

*Note: The following proposal to form a Digital Humanities Library Interest Group (open to all in the libraries) was approved on January 29, 2014. The new interest group will be chaired by Blake Landor. In Blake's role as Chair of this group and as a member of the Data Management/Curation Task Force, he will serve as a liaison between the two groups.*

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**Proposal to Form within George A. Smathers Libraries  
an Interest Group for Digital Humanities  
Draft 01-06-2014**

**Background**

Smathers Libraries has been building infrastructure in support of data services for research programs in all disciplines. As part of that effort, the Data Management/Curation Task Force in its discussions concerning the expansion of data services at UF has emphasized the importance of having subject librarians with the appropriate skills to assist patrons in the identification and use of data sets, databases, and data processing and management tools. Digital Humanities is a specialized and growing area within the data management/curation arena, an area that increasingly involves librarians in various capacities. Smathers Libraries already has an active Digital Humanities librarian (Laurie Taylor), who works primarily on the technology and administrative side. Laurie has agreed to be a facilitator in the implementation of this proposal, which involves training subject librarians to expand their skill sets and participate in discussions and planning in digital humanities.

Digital Humanities has been defined in various ways and this proposal will not add to the mix.<sup>1</sup> Instead of giving a single definition, a list of topics in a recent Call for Proposals for a conference entitled, "Data Driven: Digital Humanities in the Library" (to be held in Charleston in June, 2014 <http://tinyurl.com/l9wr39f>) will serve as a starting point for consideration:

- Digital scholarship
- Humanities & library collaborations on DH projects
- GIS and/or data visualization projects
- Text mining & data analysis
- Digital humanities librarianship
- Digital project management
- Knowledge lifecycle, including production & collaboration
- Creating or using tools & services for the production, editing and/or analysis of DH data
- Metadata and linked data in DH

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<sup>1</sup> For a variety of definitions see (e.g.), "Defining the Digital Humanities - CUNY Academic Commons."  
[https://commons.gc.cuny.edu/wiki/index.php/Defining\\_the\\_Digital\\_Humanities](https://commons.gc.cuny.edu/wiki/index.php/Defining_the_Digital_Humanities). Retrieved on 20 Dec. 2013.

These are some of the topics (others will occur as we proceed) that would serve as a basis for our subject librarians to get together for discussion, training, and planning sessions.

### **The Proposal**

The proposal is for a group of subject librarians to form for purposes of discussion, training, and planning an interest group around various topics in digital humanities. (The group could be referred to as the “Digital Humanities Library Group” (DHLG).) The group would meet approximately every three weeks with the aim of generating interest in and knowledge about digital humanities. Minimally, the near-term goal would be to develop as a group a skill set that could meet the demands, wherever they arise, of our users in various departments of Humanities and related disciplines who are engaged in digital humanities projects. A possible longer term goal would be to get involved in digital humanities projects ourselves (either individually or as a group) so as to present ourselves not only as consultants, but also as project developers and classroom trainers in digital humanities. A point to be noted is that some of our humanities librarians are already involved in digital humanities projects and can share their experience in this area with other participants in the group. Thus the purpose of the group would be first to provide opportunities for people to share with their colleagues their knowledge of tools and projects as well as to learn from others about things they do not already know. A secondary purpose would be the discussion of topics (e.g. by reading and discussing articles) in digital humanities. A possible tertiary purpose would be the planning of library or campus-wide events (e.g. lecture series) on digital humanities. A possible quaternary purpose would be for the group (or a subset) to collaborate on one or more digital humanities projects.<sup>2</sup>

### **Interaction with other DH Groups**

There is the potential for interaction between the DHLG and a number of other groups and centers both on and off campus. To mention a few:

- UF’s Center for The Humanities and Public Sphere (CHPS) sponsors events and groups on the UF campus in digital humanities; it also provides funding for local digital humanities projects (<http://www.humanities.ufl.edu/digitalhum.html>). Along with Laurie Taylor, the CHPS sponsors the Digital Humanities Working Group (DHWG), which meets monthly every semester to discuss a major topic in digital humanities. In the fall semester they discussed visualization projects; in the spring semester they will discuss

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<sup>2</sup> This idea arose in connection with Posner, p.52 which mentions that at Columbia University Libraries a group of 12 humanities librarians decided to collaborate on a digital humanities project after reading Auckland, 2012. The overall idea for this proposal is similar to the Digital Humanities Incubator at the University of Maryland Libraries. (*ibid.*)

online humanities courses. During the spring semester, they also have an annual Digital Humanities Day, which showcases digital humanities projects throughout UF.

- The THAT [The Humanities and Technology] Camp will be held in Gainesville in April of 2014.
- Various centers for Humanities and digital research are springing up around the country. The one at UCF (<http://chdr.cah.ucf.edu/>) is active in sponsoring events and projects.
- ACRL's Digital Humanities Discussion Group (<http://tinyurl.com/n5xud58>) has been active in the last couple of years.

Of the aforementioned groups, the DHWG has the closest profile to the proposed DHLG, and some of our librarians already participate in it. However, this proposal is for a group that is library-centered and is primarily for subject librarians to develop their skills and become even more effective ambassadors for digital humanities both on and off campus.

### **Request for Meeting Time and Funding**

The proposal involves initially a request for permission for the participants in this group to take the time from their schedules to participate in regularly scheduled meetings. In addition there will likely be a need for some funding which can be addressed in various ways when the need arises. The anticipated need for funding includes a) the possibility of bringing outside trainers to train the participants in particular tools (e.g. text mark up and analysis tools, topic modeling, etc.); b) the need to purchase software products for use in our training sessions and by our users (e.g. one of our potential members has experience with ATLAS.ti, which the library does not currently own); c) the possibility of our group planning a digital humanities lecture series involving outside speakers.

Respectfully submitted,

Blake Landor

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