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All Your Basecamp are Belong to Us: Managing Undergraduates to Create a DH Toolkit

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All Your Basecamp are Belong to Us: Managing Undergraduates to Create a DH Toolkit

Abstract

Adapting Digital Humanities instruction to meet the needs of students and faculty members working remotely became a priority as COVID-19 canceled plans for on-campus, in-person classes at our small, liberal arts college. The eventual solution was to develop an online resource to provide asynchronous DH support or to flip synchronous DH instruction. This project, the DH Toolkit, is a collection of tutorials and documentation open to anyone working on digital projects. Specifically, it covers how to use key digital tools, develop accessible user experiences, and navigate copyright concerns.

Keywords

Digital Humanities, digital pedagogy, student collaboration, project management

Disciplines

Digital Humanities | Higher Education | Online and Distance Education

Comments

Poster presented at the [Digital Humanities Summer Institute Conference & Colloquium](#), June 18, 2021

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SOMEONE SET US UP THE PROJECT!

<https://dh.sites.gettysburg.edu/toolkit>



The Digital Humanities Toolkit is a collection of tutorials and documentation that is designed to provide information about common DH tools, as well as issues related to digital projects such as copyright and accessibility. Musselman Library's 2020 summer DH program was cancelled due to COVID-19, but we had students with DH knowledge and funding to pay them. We decided to hire the students so they could create online learning objects. Additionally, the librarian team members could use their experience with working with students and developing communities of practice. Our **primary goal** for the project was to develop a collection of online learning objects for flipped and remote Digital Humanities instruction for the 2020-21 academic year. Our **secondary goal** was to teach students best practices related to the creation of online learning objects.

GETTING A SIGNAL



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Emma Poff '22
Digital Scholarship Program Assistant

- Established parameters for the student team members: 10 weeks, 20 hours a week, with Zoom check-ins for the entire team twice a week.
- Created a Basecamp team and OneDrive file structure to organize files and communicate.
- Installed a WordPress instance for the toolkit.
- Collected background readings about teaching Digital Humanities and developing online learning objects; a bibliography is available at: <https://dh.sites.gettysburg.edu/toolkit/about>
- Purchased Blue Snowball microphones for the entire team.

IN SUMMER 2020 ...

Week 1

- Read background articles
- Brainstorm tools and topics to cover in the Toolkit
- Team members volunteer to work on tools and topics
- Begin environmental scans for existing tutorials and documentation

Week 2

- Read background articles
- Share preliminary findings from environmental scans

Week 3

- Finish environmental scans & present recommendations
- Collaborate on wireframe
- Create WordPress site

Weeks 4-10

Develop

- Gather existing content to reuse
- Create original tutorial content

Post

- Publish content on WordPress site
- Format pages

Share

- Receive feedback from the team
- Incorporate edits and changes

June 2020

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July 2020

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August 2020

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

HOW ARE YOU, STUDENTS?

"This position helped me to develop more experience using the digital tools that I previously knew the basics of or little about. Collaborating with librarians and other student employees contributed to the development of communication and collaboration skills in a professional workplace." – Emma Poff '22

"At the start I had a lot of questions and checked in frequently to make sure that I was on the same page as everyone else. Once I felt more comfortable doing this work, I was able to take the reins." – Emma Lewis '20

TAKE OFF EVERY BEST PRACTICE

- By giving students agency to apply their DH skills and work through the process of creating online learning objects, they are able to leverage existing knowledge and develop new skills.
- Nothing was "graded" and no one had veto power on the team— all feedback was reciprocal and all views were considered equally.
- Communicating and planning with collaborative tools such as Basecamp requires practice and allows for greater transparency. Email is often the default mode of communication, but it can create silos if not everyone is copied on a thread, and it is hard to review retroactively to see why certain decisions were made.
- Multiple Zoom check-ins during the week helped build a sense of community that asynchronous communication in Basecamp couldn't replicate.
- By supplying everyone with a Blue Snowball microphone, it allowed for consistency in audio quality, and also a sense of professionalism.

FOR GREAT JUSTICE

The toolkit was used in classes in academic year 2020-2021 and we asked faculty to distribute a survey to students to see how it was used. This is helping us understand what students need in practical situations vs. what we thought they would need. Depending on what digital tools were asked during the year, additional tutorials were added in response to student needs. Additionally, we are planning to use the toolkit extensively in our 2021 summer DH fellowship.

ALL YOUR BASECAMP ARE BELONG TO US

Managing Undergraduates to Create a DH Toolkit

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DHSI 2021 Conference and Colloquium, June 18, 2021

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