

## New Director's Grant

### University of Georgia Digital Humanities Lab Initiative

#### **Current State**

For years the University of Georgia has had the benefit of highly engaged faculty members who routinely produce nationally recognized Digital Humanities work. Current projects include Mapping Occupation, Invasion of America, the Linguistic Atlas, the Civil Rights Digital Library and, most recently, CSI: Dixie. These and other projects have appeared in venues like *Slate*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. These large-scale research projects show the investment the community has already made in creating and sustaining digital work.

The creation of the DigiLab is an extension of this energy. The lab was made possible by support from the UGA Libraries, the UGA Press, and the Willson Center for Humanities & Arts. Through this cooperation the lab has brought collaborators from a range of humanities disciplines and has earned the attention of University administration. In March 2016, the lab hosted a reception sponsored by the Provost's office that brought a number of new faces to the space. The digital poster session that served as the cornerstone of the event offered the opportunity to showcase not just existing faculty projects, but also work from undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty embarking on new projects. Events like these, which we hope to continue, raise the profile of the lab on campus and fulfill the promise of the DigiLab as a space of intersection between humanities disciplines and a locus for fostering interdepartmental communication. With a GIS Librarian and Digital Humanities Coordinator now in place, the DigiLab looks forward to building on this momentum and crystallizing the goals we had set forth in our original proposal.

#### **Progress**

Moving forward, our goals are to strengthen the local and regional DH community, as well as to connect the DigiLab with the national DH community and raise UGA's profile on the national scene. First, we are expanding DH efforts on campus not only to broaden the disciplinary reach to additional departments and faculty members, but also to bring DH methods and tools directly to the student population at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Second, we are actively building a Georgia consortium of DH centers and practitioners that we plan to connect to other regional and national consortiums.

## **DH at UGA**

In the last two years the DH Steering Committee has built the infrastructure for a Digital Humanities Undergraduate Certificate with significant progress on a similar certificate for graduate students. The certificate aims to run alongside of a traditional humanities degree with its focus on giving humanities students the opportunity for hands-on, experiential learning, combining the skills they already have in close attention to text, image, and cultural history with digital humanities methods and tools that include quantitative analysis and project management. With this combination, students are better able to converse with their peers outside of the humanities and are able to apply their deep subject specific knowledge to new kinds of problems and research questions. We have successfully completed our first class with a DIGI designation, an introduction to GIS for humanists taught by our GIS Librarian Meagan Duever and Head of the Map and Government Information Library, Hallie Pritchett. This class complements a range of DIGI inflected courses across the humanities curriculum including History, English, Linguistics, and Language classes with a digital component. Four other DIGI specific classes have been approved and will run on a rotation starting in the Spring 2017 semester.

Our certificate also interfaces with a number of other initiatives on campus including the New Media certificate and the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) certificate, as well as with the university wide push to increase UGA's presence in big data and informatics. We are working closely with representatives from each of these endeavors to offer complementary courses and to cross-pollinate ideas and projects. To this end, our capstone project works in conjunction with a senior thesis project, an honor's thesis or with projects developed through UGA's Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities. We welcome students who interpret DH as broadly as possible and in integrating our program with others on campus we aim to provide students with a rich selection of courses that will broaden their undergraduate experience.

In order to provide this broad range of courses and opportunities, we are working to build capacity for DIGI inflected classes. While we have a number of faculty members teaching courses in the DigiLab and including DH assignments in their classes, we would like to build a larger community. We have created a Faculty Learning Community (FLC) for Digital Humanities Pedagogy through the Center for Teaching and Learning on campus. The FLCs have a long and respected history on

campus and by tapping into this existing structure we were able to gain visibility and credibility with the faculty. We now have thirteen participants from five different humanities departments in this year-long program. The group targets those faculty members who may be interested in learning more about DH in general or who are more specifically interested in integrating DH into their pedagogy. The larger goal of this group is to create a cohort of new DH practitioners with the goal of developing DH course modules that can be used for classes participating in the DIGI certificate. Through contact in the group, we can better assess what training might be most beneficial and more effectively target workshops or skills training.

The focus on building capacity through pedagogy first and then through research is intentional. The space of the classroom is temporary and often more amenable to experimentation, whereas including digital work in one's research profile carries a much larger time investment as well as risks to tenure and promotion. We have already seen success with small scale class projects like the history project completed in the Fall 2016 semester in which students examined runaway slave ads from historic newspapers. They learned how to collect data from text and then analyze that data spatially using the ArcGIS software application, looking for patterns and new avenues for exploring the data collectively. Our GIS Librarian Meagan Duever provided the GIS instruction for the class, holding in class workshops as well as office hours and lab support. Her integration into the class helped to elevate the level of GIS instruction and the students were able to perform complex tasks and design their own research questions using spatial data. In this instructional space, the faculty member and the students get to investigate the potential of digital methods for research together in an exploratory manner. In time, these methods can be adapted more substantially into larger research projects. While DH is certainly not a requirement for every humanist, we want to make these skills as accessible as possible for those who seek them.

Accessibility and sustainability are at the center of our plan for end-to-end support for digital scholarship. While we have an established record of support for digital projects in terms of hosting, providing technical assistance, and guidance on project scope and management, we are working to further leverage our affiliation with the University of Georgia Press to provide support for the dissemination and production of the scholarly output resulting from these projects. We are actively recruiting partners who are interested in these topics.

History Professor Stephen Berry is exploring models of scholarship outside the traditional monograph with *CSI: Dixie*. Not a “project” but an archi-graph, an archive-monograph, Berry seeks to define a new mode of scholarly writing that accounts for the time, energy and resources necessary to for data collection on digital work while still providing the traditional context and analysis expected in a print-based publication.

A new project currently under consideration for DigiLab support explores new methods of peer review for adding digital content to a project that looks at the life and work of modernist poet Mina Loy. With this project we would draw on the expertise of our partners at the UGA Press as well as the Digital Library of Georgia and the New Georgia Encyclopedia to model and implement an online, collaborative peer review. This group of researchers also plans to develop a transferrable “start-up kit” for similar endeavors that will help others start their own project more easily.

In addition, we are also working with a Shakespeare journal produced out of the English department and graduate student journal in the Comparative Literature department to streamline their processes and provide a long-term home for these journals and their contents. Each of these projects explores what digital scholarship means and how it can be shared and preserved in the context of a new publishing paradigm. With our network of affiliates, we are in a unique position to further investigate and create new models for scholarly publication.

To support this work and the work that will follow, we have made improvements to our technological support and will shortly be implementing virtual machine environments allowing for ease in installing, hosting, and supporting digital projects. We are also streamlining our software platforms to common content management systems to encourage as much interoperability and reusability as possible. Consolidating our range of offerings allows us to be more agile in response to the influx of new projects and to provide clear standards and protocols for users.

We have already made major inroads into pedagogy, research and publishing. Going forward, we will grow each of these seemingly distinct aspects of scholarly work into a cohesive model that supports the entire lifecycle of digital work. Here, scholarly work applies not only to faculty members, but also to our students who are scholars in their own right. The additional focus on the student research experience builds interest and excitement from the ground up, which when combined with

existing investment from the highest levels of the university, creates a robust and vibrant DH community.

### **Building external communities**

The grant has made it possible for us to engage more deeply with our regional and national colleagues. UGA Deputy University Librarian Jason Battles has engaged DH practitioners and administrators via site visits, conferences, and meetings. In April 2015, the UGA Libraries and Press along with campus partner the Willson Center for Humanities and Arts hosted DIGI@UGA Day to launch the DigiLab. This event included nationally and regionally recognized DH scholars Stephen Ross from the University of Victoria, Will Thomas from the University of Nebraska, and Jacob Eisenstein from Georgia Tech. In addition, the executive and associate directors of the National Humanities Alliance (Stephen Kidd) and Coalition for Networked Information (Joan K. Lippincott) also participated. Further engagement with national DH leaders included Mr. Battles December 2015 site visit to the Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University where he met with Dr. Stephen Robertson to discuss approaches to DH work and support and possible collaborations. These specific interactions have been reinforced by Mr. Battles past experience with the founding of the University of Alabama's Digital Humanities Center and numerous conference meetings from the Coalition of Networked Information to the American Library Association to the Association of Research Libraries. Combined, much was learned and processed to guide the approach taken when UGA's DigiLab became operational in September 2015 and staffed in January 2016.

Through these efforts we have been able to bring these insights back to our DH community where we have the benefit of proximity to a number of other DH centers in Georgia including ECDS at Emory, CURVE at Georgia State and the Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts Center under development at Georgia Tech. We have already begun to foster relationships with these centers as well as those in our region including those at the University of Alabama, Florida State and the University of Florida. Each of these programs has its own network of expertise. With deeper connections to these and other initiatives we hope to form strong collaborations and resource sharing across institutions that can aid in the sustainability of all of these programs going forward. Rather than begin with a national advisory board we have begun with the local with the objective of forming a Georgia consortium

which we can then connect to the emerging Florida Consortium and then create a national advisory board that can link us to even larger networks.

We have begun to form these collaborations with our regional peers in Georgia. The grant funding allowed us to convene a Georgia Digital Humanities Summit in December 2016. Hosted at Georgia State's CURVE data visualization lab, the summit brought together 35 hand-selected participants from 10 colleges and universities around the state, ranging from the larger institutions like Georgia State and Georgia Tech to the HBCUs Spelman and Morehouse as well as our peers well outside the Atlanta area like Georgia Southern. The participants also ranged in rank and position to include librarians, instructional technologists, research faculty and digital humanities practitioners. Our goal with this meeting was to build connections telescopically, starting from the Atlanta metro nexus of strong digital humanities programs and practitioners and then drawing in regional and national partners.

From this meeting UGA will be hosting a collaborative site for GeorgiaDH that will include a list of practitioners, skill sets, and locally focused projects. Our goal is to open opportunities for inter-institutional collaboration on both research projects and classroom endeavors that can draw on the collective skills of the group. The [ATLMaps](#) project, one that layers historic maps of the city and allows researchers to create collections, pin locations, and investigate the spatial history of the city, is an example of how such a collaboration can work in a regional context using a broad base to which innumerable projects can be attached. Several institutions have provided historic maps to the collection and a number of projects are already underway using these materials. We aim to identify other platforms and topics that can be simultaneously investigated from multiple perspectives.

This summit meeting was the first in what we hope is a continued and sustained dialogue that will keep us connected with the broad range of DH work already happening in the state. This connection will make all of our endeavors stronger. With further communication we can more easily identify common needs like those found in the proposed Council on Library and Information Resources Hidden Collections collaborative grant, co-authored by the Digital Library of Georgia, Spelman College Archives and Morehouse College. Their project "Our Story: Digitizing Publications and Photographs of the Historically Black Atlanta University Center Institutions," has been funded to increase accessibility and interoperability of materials currently held in the Atlanta University

Center Woodruff Library. Connecting these materials through the DLG will make the history of African American higher education more discoverable and accessible for future scholars.

Going forward, we are working to connect our regional DH community with the national one. Our Digital Humanities Coordinator, Dr. Emily McGinn, has been representing UGA well in the larger Digital Humanities community. She participates in a monthly virtual working group with DH specialists at Grinnell College, Bryn Mawr College, the Claremont Colleges, Wellesley College, and the University of Miami to discuss issues related to the administration of a DH center or initiative and to share common resources among colleagues. The group will be presenting reflections on these conversations on a panel presentation “Gendering Labor in Digital Humanities” at the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians in June 2017.

Dr. McGinn also participated in a Mellon funded pre-conference summit at Bucknell University’s Digital Scholarship Conference “Negotiating Borders through Digital Collaboration.” Over the course of three days prior to the start of the “Negotiating Borders” Conference, the 13 participants in the Summit discussed both the challenges and opportunities that exist for cross-departmental collaboration between librarians, technologists and those who support digital scholarship programs at our respective colleges and universities. As a way to share the content and resources discussed throughout this summit, the group produced [scholaboration.us](http://scholaboration.us), a wiki that contains and compiles DH resources and guides for building successful collaborations.

In addition, with travel funding from the grant, she was also able to participate in Florida State University’s symposium on “Invisible Work in the Digital Humanities.” Dr. McGinn served as a moderator for the conference facilitating small group discussions following each day’s speakers. Outcomes from this symposium include a white paper describing ways that participants carried forward the ideas of the conference, that include labor, attribution, and addressing inequities in digital humanities projects. Following on the conference there is special issue of *Digital Humanities Quarterly* regarding these same topics slated for Spring of 2018.

As a result of these activities, the DigiLab has received increasing attention as an important player in the DH landscape. This year Dr. Toby Graham, University Librarian and Associate Provost, was an invited speaker for the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) workshop “Planning a Digital

Scholarship Center” during which the speakers provided insights on their own experiences in establishing a center and offered advice for institutions looking to create their own lab or digital scholarship center. CNI has since released a report based on the findings of this workshop.

While these activities diverge in approach from our original proposal, we have and continue to engage national DH practitioners and administrators and the centers, labs, libraries, and institutions where they live. Those interactions and the exceptional work of Dr. McGinn have accelerated the growth of DH at UGA placing our current status markedly beyond where we expected to be when formulating the grant proposal in early 2015. The knowledge we have gained and the initiatives we have built led us to realize the importance of a more intensive focus on local and regional initiatives. This emphasis has already paid dividends in raising our visibility and connecting us with a much wider and more viable network of collaborators. We have established connections with several key practitioners and have investigated a wide range of DH Centers, collecting and implementing best practices that work for our model. The year ahead is a promising one as we continue to move forward from the foundation that this grant has provided.

### **Future plans**

From this strong foundation will continue our pace in establishing the DigiLab as the central node of a network of DH activities and practitioners on campus. With a focus on building capacity within the student, staff, and faculty populations, our goals are to create comprehensive end to end support for digital work from idea to publication. In addition, we aim to share our processes and expertise outward as active participants in the larger DH community through alliances with other DH centers, practitioners, and consortiums.

On campus the DigiLab is rapidly becoming a key partner in innovative research and instruction. In the past year the Lab has been named as a partner in 12 grants under which we consult on project scope, data management, and we provide support and expertise in building and sustaining digital projects. Through these initiatives we are working to expand our project portfolio to include a wider representation of methods, disciplines, and content areas. We have several projects coming online this spring that are excellent examples of this breadth including a digital edition of Victorian letters, and a new model for digital scholarly writing in the Digital Mina Loy project.



At UGA, we are continuing to build DH into the university curriculum. Dr. McGinn has provided integrated support and expertise for 8 digital humanities inflected courses across the humanities, with another 6 planned for spring. These sessions are taught in the Lab and provide an introduction to digital humanities methodology as well as guidance and training on the particular tools utilized in the class project to undergraduates. This groundwork is intended not only to support innovative pedagogy, but also to generate student interest in our undergraduate certificate. As we strengthen those numbers and build a strong cohort of DH practitioners at the undergraduate level, we plan to expand this program to the graduate level. Our next step is to create an intro to DH course that will be the centerpiece of a graduate certificate. With certificates at both the undergrad and graduate level we can then offer comprehensive training and experience to our student body.

At the faculty level, the Lab helped to name “Digital Humanities” as an approved track for the [Provost Office’s Study in a Second Discipline](#) program for faculty. We currently have English professor Roxanne Eberle completing directed studies in Digital Humanities with Dr. McGinn and Professor Scott Nesbit in the History department. This program has proven highly effective and in a single semester Professor Eberle has completed a prototype of her TEI project. Her success has led to interest from several other professors. As our program grows we would like to emulate this program specifically through the lab and create more robust training opportunities for faculty that move beyond our support for projects. Offering one on one instruction on specific methods like TEI for specific research projects will create a stronger, self-sufficient digital humanities core within our humanities faculty in the long term that relies less on a service model for project support, but instead on a model of collaborative learning.

This one on one instruction will happen at the student level through internship opportunities. We are working with the university’s new experiential learning initiative to create space for humanities students to earn experiential research credits. In our Lab it is our priority to create opportunities not only for students to have hands-on experience with a faculty project, but also, and more importantly, for students to have the opportunity to build projects of their own design. The goal here as well is to create a space that breaks down hierarchies in DH labor and to value innovative thought that emerges from any level of the university.

To add to our resources and available skill sets, we are actively building our local and regional network, and as those networks strengthen we will connect our Georgia DH initiative to our regional partners in Florida DH, as well as to other consortiums around the country including Keystone DH, Texas DH, and NYC DH. With each of these connections we hope to identify shared opportunities for collaboration, and resource and expertise sharing. We have already established personal connections with members of each of these consortiums through the travel afforded us through this grant and we hope to further these relationships through a more formal alliance going forward. Following the example set by the Digital Liberal Arts Exchange, we hope to achieve a deeper model of collaboration that goes beyond a single institution or area of interest. To fulfill this goal we are building capacity at all levels across a broad set of methods in order to create an agile space for innovative research and pedagogy within a large institution.

<b>PI</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant?</b>	<b>Granting Institution</b>	<b>Specific Grant</b>
Janice Hume/Jason Guthrie	Pulitzer Civil Rights Project	Funded	Georgia Humanities Council	Pulitzer Prize Centennial Campfires Initiative
Ben Ehlers	Savannah/Liverpool cotton trade	Submitted	UGA	New Global Research Collaboration Grant Program
Laurie Reitsema	BioArcheology/Classics Summer class	Funded	NSF	
Scott Nesbit	Surveying the State	Submitted	NEH	DH Implementation Grant
Sheila McAlister	Savannah Urban Development	To be submitted	NEH	Humanities Collections and Reference Resources
Susan Rosenbaum	Digital Mina Loy	To be submitted	NEH	Research Collaborators
Bjorn Southard	Debate in Prisons	To be submitted	NEH	Public Humanities
Willson Center	Food, Culture, and Community in the Global South	Not funded	NEH	Public Humanities
Hani Safadi	Digital Transparency Platform	Submitted		
Barbara McCaskill	Civil Rights Digital Library/Freedom on Film	Second Round	IMLS	Planning grant
Willson Center	Waterways: Stories of Climate Change and the Sea	To be submitted	IMLS	Advancement grant
Emily Sahakian	Restaging Black History	To be re-submitted	NEH	Public Humanities
				Scholarly Editions and Translations