739. Going Public: How and Why to Develop a Digital Scholarly Identity

Sunday, 7 January
8:30 AM-9:45 AM
Hilton Gramercy East

Speakers
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Presiding
Katina Rogers
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#mla18 #s739
Digital housekeeping:

- Hashtags: #mla18 #s739
- Twitter: @katinalyynn, @lmrhody, @danicasavonick, @lisaironcutter
- Public google doc at: bit.ly/goingpublic-mla18
- See also goingpublic.hcommons.org
Digital Identity

Danica Savonick
Digital identity considerations

- Who do I want to be in conversation with? Where are these conversations occurring?
- How can I make my work easy to find, especially for those people who I most want to be in conversation with?
- Who do I want to see what?
- How can I minimize the amount of updating I have to do by being strategic about dynamic and static content?
- How can I enact my scholarly and pedagogical commitments through my online presence?
You can find me on...

Personal website: http://danicasavonick.com/

Institutional website: https://danicasavonick.commons.gc.cuny.edu/

HASTAC academic network: https://www.hastac.org/u/danicasavonick

MLA Commons: https://mla.hcommons.org/members/danicasavonick/

Twitter: https://twitter.com/danicasavonick?lang=en

LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/danica-savonick-11a3a2b8/

Ratemyprofessor.com (Regrettably), Facebook.com, Instagram.com
Digital Identity Spectrum

Private and Personal
Instagram

Facebook
Twitter

Public and Professional
HASTAC
Personal Website
Institutional Website
MLA Commons
LinkedIn
Personal website: http://danicasavonick.com/

Teaching Through Publishing: Scholarly Journal Article as Collaborative Final Project (a How To Guide)

On August 30, 2017, three students from my Queens College composition course published an article in the scholarly, peer-reviewed journal Hybrid Pedagogy. Their article, “The Ultimate Life Experience: Preparing Students for the World Beyond the Classroom” argues that colleges ought to prepare students for a great future, and offers concrete suggestions for how teachers, administrators, and students can...

Read more

September 30, 2017

Community Guidelines: Fostering Inclusive Discussions of Difference

In this blog, I describe how my class co-authored a set of community guidelines in order to create a supportive environment for discussing issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality. This past semester, I had the deep pleasure of teaching an English course on “The Arts of Dissent” at

- Home (blog), About, Research, Events, Teaching, Editorial Work
- Primary digital presence
- Static and dynamic content
- Reclaim Hosting
  - Student package - 2 GB, free domain, 30/year
  - Faculty package - 10 GB, free domain, 50/year
Institutional website: https://danicasavonick.commons.gc.cuny.edu/

Danica Savonick is a doctoral candidate in English at The Graduate Center, CUNY, a Graduate Teaching Fellow at Queens College, a Research Fellow with The Futures Initiative, and a HASTAC scholar. For up to date information, visit her website.

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Digital identity hack: Set up a generic profile that redirects to your primary site
Hastac.org: [https://www.hastac.org/u/danicasavonick](https://www.hastac.org/u/danicasavonick)

- Academic social network of scholars, educators, and students
- Content organized by groups and topic
- Blogs, CFPs, job opportunities, annual conference, monthly newsletter, etc.
- Individual user profiles
Where to blog?
Timekeeping as Feminist Pedagogy

I am obsessed with timekeeping. This is because, for me, timekeeping is a feminist issue.

I first learned this from personal experience in a graduate seminar that was, in many ways, fantastic, but it had one major flaw. When the end of the semester rolled around, the final few classes were dedicated to people sharing the progress they had made on their final research essays and getting feedback from our brilliant classmates and professor. As someone who is constantly begging for people to engage with my work, I would not have been more eager to present my ideas thus far and see what suggestions my classmates would provide. All semester, our discussions had been so interesting, and I knew that their engagement with my ideas would push my research to the next level. They brought with them knowledge from many different disciplines and were always recommending additional readings that brought the class material to life in unexpected ways.

In each of our final classes, during the last hour, three students would present their work, which meant we each prepared for a 20-minute conversation composed of brief remarks followed by a discussion. Given that limited amount of time, I painstakingly decided which sections of my project I wanted to share and framed questions that I thought my classmates would be able to help with.

But the day I was scheduled to present my work, I was assigned to go last. By now you're probably wondering why I'm telling you this. It’s not just because I’m so possessive of my work. It’s because this incident, I believe, is emblematic of how women engage with our work and how time constraints affect us differently than they do men. When I knew it would be only 15 minutes and not 20 minutes left in the class, and it still wasn’t my turn, I thought, “Anthony, remember what the clock says and write it down.”

I will never forget the feeling of sitting in that chair, fidgeting with sweaty palms and unable to contribute to the conversation because I was so anxious that my turn would never come. And that’s basically what happened.

I share this anecdote not to blame anyone, but as a reminder that timekeeping is not something that comes naturally.
Twitter:  [https://twitter.com/danicasavonick?lang=en](https://twitter.com/danicasavonick?lang=en)

- Crowdsourcing
- Sharing work and ideas
- Engaging with other scholars
- Finding collaborators
- Live-tweeting (record of thoughts)
- Expanding conversations
- Diversifying news perspectives
- Learning about opportunities
- Publicizing events
- Sharing student writing
LinkedIn: [https://www.linkedin.com/in/danica-savonick-11a3a2b8/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/danica-savonick-11a3a2b8/)
Remarks by Lisa Tagliaferri (See slides, p. 18-26)

I’m Lisa Tagliaferri, I have a PhD in Comparative Literature and Renaissance Studies from the Graduate Center, CUNY, an MSc in Computing and Information Systems from the University of London, and am currently working in industry at a cloud infrastructure company, DigitalOcean. I’m going to talk to you today about how I have leveraged working in a public digital space to help me achieve research and professional goals. Significantly, I have found that digital work in both academic and non-academic spaces have helped me synthesize general themes across my work and have served to strengthen my output in both areas.

When I talk about my research or my professional work, I tend to emphasize my interdisciplinary background and collaborative approach. I have found that creating narratives about my work while applying for grants and funding, preparing for job interviews (in academia or industry), and especially blogging and collaborating in an interdisciplinary cohort has helped to elucidate my own conception of the contributions and purpose of my work. Because my research is on Catherine of Siena, a 14th-century Italian mystic writer, the fact that I now work in tech may seem unusual. However, through my later graduate work, especially in working in the dynamic and public-focused space of the Futures Initiative, I was able to discover that the reason I was so interested in 14th-century Italy was because of the rich community-building that came about through the advent of humanism that sparked the Renaissance, and because of the greater access that was afforded through textual production in the vernacular Italian language. Rather than keep people out, Italian writers and especially public figures like Catherine of Siena were working to bring people into the fold and ensure that those of lower classes, the uneducated, and women were able to participate in a broader discourse.

At its best, technology helps to build community and allows people to participate in greater publics. I learned about my current organization, DigitalOcean, through the GitHub Student Developer Pack because I was offered $50 in server credit for signing up with a .edu email address. I had never worked with an unmanaged server before so I looked at their tutorials about how to set up a basic Linux server (significantly, you can follow their tutorial to set up a Linux server with a competitor, it is all open-source-based and agnostic). Because I needed a web server, I also read about how to set up an Nginx site for the public-facing digital component of my dissertation project. And to make it secure, I followed another tutorial to set up and automate Let’s Encrypt for a free HTTPS protocol. Working with an unmanaged server provided me with greater control over my spaces online, and allowed me to begin learning more about system administration and DevOps. I now had a dissertation website where I could share my project publicly online.

In the meantime, I continued working on research and teaching and, later, through social media channels, I found a role advertised with DigitalOcean that seemed like a great fit, as they were now seeking someone to write those same agnostic tutorials but this time about programming languages, which I had a professional and research background in. I had talked previously with the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development at the Graduate Center about where I could potentially fit in, and though I continued to add to my academic CV, I
had also worked to make a resume more appropriate for non-academic jobs. For this position, I tailored my resume further and made sure that my digital identity was multi-pronged in terms of thinking about technology, the humanities, research, and teaching. I have actually found that the teaching experience that we gain in our humanities training is often a great selling point as long as it is contextualized in a way for those in different industries to understand.

That said, I think I am the only person in the world who has talked about a medieval Italian saint at length in tech industry job interviews. It was important to me to be forthcoming with my experience, and this was possible to do with the narratives I had previously created through blogging and writing for grants. Like any piece of communication, we must think about our audience. When talking about early Italian vernacular writing, I would emphasize the levels of community engagement inherent in my topic and my approach, and that a great deal of my methodology was digital in nature, and that the DH approach helped me find new insights into my subject (it was Cathy Davidson also of the Futures Initiative who pushed for me to make my dissertation more digital and robust). It helped that I was able to talk about data visualization and topic modeling in technical terms, explaining the JavaScript libraries I used and the machine learning algorithms that the textual analysis was based on. However, any specific job — whether it is academic or not — will need its own individual and careful approach.

I started working at DigitalOcean in July of 2016 and defended my dissertation in April 2017. My work in tech has largely consisted of writing education-based tutorials on programming languages. The tutorials I have written are free for anyone anywhere in the world, are open access and creative-commons licensed. When I first began, I had some reservations about sharing my knowledge in such a public way. And it was challenging to find my own tone and approach in the beginning, but I can say that my tutorials are largely informed by my humanistic background and the thinking through pedagogy that I did with Katina Rogers, Danica Savonick, and the Futures Initiative. For example, a recent technical article I wrote about machine learning has a section about unconscious bias that I was hesitant about putting online out of fear of repercussion, but I have been pleasantly surprised that people in tech do want this nuanced and thoughtful approach, and I have received only positive feedback, specifically because of this section as it is not often addressed in technical publications.

Because I was writing a book on Python in a very public way alongside writing my dissertation at home, many of the aspects of public, available, digital work became less intimidating. I decided to make my dissertation creative commons licensed and freely available. This seemed like the right thing to do, especially as a graduate of a public school. I worked closely with the Graduate Center librarians Roxanne Shirazi and Stephen Klein to set my dissertation up for the public and archive my website and digital components. Thankfully, I also had other great examples of public scholarship and resources like the Futures Initiative to empower me to make these decisions. My dissertation has been downloaded over 200 times in 31 different countries. I know that this may not be the right choice for everyone, and I am not sure what the long-term impact will be, but so far it has only been a positive experience for me.
As my career continues, I think a lot about aligning my research and public scholarship goals alongside a career path in technology. It is challenging in many ways and is still something I am trying to navigate. I am fortunate in that I have a supportive and encouraging team at my organization (a member of whom is in the audience: Etel Sverdlov, Director of Community at DigitalOcean). Within my industry role, I am able to engage widely; the reach of this work still surprises me — my most popular tutorials have each been viewed hundreds of thousands of times. Helping more people learn about technology — even if they are not going to work in the field themselves — is incredibly rewarding as a humanist as technology becomes increasingly pervasive. The more communities involved in the discussion around the creation of technology, the more communities there will be whose needs are served by technology. The work that I am doing outside of academia continues to expand on my research goals, and I am continuing to negotiate these various public online spaces. So far, I have found the work I have done in a public and digital way over time has been effective in supporting my longer-term objectives. I hope others will feel empowered to contribute to digital discourses in meaningful ways that are comfortable and satisfying for them.
Going Public: How and Why to Develop a Digital Scholarly Identity
Student Developer Pack
The best developer tools, free for students

Learn to ship software like a pro

There’s no substitute for hands-on experience, but for most students, real world tools can be cost prohibitive. That’s why we created the GitHub Student Developer Pack with some of our partners and friends: to give students free access to the best developer tools in one place so they can learn by doing.

Get your pack

https://education.github.com/pack
Initial Server Setup with Ubuntu 16.04

Introduction

When you first create a new Ubuntu 16.04 server, there are a few configuration steps that you should take early on as part of the basic setup. This will increase the security and usability of your server and will give you a solid foundation for subsequent actions.

Step One — Root Login

To log into your server, you will need to know your server's public IP address. You will also need the password or, if you installed an SSH key for authentication, the private key for the "root" user's account. If you have not already logged into your server, you may want to follow the first tutorial in this series, How to Connect to Your Droplet with SSH, which covers this process in detail.

https://do.co/tutorials
Io, Caterina

Mapping and Modeling Catherine of Siena, Poetic Mystic and Community Builder

A dissertation project by Lisa Tagliaferri

A prolific mystical writer, Catherine of Siena was a civic-minded living saint, concerned not only with the afterlife, but also with earthly affairs surrounding both spirituality and community activism. Having learned to read and write informally through a network of tertiary nuns, credited with returning the Pope to Rome from Avignon through diplomatic missions, caring for the sick and comforting prisoners, Catherine served as a hub among both the religious and the secular in her city of Siena, broader Tuscany and Italy, and Avignon as well. With nearly 400 letters extant written to both religious and nonreligious contemporaries alike, prayers recorded by her followers, and a book written in the emerging vernacular Italian that was subsequently translated into Latin and Middle English, Catherine’s corpus is profound and far-reaching. Utilizing digital humanities tools for network analysis and topic modeling has served to both contextualize Catherine of Siena as a central figure of 14th-century Europe, as well as substantiate her as a literary figure who wrote metaphorically and adhered to poetic trends of her time.

External Resources

- Full text of dissertation
- Code and text repository
- Website source code
- Website archive

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https://caterina.io
Going Public: How and Why to Develop a Digital Scholarly Identity

#mla18 #s739
An Introduction to Machine Learning

Introduction

Machine learning is a subfield of artificial intelligence (AI). The goal of machine learning generally is to understand the structure of data and fit that data into models that can be understood and utilized by people.
How To Code in Python

Open educational resource eBook forthcoming
Currently available as free online tutorials
https://do.co/code-in-python
Going Public: How and Why to Develop a Digital Scholarly Identity

#mla18 #s739
In the Google document we set up for today, there is a link to a "Personal Digital Inventory and Work plan." If you would like, you can link to this, create a copy, and follow along.


Personal Digital Identity Inventory & Workplan
Know thyself… Personal inventory

- Where am I in my academic/professional lifecycle?

Most research or academic work—even administrative work—is cyclical. There’s a time when we spend more time doing research or reading than we do writing, or when we’re doing editing and revision with ideas that are more informed, but need polish. There’s a time when those ideas have already found their ways to audiences, but need to more people. Consider where you are in your academic / research / and professional life-cycle. What are you spending most of your time doing? Here are some prompts to help you get started. Are you:
  - An established scholar with existing research communities, collaborators, and peers?
  - Transitioning from one project to the next thing?
  - In the middle of an ongoing project?
  - Starting out as a graduate student in a new field?

Activity: Take a few moments to describe where you are in your professional / research / teaching career path.
What do I need?

What you need is likely related to where you are spending your time. We all go through cycles in our work: times when we are really developing a project but may not be ready to share it publicly yet, or times when we’re ready to share and disseminate our ideas widely. Take a minute to consider where you are in your work and what you need in order to grow. Here are some ideas to consider:

Where am I now?
Moving on to a dissertation? Sending article / manuscript to presses? Going on the job market? Looking for the next thing? Promotion? Teaching a new course?

What do I need?

○ Expand my existing community to find work in other/similar disciplines, communicate my work to a wider audience, receive feedback outside of my echo chamber?

○ To find new work in related areas, receive feedback on ongoing work, connect with scholars working in similar or allied fields, build a platform of scholarship.

○ Meet people in the discipline I want to join. Learn about the work currently being done in my field, learn about CFPs, and be invited to participate in others’ work. To find a community to bounce early ideas off of and receive generous feedback / encouragement / critique.

○ What will I need in 6 months? One year? Five years? What are the life events that will change the shape of your work and your community (and your relationship to those things)?

Activity: Take a few moments and using the questions above briefly describe what you are working on and what would be most helpful for you.
What Resources Can You Use?

Consider the resources at your disposal--not the least of which is your own time. You may also want to think of any local institutional resources, like a library repository, or Humanities Commons. What does your campus use, and what do the people in your discipline use to share and communicate ideas?

- How much time do I have to dedicate to this? Be honest with yourself. Keep expectations modest.
  - 1 hour per day?
  - 2 hours per week?
  - 1 hour per month?
  - 3 hours per day?
  - Set boundaries.

**Activity:** Jot down a few of the online spaces where you are most likely to find collaborators or colleagues in your field or in fields related to your own. Then consider what is a reasonable period of time you could spend curating your digital identity.
Who do you want to connect with?

- Who are my existing communities, supporters, cheerleaders, critics, colleagues, partners, peers, readers, and allies? Are they already using digital platforms? Which ones? How often do I want to connect with them?
- Where are you likely to find them?
  - This may take some research. Could you survey scholarly societies, conferences, or periodicals to find out where colleagues are having their discussion.
  - What platforms do they use, and are you familiar with those platforms?

Activity: Take a few moments to list the people whom you do not connect with regularly but with whom you would like to read and share your work. Also, consider what work you are interested in contributing to. Identify one or two online communities or spaces where those colleagues communicate and share their work. Where do they put their academic profiles? How often does conversation happen?
How much is enough for me?

- Does regular communication and participation fuel your productivity or exhaust you?
  - How much energy (emotional, intellectual) do you want to dedicate to your digital identity?
  - Less is more to begin…
    - Do I prefer long-form writing, short-form, micro-blogging (Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr), more intimate communities (Humanities Commons), or broad publics (public blogging)?

Activity: Think about your face to face experiences sharing your work. Was this anxiety producing to the point that it shut down your productivity? Was it useful because you felt heard and received feedback? What stage did you feel most comfortable sharing your work? Consider the platforms and online spaces where people you would like to connect with are most likely to share their work. Which of them are most conducive to your own style of sharing and collaborating?
How much risk, publicness, or visibility do I want?

- What is your comfort threshold for risk, negative feedback, trolling, or public critique and debate? Your answers to this may depend on many factors regarding personal identity, employment status, the institution you are affiliated with and their policies on social media and publication. You will want to consider this as you are putting together a strategy.

Activity: Take a few moments to jot down any professional, personal, or other constraints that you feel you either must (for legal reasons) or should (for personal reasons) be conscious of when you begin interacting and sharing your work online. Are you on any scholarly society or other professional boards? What disclaimers should you include with your profile? Do you feel comfortable having your picture shared?
Building a Strategy

- Goals (with a timeline)
  - Short term: What can you get done in the time you have
    - Designate the amount of time
    - What resources, time, do you have to help you achieve these?
    - Which authentic parts of yourself and your work do you want to share?
  - Medium term
    - Designate when you will expect to start working toward and achieving goals?
    - Build in an assessment of your experiences: What would you change?
  - Long term
    - How do your short term goals lead to long-term results?
    - What method can you use to evaluate how effective your attempt has been.
Sample Digital Identity Work Plan

**Goal:** I want to create an audience for my work now that I have several dissertation chapters written, so that there are people waiting to see my work and to discuss it with me at conferences.

- **Short term: Set up a website.** (Deadline: 1 month)
  - Resources available: Workshops available through department;
  - Resources needed: Attendance; maybe 5 hours more to gather content and create the site.

- **Short term: Set up a Twitter profile.** (Deadline: 2 months)
  - Resources: Free to do, but requires several photos and time to add people to follow.
  - **Daily:** Find people in my academic / scholarly community and follow them on Twitter. RT and circulate helpful materials. Spend about 1 hour per day reading the feeds of people i like and admire.

- **Mid-term:** Review metrics to see if I have added followers or experienced views of my papers. (2 hours 3 months from now) Increase each month the number of people who see my work. Begin responding to CFPs circulated through the network. Start interacting occasionally in conversations.

- **Long-term:** Evaluate--Have I expanded my community of collaborators and peers engaged in similar area of study, my work is read and circulated among a larger group of readers; and I am aware of work I might otherwise have missed? Take a couple of hours to review your list of followers, the people you follow, and look at what you've shared. Consider what impression someone who doesn't know you might have of your work. Make adjustments.