Enhancing Community through Open DH Website Design

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Institutional DH Websites

By “institutional DH website,” we mean a community website, hosted by a given university or institution, that is explicitly devoted to the advancement, support, and promotion of DH work collectively.

We argue that such websites should:

- Follow a user-focused development process
- Foreground open access and accessibility
- Build sustainability into the design process
User-Focused Development Process

- Take an **ethnographic** approach: have conversations about what has worked for people in the past and what their “pain points” are when desiring to connect with digital humanities people and practices
- Perform anonymous quantitative and qualitative **surveys** to collect feedback
- Form a communications **committee of stakeholders** who have DH content to communicate
- Perform **usability testing**: recruit ~5 users at several points during the development process, and observe their interactions with the site
- Solicit **casual, ad hoc input** and be responsive to it
- **Welcome content from all constituencies** in your institution
- **Iterate with a focus on user needs**: the site is never “finished”
**Sustainability:**
An institutional DH website is more sustainable when content comes from a variety of constituencies and through a variety of channels.

**Crowdsourcing:**
DH@UVA offers users the opportunity to create a profile and create connections with other nodes.

DH@UVA connects the network of digital humanities organizations, people, projects, and events at the University of Virginia.

- The DH Communications Committee is responsible for the DH Events Calendar.
- The DH Certificate Administrative Director and the Faculty Advisory Committee are responsible for DH Certificate information.
- The DH@UVA Team is responsible for maintaining and updating the site as a whole.

- Everyone in the University community—faculty, students, and staff—is invited to create and maintain profiles, thus crowdsourcing our network of information about the projects and tools in use at UVA.
- Upon email request, the DH@UVA team will add new projects and tools so that individuals may link to those nodes from their profile.
Built on WordPress
Showcases individual DH projects within the Bucknell community through project pages
  - Information about these projects is collected from Project PIs, who fill out a short Qualtrics survey that asks them for names of project collaborators, a project abstract, a link to the project’s website or other online presence, funding, etc.
  - PIs also select from a predetermined list of tags for their project; these tags are sorted by language, geographical region, temporal span, discipline/field of study, and topic/method
  - Tags allow for an easy way in which PIs can identify projects similar to their own & make connections with others in the community

Other resources also available on the DH@Bucknell website, including information about the DH minor at Bucknell, an ongoing blog about DH projects run by undergrad RAs, and a set of resources for the DH community
Outcomes of User-Focused Development

**DH@Bucknell**

- **Centralized site** that serves as a one-stop-shop for Digital Humanities practitioners (and those interested in learning more about DH)
- Regularly updated and maintained resources for individuals developing a DH project, including a list of open-source tools, DH Fellowships & Grants, and information about digital pedagogy
- **Active undergraduate involvement** through regular news & blog posts

**DH@UVA**

- Public portal that enables users to find people, organizations, and projects
- **Centralized resources** for community of those who are involved in the graduate DH Certificate
- Regularly updated **DH course listings**
- **New DH pedagogy resources** for instructors
- **Improved collaboration** across organizations in planning DH-related events
- **Improved collaboration** across siloed organizations to produce news content