TED-style Talk: It Takes a Village: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Supporting and Facilitating Digital Scholarship Initiatives

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TED-style Talk: It Takes a Village: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Supporting and Facilitating Digital Scholarship Initiatives

Presenter 1 Title
Associate Director of Academic Technology and CHS Fellow in Aegean Archaeology & Prehistory

Session Type
15-minute presentation

Abstract
The continued increase of digital tools and methods in both teaching and research has created a need for initial and ongoing support within institutions. While each institution has its own specific needs, we can learn a great deal from each other's approaches and experiences. This presentation offers as a case study Harvard University's recent (and ongoing) experience working across groups and divisional boundaries to support digital scholarship, digital methods-related courses, and the integration of digital components into courses and assignments through training, consultation, and the development and implementation of digital tools and methods.

Location
KIPJ Theatre

Keywords
training, digital methods, interdisciplinary collaboration, scholarly communication, digital humanities, digital pedagogy, visualization, digital scholarship, digital initiatives
‘IT TAKES A VILLAGE’

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Supporting and Facilitating Digital Scholarship Initiatives
THE PROBLEM

The proliferation of digital tools and methods in higher education (teaching, learning, and research) has created a need for access, training, support, and infrastructure.

Not everybody has a Digital Humanities or Digital Scholarship Center.
THE PROBLEM

- Academic Technology for FAS
- Research Computing for the Arts & Humanities
- Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences
- 75 Libraries!
- Maps, Media, Data & Government Information (Harvard Library)
- Digital History Program
- Center for Hellenic Studies
- Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies
- Academic Technology (University-Wide)
- Bok Center for Teaching and Learning
- Library Technology Services (NOT the Library!)
- Et cetera
- Et cetera
- Et cetera
THE PROBLEM
THE PROBLEM
THE PROBLEM

SILOS
THE PROBLEM

SILOS
CYLINDERS OF EXCELLENCE!
BEGINNING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

Step 1: Coming together across silos: Cylinders of Excellence to solve a small problem first

DiTF: Digital Teaching Fellow Program

Step 2: Figure out what comes next
WHAT IS ‘DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP’?

You didn’t think I was going to try to convince you all to agree to a one-size-fits-all answer, did you?
WHAT IS ‘DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP’?

The thoughtful, theoretically- and methodologically-informed use of digital evidence, methods of inquiry, research, publication, and preservation to achieve scholarly and research goals.

1. Using computation & digital tools to ask new questions and find answers in ways that would not be possible without these approaches.

2. Using digital tools to communicate/disseminate research in new and different ways, and/or to to accelerate/broaden the impact of research.

WHAT IS ‘DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP’?

This line of inquiry tends to break down into three categories, which overlap in the context of any given project:

1. Using computation & digital tools to ask new questions and find answers in ways that would not be possible without these approaches.

2. Using digital tools to communicate and/or disseminate research in new and different ways. These tools can also accelerate or broaden the impact of research.

3. Interrogating (born) digital sources with humanistic methods.
Every institution, organization, course, and project is different!
The Digital Scholarship Support Group brings together Harvard faculty and staff with expertise in a host of technical, pedagogical, and subject-specific areas across disciplinary and divisional borders, to provide faculty, students, and staff interested in incorporating digital methods into their teaching and research with a single point of entry to the many resources available at Harvard.
WHAT IS ‘DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP’?

Expanding digital literacy through training seminars and curricular support;

Supporting the use of digital methods and techniques for teaching, learning, and research; and

Developing well-integrated, University-supported infrastructure and the in-house expertise essential to sustain digital scholarship at Harvard.
A GROWING SUCCESS

**Foundations Seminar Series**

Reach & Impact

- PD/VF: 12%
- Faculty: 15%
- Staff: 38%
- Students: 35%

- 300+ Faculty, Staff & Students (50+ DiTFs), staff, and postdocs (and growing!)

**Fundamentals of Digital Scholarship**

- Introduction to the research workflow

**Digital Teaching Methods**

- Integration of digital methods and pedagogy
- Bok Center partnership

**DiTF Support by the Numbers**

- 50+ TFs and Courses
- 13 Departments

**Application & Infrastructure Development**

- Hosted Omeka service for FAS courses and research projects; custom plugin development and support

- Custom virtual environment to provide access to common tools for digital methods courses and research projects

...and more!
LOOKING FORWARD

Core group ("standing committee")

Gabriel Pizzorno  
Preceptor on Digital History

Marty Schreiner  
Librarian, Lamont Library  
Head of MMSDI, Harvard Library

Brandon Bentley  
Senior Instructional Technologist, AT–FAS

Bill Barthelmy  
Senior Technical Architect, AT–FAS

Cole Crawford  
Humanities Computing Specialist, DARTH

Jeff Emanuel  
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CHS Fellow in Aegean Archaeology & Prehistory

Rashmi Singhal  
Interim Director, DARTH

Jeremy Guillette  
Digital Scholarship Facilitator, Department of History

Hugh Truslow  
Head of Social Sciences and Visualization, Harvard Library
THANK YOU

Digital Scholarship

Support Group
Harvard University