Developing a Community of Practice Among Undergraduate Digital Scholars

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Abstract
In the summer of 2016, Gettysburg College’s Musselman Library piloted the Digital Scholarship Summer Fellowship (DSSF), a library-led, student-centered introduction to digital scholarship. For 10 weeks, a cohort of three undergraduate student fellows were introduced to digital tools, project management, research skills, and the philosophy behind digital scholarship, with the culmination the creation and presentation of a digital scholarship project. While the DSSF program is a library initiative, it drew support from partners from across campus, leveraging instructional support and the experience of digital scholarship practitioners from multiple departments to implement a broad curriculum in digital scholarship. The partners—who included the Educational Technology department, the Civil War Institute, and Gettysburg College faculty with a history of using digital pedagogy techniques in the classroom—worked with librarians to teach digital tools, discuss digital scholarship concepts, and help the student fellows realize the potential of their digital projects.

The fellowship was a success, and the work of the Digital Scholarship Fellows continued into the fall and spring semesters as they acted as peer mentors, supporting digital scholarship work in the classroom by leading workshops, providing one-on-one consultations, and assisting with project management. Cross-departmental support for digital scholarship continued beyond the summer program, as librarians and educational technologists worked closely with faculty during the academic year to support digital classroom assignments when the fellows were supporting a class.

Librarians R.C. Miessler and Janelle Wertzberger discuss the program, now in its 2nd year, with an emphasis on the ways in which the digital scholarship community of practice has been strengthened on the Gettysburg College campus through collaborative partnerships, student mentoring, and increased awareness of the value of digital scholarship activity in the classroom.

Keywords
digital humanities, digital scholarship, undergraduate research, Gettysburg College, learning community

Disciplines
Digital Humanities | Library and Information Science

Comments
Presented at the Keystone DH 2017 conference in Philadelphia, PA

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Developing a Community of Practice Among Undergraduate Digital Scholars

R.C. Miessler & Janelle Wertzberger
Gettysburg College

Keystone Digital Humanities Conference
July 13, 2017

@iconodule | @jlwinpa | #s3a
Who we are

R.C. Miessler
Systems Librarian

Janelle Wertzberger
Assistant Dean and Director of Scholarly Communications

Gettysburg College
Gettysburg, PA
~2,600 undergraduates

@iconodule | @jwinpa | #s3a
Origin story

ILiADS
Institute for Liberal Arts Digital Scholarship

Collaborating Digitally: Engaging Students in Public Scholarship
Bucknell University
November 6–8, 2015

DSSF
Digital Scholarship Summer Fellowship

@iconodule | @jlwinpa | #s3a
Do you want a small set of superstar faculty with awesome projects? Or do you want a community of people who learn together, support each other, and trust each other? My preference is for the latter, even though it is not as shiny. You don’t get NEH start-up grants for showing people how to build Omeka exhibits and make maps, but why on earth are we building these tools if we don’t want people to use them?

- Miriam Posner
Successes

Intentional, and

Unintentional

@iconodule | @jlwinpa | #s3a
Welcome

The work of digital scholars can be paradoxical, nebulous, and challenging; however, our contributions to scholarship are rewarding, because we are creating something that is flexible, extensible, and public-facing. Our contribution to scholarship allows those outside the bounds of Gettysburg College to see our work, and also build off of it.

#dssf16

dssf.musselmanlibrary.org/2016

@iconodule | @jlwinpa | #s3a
“Cohort, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful fellowship”

Keira Koch
July 29, 2016
Week 10
Leave a comment

So it’s the end of the Digital Scholarship Summer Fellowship 2016. This is a very bitter sweet movement; I am both happy and incredibly sad. I am happy to be going home to air conditioning but I am sad to be leaving behind such wonderful and incredible people I have bonded with over the past 10 weeks. Although it is the end of the summer, I would like to think that it is just the end of the beginning. The fellows and I have already established that fact that we fully intend to come back in the fall. We have already started to make jokes about using the Keurig in the staff room and visiting R C in his new office.
Rob Sieczkiewicz @RobScz · 29 Oct 2016
It's almost standing room only at #s2b #BUDSC16 as everyone wants to hear about student DH work at @GburgColLibrary and Lafayette College

Sarah Morris @oficklefreckled · 29 Oct 2016
Really excited about upcoming panel with @LafLib, @iconodule and @gettysburg students on models for undergraduate DH. Come! #BUDSC16 #s2c
2016 projects available at dssf.musselmanlibrary.org/2016/projects/
Keira Koch ’19 plans to research women’s experiences at Gettysburg College through different time periods using primary sources from Special Collections. She intends to use Scalar to create an interactive narrative/story book to tell the story using various media.

Julia Wall ’19 wants to work with the 1861 West Point photo album in Special Collections. Her project will be to create a digital “yearbook” that compiles information about members of the class of 1861 (especially what happened to them after they left the academy). She also wants to incorporate a digital timeline and map.

Lauren White ’18 is majoring in English and Environmental Studies. She wants to create a digital project that documents the history of social justice movements at Gettysburg College and links them to broader social movements. She is also interested in timeline tools.
Expanding #ArchivesForBlackLives to Traditional Archival Repositories (Drake 2016)

All the Digital Humanists are White, All of the Nerds are Men, but Some of Us are Brave (Bailey 2011)

Teaching Teachers in the Age of Trump (Risam, 2016)
<success

(or, not yet awesome)
# dssf17 VALUES (2.0)

- Openness
- Community
- Engaged diversity
- Experimentation cycle
- Dedication
- Have fun 😊

[diagram]

@iconodule | @jlwinpa | #s3a
Supporting DS classroom assignments
Continuing student DH work

What We Did Here: Activism at Gettysburg College is a crowd-sourced digital collection, created in partnership with Musselman Library and Special Collections and College Archives, devoted to documenting the discourse that has occurred on campus surrounding issues of race, gender, sexuality, political affiliation, religion, and class. Students, faculty, and staff have the opportunity to submit written testimonies or various media that are representative of campus’ response to these topics. Examples of media submissions are club posters, or pictures, videos, and audio of events or campus responses. This documentation is not limited in its scope; all submissions from all identities and viewpoints will be handled with equal gravitas.

Help us gather and preserve the different perspectives and experiences of the Gettysburg College community.

musselmanlibrary.org/activism

@iconodule | @jlwinpa | #s3a
Scaling up community

#dssf17 ≠ #dssf16 + 1
Big moving conclusion