Dangerous DH Liaisons

Librarians (Re)claiming Centrality in Digital Collaborations

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Image Credit: “Cyril E. Power, The Merry-Go-Round, about '29-30 (color linocut)” by Flickr user Will. Used CC-BY-2.0
J.B. Fletcher approach to DH

“The ways in which identities inform both theory and practice in digital humanities have been largely overlooked. Those already marginalized in society and the academy can also find themselves in the liminal spaces of this field. By centering the lives of women, people of color, and disabled folks, the types of possible conversations in digital humanities shift.” Moya Z. Bailey
“So when we call for librarians to approach collaborative digital work as partners and not service providers, I would like to see some acknowledgement of the fact that there are different power relations at play in these collaborative relationships. Power relations that are embedded in the hierarchies that make up academia, in both the social stratification of varying job ranks and the hierarchical classification of service and scholarship.” Roxanne Shirazi
DH/DLA @ Mac

**Formal**

- Mellon Grant
- post-doc
- learning communities
- workshops

**Informal**

- projects initiated by faculty with help from IT, library (or not)
- My involvement (most informal)
  - instruction
  - outreach
Transatlantic Slave Trade

Number of Slaves Embarked per Port Region in Africa from 1701 through 1750.

GOLD COAST SLAVE TRADE

Many slaves passed through a Gold Coast port marking the beginning of their Trans-Atlantic voyage

http://www.macalester.edu/news/2016/02/slave-trade-history/
What worked

- Students learned about primary sources
- Humanities students engaged with database (with actual data!)
- Strong interest in project from important players on campus
- Collaboration between DLA fellow, humanities faculty, students, and librarian
- Sustained library involvement
- More scaffolding, more integration
- Attribution and copyright
- More explicit role of librarian
DH @ St. Kate’s

- Faculty interested in raising visibility of Arts & Humanities
- No one with a lot of DH experience on campus, varying levels of digital technology skills among humanities faculty
- My DH work (thus far):
  - Awareness building
  - DH in the classroom (primarily digital storytelling)
  - Advisor to honors student
  - Partner in scholarship
Reading the Bible with the Dead

The course:
- Interdisciplinary (history & theology)
- Students learn how social & historical context shapes the reading of the bible
- 40 nursing students

My role:
- Assignment design
- IL SLOs
- 3 library sessions
  - Research
  - Copyright
  - Tool instruction (Timeline JS & Scalar)
- Individual consultations

Scalar Collaborative eBook

Reading the Bible with the Dead
Doing it over again...

- Build developmental steps into research/writing process
- Provide scaffolding for domain knowledge
- Session on visual literacy/writing for web
- More emphasis on overall look/feel & collaborative nature of project
Poll: What words describe your liaison work?
How has your experience as a liaison librarian prepared you for DH work?
Poll: Are colleagues on campus aware of how you can contribute to DH projects?
Poll: How would you describe the role you’ve played in DH initiatives/projects?
Why and when does visibility matter? What is the connection between visibility and agency?
What is gained and what is lost by defining DH in broader or more narrow terms?
How can we connect regionally with DH practitioners?
Thanks for coming!

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