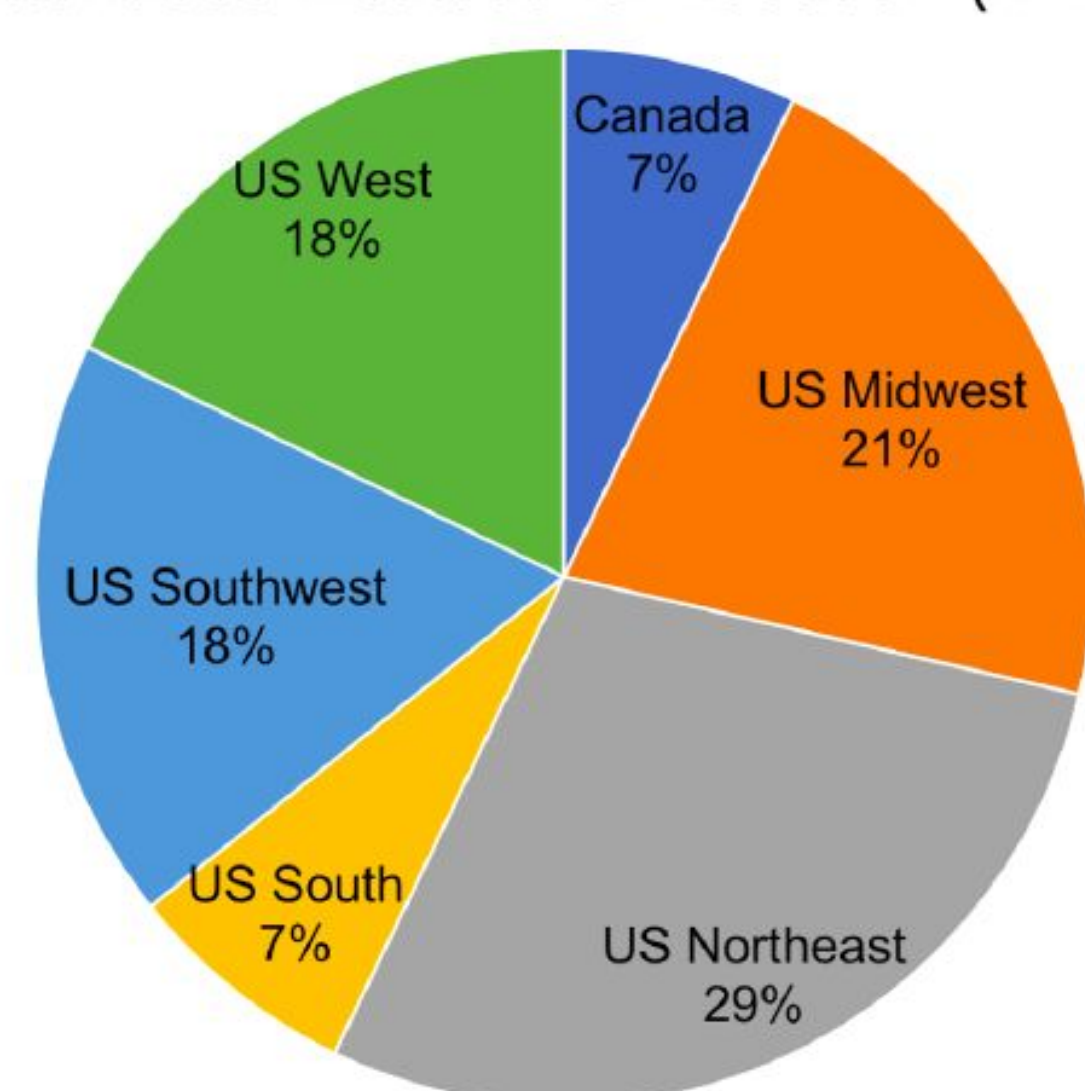
2015 University of Rochester hosts a Mellon Foundation funded Institute for Mid-Career Librarians in Digital Humanities with a residential and online format; cohort model and basic methodologies were highly valued by participants.

Fall 2016 Association of Research Libraries (ARL) convenes a working meeting with three-member teams from University of Rochester, Indiana University, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Boston College, and University of California, San Diego that includes DH and DS librarians, outreach and liaison librarians, and library directors. The team develops a model for a Digital Scholarship Institute to provide a week long, immersive experience to introduce librarians and staff who had no prior experience in digital scholarship to the methodologies and practices of DS. The Planning Team becomes the DSI Steering Committee, Admissions Committee, Curriculum Committee, and the Pedagogy Team.

June 2017 Inaugural Digital Scholarship Institute is held at Boston College under the sponsorship of the ARL Academy and the five ARL partners.

DSI Boston Participants: Attendees & Instructors

Attendees Institutional Location (n=28)

Participants were required to submit a short application in which they detailed their experience and interest in digital scholarship. A total of 28 participants attended. Instructors were drawn from the ARL DSI advisory group as well as from the Library at Boston College, which hosted the inaugural Institute.
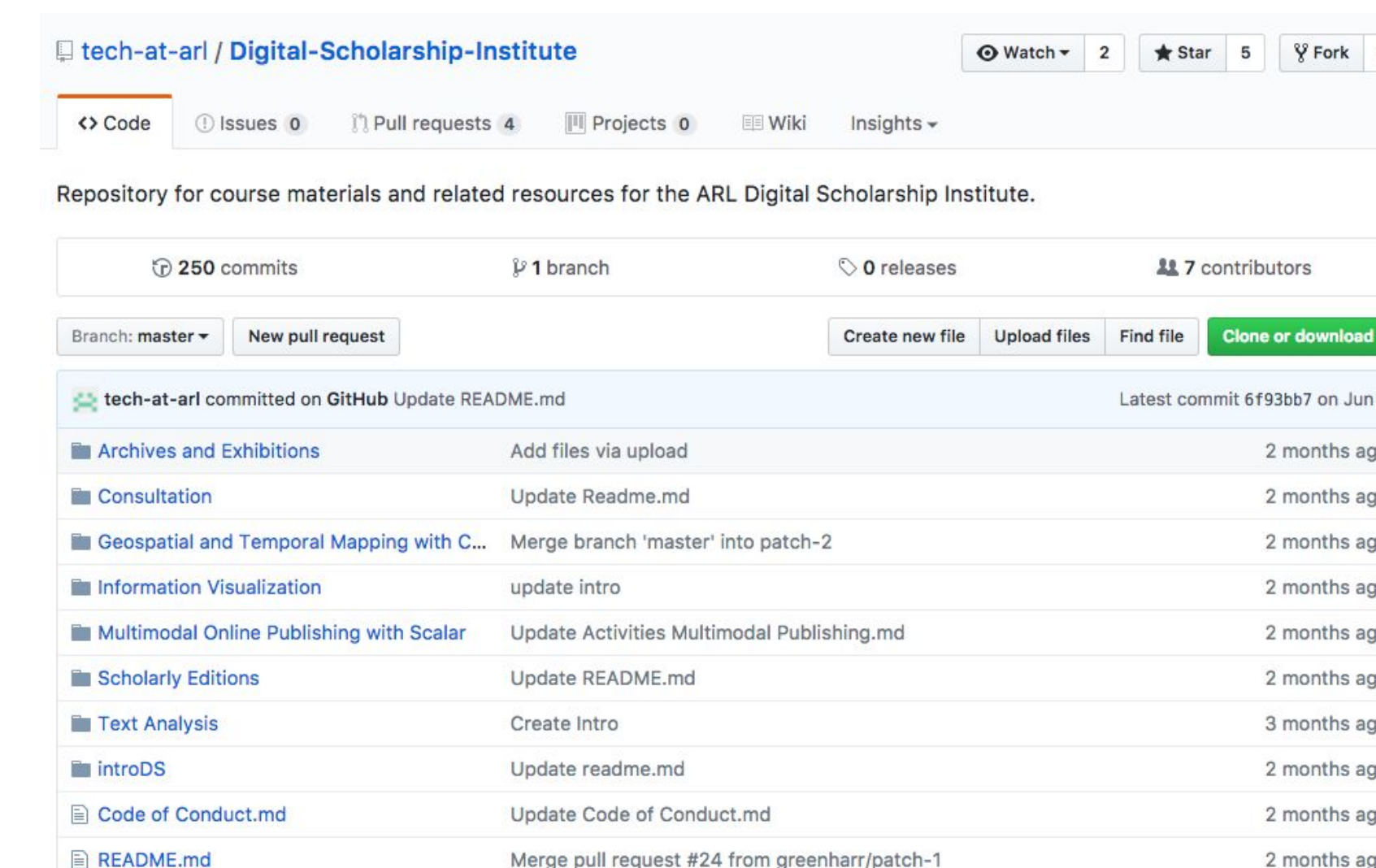

The advisory group designed a five-day, face-to-face immersive training environment in which participants learned together, shared experiences, and formed a cohort for continued support and collaboration.

- Keynotes introducing digital scholarship and hot topics
- Hands-on, half-day workshops on mapping, info viz, digital exhibitions, text analysis, multimodal publishing and text encoding
- Hackathon
- Scenario walkthroughs and use cases

The ARL DSI Pedagogy Team was convened to help guide instructors in implementing active, measurable learning strategies such as hands-on activities and peer discussion.

> This was a real overview, and I still found that meeting people was the most important thing I did. The environment—one of isolation coupled with group activities was very important in developing my feelings of camaraderie among the group.
> -DSI Participant

What worked best?
[A] Cohort of colleagues who were on the same DS exposure level as that fostered a safe and enjoyable learning environment, 1/2 day basic introductory workshops on DS tools (as opposed to many tools at one time or discussions without tools), a nice remote location that helped create a "DS Camp" feel and focus, and excursions that enabled time to strengthen ties and create a genuine sharing experience.
-DSI Participant

🖥 Goals and Curriculum

From the start, we recognized that we wanted to emphasize building a *culture* of digital scholarship over specific tools. The Advisory Group identified seven overarching learning goals for the Institute. We wanted participants to be able to:

1. describe how digital scholarship fits into higher education and why academic libraries are engaging in digital scholarship
2. demonstrate confidence in their ability to engage with digital scholarship projects by developing strategies for advancing their roles as contributors, as partners and/or co-creators in digital scholarship projects
3. identify the hallmarks of digital scholarship/critical elements and methodological principles that qualifies scholarly work as digital scholarship
4. evaluate different digital scholarship methodologies and tools
5. integrate existing skillsets into those needed for digital scholarship
6. envision digital scholarship as a collaborative endeavor by identifying individual researchers or local institutional units with whom they feel confident working to continue furthering their knowledge and practice of digital scholarship
7. establish an integrated cohort as part of this institute to cultivate ongoing knowledge-sharing, skill-building, and networking during and beyond the institute.

The pedagogy team consulted with instructors to help craft lesson plans. Course materials were shared on ARL's GitHub repository (https://github.com/tech-at-arl/Digital-Scholarship-Institute).
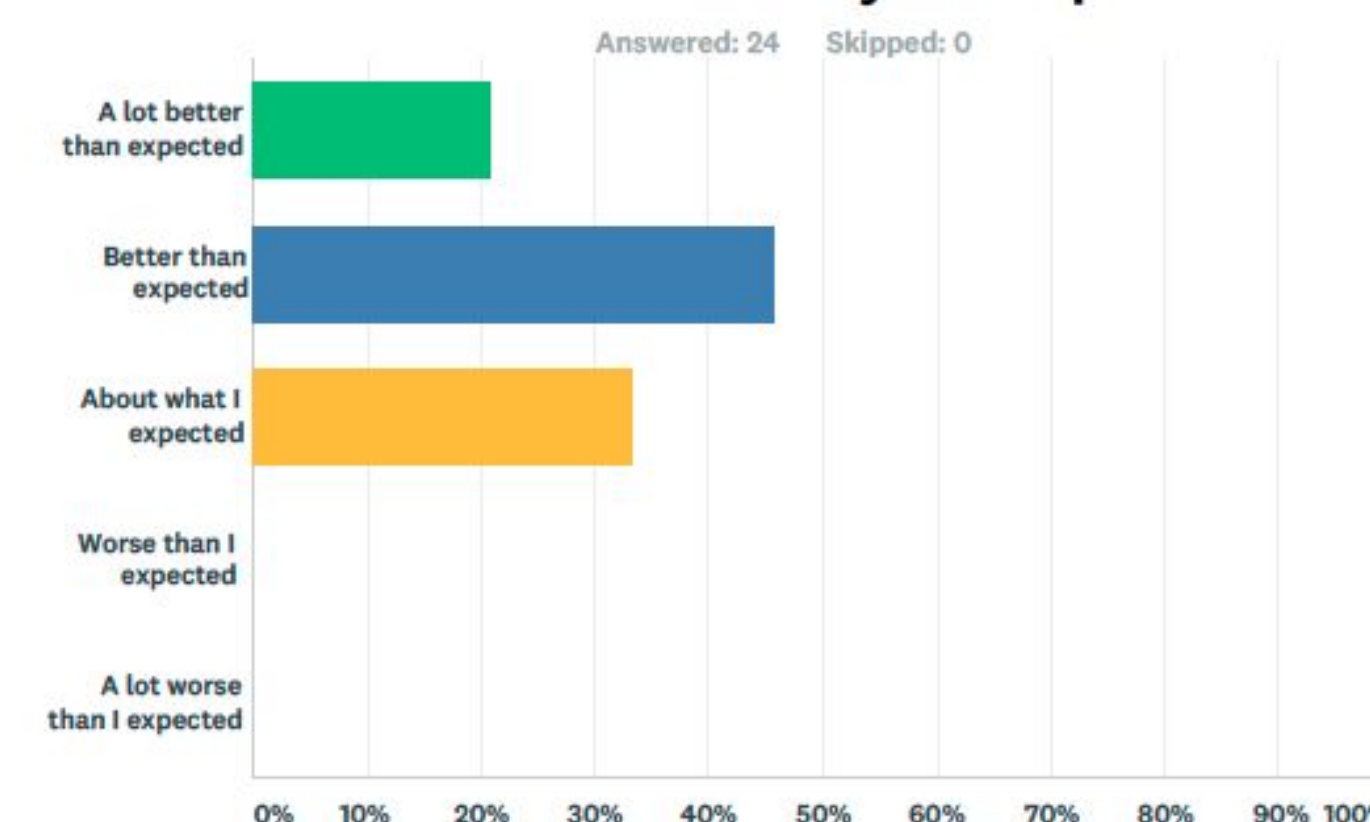

Jennifer Vinopal's keynote, "Discern, Question, and Resist," and Alex Gil's Introduction to Digital Scholarship workshop opened the Institute. On the final day, we hosted sessions on digital pedagogy and digital scholarship consultations, followed by a debrief of the Institute. The Institute's immersive environment allowed participants to learn, debate, and reflect on these concepts as a cohort.

📊 Assessment: Methodology & Findings

The ARL Advisory Group recognized the importance of assessment, and considered ways to make it as unintrusive as possible.

- A private **journal for daily reflection** with the goal to facilitate completion of three, brief surveys that corresponded to the workshop days (Tuesday - Thursday) and a comprehensive survey issued on the last day. We asked attendees to reflect upon:
  - What they learned today?
  - What they would have liked to learn?
  - What worked?
  - What didn't work?
- Two **flip-charts ("parking lot")** that were setup in a semi-private nook for attendees to note, anonymously, feedback that would be more time-sensitive.
- **Three short workshop surveys** that were disseminated post-workshops each day (Tuesday-Thursday):
  - What is an example(s) of something that you learned in this workshop?
  - Share one specific way that you might apply what you learned in your library.
  - What do you wish you learned today or did you expect to learn?
  - Any additional feedback about that day: logistics, meals, breaks, workshops.
- A **closing 8-question comprehensive survey** that was distributed at the end of the 5th and final day of the Institute.

Q2 How well did the Institute meet your expectations? Was it...?
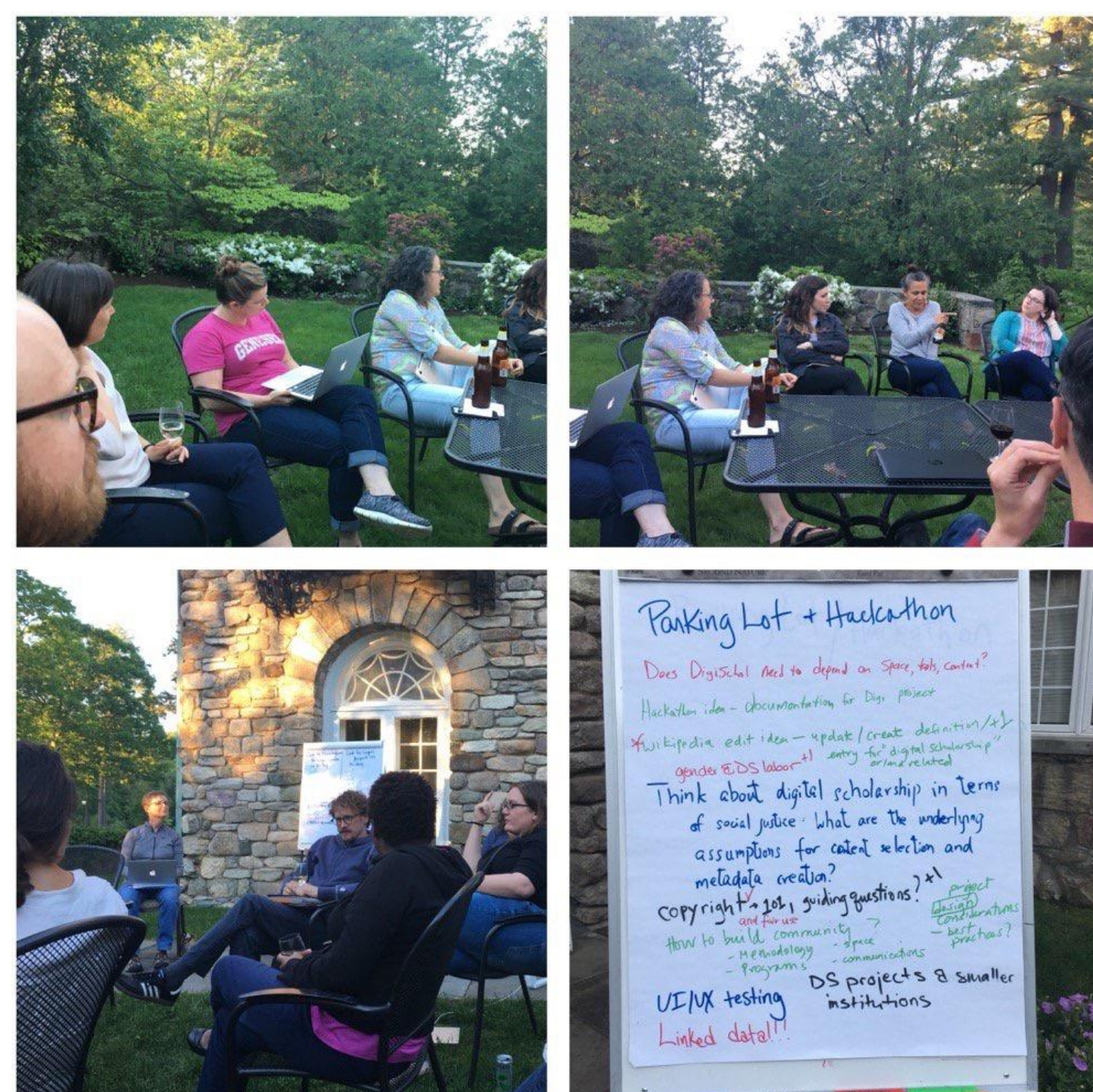

In addition to gathering feedback from attendees, we gathered feedback from instructors at the end of their workshop sessions.

Revising the Institute

Responses revealed participants valued the DSI program and found it useful for their future work, and especially valued the ability to build a cohort of distributed colleagues. Many said they would recommend it to a colleague, and in many cases already had.

Assessment activities raised several possibilities for changes to the institute:

- Streamline pre-institute communications, and set application and notification deadlines further in advance, to improve preparation for travel to and participation in the institute.
- Replace hackathon with informal discussion time: participants appreciated time to talk about issues related to providing digital scholarship services.
- Consider more time with a smaller set of tools, and more time for the sessions on core related librarianship issues like pedagogy, consultation, and data curation.

Planning is currently underway for the ARL DSI in January of 2018, which will be hosted at UC San Diego with modifications to the curriculum based on the instructional talent available at that campus and nearby. ARL is also committed to creating an ongoing community of practice among attendees so as to better support their ongoing efforts in digital scholarship. Thus, there is also a continued discussion about ways to further cultivate community among the cohorts after the duration of the Institute.

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