

Collaborations through Open-Access Scholarly Publications on WordPress, the recent Digital Humanities consortium hosted by Hamilton College, convened with the goal of “integrating digital humanities approaches into courses and digital publications.” Attendees discussed various ways of using open-access platforms and publications to create dynamic and engaging digital scholarship, and also focused on the topic of collaboration as a means of addressing DH in academic environment with respect to its nature as an emerging program. Agendas and selected presentations from this two day event are available at <http://www.dhinitiative.org/about/ny6panel.php>.

PRESENTATIONS

Presenters at Collaborations through Open-Access Scholarly Publications on WordPress spoke about the use of open-access approaches and open-source software in creating and furthering digital scholarship, particularly digital humanities.

Dr. Daniel Chamberlain is the director of the Center for Digital Learning at Occidental College and teaches courses on emergent media. He has been involved with exploring media technologies and their applications and the beneficial effects of networking and open-access platforms on research and publication. His project, *Archive Journal*, focused on the transition from collections and archival material to digital scholarship projects and other endeavors and explored the role of communication and feedback through digital journals. The core ethos of *Archive Journal* is openness in terms of access, review, and collaboration. The project approached this ethos from multiple perspectives and modalities, taking into account the need for communication and partnership to reach a diverse audience.



Dr. Jack Dougherty is an Associate Professor and the Director of Educational Studies Program at Trinity College. His work in the field of Digital Humanities addresses how DH can help liberal arts colleges interact more substantively. In particular, his project, *Cities, Suburbs and Schools*, addressed the spatial history of the development of schools and urban spaces in an open-access environment. Dr. Dougherty’s presentation sought to review the obstacles associated with digital publications, addressing how open-web scholarship can help by encouraging collaboration, allowing both narrative and visual evidence, providing many modalities for presenting this evidence, providing the opportunity for feedback and commentary, and making valuable scholarship easily accessible.



Dr. Kristen Nawrotzki teaches at the University of Education in Heidelberg, Germany and is a Senior Research Fellow at the Early Childhood Research Centre at the University of Roehampton in London, UK. Her research and publications focus on ideologies of motherhood and of childhood and social policies concerning early education and parent/school relations in the 19th-21st centuries. Her presentation, *Writing History in the Digital Age*, was co-authored with Dr. Dougherty. Built around the tenet of ‘transparency of process,’ Dr. Nawrotzki’s project explored how scholars and academics write and how modes of writing influence outcome. *Writing History in the Digital Age* attempts to “pull aside the curtain” to reveal the process behind writing and publication. Digital publication and writing for the web proves to be useful in pulling aside the curtain because both facilitate transparency of process through open review and communication, and through the democratization of participation that allows anyone with a genuine interest to be involved in scholarship.



NY6 DISCUSSIONS

Following the presentations, representatives from the New York 6 – Hamilton College, Colgate University, Hobart William Smith College, Skidmore College, St. Lawrence University, and Union College—discussed the current state of digital scholarship at their respective institutions and their hopes for advancement.

Union College noticed that the topic of digital humanities caused some trepidation on the part of their faculty due to technological barriers and uncertainty about the long-term viability of digital scholarship. The representatives also reported encountering problems related to the lack of infrastructure for implementing and sustaining digital scholarship in an academic environment. Their hopes for the advancement of this field included broadening the idea of digital humanities to a cross-disciplinary initiative, improving communication as to the use of and need for digital media, and developing a more structured way of making connections, both through digital platforms and also simply through open communication.

Skidmore College reported problems with communication and connection among faculty members on campus who are involved in digital humanities projects. The recent acquirement of a new GIS lab has opened up many exciting opportunities for innovative projects and other Digital Humanities efforts, but has also brought the lack of designers to the faculty’s attention. In an attempt to address these problems, the Skidmore representatives felt that students needed to be involved more as producers of the web and not just consumers. The process of learning digital literacy can help facilitate communication and engagement when students are involved in a bottom-up approach to digital scholarship.

St. Lawrence University felt that although there are many ideas and projects centered on Digital Humanities percolating on their campus, finding off-campus collaborators and forging connections with other institutions proved problematic. Hesitancy in terms of institutional support provided another obstacle to the university’s goal of furthering digital scholarship beyond its current bounds. The representatives suggested resolving these problems through increased on-campus awareness about the potential of digital scholarship and through greater availability for collaboration and resource sharing. Looking to the future, St. Lawrence hopes to “create a culture among institutions of dedication to important pieces of scholarship so that it becomes part of the DNA of colleges and outlasts changes.”

Hobart & William-Smith Colleges observed that digital scholarship had more resonance among faculty members than digital humanities, but problems still persisted in educating the faculties about the applications of open-access scholarship and its impact on projects, publication, and tenure. The planning, nurturing, and showcasing of digital scholarship must be discussed on all levels, including the libraries, technological services, and student work. The representatives agreed that the advancement of digital scholarship depends on a commitment to process rather than a fixation on product, and that this ethos should be reflected in poster sessions and the presentation of research at colloquiums.

Colgate University’s representatives felt that their institution’s long-standing tradition of collaboration has been a good foundation for project development. They reported some difficulties with a lack of librarians and technologists able to meet current demands and were concerned about how to work scholarship into projects in a way that will be viable in the long-term. Overall, success was reported in the form of more opportunities for participation and collaboration in projects across campuses and in the further expansion of digital scholarship efforts at an institutional level.

Hamilton College reported that their work in the field of Digital Humanities had demonstrated a prototype model for development of unique faculty research collections with associated web publications. Collaborative scholarship with students is a hallmark of Digital Humanities at Hamilton and each faculty research project has a course connection with several projects having their origin in courses. Information Technology and Library departments provide crucial support and a strong foundation for development of both course and technology infrastructure. One of the most challenging tasks the representatives brought up was the need to encourage faculty members to expand the boundaries of digital scholarship. Digital scholarship endeavors must consider how the work being done will collectively benefit the institution and the student body by providing more robust student experiences. DHI at Hamilton’s presentation is available at <http://www.dhinitiative.org/files/DHISlidesNY6.pdf>.

The consortium discussion covered the current and potential applications of open-access platforms and open-source technology with regards to scholarly publication, cross-disciplinary collaboration, institutional support, student participation, and above all, the kind of dynamic scholarship that is viable in the long-term and that embraces availability, transparency, and active involvement. There was general agreement on a need for better communication among faculty and across departments and campuses, a need for a formalized infrastructure or platform for the application and maintenance of digital scholarship in academia, and a need for the consideration of the long-term viability of digital scholarship. The institutions involved have taken these concerns into consideration and are working as individuals and as members of a larger community of digital scholars to come up with solutions that can then be shared among participants in the hopes of advancing and disseminating digital scholarship in institutions of higher learning.

Christine Henseler, Associate Professor of Spanish & Hispanic Studies at Union College, is leading the development of a 4Humanities@NY6 local (regional) chapter. A 4Humanities@NY6 website is underway to serve as a Hub for anticipated activities that include:

- Invited speakers and reading/study/discussion meetings devoted to scholarly research around the current state of the digital humanities.
- Writing groups to generate articles describing the state and the value of digital humanities for a variety of academic and general publishing outlets.
- Communication avenues to connect faculty and students in collaborative research projects.