

Library Liaison Teams for Data and Digital Scholarship Projects and Collections

The George A. Smathers Libraries at UF utilize Library Liaison Teams for digital/data scholarly projects and collections including digital scholarship projects, Digital Humanities projects and collections, Data Curation, Data Management, and other data and digital projects.

Library Liaison Team Members and Roles

The Library Liaison Team may include only the Subject Specialist Librarian, the Subject Specialist Librarian and others from within the Libraries, and Subject Specialist Librarians with others in the Libraries and others outside the Libraries. With evolving data and digital projects and needs, the Library Liaison Teams most often include representatives from 2-3 areas in the Libraries:

1. Subject Specialist Librarian(s)
 - Liaison Librarian, Curator, Collection Manager for the campus unit(s) or research area
2. Liaison Librarian(s) for Subject, Functional, and/or Technical Area
 - Liaison Librarian with appropriate expertise and role (e.g., Digital Humanities Librarian, Exhibits Coordinator, Collective Collections Librarian, Scholarly Communications Librarian, etc.)
3. Technical Expert(s)
 - Technology Expert from Digital Development & Web Services
 - Evolving data management support may engage connected collaborators including:
 - Technology Expert from campus-level group (e.g., Research Computing)
 - Technology Expert from campus unit(s) or research area

The Library Liaison Team model supports and interconnects with the work by UF's Research Computing on building a culture of radical collaboration "a new model of interaction among computing specialists, support personnel, computational faculty and faculty engaged in other research within UF and with its research partners"¹ which requires substantive new resources:

"to support computational specialists who can actively collaborate in the development of new resources for research. Ontologists, system administrators, developers, and data stewards will need to be available for partnering in research. Faculty across the campus and beyond need new information resources to identify potential collaborators and build successful teams."

¹ <http://www.it.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/research-computing-vision.pdf>

Subject Specialist Liaison Librarians

Each member of the Library Liaison Team may or may not be equally involved. In some cases, the only member may be the Subject Specialist Librarian. In many cases, data and digital projects often demand project teams. For instance, the UF Libraries support Open Access journals with a project team with at least three members: Subject Specialist Librarian, Scholarly Communications Librarian, and Digital Humanities Librarian.²

With small or large teams, Subject Specialist Liaison Librarians are essential and primary members of the project team. They are ideally positioned to support faculty in identifying potential collaborations and building successful teams because they are uniquely positioned on campus as “cultural travelers” who: are able to travel throughout the different campus cultures [...] often act as bridge builders and translators between different groups. Cultural travelers have tremendous influence and insight and have deep awareness of what is occurring on campus.³

In addition to connecting across campus, Subject Specialist Librarians have critical roles in strategic library operations where “liaison librarians have traditionally undertaken this ‘go-between’ role”⁴ across many different groups that often operate in separate silos. Building from their roles as cultural travelers, go-betweens, and connectors, Subject Specialist Librarians have continually evolving roles for significant and important work as collaborative partners for all aspects of scholarly research, teaching, and work, especially with digital and data projects.

The Library Liaison Team model offers a team approach to support campus needs in a manner that supports the Libraries in meeting those needs which includes supporting Subject Specialist Librarians with ongoing changes their work. The Library Liaison Team model helps to build community and capacity for bridging these transitions with adaptive leadership where new demands are added, including a “change in emphasis for liaison librarians is the need to be innovative and to develop their capabilities to operate in a new way with academic partners and clients.”⁵

More Information

The UF Libraries have utilized the Library Liaison Team model to ensure full support for digital/data collections and projects, and have amassed extensive experience on digital/data scholarly collections and projects with this team approach (including the UF Digital Collections, digital scholarship projects,

² <http://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/content.php?pid=230212&sid=1940482>

³ Larry Goldstein and Patrick Sanaghan, “Building ‘Relational Capital,’” *Inside Higher Ed*, October 7, 2009: <http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2009/10/07/goldstein>

⁴ Page 120: John Rodwell, Linden Fairbairn, (2008) “Dangerous liaisons?: Defining the faculty liaison librarian service model, its effectiveness and sustainability”, *Library Management*, 29: 1/2, pp.116 – 124:

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0143-5124&volume=29&issue=1/2&articleid=1641759&show=html>

⁵ Page 121: Rodwell and Fairbairn (2008).

digital humanities projects, data curation projects, and other scholarly and library-driven collections and projects).⁶

The Library Liaison Team model ensures the best support for all needs by having the full team involved to represent support the needs from all perspectives (including those specific to the project, research area, scholarly field, faculty involved, department or campus unit(s), full library concerns from many perspectives, technical needs, technical integration, etc.) and for building towards a culture of radical collaboration. The Library Liaison Team model is also related, connected, and parallel to work by the UF Libraries in building a full culture of grants management, with successful grant writing, grant project work, and optimal grant project alignment with institutional goals for collections, staff development, and other areas.

⁶ By 2008, the UF Libraries had created and developed the UF Digital Collections to a critical mass level for variety and volume, with many collections (e.g., aggregations overall with labels for curator ease including collection groups, collections, subcollections, exhibits, institutions, institutional divisions, etc.), items, material types, complexity of items (e.g., digital objects with many items included), etc. and all of these represent and relate to many subject areas, scholarly fields, and research and teaching needs.