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Digital Humanities Task Force Executive Summary of Recommendations

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Digital Humanities Task Force Executive Summary of Recommendations, Fall 2019

Faculty want help with:

- 3D modeling
- developing coding expertise “that would allow me to collect my data without relying on others”
- Web design
- TEI (text encoding initiative)
- GIS/CAD
- Using APIs
- R or other statistical software
- Data visualization
- Digital publishing
- Web scraping
- Database/digital archive creation
- Image/digital assets inventory
- Text analysis (translation, word frequency)
- Enhancing student digital literacies/software skills (Excel)

Faculty want:

- Space for physical center
- “a place to go to ask a question, without feeling like I’m asking someone to do something that’s not their job or responsibility”
- VR lab for research and student work
- Opportunities for students to develop digital skills that will make them more competitive in job market
- the ability to create searchable, attractive digital versions of out-of-print publications
- DH community/conversations on campus
- Digitization services
- Access to software (MAXQDA, FilemakerPro) for specific projects
- Access to software in sandbox to learn how to use it
- Training in DH methods and tools
- Funding
- Lynda.com
- Plagiarism detection software

Current DH Research:

- writing music through virtual reality, using physical gestures to create sound
- scraping and translating data from the Internet

- studying memes and digital aggression
- creating and managing an open-access digital journal
- coding to analyze social media content and sentiment
- transcribing handwritten documents into a machine-readable format
- creating a database from rare book research
- creating and using digital collections of out-of-copyright texts for analysis
- mapping ownership of 17th-century artwork
- creating an online archive of digital images
- analyzing digital facsimiles of medieval manuscripts
- using software like ArcGIS and MAXQDA to visualize data from historical documents

Current DH Teaching:

- using Google Apps to create a map related to a student ethnographic research project
- teaching using virtual reality applications and equipment
- having students create digital projects like social media advocacy campaigns, videos, interface analysis and redesigns, and data visualizations
- having students do coding in HTML/CSS and rhetorical analysis
- exploring copyright in digital environments (remix culture, multimodal design) and digital publishing tools
- digitizing historical documents
- students use TEI and explore grant options for digital projects
- students create 3D exhibits using Second Life
- using “out-of-the-box assessment tools” to increase student understanding of textbook material
- use online peer editing groups for writing assessments
- building a physical exhibit on campus that uses QR codes linked to web content
- creating network-based visualizations of philosophy data to show students relationships between topics and authors
- using card sorting, decision trees, and eye tracking to teach user experience
- wanting to make artwork and metadata more accessible online for student research
- history faculty partnering with geography faculty to teach history students different technologies for original research
- using unique library online collections for teaching
- students use digital projects like ESTC, EEBO, USTC, Folger Luna, and Internet Shakespeare Editions
- students use online collections of out-of-copyright texts from HathiTrust, Google Books, Internet Archive, and University of Michigan digital collections
- students create maps of artwork and generate themed walking tours of public art grouped by theme

Task force members believe that a center located in Milner Library would be an essential component to support digital humanities work on campus. Possible functions for the center

include archiving and preserving digital work, providing fellowships for graduate students in the humanities (helping to make them more competitive in the job market), assisting with website design and layout, scanning, editing, proofreading, digitization, TEI, markup languages, grant writing, giving workshops or inviting experts to give them, outreach initiatives, and providing services to content providers and external clients.

Recommendations

The task force recommends the following items for consideration:

1. Physical Space
 - A technology-rich center where faculty can teach classes and collaborate across disciplines
2. Technology
 - Hardware and software to support digitization and archiving/organization of materials, text analysis, coding, multimedia creation and editing, virtual reality
3. Personnel
 - Knowledgeable and engaging professional(s) dedicated to project development, consultation, and experimentation
 - Student intern/assistantship positions to provide job skills and increase student competitiveness in the job market
 - Create and sustain multi-year fellowships for graduate students
 - Create and sustain a digital humanities faculty fellow program (similar to CTLT model)
 - Grant opportunities for students to work on research projects (Office of Student Research)
 - Leverage funding sources from the University to support instruction related to digital humanities, such as the Academic Impact Fund or Strategic Budget Carryover funds
4. Professional Development
 - One-on-one consultations for students and faculty
 - Provision of workshops to help faculty develop skills like building websites and databases, learn a coding language, 3D modeling, data visualization, and web scraping
 - Funding to support faculty travel to attend training and workshops at other universities (train-the-trainer programs, so ISU faculty can return to campus and offer workshops to share what they learned)
 - A set amount of competitive grant money that could fund external expertise or equipment that is not provided or supported by the University
 - Create and support a digital humanities consortium or steering committee on campus, perhaps a continuation of this group
 - Provide support for external grant applications
5. Flexibility
 - A philosophy in fostering a culture that encourages and invests in risk-taking and experimentation