#Alt-Academy : 01

Alternative Academic Careers for Humanities Scholars

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Introduction: Two Tramps in Mud Time

Bethany Nowviskie

> But yield who will to their separation,
> My object in living is to unite
> My avocation and my vocation
> As my two eyes make one in sight.
>> Robert Frost, "Two Tramps in Mud Time"

One sunny, crisp November afternoon, I left a swanky hotel conference suite in Washington, DC, feeling pretty good. The Scholarly Communication Institute, a 9-year old Mellon-funded project for which I serve as associate director, had just concluded a two-day summit with a some of the most interesting organizational thinkers and do-ers I had yet encountered in the academy: leaders from CHCI, the international consortium for humanities centers and institutes, and from centerNet, its brand-new and energetic digital counterpart. This gathering culminated a process that had begun a year before when, together with SCI's director (like me, a humanities PhD working off the beaten professorial path), I hosted an event on humanities centers as sites for innovation in digital scholarship. After a January meeting in Tucson—where grapefruit were ripe in the hotel courtyard—and a series of less paradisiacal conference calls and proposal drafts, the two groups whose relationship we had fostered were now poised for meaningful collaborative action. There was a palpable sense in the room that we were hatching plans to change the way business is done at humanities centers, digital and otherwise. In fact, something like a five-year program was emerging, and the two consortia had just outlined a series of co-sponsored ventures, joint meetings, and big-picture goals.

Happiness makes me obnoxious on Twitter. Before I packed up my laptop, I tapped out two messages:

> "SCI-sponsored CHCI/centerNet meeting is winding down. Stay tuned for announcements from the two groups working jointly in the new year." [1]

"& struck again by dues-paying crap I skipped in deciding against tenure-track jobs. How many junior faculty sit in on discussions like this?" [2]

I held no illusions about *my* role in the process SCI had facilitated. SCI (from the insider's point of view) is about listening, helping, and nudging. In the conference room at the Hotel Palomar, I was Note-taker-in-Chief, pausing only a few times to add my own perspective—as a recent humanities PhD, a person who had held one of those rare digital post-docs we were discussing, as a member of the research faculty at an R-1 institution, and (now) as someone who had exercised the "expanded employment options" that are often brought up in conversations about improving methodological training in graduate education. My day job is as Director of Digital Research & Scholarship for the University of Virginia Library. This is a department that includes the Scholars' Lab, a growing digital center which mentors graduate students and awards them fellowships, offers vibrant intellectual programming, undertakes its own grant-funded research-and-development work, and partners with humanities and social-science faculty on projects in text-based digital humanities and geospatial and statistical computing.

I have a pretty sweet gig.

You might, too—or you may aspire to similar, unconventional employment in the orbit of the academy. But even if, like me, you never struck out on the traditional scholarly job market and have met with a reasonable level of success in an "alternative" career, years of grad school may have taught you some *no-longer-relevant things*: about your own market value and position in the hierarchy (which is to say, your latitude for action); about what constitutes honorable work; and about the relationship of single, blessed career trajectories to success.

I tweeted obnoxiously, and before I knew it, I was editing this **#Alt-Academy** collection. *#Alt-Academy* is an open-access publication of MediaCommons, meant to be something between a meditation, a home-coming, and an antidote.

"#Alt-ac" is the neologism and singularly-awkward Twitter hashtag we use to mark conversations about "alternative academic" careers for humanities scholars. Here, "alternative" typically denotes neither adjunct teaching positions nor wholly non-academic jobs—about which, in comparison, advice is easy to find. Instead, we are examining positions within or around the academy and requiring deep understanding of humanities scholarship, but outside of the ranks of the tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty. Such roles are taken up by capable scholars who maintain a research

and publication profile, or who bring their (often doctoral-level) methodological and theoretical training to bear on problem sets in the humanities.

For those on the #alt-ac track, keeping our talents within (or around) the academy is often more psychologically difficult than examining the color of our parachutes and gliding off to fabulous private-sector careers. Class divisions among faculty and staff can be profound, and the suspicion or (worse) condescension with which "failed academics" are sometimes met can be disheartening. As one contributor to this collection asks:

"In an arena where people spend so much time trying to think in nuanced ways and where we ostensibly celebrate the wide dispersal of sophisticated ideas, why is so much energy expended in maintaining fixed categories and squelching the intellectual contributions of those on the wrong side of the fence?

> In an environment dominated by research agendas that often seek to right historic wrongs, question power, undermine hierarchy, and give voice to the voiceless, why are intellectual status and respect given so grudgingly to smart and engaged people who have jumped off the tenure track?" ("I am Natalie Henderson," from A 'Non-Academic' Career in Academe, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 20 June 2005)

For all that, we love our work. The "#alt-ac" label speaks to to a broad set of hybrid, humanities-oriented professions centered in and around the academy, in which there are rich opportunities to put training in scholarly disciplines to use. Although the array of employment options is vast, much #alt-ac conversation (and this is certainly true of our present collection) gravitates toward the digital humanities, a community of practice marrying sophisticated understanding of traditional disciplines with new tools and methods. The digital humanities attract scholars who exhibit restless, interdisciplinary curiosity, mastery of relevant research tools and methods (old and new), and uncommon comfort—even in a world that defines expertise as specialization that narrows to a vanishing point—with a general assumption that capable practitioners should be jacks-of-all-trades.

Many of us (within and outside of the digital humanities) will tell you about the satisfaction of making teams—and systems, and programs—work, of solving problems and personally making or enabling breakthroughs in research and scholarship in our disciplines, and of contributing to and experiencing the life of the mind in ways we did not imagine when we entered grad school. On the "#alt-ac track" are: administrators with varied levels of responsibility for supporting the academic enterprise; instructional

technologists and software developers who collaborate on scholarly projects; journalists, editors, and publishers; cultural heritage workers in a variety of roles and institutions; librarians, archivists, and other information professionals; entrepreneurs who partner on projects of value to scholars, program officers for funding agencies and humanities centers, and many more.

If they are to serve us well, para-academic institutions require a healthy influx of people who understand scholarship and teaching from the inside. That our culture for many years has labelled these people "failed academics" is a failure of imagination. Those who gravitate toward #alt-ac positions during or after completing graduate study are often driven to set things in motion in the academic environment, and to set things right. Couple the attractive #alt-ac mission of *building systems* (social, scholarly, administrative, technical) with an exceptionally sorry academic job market, and it becomes clear that more and more graduate students, post-docs, junior faculty, and underemployed lecturers will be stepping off the straight and narrow path to tenure.

This means that, if the academy cannot foster more appealing and fruitful options along the #alt-ac track, we will have trained a generation of humanities experts, only to lose them. The primary danger motivating my own #alt-ac work—both in seeking to create healthy spaces for such professionals at my university, and in building community and fostering conversation, nationally and internationally—is that our educational system, institutional structures, and academic social norms will not keep pace with the ambitions, needs, and talents of aspiring "alternative academics." I want to keep my wonderful colleagues, and see their ranks grow.

Doing better by them means (among other things) preparing our graduate students for #alt-ac jobs and not training them to see non-tenure-track careers in fields like publishing, museum work, the public and digital humanities, library and information science, and higher education administration as paltry consolation prizes. Even the least technologically-engaged faculty in our academic departments must recognize that those who gravitate toward high-level humanities seminars and have made personal sacrifices in order to become more sensitive readers, researchers, and teachers—if they can also acquire the skills necessary to become builders as well as theorizers—are precisely the people we need as equal partners in the wholesale digital transformation of our shared cultural heritage—transformations that are proceeding at breakneck pace.

Speaking to this, and in the small, introductory cluster of the **#Alt-Academy** collection, Willard McCarty has contributed a set of reflections that are deeply humanistic and characteristically humane. His "Working Digitally" might have fit neatly into our first

major section, on labor, but it appears here because it so beautifully frames—in terms of a very human world of work—the institutional reconfigurations that are part and parcel of what McCarty calls our "great project:" the collective, digital transformation of the humanities. Many concepts he raises will return as debates in the essays comprising the *#alt-ac* project: the relations of our institutional forms to the individuals who shape and work within them, the benefits of and dangers inherent in professionalization and tenure, the call to examine valued praxes (like interdisciplinarity and collaboration), and the lure of the bandwagon. I am grateful to him for providing this foreword to the collection.

The clusters with which we are launching *#Alt-Academy* include: the present one ("Alternative Academic Careers for Humanities Scholars"); a look at Labor and Labor Relations; a set of essays ("Making Room") on institutional forms and alternative spaces within them; a collection of dialogues and personal narratives examining "Vocations, Identities"; a section on professionalization and qualifications ("Careers and Credentials"); and a set of "signpost" essays and dialogues, called "Getting There." All are open not only to your commentary, but to formal extension by means of new contributions and offers to edit and assemble additional clusters. See "How It Works" to learn about *#Alt-Academy*'s grassroots, publish-then-filter approach to networked scholarly communication—and about how you can add your content to the MediaCommons network and propose it for inclusion on our site. We are honored to have a special commentator on the project—Tim Powell, who will be seeding discussion here at *#Alt-Academy* over the coming weeks and months. But please don't wait: our thirty-three initial authors encourage your interaction and anticipate commentary on the collection with great eagerness.

This is a collaborative project that started, as so many seem lately to do, with a couple of throw-away comments made within a committed and interesting social media network. It seems appropriate that I close my introduction with two more such tweets:

> Another reflection after a full day of work on the #alt-ac collection: it's exciting because we don't know where we're going… [1]

> In contrast to trad'l discourse on professionalization of humanities faculty, our articulating #alt-ac isn't about reproducing *ourselves.* [2]

This isn't a collection by people who think they know the way—but they know there *is* a way, and that we have a ways to go. Similarly, McCarty encourages us "continually [to] worry the ideals by which we live." Our contributors are worriers, in the best sense of

the word. You will find **#Alt-Academy** to be written from the points of view of well-educated, experienced, and imaginative humanities professionals, largely of a rising generation—harbingers of things (we know not what) to come. The contributors to this project are here to tell you about their work in the academy and its allied institutions: work that is generally non-professorial but far from "non-academic"—that is satisfying, delightful, reasonably stable, deeply intellectually engaging, and (occasionally) a damned hard row to hoe. I am immensely grateful to them for their candor, energy, collaborative spirit, and great good sense.

Working Digitally

Willard McCarty

> It is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying. Studs Terkel, *Working* (1972: xiii)

For Sinéad O'Sullivan

In *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*, the oral historian Studs Terkel writes movingly of job-related violence "to the spirit as well as to the body" of the ordinary American working men and women whom he interviewed. Their stories derive power not just from that violence but more from the humanity revealed in their aspirations to a better life. Reading these stories positively, it is difficult not to hear Raymond Williams' declaration that "culture is ordinary" and to bring back, as it keeps coming back, the passionate and articulate concern he shared with Richard Hoggart for improving the lives of workers by improving how those lives are understood. Without much difficulty one can recognise not just the evidence of blows but also intimations that a life worth living just might be possible. In his essay "Expanding Eyes" (1975), Northrop Frye observes that only a hell with hope is a real hell. Hence the damage to the spirit of which Terkel speaks. But hope also empowers endurance and morally compels our attention—not from on high (where we are not) but from the common ground we share.

Decades of persuasion and strong market-forces have made Williams' and Hoggart's arguments so much a part of our intellectual furniture that we are apt to be forgetful of them. Williams' essay "Culture is ordinary" (1958), his *Culture and Society* (1958) and Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working Class Life* (1957) are of their time. Times have changed. The study of culture, altered forever by what they wrote, has moved on to produce new arguments for new situations. Yet, as I said, these works keep coming

back despite disciplinary evolution—for example, Hoggart's book in a new edition introduced by a 21st-century champion, Lynsey Hanley (2009).

Williams wrote that "there are… no masses, but only ways of seeing people as masses" (2000/1978: 18). The way of seeing I want to adopt for my purposes here is the one that masses us together with Terkel's workers in respect of their frustrated hope for "a sort of life rather than… a sort of dying". I cannot see this hope as confined to the mid 20th century; it is just as keenly felt and keenly disappointed now. True, we are incomparably privileged. But does this cheapen our human solidarity with Terkel's workers? We at least share, I hope, their longing for something better, especially when, bruised by one or another of the academy's muscular gatekeepers or exiled in spirit from its current polity, we pace outside the walls or turn to wonder what might be done in the open fields beyond. Our lives are, it's true, easy in comparison, but ease isn't the point, is it?

There's a strong autobiographical element lurking here that I had better make explicit. It is meant only to illustrate that which is common enough. It will surface here and there in what follows.

I received my doctorate at the University of Toronto in 1984, when as now tenure-track jobs were scarce and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the subject of my dissertation, no longer the sexiest of topics. Despite the most strenuous efforts of kind and influential people, I failed to find an academic appointment, and so took up a para-academic position, which I held until 1996. One mantra that served me well during that time, as I paced about outside the walls and came repeatedly up against their abrasive solidity was: "It's the work that matters". By this I did *not* mean the paid employment I then, as we say, enjoyed. Rather I meant that work for which I stole as much time from my employer as I could. Then, unexpectedly, I was snatched from my outcast state for an academic position in London. Nevertheless, that same mantra has remained central, especially in the last few years of steep moral decline in British academia, as its plot-lost rulers turn it ever more into a parody of itself. So, even from the inside (as my doctoral supervisor used to say), it makes sense to think about those open fields and what might be done there.

Others here and elsewhere know far more about such extramural possibilities and limitations, so I will leave that discussion to them.

I started this essay with Terkel to help bring attention not merely to the question of shared humanity, but rather more specifically on how it emerges in the implications of our collective work—on the great project that we humanities scholars are a part of. We are in fact elbow-deep in working out what computing means for the disciplines of the *literae humaniores*, the learning that pertains to human beings and so is, or should be, humane. In doing so, we are comrades in arms in a crowded assault on inherited ideas of the human, along with artificial intelligence, neurobiology *et al*. Several candidates— and, if we get what we do right, we are not the least among them—stand ready to join the list of corrosive ideas that Sigmund Freud made when he added psychoanalysis to the lineage of Copernican cosmology and Darwinian evolution (1920: 246-7). This may seem over-the-top to assert, but as some early practitioners of the digital humanities clearly saw, machines that continually get smarter, with no end to their improvement in sight, bring ever more into question what's left for us to do, what we are *for*.

"Culture is ordinary: that is where we must start" (Williams 2000/1958: 11). I would like to think that, sometime in the future, we could return to that starting-point with language clear enough to enable a conversation that would add our voices at their most radical to those of the thoughtful common people Williams knew. I would like to think that a life worth living is also our aim and that our lives would make sense to them.

My assignment here is otherwise, however. It is to discuss the institutional re-figuration parallel with, if not a product of, the re-figuration of the humanities in which we participate. What is happening in our working lives? What could?

Over the last quarter-century the institutional relation between computing and older disciplines has appeared to change considerably for the better. An involvement that, in the mid 1980s, would have stained a scholar's reputation if not poisoned his or her career (as seemed to happen to me) can now be advertised to good effect. Indeed, without digital abilities—if not accomplishments, or at least research interests that lend themselves to digital methods—a young scholar's chance for employment in many if not all fields is likely to be diminished. Within the last two decades, senior academics have enhanced or even made reputations on the basis of such interests (though not all of them have done their homework or even realised that homework is required *of them* and not just of those they hire, in this as in other intellectually demanding subjects). But even if we grant that we are in a transitional period and subtract the non-scholarly motivations handed down by government and received here below with all too little resistance, all is not as well as could be—for individuals or for scholarship. Better historical awareness of what has been happening and increased critical attention to it are needed. We must ask: toward what institutional and scholarly conditions, good for

the work as well as for ourselves, do we want to be moving? What is to be done to get us closer to them?

In the para-academic position I held from 1984-1996 (that's 12 years, by the way) the tenure-divide ruled my working life, sharply because I was on the wrong side of it—an un-tenurable junior administrator, and therefore more easily disposed of than the union-protected staff who emptied the bin in my office (as I discovered during a particularly uncomfortable period). By 1996, when I arrived in the United Kingdom to take up an academic appointment, tenure there had been abolished. Its absence proved a good thing both for me and for our nascent field, since in the UK the creation of a new appointment or new department in the humanities is *not* made a nearly impossible undertaking by the budgetary constraints of a tenure-line, which by definition runs into the indefinite future. For universities in the UK, as Holm and Liinason note, "it is easy to set up courses and degrees [and therefore to create positions] in disciplines that can demonstrate market demand" (2005: 7). Under the economic conditions at the time of my arrival here, all that was required was to be able to demonstrate such demand at some point in the future. Experimentation was thus encouraged. So, it seemed to me, a best of all possible worlds, or at least far better than the one I had left behind.

What was not apparent at the time was the expanding reach of Thatcherite market demand, from measures of success according to student-numbers to a redefinition of the lecturer's role as a form of *customer service*. (This term is actually used in some UK institutions and, given cuts in research funding for the humanities, likely to gain currency and strength.) But cuts to funding have drawn attention away from the deeper problem and cause: the managerial assumption that *vox pupilari vox Dei*, or more accurately, "the customer is always right." Behind this assumption is a massive change in cultural attitudes that raises the fundamental question of what education is for, in a world where cultural authority has been flattened—where, as John Hartley has argued for the UK, since the Annan Report on the *Future of Broadcasting* (1977) no one in the public sphere has taken humanists seriously other than themselves (2009: 5).

Tenure is designed to guarantee intellectual autonomy by protecting academics from external pressure to conform. It grounds their personal authority in a contractual right that is in practice extremely difficult to challenge. Thus, although tenure makes the academic system considerably more rigid with respect to creation of new departments and positions in them (and so distressingly conservative to upstarts like us) there's another side to it. Tenure also shields a nascent department and its tenured members from the distracting and enervating demands for proof of usefulness and service—proof in many cases, one suspects, of usefulness the evaluators are incapable of recognizing,

and service merely to those who become customers. My point is that, for the establishment of a new discipline like ours, tenure is an expression of the problem: not the problem itself, and not a remedy either. A tenure-line in the digital humanities, devoutlyto be wished for, removes one difficulty by creating another.

Differences in national and even local academic systems make institutional models difficult to transport. Institutional forms of the digital humanities are not only diverse in part because of local conditions, but are also still developing. We should look, I think, not at these models, therefore, but at a lower level—that is, to the individuals who have successfully found or created a niche, then ask what they have done. My experience suggests this: that we must consider the socio-intellectual qualities of the environment where the niche has been found or created. Despite my own autobiographical interjections I am not advocating that we do biography of individuals and sociology of groups, rather that we pay attention to our disciplinary ideals and historical trajectory. (I use the contentious word "discipline" not to assert success at achieving a place on a canonical list, rather merely to name what we numerous *discipuli* do.)

Along with our colleagues in the *literae humaniores*, we must continually worry the ideals by which we live—because, a close look suggests, we don't really know what they are or can be. We also cannot yet write the genuine history that would chart our disciplinary trajectory. But emerging from the experience of the last thirty years are without doubt two central qualities or modes of working: the collaborative and the interdisciplinary. Both are taking place on a daily basis; both are far more like questions than answers. Both are, as Peter Galison has said (2004: 380), often invoked as transcendental virtues, which we must make into qualified virtues.

Collaboration in the digital humanities remains mostly unstudied despite abundant activity and many precedents in studies of scientific collaboration and of "laboratory life," as Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar named their 1979 book. Collaboration in our field goes back to the time of probing conversation between the academic humanist and the dedicated "humanities programmer," who were not social equals but, in my experience, had to become intellectual equals for the conversation to succeed. It's clear that our greatest potential can only be realised if that social equality becomes our norm. It should also be clear that when we define the meaning of collaboration in contrast to the pernicious caricature of the "lone scholar"—none is a scholar and alone in the intended sense—we damage its value irretrievably. All else, however, remains either a vague question or an unsupported claim. Collaboration is happening here and there, perhaps on some occasions even well. But we need to know how to steer for success in it.

Interdisciplinary research is as poorly understood. Those who study "interdisciplinarity," having reified a dynamic and changeable process and named it with an abstract noun, are typically bemused with ontological distinctions between the reified "it" and other abstractions, e.g. multi-disciplinarity, trans-disciplinarity and so forth *ad nauseam*. Very few ever ask *how interdisciplinary research is done*, i.e. how best to think one's way into a discipline other than one's own. The enormity of the challenge, described by Thomas Kuhn and Dame Gillian Beer, for example, tends to be ignored; actual studies of interdisciplinary research projects, attesting to the difficulties, too few; [1] and the absurdity of a neutral standing point, argued persuasively by Stanley Fish, [2] ignored. Hence the anti-disciplinary imperialism Fish documents and an endless talk of breaking down barriers. Collaboration in the digital humanities has been interdisciplinary from the beginning—we have no choice in the matter—but collaboration in its canonical form follows the model of the Manhattan Project, each discipline or specialisation tending to be represented by a separate person or persons. Hence Myra Strober's recent book, *Interdisciplinary Conversations: Challenging Habits of Thought* (2010), which is perhaps the best study to date of interdisciplinary work at the social level. Her conclusions are sobering, and being sober is helpful, but she does not deal with collaboration in the mind.

What remains untouched is the form of interdisciplinary research and the form of collaboration closest to the humanities as we find them, i.e. individual behaviour and solitary reasoning. The humanities are surely changing, indeed must adapt to changing social and institutional conditions, but the arrogance of those who brush aside our intellectual traditions with claims of a "new humanities" is damaging. Seeing the magnitude of change afoot, we think wrongly of replacing ways of working and reasoning rather than augmenting them. We make bandwagons for people to jump on rather than observe what they are already doing or trying to do. Bandwagons go in only one direction. Many explorers find many clues.

What, then, does all this have to do with our working lives? It offers, I suppose, a counsel to do what one can, from where one can, for the work that comes within reach, and not to be repelled by canonical forms, such as the funded project or tenure-bar or academic position. It is to ask, given what I have called the great project (for which funding etc. are helpful but not necessary), *what can I do here and now, with what I have?* But however good solitude may be for some kinds of work, communication is essential. Thus Humanist—not alone in this—which began in rebellion and resistance but has survived even acceptance.

[1] For the difficulties of actually doing interdisciplinary research see Kuhn 1977/1976: 5-6; Beer 2006; Catney and Lerner 2004; Oksen, Magid and de Neergaard 2004.

[2] Fish's argument that there can be no neutral standing-point, and so no perfectly interdisciplinary research, is persuasive, but the fact that perfection is impossible does not mean, as he suggests, that trying for it is absurd. This is essentially Liu's argument (2008).

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"You Work at Brown. What Do You Teach?"

Julia Flanders

Introduction

When I mentioned to the person who was fixing my truck that I worked at Brown University, without giving further detail, he assumed that I was a professor there. As a guess, this was not only wrong but a poor play of the odds: full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty positions make up only about 15 percent of all employees at Brown, whereas 54% are some other kind of professional: technical, administrative, legal, executive, and of course adjunct faculty. Thus on the basis of pure statistics (and even allowing for my apparent level of education and socio-economic positioning), I am much more likely to be anything but a faculty member. The professoriate, though, provides the characteristic paradigm through which we understand the nature and function of the university: an institution composed of professional faculty whose job is to teach students and to perform research.

This idealized view stands in for the real complexity of the university as an institutional ecology of work—in which every hour of faculty work is brought into being by hundreds of hours of time spent maintaining the physical and administrative space within which that work is conducted: libraries, network, payroll, buildings, and all the rest of it. But it also stands in for, and obscures, the real complexity of even the "purely academic work" that goes on within the university. The sketchy wireframe figure of the "professor" suggests a division of labor and a level of intellectual independence that, in the emerging age of digital scholarship, is increasingly obsolete.

To fill in these complexities is to gain a clearer understanding of how other kinds of academic jobs stand in relation to that of the tenured faculty, and also to see how those relationships have been structured in the academic imaginary. These "alternative" or "para-academic" jobs within the academy have a great deal to teach us about how academic labor is quantified, about different models of work and work product, and about the ways that aptitude, skill, expertise, and productivity are weighed in assessing different kinds of work.

Situating the discussion within the domain of digital humanities puts these issues into more specific focus. It brings into view a wider range of work practices and roles: the novel job descriptions that arise out of digital humanities project work, but also the novel forms of academic practice that even conventional academics find themselves undertaking when they embark on a digital project. But it also sharpens our attention to the question of what "knowledge work" really is and where its boundaries lie. The tension within the domain of digital humanities work between the practical and the theoretical, the technical and the scholarly, recapitulates a familiar dialectic within the traditional academy, but does so in a way that prods us towards a new synthesis. If we understand "knowledge work" as a material practice we may come closer to demystifying it.

In what follows I am going to set out some case studies based on my own work experience, and try to unpack their significance and what they can reveal about different kinds of academic work.

Teaching Fellowship

My first job in the academy, as for so many people, was as a graduate teaching fellow. Precisely because of the self-evidence of that term as a designator of a certain kind of job let me be deliberately obtuse and pretend that we know nothing about how such jobs work and what they entail. From my viewpoint as an early-stage graduate student at Brown in 1991, the significant parameters were essentially these. My pre-tax income for the academic year was $12,500, and my formal work responsibilities were to prepare and teach two undergraduate writing courses of my own design. The time commitment for my teaching responsibilities was assumed to be approximately 20 hours per week. In addition, it was assumed that I would undertake my own research and make progress towards my PhD.

A few points are worth noting here: first, that the research I conducted as a student (preparing for professional advancement through field exams, writing conference papers, and participating in the intellectual life of the department by attending public lectures and university seminars) was not considered work, or at least not compensable work. In my first year, like all graduate students at Brown with financial aid, I received a fellowship that provided me with a living stipend and a tuition waiver, but even in that case my research would not have been characterized as work I was doing for the university. Students are positioned as net gainers from, rather than contributors to, the reservoir of knowledge the university contains, and the fellowship stipends they receive are characterized as "aid" rather than as compensation. And second, although the compensation for the formal "work" portion of my activities was reasonable (formally,

about $25/hr for 26 weeks' work at 20 hours per week), as an annual income it does not approach adequacy, and yet it would have seemed remarkable and inappropriate to hold any additional job. In other words, while formally compensating me for only part of my time, the university implicitly laid claim to all of it.[1] What is interesting about this point is not the question of whether that claim is legitimate, but rather the effect it had on me: namely, the idea that I was accountable for all of my time to the PhD program I was in, not just for my paid duties or even for a standard 40-hour work week, but potentially all of the hours not devoted to sleeping and eating. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this erosion of a boundary between the professional and personal space is a familiar and very common effect of graduate study, and (even more anecdotally) I would observe that the people who typically enter a graduate program are likely to have the kind of personality that lends itself to this erosion: highly motivated, with a strong sense of duty, and an established habit of hard work and deferral of personal pleasure (or an ability to experience hard work *as* pleasure). In my own case, lacking any common sense about how to set practical boundaries on the work to be accomplished, I tended to feel that the research work required of me was effectively limitless: that no amount of effort could be sufficient to really complete it, and that therefore no time could legitimately be spent on anything else.

Salary I: Free-floating

My second job at Brown was as a full-time staff employee at the Women Writers Project, working as the Managing Editor for a series of books the WWP was publishing at the time with Oxford University Press, at an annual salary of $20,000. Again, it may be useful to take a deliberately naïve look at this job to understand how it was conceptualized. The WWP at that time was an independent unit reporting to the Dean of the Faculty, and its funding was derived partly from grants and partly from the university. It had originated in the English Department, and its agenda was still largely set by its faculty advisors, but its grant funding was awarded in large part because of its exploration of the use of digital technology and the project was thus recognizable (to contemporary observers) as a hybrid: a project with a literary research agenda, using technology as a tool in furthering scholarly goals. The project was co-directed by Susanne Woods (a full professor of English) and Allen Renear (a member of the staff in Computing and Information Services, but holding a PhD in philosophy). Its other professional staff included a programmer and the managing editor position that I held. Despite its traditional title, this job had an unusual profile, resulting from the experimental way in which these books were being produced: by converting the WWP's SGML files into a format that could be read by FrameMaker, which we then used to produce camera-ready copy following the press's specifications. My sole qualifications for the job were a familiarity with the content of the books and the management of the

series (as a result of my proofreading work), and a willingness to learn anything else required by the job: page layout, FrameMaker, book production processes, the principles of textual editing, and enough about SGML to work with the project's programmer to troubleshoot the conversion mechanism.

It is worth noting that this job, like many jobs at the time in what was not yet being called "digital humanities", had no discernable career trajectory. The project's directors had other "real" jobs (as faculty, as permanent staff in the IT organization), and the project's programmer could by gaining further experience and skills advance to other more senior programming jobs, but the managing editor position (for a graduate student who was still in principle planning to become a faculty member at some point) did not look like part of a track of professional advancement, at least not within the academy. The job skills cohered only in the context of the work of the WWP, but even there they did not represent either a permanent niche or a developmental stage towards one. The job was in effect an emergency response to a sudden and temporary need.

Consultant

In 1994, a few years after my start at the WWP, the project was absorbed into the newly formed Scholarly Technology Group and became part of Brown's Computing and Information Services department. My own job responsibilities by this time had changed: I was working as the WWP's Textbase Editor, with responsibility for overseeing and documenting the WWP's text encoding work and research on applying the newly published TEI P3 Guidelines to our textbase. However, a more dramatic change was the way in which our work was conceptualized in fiscal terms. STG was organized as a "cost center", with some funding from the university but also the ability (and the responsibility) to bring in income from outside sources such as grants and contracts. A significant part of STG's early development was the establishment of a fiscal model in which all STG projects (including the WWP) were understood as paying customers of the STG organization. For each staff member, STG set a level of overhead based on the amount of time that person could be expected to work on projects (rather than administration or other non-billable tasks), and an overall overhead rate was determined that could be applied to all STG work as part of the billing structure. So for example if I was was assumed to have 60% billable time (or approximately 1000 billable hours per year), then each hour worked would need to be charged at not just the hourly fraction of my salary and benefits, but would also need to include an overhead amount to cover the 40% of my time that could not be billed out, plus the time that our office administrator spent handling payroll and grant administration, and so forth.

I'll have occasion to revisit this financial model later in this essay, but it is worth observing here that it provided a fascinating view into how academic work is conceptualized. From STG's point of view, this model was absolutely essential to the group's successful operation, because STG was expected to cover the bulk of its own costs through the grants, contracts, and other external income. As a result, any non-billable work (such as basic administrative operations, the maintenance of our servers, keeping up with email, attending meetings, participating in university bureaucracy) had to be paid for through the billable hours that were paid by projects. Each hour of project work, in other words, stood on the back of a fairly substantial apparatus that was necessary to make that hour possible. Without the email, the payroll, the servers, and so forth, project work wouldn't be possible. However, for many collaborators and funding agencies, this model appeared not only counterintuitive but deeply troubling, because it made our work look much more expensive than anyone else's. An hour of work from a staff member being paid $40,000 per year cost far more than the fraction of salary and benefits that person actually received. However, that additional cost represented the actual cost of bringing that work "to market", so to speak. The concept of overhead is of course familiar in another form (that of indirect costs), but indirect costs are not typically charged in the kinds of mutual exchanges of labor that we were often engaged in.

The result of this cost model for STG and WWP staff was also interesting. All of us became used to thinking of ourselves as consultants: people who might work on many different projects during the course of the year as called upon. One did not necessarily identify strongly with any single project, but one became adept at projecting oneself imaginatively into the space of each project in turn, mastering its particular constraints and terminology so as to be able to act (program, design, research, encode, etc.) appropriately within the project context. This provisional identification with multiple projects gave us all a peculiar facility for seeing projects at a kind of meta-level: understanding their commonalities *as projects* and observing the types of problems and design challenges that emerged repeatedly. We gained a similar understanding of the disciplinary language and motivations that inhabited such projects: again, not as a matter of personal identification as a scholar in a certain field, but rather as someone who is able to observe disciplines from a perspective slightly to one side.

Salary II

At a certain point, STG was reorganized to eliminate its reliance on outside funding and reduce its level of financial risk, and at this point the WWP was moved outside of STG

and established as a separate unit, also within Computing and Information Services, but funded entirely on soft money. My job during this period was thus that of a typical salaried staff member, except that all of the funding for myself and my WWP colleagues had to be raised either through grants or through licensing income from Women Writers Online (which by this time was starting to generate significant revenue). The result of this multiplicity of funding sources, however, was to reproduce in many ways the fiscal psychology of our time as consultants, in the sense that we remained very much aware of how our time was being spent and funded. In a year when the WWP had an NEH grant, part of our time would be allocated to the work for that grant (and paid from the grant ledger) while the rest would be allocated to WWP activities (and paid from license income). From time to time, when a shortfall in grant funding left us with a deficit, some staff time was "bought" by STG for specific projects.

Most recently, the WWP and STG have both been moved into the University Library, as part of its Center for Digital Scholarship. Although this move has not changed the WWP's fiscal arrangements, it has meant a subtle shift in how our work is construed in relation to the scholarly mission of the university. As a member of the library staff, my PhD in English no longer looks like a professional anomaly as it did in CIS, and the WWP's cultivation of a scholarly community for our publications, conference, and outreach programs is easier to harmonize with the digital dimensions of our research. Perhaps most importantly, the idea that we conduct research seems natural and in keeping with the library's larger mission.

Freelance

Running in parallel to this entire narrative is another with an entirely different developmental trajectory. Since 2000, my partner and I have had a small consulting business through which we have worked on an eclectic range of projects, ranging from simple database development to digital publication to grant-writing. Like my teaching activities at the University of Illinois (described below), this is for me a strictly evenings-and-weekends-and-vacation activity (though for my partner it is his job). Almost all of our projects have some connection with digital tools, formats, or activities[2]   but it is not our purely *digital* expertise that is most important in these projects but rather our *digital humanities* expertise: in the sense that our literacy in a range of humanities disciplines and our skills in writing, strategic planning, and information design are essential in making our digital expertise useful to our clients. The success of the consultancy, in other words, arises directly out of (and has as its necessary precondition) an engagement with academic practices, standards, and subject domains. In an early interaction, one client said that what she found valuable about our intervention was that it mediated usefully between purely technical information on the one hand (which

did not address her conceptual questions) and purely philosophical information on the other (which failed to address the practicalities of typesetting and work flow). We enabled her to understand how the decisions she was making about information modeling would affect both the intellectual content of the electronic publication and the realities of getting it produced.

Like all knowledge work that identifies itself as a species of "consulting", what we are doing in this role is situating ourselves as apart from—and even to a certain extent "above"—the knowledge domains of our clients. Just as critical theory came in the 1980s to occupy a position of meta-narrative with respect to the traditional academic disciplines, so consultancy positions itself as a kind of meta-knowledge, an expertise concerning the ways in which knowledge work is conducted. It's useful in the context of this essay to understand the value of this type of work—and indeed I have been arguing in favor of it throughout—but it is also important to put some critical pressure on the terms of its self-valuation.

The value of this kind of consulting work—for both the consultant and the client—is the self-consciousness it provides concerning the nature of the work being done and the terms on which it is conducted. A typical situation for a consultant is to be asked for help addressing what is taken to be a small practical problem. In the process of learning the context for addressing this problem, the consultant and client discover that in fact the practical problem arises from a deeper set of issues which had not been fully analysed or understood, because the client was too close to them (or lacked the perspective) to see them. The consultancy relationship forces the client to articulate, for a stranger, premises and assumptions that may never have been stated plainly before— indeed, may never have risen to the level of visibility. For the client, self-consciousness results from having to bring all of this to articulation, and the result is often a better (because more explicit, transparent, and widely shared) set of intellectual configurations within the client's project or environment. For instance, work processes might be explicitly documented; latent disagreements might be brought to the surface and resolved; methodological inconsistencies or lacunae might be examined and rationalized.

Self-consciousness in the consultant arises partly from habitual exposure to infinite variety—of beliefs, ways of doing things, systems of value—and partly from the constant projection of oneself into other people's imaginative spaces. The consultant must identify, however briefly and professionally, with the client's situation in order to provide useful advice, while retaining enough distance to provide advice that goes beyond what the client would come up with on his/her own. Even as we treat self-

consciousness as an *outcome* of this work, though, it may turn out to be more importantly a *precondition* of it, in the sense that people with this turn of mind (or training) will tend to approach their work in this spirit and may gravitate towards consulting roles no matter what their actual jobs.

With these points in mind, it is interesting to observe that digital humanities, as an institutional phenomenon, has evolved very substantially out of groups that were originally positioned as "service" units and staffed by people with advanced degrees in the humanities: in other words, people with substantial subject expertise who had gravitated towards a consulting role and found it congenial and intellectually inspiring. The research arising out of this domain, at its most rigorous and most characteristic, is on questions of method. Indeed, digital humanities has taken and been given responsibility for reforming the humanities disciplines, in virtue of the fact that it requires an attention precisely to method. By formalizing humanities research practices and rendering explicit the premises on which they rest, digital humanists also make possible critique and change.

My own professional preparation for working as a consultant, as this narrative has already shown, was in fact my acculturation as a para-academic: my various jobs in publishing, editing, supporting, teaching, grant-writing, and studying. What interests me most about this work, though, has to do with the ways that various kinds of knowledge—technical, scholarly, practical—are valued. I suggest that there are at least two forms of valuable knowledge in play. The first is the knowledge that the client values because they are glad they don't have it (or have responsibility for it): they value it in the consultant because it represents what they think they are buying. Technical knowledge falls into this category: in my case, knowledge of XML, databases, electronic publication systems, digital project management. The second, more problematic category is the knowledge that makes the first type usable to the client—namely, the meta-knowledge through which the consultant grasps the client's subject area. In my case, this includes familiarity with scholarly editing and with methods of literary scholarship, and despite the fact that my technical knowledge would be unusable without it, this knowledge also constitutes a kind of subtle structural irritant in the consulting relationship. Precisely because of its potential value (if I were being considered as a colleague), it must be explicitly devalued here to show that I am not so considered: it creates a necessity for gestures of demarcation by which the boundaries of my role can be drawn, with technical knowledge on the inside and subject knowledge on the outside.[3]

I'd like to describe one project in particular that may be illuminating in this context, namely the work that my partnership has been doing on the MLA's New Variorum Shakespeare editions, starting in 2003. Our work has been focused on developing specifications for representing these editions in TEI/XML, and for accomplishing the encoding of the three most recent editions, plus associated other tasks. As already suggested, our technical expertise (in this case, familiarity with markup languages and XML publishing) had an obvious relevance and importance, but arguably more important was the ability to understand and explain the editorial significance of technical decisions, and to serve as a bridge between the two strands of the project: the project's editorial work (conducted by senior humanities faculty) and the project's technical implementation (overseen by professional staff at the MLA, who manage the production of the editions in print and digital form but for whom the XML is largely unfamiliar terrain).

For this project, we began by examining the intellectual specifications for the edition, which were described in the editorial guidelines: these prescribed (most significantly) the organization of readings from the textual witnesses that are collated for each edition, the organization and presentation of the commentary in which the editor summarizes the history of criticism on each line of the play, and the arrangement and representation of the play text. From this information we were able to establish the structural bones of the edition, an understanding of what the informationally significant components of the edition are and how they are functionally related to one another. For example, each textual note (representing the set of variant readings on a given word) must contain both a reference back to the line containing the word in question, and a formally organized arrangement of readings; each reading in turn contains the textual variant and a reference to the witness(es) where that variant is attested. We then formalized this information model in a TEI schema, through which these informational nodes and relationships could be expressed and constrained.[4] Finally, we wrote comprehensive documentation of the encoding practices required to produce a TEI version of an NVS edition, and tested the entire system through the process of encoding three successive editions and creating working output of various types.

This development process, effecting as it did a complete translation of editorial methodology from one medium into another, also produced an interesting shift of perspective. In a classic edition project—such as the NVS notably was when it was a print-only edition—there are many kinds of knowledge in operation, including the literary and editorial knowledge that is responsible for what in FRBR terms would be called the "work" and its "expression"[5], the knowledge of production systems such as

copyediting and book design that is responsible for creating a high-quality "manifestation", and the knowledge of publication-related activities such as printing and bookbinding that go into producing the individual "items" that one can buy and shelve and read. In this universe the editorial knowledge that produces the work is understood to operate at the highest level: it directs and motivates the others and carries a kind of cultural authority as knowledge work in relation to their instrumentality. At the start of our work on the NVS, this relationship between types of knowledge was also in operation with respect to the digital implementation of the project: the XML encoding of the text was being treated as part of a typesetting process and was being executed in that spirit: as a way of producing a manifestation or set of items, rather than as a process with implications higher up in FRBR's great chain of being. The discourse around the use of XML was substantially instrumental: it concerned the practicalities of supporting a digital interface, generating PDF output, and similar issues.

Treating this work as information modeling, however, has produced a subtle shift in these relationships. Most significantly, it has repositioned the TEI/XML: no longer solely as part of a production work flow aimed at producing output, but rather as the formal (and authoritative) instantiation of the knowledge that constitutes the edition: as the information model for the edition itself. Where in the print production process the editorial manuscript was taken as the most informationally rich artifact in the ecology (whose contents would be translated into an effective print carrier for those ideas), in the digital process the editorial manuscript is a precursor to that state: the XML encoding brings information structures which are *latent* or *implicit* in the manuscript into formal visibility. Once completed, the XML data carries in itself the information needed to generate all of the possible manifestations of the edition: in print, in PDF, in interactive forms, in visualizations derived from the data, in Braille, and so forth. The knowledge which in this work process is positioned as "technical", in other words, actually turns out to be the meta-knowledge through which the original motives of the NVS editions can be projected into a different medium with different representational properties.

Faculty

The final dimension to this complicated professional identity is in many ways the most conventional: a turn to university teaching. Since 2005 I have held an appointment as an adjunct instructor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at UIUC, teaching a course on electronic publication standards and technologies each fall through their distance learning program (known as LEEP). I am paid by the course at typical adjunct rates, and I teach (including class sessions, responding to student work and questions, and all administrative functions) during the evenings and weekends. From

UIUC's point of view, the appointment is 25% of an FTE (a four-course load being a full-time job), and in fact the time commitment does work out to approximately 10-12 hours per week. [6]

Because the LEEP program enables students to complete an MLS degree without moving their residence or leaving their jobs (in many cases LEEP students continue to work full-time), many or most of the students in my class are already engaged in careers in digital publishing, librarianship, and other kinds of work for which an MLS degree is a strong credential. For them, the knowledge associated with digital technologies is both instrumental (a job skill that can immediately be applied in very practical ways) and foundational (a set of concepts and technologies that intersect with and enrich other dimensions of library and information science). For many of them, their working lives within the academy will be very much like mine, though probably less peripatetic: as librarians their work will be positioned at the intersection of three different paradigms of knowledge: subject expertise, "practical" or "technical" skills, and a kind of meta-knowledge that inheres in their mastery of information science (i.e. the organization and management of knowledge *across* and *apart from* specific subject areas). Depending on the specific job and institutional location they find themselves, in, any of these three domains may be construed as yielding "research" on which they might publish, present at professional conferences, and gain professional advancement.

What does my professional experience and training look like within this ecology? What from my history is taken to be relevant for these students, and how (the reader might ask) does someone who took 15 years to complete a PhD in English Literature look like a plausible faculty member in a school of library science? Interestingly enough, what has proven most useful (and what students most remark on in their evaluations of the class) is the kind of embedded knowledge I represent: the understanding of methods, approaches, strategies that arises out of "real-world experience" at a functioning digital publication project (i.e. the Women Writers Project). The course I teach covers a number of highly technical subjects (schema-writing, XML, metadata) but its emphasis is strongly on how we can understand the significance and contextual utility of these technologies within a set of larger strategic concerns. Although on paper I only became a plausible hire with the completion of my PhD, the credential that really grounds the teaching I do is actually the 15 years I spent *not* completing that degree, and working instead in the variety of roles detailed above.

Stepping Back, Further Thoughts

These examples, for all their variety of institutional location and functional modality, are actually remarkably consonant with one another: one striking observation here may

in fact be their similarity with respect to the actual work being done, coupled with the range of ways in which this same essential set of tasks can be framed and paid for. At the same time, from another perspective their differences are most salient: for the typical humanities faculty member, most of these paradigms of work are equally alien; only the first will look truly familiar (the adjunct faculty position is familiar but not to be identified with). Examining these two cases for their commonalities, we can suggest that what characterizes mainstream academic work is two qualities. The first is the unlimitedness of the responsibility: work interpenetrates life, and we do what is necessary. For instance, we attend conferences without there being a question of whether it's our "own" time or our employer's time; there is no concept of "vacation" during the academic year, and very little functional conception of "business hours" except as a personal heuristic device. The second, related characteristic is the way time is conceptualized as a function of work practice. Time for academics is not regulated in detail, only in blocks (for nine months you are paid, for three months you are free to do other things; at all times you should be working on your next book).

Most digital humanities work, however—as performed by library staff, IT staff, and other para-academic staff who are not faculty—is conceptualized according to one of the other models: hourly, by FTE, or as an agenda of projects that granularizes and regulates the work in quantifiable ways. Increasingly, the use of project management tools to facilitate oversight and coordination of work within IT organizations has also opened up the opportunity to track time, and this has fostered an organizational culture in which detailed managerial knowledge of time spent on specific tasks and on overhead is considered virtuous and even essential. As we have seen, in an organization like the early STG, such tracking was a structural requirement for billing, but even in organizations where the idea of "billing" time to a project is simply an enabling metaphor, the use of time management as a way of understanding work processes and achieving greater efficiency and productivity is clearly immensely appealing.

These terms of value—"efficiency", "productivity"—are not inapplicable to traditional academic models of work, but their applicability is considered strictly voluntary, qualitative, and relative. We can gauge the importance of voluntariness here by observing the shock and disgust with which attempts to increase productivity (e.g. by increasing class size or stipulating specific levels of scholarly output) by external enforcement are greeted: academic work is considered to have the privilege of self-regulation, being in this respect more like the work of a poet than of a journalist. The importance of qualitative rather than quantitative measures of work is similarly a kind of class marker: the cases in which specific metrics are typically applied (e.g. number of students and courses taught; quantity of committee work) are those which are least felt

to be characteristically *scholarly* work. Quantifying scholarly output can only be done at the crudest level (e.g. number of books or articles published) and the relative and comparative nature of these assessments quickly becomes apparent: a monumental, groundbreaking book is worth much more (but how much more?) than a slighter intervention, and it takes a complex apparatus of review to establish, even approximately, the relative value of different scholarly productions.

For the para-academic digital humanities work force, these different paradigms of value operate and interact in complex ways. In my own experience working in an IT organization (with time regulated by the hour or the project), the tension between quantitative and qualitative measures of productivity was a constant source of methodological self-consciousness. Within the most local organizational context (the Scholarly Technology Group, whose name sums up the conundrum), this tension was understood to be an interesting problem rather than a practical difficulty: we knew ourselves to be doing cutting-edge research at the same time as we were producing useful projects, and at a meta-level we were fascinated by the interplay of these two undertakings. However, the parent organization (the more unequivocally named Computing and Information Services department) understood our work to be much simpler to define and measure: we were supporting faculty projects, and completing those projects successfully was a desirable and quantifiable outcome.[7] As a historical matter, it is also worth noting the evolution of these practices and expectations: members of CIS from its earliest days remembered a time when the organization was much more research-oriented, developing experimental software tools and providing much more improvisational and open-ended forms of support. The transformation into a modern "IT organization" involved the importation of work and management practices that were explicitly derived from the corporate rather than the academic world.

What are the larger effects of accounting for time and regulating it in these ways? One important effect is that time and work appear fungible and interconvertible. The calculus of time and effort by which we know the cost and value of an hour of an employee's time is also the basis for assessing how those resources could be used otherwise. On the spreadsheet that tracks the project, that unit of funding (time, product) could be spent to purchase an equivalent quantum of time or product from some other source: from a vendor, from an undergraduate, from a consultant, from an automated process running on an expensive piece of equipment. The precise quantification of time and effort permits (and motivates) a more direct comparison of work according to metrics of productivity and speed, and permits a managerial

consciousness to become aware of all the different ways of accomplishing the same task with available resources.

This last formulation—"accomplishing the same task with available resources"—reverses the narrative of academic work that is on view at liberal-arts colleges and research universities, in which a thoughtful person pursues his or her original ideas and is rewarded for completing and communicating them. In this narrative, the defining and motivating force is the individual mind, with its unique profile of subject knowledge and animating research vision. The managerial consciousness turns this narrative on its head by suggesting that in fact the task and available resources are the forces that most significantly define our work, and that the choice of person is almost a casual matter that could go one way or another without much effect on the outcome. We can see this reversal even more clearly in the way that—extending the idea of fungibility—this quantification of time also permits us to deal, managerially, with fractions of people. It is common in project discussions (and I find myself speaking this way quite often) to say something along the lines of "we need about a quarter of a person for a year" or "that project will take half a programmer." Witticisms about "which half?" aside, the effect of this model of work is to treat people as resources—as a kind of "pool" from which one can draw off a quantum of work when needed. The result of this fractionalization may be felt as a positive or negative effect: either of fragmented attention or of fascinating variety. But in either case it constitutes a displacement of autonomy concerning what to work on when, and how long to take, from the staff member to the managerial consciousness—again, a reversal of the classic narrative of academic work.

It is tempting to suggest that this labor is—structurally, at least—alienated and to some extent exploited. While we can immediately distance ourselves from the melodrama of comparing a programmer who makes $60,000 a year with a food services worker making a fraction of that amount, we can fruitfully pause over the marked difference between this kind of para-academic labor and the characteristic model of labor by which "the academy" is recognizable. What *is* the effect of this fungibility, this depersonalization of labor on the para-academic staff? What is my life like as a worker (and a self-conscious manager) in these conditions?

One point worth making at the outset is that many of the people in the para-academic jobs like mine are (like me) people who originally planned to be academics in the traditional sense. Of my seven closest colleagues during the past four years, five have pursued (and four completed) a PhD. Our expectations of what work should be like are strongly colored by the cultural value and professional allure of "research," and we

expect to be valued for our individual contributions and expertise, not for our ability to contribute a seamless module to a work product. Our paradigm for professional output is authorship, even if actual authoring is something we rarely have enough time to accomplish.

One would expect the result of this mismatch of training and job paradigm to be disappointment, and in some cases it is. But in a way, my colleagues and I are anomalies: a transitional phase between an older, secure academic identity with which we strongly identify, and a new, authentically para-academic identity that is still coming into being. Trained with the intellectual self-assurance of academics (but tempted away or derailed from that professional path), we do our work *as if it were scholarship*, cheerfully and ironically aware that we are also in some sense a fungible labor pool. Having been hired and acculturated in our jobs at a time (say, 1993) when those jobs were absolutely unique—and in some cases created specifically for us—we have no doubts about our own unique configurations of expertise and experience. Our work may be modeled as fungible, but we ourselves do not feel at risk. Moreover, because of our characteristic interest in meta-knowledge as consultants and digital humanists, we construct a satisfying and holistic research narrative out of self-study: a quasi-anthropological scrutiny of our work environments that constitutes a form of suture.

But in 2025, what will the now-commonplace jobs (web programmer, digital project coordinator, programmer/analyst, and so forth) look like as professional identities, especially to people who may never have imagined themselves as "scholars" in the first place? In particular, I wonder whether the digital humanities may cease to operate as a locus of meta-knowledge if (or, less optimistically, when) digital modes of scholarship are naturalized within the traditional disciplines. In that case, would these para-academic jobs lose their distinctive structural role in the ecology, their ability to foreground method? Or, from another angle: does the inevitable naturalization of these jobs as a routine career (rather than an odd alternative to a mainstream narrative) reduce the incumbents' sensitivity precisely to issues of method, discourse, and professional identity? Will a new set of credentials arise through which these jobs can be trained for and aimed at, avoiding the sense of professional anomaly that (in my experience at least) produces such a useful form of outsiderism?

Coda

Those who catch me in moments of professional frustration have heard my standard vision of a truly alternative career: becoming a goat farmer. As fond as I am of goats, what this idea really represents for me is a reminder that ultimately what we do is work, and that there's useful work to be done wherever we look. Those of us who work

in the academy and the para-academy are lucky to have jobs that are (for the most part) steady, physically harmless, flexible, full of cultural value and opportunities to learn. If our jobs also give us a sense of identity, that is both a bonus and a pitfall: a source of inspiration and also an opportunity to confuse our own worth with what the job seems to confer on us. This is a risk to which the academy seems peculiarly prone: witness the fact that for most PhD candidates, the idea of accepting a job other than a tenure-track faculty position is tantamount to an admission of failure. The reason why Mr. Silva assumed that I was Professor Flanders—the reason that no alternative is visible to him —is that no alternative can be articulated by the profession itself. And yet the vast preponderance of actual *work* involved in creating humanities scholarship and scholarly resources is not done by faculty. As we already noted, for every hour of scholarly research in an office or library, countless other hours are spent building and maintaining the vast research apparatus of books, databases, libraries, servers, networks, cataloguing and metadata standards, thesauri, systems of access. If the academic mission, in its broadest sense, is worth doing, all parts of it are worth doing. Our own location within this landscape—the job we were hired to do—is in the final analysis a space of work like any other, with contours determined by our aptitudes and training.

For this reason, I think one of the most interesting effects of the digital humanities upon academic job roles is the pressure it puts on what we think of as our own proper work domains. In the archetypal digital humanities collaboration, traditional faculty explore forms of work that would ordinarily look "technical" or even menial (such as text encoding, metadata creation, or transcription), programmers contribute to editorial decisions, and students co-author papers with senior scholars in a kind of Bakhtinian carnival of overturned professional usages. Examples of this are real and yet also imaginary, in the sense that they are not taken as actual models to be generalized, but as exceptional cases that we can celebrate without imitating. Nonetheless, in my own experience these interactions have had very specific, beneficial effects on all participants that are worth generalizing if we can. For faculty, involvement in other kinds of work provides a perspective that cuts across the grain of standard academic work practices, and it gives a vivid and well-grounded understanding of how scholarly ideas are instantiated in digital research projects. For technical staff, these collaborative relationships produce a much richer intellectual context for their work and also convey a sense of the complexity of humanities data and research problems, which in turn makes for better, more thoughtful technical work. For students, the opportunity to work on real-world projects with professional collaborators gives unparalleled exposure to real intellectual problems, job demands, and professional skills across a wide range of roles—which in turn may yield a more fully realized sense of the landscape of academic work.

With these benefits in mind, I offer a few things that we can do to encourage these interactions, and to develop a professional academic ecology that is less typecast, that obscures less thoroughly the diversity of working roles that contribute to the production of scholarship (digital or not):

- Make it practically possible, and professionally rewarding (or, at the very least, not damaging), for graduate students to hold jobs while pursuing advanced degrees. This would involve rethinking our sense of the timing of graduate study and its completion: instead of rushing students through coursework, exams, and dissertation, only to launch them into a holding pattern (potentially for several years) as postdocs, finished-but-still-enrolled students, or visiting assistant lecturers, graduate programs would need to allow a bit more time for the completion of the degree and ensure that students graduate with some diversity of skills and work experience.
- Devote resources to creating meaningful job and internship opportunities at digital humanities research projects, scholarly publications, conferences, and other professional activities, with the goal of integrating students as collaborators into these kinds of work at the outset.
- Encourage and reward coauthoring of research by faculty, students, and para-academic staff. This involves actions on the part of departments (to create a welcoming intellectual climate for such work) and on the part of journals, conferences, and their peer review structures to encourage and solicit such work and to evaluate it appropriately.

[1] When I was a graduate student I was permitted to hold other on-campus jobs, without any limitation on the number of hours worked, but more recently the graduate school has placed fairly strict limitations on the number of hours graduate students may work while receiving financial aid (i.e. fellowships and teaching assistantships).

[2] With a few notable exceptions: one or two small bookbinding projects and a handmade rudder for a sailboat.

[3] From a practical perspective this is an entirely reasonable clarification, since it makes clear where each set of responsibilities lies—it would not do for me to imagine that I am part of the editorial team, simply because I am helping write the grant.

[4] It is worth noting for the curious that the resulting schema is a TEI customization, in which some modification of TEI structures and some new elements were required to accommodate the structural and practical requirements of the NVS editions.

[5] In FRBR (the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records), the entity termed the "work" is a purely intellectual object, which is made present in language as an "expression", then instantiated in specific publications as a "manifestation", and finally given physical form in specific, individual "items" that can be held in the hand, defaced, annotated, and thumped for emphasis. See http://www.oclc.org/research/activities/past/orprojects/frbr/default.htm.

[6] From Brown's point of view, this work is a potential conflict of interest and poses some interesting questions about what it means to be exempt staff. In principle, full-time salaried work at Brown means being available to work as required by the demands of one's job description, without being paid overtime: so an evening job constitutes a potential source of competition for my time. In practice this has not been a problem as long as I keep my work hours at Brown strictly free of non-Brown work activities, and complete my Brown-related work satisfactorily.

[7] The management instruments arising out of this relationship were fascinating in themselves: complex spreadsheets with columns showing dated progress and taxonomies of project status, with elaborate accompanying commentary explaining why each project was a special case.

I Am Natalie Henderson: My "Nonacademic" Career in Academe & the #alt-ac Quest

Anne Mitchell Whisnant

I published the article below, "A 'Nonacademic' Career in Academe," in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in the summer of 2005, while I worked at Duke University. Like many others who discuss career issues in that forum, I wrote under a pseudonym, Natalie Henderson, because I was critiquing my own employer.

Having my essay included in the alt-ac collection confirms the feeling I had in 2005 that the issues I was facing as a Ph.D-prepared *staff* employee in a university reach across academe. Currently, in fact, the contingent of Ph.D.-holding non-faculty staff at universities seems to be growing. An informal count at my own present employer, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, finds nearly forty such people in non-faculty posts.

Thanks to the Internet and resources like the *Chronicle*, Inside HigherEd, Beyond Academe, the Versatile Ph.D. (formerly the WRK4US listserv), and Twitter, we are also increasingly self-aware and vocal. We are pushing the academy to create spaces where we might make more honest and fully realized contributions to our universities' missions of scholarship, teaching, and informed public engagement. I am glad that what I wrote in 2005 has provided part of the impetus for more of us to speak out publicly in this forum.

Yet my own experience of publishing that article also provides a cautionary tale about the obstacles that alt-ac university staff may encounter, and the risks we may run, as we develop our voices, articulate our frustrations, and press the academy to change. It behooves those of us on the alt-ac track to bear in mind that the career possibilities we seek pose a challenge to some of the academy's most cherished traditions and structures (e.g., tenure, faculty autonomy and governance, and academic freedom), and that the academy may not be as receptive to our ideas as we might hope.

Hence at this juncture I need to talk about what happened *after* I published "Natalie's" article. To do that, I must shed my pseudonym and describe how criticizing my university from a staff position proved to be a costly decision for me.

"Natalie's" article was actually the second piece she/I had published in the *Chronicle* in 2005 about issues related to nonacademic careers for Ph.D.s in the humanities. The first, "Questioning the Promise," appeared in February that year and explored my growing doubts about the ease of transferring the skills developed in earning a Ph.D. to satisfying professional employment outside the tenure track. No one at Duke seemed to notice it.

The "Nonacademic Career" piece appeared in June that year, while I was on vacation. When I returned, a friend at work had emailed that "someone" wanted to know if I was the author. Knowing that I am an unconvincing liar, I admitted that I was. "Someone" turned out to be our mutual supervisor, a tenured full professor with a top-level administrative post. She was livid, and in short order, my professional life and future prospects at Duke unraveled.

Only days before the piece appeared, this same supervisor had complimented me effusively on my job performance during several difficult previous months for our organization. My careful notes from this period remind me that she had discussed with me her plans to promote me within a few weeks to a newly-opened higher position in our institute.

Yet, five days after the *Chronicle* piece appeared, she and my other faculty supervisor issued a devastating annual written personnel evaluation (still in my files) that expressed serious reservations about my professional competence by recounting at length deficiencies in areas of "teamwork," "discretion," "vision," "tact" and "maturity." Although the evaluation did not mention the *Chronicle* piece, there is no question (my notes again confirm) that its disapproving tone and content appeared in direct response to it. Nothing else could explain the sudden negativity.

A few days after sending the written evaluation, the supervisor upbraided me, in person, in her office, specifically about "Natalie's" piece. In a two-minute conversation in which I was given little opportunity to respond, she said that I had misinterpreted feedback I had received in the past, and stated that she couldn't see how someone with "this attitude" could work productively with faculty in our interdisciplinary faculty development program. She then confirmed everything I had written about university

hierarchies by telling me that as an administrative staff person I should *never* mention my own ongoing scholarly research "unless somebody asks."

As the summer unfolded, the promised promotion evaporated. Instead of conducting a modest, local search for the position, the supervisors conducted a nationwide search while I was installed as the "acting" person in the post. In the end, they put me through two rounds of interviews, and I watched as other candidates were conducted prominently through the office. By summer's end, they hired someone from out of state who became my supervisor.

Attempting to make legal as well as ethical sense out of what had happened to me, I consulted an attorney. I found that, as a staff person at a private university, I had no "academic freedom," no zone of free-speech protection for having expressed these ideas. I did learn, however, that I would have had more protection had I worked at a public institution.

Perhaps most disillusioning, I realized the limits of my institute's (and, by extension, the university's, and specifically the faculty's) stated commitments to risk-taking critiques of power. We had just that spring mounted a series of lectures and events focused on "Dissent: Past and Present" and "Risky Knowledge," but my experience taught me that the university was at best reluctant to protect dissenting views expressed within, or about, our own organization – especially when such "risky" views were articulated by staff.

After this disturbing and destabilizing episode, I launched a focused and intense campaign to extricate myself from what was clearly a dead-end situation. Just shy of one year after my "troubles" began, I found my present nonacademic job at my Ph.D. alma mater, UNC-Chapel Hill, where I have for four years been happily employed in a very good alt-ac position that also allows me to continue to function as a scholar.

The lessons I learned as I stumbled along the rough and rocky road from "academic" to "nonacademic" career within academia are important ones for anyone with high-level academic training seeking non-faculty employment in a university setting. This is especially true for those who seek non-faculty employment that will allow them to deploy the skills and habits of mind (including the propensity to analyze structures and the desire to speak freely) they developed while earning their Ph.D.s.

While continuing to have university affiliation brings many advantages for access to research materials, prospects for teaching, and opportunities for scholarly interaction, it also has its pitfalls. Its expansive rhetoric notwithstanding, university culture has entrenched hierarchies, norms, and practices – only a few of which one may chance to learn about during doctoral education.

Ph.D.s seeking employment as non-faculty staff will do well to pay attention to these norms, and to remember that universities are not free of the kinds of abuses that take place in corporate or other non-academic settings. We need to prepare ourselves for the reality that the process of carving out meaningful spaces for productive and rewarding alt-ac careers is likely to be hard and long. I know Natalie would agree.

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A 'Nonacademic' Career in Academe

by Natalie Henderson

Sitting in my office, my friend, a woman with a Ph.D. in English, was close to tears. "He said I shouldn't say anything in the meeting," she almost whispered, "because it would be inappropriate for staff to discuss faculty."

My friend had recently become administrative director of a small program here at Prestigious Research U., and part of her responsibility was to help select faculty participants. Having reviewed their proposals, she and the program's faculty director had been on their way to a meeting with other faculty leaders where she had expected to discuss the applicants. Instead, she sat silently, her anger simmering.

As she related the story, her hurt and puzzlement were palpable. I searched for words of comfort, but in my heart, I despaired: Hers was the only the latest chapter in a story I've seen unfolding ever since I finished my Ph.D. and came to work at the university as an administrator a few years ago.

My friend's experience and my own reveal the damaging effects of the rigid division of the university environment into two mutually exclusive camps: faculty and staff.

That separation is becoming increasingly untenable as the academic work force changes. With full-time, tenure-track faculty jobs become scarcer, a large contingent of Ph.D.'s has emerged—people like my friend and me who are (happily) pursuing so-called nonacademic careers within academe.

The abundant literature on alternative careers for humanities Ph.D.'s generally poses two paths: academic and nonacademic. Little of the literature deals with those of us who fall in the gray area in between. But there are dozens of us here at my own university, and the same holds true at many other institutions.

The most visible of my fellow nonacademic colleagues here are professional librarians and university-press editors, but others are associate directors of interdisciplinary centers, directors of scholarship and student-development programs, student-affairs professionals, study-abroad coordinators, career counselors, diversity trainers, academic advisers, even financial managers.

From that list alone, it seems fair to conclude that my university values the versatility, intelligence, and high-level abilities of people with Ph.D.'s.

I came to my "nonacademic" career by a path that is perhaps typical. After I finished my Ph.D., I taught as an adjunct and had children before concluding that it was impractical to relocate my family to chase a full-time faculty position. After rethinking my future, I found my current job as an entry-level program administrator.

Undeniably, working here has brought a number of benefits—many of those, in fact, that I sought when I envisioned a faculty life. I make a decent (though not lavish) salary. I have access to the library, and can have books, articles, and microfilm delivered to my office. I attend lectures. I talk with smart people about books, ideas, and new research. I have a large role in designing scholarly programs and choosing and inviting speakers for them.

Although I am not evaluated (or rewarded) on the basis of my own research and writing and cannot expect ever to receive the lifetime job security offered by tenure, I do get limited institutional support for my continuing work as a scholar. I go to at least one conference a year (on the company tab). I have business cards and letterhead. Recently I

even got some time off to finish the book I'm completing for a respected university press. As a bonus, the university news service has promoted my expertise to the news media.

All in all, then, there's a lot to like in my quasi-academic life. But therein lies the problem: Quasi academic is not a recognized category at Prestigious U.

Nor is it a category factored into the humanities-career discussion, much of which implies that a humanities Ph.D.'s biggest employment challenge comes at the outset of the transition from faculty work—in convincing someone to give you a job in the real world. Once you're hired, the logic goes, you quickly prove yourself to be a valuable team member, are welcomed as an equal, and invited to make contributions beyond what you might have expected. By that reasoning, the Ph.D. is a liability at first, but the skills associated with it soon become a plus.

But in a nonacademic job within academe, getting someone to hire you is not so hard. The problems come after you've signed the offer. The main difficulty, it seems, stems from the highly stratified environment of the university, where people are assigned to one of two large and rarely overlapping castes: faculty or staff. The highest status and the most power are conferred upon faculty members or top-level administrators who rose through the faculty ranks.

Staff members are most crucially defined as what we are not: We are not faculty members. Certain behaviors are appropriate for them and other behaviors for us.

Add to that the stigma of failure that is attached—subtly but unmistakably by people within the professoriate—to those who earn a Ph.D. and don't get a tenure-track job. So not only are we staff members in the lower category, we may also be assumed to have tried and failed to gain access to the higher one. We may, therefore, be seen as dangerous, because at one point we presumably wanted to be where they are, and may still harbor such irrational designs. We might, that is, try to get out of our box and do things considered appropriate only for those with faculty status.

As I've tried to find my way between the two poles, I've received numerous reminders that I should remember my place.

Sometimes those reminders have been communicated quite explicitly: An early performance evaluation congratulated me on overcoming an "arrogance" that unnamed

people had supposedly observed in me. While I was pleased to have improved, I have yet to understand what specific incidents the letter referred to. Other than putting "Ph.D." in my e-mail signature, I hadn't trumpeted my scholarly writings or book contract. Certainly, any self-promotion I had displayed was modest in comparison to what was regularly tolerated (indeed, expected) among faculty members.

Other times the message has come more indirectly, mainly by treatment that renders me (like my friend) invisible and voiceless. Once in a meeting to discuss plans for programming built around a topic closely related to my research and writing, I offered a substantive and detailed suggestion about a direction in which the program might go. It was met with utter silence. Moments later, a faculty member threw out a very different idea, which was greeted with great enthusiasm from everyone in the room. I felt like I had burped in public.

Sometimes the message has come via a dismissal of the sophistication of my scholarly knowledge. Recently when I suggested a list of possible speakers to my supervisor, who is a faculty member, for a campus program related to my areas of expertise, he cautioned that the perspectives of the people I had suggested, all of them well respected in my field, might be overly parochial.

Frustrated by such messages, I once dared to complain that my intellectual contributions were not being taken seriously. My superior (a top faculty administrator) advised that such offerings were welcomed as long as I did not expect my specific areas of interest to be incorporated into programming.

The message seems to be that it's fine to continue my scholarly engagement so long as I keep it to myself. Legitimate, substantive scholarly contributions to the intellectual content of our programs are to be issued only from the faculty.

Maybe I should just abandon my hope of being able to shape the direction and vision of our academic enterprise and be content with my (in many ways quite cushy) lot.

But I still can't help wondering: In an arena where people spend so much time trying to think in nuanced ways and where we ostensibly celebrate the wide dispersal of sophisticated ideas, why is so much energy expended in maintaining fixed categories and squelching the intellectual contributions of those on the wrong side of the fence?

In an environment dominated by research agendas that often seek to right historic wrongs, question power, undermine hierarchy, and give voice to the voiceless, why are intellectual status and respect given so grudgingly to smart and engaged people who have jumped off the tenure track?

Natalie Henderson is the pseudonym of an administrator at a major research university in the South.

The Effective Humanist

On Not Misrecognizing the Work of Digital Scholars

Rafael Alvarado

It is tempting these days to imagine a grim future for the humanities and, more broadly, the residential liberal arts college in which the values of reading and Socratic dialog are central. We are daily treated to predictions, often gleefully proclaimed, of the extinction of this ancient mode of teaching and learning as a new order of knowledge emerges along with the digital mass media culture of the age. The discourse of decline is by now so prevalent that we may speak of an apocalyptic style in thinking about higher education in America, a collective voice that cross-cuts political affiliation and which, like the despair inducing shriek of a Nazgûl, has infected even the minds of those who would defend the liberal arts. There are demonstrable trends behind the talk. I cite four of them:

1. Academic humanism faces a crisis of legitimacy. The humanities have become less relevant to the world, that is, to working people outside of academia. Once the hallmark of educated leadership, a liberal arts education has for years been characterized by a postmodernism whose self-concerned esotericism is legendary. Today, postmodernisms' positivist successor, the New Humanism, carries the mantle of snobbery. Both seem more interested in disabusing people of cherished beliefs than in pursuing the goal of a liberal arts of education as espoused by Jefferson and Franklin, to educate a democratic citizenry. As Ian Bogost recently blogged, in response to Duke professor Cathy Davidson's lament that the humanities are not central to public life, "Humanism does not deserve to carry the standard for humans, for frankly it despises them" (Bogost 2010). The charge may be unfair, especially as most humanists imagine that they are laying the groundwork for a more just society. But the effect of this trend is clear: parents may become less willing to send their children to places that insist on erasing the careful work of years of nurturing.

2. Many think that the education sector is the next economic bubble. A recent commentary in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* argues that higher education has become "an asset that is irrationally and artificially overvalued and cannot be sustained" (Martin and Horton 2009). As an investment option, education has many of the same traits as housing. Both houses and college degrees are core signifiers of the

American Dream which have come to be perceived as rights, not privileges. And like housing before the collapse of its market, education has shown a steady and eye-popping incline in costs (around 300% since the 1980s) that is accepted because this same growth appears to guarantee a significant return on investment. But as people begin to perceive that they will not get a return on their investment – and trend #1 does not help here – they will take their money out of the game and the bubble will pop. Although this argument is flawed for not adequately considering the behavioral economics behind education—for example, there is no analogy to flipping houses in education—it points to the limits of growth in a sector that is already suffering from other shortages, such as tenure-track positions.

3. The institution of tenure, which many consider to be the *sine qua non* of the academic life and the condition of possibility for genuine scholarship, has been in decline since the 1980s. Currently the majority of teaching in higher education in the U.S. is performed by non-tenure-track faculty, "gypsy scholars" who barely make a living wage. Aside from the unfairness of a system that cannot even be described as feudal, as there is no patronage or *noblesse oblige* in it, the reduced pool of tenured faculty in the liberal arts can be taken as an indicator of how much (or little) society, mediated through boards of trustees, values the humanities. The causes of this decline are partly explained by demographics—universities simply produce more doctoral graduates than can be absorbed by the system. Meanwhile, as student populations grow, the need to teach basic courses only increases. But in spite of the increased price of education, tenure is too expensive to scale to meet this demand—hence the emergence of a shadow-form of labor. One wonders how far this trend can go before some fundamental change (or correction) to the system takes place.

4. The use of digital technology, long at the margins of scholarship, is beginning to make inroads into the core of the academy, which has resisted its incursions for years. Although higher education administrations adopted technology relatively early to manage the low-hanging fruit of registrar and student data, the labor-intensive and profoundly human domains of teaching and research have been notoriously absent from the technological makeovers that have characterized the private sector and even government. But things are different now; there is change in the air. Deans and presidents are increasingly viewing technology not merely as means to increase student to faculty ratios (a red herring, when quality is part of the conversation), but rather as legitimate media with literacies having fundamental effects on how work in the academy gets done, and the nature of that work itself. The new respect being granted digital media is a cautious one, however, guided by the same ambivalence that characterizes the views, for example, of Nicholas Carr and Edward Tufte, both of whom

have flatly accused some technologies of making people stupid. And if technology makes us stupid, especially very popular forms of technology like PowerPoint and Google, then the academy's embracing of it can only speed our decline.

Among these trends, the most interesting is the last. Each of the others is both threatening and beyond our reach—a real source of despair. But although the fourth is likely to have a multiplier effect on the other trends, hastening the unfolding of their logic, it also contains the potential for a disruption that allows it to play opportunity's open window to the others' closed doors. I am interested in one specific form of disruption—the introduction of so-called knowledge work into the academy through the vehicle of information technology—and the specific opportunity it opens up for colleges of liberal arts.

In making the case for the potential of technology to affect the fate of the liberal arts, I set to one side the well-meaning but I think misguided millenarianism that currently flourishes among academic technologists under the guise of this or that 2.0. Those who would replace the residential college with a distributed connectivist network are overly committed to a belief in a transparent mediation that is demonstrably absent from the Internet. As Carr rightly argues, the web is not less mediated than traditional forms of communication and exchange, it is more so, incredibly more so. It is hypermediated: for the first time in human history, the traces of ephemeral communication are not only captured, they are stored, organized, and mined for purposes far beyond the needs for establishing the transaction. Edupunks are rightly concerned about the "corporatism" of this new kind of mediation, but its social and cultural implications are much more profound and interesting than an instinctual fear of capitalism would imply.

To grasp these implications, it is important to understand the specific nature of disruption caused by the technologies in question. The salient, concrete social effect of information technology is that it disrupts the order of labor—how work gets done and who does it. The first effect is typically misrecognized as having to do with degrees of efficiency and convenience, with qualitative changes viewed only in retrospect or by the highly perspicacious. The second is equally invisible at the level of discourse, but has keen effects on those whose labor is directly affected by the loss of a market or perceived usurpation.

The disruptive effects of technology on the nature and division of labor helps explains a puzzle concerning the impact of social media on academia: why, after half a century of computer usage in the academy and an equally long tradition of computing in the humanities, are university administrators only now taking proponents of digital media

seriously, as an academic force to be considered? The proximate cause of the this change of perspective is the emergence of social media, a development of the internet no one predicted, and which now strikes at the core of the liberal arts institution. For although word processors and learning management systems are easily domesticated and incorporated into traditional workflows, this is not true of blogs, wikis, games, and social networking sites. These media disrupt and challenge the old but delicate social arrangement among librarians, publishers, faculty, students, and administrators that comprises the centuries old division of labor of higher education. The effect of social media is that relations of production in the academy are directly disrupted, which causes shared tacit knowledge about what counts as academic work to be raised to the level of discourse. And, to the extent that traditional structures are guarded most effectively by the invisible shield of the unspoken, mere talk may be a sign of real change.

I offer here a set of bullet points in the trajectory of that change:

- The digital humanities remain misrecognized—variously invisible, demonized, and deified.
- This misrecognition is a symptom of liminality, the cultural condition of being hard to classify, for categories are tied to social organization—and specifically to the division of labor—but they are also lagging indicators of social organization (Douglas 1986).
- This situation leads to a misrecognition of labor as discourse about new forms of labor evolves to catch up.
- We also misrecognize the nature of labor—and must begin to acknowledge the difference between knowledge work and scholarship.
- Knowledge work in the academy is disruptive.
- Knowledge work was not invented in the academy.
- Knowledge work associated with information technology from its earliest usage.
- Knowledge work is associated with effectiveness.
- And effectiveness as a value is a variant of American pragmatism.
- We might see this as connected to the idea of a "useful education" (viz. Franklin and Rush), an idea that has become muddled.
- The concepts of knowledge work and effectiveness are useful in understanding the work of digital humanists.
- Like librarianship and publishing, the digital humanities provision scholarship, and focus on the key work of representation.
- A focus on representation contrasts with liberal arts scholarship, which is concerned with the ongoing reinterpretation of culture and tradition. (Indeed, it

is concerned with re-recognizing the always-in-danger-of-being-misrecognized corpus of inherited cultural work.)

- Perhaps, to be effective (digital) humanists, we should turn to "interpretation support." (Consider Jefferson's experimentation with reading and writing devices, or Franklin's with new media.)
- The effective humanist is something to be—and in the context of the introduction of knowledge work into the academy, we might predict that the presence of the effective humanist will not eliminate the residential college experience, but will strengthen it, even as it inflects its direction.

On Architecture and Indifference

Julie C. Meloni

Computer scientists have long sought to uncover methods for efficient and productive use of machines, based on the ways in which humans interact both with devices and with each other. Over fifty years ago, J. C. R. Licklider described an ideal symbiosis between man and machine, in which "men will set the goals, formulate the hypothesis, determine the criteria, and perform the evaluations" while machines "will do the routinizable work that must be done to prepare the way for insights" (4).

Inherent here is the notion that man must architect the system before the system can function. "Architect," in this sense, encompasses the multiple tasks of planning, organizing, and (finally) building a machine, system, or process. Over the past fifty years, the human-computer interaction model has grown to the point of providing users with hardware and software carefully constructed to offer unobtrusive assistance, helping us complete tasks in our lives and work. In the last decade, we have seen the rise of ubiquitous computing — in which it is difficult to escape the gaze of screens — as well as all of the information sharing, user-centered design, and collaborative development that comprises "Web 2.0" (and beyond). One of many developments during our advancement toward Licklider's goal of man-machine symbiosis is that users find themselves more empowered than ever before to control the technologies within which they are embedded. This is good.

But in the workforce, when a sense of empowerment turns toward a sense of entitlement, forward momentum slows and innovation ends. To shift from empowerment to innovate to a state in which you believe you are entitled to involvment in innovative development is to ignore the strong craft tradition that exists in technical fields — particularly in software development, the area most closely aligned with Licklider's man-machine symbiosis.

My time as a technologist in the private sector, my relatively short time as a humanities scholar, and my position now as a technologist in a library setting has provided me with the opportunity to experience a wide range of labor practices and to uncover more than my fair share of myths. One myth in particular rests in the misguided notion that *simply*

using a tool intensively can lead to expertise in its maintenance, enhancement, and implementation. This goes hand in hand with the all-to-common notion that scholars with technical skills can easily step off the research and teaching track to obtain jobs in technical fields simply on the basis of their academic credentials and their experiences as tool-users. Certainly, being a user of a tool (or of a set of technologies) will increase one's chances of being able to innovate upon those technologies, and the craft (or hacker) tradition does not require formal academic training in technical fields on the path toward establishment as a solid technical developer. But software development is just that—a craft tradition—and carries with it its own norms, no less complex or valuable than those found among scholars. Here one finds apprentices, journeymen, and master-craftsmen as deeply invested in the art of technical development as scholars are invested in critical interrogations of literature and history.

Where academia and the craft-tradition of technical development differ is that developers who rise to the level of master-craftsmen are not necessarily those who have worked in the field the longest or who are possessed of the best (or in fact any) academic pedigrees. Instead, the master-craftsmen are those who can conceptualize interactions, intersections, and movements of information, all the while mindful of the underlying programmatic constructs necessary to represent that world in some tangible way. Master-craftsmen are those who architect solutions while also understanding that "interpretation takes place from inside a system, rather than from outside" (Drucker and Nowviskie). A journeyman technical developer might be well on her way toward architecting solutions to problems while also interpreting a system under construction, but then again she might not; journeyman technical developers who simply work to task without critical interrogation of the task at hand are not uncommon. I have seen many developers of information systems who can quickly code bubble sorts and do-while loops but lack an understanding of the roles their work plays within greater systems. This type of developer is not the type I would hire for my technical projects in an academic environment (or in any environment),—but more often than not I have seen academics assume that when they are hiring technical developers they are hiring people who *lack the skill* required to conceptualize the grand visions they hold in their own minds.

It comes as quite a surprise to many traditional scholars that a technical developer could even begin to understand such visions. However, it is precisely the developer's job to understand these things—perhaps even better than their progenitors—in order to bring them wholly to fruition within an architected system. Using the term "architect," with its connotation of both building and design, is common among technologists, but the concept of the system (and in fact all of cyberspace) *as* architecture, *with* architecture,

and *containing* architecture can be difficult to grasp. This is especially the case if one lacks an inclination toward building, surveying, and participating in these structures on a daily basis and for years on end. Even if we do not fully understand certain arguments surrounding the architecture of systems, it is impossible to ignore our vernacular terminology, riddled with architectural terms for inhabitable places online (web *sites*, virtual *worlds*, etc.) and those charged with their development: network, application, and database *architects*. Technical developers are much like civil engineers: we construct connections among sites, worry about traffic patterns (and flow, and jams), and obsess over the placement of information within color fields (including color choice and other aesthetic issues) —all in the name of eliciting positive responses from visitors unknown.

More specifically, when academic technologists work to enact scholarly visions, we are able to do so by understanding the relationship among humans and the informational or social spaces afforded them by machines, in order to develop architectures and interfaces that enable scholars to create and extend new knowledge environments. Projects and processes that enhance critical and speculative inquiry are "dynamic and constitutive in their operation" and are not "merely procedural and mechanistic"—much like the master-craftsmen developers who create them (Drucker and Nowviskie). The term "architect" remains important not only because it connotes "building" but because it assumes a designer's hand as well. We might even speak of this as an artist's hand; Donald Knuth reminds us that "computer programming is an art, because it applies accumulated knowledge to the world, because it requires skill and ingenuity, and especially because it produces objects of beauty" (673). The knowledge and artistry that a technologist brings to a scholarly project should not be devalued, as more often than not it is the mindfulness of an architect to her craft that enables foundations to be set and structures to be built.

To scholars who employ technologists to interpret, enact, and create the tangible artifacts of their scholarly visions: I encourage you to be mindful of the effort and collaborative, architectural attention that inheres in technical knowledge-work. I encourage you to interrogate any internal voices that whisper, "a programmer's paycheck is the most appropriate form of my acknowledgment—or in fact all the credit she is due." [1]

[1] See two posts to Twitter (made during a workshop on the evaluation of digital scholarship for purposes of tenure and promotion) which, in part, inspired this essay: [1] and [2]

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What Is *She* Doing Here?
Crafting a Professional Identity as a Digital Humanist/Librarian

Lisa Spiro

I. Introduction

As I was walking by one of the main Modern Language Association (MLA) conference hotels in 2008, I overheard a graduate student from my university remark to a friend, "Hey, she's a librarian. What is *she* doing here?" My first impulse was to point indignantly to my name in the program and yank out my laminated wallet-sized PhD diploma (if only I had one). I wished that I had followed the lead of my friend Amanda and gotten a "PhD" tattoo on my bicep, so that I could roll up my sleeve and make a doctoral muscle, à la Rosie the Riveter. But then I realized that he was asking an appropriate question, one that I occasionally obsess over and that colleagues across the university probably pose as well.

By asking "what is she doing here?," the grad student was reflecting the common understanding that professional conferences assemble people with the same professional identity. Librarians usually don't attend the MLA conference, nor do English PhDs typically go to conferences on digital libraries or educational technology. But I do. What am I doing here as an English PhD directing Rice University's Digital Media Center (DMC), the library's central computer lab for multimedia projects? Bridging two worlds. Applying what I have learned from my graduate study in literature to librarianship and vice versa. I believe that my training in the humanities as well as my work experience in libraries help me to understand what services and resources students and faculty need in the Internet Age.

In this essay, I will consider the opportunities and challenges facing an English PhD working in a library, weaving together my own experiences with general observations about alternative academic careers, professionalization, and the future of libraries and the humanities. Rather than getting depressed about the pathetic job market or the perceived decline of the humanities (Weisbuch), humanities graduate students can consider careers in libraries and other academic units. As academic libraries make the

transition to digital content and aim to provide better support for research and teaching, many are eager to draw on the expertise of humanities PhDs. A career in an academic library offers many advantages, such as the satisfactions of service, the freedom to pursue what interests me, the opportunity to collaborate on projects, and the ability to pursue a more flexible, "family-friendly" career. But a library career may also entail sacrifices, including the lack of opportunities to teach semester-long courses, the difficulty finding time to do research, and the occasional injuries to pride. I meandered my way to my current position as a digital humanist/ librarian by following my curiosity and pouncing on opportunity. I will suggest more formal ways of preparing humanities graduate students for non-traditional academic positions, such as providing internship opportunities, professional training, alternatives to the dissertation monograph, and the support of professional organizations. My experience has convinced me that both the route to and the joy of a career in the digital humanities (DH) is participating in the open, diverse community of faculty, librarians, programmers, designers, graduate students, research staff, funders, and others by blogging, Twittering, attending conferences and workshops, and collaborating on projects.

As Geoffrey Rockwell suggests, the digital humanities has reached "a point of disciplinary evolution" that requires careful consideration of how to delineate the discipline without being disciplinary or establishing impermeable boundaries, and how to define the "the community so that it is inclusive without being so undefined as to be meaningless" (Rockwell). What makes the digital humanities so exciting and yet so difficult to corral is its heterogeneity. Being a digital humanist doesn't require you to have a particular degree, skill set, disciplinary affiliation, or institutional home. Rather, being a digital humanist requires a passion for exploring the role of computing in advancing the humanities, whether through developing innovative research methods such as data mining or geospatial scholarship; building tools to support analyzing or representing knowledge; creating theoretical approaches that integrate an understanding of computing; promoting interactive, dynamic means of scholarly communication; constructing digital collections; conducting cultural studies of digital media; and so forth. Digital humanities includes different disciplines—history, literature, the classics, philosophy, religious studies, anthropology, computer science, information science, even biology. It involves people with different professional backgrounds—faculty, graduate students, librarians, information technologists, research staff, officials at foundations and government agencies. Not surprisingly, the identity of the digital humanities is contested, with debates over whether its focus should be cultural studies, computation, or both, as well as whether it is a discipline, a set of methods, an "interdiscipline," or "an array of convergent practices" (McCarty; UCLA Mellon Seminar in Digital Humanities). Many feel exhausted by the debates and just

want to move forward, to create rather than talk. As Dave Lester puts it, "more hack, less yack" (Lester). I sympathize. Yet we cannot avoid conversations about the future of the profession, since these conversations will shape what is valued, how people are trained for digital humanities work, and how this work is supported.

I am writing for two audiences: current graduate students considering alternative academic (alt-ac) careers, and leaders of humanities departments, libraries, digital humanities associations, and grant agencies, who help to shape the environments where digital humanists do their work. I hope to convince both audiences of the advantages of the alt-ac path as well as to suggest ways to overcome the challenges. For graduate students, I offer advice about shaping a career; for "decision makers," I make recommendations for preparing students for the digital humanities profession and supporting digital humanities professionals. Even as I seek to broaden the professional identity of librarians to include people without an Master of Library Science (MLS) degree, I also believe that the digital humanities must move further in professionalizing in order to establish stable career opportunities for its practitioners and to have more of a public impact. Of course the digital humanities is already professionalized, with scholarly associations, conferences, journals, and awards. But we may have reached the point where digital humanities associations need to do more to promote professional education and develop a core set of values. The community should pursue greater professionalization not to create boundaries, but to open up more opportunities for people to do meaningful work in the digital humanities, whether in faculty or non-faculty positions.

II. Going Alternative: The Rationale for an Alternative Academic Career

I wanted to attend graduate school in English because I loved doing research, reading literature and writing about it. Although many of my college classmates whined about writing papers, I actually looked forward to it, thrilled by the process of generating ideas, crafting sentences, and revising until I arrived at a strong. Rather naively, I thought being paid to read and write sounded like paradise. I also wanted to teach, to share my love of literature with others. And, frankly, when I graduated from college with a BA in English and history during the recession of the early 1990s, I wasn't sure what else to do. I was pretty good at literary study and enjoyed it—why not do that? So off to the University of Virginia I went.

Soon after I arrived at Virginia, I became dispirited. In part, I was afflicted by the anxiety generated by the "permission to proceed" process. Virginia admitted a large number of master's students (over 100, as I recall), but only a small number (around 15, I believe) made the cut to continue on to the PhD.[1] As a result, competition rather than

community ruled. My boyfriend (now husband) hated going with me to English department parties, since the conversation almost always turned to permission or the job market. As I worked away in my library cubicle on seminar papers, I felt isolated. I sometimes wondered what the point of literary study was, anyway. Although there were some critics whose work I admired, much of what I read seemed unremarkable and of small social significance, and I doubted I could produce anything better. I went to meetings about the job market where angry grad students accused the department of betraying them. I heard stories of people who had been on the market for years without results, or who moved from one adjunct position to another, or who ended up at third-rate colleges in places they didn't want to live. I worried that I could never do enough work and felt guilty when I was not working. During a semester when I was off from teaching to focus on my dissertation, I struggled with insomnia almost every night, because if I was sleeping I wasn't working (not that I made any progress when I was awake).

I was not alone in suffering what Piper Fogg calls the "Grad-School Blues." Indeed, I heard that the counseling center at my university was seeing so many depressed English grad students that a staff psychologist called the department chair and asked, "What are you doing to your grad students?" This story may be apocryphal, but it still carries truth. I visited UVA's Counseling Services for help with my insomnia, but was told that the university's center was too busy to see someone with relatively minor problems and that I should see an outside counselor. Depression seems to be common among graduate students, a result of the pressure, financial insecurity, and isolation of graduate study. For example, a 2004 survey at UC Berkeley found that "67 percent of graduate students said they had felt hopeless at least once in the last year; 54 percent felt so depressed they had a hard time functioning" (Fogg).

The dismal job market in the humanities exacerbates grad students' anxiety. Why spend eight to ten years scraping by on less than $20,000 a year while you train for… no job? On average, it takes 9.3 years to complete a humanities PhD (American Academy of Arts & Sciences), if you don't drop out first. (I took ten years, but I was working full-time for almost two of them.) Nearly 50% of all English PhD students leave before completing their degree, and only about half of those who remain end up in tenured faculty positions, mostly at institutions that are not research universities (Menand, "The Ph.D. Problem"). In the current recession, the job market seems to be getting even worse. The number of positions in English language and literature posted on the MLA's job list fell 35 percent for 2009-2010 and a total of 51 percent over the past two years, the biggest decline in the 35 years that the MLA has been monitoring job trends in the list (Jaschik). Only 53% of the advertised jobs in 2009-2010 were for tenure track assistant

professor positions. The situation is unlikely to get better, since general trends indicate that the number of tenure-track faculty jobs is shrinking. According to the American Association of University Professors' 2006 Contingent Faculty Index, between 1975 and 2003 the percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty positions declined from 56.8 percent to 35.1 percent (cited by Conn).

Troubled by the horrible job market and the senselessness of investing years of your life in what will likely be a fruitless pursuit, William Pannapacker (aka Thomas Benton) recently advised prospective humanities graduate students "Don't Go" (Benton, "Graduate School in the Humanities"). In response, people wrote painful letters articulating the human costs of pursuing a humanities doctorate, such as the person who calls the time spent in a PhD program "the most destructive four years of my life," a current grad student "struggling with feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness," and a PhD who is "living at home once again and making $10,000 a year" ("Letters About "Graduate School in the Humanities: Just Don't Go""). Yet Pannapacker's advice —don't go unless you are wealthy, well-connected, financially supported by a spouse, or have your degree paid for by your employer—narrows the doctorate to elites, ignores the passion that motivates people to pursue the PhD despite the risks, and overlooks the ways that graduate study in the humanities can train people for a range of careers. Instead of limiting humanities doctorates to people with money or connections, we need to make doctoral programs more diverse, reform the academic job market so that adjunct positions are replaced by full-time tenure track jobs, and prepare humanities graduate students for non-faculty as well as faculty positions. Indeed, in a follow-up column, Pannapacker points to one more group of people who should go to graduate school: those who don't expect to secure tenure-track faculty positions and can shake up the system as they cultivate technical skills, demand training that prepares them for the outside world, and "challenge the tyranny of the monograph" (Benton, "Just Don't Go, Part 2"). I bet that Pannapacker, who in a later column hailed the intellectual excitement generated by digital humanities sessions at the 2010 MLA Conference, has the digital humanities in mind here (Pannapacker), but he also echoes the general call for graduate education to shape students for a broader range of careers.

The frustration and anxiety felt by graduate students and young scholars result not only from the poor job market, but also from the insularity and narrowness of many graduate programs. Several studies of graduate education, including *Re-envisioning the PhD* (2000), *Ph.D.'s — Ten Years Later*(1999), and *The Responsive Ph.D.*(2005),have reached the same basic conclusion: students need a broader, more interdisciplinary education, better preparation for teaching, service, and non-faculty positions, a faster track to a degree, and more engagement with real-world issues. According to *Re-envisioning the*

Ph.D., universities should reform doctoral education by making interdisciplinary work more central, exposing students to technology, decreasing the amount of time it takes to complete a PhD, increasing the diversity of students, training students for a broader range of professional careers, and integrating a knowledge of "the global economy and environment" (Nyquist and Woodford 6). Likewise, English PhDs surveyed for *Ph.D.'s − Ten Years Later* recommended that graduate programs provide better preparation for teaching, more interdisciplinary training, and more collaborative experiences (Nerad and Cerny).

To encourage humanities graduate students to explore alternative careers, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation launched the Humanities at Work Program (1999-2006). This program disseminated information about non-academic careers, funded a postdoctoral careers program that placed humanities PhDs. in nonacademic internships, and supported practicum projects in which graduate students applied their humanities training to community initiatives such as oral history projects (Bennett; The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation). Critics charged that the Wilson Foundation's efforts did not address the core problems with the humanities job market (oversupply of PhDs/ undersupply of good jobs) and naively assumed that a humanities graduate program has relevance beyond a faculty career. As Louis Menand puts it, "there is no obvious efficiency in requiring people to devote 10 or more years to the mastery of a specialized area of scholarship on the theory that they are developing skills in research, or critical thinking, or communication" (Menand, "The Ph.D. Problem"). Yet doctoral training does provide the skills and knowledge needed by many who pursue "alternative academic" careers. You learn valuable skills through doctoral training, including how to find, evaluate, organize and analyze information, write scholarly arguments, lead discussions, put together a lecture, comment on papers, and operate in academic culture. Most of all, you develop and evince discipline and persistence as you labor through the long slog of a PhD. Even those English PhDs who wind up in non-academic jobs see value in their training. According to the *PhDs − Ten Years Later* study, 64% of English PhDs who ended up working in the Business, Government and Nonprofit sector said they would pursue a PhD in the same field if they knew what they knew now, compared to 84% of those with tenure or tenure track faculty positions and 88% of those in academic administration (Nerad and Cerny).

You may learn even more in graduate school by participating in digital humanities projects. Whereas humanities grad students typically work alone, only occasionally checking in with their advisor, those engaged in digital humanities projects learn from, contribute to, and are appreciated by a community that often includes fellow grad students, faculty, library and information technology staff, and others. Through training

and work in the digital humanities, graduate students acquire the technical, managerial, and collaborative skills that can serve them in a range of careers, both faculty and non-faculty. Certainly the digital humanities is not *the* solution to the problems with graduate education. Not every humanities graduate student feels passionate about the potential of computing to advance teaching and research, and it is passion rather than despondency about the job market that should motivate someone to pursue a career in digital humanities. Further, many universities lack the staff, funding, infrastructure or mandate to support digital humanities initiatives. Nevertheless, for an example of how graduate education in the humanities can become more collaborative, interdisciplinary, and versatile, reform advocates can look to the experiences of graduate students who participate in digital humanities projects. Indeed, leaders in the graduate education community are beginning to view the digital humanities as a promising model for improving graduate training. For instance, Debra Stewart, president of the Council of Graduate Schools, recently gave a presentation in which she cited the digital humanities as a means of providing students with the hybrid knowledge and transferrable skills essential for the "knowledge economy" (Stewart).[2]

My own experience as a graduate student at Virginia in the 1990s speaks to value of digital humanities training. Although I had no intention of pursuing work with computers or in libraries when I started graduate school, I found myself in the right place at the right time, as Virginia was establishing an international reputation for itself in digital humanities through the pioneering work of the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, the Electronic Text Center, and other groups. Amidst the anxiety of graduate school, I found a refuge by working as an assistant at the Electronic Text Center (Etext Center), a place where I learned valuable skills, produced meaningful work, earned a modest income, and, most importantly, felt like I belonged to a community. When I first started at the Etext Center, I didn't even know what control-alt-delete did. Staff seemed to speak a mysterious techie language. DTD? SGML? Tag? Perl? But David Seaman, the Etext Center's director and an ABD in English, told me that lack of technical knowledge posed no barrier, since he believed it was easier to teach a humanist technical skills than vice versa. Within a few weeks I too was speaking geek speak. I learned SGML, HTML, image and text scanning, how to transcribe manuscripts, and even a little bit of Perl (thanks to the excellent teaching of Steve Ramsay). With my friend and colleague Carolyn Fay, I marked up several collections of Civil War letters using the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). David invited me and Carolyn to lead a session on marking up manuscript materials for his Rare Book School class and to author a guide to encoding handwritten materials, giving us the sense that we had developed expert knowledge. Whenever David read off another email from a grateful user of the Etext Center's collection, I felt like I was doing work that mattered to the community. The education I received at the Etext Center was in many ways more

valuable than what I got in any of my classes, as it brought my attention to the significance of textual representation and reignited the joy of inquiry that had drawn me to grad school in the first place. For example, I found myself pondering the right way to describe the structure of an epistolary novel.

Beyond my own experience, I can cite many examples of humanities graduate students who have made vital contributions to digital humanities projects and in so doing transformed their own careers. A glance at the credits page for many digital humanities projects reveals the extent of the contributions made by graduate students, whether as project assistants or project managers. As Ken Price, a co-editor of the Whitman Archive, notes of graduate students with whom he collaborated, "While enriching and diversifying their record as they prepare, most often, for work as professors, they also provide themselves with skills and knowledge of information architecture that leave them open to other types of academic employment, employment that frequently pays better and has better job security than a tenure-line position in the humanities" (Price). Price also observes that grad students engaged in digital humanities projects develop a greater understanding of scholarly publishing and alternatives to the monograph and enjoy the close collaboration with faculty and fellow graduate students. Graduate students who worked on the Whitman Archive have gone onto a range of careers, including as faculty, the director of a digital humanities center, and a senior manager in an academic information technology organization. Similarly, describing the collaborative work on text mining done for the NORA project, John Unsworth cites the vital contributions made by the nine graduate students who were part of the multi-university, multi-disciplinary team of seventeen people. Unsworth suggests that new models of graduate work will come out of computational approaches to humanities research:

You've got to have graduate students involved, because they have so much to contribute in actually carrying out certain parts of the research program, and by the same token they can make some of those parts their own, get their own publishing done, and build dissertations out of the raw materials in something like nora. They can be funded while doing it, too, and they have a completely different kind of working relationship with faculty than that provided by the tutorial model that still informs most graduate training in English. (Unsworth, "New Methods for Humanities Research")

If one aim of graduate education is to produce scholars who can collaborate to solve complex problems, then the digital humanities illustrate a compelling way to accomplish this goal.

Given how young (relatively speaking) the field of digital humanities is and how many research problems remain to be solved, students have the opportunity to make vital contributions. For instance, students in Matthew Jockers' Stanford course on "Literary Studies and the Digital Library" are innovating ways to analyze large text collections and have become so engaged in their work that most signed up to continue their work for two more quarters. Students enjoyed collaborating across disciplines to develop new methods and produce work that has real impact. As English PhD student Ryan Heuser commented, "this methodology and this level of cooperation are rarely seen in the humanities. It's also revolutionary in the sense that we're just a bunch of grad students and undergraduates, and in two quarters, we have built an entire corpus of novels and three separate ways of studying them" ("Stanford Students Use Digital Tools to Analyze Classic Texts"). In collaborative digital humanities work, students often find what drew them to graduate school in the first place: delight in figuring things out.

III. The (Digital) Humanist as Librarian

So once you receive training in digital humanities, what career prospects are open to you? As the essays in this collection suggest, humanities PhDs with a background in digital humanities work in a range of careers, including as faculty members, information technology professionals, editors, museum curators, academic administrators, web and media professionals, and officers at foundations or grant agencies. Although they will call upon their graduate education as they conduct research, write, and lead discussions, the work they do is more likely to be practical rather than theoretical, collaborative rather than solo, and focused not so much on writing books and essays as on producing grant applications and building tools, digital collections, web sites, or training programs. Pursuing a non-faculty position does not mean dooming yourself to a second-rate career. A study of English PhDs found that 88% of those who worked in academic administration and 87% who wound up in the Business, Government and Non-profit sectors were very or fairly satisfied with their employment, as were 87% of tenured and tenure-track faculty and 71% of non-tenure track faculty and academic staff (Nerad and Cerny).

Since my own career path led to work in the library, I will focus on the opportunities for digital humanities professionals in libraries. As the Internet revolution transforms how researchers access and make sense of information, libraries are grappling with an identity crisis: what is their role in a world here many people go to Google before the

library catalog? What kind of skills and services can libraries offer to maintain their relevance? As academic libraries seek to embed themselves in research and teaching, support emerging forms of research (including digital humanities and other forms of digital scholarship), assist researchers overwhelmed by data, and help scholars disseminate their work, they are recognizing that they need to hire people with a range of skills, including teaching and research experience and technical knowledge. Indeed, libraries recognize that they may need to turn to professionals without library degrees to fill the demand for these skills. According to the Association of College and Research Libraries' "2010 top ten trends in academic libraries," transformations in higher education will demand that "librarians possess diverse skill sets," which suggests that "[w]e may see an increasing number of non-MLS professionals in academic libraries with the skills needed to work in this changing environment"(ACRL Research Planning and Review Committee 287). As James Neal, Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian at Columbia University, observes, academic libraries are increasingly hiring people who lack a library degree but have advanced academic training, teaching experience, language expertise, and/or technical skills (Neal). Neal calls these people "feral librarians," since they have not been enculturated into libraries through traditional training. Although feral implies wild and threatening (and change can be both), "feral librarians" can spark innovation by bringing fresh perspectives, key skills, and new expectations to librarianship.

Digital humanists will likely be attractive candidates for new library positions, since they offer deep disciplinary knowledge and strong technical expertise, whether in metadata, programming, web design, networked communication, text analysis, visualization, or Geographic Information Systems. Indeed, many digital humanists have already worked for or with libraries, which have long offered key support to digital humanities projects. For example, Nebraska's Center for Digital Research in the Humanities (CDRH) is a joint initiative between the library and College of Arts & Sciences, and the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH) is a "collaboration among the University of Maryland's College of Arts and Humanities, Libraries, and Office of Information Technology" (Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities; Center for Digital Research in the Humanities). If the library is, as many have claimed, "the lab for the humanities," it makes sense for those with expertise in finding, analyzing, manipulating, representing, and disseminating humanities data to play a key role helping to run the lab. Humanities PhDs are not trying to displace traditional librarians, but to augment them by bringing a different skillset and professional background. Several recent library job postings include "digital humanities" as part of the job description, including the Coordinator and Librarian for Humanities Collections at the University of Pennsylvania, Data Librarian for Social Sciences or Humanities at the University of New Mexico, Librarian for Digital

Humanities Research at Yale, Humanities Librarian at Emory, and the head of the East Asian library at UCLA. (Several of these jobs require an MLS, while others prefer one.)

I am a digital humanist working in a library.[3] In 2000, two years before I finished my doctorate, I jumped at the opportunity to become a Digital Media Specialist at Rice University. I now serve as director of Fondren Library's Digital Media Center, where I oversee the campus's central multimedia production lab, provide training in digital storytelling and digital tools such as Zotero, research emerging technologies and their impact on teaching and scholarship, and contribute to digital library projects such as the Our Americas Project and the Travelers in the Middle East Archive. Although it is thrilling to develop new scholarly digital resources and experiment with methods such as text analysis and visualization, my job focuses on service to all faculty, students and staff at Rice, some of whom are bewildered by how to do research in a digital environment. Thus I offer training and support to help scholars and students use digital resources and tools such as Zotero effectively, drawing on my own background as a researcher and teacher.

Often work in the digital humanities allows you to pursue a hybrid career, combining theory and practice, humanities and technology, librarianship and scholarship. As someone who typically rejects either/or in favor of both/and, I find this career path fulfilling. You morph, get exposed to a variety of problems and disciplinary approaches, and become nimble and flexible. Melissa Terras inventories the various transformations that her colleagues in the digital humanities have gone through: "The Eng Lit PhD-turned publisher- turned usability expert. The trained and practicing Librarian – turned academic information seeking specialist. The archaeologist- turned museums and the web expert – turned usability expert. The computer-scientist turned-medical physicist – turned manuscript expert" (Terras). Digital humanists are the Transformers of the academy (not that we're robots, but we are able to change form as the situation demands). Early in my career at Rice, I met with the university librarians from two prestigious research libraries. They told me that they were thrilled to have PhDs working in positions like mine and that I would have a lot more fun and make more of a difference than I would as a faculty member. They were right. Because both my supervisor and my institution have been so supportive, I've been able to follow my interests, whether by launching a wiki focused on digital research tools, researching how American literature scholars view thematic digital research collections such as the Whitman Archive, or taking classes in documentary filmmaking and in social research methods. I have participated in conferences on digital libraries, digital humanities, educational technology, and new media, collaborated with colleagues across the library and the campus, and contributed to the university's IT planning efforts. Although my

library job does not provide tenure, it is more stable than a grant-funded position and offers some opportunities for advancement. Not having to pursue tenure means that I have more freedom to experiment (and less anxiety). When I decided to start a blog, I didn't worry about whether it would count toward tenure—I just did it. I get to keep learning, whether that means trying out new tools or following trends in digital scholarship. Most of all, I've worked with colleagues to build a well-respected multimedia computing lab that has supported a wide range of innovative projects, from student films to digital collections.

In choosing to work in a library rather than pursue a tenure track job, I have made some sacrifices. I miss teaching. I miss planning a syllabus (which for me is kind of like making a Christmas wish list), guiding class discussions, forming bonds with students, even grading papers. I love doing research, but I end up doing most of my professional reading, writing and tinkering in the wee hours of the morning before I go to work, since I usually don't have time for such activities as part of my regular duties and feel a little guilty doing this work during my "paid time." (Yes, research has become my hobby.) Sometimes I long to throw aside administrative and managerial responsibilities and just think and write, although no faculty position is free of such duties, either. Occasionally my pride has been injured and I have felt frustrated by institutional and cultural barriers. Sometimes I feel like an awkward pre-teen, like I don't quite fit in anywhere.

Indeed, humanities PhDs may face some resistance for taking library positions without having a library degree, particularly if they call themselves "librarians." Three anecdotes illustrate this point. When I first arrived at the university, I was invited to join the Librarians' Assembly (LA), which represents Rice's professional librarians. Several months later I was silently dropped from the group. When I asked the chair of the LA for an explanation, I was told that only people with an MLS were eligible for membership. I pointed out that the group's guidelines stated that people with advanced degrees and library experience also qualified. With the support of the University Librarian, who like me was an English PhD without a library degree, I was reinstated, but the experience made me feel like an interloper. I can understand why librarians want to preserve the importance of professional training, but I also believe that focusing solely on a degree is limiting and ignores libraries' need for a range of professional expertise, some of which may not come with an MLS. Professional librarianship at Rice carries with it benefits such as a path to promotion through the Career Advancement Program (a quasi-tenure system that does not provide permanent employment or faculty status), a bonus for reaching the next professional rank, eight "study days" to keep up with trends in librarianship, and participation in self-governance (Rice

University, "Rules and Procedures for Ranked Professional Librarians of Rice University"). If I am performing professional work, shouldn't I have the same rights and responsibilities as other professionals in the organization?[4] From the perspective of many faculty members with whom I work, my PhD holds more weight than an MLS. Several faculty members have told me that they appreciate my humanities background, since I have experience with research and teaching and thus can more quickly understand their needs. I should emphasize that when I interviewed for my job, my interviewers viewed my graduate training in the humanities as an asset, encouraged me to complete my PhD and seemed not to object to my lack of a library degree. The atmosphere at my library is quite collegial, and there are real efforts to bring together the community through social events and professional development opportunities. The point of contention that I faced was not whether people without library degrees should work in the library, but whether they should be considered librarians. I've since been elected to the Librarians' Assembly executive committee and received the library's Shapiro Library Staff Innovation Award, so perhaps I needed to prove myself before being fully accepted into library culture.

Nevertheless, some librarians remain protective of the librarian label. In a recent article about academic leaders' views toward libraries, Barbara Fister called Daniel Greenstein, formerly University Librarian and Executive Director of the California Digital Library, a "librarian" (Fister). Wrong! When a reader commented that "Dan Greenstein is not a librarian and does not have an MLIS," *Library Journal* added a correction: "*The article originally described Daniel Greenstein as a librarian, implying that he holds a Masters in Library or Information Science. He holds a DPhil in Social Studies from Oxford University and a BA and MA in American History from the University of Pennsylvania*" (Fister). However, based on his professional expertise and contributions, I think Greenstein is a librarian. He founded the Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS), worked as director of the Digital Library Federation, co-wrote *The Digital Library: A Biography*, and serves as adjunct faculty at UC Berkeley's School of Information. Although Greenstein has been criticized for not having an MLS, the search committee did not see that as an issue when he was appointed University Librarian for the California Digital Library: "They recognize that leadership in a library doesn't necessarily require a library degree" ("Dan Greenstein: University of California, Ca Digital Library Orchestrating Digital Worlds"). Ultimately what you do matters more than what you are called, although your title may influence how you are seen by the community and what you are empowered to do. In any case, as a commenter on a recent blog post acknowledges, "The general public calls every adult that works in a library a librarian," not knowing to make distinctions based on education (Deschamps). Likewise, you don't have to have a library degree to think of yourself as a librarian; according to the Census Bureau, about

178,000 people call themselves librarians, but only around 105,000 have received a master's or doctorate degree in the field (Davis).

The debate about the CLIR Postdoctoral Fellows programs further demonstrates some librarians' anxieties about alternative routes to professional library jobs. In 2003, the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) launched a program to place new humanities PhDs. in one or two year fellowships with academic libraries, aiming to prepare "a new generation of librarians and scholars for work at the intersections of scholarship, teaching and librarianship in the emerging research environment" (Council on Library and Information Resources). In the summer before their fellowships begin, fellows attend a two-week seminar to become immersed in librarianship, which is followed by a two-day seminar in the winter. Fellows work on a variety of special projects, from contributing to information fluency initiatives to managing digital collections. When the program was announced, it drew criticism from library school faculty, who thought that it diminished the value of the library degree, and librarians, who felt that job opportunities for trained librarians were being threatened (Bell; Berry III). Both groups seemed to fear that this was merely a jobs program for unemployed PhDs who lacked a real commitment to librarianship and wanted a place to "rest until they get another job," as one library school dean put it (Berry III). Yet the leaders of academic libraries generally seem to support the program, viewing it as a way of bringing new talent into libraries and generating long-term support for libraries from the fellows, some of whom later become faculty. Indeed, the fears that the library degree would become valueless or that trained librarians would see their jobs vanish have turned out to be baseless. According to recent survey completed by 22 of 29 CLIR postdocs, fewer than half of the program's alumni continue to work in academic libraries, and some of those people have gone on to get MLS degrees (Brunner). Other alumni now hold faculty positions but praise the program for deepening their knowledge of grant-writing, scholarly communication, intellectual property and digital publishing (Brunner). Despite some problems with defining the role of the fellows on campus, the program has succeeded by producing new leaders who understand the transformations underway in libraries and have pushed forward library projects (Brunner). Whether alumni become librarians or faculty or end up in another career, the experience seems to have made participants passionate advocates for the library and for new models of scholarship. As one former fellow commented, she is now "committed to fostering strong collaborations between faculty and librarians/archivists toward re-shaping the idea of scholarship in the academy" (Hswe). Despite the seeming challenge to the professional identity, the goal of bringing PhDs into libraries is not supplant librarians, but to build "symbiotic relationships between academic libraries and scholars"(Brunner).

So should humanities PhDs who wish to work in a library get a library degree? An MLS certainly does have value. By getting a library degree, you not only develop useful skills such as managing collections, creating metadata, and overseeing digitization projects, but you also attain professional certification and a professional network (Danley). However, several library directors have told me not to bother with getting a library degree, since my PhD and work experience more than prepared me for my position—but they did suggest getting an MBA. Although most PhDs working in libraries do have library degrees, a significant minority (15.5%, according to a 2006 study) have carved out successful careers without one (Lindquist and Gilman). Ultimately whether to get a degree depends on the job that you want to pursue and whether your professional experience could compensate for the lack of an MLS. Although most job postings for professional librarians still require MLS degrees, positions in archives, special collections, and outreach are less likely to have such a requirement, as are those in emerging areas such as digital libraries, information technology, Geographic Information Systems, user studies, and scholarly communication (Lindquist and Gilman). Some academic libraries aim for flexibility in hiring by requiring "ALA-accredited MLIS or equivalent" (Ad Hoc Task Force on Recruitment & Retention Issues). If you do want to pursue a library degree and prefer the flexibility of a distance education program (whether 100% online or mostly online), many library schools offer that option (American Library Association, "Education for Librarianship").[5] Combining the subject knowledge represented by your PhD with the technical training that a MLS provides will likely make you an attractive candidate on the library job market, although some search committees may think that you are overqualified or a "prima donna" (ACRL).[6]

IV. Advice for Humanities PhDs Considering Alternative Academic Careers

Based on my experiences working as a librarian, I offer the following advice to humanities grad students contemplating other non-faculty positions, as well as to people just entering alternative academic positions in the digital humanities.

1. **Get past the shame.**

I recently met with an English grad student at Rice who was exploring alternatives to a tenure track career. Although she was comfortable with not following the faculty route, she said that many of her fellow grad students felt ashamed to even consider another career. For instance, when English graduate students attend seminars on non-academic jobs, they tend to sit by themselves and pretend like they are not really there, as if considering another career is a failure. If you can achieve personal and professional satisfaction by pursuing another career, why box yourself in? Visit one of the web sites

that makes humanities grad students aware of non-academic career options, such as Beyond Academe, SellOut, Versatile PhD, or the wrk4us listserv.

2. **Learn about other options.**

You can feel trapped by graduate school, as if it is an assembly line that ends in one of two destinations: faculty position or reject barrel. But you can steer your own career. Find out what you can do with a humanities PhD. Invite someone who has a job you might enjoy out for coffee so that you can learn about his or her career and make a useful contact. If you are curious about what digital humanities folks do during the course of a day, read some of the blog posts that are part of the Day of Digital Humanities ("Day in the Life of the Digital Humanities 2010").

3. **Follow your curiosity.**

Rather than single-mindedly focusing on your dissertation, pursue a range of interests. Often those interests will not only make you a more balanced, happy person, but they will bring new perspectives to your academic work. For example, while working at the Electronic Text Center, I grew interested in textual editing, so I audited a course on the topic, even though I had completed my coursework and was supposed to be well into the dissertation phase of my PhD. For my class project to create an online critical edition of a section from Donald Grant Mitchell's *Reveries of a Bachelor*, I traveled to the Beinecke Library to study their Mitchell collection and became intrigued by a collection of fan letters to Mitchell. My analysis of this collection formed the basis of my favorite dissertation chapter, which later appeared in revised form in the journal *Book History*. The online edition that I created (with help from David Seaman, who did the Perl programming) both developed and demonstrated my editing and text encoding skills.

4. **Develop your skills**.

When I was beginning graduate school in English, my husband met a woman who had recently completed a PhD from my program. She passed on some hard-won advice: develop your skills so that you have job options. I followed this advice perhaps too enthusiastically, working at the Writing Center, Electronic Text Center, as a research assistant at the Darden School of Business, and for the online journal Postmodern Culture. With each job, I not only learned important skills and gathered more experience for my resume, but I also learned more about my own capabilities and interests. When I worked as a research assistant at Darden, for example, I realized that I

could be just as engaged studying business ethics or environmental entrepreneurship as literature or cultural history. I just like digging into a topic and synthesizing what I have learned. My job as managing editor at *Postmodern Culture* demystified the publishing process, sharpened my editorial skills, and helped me develop a professional persona as I communicated with authors, editors, and reviewers. Taking these jobs probably delayed me finishing my PhD, but they also introduced me to alternatives to a tenure track job, built my confidence, and gave me technical, managerial, and communication skills valuable in the marketplace.

5. **Build a community on and beyond campus.**

Graduate school can be isolating, but I got through thanks to the support of others: my husband, who gave me love and good counsel; my dissertation group, which not only offered me helpful feedback on my dissertation but also friendship; and my job at the Etext Center, which provided structure, community, and a sense of purpose.

Given that one of the aims of the digital humanities is explore networked scholarship, aspiring digital humanists should establish a presence online. Follow digital humanities folks on Twitter, and tweet, yourself.[7] You can learn about what's going on in the community, establish connections, and build your reputation. Perhaps most importantly, you gain an understanding of what social media means for scholarship. Share your ideas by making them openly accessible through your university's institutional repository or a disciplinary repository such as SSRN. Read blogs, comment on them, and start one up yourself. I was pretty invisible in the digital humanities community until I launched a blog called "Digital Scholarship in the Humanities." To my surprise, people actually read the blog, thanks to some much-appreciated shout-outs from Dan Cohen, Steve Ramsay, and others. Participating the network of digital humanists can be good for your career, leading to speaking and writing invitations, committee appointments, and even job inquiries. But it's also, in my view, the point of an academic career: to share ideas, understand other perspectives, and reach beyond the ivory tower.

Once you land a job as a digital humanist, you should continue to develop your skills and participate in a professional network. You also need to:

1. Make known your unique skills.

Since "digital humanist" and "digital librarian" are still not well-known roles on college campuses, you cannot assume that people will come to you. You need to go to them and let them know what you can offer. As an introvert, I feel a little sick to my stomach at the thought of having to sell myself, but I am beginning to figure out how to do this in a natural way. Participate in the life of the university. Go to lectures and stick around for the reception afterwards. Search the university's web site for researchers and instructors who might have similar interests, then invite them to lunch or coffee. Be present on the web yourself. Organize special events that showcase what your group can do. Send story suggestions to the folks in campus media. Cultivate your relationships with possible collaborators, such as the historian with a passionate interest in public history, the computer scientist who works in text mining, or the graduate student who wants to get engaged with digital projects.

2. Be flexible.

Sometimes you may not get exactly what you want, but you can still advance your goals. I long to teach, ideally semester-long courses in the English department. Although the English department insists that teaching is reserved for tenure-track faculty, I still have been able to do some teaching, including a three-credit course called "The Documentary Across Media" that was sponsored by one of Rice's residential colleges. Since I have both an English and library background, faculty were eager to involve me in helping grad students learn how to do research, so I teamed up with the librarian for English to organize workshops on research skills and professional issues such as academic publishing. Likewise, I've collaborated with Communication instructors to offer a series of in-class workshops on digital storytelling, helping to integrate multimedia into the curriculum.

V. Recommendations for Institutional Decision Makers

Many PhDs with a background in digital humanities have thrived, whether as leaders of digital humanities centers, librarians, or faculty members. However, to enable them and succeeding generations to shape satisfying careers and have an even greater impact, humanities departments, academic administrators, professional organizations, and funders need to make some changes to the culture and structure of professional education and academic work.

1. Get past obstacles based on status.

In many ways, academia is a caste system (Altbach). Faculty are the Brahmins, but even within the faculty there are distinctions based on tenure status, seniority, reputation, and so forth. Staff serve the faculty and students, but have their own hierarchies. Libraries, for instance, distinguish between professionals and paraprofessionals. At some libraries, a tenure system further differentiates librarians by rank and reflects the profession's desire to be considered similar to faculty, with its own commitment to research, teaching, and service. Of course, such hierarchical systems serve a purpose, providing a path to advancement, recognition for achievements, validation of professional authority, and access to resources. But they can also become too rigid, rewarding people for past success rather than for current efforts, excluding those who don't have a "valid" background, and generating anxiety for those striving to secure their place within the system. People like me—who have doctorates but work in academic support groups such as the library—don't quite fit into the hierarchies. We aren't faculty, but we aren't exactly librarians either. Yet we can help to push forward collaborations that will, I hope, demonstrate that all who contribute deserve respect, credit, and opportunities to advance.

My university tends to be collegial. I've teamed up with a faculty member on a major grant and have been invited to lunch by a dean to talk about education and XML. However, I have run into barriers because I lack faculty status. When I asked the English department if I might teach courses such as digital humanities or digital storytelling, I was told that the dean did not want non-tenure track faculty teaching. (When I asked the dean about this, he said he didn't want non-tenure track instructors teaching *introductory* courses, but had no problem with them teaching *some* courses.) Likewise, when I inquired about getting one the university's research centers to sponsor a digital humanities working group, I received general support for the idea, but was informed that I would need to find a faculty member to submit the proposal and lead the initiative. I got the same answer when I invited the center to co-sponsor a lecture by a leading digital historian—good idea, keep us posted, but a faculty member needs to make the request. I don't mean to inventory personal affronts (told from my own admittedly biased perspective), but to offer an honest discussion of some of the barriers that people in positions like mine may face as they try to initiate change. The research centers have generally been supportive, collaborating with the library on digital scholarship initiatives and treating both faculty and non-faculty with respect. I realize there may be good reasons for policies that require faculty to lead initiatives. Research centers exist principally to promote faculty research; in fact, funding guidelines may be written so that faculty must assume responsibility for projects sponsored by the center. Faculty have the reputation and connections to attract others to collaborative initiatives. Students deserve to be taught by qualified professionals (although I think I am one), and the university should not exploit people who get paid far less than tenure-track

instructors. Removing all hierarchies isn't practical and may not be wise given the importance of faculty self-governance and academic freedom. However, at least the system can be more flexible. Good ideas can originate from beyond the faculty ranks, so there should be ways to facilitate this exchange, such as opportunities for qualified non-faculty to teach courses, participate in research seminars, and even apply for funding for campus-based pedagogical or research projects. Many research centers aim to facilitate interdisciplinarity by fostering dialog across disciplines and between faculty and grad students, but staff should also be included in the mix, particularly if they can offer unique expertise on the topic. Staff can not only serve, but also lead, if given the opportunity.

I have seen that if a set of skills is unique enough and in demand, the academy may be willing to open itself up a bit. My husband, Rice's director of sustainability (a position based in Facilities and Engineering), is one of the university's leading experts on environmental sustainability. Although he has a master degree in urban and environmental planning rather than a Ph.D., he serves as associate director of the Center for the Study of Environment and Society, co-teaches courses on sustainability, co-chaired a major conference on the future of cities, is a professor in the practice of environmental studies of sociology, and leads many of the university's environmental initiatives. The operative word is "co-"; since he does not have a PhD and is not faculty, he is not able to assume full responsibility for classes or for overseeing a center. However, he is having a significant impact on the university because he collaborates so well with faculty, students, administrators, and community members. Further, he is knowledgeable, capable and collegial, can see across (and is not restrained by) disciplinary boundaries, has a deep understanding of the environmental issues facing the university, and knows how to connect the right people with each other. He also has the advantage of coming to the university at a time when interest in sustainability has been exploding, thanks to growing student engagement and the university's own commitment to reducing its environmental impact. I don't see the same degree of interest—yet—in digital humanities as in environmental sustainability, but I keep his example in mind when I'm feeling constrained by academic status.

2. **Make graduate students aware of alternative academic and non-academic careers.**

Alternative academic careers are by no means a new trend. Humanities PhDs have historically taken jobs in academic administration, archives[8], libraries, information technology groups, academic publishing, professional organizations, scholarly editing, and so forth. But the core expectation is that a humanities graduate student is bound for a position as a tenure-track faculty member, even though the reality often does not

match that assumption. In the sciences, by contrast, graduate students know that they can find jobs not only as faculty members, but also working as researchers for industry or in governmental labs, even if their first intention is to land a tenure-track job.

Graduate programs should make students aware of the variety of opportunities open to them, celebrate *all* employment successes, and offer training and mentoring for those interested in alternate tracks. I recall my graduate program trumpeting every new tenure-track appointment, but saying nothing about those who landed good alternative-academic or non-academic positions. Indeed, the department's web page today inventories every university where a recent graduate landed an assistant professorship, but there is no word about those who finished their PhDs and have gone onto successful careers outside of the faculty track, such as the managing editor of a major editorial project, the director of a university Women's Center, and the director of a digital scholarship center, just to name a few (Department of English at the University of Virginia).[9] Perhaps that's a wise decision from a PR perspective, since potential candidates for graduate study want reassurance that they can get a tenure track job by going to UVA. But such an approach does nothing for morale or for making students aware of other options.[10] Likewise, career counseling should focus not just on preparing students for the faculty job market, but for developing and marketing themselves for other types of careers. Mentoring programs that link students to professionals with PhDs would help students learn about other opportunities and establish professional networks. If you're lucky (as I was), faculty advisors will support you in your decision to pursue an alternative academic career; if you're not, you may feel like you are letting your advisor—and yourself—down.

3. Enhance educational opportunities for aspiring digital humanists

How should one acquire the skills necessary to pursue an alternative academic career in the digital humanities? I and most of my digital humanities colleagues who came of age in the 1990s learned on the job, which gave us a practical context for developing skills (you learned because you had to), immersed us in collaborative work, and gave us the satisfaction of producing scholarship that had public visibility and significance. I would argue that any DH program should include a requirement that students learn by doing, such as through a practicum or an internship, but unfortunately not everyone is at an institution that offers such opportunities. I know, and I've heard my compatriots say, that formal training would have kept us from making mistakes, allowed us to work more efficiently, and given us a broader way of thinking about our work and its possibilities. I would even now benefit from training in project management, programming, text analysis, metadata creation, digital curation, statistics, visualization,

geospatial scholarship, video production, and web design. In addition to receiving practical training, I believe that aspiring digital humanists should understand key issues in the field. Although I didn't take any for-credit courses on digital humanities in graduate school, I attended many sessions of "'Is Humanities Computing an Academic Discipline?' An Interdisciplinary Seminar," which brought experts in digital humanities such as Willard McCarty, Geoffrey Rockwell, Susan Hockey and Lou Burnard to discuss the significance of humanities computing and explore whether Virginia should set up a degree program (Nowviskie and Unsworth). The seminar convinced me that practical training should be complemented by more theoretical and self-reflexive analysis of digital humanities, its purposes, and methods. In addition, digital humanists need a deep understanding of the methods and problems in their "home" humanities discipline.[11]

Already there are several options for those wishing to pursue training in digital humanities, including degree programs, coursework, workshops and institutes, unconferences, and internships. If you are committed to a DH career, you may wish to enroll at an institution that offers a graduate degree in digital humanities or digital arts and culture, such as Kings College London, Georgia Tech, the University of Alberta, or the University of Glasgow.[12] But if you want to keep your options open, you may decide to go to a university that is strong both in your academic discipline and in the digital humanities, such as Virginia, Nebraska, Maryland, Stanford, the University of Victoria, or George Mason. Such universities may offer coursework in digital humanities, but more importantly they would provide graduate students the opportunity to participate in cutting-edge digital projects.

In addition, the digital humanities community offers intensive workshops focused on particular methods or skills. For example, the NEH Institutes for Advanced Topics in Digital Humanities provide advanced graduate students and scholars the opportunity to explore topics such as advanced text encoding, game studies, programming, high performance computing, computer simulations, or digital publishing. At the University of Victoria's Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI), participants take training workshops that focus on practical skills such as fundamentals of digitization, data analysis, Geographic Information Systems, and project management (Meloni, "Reporting from 'Academic Summer Camp': the Digital Humanities Summer Institute"). Likewise, THATCamps, which are now held around the world, offer participants the opportunity to learn by actively constructing knowledge in hackfests and seminar sessions ("THATCamp"). Some THAT Camps also sponsor "BootCamps," workshops that take place the day before THATCamp begins and focus on topics such as web design, user design, mapping, scholarly communication, and particular

technologies such as WordPress or Omeka ("Plan a BootCamp"). As regional digital humanities networks such as DH SoCal emerge, we may see local groups coordinating professional development opportunities ("DHSoCal"). Not only do programs like the NEH Institutes, DHSI, and THATCamp allow participants to develop new skills, but they also build community, seed collaborations, and foster new projects.

Although there are already excellent training opportunities in the digital humanities, I think the community can go further in broadening access to digital humanities education, offering more flexible options for acquiring credentials, and providing opportunities to participate in research communities. I propose:

1. Exposing humanities graduate students to fundamentals of digital humanities through a methods course.

What it means to do research in the humanities is changing as a result of digital collections such as Google Books, new methods of analysis such as text mining and geospatial scholarship, and electronic publishing. To prepare students to produce and disseminate research in the digital environment, PhD granting institutions should offer an interdisciplinary methods course in digital humanities—or, at the very least, provide a module on digital humanities as part of an existing methods course. If universities lack faculty to teach such courses, departments can turn to qualified librarians, IT professionals, research staff, or multidisciplinary teams.

2. **Providing internship opportunities.**

By serving internships, graduate students are immersed in real-world problems, get an "insider's view" of a profession, reflect on their own graduate training and professional possibilities, gain useful skills, and participate in a community beyond their graduate program ("Graduate Students & Internships"). Humanities departments should collaborate with career centers to provide more opportunities for graduate students to hold internships in the digital humanities (and perhaps award funding or course credit for completing these internships). As one possible model, the community can look to the IMLS-funded iSchools and Digital Humanities program that enables students at three leading information schools to intern at three top digital humanities centers ("About"). Why not expand this program from information schools to humanities departments?

3. Holding a doctoral consortium at the annual Digital Humanities conference.

To enable graduate students who are working in the digital humanities to get feedback on their work and connect with other researchers, the digital humanities community should follow the lead of the computer science community and consider sponsoring an annual doctoral consortium in conjunction with the annual Digital Humanities conference.[13] For example, the Joint Conference on Digital Libraries doctoral consortium convenes an international group of doctoral students who are just beginning work on their dissertations ("Doctoral Consortium"). Students present their work to a panel of experts, who offer recommendations on the dissertation project as well as more general professional advice.

4. **Defining elements of a digital humanities curriculum.**

Recently the Humanist listserv featured a discussion of the minimal skills for a digital humanist. While some argued that generating a skills list would narrow the discipline and orient it towards professional rather than academic preparation, I believe that coming to a loose consensus about key knowledge and skills will help the discipline continue to define itself and build common ground ("23.760 skills for humanities computing"). The community can develop a flexible, dynamic "core curriculum" (or checklist) that aspiring digital humanists can use to plan their education, graduate programs can draw from in building their own curricula, and experienced digital humanists can employ to identify gaps in knowledge.[14] Rather than narrowing the discipline, the curriculum should serve as a starting point, and it should evolve to incorporate emerging specialties and new knowledge. This curriculum can provide the basis for a series of free, customizable, open access modules on important theories, skills, methods, projects, and problems in the digital humanities.[15] These web-based modules could be used in semester-long courses, workshops, or by mid-career scholars (and others) who want to enhance their skills.[16]

5. **Launching a flexible certificate program in digital humanities.**

The digital humanities community should offer an advanced certificate in digital humanities that would allow participants to acquire essential skills and professional validation in a flexible way.[17] Such a program might be especially attractive to those who have a strong interest in digital humanities but do not have opportunities to participate in DH projects at their home institutions. Since those who might be interested in such a program live all over the world and are typically already engaged in graduate study or professional careers, the graduate certificate program should be offered mainly online, although there should be occasional face-to-face meetings to build community and promote work on collaborative capstone projects. Already online

certification programs are offered for areas such as digital curation (University of Arizona School of Information Resources and Library Sciences); digital libraries (School of Information Studies, Syracuse University); and GIS (The Johns Hopkins University Office of Advanced Academic Programs). The digital humanities seem ripe for such a program as well. Perhaps this program could be offered through collaboration between a digital humanities program and an information science school. Many information schools already have experience administering distance learning programs and professional certificates, as well as growing expertise in digital humanities. Of course, there would be administrative hurdles to clear, but such a program could build on existing collaborations such as the iSchool-Digital Humanities Center Partnership (Conway et al.). Alternatively, leading digital humanities departments (and possibly I-schools) could collaborate to offer a multi-institutional certificate program that would reflect the strengths of different institutions, such as text mining at Stanford and UIUC, application development at CHNM, and digital curation and preservation at Maryland. [18]

6. Support alternatives to the traditional dissertation monograph.

By writing a dissertation, graduate students learn how to do scholarly research and craft a coherent scholarly argument, produce visible proof of their expertise, and often lay the groundwork for their first book. But for researchers interested in digital humanities and/or an alternative academic career, a traditional dissertation monograph may not provide the best preparation or credential. Graduate programs should support alternatives to the traditional dissertation, such as an electronic edition, collaborative project like a participatory community history site, a tool and accompanying essay, or a suite of interactive, multimedia essays. Recently MLA President Sidonie Smith articulated her support for this idea, arguing that re-imagining the dissertation would "better prepare our graduate students to navigate a scholarly environment in which the modes of production are increasingly collaborative, the vehicles of scholarly dissemination increasingly interactive, the circulation of knowledge more openly accessible, and the audiences for which we compose purposefully varied" (Smith).

7. Provide more postdoctoral fellowships in the digital humanities.

In the sciences, the typical route to a research career requires holding a least one postdoctoral fellowship. Science postdocs often assist the supervising faculty member in running the lab, thus acquiring skills in managing research and mentoring students as well as deepening their own research profile. In the humanities, there seem to be fewer postdocs, and most of these focus on individual research or on teaching rather than on

collaborative research.[19] Digital humanities centers, libraries, and other organizations should sponsor postdoctoral fellowships that allow junior researchers to help run collaborative projects and learn advanced skills. However, the community should avoid problems that have afflicted some science postdocs, such as low pay and failure to receive useful feedback from supervisors. The digital humanities community can look to recommendations provided by the National Postdoctoral Association, which works to improve the situation of postdocs in the US and defines core competencies that postdocs should seek ("National Postdoctoral Association").

8. Provide long-term professional opportunities for digital humanists by establishing stable research staff positions.

To build and maintain the cyberinfrastructure to support digital scholarship in the humanities, skilled research staff are needed (American Council of Learned Societies). But translating that need into actual jobs will require support from universities, grant agencies, and foundations. Participants in the CLIR postdoctoral program articulated a concern that I've heard expressed by another person interested in a career in the digital humanities: What next? (Brunner). What are the opportunities for professional advancement in digital humanities? Many agree about the need to reform the evaluation process for tenure so that faculty can win credit and advance based on their digital scholarship—but what about creating a path to advancement for professionals who have opted out of the faculty track and are working in alternative academic careers, doing the planning, development, and project management work that is essential to digital humanities scholarship? As Tom Scheinfeldt argues, "With the emergence of the new digital humanities, we need some new employment models" (Scheinfeldt, "Making It Count"). Scheinfeldt calls for a "third way," one that values research but is not part of the tenure system. As "Managing Director of the Center for History & New Media" and "Research Assistant Professor," Scheinfeldt has a "third way" position.[20] Although this kind of position lacks the security of tenure, it also offers more freedom to collaborate, focus on research, experiment, and manage one's own professional development. Such a position looks attractive to me, since it would give formal recognition to research as part of my professional portfolio. For digital humanists who work in libraries, perhaps there could be opportunities for joint appointments with a humanities department or research center. What would it take to create more "third way" positions?

Initially I thought that the "research scientist" role common in the sciences might provide one model for the digital humanities professional, but I am troubled by the low status and job insecurity that many in these positions face. Although titles given to

research staff vary from university to university, Rice University employs research faculty, who are known as "Faculty Fellow, Senior Faculty Fellow, and Distinguished Faculty Fellow" depending on seniority, as well as "research support" staff such as research scientists and research technicians (Rice University, "Research Faculty"; Rice University, "Research Positions"). Research faculty and staff typically must win external funding for their positions, lack tenure, do not teach (although some may serve as dissertation advisors), and often hold a lower status in the university. According to a 1994 study of non-faculty soft-money astronomers, "they are often perceived as being of lesser quality and importance than their faculty counterparts," even though they make equal contributions in terms of research productivity and professional service and contribute valuable organizational and managerial expertise (Cardelli). Not surprisingly, morale among non-faculty astronomers was low. Similarly, in the life sciences, "the staff scientist positions that have evolved often pay little more than a senior-postdoc position and offer little job security," as well as failing to provide much research autonomy (Stephan). Perhaps the professional research staff track is still appropriate for many digital humanities professionals, but the community should make sure that they enjoy respect, fair pay, and opportunities for advancement.

VI. Professionalize?!

How can we come together as a community to advance the goals I've outlined above? A variety of approaches will likely be needed, including garnering the support of academic administrators such as deans, library directors, and provosts; teaming up with scholarly organizations such as AHA and the MLA to address issues such as evaluating digital scholarship; and working with grant agencies such as the NEH and Mellon Foundation to fund professional development programs. Many of these efforts are already underway. But perhaps an overarching strategy is to strengthen professional organizations in the digital humanities and orient them toward these goals. A professional organization can promote professional education, advance the profession's status, foster communication among members, research and disseminate understanding of issues and innovations important to the profession, nurture young professionals, recognize and celebrate success, and define community standards and best practices. [21] Some professional associations focus on establishing boundaries and defining who "counts" as a professional, reflecting their origins as part of the shift toward professionalization in the nineteenth century. Perhaps professional associations in the digital humanities can reflect a contemporary notion of the professional as one who builds knowledge through collaboration, participates in professional networks, and develops new skills to confront emerging challenges.

Whereas the MLA represents language and literature scholars and the American Historical Association (AHA) brings together historians, no single group represents digital humanists, who affiliate with different disciplines and professions. However, the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO) already serves as a sort of umbrella organization for the digital humanities, linking together the Association for Literary and Linguistic Computing (ALLC), the Association for Computers in the Humanities (ACH), and The Society for Digital Humanities / Société pour l'étude des médias interactifs (SDH-SEMI), so it might be the appropriate group to undertake these efforts. In addition, perhaps centerNet, a coalition of digital humanities centers, can promote professionalization, although I think the effort should extend beyond centers. ADHO has been criticized for focusing too much on text encoding, so it should continue to reach out to different areas of the digital humanities community, such as scholars in media and software studies, mapping, and digital rhetoric.[22] Perhaps ADHO can also build relationships with networked communities such as the Digital Classicists, Digital Americanists, and Digital Medievalists and professional associations such as the AHA, Association of Internet Researchers, Society for Cinema & Media Studies, the New Media Consortium, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), and Association for Computing Machinery (ACM).

In suggesting further professionalization as one way to advance the digital humanities, I am conscious of an irony: I have been frustrated by the defensiveness of the library profession, even as I respect how the American Library Association (ALA) promotes librarianship and fights for important causes such as privacy, intellectual freedom, diversity, net neutrality, and a balanced approach to copyright. Although I think digital humanities groups like ADHO and ACH can learn from long-established organizations such as the American Library Association, they should not try to imitate them, since there are important differences in scale, history, mission, and priorities. Whereas the ACH[23] was founded in 1978, the ALA started in 1876, so it has had a hundred-year head start in developing as a professional association (although it may be constrained by that history as well). The ALA pursues a broad mission "To provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all" (American Library Association, "Mission & Priorities"). In contrast, the ACH embraces a more focused mission "to encourage by suitable means the appropriate uses of computers and related technologies in the study of humanistic subjects" by sponsoring conferences and "otherwise facilitating contacts and discussion among scholars" (Association for Computers and the Humanities). While the ACH has fewer than 200 members ("ACH Membership Database"), the ALA boasts over 62,000 members, including public librarians, academic librarians, school librarians, vendors, library support staff, and library school students, so it can call on a number of

prospective volunteers ("American Library Association"). Although the ACH is an all-volunteer organization, the ALA has approximately 300 staff members, draws from a budget of over $33 million, and has eleven divisions focused on different areas of librarianship, such as school librarians, collection development librarians, and college and research libraries. The point, then, is not for ACH or any other digital humanities organization to become like the ALA, but to understand how other professional associations have developed, expand its own mission, and more energetically promote education, professional standards, and a professional identity.

Here are some opportunities I see for ADHO or a similar organization to further develop the professional identity of the digital humanities:

Education, mentorship and certification

Traditionally professional associations have played a crucial role in preparing their members for careers and providing credentials. As Robert Martin observes, professional education defines "both the profession and the professional" by determining what professionals need to know and supporting programs that cultivate such knowledge (Martin 545). For example, whereas the American Library Association, with the support of the Carnegie Foundation, actively shaped the education of librarians in the early twentieth century by developing standards for professional education, the Society of American Archivists failed to establish guidelines for archival training until the 1970s, setting the profession behind (Martin). Perhaps ADHO can play a more central role in promoting professional education in the digital humanities. For example, ADHO could establish an online clearinghouse of digital humanities training opportunities, including formal degree programs, workshops and institutes, and internship opportunities. The ACH already has a mentoring program that offers support to graduate students and junior scholars, mainly at the annual Digital Humanities conference; perhaps this can be expanded to become a publicly visible network of established professionals who are willing to act as advisors.[24] As I've already suggested, ADHO could bring the community together to outline the elements of a digital humanities curriculum. Perhaps ADHO could even accredit programs, as the NMC plans to do for new media programs (NMC).

Best practices for credit and intellectual property

As Bethany Nowviskie observes, differences in status among members of project teams can mean that faculty largely control and take credit for collaborative digital scholarship, undermining trust and derailing projects (Nowviskie). Furthermore,

universities can claim intellectual property rights over the project. Project teams should engage in open conversations about responsibilities, credit and intellectual property and value the contributions of all. Perhaps the digital humanities community can craft best practices for managing collaborations, assigning credit, and negotiating intellectual policy rights, ensuring that graduate students and those in alternative academic careers have a voice and benefit from their work.

Research and advocacy

Professional associations often monitor issues that matter to their constituents and push for appropriate policies. For instance, the ALA promotes intellectual freedom, equal access to information, and funding for libraries. In collaboration with groups such as the MLA and AHA, ADHO could advocate for policies that would advance teaching and research in the digital humanities, such as open access to educational resources, networked scholarly publishing, best practices for evaluating digital scholarship, and the core cyberinfrastructure to support digital scholarship.

Developing a statement of professional values and practices

At gatherings like THATCamp, you see the diversity and enthusiasm of the digital humanities community on display, as graduate students trade ideas with established scholars and collaborations come out of conversations and hackfests. Perhaps as the digital humanities grows and becomes institutionalized its inclusiveness will diminish; indeed, as Geoffrey Rockwell notes, there are already grumblings about the lack of inclusion (Rockwell). To counter that risk, perhaps the digital humanities community needs to develop a statement of core values and encode openness into its culture. Such a statement of values would serve two purposes: digital humanists would gain a greater sense of ourselves as a community, and we would communicate that understanding to others. The values could help shape professional education, guide ethical practices, and give the community cohesion, as well as promote public trust (Frankel). Of course, developing a value statement may exclude rather than include, so efforts should be made to make the process of crafting such a statement as transparent, participatory, inclusive and flexible as possible.

We can look to other communities for examples of professional values. For librarians, core values include access, confidentiality, democracy, diversity, intellectual freedom, and service (American Library Association, "Core Values Statement"). Historians' values focus on engaging in "critical dialogue," maintaining the trust of scholars and the public, protecting the "integrity of the public record," documenting sources, and

embracing "mutual respect" (American Historical Association). Although I can find no documents that aim to articulate the values of the digital humanities, recent digital humanities manifestos offer forceful statements about the discipline's priorities ("Manifesto for the Digital Humanities"; UCLA Mellon Seminar in Digital Humanities). [25] Drawing from these manifestos and my own sense of the community, I suggest that the values of the digital humanities might include openness (including a commitment to open access publication), transdisciplinarity, play and experimentation, an appreciation of both theoretical and "thing" knowledge (to borrow Geoffrey Rockwell's terms), collaboration, diversity, and integrity.

Since many leaders in digital humanities organizations are already overstretched, how can these ambitious goals be accomplished? Try going to the network, both by asking for volunteers to take on initiatives and by aggregating existing efforts.[26] As is appropriate for a community that is committed to networked innovation, I think scholarly organizations in the digital humanities should harness technology and rethink traditional modes of getting things done. Just as the digital humanities is innovating in scholarly communication through Twitter, crowdsourced books, and blogs, so it can explore models for the twenty-first century scholarly association, which would combine the flexibility and speed of social networks with the leadership and cohesion of a scholarly organization. Maybe, like the unconference, which drains the formality, pre-generated structure, and dullness from the academic conference and replaces it with collaboration, just-in-time organization, and hacker glee in making stuff, we need the un-professional organization, or the un-scholarly society (although to avoid giving the wrong idea, we should use a different descriptor than "un," such as "networked," "open" or "participatory"). ADHO can crowdsource projects by outlining the challenge, inviting participation, providing seed money for infrastructure (if necessary), promoting the project, and recognizing contributions. It can even invite the community to help generate the list of prospective projects. As a member of the participatory scholarly association, you would pay your dues by doing (OK, you would probably continue to pay monetary dues as well) and use wikis or other technologies to contribute your ideas about the organization's projects.[27] By participating, graduate students could gain valuable experience, connections and recognition, not to mention satisfaction.

There are two big risks with this crowdsourcing approach—too little participation, so that nothing is accomplished, or too much, so that pushy people dominate or flamewars erupt. Given how busy digital humanities folks already are, I think that the lack of participation is the greater risk. I've been a member of enough aimless committees to know that you need a clear charge, resources, and the division of responsibility to get

some things done. But I also have been impressed by the entrepreneurial spirit of the digital humanities community. Someone gets an idea (often through conversation with others), recruits colleagues, works hard, and makes something new, whether a group blog such as ProfHacker, a "multi-campus experiment in pedagogy" such as Looking for Whitman (Gold), or a book such as *Hacking the Academy*. Why not take the same approach to the professional association?

In many ways, the digital humanities provides a model for how to get past differences in status and just get things done. Because of the discipline's practical orientation and collaborative approach, it has more or less avoided the typical academic caste system and offered "a safe and inclusive space where having a faculty position (or not) made no difference" (Rockwell). As Tom Scheinfeldt observes, "collegiality," "openness," and "collaboration" characterize the digital humanities community (Scheinfeldt, "Why Digital Humanities is "Nice""). Whereas most professional conferences typically attract people with the same professional background (such as English PhDs. or librarians), digital humanities conferences typically mix together faculty, librarians, information technologists, programmers, project managers, and foundation staff, but those professional distinctions seem not to matter. The leadership of the Association for Computers and the Humanities (ACH) reflects the diversity of the community and includes research staff based in libraries, digital humanities groups, and educational technology units; faculty in library science, humanities computing, and English; and a dean ("ACH Officers, Council Members, and Liaisons"). Although there are currently no graduate students in the executive council, the 2010 invitation for nominations takes a deliberately inclusive tone: "You don't need to be in an old-fashioned academic job: graduate students have often served on the council, for example, and commitment to the organization and to the field have usually counted for more with the membership than job titles" (Lavagnino).[28] Similarly, the HASTAC Scholars program enables students to participate in discussion forums about innovation in digital humanities and network with people from a range of professional backgrounds (Barnett).

Tom Scheinfeldt suggests that digital humanities' "niceness" results at least in part from its practical orientation, as digital humanists tend to focus on method rather than theory and can settle methodological debates more easily (Scheinfeldt, "Why Digital Humanities is "Nice""). As digital humanists collaborate to build a collection, create a tool, visualize data, or create a scholarly publishing platform, they value the unique skills that each team member brings to the project and learn how to get along. Since the digital humanities has tended to view itself as being marginalized by the academy, perhaps this feeling of exclusion creates a sense of solidarity (Rockwell).

Yet the digital humanities, like any other profession, can get caught up in differences and seem not so nice. Some feel excluded or alienated from the digital humanities, which they perceive as being too focused on employing computers to solve old problems rather than transforming scholarship using social media.[29] Others question whether people at second and third tier universities are being closed out, or whether digital humanities is being defined so narrowly that it excludes media studies (Unsworth, "The State of Digital Humanities, 2010"). As John Unsworth suggests, ultimately these debates are about who gets jobs, but they are also about professional identity (Unsworth, "The State of Digital Humanities, 2010"). Observing these debates, leaders in the digital humanities rightly call for "reflection, grace, and a renewed commitment to inclusion" (Rockwell), expanding the community, and avoiding a bunker mentality (Unsworth, "The State of Digital Humanities, 2010"). As the digital humanities continues to professionalize, the community should pursue its goals in a way consistent with its own values and practices—that is, openly, flexibly, and inclusively.

I suggest further professionalizing the digital humanities with some uncertainty, more in the spirit of opening a discussion than laying out an agenda that I believe must be followed. I wonder if it is even possible to have a single professional organization represent the digital humanities, since it encompasses so much. I do not know how to raise the funds that would likely be necessary to support new initiatives. Most importantly, I worry that further professionalization would mean bureaucratization. I fear that we would lose the fun, open, hacker-meets-scholar culture that has defined the digital humanities up until now, in part because "[t]here is not a traditional path in" (Terras). As my own experience as a digital humanist working in a library has made clear to me, a profession should provide multiple paths to entry. Perhaps professionalizing further will promote exclusion rather than inclusion, focusing on defining who counts as a member of the field rather than what it takes to advance the profession. Louis Menand elucidates "contradictory impulses" in professionalism:

On the one hand, it belongs to the movement toward a democratic society and a free market economy. Professionalism promises to open careers to talent [.....] On the other hand, professions are monopolistic: people who don't have the credential can't practice the trade. (Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas* 101-102)

Historically the digital humanities has avoided creating narrow paths to membership, valuing passion over professional education. Many become digital humanists by serving as apprentices on projects or by pursuing intellectual interests that ultimately

lead them to computers. Yet as Geoffrey Rockwell points out, the apprenticeship system no longer works for everyone, and may be more a function of where you are (at a university with a digital humanities center or a cadre of people interested in digital humanities) rather than what you are passionate about (Rockwell). By establishing model curricula, mentorship and internship programs, and a statement of core values, the digital humanities community can promote opportunity rather than acting monopolistic. In practical terms, inclusive professionalism means opening up more ways into the profession, such as through degree and certificate programs, rather than patrolling a single point of entry.

VII. Conclusion

My account of the conflicts over humanities PhDs entering librarianship highlights anxieties about professional identity. Academic training in the humanities should not become narrowly careerist, and the MLS degree should be respected for providing core training in library values, culture, and methods. But in a time of such rapid change in how research is done and libraries operate, isn't it necessary to stretch professional boundaries and bring in people who are hybrid professionals, scholar-librarians with a deep understanding of both libraries *and* research (Shore)? Rather than narrowing professional identity, we should provide opportunities for people to pursue hybrid careers that link different areas of knowledge. In a tight job market, people with a hybrid background (particularly informatics plus another discipline) claim an advantage, since they help companies respond strategically to complex new challenges by seeing the connections among ideas (Coombes). The same is true in academia. A diversity of people with MLS degrees, PhDs, and other professional backgrounds will promote the vigor of the academic ecosystem.

Sometimes others wonder what I am doing attending a literature conference or working as a librarian. Sometimes I wonder myself. But I have thrived in a hybrid position where I can continually learn new skills and contribute to scholarly and pedagogical projects, and I want other people to have the same opportunities. By collaborating with students, librarians, scholars, administrators, and others, digital humanists can transform the university, advancing new means of producing and disseminating knowledge. According to Jerome McGann, the main accomplishment of the University of Virginia in the 1990s was not producing projects like the Rossetti Archive, but training graduate students who became "the generation of scholars shaping the future of humanities research and education" (McGann). Some of those graduate students are now tenured or tenure track faculty, while others lead initiatives at digital humanities centers. What greater testament can there be to the impact of the digital humanities—that it shapes nimble leaders as well as advances scholarship and teaching?

[1] Virginia eliminated permission in the mid-1990s.

[2] In her presentation, Stewart associated the digital humanities with the professional science masters (PSM), which combines training in entrepreneurship and management with graduate coursework in science or math to prepare students for careers managing labs, running start-ups, or working for government or non-profit groups. On the one hand, this comparison may indicate that the digital humanities is being seen more as training for a technical or managerial career than an academic one. On the other hand, perhaps it would be useful for the digital humanities to incorporate entrepreneurship and project management skills into professional training, particularly for those who are interested in alternative academic or non-academic careers.

[3] Since writing this essay, I have taken a new position as the director of NITLE (National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education) Labs, but I have not revised the essay to reflect that new role. Some of the aims that I mention here—particularly the urge to focus more on research—led me to apply for my new position.

[4] Libraries typically distinguish between professionals and paraprofessionals, in my view relegating people without a library degree to a position that often offers lower status and pay. This distinction originated in the in the early twentieth century as part of the American Library Association's efforts to define professional training by separating clerical from professional work. Since paraprofessionals are now doing much of the same work as professional librarians, some are calling for professional status to be based on competency rather than degree (Oberg).

[5] Ideally participating in programs such as the CLIR postdoc would count toward a library degree; such was the hope when the CLIR program was announced, but it doesn't appear to have panned out (Berry III).

[6] In 1975, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) declared that an accredited master's degree in library science is the terminal degree for librarians (Association of College and Research Libraries).

[7] A good place to discover digital humanists on Twitter is Dan Cohen's list of "editors" for Digital Humanities Now (Cohen).

[8] Some consider a history graduate degree to be a legitimate professional certification for an archivist (Society of American Archivists), although others argue that archivists need the specialized training in processing, arranging, and digitizing collections that a library degree offers (Danley).

[9] Yet I'm heartened to see that the Career Services Office at UVA now includes a web page offering vignettes from both MA and Ph.D. students who pursued alternative-academic and non-academic careers in fields such as publishing, journalism, development, and new media design and production ("Alumni Spotlight: Careers Beyond Academe").

[10] The MLA does include a brief page on non-academic jobs on its web site, but it might consider creating a more substantial guide similar to the American History Association's *Careers for Students of History*.

[11] For example, King's College London requires prospective students for its Digital Humanities PhD program to have a "master's degree in a relevant subject," since disciplinary knowledge is necessary to explore "the intersection of computing" and the humanities (Centre for Computing in the Humanities).

[12] Most of these programs are fairly new and weren't available for people who completed their graduate training in the 1990s (Terras).

[13] The Digital Humanities Summer Institute at the University of Victoria already holds a graduate school colloquium in which students present their work and receive feedback from both established scholars and fellow students; I would like to see such a program expanded.

[14] Already the community has made an important step toward describing foundational knowledge in DH through the publication of *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, which a number of courses have adopted.

[15] To produce and publish the modules, I suggest using Connexions, an open educational platform and content repositories developed at Rice, my former employer ("Connexions"). Connexions enables instructors to assemble "courses" from a collection of modules that can be modified and remixed. Connexions uses the Creative Commons attribution license to facilitate re-use, and all of the modules are marked up in XML to support flexibility and data exchange.

[16] Julie Meloni pitched a similar idea at THATCamp 2010, proposing "Project 'Develop Self-Paced Open Access DH Curriculum for Mid-Career Scholars Otherwise Untrained'" that would develop "bite-sized lessons" on technologies useful to humanities scholars (Meloni, "Project "Develop Self-Paced Open Access DH Curriculum for Mid-Career Scholars Otherwise Untrained"").

[17] A few digital humanities certificate programs already exist, but it appears that these require students to be in residence and already affiliated with the university. For instance, Texas A & M University offers a Digital Humanities Certificate for students enrolled in any graduate program at the university ("Digital Humanities Certificate"). Tulane University offers a Certificate in Archival and Digital Humanities for Masters students that aims to prepare them for employment in museums, libraries, archives and other institutions (Tulane University Department of English).

[18] Participants in a 2009 colloquium on "education in digital scholarship" likewise recommended organizing "collaborative M.A. and Ph.D. programs across universities," as well as creating curriculum guidelines for graduate training (Sehat and Farr).

[19] However, there are more collaborative research postdocs in digital humanities. For example, the INKE (Implementing New Knowledge Environments) project offers a postdoctoral fellowship that requires "collaborating with INKE's Textual Studies team and others, consulting with project stakeholders and potential stakeholders, and liaising with other INKE researchers located in North America and the UK" (Galey).

[20] Other digital humanities professionals who hold positions as research staff include Brett Barney, Research Assistant Professor at the University of Nebraska's Center for Digital Research in the Humanities; Tom Elliot, Associate Director for Digital Programs and Senior Research Scholar at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University; and the recently-appointed Research Assistant Professor at the University of South Carolina's Center for the Digital Humanities.

[21] I should emphasize that my aim is not to bash existing organizations, which I think are doing a great job, but to imagine some ways that they might further engage the problems of professional identity and advancement.

[22] Recent Digital Humanities conferences (sponsored by ADHO) have included more sessions on software studies, digital history, scholarly communication, geospatial

scholarship, visualization, and cultural studies, so outreach efforts may already be having an impact.

[23] I'm focusing on the ACH here because ADHO is an umbrella organization and was founded only a few years ago, in 2005.

[24] I'm currently part of the group that is matching mentees to mentors. Since writing this essay, I was elected to the ACH Executive Council. Since ADHO is an umbrella organization, I now think that an organization like ACH may be better positioned to embark on some of these suggestions, but I'm also aware that it will be difficult for an all-volunteer organization to find the necessary time and resources.

[25] Of course, a manifesto is a different rhetorical form than a statement of values, focused on challenging the status quo and rallying the community rather than defining norms and best practices. A statement of values is drier and more bureaucratic, but potentially more enduring and more useful in daily practice. I elaborate on my ideas about a values statement for the digital humanities in a forthcoming essay for *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, edited by Matthew Gold.

[26] Already ADHO aggregates blogs and links to community efforts to share information, such as the collaborative Google calendar of digital humanities events that Amanda French launched ("Conferences for Digital Humanities, Digital Archives, Digital Libraries, and Digital Museums").

[27] Experiments with participation are already underway. For instance, the MLA Committee on Information Technology (CIT) set up a wiki to collect resources related to the evaluation of digital scholarship (Modern Language Association Committee on Information Technology (CIT)).

[28] I used to be a member of the ACH's nominations sub-committee.

[29] See, for instance, David Parry's blog post "Be Online or Be Irrelevant" and the resulting discussion (Parry).

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On Ant-Lions and Scholar-Programmers

Doug Reside

Alongside the griffins and unicorns in medieval bestiaries frequently appears a fascinating but somewhat less notorious hybrid: the *ant-lion,* a creature with a magisterial feline head and an industrious, formican body. David Badke's fascinating online anthology of bestiaries notes that fantasies of ant-lions likely originated with the Septuagint's mistranslation of Job 4:11 which contains an "uncommon word for lion"[1] that is commonly rendered, as in the King James Version, "old lion" (e.g. "The old lion perisheth for lack of prey"), but in the Greek translation as the "Μυρμηκολέων" — the ant-lion. Although medieval readers (somewhat disappointingly) read a reference to a large, aggressive, and possibly cannibalistic species of ant early Greek writers imagined an actual lion-ant cross-breed which, being the offspring of a carnivore and herbivore, could find no food to eat and so eventually "perisheth."[2] For my entry in this bestiary of alternative career paths in academia, I would like to turn to analogous hybrid: the scholar-programmer, a beast with the head of a scholar (and likely an advanced degree in a theoretical discipline to prove it) joined with the industrial and practical skills of a computer programmer.

The scholar-programmer is not, it should be noted, a software developer, but a scholar for whom algorithms are an important mode of inquiry and communication for work in his or her chosen field. This chapter will particularly examine the scholar-programmer whose interests lie mostly in the humanities. This focus is not chosen because scholar-programmers are only (or even primarily) found in such fields (indeed, scholar-programmers occur naturally in the sciences[3]), but because it is in the humanities that the hybridity is arguably most striking. In this chapter I will examine four possible career paths for the scholar-programmer — the traditional faculty position in a humanities department, a faculty position in a school of library and information science, a research librarianship, and employment in a digital humanities center — along with the concomitant advantages and drawbacks of each.

First though, a word on the qualifications one should attain to become a scholar-programmer seems apt, as one goal of this collection is to plant, to borrow a word from the request that partly inspired it, "signposts" for graduate students in search of a career in academia[4]. First, the humanities scholar-programmer should probably earn a Ph.D.

in the humanities. Although one can clearly function as a scholar without a terminal (or any) degree in one's field, a Ph.D. remains the most widely accepted certification of one's qualifications to participate in the work of the academy. For some of the careers described below, a Master of Library or Information Science might also suffice and may in fact open more gates along certain roads, but for those who think of themselves as a humanities scholars first and programmers second, a Ph.D. demonstrates a clear and inarguable commitment to the field. Technical qualifications are somewhat more flexible. At most universities the computer science undergraduate major is less a course in programming and more a study in advanced mathematics and the theory of information one will encounter in computer science graduate work. This can often be surprisingly useful knowledge; but I do not think every scholar-programmer needs to have it. Instead, a scholar-programmer should be someone for whom algorithmic thinking, that is the ability to think about a problem in mental pseudo-code, comes naturally. Familiarity with a number of different programming languages is important and the ability to learn new languages quickly is essential. This will probably mean the scholar-programmer has taken at least a few programming classes, but some of the best scholar-programmers working today are largely self-taught. The best proof of one's programming credentials, then, is being able to point to an impressive bit of functioning code written (mostly) by oneself on a major code respository such as Sourceforge, GitHub, or Google Code.

One might think that scholars with the above qualifications would be highly valued for the breadth of their skills, but in the current environment the humanities scholar-programmer is far more likely to find no completely suitable professional home and must often either temporarily favor one nature over the other to avoid starving for lack of gainful employment. Many humanities scholar-programmers will first attempt to find a tenure-track faculty position in a relevant humanities department. If it can be found, a faculty job is without a doubt the most widely understood and in many ways the most accommodating place for the scholar-programmer to conduct her research. The advantages of extremely flexible hours, summers off, and the permission (even the expectation) that one research in the field that led one to graduate school are undeniable perks. Certainly, burdensome committee work, teaching uninterested or even antagonistic students, and relatively low salaries and limited travel funds keep the ivory tower from reaching paradise, but these were factors most scholars knew and at least partially understood as they pursued their graduate degrees, and yet many finish undeterred and hundreds apply for most available openings—with the result that few actually find such a tenure track position.

Technical expertise, in most cases, gives the scholar-programmer little advantage in the competition for faculty jobs. Most humanities departments, like any professional organization, tend to select candidates with skills the incumbent employees can best appreciate. Work that is largely based on technical methodologies may seem unfamiliar and perhaps threatening to traditional humanities scholars. Surprisingly, even those few positions now sometimes advertised as requiring a specialty in "digital humanities" rarely require or strongly value the ability to program. Programming is a very difficult and time consuming activity that drains mental energy in a way most scholars only experience when in the midst of an important writing project, and the energy spent writing code takes away from that which could be spent publishing articles and books (the most valued currency to deposit into the humanities CV at present). Even if hired, the scholar-programmer in a traditional humanities department may find it challenging to communicate the value of her work to her colleagues.

For some, a faculty position in Library Science (or as it is now more often called, Information Science) might be an alternative. For probably obvious reasons, the value of algorithmic thinking became clear to those whose work centers around searching, sorting, comparing, and visualizing data rather more quickly than it has for those whose work mostly involves reading books and writing about them, and so technical sophistication is more likely to be understood and appreciated in such departments. On the other hand, writing a monograph on a traditional humanities topic (say, a post-colonial reading of *Beowulf*), even if one's research is supported by clever algorithms, may not earn one tenure in some Information Schools, and a humanities Ph.D. is probably less valuable to a candidate than one in a field directly related to Information Science. Most of the other advantages and drawbacks of the humanities professorship still pertain, though, and the job market tends to be slightly better, so for scholar-programmers whose research fits the Information School paradigm, hopping disciplines might be a viable alternative.

Libraries themselves are also beginning to provide excellent opportunities for scholar-programmers. The practicality of providing resources to scholars who increasingly interact with their content and each other as much online as they do in physical space has forced library administrations to begin to develop the technical capacity of their work forces. Many now seek to hire librarians with technical skills to work on interesting projects, and are sometimes willing to forgo the usual requirement of a Masters degree in Library Science for demonstrable content and technical expertise. Further, many libraries offer tenure-track faculty status to these employees (often at higher salaries than humanities faculty of equal rank). Still the primary mission of most libraries is service to scholarship rather than scholarship itself, and so librarians, despite

their faculty status, often are ultimately treated as service employees and usually have 12-month contracts (without summers off). Further, most digital librarians are responsible, not just for one content area, but for the holdings of the entire library. The work of the humanities scholar-programmer in such a position is therefore likely to drift further and further from that which inspired her to undertake the stress and poverty of graduate school in the humanities.

There is still another place, to (mis-)quote an 11th century bestiary entry on the ant-lion, not of those which I have told you.[5] Over the past two decades there have emerged places known as Digital Humanities Centers that provide amenable ecosystems for such hybrids as the scholar-programmer. For those unfamiliar with the model, digital humanities centers are spaces, usually administratively connected to libraries or humanities colleges, which attempt to combine digital technology with humanities research. I will spend the remainder of this chapter discussing the place of the scholar-programmer at such centers. My two reasons for such disproportionate attention are a) digital humanities centers have come into existence far more recently than the other institutions described above and so the opportunities they offer may be less familiar to most readers and b) although far from perfect they seem to offer the most potential at present for satisfying the diverse passions of the scholar-programmer

Although there is now some variety in what such centers do, many were founded as service units tasked with providing advanced technical support to tenure-track faculty members in traditional humanities departments. The scholar-programmer employed by such a unit would likely find herself working on someone else's research in a relationship that more closely resembled that of graduate student or lab assistant to her supervisor than a true scholarly collaboration. As funding became increasingly available for digital humanities projects (most notably with the founding of the Office of the Digital Humanities at the National Endowment for the Humanities[6]), the mission of many centers began to shift from faculty service to internally generated, grant-funded research. For a few scholar-programmers, external funding meant it was possible to add one's own research project to the work of the center.

Even so, new positions at digital humanities centers are still often classified as "staff" rather than "faculty." It is tempting to think that this status does not matter, but it does, at least, suggest the value with which a university regards the employee to those outside the institution. An assistant professor has a title that clearly defines a stage in a career that is understood both throughout the university and can be transferred to other institutions—an assistant director of a digital humanities center far less so. Still, the enterprising scholar-programmer in this high profile, emerging field can often more

than recover whatever professional status is sacrificed by the staff designation. As a result of the aforementioned increases in funding for digital humanities work, many scholar-programmers now have unprecedented opportunities to receive and oversee large, international research projects at a very early stage in their career. In the five years I have spent as a scholar-programmer at a major digital humanities center, I have been in small and productive meetings with the heads of many of the world's major libraries, a few of the nation's best performing artists, and consider top scholars from around the world my colleagues and friends. As Bethany Nowviske, editor of this volume, tweeted after such a meeting: "struck again by dues-paying crap I skipped in deciding against tenure-track jobs. How many junior faculty sit in on discussions like this?"[7]

Of course, along with the glamour of high-powered meetings and world travel comes the administrative and managerial work that is also, in traditional departments, reserved for more senior scholars. Like department chairs and deans, successful scholar-programmers can quickly find themselves distantly separated from the actual work of humanities research. In large centers, even much of the actual coding is done by those hired on the soft money provided by grants. For many of the scholar-programmers who administer these grants, this "outsourcing" of the programming work feels somewhat like having a graduate student write one's monograph (even if it is based on one's own outline). My colleague Matthew Kirschenbaum observes, quite accurately, that, "Many programmers talk openly of the aesthetics of code, using terms like beautiful or artful in the same way that a grandmaster might describe a game of chess (another formal activity par excellence)."[8] For the scholar-programmer the code is a place of discovery and scholarly expression no less than written natural language. Unfortunately, at large centers, it is likely that the one who conceived a grant project must oversee many others as well, and so is unlikely to spend much time working on the details of the code for the project she initiated. Thus, for many digital humanities programmers, (not all of whom, it should be noted, self-identify as *scholar*-programmers), the service model remains very much in effect; the programmer still works on a project the scholar cannot complete, only now because of lack of time rather than lack of knowledge.

There are, it should be said, very good reasons for an organizational model in which the director of a software project delegates much of the hands-on work to a team. In fact, it is generally the best model for the sorts of projectsthat intend to deliver reusable code that might participate easily in the academic open source ecosystem. These are the sorts of projects that are often funded, and rightly so. The really elegant piece of code written in the course of research by the scholar-programmer which, after having run once or twice, has completed its one and only purpose is not uncommon in more technical

fields, but generally is not (and arguably should not be) funded by public money in the humanities. It must be understood, however, that large digital humanities software projects are more about *programming* and *enabling* humanitiesresearch than about research itself.

Yet many digital humanities centers, including my own, promote themselves as research units (usually to distinguish our work from the service function of, for instance, those groups that train faculty in the use of more common technologies such as blogs and PowerPoint). Clearly, digital humanities centers are places where scholars are exploring more advanced technologies, but to call tool building or interface design "research" seems to stretch the definition of the term well beyond the elasticity of its common interpretation by the rest of the academy. The reality is that while many digital humanities projects produce useful and innovative new software, few by themselves, actually advance knowledge in either the humanities or programming. We abdicate that work to the "content partner," the scholar who oversees and contributes content but does not program. Yet most digital humanities centers have on their staff a few scholar-programmers who could, if afforded enough time, serve as both the scholarly and technical lead on important projects. If digital humanities centers are to become, as most aspire to be, places of research rather than service, they must abandon the anachronistic division between theory and application. Those who want to use new technology for their research should intimately understand it themselves.

Some might object that 1) there are not enough scholar-programmers who can do such work and 2) service and grant work help to justify the existence of an academic unit, especially a new unit like a digital humanities center, in lean economic times. Both objections could be addressed, however, if digital humanities centers became, like most other non-service units on campus, teaching units. As cultural heritage and human experience becomes increasingly digital, the relevance of non-technical humanities scholarship is in danger of diminishing to the point that tax payers, legislators, and donors may someday decide it is no longer worth supporting. Digital Humanities centers are uniquely positioned to begin training a new generation of students for this change, and if they undertake this mission now, few could fault them if they no longer build websites or tools for faculty. Such centers would have to be staffed by scholar-programmers whose jobs would so resemble the work of tenure-track faculty that fair administrators could not ethically withhold the status from them.

Until such a happy future, though, the ant-lion seeks its elusive prey. Which (if any) of the above career paths is best suited for individual scholar-programmers depends, unfortunately, on which part of their nature they are most willing to sacrifice. If one's

scholarly head must be fed by conducting humanities research, a tenure track position in a traditional humanities department is probably the only choice that will satisfy. This prey is as elusive as is rumored, though, and hunting it successfully likely means amputating (at least for a time) one's programmer body in favor of prostheses made of articles and monographs. If, though, working on interesting programming projects in service of humanities scholarship seems sufficiently nourishing, a library job might suit. For those who are unwilling to completely cut off either part of their intellectual selves, and believe in the promise of what might soon be rather than what currently is, a digital humanities center will easily keep a scholar-programmer from starving and could, in time, provide the sort of omnivorous feast for which we hybrids hunger.

[1] http://www.bestiary.ca

[2] Badke's site includes a copy of a 1923 article from *Antiquaries Journal* by George C. Druce that cites J. B. Pitra's translation in *Spicilegium Solesmense*, vol. iii, p. 354, of *Physiologus veterum gnosticorum*: 'Eliphaz the Themanite says: "The ant-lion perisheth for lack of prey". The Naturalist speaks thus about the ant-lion, that its father eats flesh and its mother herbs. If then they shall have produced the ant-lion they produce it possessed of two natures. It has the fore parts of a lion and the hind parts of an ant; so that it cannot eat flesh because of the nature of its mother (or herbs, because of the nature of its father), and therefore it perishes for lack of food.'(http://bestiary.ca/biblios/biblio45.htm)

[3] Scientific publications frequently cite algorithms used in research. Consider, for instance, the image post-processing algorithm "DUSTY", used by astronomers to account for the effects of space dust, http://www.pa.uky.edu/~moshe/dusty/DUSTY_Cites.htm

[4] Brian Croxall's November 20, 2009 tweet: "@nowviskie We just need more signposts helping us get there! Some of us are trying!"(http://twitter.com/briancroxall/status/5899059507)

[5] Qtd from Druce on Badke's Bestiary site: http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast145.htm

[6] More information about the Office of Digital Humanities at the NEH can be found at http://www.neh.gov/odh

[7] Nowviskie republishes this tweet and outlines the circumstances that inspired it at the blog for this project: http://nowviskie.org/2010/alt-ac/

[8] From "Hello Worlds (why humanities students should learn to program)", originally published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* and now reprinted on Kirschenbaum's website at: http://mkirschenbaum.wordpress.com/2010/05/23/hello-worlds/

Space for Hire
Alternate Careers in Academic Inter-Spaces
Tanya Clement

As the Associate Director of "Digital Cultures and Creativity," a new undergraduate program in the honors college at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD), I hold a non-faculty position. I am staff. My degrees were appropriate training for my job. I have an M.F.A. in fiction from the University of Virginia and a PhD in English literature from UMD with a focus on digital and textual studies. I was trained in the digital humanities by doing project work and text encoding at the Institute for Advanced Technologies in the Humanities and the EText Center at UVA, in private industry developing projects such as Early English Books Online (EEBO) and Proquest's Historical Newspapers project, and continuing that work at the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH) at UMD while I worked on my PhD and taught in the English department. In my current position, I create curriculum, teach, research and write, consult with students on projects, and perform administrative duties within what I am calling "inter-spaces" in the university. These are sites of academic interdisciplinary and professional work that happens primarily outside of traditional departmental space. This piece contextualizes and defines two specific inter-spaces in which this work takes place (honors colleges and digital humanities centers) in terms of general trends in the academy towards restructuring, interdisciplinary work, and professionalism outside of tenure-track choices.

I. History: crisis in the humanities and the response

The very nature of humanistic study and of the profession which conducts it has been the focus of much recent debate around the "crisis" in academia. This debate is by no means new. The turn into the new millennium sparked the conversation about knowledge production in the humanities into a firestorm of conferences, talks, presentations, articles, chapters and special journal issues by many humanities scholars seeking to define not only the question of what humanists do in the university, but also matters of professionalism, or how we produce and value our work. The debate constellates among a variety of needs but many of these are the same practical concerns that directly affect #alt-ac scholars in our current, shaky economy, namely: decreased enrollment in humanistic studies; limited opportunities for publishing and therefore promotion; and, finally, a glut of PhDs in a time of decreased numbers of faculty positions.

Two significant critiques are pertinent to discussion of humanistic study in general and modes of professionalization within humanities departments in particular. Many, including the panelists at a 2004 MLA Presidential Forum entitled "The Future of Humanities," agree that the crisis in the academy is in part the result of a perception (by funding sources, institutions, scientists, the general public, and even some humanities scholars themselves) that knowledge production in the humanities is less significant than that in the natural and social sciences. In his opening remarks to the panel, Robert Scholes claimed that "while insisting on the real differences between scientific and humanistic learning, humanists need to use the sciences more and to explain more clearly to scientists what we are doing and why we are doing it" (8). As this introduction might portend, participants of the forum followed suit with arguments that define knowledge in relation to how it is valued in the sciences— with that value evinced in terms of institutional resources, support from funding agencies, a more robust scholarly publishing system, and a greater pay-off in cultural currency. Louis Menand introduces his discussion with an anecdote about the apparent cultural currency even the most "outrageous" scientific theories (such as string theory) receive in comparison with humanities scholars who are expected merely to "confirm common sense" ("Dangers Within and Without" 10-11). It seems from these arguments that perceptions about the humanities stem in part from the misperception that humanistic knowledge is only about process or argument, whereas in the sciences it is about results and products—a misperception that ultimately leads to reductive theories about both disciplines and a reduction in institutional or financial support for the former.

Responses to these criticisms come in many forms, but what is most relevant for a discussion of inter-spaces in the academy are two themes that emerge often in terms of new directions for resolving the crisis in the humanities: "interdisciplinarity" and "professionalization".

The professional humanities scholar's needs have been articulated time and again in forward-thinking terms regarding interdisciplinary work. Geoffrey Harpham contends that humanists are by nature interdisciplinary when they "understand their actual and potential contributions to knowledge as a whole and even to the culture at large" (21). Barbara Herrnstein Smith claims that there is a constant dialogue among humanists who increasingly deal with the natural sciences through their "findings and theoretical elaborations or their associated technologies and social and cultural interfaces." Scientists, she maintains, must answer to the "well-articulated alternative accounts and related epistemologies (largely constructivist and pragmatist)" of historians, sociologists, and philosophers (18). With the exception of Stanley Fish who calls interdisciplinarity a "nonstarter" and contends that work should begin within a given

discipline's desire to articulate its own objectives (only then to be "taken up by someone with a project a million miles from ours,") most scholars describe interdisciplinary work as a crucial aspect of strengthening the humanities in the academy (375, 377).

On the other hand, many who see interdisciplinary work at the very heart of humanistic inquiry also see weakened systems for academic professionalism as the gravest issue in the crisis. In more recent writings, Menand focuses specifically on the crisis and its relationship to scholarly training and the professionalization of faculty. In particular, he sees concern about interdisciplinarity as symptomatic of "a displaced anxiety about the position of privilege that academic professionalism confers on its initiates and about the peculiar position of social disempowerment created by the barrier between academic workers and the larger culture. It is anxiety about the formalism and methodological fetishism of the disciplines and about the danger of sliding into aimless subjectivism or eclecticism" (*The Marketplace of Ideas* 123). Jerome McGann has come to a similar conclusion which he noted recently in a plenary talk at the conference "Online Humanities Scholarship: *The Shape of Things to Come*". Acknowledging a hard road ahead for scholarly publishing and libraries, he maintains that interdisciplinarity and economic instability are not the primary causes of crisis. The primary issue is political, institutional and infrastructural. "Money isn't the problem," he writes, "it's the symptom of the problem of setting university policy at a time when humanities faculties are uncertain of both their public and their intramural position" ("Sustainability").

In particular, "academic service" is a much maligned and poorly understood aspect of academic professional life. Though once highly esteemed, "service" is a term usually relegated to onerous administrative duties or pesky, custodial technology assistance in the classroom or library. Unfortunately, professional organizations have historically done little to ameliorate any misperceptions. For instance, the American Historical Association (AHA) and the College Art Association (CAA), offer little concerning the term "service" in their recommendations for tenure and promotion. The most often cited document of the Modern Language Association (MLA) concerning the definition and evaluation of academic service was written in the 1990s (though the MLA has recently updated its recommendations). Even fifteen years ago, the MLA report acknowledges that "[o]ver the last few decades, the traditional triad of research, teaching, and service has increasingly become a hierarchy, ranked in order of esteem" ("Making Faculty Work Visible" 1). Little has changed. In the 2010 AHA recommendations concerning tenure and promotion, "service" is defined in abstract terms that do little to help readers negotiate its assessment. In the AHA report, "service includes the administrative work necessary to create robust programs and vibrant

connections to the community" ("Tenure, Promotion, and the Publicly Engaged Academic Historian" 2). In the CAA's recommendations for promoting art historians (adopted 1996, revised 2009), service similarly goes undefined but it is triangulated into three different areas of abstraction covering "community," "professional," and "departmental" needs. The fact that these professional organizations simultaneously poorly define and disregard "service" may help to explain why it is at times difficult to attract #alt-ac scholars to the inter-spaces of the university—places where the interplay of teaching, research, *and* academic service is necessary and valued.

This background is essential to a conversation about inter-spaces for #alt-ac scholars, because anxieties about the humanities underlie recent PhDs' attitudes toward "undesirable" jobs outside of academic departments. But what do we—the #alt-ac community—have to do with this state of things, or with what Latour calls "states of affairs" (232) other than, for some of us, to lament our curtailed opportunities to join the fray? What is our concern with this anxiety and uncertainty?

McGann notes that the elephant in the room, from his perspective, is sustainability. From my perspective, we are talking, in this collection at least, about what I see as the trunk of that elephant: the sustainability of professional scholars who work within the academy but are not faculty in departments, who are trained in the mandates of the academy (in teaching, research, and service) but who are not performing these skills within one academic discipline. What do we have to do with it? Opportunities for #alt-ac work are opening up in new inter-spaces, in fissures on the university grounds as ivory towers teeter towards seeming collapse.

II. Inter-spaces for hire: honors colleges and digital humanities centers

Instead of exclusions, fissures, and crises, I'd like to switch metaphors: to gatherings, assemblies, and opportunities. I'd like to offer for consideration university inter-spaces as an arena where #alt-ac scholars can use their advanced training to gather, to assemble, and to create opportunities within the academy. Bruno Latour uses the term "gathering" to signify what he calls "a thing, an issue, inside a Thing, an arena" that results from "a multifarious inquiry launched with the tools of anthropology, philosophy, metaphysics, history, sociology" (246). He posits that it is the humanist critic's job to "assemble" these features and to offer "the participants arenas in which to gather" (246). To begin to discuss the kind of work that #alt-ac scholars do in inter-spaces, I'd like to work with alternate definitions for the traditional university triad of teaching, research, and service. Instead of these, I would like to posit "intellectual work" and "academic and professional citizenship" as the work that happens within university inter-spaces—in part because these terms are introduced in the 1996 MLA

recommendations "Making Faculty Work Visible: Reinterpreting Professional Service, Teaching, and Research in the Fields of Language and Literature" as sites of academic work in the university rather than "discrete categories of faculty work or distinct roles of faculty members." Instead, the terms "intellectual work" and "academic and professional citizenship" are "*the places* where faculty work occurs or is disseminated. Such places include classrooms, committee meetings, the Internet, scholarly conventions, journals, community boards, and so on" (3; emphasis added).

Where are these academic inter-spaces for #alt-ac scholars? As McGann asks, "if the quotas are lifted and these persons come into the university, where do they live? The answer is: outside the departments and traditional faculties" ("Sustainability"). The terms "intellectual work" and "academic and professional citizenship," are useful however, in that they can describe sites where faculty often work ("classrooms and committee meetings"), but they also describe sites where faculty and #alt-ac scholars work together ("classrooms, committee meetings, the Internet, scholarly conventions, journals, community boards, and so on"). These are the university spaces where what Louis Menand calls the "academic" world of departments and disciplines and professors is often more closely aligned with other "non-academic" professions which see their "purpose as something larger and more various than professional reproduction" or "the academic intellectual status quo" (*Marketplace* 154). In other words, these are sites where interdisciplinary work and academic professionalization often co-occur, where the intellectual work and academic training of #alt-ac scholars is valuable and valued professionally.

A. Interspaces: honors colleges

Honors programs in American universities have a history that extends back to the 1930s. Honors colleges are a more recent trend in public universities that began during the recession of the 1980s. Universities considered this smaller, more college-like space within the larger university a good mechanism for attracting high-caliber students who might ordinarily choose a more intimate private education. Most important for this discussion, provosts and deans began creating honors colleges from the perspective that these spaces were inherently interdisciplinary and revolutionary. In contrast to the Great Books curriculum of honors programs of the fifties and sixties, Ted Humphrey, the founding dean of Barrett Honors College at Arizona State University, describes "the nature of an honors education" as one that fosters "moving from a disciplinarily embedded program to a college that organizes honors opportunities for the institution as a whole" (18). Today, 68.6% of honors colleges exist outside of the academic departments and are centralized within their university's structure (Sederberg 28), a fact which encourages Davis Baird, Dean of the South Carolina Honors College, to postulate

that the college provides more than an opportunity for greater "lip service" to interdisciplinary work; rather it is "the vehicle for making it happen. From new courses, to tracks of study, to actual degree programs" (151). Because the honors college is situated centrally within a school's infrastructure and can function as a hub for interdisciplinary initiatives, leaders of an honors college often work to create movements and tectonic shifts within the university. Humphrey describes the leadership of such colleges as those who are "committed to changing institutional culture" (22).

Many #alt-ac scholars have found positions within honors colleges that fulfill their professional interests and for which they are uniquely trained as educators and researchers. Indeed, most universities are committed to equipping honors colleges with credentialed academics. Gary Bell, founding dean of the honors college at Texas Tech University, argues that "Ph.D.-holding college administrators" are crucial because they bring credibility, but they also bring experience with the particular demands of academia. In addition, Bell argues that the honors college experience is a useful place for training scholars in the kind of interdisciplinary work and structural redevelopment that universities need right now: "Assistant or associate deanships are substantial prizes, and in an increasingly professionalized honors environment, honors college leadership can now chart a career path that could mean an ultimate deanship, and perhaps other academic positions of equal or greater rank" (Bell 153). Robert Pepperman Taylor, dean of the honors college at the University of Vermont sees "service-learning programs, prestigious scholarship advising, or the general promotion of multi-disciplinary educational experiments" as the future work of honors college administrators and staff, while Bell call this inter-space "the home for cross-disciplinary orphan institutes or centers" (Taylor 107; Bell 151).

The Honors College at the University of Maryland, College Park opened its doors in the fall of 2010. The Honors program has been a part of the university for forty-three years, since its founding in 1966. Like most honors programs, it was interdisciplinary by nature. Originally, General Honors was a four-year program with a thesis required in an area different from the student's major. During the recession in the late 1980s, the program was restructured into a two-part program: for the first two years, students took interdisciplinary seminars; the second two years were for departmental honors classes. A year ago, the current provost, Dr. Nariman Farvardin, made a call for proposals to the different colleges to come up with two new interdisciplinary "themes" within the developing new Honors College. Two new themes are launching with the new Honors College: the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program (EIP), sponsored by the Maryland Technology Enterprise Institute (Mtech) and the A. James Clark School

of Engineering and Faculty; and Digital Cultures & Creativity (DCC), sponsored by the College of Arts and Humanities and co-sponsored by the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH), the Computer Science Department and the School for Information Science. These represent exciting opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning. These also offer opportunities for revolutionizing the structure of the university and the role #alt-ac scholars can play in a changing environment.

For instance, at the time of this writing, no digital humanities departments exist in the United States. Scholarship in the digital humanities demonstrates that inquiry enabled by modes of research, design, preservation, dissemination and communication relying on algorithms or online networks for processing data deepens and advances knowledge in the humanities. This is a field or a mode of inquiry that engages a wide range of disciplinary perspectives and is represented by programs of study that inflected by— but not necessarily called—*Digital Humanities*. Some argue it constitutes a method. Others insist it should occupy its own department. The fact remains that it is very difficult for universities to justify creating a digital humanities department or tenure-track lines primarily for digital humanities scholars when this mode of inquiry can mean so many things to so many people. This fact also makes traditional hiring channels rare. As the Associate Director of DCC, my position is a staff position and part of the work I do is to create and coordinate the inter-space in the university where the collaborative research and education that comprise digital humanities can happen. A program like Digital Cultures & Creativity creates opportunities for #alt-ac scholars like myself in the digital humanities because ours is inter-disciplinary work that requires alternate modes of professionalization. My work entails thinking about what scholars do in the arts and humanities, in computer science, and in information science from the perspective of the work we need to do to produce culturally literate and critically savvy students. My position within the honors college represents a unique opportunity for professional "alternative academic" work in the university. And the professional training that prepared me for this points us toward another inter-space in the university and more opportunities for intellectual work and academic professionalization: digital humanities centers.

B. Interspaces: digital humanities centers

To paraphrase a 2008 Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) report, a digital humanities center is a physical or virtual space, centrally located, in which humanities research is engaged with new media technologies ("Survey of Digital Humanities Centers in the United States"). As with honors colleges, the "central location" belies a certain inter-departmental positioning that puts digital humanities

into the inter-space of the academy and makes these venues, like more traditional humanities centers, important locations for humanities scholars trained in the intellectual and professional work of academia. Much like honors colleges, humanities centers emerged in the 1980s as a response to the changing landscape of scholarship on campus, from one that was siloed in departments to one that was more interdisciplinary. Likewise, as honors colleges are again seeing a rise in popularity because of the changing economic landscape, so are digital humanities centers increasing in numbers as the nature of research is changing through new technologies, new modes of communicating, and new global online communities.

Digital humanities centers provide scholars with invaluable academic professional training such as experience in creating and working on grant-funded research projects. They have flourished in a difficult economy. In 2006, the American Council of Learned Societies issued a report on cyberinfrastructure for the humanities and social sciences, *Our Cultural Commonwealth* (2006), which recommends that federally-funded agencies support universities in their attempt to create and support digital humanities centers. To this end, in 2008, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) formed the Office of Digital Humanities (ODH) and in the same year the level of attention, discussion, and financial support made available to such centers increased dramatically ("Survey of Digital Humanities Centers in the United States"). This generous support continues through funding agencies such as CLIR, the Institute for Museum and Library Studies (IMLS), the Mellon Foundation, and NEH, among others. Just as outside scholarly publishers determine the value of scholarly monographs, these agencies offer tacit accreditation that has engendered a level of trust within the larger community. This trust encourages various kinds of groups to collaborate with scholars at funded centers, including other smaller centers or initiatives, libraries, museums, or commercial entities like Google or Microsoft. As a result, smaller and newer centers such as the Center for Digital Humanities (CDH) at the University of South Carolina and the digital library initiative at Emory University are gaining support from their local universities. Further, there is a movement toward supporting centers that serve tribal and two-year college communities currently excluded from the benefits of digital technology but uniquely placed to support field work and local community projects. An example of this would be the digital archive of endangered Native American languages now centered at the American Philosophical Society. With more local systems of support and evaluation, unknown or fledgling digital projects also garner trust or imprimatur from agencies, which in turn attracts the attention of #alt-ac scholars who seek to engage academic citizenship or intellectual work in these areas of study. Currently, digital humanities centers and initiatives are a steadily expanding inter-space for these #alt-ac scholars, who gain invaluable experience in project management, funding and resource

allocation, and matters of sustainability and professional development from a variety of humanistic perspectives.

Beyond facilitating cutting-edge research and training scholars in hands-on project management skills, digital humanities centers are uniquely placed to engage the changing pedagogical needs of the university. On the one hand, digital humanities centers profit from their interaction with students of all levels. In his recent and thorough study, "The Landscape of Digital Humanities," Patrik Svenssson notes that "complex, multimodal, interactive and networked expressions in the humanities … are more common … in undergraduate education than in faculty research" (para 132). On the other hand, department deans interested in including digital scholarship as part of the curriculum benefit as well. An #alt-ac scholar within a digital humanities center is often versed in advanced digital research as well as theory and can design and teach undergraduate and graduate level classes that require a unique hybrid of theory and praxis. For instance, one model for this work embodied by Matt Jockers, an "embedded" Academic Technology Specialist (ATS) in the English Department at Stanford University. There, he is a consultant who helps other faculty and staff use technology for research and teaching. Trained with an English PhD, his position evolved from a primarily service position to one in which he teaches "a variety of undergraduate and graduate DH courses for the department, leading a research group that explores macro-analytic approaches to analyzing large literary corpora, and running a small text-mining lab" (personal correspondence). It is clear that #alt-ac scholars have a variety of opportunities for staying engaged with academic professional work within inter- and traditional-academic spaces.

II. Conclusion: a cautionary note about #alt-ac careers and the digital humanities

The emergence of desirable university jobs for #alt-ac scholars interested in pursuing intellectual work that incorporates academic and professional citizenship is a positive trend. As a cautionary note, however, it should be said that fissures opening and towers falling make for a messy environment in which to work.

Patrik Svensson sees the perspective afforded by the digital humanities as offering "a large scope" with "substantial impact and broad engagement," often relating "to the development of the humanities at large, a discussion of the traditional humanities disciplines, and sometimes a call to action" (28). On the other hand, Katherine Hayles warns that "if the Digital Humanities were to spin off into an entirely separate field, the future trajectory of the Traditional Humanities would be affected as well," calling these changes "a political as well as an intellectual issue (qtd. in Svensson 17). Why political?

As Cathy Davidson implores us to realize, messiness is the reason humanist studies are significant in the first place:

In a time of paradigm shifts, moral and political treachery, historical amnesia, and psychic and spiritual turmoil, humanistic issues are central—if only funding agencies, media interests, and we humanists ourselves will recognize the momentousness of this era for our discipline and take seriously the need for our intellectual centrality. (Davidson 2008, 715, qtd. in Svensson)

Heralding the momentousness of the era, we see that digital humanists *do* get funding and *do* receive media attention, but we fall short in recognizing the elephant that remains: sustainability.

On the other hand, tackling issues of sustainability is part of our intellectual work as professional academic citizens in the inter-spaces of the university. For instance, much #alt-ac work needs to be done in the digital humanities from within the inter-spaces created by change. Sarah Toton's position as Digital Scholarship Strategist at Emory University reflects a space to focus on such tensions. On the one hand, she is enthusiastic about serendipitous encounters in which "faculty team up with interested librarians, graduate students, programmers, and archivists to produce innovative digital projects on a one-off basis;" on the other hand, she is dubious about the practice in the long-term: "While this model offers room for creativity and innovation, it lacks definition as well as long-term sustainability. The individuals 'doing' digital scholarship remain individuals: outliers in academic discussions and producers of innovative scholarship that few tenure review boards can effectively evaluate" (personal correspondence).

That fact that academic infrastructure needs building and restructuring is not a bad thing (in fact it's a good thing!) as long as university administrators create a dedicated space from which to do it. Jerome McGann reminds digital humanists that our "hodgepodge character is darkly eloquent, signaling a grave and now widely registered instability in humanities research education," but that signaling change is not enough. "Second, and far more troubling," he writes, "the community of scholars has played only a minor role in shaping these events" ("Sustainability"). One tacit result of expanding the sites for teaching and pedagogy in the university to include inter-spaces such as honors colleges and digital humanities centers is an expanded pool of future educators who have PhDs or at least work experience both in the humanities and are trained in interdisciplinary methods. Mark Tebeau, who founded the Center for Public

History & Digital Humanities, notes the significant role that interdisciplinary digital humanities scholars must play as active academic professionals:

Many of our partners are aware of advanced training programs and their demands in other fields—library science, history and the humanities, as well as in non-profit management because they hire staff with degrees in these areas. And, it is largely through staff expertise and training that professional disciplinary practices become part of organizations and institutional memory. I would venture to say that our partners lack of familiarity with what constitutes the digital humanities has to do with the fact that there are relative few and only recent models for training in the field (personal correspondence).

In a space in which "professional disciplinary practices become part of organizations and institutional memory," #alt-ac scholars have the opportunity to become professionalized in a sustainable culture as active academics who understand the significance of their intellectual work in the world outside of the academy.

Reflecting on issues of change and sustainability in academia, McGann writes that "we have been like marginal, third-world presences in these momentous changes—agents who have actually *chosen* an adjunct and subaltern position" ("Sustainability"). In contrast, #alt-ac scholars have the *opportunity* to choose academic inter-spaces that are "adjunct or subaltern" to traditional departments but are still sites where professional and intellectual development and attention to sustainability actually happens, sites situated in the center of fissures, where #alt-ac scholars are agents of change.

Before I conclude, I think a level of transparency about my present location is necessary: My PhD is in English Literature and my M.F.A. is in fiction, my job is in the honors college at the University of Maryland and my field is in the digital humanities. What does that mean for my research and my perspective on interdisciplinary work, professionalism in the humanities, and this article? Writing this piece from this perspective makes it particular to my experience but it may be generalized to the extent that the digital humanities, like many other academic fields, is inherently interdisciplinary and is not well represented or supported by traditional forms of scholarly publication and academic promotion. The work of the digital humanities can be distilled in a monograph, but it could also become a multi-media, multi-modal, electronic scholarly edition, a database, an encoding standard, a geo-located map of multi-media installations, or a hypertext novel, to name a few instantiations. Or, it can be, as it is in my case, work based in creating curricula and opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students who are becoming versed in an exciting range of

disciplinary perspectives: the arts and humanities, computer science, cultural studies, information studies, new media studies, and communication. Though my background provides the backbone for the examples I use in this discussion, I believe that the interdisciplinary and collaborative inter-space in which I have found myself as the administrator of an honors college program is a location where all humanists find themselves these days, especially those who are not "disciplined" into a particular department in the university.

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Building Digital Classics

Hugh Cayless

Digital Classics

"Digital Classics" is not a recognized sub-discipline of classics; it is more of an underground movement. The Digital Classicist site deliberately avoids defining it, though it could be characterized as the application of digital methods, tools, and "ways of knowing" to the field of classics, broadly understood.

The Digital Divide in Classics

Classics has the appearance to outsiders of being an extremely "plugged in" discipline, thanks to some very high-profile centers and projects. The truth is more complex, and much more problematic for the digital future of the discipline. The distribution of technical expertise and interest is extremely uneven in classics. There are a few practitioners who are far (decades) ahead of everyone else, but the typical attitude toward digital methods as ways of knowing in the discipline is downright hostile in many quarters. Mainstream classics is largely concerned with literary criticism, and while there are sub-disciplines where digital methods are a better fit, the focus of the discipline has long since turned away from "discovery" towards "insight". Put another way, much modern classical scholarship works mainly on the interpretation of texts, and such research (while it benefits greatly from searchable digital copies of the canon) does not require or have much use for digital methods.[1] So you have a situation where digital praxis meshes very well with a praxis that has been, since the 1980's at least, rather deprecated in mainstream classics. Much of the work necessary to implement digital research projects looks like "Lower Criticism" to established practitioners.[2] The practical upshot of this situation is that mainstream scholars working in classics don't need to engage very deeply with the digital world in order to do their work, and indeed, focusing on digital praxis might well be seen by one's peers to detract from "real" research. This situation is perhaps made paradoxically worse by the highly visible successes some digital classics projects have had. Since it is possible for a small number of people (and many of those traditional classics faculty) to make a great deal of progress without much engagement from the community, that community can wait to reap the benefits of their research and development without much pressure to engage with it.

The typical classicist is quite happy to use tools that are built (or are offshoots of research) by the digital few, but probably does not view that kind of effort or experimentation as real "research." As a result, graduate students interested in digital classics are discouraged from that sort of work. They do not go on to become classics faculty, though alternate-academic careers are certainly open to them. I don't know of anyone of my generation who had a digital classics focus in graduate school and who now has a faculty job. We all have #alt-ac or non-academic careers. Alumni of the Perseus Project (one of the flagship centers of digital classics) seem to go into computer science instead of classics, which is telling.

This kind of tension between the traditional humanities and digital humanities is far from unusual. It exists across many disciplines, but the relatively small size of classics means that there are fewer spaces for "liminal" people, like digital classicists, to exist in a traditional setting. It is becoming ordinary to find faculty in English or History with a digital orientation, but this is much rarer in classics. Most of the innovative digital work in classics comes out of centers rather than departments, places like Perseus at Tufts, the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies, and the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at NYU. Because this work is concentrated around a few individuals, there is inherent instability. The death of Ross Scaife in 2008, for example, probably set digital classics back by 5-10 years. One reason for the primacy of centers in digital classics is that the majority of research in classics very much fits the "lone scholar in an ivory tower" mold. Collaboration is a rarity, and since digital humanities projects are nearly always collaborative in nature, they do not fit the mode of work classicists are used to. Perhaps centers lack the cultural baggage that impedes the adoption of collaborative work in the departments.

There are sub- and related disciplines of classics where the digital has found a foothold. In classical archaeology, for example, digital techniques are manifestly useful (and collaboration is inevitable); epigraphy and papyrology have long relied on databases as research tools and are clear-headed enough to realize that the creation of these requires people comfortable with both scholarship and technology. My day job involves working on digital papyrology, and the reception the project is getting from the community seems universally positive.

My own perspective should be made clear here: I gave up on pursuing a faculty position after I earned my Ph.D. for a variety of reasons, some of them the usual ones: I didn't want to move around the country randomly for a few years, I was burned out and frankly having trouble thinking of what to do next, research-wise, and I was ready to settle down and start a family. Some of them were probably less usual: I'm a hacker. I

have an engineer's perspective on theory: present me with a research problem, and rather than theorize about it, I'm immediately going to start figuring out methods to solve it. If there were digital classics positions out there that I could have applied for, I probably would have. So my perspective should be taken with a grain of salt: the academy didn't have a place for me to do exactly what I wanted to do. I'm a frustrated outsider looking in and wishing I could do all sorts of research that my job as a programmer doesn't give me scope for. On the other hand, I love what I do: I get to hack on ancient texts all day, and I have more ideas than I know what to do with. Whatever regrets I might have for not going after that classics faculty job, I think I'm much better off.

So what should a current graduate student interested in digital classics do? The first thing I'd say is that you should feel free to tilt at the windmills—just realize that that is what you're doing. Be aware that if you really want to use digital methods in your work, you'll have to justify its usefulness to people who don't understand it (and might be actively hostile to it). Know that you'll be facing the same reaction when search committees read your sample dissertation chapter. But also be aware that there's life outside classics: there are plenty of careers where your digital skills will be useful (some of them even involving doing digital classics) and you will have something many of your peers lack—a good fallback position. To put it in perspective: of my (small) year of matriculating classics grad students, only one of us works as a professor, and not on the tenure track. Your chances of success were slim to start with.

This all sounds a bit glum, and I don't really mean to be. Upcoming classicists who want their primary focus to be the application of digital tools and methods to classical philology will have a hard time getting jobs in classics departments until the current scholarly fashion loosens its sway. This may take another generation or two, but it will happen. And that doesn't mean they can't be productive members of the academy. Classicists are particularly well-suited to becoming digital humanists. They have already faced the tough intellectual battle of mastering ancient languages, so Java or Python need hold no terror for them. They will already have confronted complex issues of character encoding, just to be able to type in Greek. And since classics is inherently multidisciplinary, they will be used to applying knowledge from multiple domains in the pursuit of solutions to scholarly questions.

So what skills should a DH developer possess?

Becoming a Digital Humanities Developer

I will start by saying that I don't believe there is any particular single "entry card" into DH development. Projects are built in many languages and on many platforms. To say "you must learn Java," or PHP, or XML, in order to become a DH developer is just wrong. What I would say, however, is that flexibility and the ability quickly to acquire new skills is crucial. What will help more than anything is to learn more than one programming language. Classicists tend to have a facility with human languages, since a Ph.D. in the subject typically requires acquiring at least a pair of ancient languages (usually Greek and Latin) and a pair of modern languages (French and German are the usual suspects). Programming languages are not human languages, but the process of learning to understand and use them is not wholly dissimilar, particularly since a graduate student is usually interested in learning to read, rather than speak, these languages.

While I don't believe it really matters where one starts, some advice on where to begin is likely to be helpful. It is very easy to feel overwhelmed and give up when confronted with the universe of possibilities in programming. The best thing to do is to pick a project, and figure out what you need to learn in order to make it happen. You will be helped in this by the realization that you don't need to know everything about a language or piece of software in order to make it work. A lot of programming involves making different software packages work together. For all the arguments about the superiority of one language over another, most programming languages are broadly equivalent in their capabilities, though there are certainly differences in syntax and approach. Acquiring your first programming language will be the hardest task. Look at what's available in your environment. If you want to do a web-facing project, you might have one or more of PHP, Ruby, or Python available to you. Ruby and Python are, in my opinion, better designed languages, but PHP is easy to set up, and is perhaps still slightly more likely to be available in a standard web server setup. It takes about a year to become "fluent" in a language. When you begin, you will be constantly looking at a language reference, and will frequently know what you want to do, but not how to look it up. Just like when you're learning a new human language and must constantly resort to the dictionary when reading, or know what you want to say, but not how to say it idiomatically. Plough through it. Fluency will come.

Once you've mastered a language, you should try learning another. If you're doing web development, you may not have a choice: you will likely have to learn some Javascript, for example, while you're developing your PHP project. It is easy to fall into a programming rut once you see how much stuff you can do with your new language. You will feel proud of your abilities, and will resent it when other programmers of different languages question your language's syntax, power, speed, etc. Languages are

tools, like screwdrivers and hammers are tools. Both screwdrivers and hammers are great at what they are designed to do, but neither of them work very well in the other's domain. Programming languages, and software tools in general, are more flexible than most physical tools, but they are not universal in their application. Once you've learned PHP, you will be able to see how you would do nearly anything in PHP. But PHP may not be the best tool for the job. You won't learn how to choose a better tool until you acquire some breadth. So pick another language to learn. Something different. If you learned PHP first, maybe pick Java next. The same process will apply, but you will acquire some facility with the language faster than you did the first time. After you've learned a couple of languages, you'll find you can pick up a new one in a day (though fluency still takes time).

Classics is largely concerned with text, and there is a strong tradition of using Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) XML markup to encode those texts for publication. So a good place to engage with DH for a budding digital classicist might be to work with the texts published by (for example) the Perseus Project, or papyri.info. Looking at XML is a good way to unpack some of the complexity involved in DH development. Any language you choose to work with will have decent to great support for XML processing, but the picture is complicated by the nature of the medium. XML by itself is merely a way to mark up a document for publication or as a kind of database for asking questions of. For publication, your targets will probably be HTML or PDF. In order to convert XML to something like HTML, the most common method is to use XSLT (XML Stylesheet Language Transformations), which is a programming language in its own right. For asking questions of a corpus of XML documents, there is another language, called XQuery. PHP, Ruby, and Python all rely for their XML support on a library written in C called libxml2, and there is an associated library called libxslt that handles XSLT. While these are excellent, they support only the 1.0 version of XSLT, and XQuery not at all. The only Open Source implementations of XSLT 2.0 is written in Java and the .NET platform. So if you want to use the latest technology, you have to use something based either on Microsoft's proprietary development platform or on the Java Virtual Machine. Interestingly, this does not necessarily mean you can't use your favorite language: there are Python and Ruby implementations for .NET and the JVM. Even with this flexibility, however, you are looking at learning TEI, XSLT, and another programming language as a basis for doing fairly simple web publishing of texts. For something more complex, you might have to learn XQuery and how to run an XML database, like eXist.

One of the most useful qualities a DH developer can possess is one that is nurtured by the grad school experience: being able quickly to pick up enough knowledge about an

unfamiliar subject to do something useful in it. I'm certainly not downplaying the value of expertise and depth, but if you need, for example, to acquire enough background in Hellenistic Philosophy to write a paper for a class in two weeks, or present on it to your colleagues, then you do it. This is not a dissimilar intellectual activity from learning enough about a piece of software to modify it for your own purposes—not to thoroughly understand all its depths—just enough to get something done. Study in classics certainly helps develop the mindset you need in order to do this, and it also makes one familiar with the experience of tackling and mastering subjects that are genuinely hard.

This ability will help you with our hypothetical XML project: you don't need to learn all of XSLT, because there are already stylesheets out there on the web that you can pick up and customize. You need only figure out what you need to change. You will need to learn how to install, configure, and query an XML database, but you won't have to write one from scratch. If you are using a language you're familiar with on the JVM, such as JRuby, you will need to learn how to get it running, and read Java API documentation to find out what libraries to call, and how to call on them, but you needn't necessarily become a Java expert. Being good, as graduate students have to become, at acquiring sufficient knowledge quickly, is a tremendous boon.

Since classics tends to deprecate the development (though not the use) of digital tools and methods, acquiring programming skills in graduate school may be difficult. I did it in two ways. First, I was already a hacker (in a small way). I learned to program in BASIC on my first computer, when I was twelve. But I really cut my digital classics teeth on building an elaborate Hypercard Greek and Latin flashcard system, starting in my senior year as an undergraduate, and continuing through graduate school. I used it to study for my MA comprehensive exams. Second, and later, I worked as a technical trainer for the university's IT organization, did technical support for the Psychology department, built databases for various departments on campus and for the National Humanities Center Library, and worked on image databases for the classics and history departments. The latter project led to a job working for the College of Arts and Sciences as an "Academic Applications Developer." Formal programming classes may or may not help you very much. I've certainly found them helpful, but not life-changing.

My digital side projects and jobs brought in a good deal of income during the latter part of my graduate career, enough that I did not have to go into debt to finance my Ph.D. On the other hand, they probably did affect my focus somewhat. Given the way my subsequent career developed, it was clearly a good thing that I spent so much time on

digital projects, but I have to acknowledge that that focus probably pushed me away from a career as a classics professor.

Being a Digital Humanities Developer

Working for Libraries

In general, libraries are a really good place to work as a programmer, especially doing DH projects. I've spent the last three years working in digital library programming groups. There are some downsides to be aware of: libraries can be very hierarchical organizations, and if you are not a librarian then you are probably in a lower "caste." You will likely not get consistent (or perhaps any) support for professional development, conference attendance, etc. Librarians, as faculty, have professional development requirements as part of their jobs. You, whose professional development is not mandated by the organization (merely something you have to do if you want to stay current and advance your career), may not get an adequate level of support and may not get any credit for publishing articles, giving papers, etc. This is infuriating when it happens, and is in my opinion self-defeating on the part of the institution, but it is an unfortunate fact.

There do exist librarian/developer jobs, and this would be a substantially better situation from a professional standpoint, but since librarian jobs typically require a Master's degree in Library and/or Information Science, libraries may make the calculation that they would be excluding perfectly good programmers from the job pool by putting that sort of requirement in. These are not terribly onerous programs on the whole, should you want to get an MLIS degree, but it does mean obtaining another credential.

It's not all bad though: in a lot of ways, being a DH developer in a library is a DH developer's nirvana. You will typically have a lot of freedom, loose deadlines, shorter than average work-weeks, and the opportunity to apply your skills to really interesting and hard problems. If you want to continue to pursue your academic interests however, you'll be doing it as a hobby. Many libraries don't want your research agenda unless you're a librarian.

Working for a .edu IT Organization

My first full time, permanent position post-Ph.D. was working for an IT organization that supports the College of Arts and Sciences at UNC Chapel Hill. I was one of a handful of programmers who did various kinds of administrative and faculty project

support. It was a really good environment to work in. I got to try out new technologies, learned Java, truly understood XSLT for the first time, got good at web development and had a lot of fun. I also learned to fear unfunded mandates, that projects without institutional support are doomed, and that if you're the last line of support for a web application, you'd better get good at making it scale.

IT organizations typically pay a bit better than, say, libraries and since it's an IT organization they actually understand technology and what it takes to build systems. There's less sense of being the odd man out in the organization. That said, if you're the academic/DH applications developer it's really easy to get overextended, and I did a bad job of avoiding that fate, "learning by suffering" as Aeschylus wrote.

Working in Industry

Working outside academia as a developer is a whole other world. Again, DH work is likely to have to be a hobby, but depending on where you work, it may be a relevant hobby. You will be paid (much) more, will probably have a budget for professional development, and may be able to use it for things such as attending DH conferences. Downsides are that you'll probably work longer hours and you'll have less freedom to choose what you do and how you do it, because you're working for an organization that has to make money. The capitalist imperative may strike you as distasteful if you've spent years in academia, but in fact it is a wonderful feedback mechanism. Doing things the right way (in general) makes the organization money, and doing them wrong (again, in general) doesn't. It can make decision-making marvellously straightforward. Companies, particularly small ones, can make decisions with a speed that seems bewilderingly quick when compared to libraries, which thrive on committees and meetings and change direction with all the flexibility of a supertanker.

Another advantage of working in industry is that you are more likely to be part of a team, all working on the same stuff. In DH we tend to only be able to assign one or two developers to a job. You will likely be the lone wolf on a project at some point in your career. Companies have money, and they want to get things done, so they hire teams of developers. Being on a team like this is nice, and I often miss it.

There are lots of companies that work in areas you may be interested in as someone with a DH background, including the semantic web, text mining, linked data, and digital publishing. In my opinion, working on DH projects is great preparation for a career outside academia.

Funding

As a DH developer, you will more likely than not end up working on grant-funded projects, where your salary is paid with "soft money." What this means in practical terms is that your funding will expire at a certain date. This can be good. It's not uncommon for programmers to change jobs every couple of years anyway, so a time-limited position gives you a free pass at job-switching without being accused of job-hopping. If you work for an organization that's good at attracting funding, then it's quite possible to string projects together and/or combine them. However, there can be institutional impedance mismatch problems here, in that it might be hard to renew a time-limited position, or to convert it to a permanent job without re-opening it for new applicants, or to fill in the gaps between funding cycles. So some institutions have a hard time mapping funding streams onto people efficiently. These institutions aren't too hard to spot because they go though "boom and bust" cycles, staffing up to meet demand and then losing everybody when the funding is gone. This doesn't mean "don't apply for this job"—just do it with your eyes open. Don't go in with the expectation (or even much hope) that it will turn into a permanent position. Learn what you can and move on. The upside is that these are often great learning opportunities.

In sum, being a DH developer is very rewarding. But I'm not sure it's a stable career path in most cases, which, if nothing else, is a shame for DH as a "discipline." It would be nice if there were more senior positions for DH "makers" as well as "thinkers" (not that those categories are mutually exclusive). I suspect that the institutions that have figured this out will win the lion's share of DH funding in the future, because their brain trusts will just get better and better. The ideal situation (and what you should look for when you aim to settle down) is a place

- that has a good track record of getting funded,
- where developers are first-class members of the organization (i.e. have "researcher" or similar status),
- where there's a team in place and it's not just you, and
- where there's some evidence of long-range planning.

Programming is often viewed as a young person's game, though there are many examples that refute the stereotype. It remains to be seen whether DH development is for junior people only. The limiting factors—dependency on funding cycles, lack of institutional support, and lack of status—may tend to push away senior developers. There is some danger that DH development could become just another way in which the academy exploits graduate labor. It will be a shame if that becomes an established

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pattern. The antidote is almost certainly the digital humanities center, with its ability to bring together and support faculty, researchers, and developers alike. In the future, academic departments in the humanities may develop in the way their counterparts in the sciences have, and encompass, alongside full-time faculty, staff who can support (or even lead) research efforts.

1. See W. R. Connor, Scholarship and Technology in Classical Studies, Scholarship and Technology in the Humanities, Mary Katzen ed. (1990) for some insightful remarks on the reaction of classics to the new possibilities of digital research.
2. Jerome McGann's analysis in "Our Textual History", Times Literary Supplement No. 5564 (20 November 2009): 13-15, while not directed at classics, provides a useful update to Connor.

Toward a Third Way:
Rethinking Academic Employment
Tom Scheinfeldt

Introduction: "Tenure is broken. Please give me tenure."
Lately it seems the papers are full of articles and essays reporting, decrying, and demanding for an end to tenure as we know it. According to a U.S. Department of Education study quoted recently in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the percentage of college instructors who are either tenured or on the tenure track was down from 57 percent in 1975 to 31 percent in 2007. Many see this crisis of tenure as a threat to academic freedom and quality teaching, a portent of declining scholarly standards, and a dangerous erosion of hard won concessions from management. Others, such as Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus in their much-discussed book *Higher Education? How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids — And What We Can Do About It*, welcome the end of tenure as necessary step in top-to-bottom higher education reform. Value judgments aside, most observers agree that the proportion of tenured faculty will continue to drop, perhaps to fifteen or twenty percent of college instructors in the coming decades. [1]

Enter the digital humanities, which only complicate this picture. Digital humanities has expanded significantly in the past decade, in term of budgets, numbers of institutions, and numbers of practitioners. But this hasn't put digital humanities on the sunny side of the declining tenure numbers. As this volume demonstrates, most digital humanists are not in tenured or tenure track positions. Despite digital humanities' currency, it is still viewed skeptically by more traditional colleagues. For these scholars, a strong portfolio of digital work may actually make it more difficult to find that rarer and rarer tenure track opportunity because more traditional search committees may wonder whether the candidate's digital work will distract them from their "real" scholarship, whether they are, in fact, "serious" scholars. Likewise, even for those lucky enough to be on the tenure track, the system often doesn't recognize digital work. Digital research doesn't count in decisions about tenure and promotion as do journal articles and monographs. Assistant Professor contracts rarely even include the word "digital." Digital work is done on the side, and at best considered service, at worst a distraction from "real" research.

This is familiar terrain. Anyone who has been to almost any meeting of two or more digital humanists during the last fifteen years has heard it all before. It's an old joke among digital humanists that, sooner or later, our conversations always roll around to tenure.

Yet even the current tenure regime's stronger and more radical critics, especially among digital humanists, tend to be extremely conservative when it comes to proposing a solution. Somewhat astonishingly, the solution most commonly proposed to the problem of a broken tenure system is expanding the tenure system. This conservative position holds that if only more assistant professor positions were written to include digital work, and if only more tenure committees would recognize that work as tenureable, all would be well. Without naming any names, I get the feeling that many of my untenured digital humanist colleagues currently critical of the system would be happy if only the system would simply embrace them. Too often criticism seems aimed not at fixing inequalities in the system, but at getting on the right side of those inequalities.

Should we lament the decline of tenure? Perhaps. But two things suggest to me that digital humanists in particular shouldn't put much time or effort into it. First, it's clear our lamentations are not working. The fact is, as the statistics above show, tenure isn't expanding, it's contracting. There isn't much reason to think this situation will turn around any time soon. Second, even if we could create tenure track positions for everyone working in digital humanities, I'm not sure we'd want to. Tenure may or may not be the best model for traditional academic employment. But a blind extension of it to all digital humanists would not take seriously the differences inherent in digital humanities work. It would not admit the possibility that pouring the new wine of digital humanities into the old skins of tenure-based employment models—with their 3-3 teaching loads, tri-annual sabbaticals, research-teaching-service evaluation rubrics, and nine-month contracts—may be inefficient and ineffective for both digital humanities and its practitioners. [2]

Toward a third way

In 2008, Mills Kelly, my colleague at the Center for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University, wrote a series of blog posts that took seriously the problems of awarding traditional tenure based on digital work.[3] In "Making it Count," Mills argued that if scholars want digital scholarship to count in traditional promotion and tenure decisions, then they have to make sure it conforms to the characteristics and standards of traditional scholarship (though Mills points out that some of those standards, such as peer review, will have to be modified slightly to accommodate the

differences inherent in digital scholarship.) At the same time Mills suggested that we have to accept that digital work that does not fit the standards of traditional scholarship, no matter how useful or well done, will not count in traditional promotion and tenure decisions. Essentially Mills made a distinction between digital "scholarship" and other kinds of digital "work," the first which bears the characteristics of traditional scholarship and the second which does not. The first should count as "scholarship" in promotion and tenure decisions. The second should not. Rather it should count as "service" or something similar.

I more or less agree with this, and I'm fine with Mills' distinction. Communities have the right to set their own standards and decide what counts as this or that. Much, if not most, digital humanities work does not fit traditional definitions of "scholarship." But this situation does raise questions for those of us engaged primarily in the second kind of activity, in digital humanities "work." What happens to the increasing numbers of people employed *inside university departments*, doing "work" and not "scholarship?" In universities that have committed to digital humanities, shouldn't the work of creating and maintaining digital collections, building software, experimenting with new user interface designs, mounting online exhibitions, providing digital resources for students and teachers, and managing the collaborative teams upon which all digital humanities depend count for more than service does under traditional promotion and tenure rubrics? Personally I'm not willing to admit that this other kind of digital work is any less important for digital humanities than digital scholarship, which frankly would not be possible without it. All digital humanities is collaborative, and it's just NOT COOL if the only people whose careers benefit from our collaborations are the "scholars" among us. We need the necessary "work" of digital humanities to count for those people whose jobs are to do it.

I myself do relatively little work that would fit traditional definitions of scholarship. Practically none of my digital work would. Because of that I am more than willing to accept that tenure just isn't in the picture for me. With my digital bent, I am asking for a change in the nature of academic work, and therefore I have to be willing to accept a change in the nature and terms of my academic employment.

That said, I am not willing to accept the second-class status of, for instance, an adjunct faculty member. My work—whether it is "scholarship" or not—wins awards, attracts hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant funding, turns up periodically on CNN and in the *New York Times*, enables the work of hundreds of other academics, and is used every day by thousands of people, scholars and non-scholars alike. That may not make

it tenureable, but it's certainly not second class. It can't be tenure track or nothing. My work requires a "third way."

Fortunately I'm at an institution committed to digital humanities and willing to experiment with new models of academic employment. Technically I have two titles, "Managing Director of the Center for History & New Media" and "Research Assistant Professor." That puts me somewhere between an untenured administrative faculty member and an untenured research faculty member. It is a position which would frighten some of my tenure track colleagues terribly, and I can, indeed, be fired from my job. Sometimes that worries me too. Then I remember that probably 99% of the rest of working Americans can also be fired from their jobs. I also remember that just like that other 99%, if I do what's expected of me, it probably won't happen. If I continue to win grants and awards from panels of my peers and continue to produce quality, well-received, well-used digital humanities products, I'll probably continue to have a job. If I exceed expectations, I'll probably advance.

Just as important to note are the benefits my job has over more traditional scholarly career paths, some of which are pretty serious. I'm not terrorized by the formalized expectations that accompany traditional promotion and tenure decisions. I won't perish if I don't publish. I also don't have fixed teaching obligations. I can focus full-time on my research, and I have greater freedom and flexibility to explore new directions than most of my tenure track colleagues. I get to work on lots of things at once. Some of these experiments are likely to fail, but as long as most succeed, that's expected and OK. I manage my own travel budgets and research schedule rather than being held hostage to department committees. I get to work every day with a close-knit team of like-minded academics rather than alone in a library. I have considerably greater freedom to negotiate my pay and benefits. And to the extent that it advances the mission and interests of CHNM, my digital work, even my blog, "counts."

Mine is not a tenure-track position, and (even though I have a Ph.D.) based on the work I do, I don't expect it to be. Nor do I care. There are some downsides and some upsides to my position, but it's a reasonably happy third way. More importantly, I believe it is a necessary third way for the digital humanities, which in Mills' terms require not only digital "scholarship" but also digital "work."

If digital humanities are going to flourish in the academy, we need both to accept and advocate for new models of academic employment. Academic work is changing, and the terms, conditions, and models of academic employment and career advancement will have to change along with it. We don't have to relegate old models of tenure and

promotion to the chopping block. But nor should we stubbornly insist on their unique primacy or fool ourselves that they're somehow eternal and unchanging. Whether we are the ones seeking or bestowing the promotions, we need to recognize that an institution as diverse and kaleidoscopic as the modern research university can, should, and will accommodate more than one employment model and path to advancement and leadership. What digital humanities needs is not the simple and essentially conservative expansion of tenure and tenure-track employment, but a more thorough and radical rethink of humanities employment, one that takes into account the unique demands of digital humanities work and crafts new job descriptions and new employment terms to fit those demands.

Let me be clear. I am not proposing surrender in the fight for justice in academic employment. But justice does not only come in the form of tenure. What I am proposing is a thorough rethink of what good and just academic employment means in the digital humanities context and the invention and implementation of new models of academic employment that are both fair and well-matched to the new digital humanities. Crucially, this is not just a matter of reforming existing systems. In addition to the structural adjustments that are required to ensure just employment, we need to make some psychological adjustments. Certainly, we need to be granted sufficient respect by our higher-ups and our peers and colleagues in more traditional jobs—I'm not trying to blame the battered woman for her predicament. But digital humanists themselves have to start thinking about landing a "third way" position as "making it." We have to start acting and thinking like we're worthy of respect. We have to give people in third-way kinds of jobs permission to be proud.

Two kinds of digital humanities employment in particular are need of this kind of rethink: the soft-money research appointment within the departments and the library line. Both are jobs that digitally-minded recent Ph.D.s may feel depressed or embarrassed to find themselves in. The rest of this essay aims to tell them—and their friends and colleagues on the tenure track— otherwise.

"Soft" is not a four-letter word

I will be the first to say that I have been, and continue to be, extremely lucky. As I explained above, I have managed to strike a workable employment model somewhere between tenured professor and transient post-doc, expendable adjunct, or subservient staffer, a more or less happy third way that provides relative security, creative opportunity, and professional respect. The terms of my employment at CHNM may not be reproducible everywhere. Nor do I see my situation as any kind of silver bullet. But it is one model that has seemed to work in a particular institutional and research

context, and I offer it mainly to show that fairness doesn't necessarily come in the form of tenure and that other models are possible.

Taking this argument further, I would also argue that fairness does not necessarily come in the form of what we in the educational and cultural sectors tend to call "hard money," i.e. positions that are written into in our institutions' annual budgets.

Of course, the first thing to admit about "hard money" is that it doesn't really exist. As we have seen in the recent financial crisis, especially in layoffs of tenure-track and even tenured faculty and in the elimination of boat-loads of "hard lines" in library and museum budgets, hard money is only hard until someone higher up than a department chair, dean, or provost decides that it's soft.

The second thing to acknowledge is that the concept of "hard" versus "soft" money really only exists in academe. If those terms were extended to the rest of the U.S. economy—the 90+ percent of the U.S. labor force not employed by institutions of higher education (although government may be another place where this distinction is meaningful)—we'd see that most people are on "soft" money. My wife has been employed as lawyer at a fancy "K Street" law firm in Washington, DC for going on six years now. She makes a very good living and is, by the standards of her chosen profession, very successful. And yet, you guessed it, she is on soft money. If for some reason the firm loses two, three, four of its large clients, her billing and hence the money to pay her salary will very quickly dry up, and the powers that be will be forced to eliminate her position. This is true for almost any job you can point to. If revenues do not match projections, layoffs occur. One can debate the justice of particular layoffs and down-sizings, but without wholesale changes to our economy, the basic rule of "no money in, no money out" is hard to deny.

Indulge me for a moment in a bit of simile. In some ways, CHNM is very much like any other business. At CHNM we have clients. Those clients are our funders. We sell products and services to those clients. Those products and services are called digital humanities projects. Our funder clients pay us a negotiated price for those products and services. We use those revenues to pay the employees who produce the products and services for our clients. To keep the wheels turning, we sell more products and services to our clients, and if an existing client doesn't want or need what we're selling anymore, we either find new clients or change the range of products and services we offer. Failing that, we will have to start reducing payroll.

How is this situation any different or worse than any other sector of the economy? If people stop buying Word and Excel, Microsoft will have to find something else to sell people or layoff the engineers, designers, project managers and other staff that make MS Office.

I understand that so crass an analogy to corporate America will make many people unhappy. The idealist in me recoils from the notion that the academy should be treated as just another business. Yet the pragmatist in me—a side that is certainly stronger than it would otherwise be from dealing for so long with the often very practical, hands-on work of digital humanities and the frequent sleepless nights that come with the responsibility of managing a budget that supports nearly fifty employees—thinks it foolish to reject out of hand employment models that, however imperfect, have worked to produce so much and provide livelihoods for so many. (Indeed, the democrat in me also has to ask, what makes us in academe so special as to deserve and expect freedoms, security, and privileges that the rest of the labor force doesn't?)

Therefore, in my book, "soft money" isn't necessarily and always bad. If it funds good, relatively secure, fairly compensated jobs, in my book soft money is OK. CHNM has several senior positions funded entirely on soft money and several employees who have been with us on soft money for five, six, and seven years—a long time in the short history of digital humanities.

What isn't OK is when "soft" equals "temporary" or "term." This, I readily acknowledge, is an all too frequent equation. Many, if not most, soft money post-doc, research faculty, and staff positions are created upon the award of a particular grant to work on that grant and that grant alone, and only until the term of the grant expires. I make no bones that these defined-term, grant-specific jobs are inferior to tenure or tenure track or even corporate-sector employment.

At CHNM we try to avoid creating these kinds of jobs. Since at least 2004, instead of hiring post-docs or temporary staff to work on a particular grant funded project when it is awarded, where possible we try to hire people to fill set of generalized roles that have evolved over the years and proven themselves necessary to the successful completion of nearly any digital humanities project: designer, web developer, project manager, outreach specialist. Generally our people are not paid from one grant, but rather from many grants. At any given moment, a CHNM web designer, for example, may be paid from as many as four or five different grant budgets, her funding distribution changing fairly frequently as her work on a particular project ends and work on another project begins. This makes for very complicated accounting and lots of strategic human

resource decisions (this is one of the big headaches of my job), but it means that we can keep people around as projects start and end and funders come and go. Indeed as the funding mosaic becomes ever more complex, when viewed from a distance (i.e. by anyone but me and a few other administrative staff who deal with the daily nitty-gritty) the budget picture begins to look very much like a general fund and staff positions begin to look like budget lines.

Perceptive readers will by now be asking, "Yes, but how did CHNM get to the point where it had enough grants and had diversified its funding enough to maintain what amounts to a permanent staff?" and I'll readily admit there is a chicken-and-egg problem here. But how CHNM got to where it is, is a topic for another day. The point I'd like to make in this essay is simply that—if we can get beyond thinking about project funding—soft money isn't essentially bad for either the people funded by it or the institution that relies on it. On the contrary, it can be harnessed toward the sustainable maintenance of an agile, innovation centered organization. While the pressure of constantly finding funding can be stressful and a drag, it doesn't have to mean bad jobs and a crippled institution.

Just the opposite, in fact. Not only does CHNM's diversified soft money offer its people some relative security in their employment, pooling our grant resources to create staff stability also makes it easier for us to bring in additional revenue. Having people in generalized roles already on our payroll allows us to respond with confidence and speed as new funding opportunities present themselves. That is, our financial structure has enabled us to build the *institutional capacity* to take advantage of new funding sources, to be confident that we can do the work in question, to convince funders that is so, and in turn to continue to maintain staff positions and further increase capacity.

CHNM is by no means perfect. Not all jobs at CHNM are created equal, and like everyone in the digital humanities we struggle to make ends meet and keep the engine going. In a time of increasingly intense competition for fewer and fewer grant dollars, there is always a distinct chance that we'll run out of gas. Nevertheless, it is soft money that so far has created a virtuous and, dare I say, sustainable cycle.

Thus, when we talk about soft money, we have to talk about what kind of soft money and how it is structured and spent within an institution. Is it structured to hire short term post-docs and temporary staff who will be let go at the end of the grant? Or is it structured and diversified in such a way as to provide good, relatively stable jobs where staff can build skills and reputation over a period of several years?

When soft money means "temporary and insecure," soft money is bad. When soft money facilitates the creation of good jobs in digital humanities, in my book at least, soft money works.

The library isn't the minor league
One thing that has been clear since the birth of the new digital humanities is the centrality of collecting institutions and collecting professionals in all aspects of the endeavor, not simply as support but as key engines of knowledge creation and innovation. And yet even among digital humanists, especially those with Ph.D.s, there is a sneaking suspicion that a buddy from grad school who ended up in a library gig has somehow failed. I think even those Ph.D.'s who have chosen library, archives, or museum work over a teaching position sometimes feel, if not their own sense of failure, then certainly the scorn of their colleagues and graduate school mates. This attitude must change.

Visitors to CHNM have often commented on the strange concentration of digital humanities centers in and around Washington, DC. In fact, for many of our visitors, CHNM is just one stop on the larger Washington digital humanities circuit, which also includes the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH) in College Park, the Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS) at Georgetown, the instructional technology group at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, and the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH) and Scholar's Lab at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Just as rising high school seniors and their parents descend on Washington campus admissions offices in the summertime, these visitors, frequently in the planning stages of digital humanities initiatives on their own campuses, come to Washington to see more or less the full range institutional models for university-based digital humanities, all within relatively easy driving distance of one another.

Maryland, Virginia, Mary Washington, Georgetown, and George Mason are very fine universities. But to my mind they're not the reason why digital humanities has taken root in Washington, DC. Instead, I believe that the main reasons for Washington's universities' prowess in digital humanities are essentially external, based more on their geographic location than their institutional affiliations.

The first and most obvious of these external causes is proximity to the agencies that fund digital humanities: NEH, IMLS, the Department of Education, NHPRC, NSF. All of us in the Washington area have benefited from the advice we've received upon bumping into a program officer at the ubiquitous symposia and seminars to be found

around the Capital Beltway. There isn't any special treatment to be had from these meetings. Usually the advice we get simply reinforces information that is published publicly elsewhere: "an advisory board is recommended for projects under this grant program" or "don't bother, the program guidelines actually exclude projects like yours" or "have you thought about this other grant program for your project?" Indeed, federal program officers have relatively little discretion when it comes to picking winners; the peer review process at each of these agencies is strictly enforced. Nevertheless, a personal knowledge of the federal funding scene and the knowledge of whom to call and when are invaluable assets in building a digital humanities center.

But proximity to funding isn't really what makes Washington a good place for digital humanities. More important than being close to funders is being close to collections. For my money, it's proximity to the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Park Service, the Folger Library, the Phillips Collection, and the hundred other libraries, archives, and museums in the Washington area that has made it Ground Zero for digital humanities in the United States. Of course it's also no accident that many digital humanities centers, in Washington and elsewhere, including IATH, the Scholar's Lab, and MITH, are themselves located in their university libraries.

Like the Web itself, so much of digital humanities is organized around the database. Nearly every digital history project at CHNM, from our education projects to our digital archives, starts with an archive of sources. Databases—of primary source documents, images of artifacts, video recordings, oral history transcripts, and lesson plans—power our content-driven digital history websites, projects like *History Matters*, *Historical Thinking Matters*, the *September 11 Digital Archive*, *Gulag: Many Days, Many Lives*, and the *Papers of the War Department, 1784-1800*. Databases underlie the software we build. *Zotero*, CHNM's research management tool was only made possible by the inclusion of a SQL TK database backend in Firefox 2.0. Every site built in *Omeka*, CHNM's web publishing platform for digital humanities scholarship, begins with an "archive" of raw materials from which narratives and visual displays are constructed. Primary source-based digital history may be the most obvious (and for me, the most familiar) example of the database-driven nature of digital humanities, but even the more textual digital humanities projects of the literary disciplines usually rely on a database of some sort or on the database's structured text cousin, XML. Content projects such as the *Whitman Archive* and tool-building projects like MONK (Metadata Offer New Knowledge) are prominent examples of database-driven literary scholarship.

It is an axiom of the Internet that "information wants to be free." Databases on the other hand want to be filled. The problem for digital humanists working in the academy is that we generally don't have the stuff on hand to fill them. University departments and research centers do not maintain their own collections. To fill our databases, to achieve their *telos*, we must partner with collecting institutions—libraries for books and other texts, archives for documents and ephemera, museums for artifacts. We can't build digital humanities without databases, and we can't build databases without stuff. That means making friends with librarians, archivists, and museum professionals.

Physical proximity to libraries and museums helps in this endeavor. Concretely, CHNM's award winning *Object of History* project could not have been built without direct access to the desk at which Thomas Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence, or the lunch counter where students in Greensboro, NC sat until they were finally served, or Ceasar Chavez's short-handled hoe—all located at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. MITH's *Shakespeare Quartos Project* would be unimaginable without access to *the real thing*, so much of which is located in the marble halls of the Folger Library. I suppose both projects could have been done via email, conference call, and FTP by centers in Texas or Ohio. But they may never have been imagined without the casual encounters at local seminars and symposia where ideas and collaborations are born.

This suggests that it is not only, perhaps not even mainly, our proximity to collections that makes D.C. a hotbed of university-based digital humanities. It is our proximity to *collections professionals*. Indeed, access to stuff was much less important to the success of the *Object of History* project than was access to the Smithsonian's curators, whose unique expertise infuses the site with authority and fills the databases with good information. Perhaps more abstract, but no less important than the collections knowledge and data they pour into our databases, moreover, are the lessons collections professionals teach us about information management. Even if their training or work is not in digital curation or collections management *per se* (though it often is), collections professionals are by occupation and usually inclination *database minded*. Being close to the peerless collections professionals of the Capital region puts us academics, trained in linear argument and narrative, in a database frame of mind. Thus, what the centrality Washington's digital humanities centers shows us is, far from being peripheral to it, librarians, archivists, and museum professionals are central to digital humanities. The digital humanities centers located around the Beltway are dependent on the libraries and museums located at its center just as much as the defense contractors, think tanks, and law firms that are our neighbors are dependent on the Pentagon, White House, Congress, and courts.

You wouldn't know it from the way many digitally-minded humanities graduate students or recent Ph.D.'s approach the job market. Despite the centrality of the library, archive, and museum to digital humanities, many aspiring digital humanists cling to the idea of the tenure-track position to the exclusion of all other options. They befriend colleagues in the library, archive, and museum, but fear ending up there. They pursue their digital work "on the side," trying to juggle two research agendas, the digital one they care about and the traditional one which may "count." Both suffer. They join the chorus calling for a revision of promotion and tenure guidelines to include digital humanities.

This course is not just ineffectual. It is perilous. Too many have dragged their careers down the path of adjunct employment while waiting for the enlightened search committee or, more futilely, for "things to change."

Instead of grasping for ways to construe, or misconstrue, their digital interests and work to fit the more traditional expectations of department search committees, wouldn't it make more sense to dive head first into the library, archives, or museums job market where these interests and achievements will be recognized on their own terms? Wouldn't it be better to pursue your database-mindedness among the likeminded? [4]

By arguing that digital humanists should consider jobs in libraries, I'm not saying that digital humanities should retreat from the university. I am just saying that aspiring digital humanists should be be catholic and unprejudiced in their job searches, placing universities and collecting institutions on equal footing in their own minds. They should avoid buying into the elitist and wrongheaded idea that any job outside the departments constitutes failure, that the library is the minor league. They should ask themselves "where can I do my best work?" not "how can I become a professor?" The first question is about advancing digital humanities. The second is about buying into values that are foreign to digital humanities and flattering one's biases and self-image.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have argued that the digital humanities necessitate third-way models of academic employment and therefore the digital humanities community needs to accept and promote them as valid alternatives to the tenure track, deserving of equal prestige and respect. This is as much a matter of changing mindsets as it is about changing labor contracts. I have argued that soft-money research positions and library, archives, and museum jobs can be just, fitting, and sometimes superior alternatives to traditional academic employment for aspiring digital humanists. Debates about the future of

tenure—changing it, expanding it, eliminating it—are sure to continue. But this essay has tried to show, at least for the digital humanities, that debates about tenure may simply be beside the point. What's best for digital humanities and digital humanists may not be tenure at all.

[1] Robin Wilson, "Tenure, RIP: What the Vanishing Status Means for the Future of Education," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 4, 2010, sec. Labor & Work-Life Issues. Christopher Shea, "The End of Tenure?," *The New York Times*, September 3, 2010, sec. Books / Sunday Book Review. Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus, *Higher Education?: How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids–and What We Can Do About It*, First Edition. (Times Books, 2010).

[2] Some of what follows appeared originally on my research blog, *Found History*. Tom Scheinfeldt, "Making It Count: Toward a Third Way," *Found History*, October 2, 2008. Tom Scheinfeldt, "'Soft' [money] is not a four-letter word," *Found History*, March 26, 2010.

[3] Mills Kelly, "Making Digital Scholarship Count," *Edwired*, June 13, 2008.

[4] It is important to note that libraries, archives, and museums are themselves specialized fields, and digital humanists looking to enter these fields should be prepared to learn the specialized skills necessary to work into them, up to and sometime including pursing an archives, museum studies, or library science degree. It is further proof of the centrality of the collecting disciplines that nothing you learn in these studies will be wasted on your digital humanities scholarship.

Credential Creep in the Digital Humanities

Amanda Gailey and Dot Porter

In a 1903 issue of *Harvard Monthly*, William James decried "The PhD Octopus," the disturbing trend among American colleges of requiring a PhD—even one in an unrelated field—of anyone hired to teach. The degree was not an accurate indicator of a candidate's merit as a teacher, James felt, and was simply "a sham, a bauble, a dodge, whereby to decorate the catalogues of schools and colleges." He warned that the vanity of requiring unnecessary degrees would, over time, devalue the degree itself, distract capable teachers from their work or dissuade them from entering the profession altogether, and contribute to the personal destruction of PhD students who really had no business in their programs.

Over a hundred years later, as we face an academic buyer's market that consigns untold numbers of PhDs to poorly compensated, teaching-intensive jobs that offer no incentives for serious scholarship, James's concerns seem both eerily prescient and quaint. The PhD Octopus proved a PhD juggernaut, and nothing seems likely to reverse its course.

Until recently, though, the digital humanities seemed a sanctuary from these trends. Provided you had found a way to enlist in a digital humanities project, you stood a good chance (relative to your fellow students) of landing a rewarding job somewhere in academia. Sadly, this seems to be less the case with every passing year. As two professionals who have benefited from the relative egalitarianism of the digital humanities, we are disturbed by what we see as increasing gatekeeping within the field. Specifically, we have observed two trends that we fear have begun to threaten the relatively open and egalitarian tradition of digital humanities. First, job advertisements are now more likely to require formal credentials and specific skills. More and more job postings require advanced degrees in the humanities, presumably as evidence of the applicant's well-roundedness, educability, and potential for creative thinking, yet they simultaneously require very specific technological proficiencies that indicate the hiring committees have little faith in the applicant's ability to learn on the job. Second, as digital humanities has moved increasingly into the mainstream in the US, institutions widely regarded as prestigious have begun to participate in the field. In itself this is a

welcome development, but we predict that degrees from these institutions will be overvalued in comparison with universities that have longer and stronger records of work in digital humanities.

The PhD Octopus

Both of us are often approached by students interested in careers in digital humanities, and until recently we have advised them to consult current job advertisements to learn what kinds of skills and educational credentials an employer will likely require. What they will find if they look these days, though, is an often bewildering, idiosyncratic laundry list of skills and degrees generated by hiring committees who, likely lacking background in the field themselves, seem to study the particulars of DH professionals they know rather than sensibly considering the general skills the job requires. Other times, the reader must wonder whether gratuitous credentials, such as the PhD for entry-level or even temporary jobs outside of academic departments, stem from the committee's inability to see past their own training, or even worse, are tacked on because any employer hiring in this job climate has the luxury of requiring superfluous credentials while usually failing utterly to offer commensurate rewards. In short, our study of digital humanities job postings has found that the answer to the question, "Why do search committees require the PhD" is often not "because they should," but "because they can."

We have canvassed two decades of job advertisements in digital humanities looking for hiring trends. We have not attempted a thorough, quantitative study of every job posting in the field, but have read through a large random sampling to get a sense of trends. Our admittedly unscientific survey has revealed that job postings seem to fall into three categories: 1) professorial positions; 2) librarian positions; and 3) technical or research positions. Professorial positions prioritize research and teaching, and are often housed within traditional departments such as English or History. Almost all of them require a PhD, which seems entirely appropriate (given that we are living in the era James foretold). Librarian positions tend to involve digitization and metadata development and analysis. These jobs usually require the MLS/MIS degree, which we also see as appropriate. The third category includes some positions that are exclusively or almost exclusively technical. Others within this category are more administrative or research-focused, including positions to liaise with librarians and faculty and to develop digital centers. Within this third category, which includes many entry-level jobs in digital humanities, the degree requirements vary wildly, even within subtypes. They range from requiring a bachelor's in computer science to a master's in the humanities or library science to a PhD in a variety of fields, in addition to a largely unpredictable array of specific programming knowledge and administrative experience.

Humanist, an international listserv for people interested in any aspect of digital humanities, has been posting job advertisements since 1989, when most of us had never heard of the internet, much less humanities computing. Unsurprisingly, the job ads in 1989 were written broadly: one asked for experience in computing, specifying only "extensive knowledge of computer archiving, with skills in programming and relevant systems management," and asked that the applicant be in some way familiar with the topic of the archive. The only other ad from this year asked for a bachelor's degree in an unspecified field along with "a minimum of three years computing experience, one of which must be in management, preferably in a higher education environment." We might attribute the vagueness of these ads to the rarity of applicants qualified to work in humanities computing positions in the late 80s. Interestingly, though, this trend generally held through the 90s and the early oughts. Certainly there were exceptions, such as one ad from 1990 that sought a candidate with a PhD in philosophy, a degree in computer science, management skills, and preferably some experience in academic editing and desktop publishing. In exchange, this polymath would earn the princely sum of $30,000 a year.

Unfortunately, such job ads have become increasingly common in the last five years. As a rough measure, we looked at the occurrence of the word "PhD" (and various permutations) within the bodies of posts to Humanist, and found that by 2007 "PhD" was occurring on the order of five times more frequently than in 2000: not a definitive statistic, but evidence that the community is talking about PhDs a lot more than it was a decade ago. The trend seems to hold within job ads, where the PhD requirement often ranges from a perfectly reasonable component for a faculty position in the humanities to an irrelevant credential that disqualifies competent applicants from the pool and stands as a poor surrogate for the combination of skills that are necessary for the job but only rarely taught in graduate programs.

Even job advertisements that do not require the PhD frequently require too many credentials. Sometimes these are lists of assorted technical skills; other times the job seems to have been designed to cover every professional task and office odd job not managed by current staff. For example, a recent post seeks a candidate with a graduate degree in American history and proficiency in XML/TEI to manage both a digital archive *and* an unrelated print journal. The successful applicant could look forward to a two-year halftime position that would pay just over $18,000 a year.

Even if we allow for draconian market forces, employers do themselves a disservice by specifying too many credentials. As James wrote of his contemporaries, "Certain bare human beings will always be better candidates for a given place than all the doctor-

applicants on hand; and to exclude the former by a rigid rule, and in the end to have to sift the latter by private inquiry into their personal peculiarities among those who know them, just as if they were not doctors at all, is to stultify one's own procedure." Excessive and irrelevant credentials make the stack of applications shorter, but they also likely filter out some of the most suitable candidates.

Further, the ethical failure of the over-credentialized job advertisement is significant. At best it risks expending institutional resources on poor recruitment. At worst it directly advises young, skilled, and vulnerable young people to put off their financial security and family planning to seek expensive credentials that have limited currency beyond academia and may lead to part-time, temporary, benefitless employment.

Creeping Ivy

Alongside our concern with the gradual increase in required degrees and technical proficiencies we've described, we worry about a less quantifiable trend in DH hiring: the encroachment of elitism. Over the past few decades, digital humanities in the United States has developed into an energetic, collegial, and exciting field largely in spite of, and not because of, the involvement of the nation's most elite universities. There are clear exceptions to this trend: some schools, such as Stanford, the University of Virginia, and Brown, made significant and early contributions to the field. But many early proponents of digital humanities were less renowned institutions. George Mason University started its Center for History and New Media in 1994; the University of Kentucky began the Collaboratory for Research in Computing for the Humanities in 1998; the University of Maryland founded its Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities in 1999; and the University of Nebraska, which founded its E-Text Center in the late 90s and its Center for Digital Research in the Humanities in 2005, was hiring faculty involved in digital humanities in 2000. Unperturbed by the lack of enthusiasm at universities with higher reputations, these institutions invested in digital humanities.

As digital humanities has received more press, some of the nation's leading institutions have begun to get on board. In February of 2010 a group of admirably proactive graduate students at Yale received funding to stage a conference called "The Past's Digital Presence." At the conference, one of the keynote speakers remarked that the event served as a "watershed moment" in digital humanities. Indeed, he was right if he meant that the involvement of graduate students at an Ivy League university signified that decades of work elsewhere had finally convinced some of the last venerable holdouts that digital humanities is worth pursuing. A less charitable reading of his comment, though—that digital humanities has finally made it now that these formerly uninterested schools are involved—may leave digital humanists at universities with a

longer history in the field feeling a bit like the Little Red Hen. We hope that as the nation's more illustrious institutions become involved in digital humanities, the nature of the field, which has historically been significantly shaped by big public universities and held good prospects for *their* students and staff, is respected in hiring decisions.

Recommendations

We believe that digital humanities has thrived on a spirit of entrepreneurship and egalitarianism that, sadly, has not been palpable in the traditional humanities perhaps since James lamented credential creep at the turn of the last century. Digital humanities has served as a model not just for new ways of thinking about old texts, but for new ways of organizing academic labor in the humanities—a model in which humanists collaborate with each other and with librarians and publishers, in which ambitious junior faculty can shape major research initiatives, and in which talented people lacking formal credentials or a vaunted pedigree could forge careers that would be impossible in the traditional humanities. We believe that committees tasked with creating DH positions would do well to value the spirit that has helped make this new work worth hiring in. To that end, we offer the following suggestions.

- **Are you advertising for a faculty position in digital humanities within a traditional department, such as English or History?** If so, the PhD is an entirely appropriate requirement, of course, but be willing to do your homework on these applicants more than may be customary for more orthodox faculty positions. The usual pedigrees don't apply here.
- **Are you advertising for a faculty position or leadership position in a digital center or newly-created department?** Consider making an advanced degree a preferable but not required credential, and leave open what the degree may be and in what area. Describe the responsibilities of the position and ask applicants to make clear to you how their educational and career backgrounds have prepared them to meet those responsibilities.
- **Are you advertising for a midlevel or entry level staff position or programming position?** Do not require an advanced degree, and do not be overly specific about what the degree must be in. Some humanities or library science students have developed excellent programming skills, either in formal coursework or through other educational or work experiences. These people may not only be able to tackle your programming needs competently, but will bring with them a valuable understanding of the context of the work, and have the potential to develop their careers at your center. Don't be needlessly specific about required technical proficiencies. A well-rounded applicant with related

proficiencies will be able to pick up the specifics of your position while bringing a healthy diversity in his or her approach to the job.

These considerations may stop short of the admonishment of James, who insisted the duty of the university is to "guard against contributing to the increase of officialism and snobbery and insincerity as against a pestilence." We hope, though, that they will help to protect a healthy impulse within the digital humanities community, attract good people to the field without expecting needless sacrifices from them, and allow hiring committees to find their best candidates.

Respect My Praxis

Dorothea Salo

I am an academic librarian.

This may seem an odd thing to admit in a collection aimed at Ph.Ds. I don't have a Ph.D; I dropped out of Wisconsin's Spanish program, defeated and broken, a dozen years ago. I came to librarianship after a reconstructive interval of work in scholarly publishing, during which I piled up a lot of learning and a lot of stories. I've been headhunted by Microsoft. I participated in the ebook boomlet of the early 2000s, and watched the dot-com implosion hoping for the best for my friends and colleagues. I learned plenty that would now come under the "digital humanities" rubric. I built subsets of TEI to mark up work by American luminaries from George Washington to Edmund Burke, all the way through James M. Buchanan. I rescued the *World Book Dictionary* from an obsolete typesetting format and remade it in XML singlehandedly.

Sadly, I left publishing when it became clear that publishing praxis would not adapt itself well or quickly to the digital world. After a year thinking things through while I paid the bills and picked up some database knowhow doing data entry and cleanup on a census demography project, I decided that academic libraries were doing good work with digital materials, and now I am an academic librarian.

My six-year-old career, from a strictly careerist perspective, has done rather well. I published an article in 2008 that has been called an "instant classic," one that changed the way academic librarianship thinks about what I do. I've done the keynote for a small conference and a plenary for a rather large one, as well as a startling number of other invited conference talks. I have taught three courses in two library schools and received enthusiastic appreciation from students. I sat onstage for our latest library-school graduation ceremony and blinked back tears as new colleagues who had been my students crossed the stage on their way to change the world.

What I've never done is research, in academia's sense of the word. I do write professionally, to be sure. I write jeremiads, I write futurist screeds, I write systems

analyses, I wrote a weblog full of pigheaded but well-read rants for seven years—but nothing I've written is academic research, because I don't *do* academic research.

When I'm not teaching, I work to reconfigure the entire system of scholarly communication. I am an open-access advocate, an institutional-repository manager, a copyright consultant, a metadata manager, a small-time data curator, an occasional problem-solving hacker. Because of what I do, more people can find and use more information. In its small way, the work I do changes the way the world works and learns, every single day.

How many researchers can say that about their research?

Having been headhunted by two library-science Ph.D programs (not coincidentally, the same ones I've taught for), I've had ample opportunity to think about my relationship to academia and research. What I have decided is that academia-style research does not fit how my brain is wired. I hack. I build. I mark up. I design. I am fundamentally a doer, not a researcher. I teach and write about what I've learned by doing. I can only reason and theorize about things after I've done them, not before.

This would all be fine, except that academia privileges its notion of research to such a degree that it refuses to respect my praxis. The library literature argues ceaselessly about tenure for librarians, a decision that often hinges on "research," just as for other faculty. (At neither of the institutions where I've worked as a librarian have librarians been tenurable.) Likewise, discussion of the digital humanities often revolves around "But is it really *research?*" as often as not. *Who cares?* I answer. *Is it useful? Then it's useful.*

The looming spectre of the deprofessionalization of the professoriate doubtless underlies some of the undue privileging of the research enterprise. Professions that do not demarcate their boundaries and their specialized functions very carefully do not survive. Ironically, however, the creeping adjunctification that threatens to destroy tenure for all happened not because anyone undervalued *research*, but because institutions undervalued *teaching*, and the research-besotted professoriate let institutions get away with that undervaluing scot-free. Indeed, insofar as institutional academic governance rests with the professoriate, the professoriate cut its own throat.

Have research quality and usefulness improved because of this relentless overfocus on research over any other kind of academic praxis? I cannot speak for all fields, only for my own, which boasts both a strictly academic and a praxis-oriented literature. For my

part, then, I read voraciously in my field, but very little of what I choose to read, and even less of what I find useful as I go on changing the world, is academic research. Much of it is project reports and white papers and similar praxis-based information.

I encounter academic research mostly as its subject. For some ungodly reason, the institutional repositories I spent most of my early career on became a hot research topic among young information-science researchers. I have therefore been bombarded with survey requests, not to mention the occasional request for a lengthy interview. And the result? Practically none of these research projects investigated a phenomenon of any use or interest to me.

Finally, after explaining at great length in many a survey's free-response field, tongue clamped between my teeth, why a certain question was built on flawed premises and nonexistent understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, I went on strike. I no longer take academic research surveys. Enough of my time has been wasted on other people's pointless, fruitless, groundless "research." I'm a librarian; I have work to do.

Yet those flawed, useless articles receive more respect within the academy than my praxis and the experience-based reporting I perform on it. Until the academy learns to recognize that not all wisdom comes from observation and controlled experiment alone, "alternative" academic careers such as mine will remain marginalized, and the research enterprise will remain a sickly rootless weed torn loose from the good rich earth of praxis.

Practitioner's Art: the Master's Degree in Humanities

Joseph Gilbert, Wayne Graham, and Eric Johnson

Most conversations on the changing landscape of scholarly production still center around three letters that sit at the core of labor, publication, and peer-review: Ph.D. But what opportunities are available at universities and cultural heritage organizations for faculty and staff without doctoral degrees? Is the traditional research-training route still a requirement for leading work in the digital humanities? By examining collaborative roles, avenues for scholarly production, and opportunities for professional advancement available to those without doctorates who nonetheless pursue careers in and around the academy, we reveal the benefits and pitfalls of working without a Ph.D. in higher education.

As Melissa Terras discussed in her plenary address to the Digital Humanities 2010 conference in London, the ingrained nature of the Ph.D. is "a real issue in Digital Humanities. There is no clear route to an academic job, and no clear route to Ph.D., and there are a lot of people at a high level in the field who do not have Ph.D.s. Yet increasingly, we expect the younger intake to have gone down that route." The capacity of non-Ph.D.s to contribute to digital academic output stands in tension to the academy's de facto stance of gate-keeping scholarly production to "doctors only."

Below, three practitioners — Eric Johnson, Social Media Librarian at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, Wayne Graham, Head of Research & Development at the University of Virginia Library's Digital Research & Scholarship department, and Joseph Gilbert, Head of the Scholars' Lab at the University of Virginia Library—describe their own experiences as case studies of Master's degree holders working in the digital humanities. Each of these personal narratives echoes the need for re-examination of the criteria for evaluating scholarly contributions and authorial credentials in light of the renewed emphasis on praxis—making, doing, and creating—offered by the digital humanities.

Case Studies

Eric D. M. Johnson

I knew late in my undergraduate career that I would be going to graduate school but that it was unlikely that I would pursue a doctorate—at least not right away. I was a history major at the College of William & Mary in the early 1990s, just as history doctoral programs were experiencing another of their regular enrollment gluts thanks to a thin job market. I had earned adequate grades, but nothing great, and I recognized that I would be "just another guy" even if I were to be accepted into a doctoral program.

But I did want to carry on with my study of history. My plan at the time was instead to earn a Master's with an eye towards a career in museum education. I didn't want to teach in a traditional classroom; I had worked in interpretive settings for several summers and was interested in the possibilities of public history, a field I saw as sharing my preference for focusing on collaboration, service, and purpose over the inward focus and reification of process that seemed to be so much the norm in traditional academia. I wanted to make my mark in such an open, collaborative, *practical* field.

In the Master's program in U.S. history at George Mason University, I managed to strike a balance between the academic grounding I still felt I needed, in case I should change my mind and go after a traditional doctorate, and the practical experience I wanted, in order to stay on in public history. My coursework was quite traditional, culminating in my decision to write the optional thesis which would prepare me for any future dissertation work. Meanwhile, my employment focused on non-traditional education and interpretation: I worked at the Valentine Riverside museum and in public services at the Virginia state archives. One day a week I interned in the special collections of the Museum of the Confederacy.

Later, the need for steady income and benefits led me to a full-time job in the government documents department of the University of Richmond library, where I worked with federal documents and took shifts at the main reference desk. This was also the first position I had in which website development was an official part of my job. Two years later, I moved to the university career center, where I would spend seven years managing its library and website, adding database and web interface skills to my repertoire.

In the early 2000s, after a dozen years in the field, I had come to realize how much I enjoyed working in library settings. It scratched much the same itch as museum education: work in a learning institution surrounded by people interested in the life of

the mind, creative problem-solving, collaboration, service, a focus on outcomes. I was interested in learning the theory behind the practice I had undertaken for years, so I decided to head back to school to earn a second Master's degree, this one in library and information studies. This was a field tailor-made to my personal interests: public service, information-seeking and reference work, technology, scholarship. It had the added bonus of crystallizing a career path.

By the time I finished, I was working at the Jefferson Library at Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's historic home, as the organization's library services coordinator. New appointments followed, first as Web Services Librarian and then as Monticello's social media manager. History, technology, information management—all combined in an institution (the museum library) that is a collaborative environment dedicated to serving learners. A perfect place.

So why didn't I go after the Ph.D.? The short answer is that I didn't need it to reach my career goals. Early on in my undergraduate studies I imagined myself moving straight into a doctoral program and skipping blithely down the traditional academic path. But later self-reflection led me to realize that that wasn't really the life I wanted, at least not yet. I wanted to be involved in education, yes, but not so much at the mercy of forces so far out of my control: the vagaries of the academic job market, tenure, academic politics.

I was intrigued at the possibilities offered by other learning institutions (museums and libraries) and in the exercise of nontraditional skills such as web design and social media. Traditional doctoral programs showed no signs of rewarding these talents that I valued highly, so it wasn't hard to conclude that the doctorate was not then the path for me. Of course, that decision doesn't preclude the possibility of tackling a Ph.D. later: I may yet develop a call to dive deeper into some field of choice with the goal of giving back at an academic institution. I deeply honor my family, friends, and colleagues who hold doctorates, especially envying them their highly-specialized knowledge of their chosen fields.

Having worked in and around the academy for many years—in university settings proper, at archival institutions, and in special museum libraries—what kind of relationship do my two Master's degrees give me to the scholars and other academic staff with whom I work?

The reaction I receive is fairly audience-specific. To scholars, my library degree gives me an entrée into the academic world; librarians play a familiar role in scholarly production. Unlike many of my other Master's degree-holding colleagues within and outside the digital humanities, I generally don't experience the tension of explaining my

place in their world; librarians are familiar animals and our role in the academic universe is largely understood. In the best relationships, I respect our visiting academics for their content expertise while they respect me for my knowledge of the myriad tools and resources that help them in their research at our institution.

When I am acting in a capacity with which traditional scholars may be less familiar or comfortable, such as when I approach them to participate in social media endeavors, my library degree provides a point of familiarity while my M.A. in history assures them that I have grounding in the content and practices they value. Many times, I have bridged the distance from traditional scholarship to new media by first assuring the scholars of my *bona fides* and my commitment to traditional scholarly goals. They are then more ready to hear me out when I suggest practices that may help them achieve those goals in new ways.

In addition to these more traditional scholars, when assessing my relationship with the academy I should mention colleagues who aren't traditional faculty. Speaking broadly, I find that among such colleagues my degrees are seen as positive ends to themselves—proof of achievement and dedication on my part rather than as needed bridge-building tools. Fellow librarians appreciate the library degree as proof of my commitment to upholding professional practices and standards; the history degree is a bonus that not only further grounds me in my chosen content field but makes me more competitive from a career perspective. Other colleagues—departmental secretaries, development staff, curatorial staff, digital humanists at fellow institutions, etc.—view the degrees as relevant or not depending on the particular vagaries of our professional relationships. Truthfully speaking, most probably don't even consider academic credentials—our relationships are based on the services we render to one another within the confines of our jobs; either we're good at them or we're not, either we're helpful or not, credentials be damned.

I fell into the world of digital humanities by accident rather than design. Like so many digital humanists, I'd picked up related skills (in my case web design and database programming) along the way without specifically planning to apply them in my career. But apply them I did, as employers learned that I had these skills. Doing web and database work in a library dedicated to the history of Thomas Jefferson and his era perforce made me a practitioner of the digital humanities—a term that I did not encounter until the lead-up to the first THATCamp in 2008.

There is a lot of similarity between public history and the digital humanities. The

"Scrappy Quotient" of each is high, by which I mean that the practitioners in those fields are more willing to expend effort in creative problem-solving in the face of obstacles—while keeping a specific result in mind—than I find to be the norm in other areas of the traditional humanities. The "Collaboration Quotient" is likewise high in each, perhaps because these fields were interdisciplinary from the very start; digital humanists need help from software and hardware experts, programmers, information specialists, and user interface designers, while public history grows out of the work of museum curators, interpreters, academic historians, and learning specialists. Nobody in those fields can function in a vacuum.

Because of this spirit of collaboration and of scrappiness, I find the generosity of the two fields to be outstanding: rare is the digital humanist or public historian who is curled into a self-protective, exclusive, scholarly ball, unwilling to share code, lessons learned, or a beer. They actively seek the company of their peers in many fields, always open to the possibility of learning from or teaching something to others. And because of this ethic of egalitarian knowledge sharing, these fields are rich soil for the holder of the Master's degree.

Save, perhaps, in one way. The digital humanities do share one thing with traditional academic humanities; the reputation economy is very strong indeed and is actively nurtured by its leading practitioners. I have found that the principle movers and shakers in the digital humanities are almost without exception holders of doctorates, most often employed in academic institutions (or doing their best to be so). I wonder then at the parallel between the traditional means of scholarly reputation management —the ongoing process of book and article publication and conference appearances— and that of the leading digital humanists, with their steady contribution of blog posts, tweets, and conference appearances.

I feel very little tension in pursuing my day-to-day work as a librarian or social media specialist—beyond the regular deadline- or project-induced stresses of any work place. This stands in contrast with the special stress that I do feel when I can't free up the time to manage my reputation as a digital humanist through tweeting or blogging about my work to inform my digital humanities peers of my efforts. This kind of active self-promotion seems to be normative in both traditional academia and the digital humanities. The doctorate looms large in both; it is unclear, though, if that is a cause-effect relationship or if there is another explanation altogether. Perhaps it is simply the nature of the online environment in which the digital humanities move that encourages such active reputation-building.

I don't have to tell fellow librarians of my work at the reference desk—though I may

certainly choose to do so—but if I don't inform the digital humanities world of my latest social media initiatives I feel I am in danger of losing my place at the table. Very little popular credit accrues for the practicing digital humanists who may not have time to step back to present their work for an audience of their peers in the field because they're too busy working for their colleagues in their institutions or their public audiences. I don't have to take time to reinforce my work among my library colleagues. It sometimes appears as though the audience for digital humanists is often, in a curious way, other digital humanists; in contrast, the audience for librarians is generally not other librarians.

Master's degrees are practical degrees, at least in my experience. They are particularly good for those who want to be around academia or learning institutions but aren't interested in being subject to the rigors of tenure or the uncertainties of the academic lifestyle or marketplace. Because they remain by definition more generalist than are the specialist doctorates, they strike a good balance between theory and content on the one hand, and hands-on practice on the other. Professional degrees in particular create an instant recognition, an instant role—to be sure, this can be a limitation as much as it can be an opportunity. Within learning institutions, master's degree holders make good collaborators, bridge builders, and service providers, with *enough* grounding in the specialty field that interests them to talk to the true specialists while remaining engaged with the larger project or institution.

Evaluation becomes tricky, though, for these practical-minded bridge-building collaborators. How is their effort "scored" by supervisors and colleagues? If they remain in the trenches solving problems as part of a larger group working together, how does a supervisor tease out their particular contributions? Their sense of worth—and their professional evaluation—needs to come from their institutional colleagues and their successful service to their audiences; managing reputation among peers at other institutions can become a distraction if not carefully governed. Until assessments are grounded not only in the scholarly output of single individuals but in evaluation of the efforts of teams of people working towards a shared goal, I would wager that the work of most digital humanists and other collaboration-oriented academic service professionals won't be considered to hold much intrinsic value in the academy. This is a true shame. In the alternate academic world posited by this #*Alt-Academy* collection, though, the story is different: with so much evaluation stemming from service rather than output, collaboration and group contribution are often evaluated as a positive good. There may be some lessons to be had here.

Wayne Graham

I remember the excitement that characterized my first experiences in academia. I was finishing my honors work at the Virginia Military Institute in analyzing the growth of a small community on the early Virginia frontier. I had spent months in the county courthouse in a gray blouse (a monstrosity of a nineteenth-century wool military uniform still worn at military academies) researching how land was transferred between generations. My advisor, Col. Turk McCleskey, had attended William and Mary and was encouraging me to investigate the school as well to continue my academic pursuits. After meeting Professor James Whittenburg at a conference, I knew that William and Mary's program was a perfect fit for my interests and approaches to history.

While at William and Mary, I undertook an internship with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's Department of Historical Research. During the late 1990s' push to digitize cultural material, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation had received a grant from the Mellon Foundation to see if, given start-up funding, a well-known organization with large research libraries (the foundation had been writing architectural and archaeological reports on Williamsburg since the 1940s) could sustain the further digitization of their collections on a subscription model like JSTOR. As a lowly intern, my part was to work on the transcription and markup of primary research reports using the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) standards in SGML for one semester and, because I had some experience with databases, work to develop a web interface that would allow people to research in an existing database of collections: an exciting opportunity to learn from and work closely with some of the brightest thinkers in my field.

My Master's degree took one year to complete, a schedule which gave students little less than a semester to decide if academia is the right career path for them and impress the faculty that they had a strong research project. To assist in decision-making, many of the faculty at William and Mary held a series of very frank discussions with students about what a tenure-track position means, the sacrifices one would need to make with regard to family, and some of the very difficult hurdles that lay in the way. Conversations often centered around the importance of thesis and dissertation topics, as this is what one would expect to be writing about for about the next 15 years, in various formats, until one had received tenure. More than just picking the right topic, the right conferences, and the right advisors, several faculty spoke about the impact of the choice to pursue a tenure-track faculty career on one's family. When it neared time to make the difficult decision to pursue a Ph.D., I was given the opportunity to take on a full-time position with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, continuing my work on the digitization project, and also helping to bring all of the research reports, probate

inventories, manuscripts, and other primary documents that lay squarely within my research interests together in a web site.

Excited by the prospect, I jumped at the opportunity to stay on at the Foundation, telling myself I would be in an even better position after a couple of years of "real" work as a historian to apply to a Ph.D. program. What I quickly discovered about myself was that, while I really liked history, I *loved* working with computers. When I started working at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, we used very rudimentary tools (Microsoft Notepad and the JADE SGML processor) to encode and validate our SGML documents. The work was slow, laborious, and very error-prone. I was primarily responsible for digitizing the extant York County Probate Inventories for the seventeenth-century. These had been transcribed and typed on an earlier project, and stored in three-ring binders. Because they were an important piece of my thesis work, I wanted to come up with a more efficient way to get them into electronic form, rather than just re-type the entire run of court documents. In my first scripting experience, I procured a scanner and some OCR software that could only produce Microsoft Word documents, and strung together a series of macros to facilitate Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) markup. The desire to improve the production and dissemination of historical materials would stay with me throughout my career. Over time, I was placed in charge of the group's servers, which eventually lead me to seek some more formal training, and Microsoft was aggressively marketing certification program. I took the coursework to become a Microsoft Certified Database Administrator (MCDBA), which taught me how to set up robust database-driven systems. As the project continued to reach its goals, the Foundation was hopeful of renewed funding from the Mellon Foundation but, as is always a risk with soft-money jobs, the funding was not renewed. While the Foundation was committed to continuing the project, the uncertainty of my job's status prompted me to begin investigating other options.

The timing of these events ruled out the possibility of applying to a Ph.D. program, and colleagues encouraged me to put my name in to several different agencies. The library at William and Mary was looking for a person to help administer their computer systems. After a several nerve-wracking weeks, I finally got a call offering me a position at William and Mary's Earl Gregg Swem Library as a systems administrator, which I was eager to accept. The very next day, I got a call from a contractor offering me a position as a database administrator. The pay was significantly better (nearly twice what the state institution was offering), but only guaranteed for two years. Remembering what it felt like to be on soft money and being familiar with the William and Mary Library, the opportunity to be around interesting people and the stability of

the academic job ultimately won out over more money, a long commute, and the need to start seeking other work soon after beginning.

When I began at the Swem Library, the building was going through a major renovation that would greatly increase the number of publicly-available computers, as libraries attempted to re-envision how they supported scholarship in the 21ˢᵗ century. Given this emphasis on technology, one of my first tasks was to improve the library's web presence. Beginning with rudimentary applications written in ColdFusion, I started to build a dynamic web presence for the Library and continued to develop my skills as a systems administrator and programmer. Along the way I made many mistakes but often had no one to turn to when I ran in to difficulty developing, improving, and deploying code. Relying on William and Mary's education benefits, I took some math courses and some computer science courses to develop my programming skills and learn new approaches.

Over time, my position began to shift from a primarily systems-support role, to more application development and integration. I thought it would be a good idea for the library to establish a digitization center that could not only have a lab with some scanners for student and faculty use, but also more robust equipment that could support digitization requests for the library's special collections and rare manuscripts, including its robust collection of Thomas Jefferson's correspondence. While this effort ultimately failed to gain financial support, the library was able to start a new internship in digital history that would expose students at the Master's level to the tools and techniques of digital history. My experience with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation had been hugely positive, and I wanted to do something that could help train historians in new methods, and also help fund another graduate student. I conceived the internship to train students to use TEI standards to encode documents and also work on database development, web design, and other projects that would expose them to new techniques and methodologies they could use in their academic careers.

It was around this time that the library started to think about changing my position from a staff position to a faculty position. The thought was that, given the increasing amount of work I was doing with faculty, and in support of faculty projects, changing my employment classification would be advantageous, both in giving me weightier credentials when working with faculty members for whom such things mattered, and in signalling a shift in the way in which the library operated. The MLS was really what separated the librarians from staff, and I did not have that particular degree. However, what I did possess was a set of very specialized skills, and a vision for what was possible in the online environment, which was seen as equally important.

Based on my experiments coding in an academic setting, I started gaining some recognition in technical circles. After writing a series of blog posts on how to use the emerging Facebook API, I was approached to write a technical manual by APress publishers. At the time, the Facebook API was not well-documented and was changing weekly. Unlike the reflective, research-based style of academic writing I was trained for, in writing this book I described and provided code examples for unusual API behaviors, only to find that Facebook would either fix or remove the "feature." I was literally writing a book that was becoming outdated while I wrote it! The shifting landscape of technology provided a unique writing challenge.

At the same time, I was also becoming more deeply embedded in the institution's high-end computing efforts. The university hired a new director of computational computing who had a nice budget to build a computer graphics lab, and I was able to start working with computer graphics, with the maintainers of our high-performance computing cluster on scientific visualization using tera-scale data, and generally have lots of fun in new areas of computation. Likewise, despite my position at a small institution, the emergence of open-source communities allowed me to connect with many like-minded individuals interested in working on some of the same projects I was. My first open source project was with Mozilla's Mycroft, and I later became deeply involved in the VuFind project sponsored by Villanova University, helping to build better ways to discover and access library holdings.

Working on these projects was fun and eventually led me to rethink my career priorities and explore new employment opportunities. After some soul searching, I realized that what I loved most about my job was working with faculty and students to collaborate on research projects. This ultimately led me to the difficult decision to leave William and Mary to take on a new position at the University of Virginia's Scholars' Lab. Having the opportunity to work with faculty and help advance their research into new areas was very appealing to me. I appreciated the Scholars' Lab's vision for the future of scholarship—particularly as it intersected with new geospatial methods—and I was excited to work with a skilled group of programmers.

Today, as head of the Scholars' Lab Research and Development team in the University of Virginia Library's Department of Digital Research and Scholarship, I spend my time working with faculty and library staff on innovative projects pushing the boundaries of humanities and social science research in new and exciting ways. However, I still am occasionally asked if I will pursue a Ph.D. I have to say that since I entered graduate school in the humanities, my research interests have become more diverse than traditional graduate education seems to allow. Not only am I interested in more

traditional quantitative analyses of community development on the colonial frontier, but also how new methods, derived from work in computer graphics, computer science, and mathematics, can add to the scholarly interpretation of these communities. Unfortunately, I have just not found the right fit between experimental methodological approaches and traditional historical research in traditional roles within the academy. Clearly, if I had attempted to become a tenure-track faculty member, I would not have been able to have many of the valuable experiences I have had at this point in my career. I would be working on finishing my book for tenure right now rather than engaging in activities normally reserved for senior faculty members, such as speaking at major society conferences, participating in large grant-funded projects, and pushing the boundaries of what digital scholarship can be.

Joseph Gilbert

When I graduated from Vanderbilt University in 2004 with a degree in English and Computer Science, I was (and remain), as a potential Ph.D. student writes to Michael Bérubé, one of those people who "Really Cares About Literature." Though I had obtained marketable programming skills as a CS student, the thought of a cubicled life producing uninteresting code for an uncaring corporation seemed unthinkable and frankly intimidating, despite the real interest some computer science topics—artificial intelligence, in particular—provoked in me. At the request of a favorite professor, I met with a kind and forward-thinking Director of Graduate Studies who stunned me with facts about the abysmally low rate of success for job-seeking Ph.D. candidates. I was taken aback but not dissuaded: job markets could change, after all, and could someone with such a deep and abiding love of literature really ever be happy in another role?

I would hear the Vanderbilt professor's words echoed on my first day of graduate school when my new Director of Graduate Studies, welcoming a large class of many M.A. students and a select few Ph.D. candidates to the University of Virginia's English Department, warned us to only undertake the study of literature for its own sake and not with the hope of future employment as a professional literary critic. Those words were a bit more alarming the second time around. As one in the sea of Master's students and not of the chosen few Ph.D. students whose stipends our tuition helped subvent, the financial realities of graduate school were made as tangible as the slim margin for success, defined nearly always as a tenure-track position.

Much of my graduate school experience was quite traditional: 20th-century poetry became my main area of interest, and my Master's thesis on American poet Wallace

Stevens was entrenched in the kind of high theory to which some believe the digital humanities stand in opposition. In my second semester at UVA, however, I had the great pleasure of taking a class from Jerome McGann, one of the founding fathers of humanities computing. McGann and his colleagues at "Applied Research in Patacriticism" were completing work on a beta version of IVANHOE, an interpretive literary and textual studies "game," and I spent the semester employing ludic strategies to formulate a play-acted critique of Blake, Rossetti, and others. While my focus was neither on textual studies nor on 19th-century works, the iterative, playful approach to technology and humanities research would revolutionize how I thought about scholarship both off- and online.

As influential as my experience in McGann's class was, another opportunity proved even more formative: my work as a student assistant at the University of Virginia Library. Beginning as simple opportunity to make some money while in school, my time with the circulation, reference, and government documents public service departments revealed a exciting professional culture of which I was previously unaware. Put simply, librarians were *smart* and *nice*, a combination less visible (though certainly extant) in the high-tension environment of an academic department. Librarians could act as forces for active change, as well: connecting scholars with salient troves of information and enabling work that would be impossible without their expertise.

After a year-long stint at a local record store, the appeal of the collegial yet intellectually-grounded life of the library seemed paradisiacal, and I was fortunate to find entry-level work in coordinating public service at a new library space dedicated to digital research and scholarship: the Scholars' Lab. After purposefully escalating my involvement with digital projects by conducting outreach efforts and increasing my technical know-how, I became a primary liaison to our teaching faculty collaborators. Thanks to the support of Donna Tolson—my predecessor as Head of the Scholars' Lab— and Bethany Nowviskie, Director of Digital Research and Scholarship at the Library, I took on a larger leadership role and eventually applied for and was promoted to head the Scholars' Lab.

At the Scholars' Lab, we emphasize service, not servitude, to our scholarly community. We express this commitment to service through teaching (both in the classroom and one-on-one) and collaborative work on scholarship. For projects led by teaching faculty, like Herbert Tucker's For Better for Verse and Alison Booth's Collective Biographies of Women, I provide regular technical consultation and project management. Through my work on these projects, I've come to realize that making—creating, shaping, and coding

new digital projects and experiences into being—offers an artisanal opportunity to add to the scholarly record. This is an opportunity that, for me, provides a sense of satisfaction greater than that of mental or written deliberation alone.

In addition to the pleasures of collaboration and creating on the web, the prospect of interdisciplinary work in challenging new areas, such as the Scholars' Lab's deep involvement with spatial tools and methods, provides a breadth of personal improvement and an ongoing education not always present in an academic culture that thrives on specialization. The ability to inhabit a number of methodological spaces helps diversify scholarly possibilities, as well. Creating means of accessing and using historic maps and geospatial data through our Geospatial Data Portal and Spatial Humanities site, and visualizing the shifting boundaries of United States counties over time are unexpected new ways I've been able to help push the boundaries of digital humanities scholarship forward—ways that would not have come to be at all without the strongly collaborative and grounded-in-practice approach of groups like ours.

Of course, the old goal of a doctorate degree hasn't entirely faded from my mind. In the past, I've believed (as does Al Franken's Stuart Smalley character), that "I'm good enough, I'm smart enough, and doggone it, people like me!" Shouldn't I, then, strive to obtain the highest degree available in the humanities? In short, not when such a degree takes the better part of a decade to complete, is financially untenable, and provides the small number who complete the journey with meager and uncertain rewards. If you're lucky, you can get paid to do what you love, but loving something—history, literature, art—isn't an occupation in and of itself. For me, a career teaching composition at a four-year university or literature classes at the high school or community college level—academic positions commonly held by Ph.D.s off the vanishing tenure track—is a less interesting route than the one I've taken, and the Ph.D. more a nod to a scholarly landscape that is quickly eroding than a measure of my own ability. I have the too-rare opportunity to help people discover and investigate our cultural history every day and collaborate with world-class scholars on interesting research questions. In many ways, the creative and service opportunities available in a practitioner's role remove my concern over reward and renown: I'm trading an anxiety about prestige for the satisfaction of a job well done.

Final Thoughts: Strangers Among Us

> *"Some frightful influence, I felt, was seeking gradually to drag me out of the sane world of wholesome life into unnamable abysses of blackness and alienage […]"* [1]

In his novella *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, pulp horror writer H. P. Lovecraft depicts a small town whose inhabitants have been transformed into grotesque, amphibious creatures through interactions with an alien race and oaths to their strange gods. In Lovecraft's tale, the narrator, investigating the infested town, later comes to realize that he, like so many of the town's residents, has been irrevocably tainted, is transitioning into something not quite human. He eventually goes insane.

A similar fear of irreversibly turning from what we believe we are—critically thinking, interpretive humanists—into something other and alien—mechanistic, technophilic positivists—informs the academy's resistance to take up digital methods of scholarship and fully embrace the hybrid professionals that facilitate those new methods. We worry about distinguishing ourselves from the (non-existent) horde that employs technology for technology's sake and fret that over-engagement with digitally grounded methods will divorce us from our conception of what scholarship is.

Trepidation over the new and the other makes us cling to our own old gods: the traditional dissertation, the Ph.D. degree, and the tenure track. In truth, giving ourselves wholly over to the restrictive, multi-limbed system William James termed the "Ph.D. Octopus" is more distorting—and Lovecraftian—than we fear the alternative to be.[2] So many of us are fit to make, shape, and create, to *do scholarly work*, but our "spontaneity" (or freedom) of thought and action, which James believed vital to the future of scholarship and something our universities must preserve, is stifled, either by our own feeling of inadequate formal affirmation or others' respect for the "title-giving machine."[3] Perhaps the latter believe that we can trust the "fit…though few" who have trod the Ph.D. path to keep the faith of the humanities' core values through the oaths of years of study, dissertating, and publishing in print. Perhaps they believe that, by narrowing scholarly activity to those few, we have protected the quality and character of academic output.

David Brownlee offered another perspective at the 8th annual Scholarly Communication Institute held in July 2010, saying: "What humanistic scholarship *is* is what humanistic scholars *do*."[4] Incorporating new tools and methods into the various humanities disciplines need not alter who we are as scholars or who is able to contribute since our scholarship itself is self-defining. No psychological or philosophical cliff over which we might tumble exists in Brownlee's model, nor will amphibious non-doctors comfortable in both scholarly and technological environments transmogrify fellow academics into uncritical beings. By creating opportunities for practitioners with Master's degrees or other non-doctoral qualifications to participate deeply in the

scholarly process, the academic record can be invigorated with new methods and perspectives while remaining, self-definitive, distinctly humanistic in its approach.

[1] Lovecraft, H. P. *The Shadow Over Innsmouth. The Call of Cthulu and Other Weird Stories*. Ed., Joshi, S. T. Penguin Classics. 1999.

[2] James, William. "The Ph.D. Octopus." *Writings 1902-1910*. Ed. Kuklick, Bruce. p. 1111. Library of America. 1987.

[3] James. p. 1118.

[4] Personal notes, Joseph Gilbert. Scholarly Communication Institute 8 [conference]. Charlottesville, VA. July 15, 2010.

Intentional Alts

Sheila A. Brennan and Jeremy Boggs

Often, pursuing an alternative academic position falls outside of the planned career trajectory of a full-time doctoral student, and both students and advisers do not always take steps to prepare themselves or students for alternative academic careers.

This conversation, recorded in the style of Digital Campus and available as a Scholars' Lab podcast, highlights the paths of Jeremy Boggs and Sheila Brennan. We are two "Intentional Alts," and at the time of the recording worked together at the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. We share our decision-making processes, work and education experiences, and finish by offering suggestions to those considering similar career paths and to graduate program directors confronting the challenges of training students for alternative academic careers.

Intentional Alts: MP3 file available at: http://bit.ly/1ePz8bJ

Summary

We begin by discussing our decisions to apply only to George Mason University to pursue PhDs in history. This decision has influenced our attitudes and pursuits throughout our graduate and professional careers. Mason's doctoral program may be young (accepting its first students in Fall 2001), but it was one of the first in the US to offer a minor in history and new media by drawing on the strengths of faculty whose works comprise some of the earliest literature and projects in the specialty of digital history. With this focus in place, and because the MA at Mason has always attracted public historians and cultural heritage professionals, the program and its faculty are very supportive of alternative academic pursuits.

GMU's public history focus and new media minor attracted Brennan, who was working full-time as the Director of Education and Public Programs at the US Navy Museum in Washington, DC when she began the program. She planned to continue working in the museum field after completing her PhD. At the time she had taught herself HTML and began designing simple pages for the museum's website. A few years later, Brennan took a leap by leaving her museum job and joined the staff at CHNM to assist with grant and technical writing, which led to other opportunities, including managing a

major digital collecting project. Additional projects allowed Brennan to do public history work at CHNM through partnerships with museums, libraries, and archives, as well as speak at conferences and collaborate on publications.

Upon arriving at Mason, Boggs was armed with a digital history class from his Virginia Tech MA program, and wanted to pursue a traditional tenure track job. But Mason's program and his own work experience at the Center for History and New Media changed his mind about what he wanted to do after graduation. Boggs first took a Graduate Research Assistant position at CHNM, where he learned basic web design markup and quickly moved into programming with PHP. He was hired full-time shortly thereafter. This position at CHNM dramatically changed his intended path, creating a desire to maintain an alternative-academic career. Boggs' willingness to learn new skills and to take advantage of opportunities available through Mason and CHNM led him to his current position. He recently began teaching a US history survey, and now teaches digital history courses, while honing his development and design skills. He describes how he enjoys some flexibility by teaching courses that appeal to him, while working on innovative digital scholarship without tenure worries.

We go on to discuss graduate humanities programs and debate the value of disciplinary studies and learning practical skills as preparation for alternative academic work. Both of us advocate strongly for students to learn some practical skills, including setting up blogs, building websites, or using digital tools to assist with research.

One recurring recommendation for PhD students in this conversation is that they need to take responsibility for guiding their education and training, and should work with their professors to pursue alternative academic interests during their graduate years. When students encounter resistance to alternative academic pursuits, Boggs encourages them to seek out others through professional networks, such as the thriving Digital Humanities community on Twitter. Other professional associations, such as the National Council on Public History, American Association of Museums, and American Library Association offer support to budding new professionals seeking positions outside academia.

Additionally, Boggs recommends that full-time PhD's consider publishing some of their research and in-progress writings or digital project experiments publicly, on a website. In exposing their work, students can more easily connect with fellow grads and with scholars working within and outside of academia.

We both suggest that, to encourage sharing of digital projects and traditional works in the online environment, graduate programs can work to secure free server space for their students if that is not already available. By following the model of institutions like Mary Washington University, which provide WordPress blogs for all students and faculty, some graduate programs could use hosted and supported server space as a way to attract new students. This virtual space can also offer a good place for students to learn how to work collaboratively on a large project. Brennan suggests opportunities through seminars for students to co-author article-length papers or websites.

Finally, in support of students interested in gaining experience working at a museum, archive, or library, Brennan asks program directors to allow them to earn course credit in the same way that internships are counted and structured for many MA programs. We all know that every PhD will not secure a tenure-track job. PhD programs need to be more flexible in the ways they implement requirements so as to provide students with experiences and training that will help them do things in addition to research and teaching.

Humanities doctoral students may not always plan to pursue an alternative academic career upon entering graduate school, but they should be encouraged and supported when they change their minds. This audio file offers the perspectives of one recent PhD and one ABD student who choose not to pursue tenure-track jobs, and who enjoy the intellectual life and challenges they encounter in their alt-ac careers.

Project Management for Humanists: Preparing Future Primary Investigators

Sharon M. Leon

We have all seen them: large-scale collaborative projects that are just a mess. They are ages behind on their schedule. Or they have failed to produce any of their deliverables. Or, even worse, the project is so lacking in leadership that it has no concrete sense of what its deliverables even are. All of these conditions point to missed opportunities and squandered funding.

While we might all be capable of recognizing a project that is crashing on the shoals of disorganization, fewer of us are confident that we are adequately prepared to prevent these kinds of disasters. For individuals with alternative academic careers, obtaining the skill set necessary to keep collaborative projects afloat and headed in the right direction is essential. Alternative academic careers are often made or broken on the success or failure of such collaborative projects. Success can mean a path to additional funding opportunities and, sometimes, increased institutional security. Project failure can mean unemployment at the end of a term contract. Unfortunately, most people with graduate degrees in the humanities have no explicit or formal preparation in managing collaborative projects, large or small. Given this situation, as a community, alternative academics must consider more concrete methods for transmitting good project management skills and techniques to potential employees. This essay will offer some thoughts on effective project management, effective project managers, and some ways that we might transform graduate education in the humanities to convey more of these necessary skills.

I offer these suggestions as some one who was the product of a very traditional graduate education. Thus, despite having successfully managed over a dozen grant-funded and contract projects over the last six years, my preparation for project management was no different from that of most humanists. As an undergraduate at Georgetown University, I gained some experience working on grant-funded projects. In addition to my coursework, I worked 15 hours a week for one of the first generation of digital humanities centers. The Center for Electronic Projects in American Cultural

Studies has since been eclipsed by the Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship, but in the mid-1990s it was the source of one of the very first academic association websites, the American Studies Crossroads Project. My work there with Randy Bass and others gave me a glimpse into the kinds of moving parts that were inherent in a large multi-year project.

In 1997, I entered the American Studies Department at the University of Minnesota in pursuit of a doctorate. As graduate programs go, American Studies at the U was cozy and collegial, not to mention interdisciplinary. For all of the ways that interdisciplinary degrees challenge the boundaries of classical graduate education in the humanities, the program was traditional in its emphasis on readings, seminars, and individual pursuit of research questions. Engagement with sources and scholarship in graduate seminars was primarily about challenging existing theses and interpretive points of view. We were trained to look for logical gaps in scholarly arguments, and to find ways to bridge those gaps with our own work. This stance of interrogation did not foster the notion that scholarship should be a collaborative venture.

To some extent, peer writing groups and student cohorts provided a sense that we were all moving forward in a shared experience, but we were definitely acting as single scholars. In fact, the message of traditional academic training is that a scholar must make a contribution to the conversation as an individual in order to be a full member of the scholarly community. Thus, we offered each other constructive criticism and commentary, but we never really considered anything that would involve co-creation. In the end, the production of a single-authored (and defended) dissertation was the only way to prove full membership in the community of doctoral scholars. So, while we might be moving forward on parallel tracks, our work was individualistic enough to require that we maintain a certain amount of isolation.

Along the way, I, like many of my peers, worked as a teaching assistant and taught my own courses. All of these experiences involved some collaborative work. Being one of several TAs for a large-enrollment class required that we were all on the same page about our expectations and standards for student work. We discussed assignments, teaching strategies, and the implementation of grading rubrics. Similarly, once I began teaching my own courses in Composition and American Studies, I had a series of excellent observation and mentoring experiences with more senior instructors. My department committed significant resources to supporting good teaching from graduate students, including pre-semester training, and a required course on designing and teaching courses in American Studies.

But, by far, doing research for a faculty member was the most collaborative of my work experiences in graduate school. In more than one research assignment, I was able to participate in larger-scale projects that allowed me to see how my particular skills contributed to the work of the group. In my case, these assignments inevitably involved some amount of technical work, whether it be research on newly-available digital resources, or the crafting and managing of relational databases. Regardless of the work at hand, doing research in the service of another scholar's goals requires a careful attention to detail and at least some organizational skill, even if rigid structures were not prescribed by the senior scholar. Though I might not have known it at the time, working on these projects was providing me with some methodological building-blocks toward thinking about attacking large-scale projects on my own.

Thus, my graduate training was not so different from the thousands of others who complete their doctorates each year. So, like many recent PhDs, I began my alternate academic career as a post-doctoral fellow at the Center for History and New Media with almost no formal preparation for what lay ahead. Armed with an eclectic set of interests, I settled in to watch, and learn, and do the best I could to fulfill the responsibilities with which I was charged. I was lucky enough to be surrounded by generous colleagues under the leadership of Roy Rosenzweig, whose legacy to the digital humanities is large, but most definitely includes stunning examples of the power of productive collaboration. As the years pass, I am increasingly cognizant of the ways that those examples prepared me for future success.

I. Managing the Project
In the absence of those kinds of mentoring situations teaching project management in the abstract can be difficult. The nature of collaborative project work is endlessly variable. Funding and timelines will differ, but so too will team dynamics and the nature of the problems to be solved. Nonetheless, it is possible to try to make some generalizations about project management and the factors that are necessary for success.

Beginning with a clear project proposal is frequently the first step to launching and managing an efficient collaborative project. That proposal includes the vision of the project that the funders, whether they be federal agencies, private foundations, or university divisions, authorized for completion. Writing a project proposal that provides a clear statement of deliverables and a path to their completion can offer guidance for everyone involved in the work. To some extent, the project proposal is a necessary fiction. It is a leadership vision for what an idealized version of the project could be, but it is impossible to know for certain at the distance of a year what exact steps and technologies will be appropriate to complete any deliverables. Thus, in

transforming the proposal into a viable plan to finish the project, one needs to be flexible. The pace of change in technology means that once the work begins we may find significantly better and/or more efficient means to do the work. Nonetheless, the project proposal contains both the intellectual vision for the work and hopefully a modest and realistic plan for its completion.

The project proposal will include an articulation of core deliverables. Project managers need to be able to differentiate between the deliverables that are absolutely necessary to deliver a satisfactory project, and those that are secondary and negotiable. Making this distinction requires the project manager to navigate the needs and desires of core stakeholders in the project. If a central scholar on the team is particularly attached to an ancillary feature, the project manager needs to be aware of how that will affect team dynamics and decision-making about other elements of the work. Clear statements about the core deliverables and features at the start of the project can fend off future misunderstandings about the ways in which resources are allocated to work on secondary elements. It can also go a long way toward stemming the tide of feature-creep that often happens in the middle of a large project. If each member of the team has a clear understanding of the essential scope of the work at the beginning, she can set to work attacking those essential items. Once the initial scope is satisfied, team members might have the time and resources to work on enhancements that will improve the ultimate project and hopefully please the project's funders.

After determining the core deliverables for the project, the manager has to make a frank assessment of staff expertise and the resources that are available for the work. In some cases, staff working on projects have all of the skills necessary to play their part in the collaboration. But more often than not, new projects call for everyone on the team to learn new skills. The project manager needs to carefully consider who is best positioned to acquire the individual skills needed at each stage of the project development. This means more than assessing an individual's training and preparation. It also means assessing each staff member's ability to acquire new knowledge and operationalize it in the setting of the project at hand. Will this programmer be able quickly to learn enough javascript to help create these particular user interface elements in a web project? Or does this person's learning style suggest that he would only be able demonstrate a functional knowledge of the language after extended study? Would the development of this content benefit from the sole attention of a graduate research assistant? Or would having two graduate students working together for a short period of time result in a more complete and creative product? Will a small team of staff working together produce work at a quicker pace? Or is that combination of personalities a recipe for distraction and reduced productivity? All of these questions factor into a project

manager's decisions about how to assign the basic project roles. Of course, staff themselves should have significant input into these decisions. If they work in an environment where they feel like they can frankly assess their own strengths and weaknesses, they can be a project manager's best source of guidance on how to plan for each stage of the work.

Similarly, one must make an evaluation of all of resources at hand, both material and intellectual/knowledge-based. In addition to human resource factors, projects can be easily hamstrung by inadequate access to workspace and supplies, including hardware and software. It is possible to make a tremendous amount of progress on very limited resources, but only if those limitations are clear from the beginning. Then, one can plan for the allocation and distribution of resources in accordance with key deliverables for the work. A good project manager also needs to assess the work at hand and ways that she can leverage existing work that is being done in the field. Even if the base project at hand is not a collaborative one, other organizations and institutions will have experience with aspects of the work and those experiences should serve as lessons and in some cases as models for the coming weeks and months as the project team moves forward. Thus, it is important to reach out to other projects and to search for best practices. Above all, strive to not reinvent the wheel if sufficient groundwork already exists.

Based on these assessments of staff and material resources, the project manager can then go on to plot out the pace at which work can be completed. Estimating time and phases of work is very difficult, especially if the group is engaging in types of work that they have never done before. Newer staff members may not be particularly good at predicting how long a task will take. Breaking deliverables down into sufficiently small parts can help with this. But, generally, the staff will provide an estimate of time to completion, and the project manager will have to determine how significant a cushion to add to that estimate to allow for setbacks and delays. Many project managers in the technology sector counsel taking a conservative time frame from the staff and then doubling that amount of time for the overall workplan. Unfortunately, you may not find yourself with flexibility if you are locked into a time-table from a grant application that cannot absorb that amount of cushion. Funders are often willing to grant projects a no-cost extension to enable the completion of deliverables, but it is best to create an initial schedule that aims to bring the work in on time.

Good workplans are composed of several factors. First, they must contain a clear indication of the key deliverables and when they need to be completed. These statements form the main scaffolding for all of the other planning and tracking work

that project managers need to do. Second, the team needs to come to an agreement about the steps that are necessary to achieve the goal of completing those deliverables on time. Breaking the core deliverables down into manageable pieces, which will serve as smaller milestones, will result in the main contents of a workplan. The pieces need to be sequenced logically, and the project manager needs to have an overall sense of the staffing for the work. Can several members of the team proceed on different fronts for a time and then come together to produce one component of the work? Or will everyone work together for a short burst to produce an element of the project? Is there a way to sequence the work to avoid overloading the members of the team? All of these issues should be discussed with the project team, and everyone should be comfortable with the strategy and schedule of work that results. If members of the team know in advance that they will need to put in an extraordinary effort at particular points in the schedule, they can plan ahead for those times, and perhaps even strategized about how to lessen the impact. Third, the workplan has to be realistic about calendaring. The project manager needs to build some flexibility into the schedule because things simply never go totally as planned.

While it is important to stay flexible and not get bogged down in overly complex systems, the team will need a clear, easy way to track progress and outstanding work. There are many good, free or inexpensive tools for this type of tracking.[i] Generally, the best systems allow the entire project team to view major milestones for the project and their due dates. Given the structure of the milestones, the project manager or members of the team should be able to create to-do lists, assign those tasks to individual members of the staff, and perhaps map those tasks to particular due dates. This is not list making for the sake of list making. Rather, it makes it possible for the team to collaboratively decide on the key steps that are necessary to complete core pieces of the work. Placing all of these tasks in a centralized system lets staff know that they have a place to refer to get the big picture and it means that they do not have to hold the scope and feature of the project entirely in their heads. Everyone is aware of the work that has been completed and the work that remains. Thus, using web-based project management software can create a system of public accountability that lessens the burden of the project manager's need to privately track individual progress.

Even though a tracking system will help keep the whole team moving in the right direction through the stages of the project, individual team members may have more or less trouble managing their own time and work. For those who are having difficulty with prioritizing and completing tasks, a manager might suggest David Allen's *Getting Things Done* system, or one of the variations such as Leo Babauto's *Zen to Done* system, as a place to start.[ii] But more than anything, a project manager needs to make an

assessment of how much guidance and oversight each individual team member needs. At a baseline, everyone needs to have a clear sense of regularized work expectations, including when to be in the office and whether or not telecommuting is okay. If members of the team do telecommute, the project manager needs to establish communication standards so that work is not impaired by distance. A range of simple tools can facilitate easy communication, including asking staff to log into an agreed-upon messaging system during work hours such as an AOL instant messenger, Google chat, or Skype, all of which are free. Another strategy that can help team members improve their time management skills is to establish a way for them to report their individual efforts. Tracking and reporting effort need not be a complicated business. If the project is using a shared management system, simply checking off assigned to-dos when they are completed will allow the whole team to have a sense of individual progress. Another strategy calls for asking staff to note their accomplishments for the day or week in a shared document. Finally, while asking team members to keep track of hours spent on particular tasks might seem onerous, in specific situations it can help staff learn more accurately to estimate the work for future projects. All of these strategies can help to improve the efficiency of collaboration by creating a set of predicable conditions under which staff can clearly see their progress toward meeting the project deliverables.

Meetings are an inevitable part of collaborative work. They can be efficient and productive, rather than tedious and mind-numbing. Regularly scheduled meetings of collaborators should be as streamlined as possible. Setting and sticking to a clear agenda is essential to maintaining productivity. The project manager must be committed to moving through the agenda, to preventing the meeting from being derailed by digression and tangents, and to knowing when to schedule additional smaller meetings to work through details. The clear benefit of the periodic full team meetings is that they help assure that everyone understands the trajectory of the work and the way that all of the smaller components fit together. They also provide a place to surface concerns about how pieces will integrate and the ways that one segment of the work might influence others. For long-distance collaborations, these regularly-scheduled status-update meetings are even more important. With collaborations dominated by asynchronous communication and very short messages, members of the team need to know that they have a chance to make sure that the staff from all segments of the project are on the same page and proceeding with the same assumptions about the deliverables and the schedule. Similarly, for long-distance collaboration, project managers from all of the work sites may need to schedule more frequent check-ins.

While occasionally meetings of the whole team might be necessary, more often than not smaller group work can produce more significant results. These working sessions might technically be meetings and might involve significant periods of time, but they need only involve the members of the team best qualified to puzzle out a portion of the project. Thus, they tend to be more productive than larger groups of people with less expertise. Though larger meetings may be disruptive to the flow of the work day, feedback from the project team is essential to the success of the small groups. Sharing the state of the work and the assumptions about its development with a larger group of staff help the small working groups to avoid the echo-chamber effect that can happen when they get down in the weeds of a task. Those feedback and brainstorming discussions should definitely involve a range of experts and non-experts to surface communication and logic gaps in the structure of the end product. As with the larger status update meetings, the project manager will need to guide the discussion, avoiding unnecessary derailments. At the end of the meeting, the team should be clear about the steps that are needed to move forward and who is taking responsibility for those actions.

II. Managing the Project Manager

Planning, scheduling, and tracking work is essential to project management, but these administrative tasks do not really get at the heart of the qualities that are essential to being a good project manager. Taking on a leadership role in a project is distinctly different from being a general member of the team. The project lead or the primary investigator is ultimately responsible for fulfilling the deliverables of the project, on time and on budget. Upholding these responsibilities has implications beyond the success or failure of the project at hand. If an organization consistently fails to complete promised work adequately, it can make a difference when funders consider future applications, and it can certainly have an impact on the over-all reputation of the organization within the university and the larger community.

First, one must be at home with complex organizational structures and juggling of a lot of different kinds of information and tasks at once. In some senses it is easy to understand why individuals with advanced graduate training in the humanities and the social sciences might resist the level of structure and organizational specificity that is required by effective project management. The echos of scientific management and Fordist economic practices haunt our readings of twentieth-century industrial life. More recently, sociologists of labor have effectively analyzed the impact of "total quality management" schemes on the work environment, particularly in the realm of technology. Given these legacies, the notion of taking a hands-on approach to project management may seem fraught with possibilities for disaster.

Yet project management calls for the ability to balance the intellectual work of the project and the mundane processes that are necessary to successfully accomplish the project's goals. Pursuing this kind of work within a university environment is not like working as an independent scholar or as part of a technology start-up. More than likely, there will be entrenched layers of management and oversight within the university that focus on hiring procedures, accounting, and reporting. For individuals who have the experience of completing large-scale research projects such as dissertations or monographs, these types of structures and requirements may seem overly cumbersome, but in the long run it is best at least to be aware of regulations and institutional practices prior to beginning work. In addition to university systems and requirements, project managers face the day to day responsibilities of keeping track of the progress of the project team.

Certainly, some people are more detail-oriented than others, but a willingness to embrace some systematic ways of tracking project work and obligations will allow the whole team to get a sense of their progress and the major issues and milestones that they face in the future. For this reason, comfort with organizational structures is intimately linked to time management skills. A good project manager needs not only to be able to manage her own time and obligations, but also to be able to see the big picture and to help manage the time and obligations of the members of the team. This type of orchestrating involves evaluating the demands of the work plan, the strengths of the team members, and the ways that they interact with one another. Each team member will likely need different kinds of guidance and support to produce her best work.

Equally important, project managers need to focus on establishing and maintaining good communication with the project team and with other stakeholders, particularly if the project involves collaboration amongst disbursed partners. Communication skills are central not only to shepherding the work of the team in fulfillment of the project goals, but they are also absolutely necessary for building trust amongst team members. Projects succeed much more easily when there is a spirit of openness in which the skills and opinions of every participant are valued.

Creating an environment of innovation with dedication to core principles of openness and access undergird so much of sponsored academic project work. And, given the marginal resources available to support this work, project managers need to use all of the tools at their disposal to maintain energy, interest, and the investment of staff/ collaborators. Openness is important in all aspects of successful project management. Every member of the team needs to have a clear sense of the larger goals of the project,

the schedule for completion, the range of deliverables and the ones for which she is responsible. Teams need to know the kinds of pressures each member is under if they are going to work effectively together. A shared schedule and list of deliverables allows individual contributors to know that their work is intimately connected to that of their colleagues and that it plays an important part in the overall success of the project. This type of openness is also connected in an important way to other ingredients necessary for overall success: respect and trust among team members. Similarly, it should extend to an open discussion of the means of achieving deliverables. This should encourage team members to respect the particular skills that each person brings to the tasks at hand, and should create an environment where they feel free to ask for the help that they need to complete their own tasks, whether that be help from the project manager or from other team members. The trust needed to achieve this level of comfort can only happen when the project manager actively fosters open communication and collaboration.

Even the most well-run project teams will eventually experience some level of conflict amongst the staff. Disaffected team members are simply not productive, and a project manager who has not established sufficiently open lines of communication with collaborators may have difficulty dealing with problems because they have festered past the point of easy resolution. Thus, dealing with conflict early and decisively helps to keep a team moving forward. Ineffective communication can be the source of significant amounts of conflict, so whatever a project manager can do to encourage team members to deal openly and respectfully with one another will contribute to swift resolution to conflicts.

Project managers frequently have to make decisive choices about staffing, development paths, and core elements of the project. This leadership needs to be careful and informed, not arbitrary. Nonetheless, in some cases, the project manager is going to make decisions that not everyone on the team likes or agrees with. If a project manager has a long-standing track record of being a fair, honest ally of the staff, they are more likely to accept those decisions and move on. Building up this kind of trust involves more than open communication. It requires that team members know the project manager does what she has to do to secure them an environment in which they can perform their best work—an environment free of unnecessary distractions and road blocks, an environment in which their expertise is respected.

Finally, effective project managers must be willing to learn enough about a whole range of things to be able to talk effectively to those who are real experts. Knowing how to seek out expertise and evaluate a range of good options is essential to providing strong

leadership. The manager simply cannot be the keeper of all knowledge for a project. Thus, she needs to know how to weigh the options provided by experienced and informed team-members. If the team knows that their recommendations are likely to influence the overall direction and success of the project, they are more likely to bring carefully-considered options to the table. Then, the project manager can guide the group to consensus on issues at hand and delegate the work and responsibility necessary to complete the project's deliverables.

III. Models for changing graduate preparation

As more and more people pursue alternative academic careers, better preparation for project management is essential. The emphasis on isolated research and scholarship that is so much a part of graduate education often leaves those individuals wholly unprepared for a significant aspect of their work: managing projects and the variety of staff who must work together to complete them. For those who have never participated in any sort of large-scale collaborative venture, this process can be even more mystifying.

In comparison, the sciences have a long tradition of combining the teaching of some management skills through apprenticeship. Graduate students work in research labs that provide training grounds for learning how to manage their own labs. Additionally, professional journals provide occasional advice about lab management issues and strategies. For example, the Careers section of *Science*, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, offers a collection of articles on "How to Manage a Lab and Staff."[iii] Much of this material is general enough that humanists can draw significant lessons from it, for managing their own collaborative projects.

Professional organizations in the humanities are in relative agreement about the current focus of graduate training and some ways that it fails to provide sufficient preparation for the types of careers that recent graduates obtain. For example, in 2003, the American Historical Association's Committee on Graduate Education provided an introduction to their study of the field, *The Education of Historians for the 21st Century*, in part by explaining: "Most doctoral programs do a good job at what they presently see as their main task: teaching research skills. But they must recognize that more expansive obligations are involved in preparing graduate students for careers as educators and institutional citizens, to say nothing of their public obligations as professional historians."[iv] The Modern Language Association has made a call for graduate institutions to take a larger role in helping support students who pursue these alternative paths, in part because they feel that individual departments and the faculty who compose them are not prepared to offer such guidance and support.[v] To some

extent, this plea is offered in support of those who pursue work in wholly non-academic settings, but it is equally applicable to those who pursue alternative academic careers.

As a result of these concerns and others, in the course of the last fifteen years, a number of efforts have been made to broaden the scope of the training received by graduate students, across disciplines. One such effort was the Woodrow Wilson Foundation's *Responsive PhD* project, which existed formally between 2000 and 2006. This project called for a "Cosmopolitan Doctorate," and worked to foster change and encourage innovation in graduate training with an emphasis on creating productive partnerships with organizations and institutions outside of academe, as well as encouraging increased diversity in graduate programs.[vi]

Perhaps the best well-known and wide-reaching of these programs is Preparing Future Faculty (PFF), which was a joint project launched in 1993 by the Council of Graduate Schools and the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and which enjoyed significant support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the National Science Foundation, the Atlantic Philanthropies, and key professional societies and associations. Between 1993 and 2003 dozens of graduate institutions participated in elements of the program, and its practices continue to live on in programs around the country. PFF succeeded in setting out a model for graduate-student training that complimented the traditional focus on solitary scholarly research.

While recognizing that mastering an ability to do original research and to create new knowledge within a scholarly conversation is the central mission of graduate education, the *Preparing Future Faculty* program worked to systematically prepare graduate students for those other aspects of a faculty position for which they would be responsible upon landing a tenure track job. Since most graduates will not find employment in research universities, but rather in smaller liberal arts and community colleges, a significant portion of the program deals with improving preparation for teaching.[vii] Planned and intentional professional development activities that take place through mentoring relationships and other kinds of institutional programming allow participants to gain first-hand experience in range of situations and environments. Such programming functions on six key assumptions:

- Apprenticeship experiences should be planned and intentional based on the participating student's experience;
- Students should be exposed to a range of responsibilities in different types of institutions;

- Mentoring for doctoral students should be formalized at every stage of development;
- Experiences should prepare students for changing classroom and workplace environments;
- Professional development experiences should be integrated into the rest of the degree program;
- Professional development experiences should build upon and integrate with existing successful programs.[viii]

Participating graduate schools facilitate partnerships with other colleges and universities so that graduate students can benefit from mentoring relationships with faculty from those schools. They gain a variety of types of teaching experiences and come to learn about service obligations at institutions other than research universities. Graduate programs also provide a host of seminars, workshops, and other ongoing support activities to supplement the mentorships. Some provide course credit and others issue certificates to increase the official recognition that students gain for their participation.

A host of professional societies, including the American Historical Association, the American Political Science Association, and the American Sociological Association joined in the later stages of PFF, lending support by selecting doctoral programs to participate. As the report on the program's work in the humanities and social sciences explains, those professional societies put their weight behind PFF because they recognized both that doctoral education is a "powerful socialization experience" and the there is a need to focus on this type of broad-based mentoring and preparation.[ix]

Just as graduate schools and professional societies came to recognize in the 1990s that they needed to support more pedagogical training, they should come to understand that they have a responsibility to help with similar kinds of training for project management. One could imagine launching a "Preparing Future Primary Investigators" program that would provide mentoring opportunities and workshops for those interested in pursuing alternate academic, private sector, government, or non-profit careers. Internships or mentoring programs would be invaluable if they could provide a mechanism through which graduate students could begin to understand the scope of practical work that project managers must do, in addition to providing the intellectual vision for large-scale collaborations.

[i] See, "Comparison of project management software," *Wikipedia*.

[ii] See David Allen, *Getting Things Done*, Nels P. Highberg, "An Introduction to GTD (Getting Things Done)," Profhacker in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (September 22, 2009), and Leo Babauto, *Zen to Done: The Simple Productivity E-Book*.

[iii] "How to Manage a Lab and Staff," in *Science*. See Also: http://www.scripps.edu/services/postdocs/career/labmgnt.html.

[iv] "The Education of Historians for the 21st Century," *Perspectives* (October 2003) [summary of findings]. See also, Thomas Bender, et al., *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-first Century* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

[v] "Professionalization in Perspective" MLA Ad Hoc Committee on the Professionalization of PhDs (No Date).

[vi] *The Responsive Ph.D.: Innovations in U.S. Doctoral Education* (Princeton, NJ: Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, 2005).

[vii] For a detailed discussion of the program and its practices, see Jerry G. Gaff, et al., *Preparing Future Faculty for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2003).

[viii] Ibid., 6-7.

[ix] Ibid., 14.

Playing for Both Teams, Winning on One
Finding and Adjusting to an Alt-Ac Job
and Getting over "Failure"

Brian Croxall

When I wrote my personal statement for grad school, I knew that I didn't understand everything that would be required of me to earn my PhD. But I did know that the final goal was not the degree itself but rather the job for which it would qualify me.

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Consequently, the first line of that personal statement read, "I hope to be admitted by the English Department to pursue a Ph.D. in American literature, with the eventual goal of securing a tenure-track position at a university." For all the uncertainties of graduate study, in other words, one tends to have an idea of where one is going at the end of it all.

Although I had a clear sense of my post-graduate school destination, I did not quite understand how difficult it would be to get that tenure-track position nor that the difficulty would not be assuaged by my "doing everything right" while a graduate student. The recent financial crisis began affecting the academic job market in the fall of 2008, right after I completed my degree.[1] But even before the housing and financial markets collapsed, it was not an easy thing to win a tenure-track position as a literary scholar.[2] For example, the number of applicants has exceeded the number of jobs available in English literature since 1968, according to Marc Bousquet ("The Rhetoric" 211). At the present, approximately 1,000 new English PhDs are granted every year and there are approximately 400 tenure-track positions for those 1,000 PhDs to compete for —to say nothing of the 600 PhDs from the previous year, the 600 from the year before that, ad infinitum (MLA Office of Research 3, see also figure 10). In short, it's not been easy to get an academic job for four decades. So while I knew that earning the degree was not as important as getting the job, I had had no idea how hard it actually was to transition from graduate student to assistant professor.[3]

But as little as I knew about the *process* of obtaining a tenure-track position in academia, I knew even less about non-tenure-track jobs one can hold in or around a university and which build and expand on graduate training. These alternative academic (or "alt-ac") positions include working in administration or a library to support scholarly work of others. Other "alt-academics" might become programmers or instructional technologists working to design and implement systems to improve teaching and research. Others work in cultural heritage institutions—museums and archives—both on and off campus. Others work as journalists, editors, or foundation administrators (see Nowviskie, "#alt-ac"). And others still work in traditional departments as researchers but off the tenure track. My final year's fellowship during graduate school allowed me to begin meeting many people who fit the description of an alt-academic, as I worked in Emory University's Center for Interactive Teaching (ECIT), which was housed in the library. Being exposed to this new category of academic worker subsequently led me to expand my ideas about where I might be able to contribute to a university community. The result was that I began applying to alt-ac jobs along with regular tenure-track positions, and I have recently begun a position that fits into the former category, where I work to integrate emerging technologies into an academic

library and to facilitate interactions with other technologically-oriented units on campus.

Others who were not as callow as I was know that it is difficult finding tenure-track positions, and there is an entire cottage industry of guides for conducting your academic job search. These texts make plain many of the standard and unspoken practices of the application process, none of which has changed despite the increased destabilization of higher education in response to the financial crisis. Far less familiar is how someone with a PhD searches for an alt-ac career. In this essay, then, I hope to provide some initial "signposts" for the process of how one pursues an alt-ac position. [4] Be it ever so idiosyncratic, making plain the path that I took to my current position will hopefully provide some insight for others who find themselves curious about how one might pursue an alt-ac career. Since many who consider the alt-ac will have already been engaged in the regular academic "job market," I will compare and contrast my experiences applying to conventional, tenure-track jobs over three years with my more recent, year-and-a-half experience searching for an alt-ac position. I'll begin by considering how to *find* jobs to apply to, the application process, and the interview itself. After that, I will reflect on feelings of failure that some might experience on transitioning away from traditional academic careers and on my experience transitioning into a new alt-ac position.

Finding Jobs

Every "regular" academic discipline has a particular process for advertising tenure-track jobs. Disciplinary organizations such as the American Historical Association (AHA), the American Psychological Association (APA), or the Modern Language Association (MLA) publish collect and publish (online and/or in print) advertisements for openings. While these professional organizations collect the lion's share of these advertisements, many schools also advertise in other venues, such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Regularly searching through these lists is the best way to learn about jobs across the United States, as well as occasional jobs in Canada and other places around the globe.

Finding alt-ac job listings is a much more complicated procedure. Since most alt-ac jobs fall outside the auspices of regular disciplinary structures, they aren't often listed by the professional organizations. Instead, they are listed by groups or publications that are connected to the academy but not necessarily to any one part of it. Consequently, *The Chronicle* remains important, but one should also search postings at *Inside Higher Ed*,

HigherEdJobs.com, *H-Net.org*, or *Educause.edu*. While many jobs will be listed with each of these sites, some will only appear in select publications. Of course, since there are thousands of jobs posted at each of these sites, you will need to winnow down the search with terms to restrict the listings that you see. Plan on taking some time to experiment with different terms since each institution will likely use an idiosyncratic approach to describe alt-ac positions. Depending on the field in which your alt-ac work will fall, there will be other specific places to look for job listings. The best way to find these venues is to ask acquaintances that are already working within the field where jobs like theirs are listed.

More than providing you places where to look, though, my experience shows that finding alt-ac jobs depends on acquaintances telling you personally about positions that they have come across. Again, since such jobs are so hard to describe and categorize, they do not get listed in every place, and are easily missed. Some jobs may only be listed on an institution's Human Resources page, with only the people who are involved in the search committee able to advertise by word of mouth. Most of the alt-ac positions that I have applied to were listed in *The Chronicle*, but they had fallen outside my search pattern. To get such help from your friends and professional associates, however, you have to let them know that you are considering jobs that fall outside the tenure-track and what sorts of positions you think you are interested in. Doing this can be difficult for many reasons (something that I'll return to below), but the increased efficacy in finding suitable positions certainly outweighs any discomfort that you might feel. Moreover, you should reach out to as wide a network of acquaintances as possible. Twitter has, in this sense, been indispensable for me in my searching for an alt-ac position. I do not believe that it is an exaggeration to say that every job interview I've had in the last year and a half was a job that I first learned about via my friends.

Applying to Jobs
The process for applying to tenure-track jobs remain fairly constant from one discipline to another. Once you have found an advertised position, you will almost certainly send the search committee a dossier of materials—either by mail or electronically. The dossier will likely include a cover letter and a curriculum vitae (CV). Depending on the school and your field, you may be asked to provide several other items: a dissertation or book abstract, one or more writing samples, letters of recommendation, transcripts, teaching evaluations, a statement of teaching philosophy, or sample syllabi. Some schools will also ask you to send a job application form that is specific to their institution or to fill one out online. The ad for each position should make it fairly clear which of these items the search committee would like to receive. Each discipline has different expectations for how long these documents are and for what goes in each of them, and you should

consult with faculty members to get a sense of what these expectations are. You will want to workshop these materials over and over again, calling on those same faculty members and your friends to help you consider how to most effectively represent yourself. Since you will normally have only a few weeks to deliver your materials once the ads for positions have been posted, the sooner you get started on these materials the better off you'll be.

Although alt-ac jobs are not as rigidly defined as those within the professoriate, they will frequently require you to submit some of the same materials as tenure-track jobs. Once again, the advertisements and announcements that you find will explicitly state what you should provide, but you will almost certainly have to supply the search committee with a cover letter and a CV. If you have already applied for tenure-track positions, you will have a head start on both of these documents. You can use them as the framework for the materials that you will send to the search committee since many alt-ac jobs will want to know a bit about what you research or how you teach. But you need to realize (the obvious fact) that alt-ac positions are *not* looking for professors. As such, you will need to spend some time learning as much as possible about the position and about the school or organization where it is located so you customize the cover letter. You will want to reflect on which experiences you have had during your education and any time since you finished that relate to the core responsibilities they have outlined in the advertisement. It is also not unusual for alt-ac jobs to advertise for candidates with specialized skills, such as web design, programming, grant writing, project management, or budgeting. Just because you are not an expert in these fields does not mean you cannot apply to a position requesting them. But your letter will need to acknowledge—to a degree—the requirements, and you might reasonably discuss your willingness to acquire new skill sets if you do not yet have all the abilities the advertisement describes. Do not be afraid to drop entire portions of your tenure-track cover letter so you can report on your relevant experiences and skills with concrete detail and still stay within a two-page limit. By the time you are done with the cover letter, you should not be surprised if more than 80% of it differs from your letters for tenure-track positions.

For example, when applying to a position where I would "help plan and execute a variety of research projects utilizing technology to advance innovative intellectual inquiry," I discussed both my research and teaching. But instead of letting these two subjects fill the entire two pages, each got a small paragraph. I discussed my teaching in terms of assignments and projects that had leveraged an interactive timeline I had developed and the in-class use of Twitter (something that was still novel in 2009).[5] My research, which investigates the cultural importance of technology in connection with

psychological trauma, got a single, seven-sentence paragraph. I used the rest of the letter to discuss my qualifications for other aspects of the position: my grant-writing experience; my experience teaching graduate students and faculty how to incorporate new technology into their teaching and research; my experience with project management in a university and in a service organization of which I was president; and my vision of specific things I would do in the position to help the organization I would be joining to become successful. While I did have paragraphs about my teaching and research, then, they did not dominate the letter in the way they would for a tenure-track position. What's more, each paragraph was largely rewritten so as to make them tighter and more clearly related to the job.

The amount that your CV will shift when applying to alt-ac jobs depends upon the position. Academics tend to include everything they have ever done on their vitae, which easily leads them to being more than five pages long. If you're applying to jobs outside of a university, you will likely need to revise your CV into a resume. This restructuring will force you to radically shrink what you include and how you categorize your experiences to stay in the one-page limit.[6] If the alt-ac positions you are applying to are still part of a university community, you will likely be able to submit a longer CV. That being said, you should look over how you have ordered its information and consider rearranging it so that the most relevant experience of your academic life appears near the top, whether it is your work in a writing center or some of the service that you have done for a department, such as organizing a conference. Your academic positions and education will probably still have first placement on the document—after all, most alt-ac jobs (whether affiliated with a university or not) will require you to have some education beyond the Bachelor's degree, if not necessarily the PhD. But the rest of the CV should be ordered to reflect the responsibilities of the job. For instance, my normal CV lists my publications and book projects immediately after my education. When applying to the alt-ac job I discuss in the previous paragraph, I shifted my publications lower and replaced them with my digital projects. My standard vitae lists these projects on its fifth page, out of seven. But for this job, I knew that evidence of how I had "utiliz[ed] technology to advance innovative intellectual inquiry" was more important than research related to my dissertation. As you think about how to adapt your CV, you will again want to confer with any alt-academics whose positions are similar to the job to which you are applying on how best to represent yourself to the search committee.

While the time for applying to tenure-track jobs can seem short, the time to apply to alt-ac positions is frequently shorter still. Since it takes a long time to customize letters, you will want to begin work on your application materials as quickly as possible. Once

you've written one alt-ac letter, however, you will likely be able to draw upon its language for future alt-ac positions to which you will apply. Once you've sent in your materials, it does not hurt to consult with your friends and acquaintances to see if any of them have connections with the institution or its search committee that would allow them to put in a word on your behalf. Doing this is good practice whether one is applying to alt-ac or tenure-track positions. But since the applicant pool for alt-ac positions tends to be much smaller than the pool for faculty positions, the phone call or email will tend to go further.

Interviewing for Jobs

It is not unusual to have two rounds of interviews for tenure-track jobs. The first round will often involve 10-12 candidates that the search committee has selected. In some fields, these candidates will be asked to meet with members of the search committee at a large disciplinary conference such as the MLA or AHA. These requests for interviews often don't come for well after a month after you sent your application materials to the school. This delay in interview requests makes sense given the hundreds of applications search committees receive. But this delay can complicate matters for candidates, who are sometimes given only a few weeks' or days' notice before the interview happens. As an example, one of the schools that I applied to in 2008 had an application deadline of 24 October. I heard nothing from that school until approximately December 15th, when they called to ask me to come to an interview at the MLA in San Francisco on December 29th. If I hadn't already been planning to attend the MLA because of a panel that I was chairing, it would have resulted in a tremendous expense on my part. First-round interviews at conferences, in other word, depend on the person being interviewed to pay his or her way. When one includes travel, lodging, meals, and conference registration (a requirement to interview for some jobs at MLA), one can easily spend $1000—and that's when purchasing airfare and booking hotels months in advance of the conference. Not all fields have a tradition of conference interviews. When describing Middlebury's 2009-2010 search for a new media studies faculty member, Jason Mittell notes that his field often does its first round of interviews on the phone or via a service like Skype (Mittell). Given the difficult economics of attending conferences for the express purpose of having a job interview, one hopes that more and more departments will consider interviewing their first round of candidates remotely.

Regardless of whether this first interview happens on phone or in person, one can count on it taking approximately 30-60 minutes. You will, of course, do all you can to learn about the department that is interviewing you—its faculty, its courses, its history, its special projects—so that you will be ready not only for their questions but to ask questions yourself. It will not be a stress-free situation as you will want to do your very

best and the interviewers will likely ask probing questions about your scholarship and teaching. But in the end, it will only last 30-60 minutes. Once that interview is over, you will again have to wait to hear from the search committee. When they have finished interviewing all of the first-round candidates, they will do some deliberation and decide to interview a smaller group of candidates. Narrowing the candidate pool and inviting candidates to "campus visits" can take as little as a few hours to as much as a few weeks. In the meantime, you will not hear much from the committee, and if you've not been invited to a visit, you might not hear anything at all.

If a first-round interview is a one-hundred meter dash, a campus visit is a marathon that is run at a full sprint. They normally last at least a full day and can easily encompass all of a second. You will meet with any number of different faculty members from around the department and particular administrators within the college or graduate school. As important as those meetings are, they will not be as important as the presentation you will give on your research to the department that is considering you as a colleague. This presentation will likely take an hour, including yet another opportunity for people to ask you questions. Once this campus interview is concluded, you will have to wait for other candidates to come to campus and for the search committee to deliberate. Making a choice will not take very long at this point, but you might not hear anything unless you are the first-choice candidate. Search committees will generally wait to inform runners-up of their status until an offer of employment has been accepted so as to leave room to extend an offer to a second choice if the first candidate declines. It's not unusual for offers to not be extended until March, which means that there can be five months between when one applies to a job and when one learns that she has been successful in obtaining it.

Once again, my experience interviewing for alt-ac positions suggests that it is simultaneously similar to and different from the process involved with tenure-track jobs. One similarity is that alt-ac positions tend to require multiple rounds of interviews. As is the case with smaller departments, the first round of these interviews tend to be conducted remotely, most often by phone in my experience. An immediate advantage with interviewing for alt-ac positions, then, is that they do not require a tremendous outlay of money on the part of the candidate. Just like tenure-track positions, the first round of alt-ac interviewing tends to last 30-60 minutes, and you should prepare by knowing as much as possible about the organization you are hopping to join and the university of which it is a part or in orbit. The exact questions you will be asked may not be as predictable as with a tenure-track position, but you should be able to get a sense of what their major concerns will be by examining the advertisement for the position. You will want to be ready to expand on the specific experiences you detailed

in your cover letter or to add new ones. If the position requires you to interact with professors in what could be construed as a support role, you should be prepared for questions about times in which you had positive or difficult interactions with faculty. It is not unusual for search committees to ask you to situate the position in terms of what is happening at other universities. For example, when applying to digital humanities jobs, I have almost always been asked for examples of what other alt-academics and centers have been doing across the country. Although your alt-academic career may not place you in a set disciplinary field, that does not mean that you won't be part of a national conversation; do what you can to know this conversation and to be known within it prior to your interview. Finally, you should also anticipate how you would answer questions about your decision to apply to an alt-ac position rather than a regular faculty position. The intent with these questions will be to determine whether or not you really understand the differences between the tenure-track and the alt-ac paths. It will not be so important to answer these questions "correctly" as it will be to demonstrate that you have been thoughtful in your decision to move in the alt-ac direction. In my experience, it becomes easier to answer such questions if you have already considered how your graduate training relates to this new position. If you spend some time thinking, you will probably be surprised at how organic the transition from one part of your life to another feels. Again, consult with alt-academics that you know for ideas on questions that you would likely be asked.

If you are successful in your first interview for an alt-ac position, you will be invited to campus for a second round. Just as with a tenure-track position, this interview will likely be an all-day affair and may last more than one day. These interviews will (again) tend to start early in the day and last well into the evening, as you meet with as many different people as the search committee can arrange of those with whom you will work on a regular basis. But here is where a difference lies between the tenure-track and the alt-ac job interview comes to the surface. In a "regular" faculty job, you will primarily work with the people in one department and occasionally with administration. An alt-ac position, on the other hand, will almost certainly have you working with a much wider swath of people, some of whom are faculty members and many of whom are not. Even those who are faculty members will very likely not work in your area of expertise. In one alt-ac campus interview that I had, I met with an Associate Vice President for Research, the Dean of Libraries, the Director of the School of Library and Information Science, the Director of Composition, the chairs of at least two departments (humanities and computer science), programmers, librarians, facilities supervisors, graduate students, and faculty members from a number of disciplines over two long days. Some of the meetings during this interview were with individuals, but many were with groups; you will need to be prepared for both types of interactions. In another alt-ac campus interview, I started my day (at 7:30 am, no less) meeting the University's Chief

Information Officer (CIO) and Vice President, the Deputy CIO, and University Librarian for a wide-ranging talk. The day didn't end until past 9 pm, after which I had easily met and been questioned by 50 different administrators, faculty, alt-academics, graduate students, and human resources personnel. All of these people who interview you will know what the job is they are looking to fill, but since they hail from so many different levels within the university structure, they will all come at the position with an individual angle. Speaking directly towards individuals' sense of the position while simultaneously not losing sight of your *own* perspective will be one of the most important things you can do to make an effective case. Becoming aware of the university as a whole and of its strategic plan and/or mission statement helped me to frame my sense of how the position could fit into the larger structure of an institution. After all, it's important to realize that the alt-ac positions you are applying for is very likely newly-created at the university you are visiting. What this means is that you will be arguing not only for your own candidacy but also the necessity of the position for meeting the goals of the team you will be on and of the university itself.

As a portion of your interview, you will almost certainly be asked to give at least one presentation. As opposed to a tenure-track position, where you will most frequently give a talk on a portion of your research, the search committee for an alt-ac position is very likely to assign you a topic. You should take this topic and its presentation very seriously. If there is a way for you to connect your research to the topic at hand, you should by all means take that opportunity, but it should only be a portion of the presentation. What's more, since your audience for the presentation will include individuals from all areas and ranks of the university, you will need to tailor any references to your own work so as to make them legible to a non-specialist audience. Not everyone, for better or for worse, has read as much Lacan as you have. Instead, you should try to think as broadly as possible about the position and how you can—again— make an argument for its existence and for the necessity of your being just the person to occupy that position. As you plan the presentation, you should also remember that it is a *presentation* and not a paper. You should not simply read a prepared statement. Instead, you should try to engage your audience as much as possible. An easy way to do this is through the use of visuals, such as simple slides or images that you can use to underscore your point. If they are organized effectively, you can use the slides to simply remind you of the next points that you plan to make. Being prompted from your notes or your visuals is much better than the stale and direct reading that features so prominently at academic conferences. If you've had the opportunity to teach undergraduates prior to this point, you will have doubtless learned that they do not respond well to being read to. Consider this presentation an opportunity to teach those in attendance not only about yourself but also about the position and its interlocking relationship to the university. As an outsider and someone who will likely occupy a

hybrid space within the school's structure, you might very well be able to teach individuals something new about how they themselves fit into the larger university. It goes without saying that preparing such a presentation—on a topic that is at best tangential to the years of research you will have already done, for a university that you are not yet a part of—can be difficult. Recognize this ahead of time and spend as much time preparing as possible. Solicit feedback from as many faculty members and alt-ac acquaintances as you can to get a sense of how portions of the presentation play to different audiences. And be sure to practice, practice, practice to find natural ways of explaining your ideas rather than defaulting to how you might express them on paper.

As much as you might want time to prepare for your presentation, you might find that you have precious little time to do so when going to an alt-ac campus visit. If the time between applying to tenure-track jobs and going to a campus visit is measured in months, the time between application and campus interview for alt-ac positions is measured in weeks. For one recent job I applied to, applications were due on 15 February; I had a phone interview on 1 March; a few hours later I was invited to a campus interview, which happened on 18-19 March. In only 32 days, the entirety of the search process was complete. My experience interviewing for alt-ac jobs over the last year and a half suggests that this pace is not unusual. I have regularly received invitations to campus interviews within one or two days of the first interview, and these campus interviews follow closely on the heels of the first. What's more, the decision process following the candidates' visits is always very quick. When I have had a campus interview, I have in almost every case been informed of my status within one week, even if I was not the successful candidate. Again, this differs quite a bit from applying to tenure-track jobs, where candidates will simply not be told of their status until someone signs a contract. I do not think that search committees for alt-ac jobs are necessarily more decisive than those chairing the search for faculty members, but the culture of alt-ac positions appears to let the chair of the search committee be forthcoming with candidates. While it can be difficult to hear that you will not be offered a job, I have found the quick resolution far preferable to hanging on for weeks at a time.

Success and "Failure"
When you learn that you have not been selected for a job you will naturally be disappointed, whether it's a tenure-track or alt-ac position. Although you know that there are many other candidates for positions, you might end up feeling like you had failed. But while not getting a tenure-track position can leave you feeling like a failure, in a strange twist simply *applying* for an alt-ac position can leave you dejected. After all, if you've framed going to graduate school in terms of "the eventual goal of securing a

tenure-track position at a university," as I did, choosing a different career path very much looks like an admission of failure: that one was not good enough or did not work hard enough to do those things that would guarantee success. These self-generated sentiments are exactly what I faced when I first began looking for alt-ac positions.

When contemplating a shift from the tenure-track to the alt-ac (or really *anything* that's not a tenure-track job), it's important to recognize that the belief that only a "regular" academic position is almost always heightened by the experience of graduate school. While one studies her subject matter, she is also socialized to believe that becoming a professor is the only proper outcome for someone with a PhD. To an extent, one cannot justly blame this socialization on the faculty whose paths have typically not included the exploration of other careers, especially if they are teaching at a prestigious graduate institution. Most of the time, these faculty members have not had other long-term careers and while they really do know the difficulties of the "job market," they do not necessarily have the frame of reference that allows them to see the possibilities of a different path. The competition among students inherent in many graduate programs also contributes to conformity of opinions about the importance of obtaining a tenure-track job. If everyone in your department wants a tenure-track job, considering other options may very well get you less attention and funding from your department. What's more, this socialization about tenure-track jobs frequently works so that graduate students view any position at "less" than an R1 institution as a failure. I still remember a conversation with a faculty member in my graduate department in which I was sharing the schools to which I had applied for jobs. As I mentioned one mid-sized, state university far from where I was at the moment, the faculty member quickly intoned, "Oh, you don't want to teach *there*." I did not respond, but inwardly noted that if I wanted to teach, I had to apply everywhere. Graduate school, in other words, produces a specific form of Stockholm Syndrome, where one is only content to become that which you constantly see before your eyes.

Choosing to pursue alt-ac jobs, then, requires one not only to shift perspectives on personal goals, established many years previously and assiduously worked toward, but also to discount the training and professionalization that graduate school imposes. If one has studied American literature, one might do well to remember Ralph Waldo Emerson's exhortation in *Self-Reliance* (1841) that "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." Since graduate training exists in large part to broaden one's mind and perspectives, it should only follow that such training should result in a broader sense of career opportunities. Unfortunately, most graduate students that I have spoken with receive no discussion of alt-ac career paths (or *any* alternative career paths) in their graduate instruction.[7] Such a conception of graduate education ignores the reality of

the job situation that has faced graduates for the last several decades and contributes to the socialized belief that a tenure-track position is the only one worth pursuing. At its heart, this belief reflects a policing of the boundaries of what is considered scholarly. The actions of many in the academy suggest that only individual research, writing, and teaching are scholarly—hence the difficulty of getting people to participate in academic service, which more often than not requires working with others. Alt-ac jobs differ from the traditional way of participating in a scholarly community, but that difference by no means will say that the work of alt-academics is not scholarly. Figuring out how to improve library access or the use of technology in a classroom are not only activities that support others' scholarship; these *are* intellectual questions in their own right, regardless of whether one solves them in a team or not. Solving these problems requires not only technical or other skills but also those who have the deep training that an advanced degree confers. Rather than being washouts from the academy, alt-academics are in reality too scholarly by half.

As difficult as it might feel, then, it is to your advantage to recognize that earning a graduate degree does *not* commit you to only pursuing a tenure-track position. After all, we do not call graduate school a "professional" program in the way that we discuss graduate education in medicine, law, or business. While it might seem that graduate school trains you to do one thing, the nomenclature alone suggests otherwise. Ironically, advanced training in the humanities frequently provides one with the opportunity to consider the importance of difference and diversity. Alt-ac positions invite the academy to recognize its own difference, to see the Other scholarship in its midst. And pursuing these Other opportunities need not be coded as veering precipitously off course; rather, one must realize that choosing a new path can be a conscious and thoughtful decision. Thus, even if you've previously gone on the "job market" and not found a job there, applying for alt-ac jobs does not mean that you are settling.

Ironically, when I consider my time searching for jobs in academia, I find that it has consistently been applying to tenure-track positions that has made me feel like a failure. I have gone on the academic "job market" three times: in 2007, 2008, and 2009. Each year I applied to *every* job in North America whose description I could even partway claim to fit. While I didn't relish the idea of living in Antigonish, Nova Scotia (2007), Fairbanks, Alaska (2008), or Grand Forks, North Dakota (2009), if there was a job for an Americanist, I applied. As best as I can tell from my records, in the 2007-2008, when "the number of jobs" listed with the MLA "approached its highest level in almost two decades," I applied to 45 tenure-track positions and post-docs (MLA Office of Research 1). The net result was two tenure-track interviews at MLA, one phone interview in the spring, and, eventually, an offer of an instructorship at my graduate institution. In 2008,

when the job market dropped off precipitously, I applied to 60 academic positions.[8] That year, I had one tenure-track interview at MLA, one phone interview in the late spring, and two local interviews in the summer. One of these last offered me an instructorship. In 2009, I applied to 43 tenure-track positions in English departments, and I had zero interviews (see Croxall, "The Absent Presence"). Over three years on the "job market," then, I had applied to 148 academic positions and received three MLA interviews, two phone interviews, and two local interviews. That's a success rate of 4.7% of simply obtaining an *interview*, a percentage that is lower than the current admissions rate of Harvard—or any other university—in 2010 (Johnson). By the end of my second year on the job market, pursuing that "tenure-track position at a university" was leading me to feel inadequate in more ways than one, despite my having done all the "right things."[9]

On the other hand, my pursuit of alt-ac jobs, something that I began during my second year on the "job market" in the spring of 2009 has made me feel incredibly successful. According to my records, I applied to six alt-ac positions beginning in March 2009. Given the difficult track record of even getting an interview for a tenure-track job, you can imagine my surprise when the first two jobs I applied to asked me to do a phone interview. Of those, one invited me to a campus interview, the first that I'd ever had. Although I was not offered this job and was disappointed, I was simultaneously encouraged by the fact that my search in these new positions resulted in a 33% success rate for getting interviews. It suddenly appeared that I was not quite the failure that my tenure-track job search might have suggested. As I began my third run at the "regular" academic "job market" in the fall of 2009, I watched for other alt-ac opportunities. I ended up applying to three alt-ac positions and one post-doctoral fellowship that was aimed at developing hybrid, alt-academics, a program sponsored by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). I was asked to interview for all three jobs to which I applied; for the CLIR post-doc, I was asked to interview with three different host institutions. In other words, I had interviews for 100% of the jobs I had applied to. What's more, I was asked to campus interviews for one of the jobs and for all three of the CLIR host institutions that had interviewed me. And as a final twist to the year's job hunt, I actually had an institution *ask me* to interview with them when I had not even submitted an application. All told, in a little more than one full year looking for an alt-ac job, I had a 60% rate for receiving job interviews, had received five campus interview requests, and even had one institution pursuing me.

It was this last institution that eventually started to make the dominoes fall. After a phone interview, I was offered a position—without even having been to a campus interview. I had already discovered I had come in second place for a position where I'd

done a campus visit, but I hadn't yet heard from another where I had recently been. I quickly wrote an email to that school to let them know that I had an offer. Even more complicated, however, was the fact that I had been made this job offer at around 10pm, and I was supposed to fly to another campus interview the next morning. In many circumstances, my path would have been clear: one simply interviews for as many positions as possible so as to get the position that best suits one. But this school had also been very forthright with me in disclosing the salary and terms that they would be able to offer me, even before the campus interview. As such, I knew that the position I was to interview for could not compete with the one I had been offered. I wrote another email that evening to the members of the search committee, explaining what had happened and asking whether there would be any room to negotiate the contract. If there wouldn't be, I suggested that I should save them some money and not come to a campus visit when I could no longer consider myself a real candidate for the position. I felt a little bit badly in putting things in such bold terms, but then I realized that for the first time in my search for an academic (alt- or otherwise) job, I had some power to negotiate. I spoke with members of the search committee the next morning, who were kind enough to make inquiries on my behalf at different levels of the institution to see if terms could be renegotiated. This proved impossible, but we left on very good terms with them congratulating me and my being glad to have saved them time and money. The experience proved so positive that they extended me an invitation to visit the campus in the coming year for another project altogether.

Within one day of receiving the offer from the school that was pursuing me, I heard back from the other school where I had had a campus visit. They too made me an offer, and I suddenly had something that happens very rarely in the tenure-track "job market": a choice between two jobs at two very exciting institutions. Choice! It's what the term "market" normally suggests but which is so seldom seen when on the tenure-track. Aspects of each job offer were very appealing and while I was tempted by both, the key factor in making my decision was the length of time of the contract. Neither were permanent jobs, and while both offered the possibility that they could become so, I decided that having stability for a couple of years was important for my family. The key advantage of the job that was pursuing me was that they were offering a higher salary. But since I had two offers—and advice from other alt-academics—I worked to negotiate. When the Human Resources person called to make me my second offer and quoted me a salary, I immediately asked if it could be increased. She offered me a 2.3% increase per year (a nice round number, actually) without any questions. A few days later, I began much more serious negotiations around the issue of salary. Having an offer letter from the other institution helped tremendously to get my starting salary increased by another 2.3%. Although the final salary at this position never got as high as the other one I was offered, the package was ultimately a better fit for my career. While

it's always possible to negotiate when starting a new position, I was certainly helped in this endeavor by having multiple job offers. At the risk of repeating myself, that situation just doesn't happen very frequently when applying to tenure-track jobs.

Of course, my recent good fortune in landing alt-ac job interviews and campus interviews cannot be considered predictive for my own future or anyone else's. The economic situation continues to be a difficult around the world, and there are signs that this will not abate in the short-term. But I can say with real conviction now that I have made real progress in escaping the socialized sense of loyalty toward the tenure track. While I did initially feel like a wash-out when I began looking for alt-ac jobs, my experience with the pursuit has been so radically different from the tenure-track "job market" that the only thing I consider to be a failure is my not looking for such jobs earlier.

Switching Teams: Starting an Alt-Ac Job
As I write this essay, I'm only a few weeks into my new alt-ac position: a CLIR Postdoctoral Fellow and Emerging Technologies Librarian in the Emory Library. Since I've spent some time on the psychology of the regular and alt-ac "job markets," I thought that it would be useful to offer my initial impressions for how my alt-ac job differs from the faculty-like ones that I've had in the past. In short: it's very different.

But before exploring the differences, let me mention one similarity: the difficulty of starting a new position. In starting any job there are a number of psychological start-up costs. One has to learn who one's colleagues are, fill out numerous HR and (hopefully) benefits forms, attend orientations, get access to the computer network, and find the bathroom. Discovering procedures, policies, and organizational history all take time whether one is entering into a position that is on the regular tenure track or one that is alt-ac. My psychological start-up costs have been greatly reduced by the fact that I'm working at my graduate institution. What's more, my final year's fellowship in graduate school had me working 20 hours a week in this same library, albeit a completely different division. I already knew the lay of the land, then, and I knew many of the people that I'm now working with by sight if not by name.

But if my discomfort at starting this new position was reduced to a degree by my familiarity with the location, I was not ready for how shocked I would be by the day-to-day work of my alt-ac job. One of the most comforting things about going on to the professoriate after finishing graduate school is that one's job's duties remain very similar. As you will have done for the previous X years (where X is greater than four and hopefully less than 10), you will continue to research, teach, and provide some

service to your department. Depending on where you end up as a professor, the number of courses you teach might be greater or smaller than what you taught as a graduate student, and you will almost certainly be expected to design new courses that do not fall as easily into your comfort zone as you would like. You might feel worried about the number and quality of publications you will be required to produce before going up for tenure. So while the intensity of the work might change in one degree or another, you will more or less continue doing these three tasks, each of which you will have already proven yourself adept at—after all, you *did* get hired.

The first difference that I discovered between my alt-ac position and the two teaching positions I had held since finishing my PhD was the absence of any clear guidelines for what I was supposed to do all day. After doing three things (research, teaching, service) for eight years, I suddenly found myself lacking clear goals for what exactly I'm supposed to do with my time each day. The position that I'm in is new, so there isn't a job description that I can necessarily follow. Indeed, *I'm* the one who is supposed to be helping to define the position. One might say that this is not so terribly different than doing academic research. After all, no one sits down and tells the assistant professor what the subject of her tenure book should be. But the assistant professor knows that she *should* be writing a book. My new position offered none of that certainty for the first week or so. One could fault my supervisors for not having a clear enough action plan laid out for my first week, but from talking to others in similar positions, I'm beginning to believe that this uncertainty about how to spend my time is representative of most jobs that are not professorships. It is a rare thing to have such a clear delineation of tasks as "research, teaching, and service." Instead, most alt-ac positions are like many *non*-ac jobs in that they are ambiguously defined and depend upon the person filling that position to figure out what she should be doing all day long to benefit the team, project, or organization.

Adjusting to this concept of the organization is something else that I've had to do in these first few weeks. Again, this doesn't necessarily sound like something an alt-academic should have difficulty with since departments and programs within a university are all organizations. But given the relatively small size of most academic departments, the issue of organization is not nearly as important as it is if your alt-ac job links you to something like an academic library, where you are one of hundreds of employees. I spent some of my first week on the job learning what small teams I was assigned to, the history and goals of those teams, and how and to whom those teams reported. To someone who has been used to the autonomy of an English department where I was an independent actor who reported only to the chair and the curriculum committee on a once-per-semester basis, the need to understand org charts seemed, I'll

admit, superfluous at first. I'm beginning to see, however, that understanding how the parts of this library fit together is a key to my being able to function effectively within it and to create the sorts of change and opportunity that I came here for. If I ever return to a regular academic position, I can already tell that I will be more invested in understanding how my own little cog fits into the larger university mechanism. As a faculty member, it is easy to not worry too much about *how* things get done as long as they do get done. The result of this has been the increasing role of administrative apparatus that is disconnected from faculty input. Ignoring the processes that make such large and complicated organizations such as universities run only leads to the reduction of faculty governance. While I'm sure that many faculty understand the connections between their department's "team" and the larger university better than I did after working a single year at two different institutions, I still believe that this collaborative and team-based structure of many alt-ac endeavors has something to teach tenure-track faculty.

Another surprising shift in having an alt-ac position was how strange it felt to work a regular schedule. While academics have notoriously flexible schedules, most alt-academics tend to work the standard, business day of 9 to 5. Of course, it's not as if academics don't work 40 hours per week; indeed, when working as a faculty member over two years, I would guess that I worked between 60 and 80 hours per week as I designed new courses, graded papers, worked on my own research, and applied to jobs. What's more, I found that I was most effective if I worked every day in my office, where I tried to keep a 9 to 5 schedule. Even so, I was free to alter that schedule or where I worked as it suited me. As long as I showed up in the classes I taught and for my office hours, there was no concern about my work habits. For my new position, I still work the same hours, but there is much less flexibility in shifting those hours and almost none in moving the location. It would be very difficult for me to work with team members on designing a new digital scholarship commons at Emory if we did not all work the same hours. The inflexibility on scheduling is not all that surprising when one considers that alt-ac jobs fall somewhere in between regular academic positions and regular non-ac jobs. Another commonality between alt-ac jobs and non-ac jobs is that the long breaks that faculty get in-between semesters or quarters do not exist. The library, after all, is almost always open. And while faculty members must use their long summer breaks for producing the research they need to keep their jobs, the research can, as always, be conducted at one's own pace. But while it has been a bit of an adjustment to get used to a different work schedule than I have been used to, it comes with knowing that my evenings are free. As a faculty member, one knows that one *could* always be reading another article, writing another paragraph, or grading another paper. My current position comes with none of those expectations. I still work on my own scholarship

many nights, but it feels different when I'm choosing to do it simply for myself rather than as a core aspect of my job.

After working for universities for the last eight years as a graduate student and then as a visiting faculty member, I thought that my experiences would have prepared me to work as well in an alt-ac job as a regular faculty position. I've quickly learned that the two can be very different. I do not believe that one is inherently better than another. Both provide me a certain amount of freedom that—even if frightening at first—allows me to work creatively to solve intellectually challenging questions. If before I concentrated on explaining in writing how metaphors of technology had powered an understanding of psychological trauma, I now work to determine how to teach graduate students, faculty, and librarians to integrate emerging technologies into their research and teaching. Again, let me just say unequivocally that determining how to do either of these tasks—that of the regular academic or the alt-academic—as effectively as possible is a subject of scholarly inquiry.

Playing for a Fantasy Team?
At the end of "The Waste Product of Graduate Education," Marc Bousquet mentions some of the solutions that have been offered since 1970 for righting the imbalance between academic jobs and job seekers: "supply-side balancing of 'the market,' alternate careers, more teacher raining, 'buyer beware' labels on admission letters and so on" (100). None of these solutions, he argues, reaches the heart of the problem; instead they appear to aid and abet the "well-being of casualization—especially the fantasy of 'alternate' careers, which enables administrations to flush away the degree-holding waste product" (Bousquet, "The Waste Product" 100).[10] In context, it is plain that Bousquet's mention of "'alternate' careers" means those that are outside the academy, ones that graduate students, to the mind of administrators, are freely "choosing" to follow rather than seek academic employment.[11] While Bousquet doesn't have alt-ac careers in mind, then, I think that it's prudent to recognize that alternative academic careers can be subjects of "fantasy" in just the same way that a traditional tenure-track position can be. Those of us contributing to this collection are in the main people who have been lucky enough to slip interstitially into the university. We've managed to inhabit gaps that, often, no one knew needed filling before we found ourselves in them. We do not want to mislead you into thinking that the path here is of necessity any easier than a traditional academic career; in fact, the path may be more difficult to tread simply because its ways are largely personal and uncharted. That said, alt-ac careers are not *only* objects of fantasy. They exist, and if you've already prepared for—or even "failed" on—the job market, you are probably well on your way to being ready to apply for alt-ac positions.

[1] In that year the number of English literature positions listed with the Modern Language Association dropped 24.4% from the number that had been listed in 2007. The projected drop in the most recent year was even worse: 27.5% fewer jobs were listed in 2009 than in 2008, which as I've just noted was already a bad year (see MLA Office of Research). It had previously been reported by The New York Times that the number of jobs listed in 2009 was down 37% from 2008 (Lewin). This number only takes into account the number of jobs posted in the October 2009 Job Information List. The MLA's "Midyear Report" also includes the December job listings. Still, the 37% drop in October is important to note since the most prestigious jobs and many of the tenure-track jobs are listed in that issue rather than December and March.

[2] As I speak about my own experiences throughout this essay I will frequently refer to the aspects of the "job market" within English literature. While the process of securing an academic job certainly differs from one discipline to the next, the discourse surrounding securing jobs within MLA fields "appear[s] to fairly emblematize the general state of disciplinary discourse on higher ed workplace issues" (Bousquet, "The Rhetoric" 211).

[3] One could easily level charges of negligence against my younger self for not adequately researching my desired profession, the lack of research naturally predicting a lack of success in finding jobs tied to closely to research. I believe, however, that undergraduates are in a very compromised position when trying to get information about graduate school since they inevitably end up talking only to people who have succeeded at the career path. Still, much has been written in the last year about the extent to which potential graduate students are responsible for learning about the job situation of academia and whether or not graduate school should change admissions, length of study, or coursework. See, for instance, Louis Menand's The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University, Tenured Radical's blog post "Playing the Blame Game," or The Chronicle Review's forum "Graduate Humanities Education: What Should Be Done?"

[4] I myself asked Bethany Nowviskie and others for such "signposts" in November 2009 on Twitter, after I had spent much of a year looking for an alt-ac position. My tweet was a response to one of Bethany's, which was the original germ of this edited collection (Croxall, "Tweet"; Nowviskie, "Tweet"). Having secured a post-doc that is decidedly alt-ac in its scope, I feel it only fair that I limn the path I followed.

[5] For more information about the interactive timeline assignment and a tutorial for how to build one's own timeline see (Croxall, "Assignment").

[6] For advice on converting an academic CV into a resume see Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius's *"So What Are You Going to Do with That?": Finding Careers Outside Academia* or articles in *The Chronicle* by the "CV Doctor" team, Julie Miller Vick and Jennifer S. Furlong.

[7] With the ongoing crisis of jobs in the academy, it is imperative that graduate education begin to include more viewpoints on what one can do with a PhD. I have argued elsewhere that graduate students should be required to do internships that are separate from the university, perhaps with non-profit institutions (see Bonde et al.). Such internships could provide students with insights into other career paths that call on graduate-school skills like research and writing. Moreover, internships would confer "real-world" work experience that would be useful for those who decide to shift away from the academy. Another important approach to helping graduate students expand their vision of a possible future would be to give current alt-academics with advanced degrees joint appointments in appropriate departments. Graduate students benefit from taking courses with those who *have* bridged the traditional gap in humanities education, and departments benefit from fresh and insightful approaches. While both of these suggestions represent radical shifts from the status quo of graduate education, we must admit that the current situation is untenable. These and other similar changes must be enacted so as to improve—as well as to preserve—higher education.

[8] While the number of jobs I applied to in 2008 is higher than that in 2007, this is largely due to my having had to continue searching for a job until July of 2009. My job search, in other words, stretched 10 months: from September 2008 to July 2009. My 2007 search ended in late April of 2008.

[9] In a 2002 essay, Marc Bousquet sought to reposition the understanding of the employment situation within academia from a metaphor of the "job market"—a figure of speech that had calcified over three decades so that it had stopped behaving as metaphor and was understood as an accurate description of reality—to a metaphor of waste management. The impetus for Bousquet's analysis was the absence of jobs that had been enthusiastically projected but that had stubbornly failed to appear throughout the end of the nineties and the beginning of the new millennium. The radical inaccuracies of reports such as William G. Bowen and Julie Ann Sosa's 1989 study, *Prospects for the Faculty in the Arts and Sciences*, could only be understood, Bousquet writes, by recognizing that a university's purposes was necessarily not to provide the

best education but rather to "accumulate capital and conserve labor costs by casualizing faculty positions by any means available" ("The Waste Product" 83). Since the best supply of casual labor comes from current graduate students, "it has to be acknowledged that increasingly the holders of the doctoral degree are not so much the products of the graduate employee labor system as its *by-products*, insofar as that labor system exists primarily to recruit, train, supervise, and legitimate the employment of nondegreed rather than degreed teachers" (Bousquet, "The Waste Product" 86, my emphasis). Given the number of jobs available to people holding the PhD, it seemed apparent to Bousquet that one stood a better chance of teaching in college if one had not yet graduated. Those that graduated simply became waste products that needed to be expelled from the system. There was a reason, in other words, that so many recent graduates on the job market "feel 'treated like shit'": in the context of the academy as waste management system, they *were* shit (Bousquet, "The Waste Product" 91).

[10] Bousquet persuasively argues his point that correcting the academic labor problem will only be made as we reverse the casualization process. Demand for teachers obviously exists, and we should fill these positions with the degreed rather than the not-yet degreed. Universities' costs will increase but so too, recent research suggests, will the performance of students in those universities: "Vanishing tenure may be bad for students as well as teachers. A couple of dozen studies over the last decade have shown that as the proportion of professors off the tenure track rises, the proportion of students who return to college the following year and eventually graduate declines" (Wilson).

[11] Bousquet is clear that this "ideology of 'free choice'" belies the fact that many of those leaving academia do so involuntarily ("The Waste Product" 82). As anonymous blogger Bitch Ph.D. put it in a December 2008 post "On 'Leaving' Academia," "[T]he truth, I think, is that part of what's so painful about 'leaving' academia is that we usually aren't leaving by choice. More often, academia is leaving us, and all we're doing is having to slowly come to the point of acknowledging that we've been left alone in this big apartment full of books, maybe with a cat or two, and a big pile of bills on the counter. Academia, that bastard; he just up and walked one day, and it took us a while to realize he wasn't going to come back" (Bitch Ph.D.).

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Administrative Careers for Humanists: an Overview

Joanne Berens, Arno Bosse, and Miranda Swanson

American institutions of higher education are complex engines for the production of knowledge. Community colleges, liberal-arts colleges, and research universities, both public and private, are primary contributors to economic growth, cultural life, and civic well-being. They all depend upon the skills of exceptional administrators to execute their educational and research missions on behalf of the faculty and students. Students with advanced degrees in the humanities are well qualified for alternative academic careers, which we define as positions in higher education that do not include an appointment to the faculty.

In this article we outline the reasons humanists contribute to the aims of higher education, the practical steps needed to prepare for a career while still a student, and the professionalization necessary for career advancement—whether one is a seeking a relatively short-term, but rewarding, position before applying to a doctoral program; is an artist, an actor, or a musician in need of a "day job;" or is an MA- or a PhD-degree holder about to embark upon a career in higher education administration. We offer general principals required for a wide variety of positions across campus, illuminated where appropriate with examples from our own careers in three areas: fund-raising, information technology, and student affairs.

Why humanists?

Graduate humanities programs cultivate a versatile intelligence but generally do not offer specialized training for alternative careers. Versatility and a lack of specialization make humanists distinctly qualified for academic administration. A humanist's ability to sustain multiple points of view, to maintain the thread of an idea as it is creatively developed, to defend an idea with cogent, nuanced arguments, and to translate complex ideas for the benefit of diverse audiences all find daily application in the academy.

In addition to these intellectual qualities must be added a politician's skills—in the original sense of the word, as a leader of the *polis*, a civic-minded citizen who cares for the well-being and governance of the state, which in this case is the academy. If you find yourself organizing conferences, joining student organizations, questioning policies and serving on ad hoc committees, or discussing institutional history with your department chair or dean, you already possess the type of personality well suited to an alternative administrative career in the academy. In short, if you have strong organizational, communication, and problem-solving skills, along with a desire to help others, you will

find the field a good fit: faculty members and faculty leadership will value your advanced academic training and students will appreciate your understanding of their needs.

Student Preparation

The preparation you can undertake will extend over your entire time as a student. You must first determine the time needed to excel academically. Higher education administration is not a field for those with mediocre grades or abilities. Faculty and members of an institution's leadership seek colleagues who are their intellectual equals and who can be entrusted to manage an institution at a very high level. Your academic performance—in classroom discussion, in meetings with professors, in the quality of your research, ideas, and writing—will demonstrate your administrative abilities far more than any subsequent interview.

Next, you should take part-time positions that provide practical experience and help you identify and test your skills. Most American colleges and universities conduct so-called "fund-raising campaigns" on a continual basis. Working with the president and trustees, fund-raisers determine an institution's priorities and craft stories that will appeal to alumni, private philanthropists, public foundations, and government agencies. Depending on an institution's ambitions, a campaign may raise millions or billions of dollars over a ten year period. This money provides expendable income for immediate needs and invested income to establish permanent endowments for ongoing needs, such as student scholarships, faculty salaries, or programmatic research. As in politics or the military, campaigns require an army of supporters to succeed. Fund-raisers recruit students as telethon callers, alumni magazine writers, and alumni reunion aids, among other positions. Many top development officers began their career as students because they enjoyed sharing their enthusiasm for their school and could communicate the aims of their institution to an educated lay audience.

Information technology is perhaps one of the areas experiencing the greatest growth in higher education today. Entire fields of knowledge, such as molecular engineering, physics, and certain branches of medicine or environmental studies, would not be possible without technology; others, such as libraries, literary studies, linguistics, economics, history, and education depend on technology to store, manage, and analyze large amounts of data that would be difficult to comprehend by any other means. Faculty members who guide these projects hire students because they need versatile specialists who not only understand computer programming but who possess the academic skills to understand a project's intellectual aims. A scholar studying Shakespeare's pattern of word usage will benefit from an English major as a

programmer; a library digitizing fragile materials needs a technician who is sensitive to books, images on paper, or sounds saved on magnetic tape as historical and cultural artifacts. Because of the growing importance of information technology in education, full-time career opportunities can appear even before graduation.

At the heart of every institution of higher learning is the bond between faculty and students. A range of student services administrators are fundamental to strengthening that bond. In addition to teaching and tutoring positions, graduate students are often recruited as admissions counselors, mentors for multicultural and LGBTQ programs, live-in dormitory counselors, career counselors, and general administrative support personnel by a variety of offices. This direct experience helps students develop skills in organization, written and oral communication, program development, and diplomacy that often lead directly to permanent and senior positions after graduation in admissions offices, academic departments, offices of deans of students, student housing, and offices for student activities, career counseling, and multicultural and minority affairs.

Professional Advancement

It is easy to advance in higher education administration if one is willing to invest time in building career credentials. Early in your career, build a network of peers within your institution to share ideas and continue to explore the range of career trajectories. Pay close attention to areas designated by your institution for expansion. Seek out leaders that you admire and turn to them for mentorship and advice.

At early and mid-career levels, serve on committees, especially those outside of day-to-day job that build institutional knowledge and develop skills. Look for training opportunities, such as courses offered through human resources or your institution's school of continuing education, which build business skills in technology, administration, and communications (writing, editing, or marketing). Work entrepreneurially in your position to create efficiencies or identify and develop new processes, especially with an eye toward incorporating new technologies or new services. Develop your project management and managerial skills, join national professional organizations, and attend conferences in your field of specialization.

For mid-career to executive-level movement, teach courses, serve on career panels, make conference presentations, and mentor younger colleagues. Build networks outside of your institution by serving on national review boards such as the NEA or NEH and by taking leadership positions in professional organizations. If you do not hold a PhD, consider obtaining certification in project management, an executive MBA in nonprofit

management, or a PhD or EdD in higher education administration. Apply for mid-level management and senior executive positions that build on past experience. An informed and enlightened management will recognize and encourage your ambitions by providing monetary support or flexible work schedules to pursue career advancement that will ultimately benefit the larger institution.

In conclusion, administration of institutions of higher education can be rewarding at all levels, even as a student worker or in an entry-level position, because of the stimulating environment this activity provides and the caliber of people who will become practitioners' colleagues and friends. More than in the corporate world, your advancement is based on your intellectual ability, collaboration, and creativity. We encourage you to join us in this immensely fulfilling and vital work.

Of Hybrarians, Scholar-Librarians, Academic Refugees, & Feral Professionals

Amanda Watson, Patricia Hswe, Amanda French, and Christa Williford

Introduction

Whenever a humanities scholar reads a document crucial to her research on a computer screen or a microfilm reader, she is very likely profiting from the work of the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), a renowned organization that she has probably never heard of. CLIR, which has existed in one form or another since 1956, might be called a library technology think tank. For the last few years, one of the problems it has been thinking about, and acting to solve, is the problem of how to develop future leadership for academic libraries. One of the organization's strategies has been to encourage new humanities Ph.Ds to consider careers in academic libraries. In 2004, CLIR selected its first cohort of fellows for its newly created Postdoctoral Fellowship in Academic Libraries. The fellowship program's goals were not only to offer humanists a different career path, but also to bring much-needed scholarly expertise into academic libraries. To date, participating libraries have hired forty-five scholars for one-to-two year positions on special projects in areas such as special and digital collections, instructional technology, reference, instruction, and developing information literacy curricula. Over the six years of the program's existence, CLIR postdoctoral fellows have gone on to both faculty and library careers, often carving out distinctive hybrid positions for themselves or crossing back and forth between librarianship, traditional faculty roles, and work in the digital humanities. Recently, the program has expanded into the social sciences, and may soon incorporate scientists as well.

Here, four former fellows from the program's inaugural year look back on their experiences on and off the faculty track. All of us — Amanda Watson, Amanda French, Patricia Hswe, and Christa Williford — were part of the first CLIR fellows cohort in 2004-05. All of us entered the program with recent or brand-new humanities Ph.Ds (two in English literature, one in theater, one in Slavic studies); two of us are now librarians, and two have continued to alternate-academic positions that span librarianship, academia, and the digital humanities. Others in our cohort have also pursued library careers, or have returned to teaching as faculty, but with a new appreciation for the role

of the information sciences in the academic world. All of our professional lives have taken sometimes surprising turns after (and, for some of us, before) the Ph.D. A sense of the unexpected — "Plan B," as Patricia Hswe calls it, or even Plans C, D, and E, replacing the Plan A of a traditional academic career — runs through our narratives.

Our contribution is not so much an introduction to the fellowship program itself (a more comprehensive treatment can be found in Marta Brunner's "Ph.D. Holders in the Academic Library," cited below) as a set of reflections on the ways in which the fellowship has affected our various career paths. We begin by summarizing these paths in a series of biographical statements; then we move on to a conversation about our interest in the information sciences, the impact of the fellowship, the place of scholar-librarians and digital humanists, and the future of libraries and other cultural memory institutions.

Biographical statements

Amanda Watson

In 2003, I was finishing my dissertation on early modern English poetry and theories of memory at the University of Michigan when I realized that I just couldn't picture myself being happy in a faculty position. It took me a while to admit as much to myself. Everyone who knew me thought I was born to be an English professor. I thought so, too, when I started grad school, but somewhere along the line, the doubts started to creep in. It's hard to say what was most dispiriting: the prospect of having no control over where I lived, the constant pressure to prove how smart I was by working every waking minute of every day, the lack of "fit" I felt when I had to get up in front of a classroom. But the upshot was that I was more depressed than excited at the prospect of getting even one of the elusive "good" jobs, which were looking increasingly unfindable anyway.

For months, paranoid about what might happen if I admitted that I didn't want to be a professor, I kept my discontentment mostly to myself while reading every career-changing self-help book I could find and brainstorming things I might conceivably do with my life. Eventually, I realized that everything I most enjoyed doing boiled down in one way or another to "working with information." I found a part-time job proofing SGML markup with the Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP), which helped to confirm a few hypotheses: that I liked working in a library setting; that I could actually get paid for tinkering with digital texts, as opposed to having my interest in the web regarded as an eccentric quirk or an unproductive hobby; that there were lots of interesting people doing intellectual work outside traditional academic departments; and that I didn't have to spend the rest of my adult life giving

up my weekends to grading. (Of all the many things that drove me crazy about the academic life, grading probably drove me the craziest.)

After I finished my Ph.D, I might have taken a full-time job with EEBO-TCP and eventually gone for an MLIS at the University of Michigan's School of Information. But I had heard about the new CLIR postdoctoral fellowship program, and it sounded like too good an opportunity to pass up. In July 2004, almost a year after I defended my dissertation, I moved to Charlottesville for what turned out to be two years at the University of Virginia Library. My first year involved two digital projects (an online exhibit of manuscripts by Hart Crane and a website for a new course on the Enlightenment); in my second year, I worked with the Digital Research and Scholarship department, managing a temporary computer lab space and doing outreach to faculty.

By the end of my second year at UVA, I knew I wanted to be a librarian. Knowing that the MLIS would make me more marketable to library hiring committees, I enrolled in the School of Information at Drexel University in Philadelphia, where I was fortunate enough to find an internship at the Swarthmore College Library for the two years it took to complete my master's degree. I'm now a research and instruction librarian at the Connecticut College Library, which means I field questions at the reference desk, offer research instruction to students, act as liaison to the English department and the Film Studies program, select new materials in both of those subject areas, and juggle a wide range of "additional duties as required," from statistics collection to library newsletter editing. I'm still immensely pleased to have found a job where I can put my subject background to use while indulging my generalist tendencies. In my copious spare time, I'm developing an interest in the history of the book, a field I wish I'd known about the first time I went to grad school.

Patricia Hswe

In 1984, I entered Yale's Ph.D program in Slavic Languages and Literatures, concentrating in Russian. I had just graduated from college, and I viewed my graduate program as the launching pad for the kind of career that my mentor, who was my undergraduate thesis adviser, was excelling in and enjoying. I had every intention of following in her footsteps. Russian language and literature were my life; there was no Plan B, nor did there need to be one, in my naive estimation.

Fast forward nineteen years, when I finally received my doctorate. That's right: nineteen years. I was 40 when I finished my Ph.D, by which time there had been a Plan B—in fact, many iterations of a Plan B.

If there's a line of poetry that describes the trajectory of my career, from temporary faculty member, to program assistant for a refugee resettlement agency, to university administrator, to reference book editor, to CLIR postdoctoral fellow, to, finally, librarian, it is likely this, from W. H. Auden's "Our Bias": "When have we not preferred some going round / To going straight to where we are?" The accumulated experiences of this "going round"—the indirection, the circuitous path, the detours—have shaped me both personally and professionally. I see this now and believe it fiercely, but my twenty-one-year-old self would have viewed such amblings off the beaten path as profitless diversions, if not also bizarre and suggestive of failure. And how could she not? What other options existed for an aspiring academic 25 to 30 years ago?

The Plan B that made a lasting difference was the postdoctoral fellowship I held in 2004-2006 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in the Slavic and East European Library. I became interested in the fellowship while working as an editor of reference books, a position that required me to consult OPACs and other online resources, such as digital collections, for the verification of the bibliographies that accompanied the entries I edited. These resources did not exist when I started graduate school, so to be paid (however meagerly) to indulge myself in a regular exploration of them was nothing short of extraordinary for someone like me with a life-long library habit. At the same time, my wanderings on the Web led me every so often to wonder where the reference projects I was editing were really headed. As a fellow, I was contributing to the creation of digital resources; learning more, and becoming fascinated by, the infrastructure of people and systems supporting the university library; and discovering the rewards of collaborating with librarians—something new to me, since collaboration was, and continues to be, a rare *modus operandi* for humanists. Eager to know more about libraries, I applied to the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) at the University of Illinois, and graduated with my master's degree in library and information science in 2008. I now work as Digital Collections Curator at the Penn State University Libraries, where I'm involved in a range of activities, all of which address the question of how we can make our data and content in digital form more discoverable, more accessible, and thus more usable. In other words, I am finally carrying out the *real* Plan B.

Amanda French
The moment in graduate school when I realized I had to either fish or cut bait, finish my dissertation or drop out, was a crucial one. And yet it wasn't exactly a moment—it was more like a month, or several months. In 2001, eight years in, I went through a painful breakup, and I thought, Well, okay, if that source of joy and fulfillment has been cut off, what other potential sources of joy and fulfillment are there? My dissertation at that

time hardly qualified; I had been working on it intermittently and worrying about it continually for three or four years, with maybe two chapters at most to show for it. (I don't know and can't find out, since there's apparently no trace of that initial attempt in either my digital or my print archives, which are instead bursting with records from all the teaching I did in those years.) Once I gave myself permission to quit, I found that I didn't actually want to. Knowing that I could leave, and that leaving would be a perfectly rational choice, let me get past both the paralysis of blaming myself for insufficient progress and the bitterness of blaming academia for unfair labor practices. (All that poorly-paid teaching.) What I decided to do instead was to find a dissertation project I really believed in and would really enjoy working on, something that would be a real contribution to knowledge, something that would bring me a measure of joy and fulfillment. So I changed advisors, changed projects, even changed my field from fiction to poetry. It took me another three years to finish, but I was much happier with the work I was doing, even though my new advisor warned me from the get-go that it probably wouldn't get me a job. My new dissertation was a history of the nineteen-line poetic form called the villanelle, which was problematic because there were very few jobs for people doing post-Renaissance British poetry. Both my topic and my method were unfashionable, as well, and my work ranged over too many periods to prove that I was an expert in one. I was proud of the work I did, though, and I thought, If I can get a tenure-track job doing this, then I would love to do this. If they want me, they can have me. If not, I have other options.

And, indeed, it's those other options that have panned out, and panned out in surprising and interesting ways. In 2003, the year before I finished, I applied for only three tenure-track jobs. Most people these days, of course, apply for 20 or 30 or 75 or more tenure-track jobs at a time, but I didn't have much to choose from and was in any case picky. I wasn't really surprised that no one asked to interview me at the Modern Language Association convention: probably at least 200 people applied for each of those three jobs. When I heard about the CLIR fellowship in December, however, I knew not only that it was something I was perfectly qualified for, but that there weren't many others with those qualifications. UVA was a major pioneer in what we're now calling "digital humanities," and thanks to first a class and then a part-time job with Jerome McGann, plus free workshops offered at UVA and a lot of self-teaching, I had picked up a good many tech skills along with a fairly serious tech habit. I therefore applied for the CLIR postdoc, was accepted, finished and defended my dissertation, and began work at the NCSU Libraries in August 2004. Taking the CLIR seminar with Elliott Shore and working at NCSU Libraries was also a major source of joy and fulfillment, as it turned out, and it led to a number of very interesting positions, of which the most interesting is probably my current one, working for the marvelous Center for History and New Media on the modest project of "hacking the scholarly conference" worldwide by

helping people from Chicago to Canberra put together "unconferences" called THATCamps. (THATCamp stands for The Humanities And Technology Camp.) I did go on the academic job market again after my postdoc ended, but beating on that closed door eventually gets very stale. Especially when there's so much that's urgent and quicksilver and important and fascinating (and joyful and fulfilling) about studying and preparing for and causing the difference technology makes to universities and libraries.

Christa Williford

I've never been one to do much career-oriented soul-searching, so it can take me by surprise when others call my work history unusual. But I suppose it is pretty unusual. As a student, my passions were for theatre history and the potential of technologies to enhance research, and I was fortunate enough to bring these together in my dissertation work on Parisian playhouses, and in a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Warwick that extended that project. In my CLIR postdoctoral fellowship at Bryn Mawr College, I had the opportunity to work with theatre-related special collections and provide instructional technology support. Working there and at Haverford College gave me new insights into the complexity of relationships between our surviving cultural heritage and its interpretation. In the library, I felt much closer to the "engine" driving contemporary scholarship , and I saw that the important decisions being made about its operation would determine the quality of that scholarship in years to come.

Like Patricia and Amanda Watson, I succumbed to the temptation to make my transition "official" by earning a master's degree in library science; by the time I finished at the University of Washington in 2008, I had a strong grasp of the traditions of the library profession and how they were shaping current practice, both for better and for worse. Library staff, just like many academics, need to grow more comfortable with change in order to thrive, and the desire to cultivate such change is what led me to double back to CLIR, where I now work as a Program Officer. I am continually learning in this role and interact regularly with librarians, archivists, and academics, and no single day on the job is like any other. My colleagues are equally supportive of my professional and personal growth, including my abiding passions for theatre and research. So while it may seem that I've taken an atypical path, to me it feels like exactly the right journey. I couldn't have planned it better had I tried.

The CLIR fellowship and life after the Ph.D: a conversation

In preparing our contribution to this collection, the four of us considered a set of questions about our CLIR fellowship experiences, our work in academic libraries and in other paths, and the place of an alternate-academic humanist in the many and various

fields of the information sciences. What follows are our reflections and responses to each other.

What led you to consider this fellowship? Why librarianship rather than another career path?

Amanda French: Well, what led me to consider the fellowship was that I knew I could get it: the description of the qualities they were looking for in candidates fit so perfectly the work I had been doing at the Rossetti Archive and the Electronic Text Center. The call for applicants was passed around quite a bit among the graduate students at the University of Virginia, and indeed, another graduate student from UVA also landed a CLIR fellowship that first year. To be honest, I didn't quite realize that the fellowship wanted to make a librarian out of me until I went to discuss it with Karin Wittenborg, the University Librarian, who was kind enough to meet with me—someone (I don't recall who) had suggested that I do that, and it was definitely informative. She talked at length about what it would mean to switch from an academic track to a library track, and what it had meant to her and to other academic librarians to make that switch.

I realized during that meeting that while I had been on the fence about a traditional teaching career for quite awhile, I wasn't yet ready to jump off into the meadow of librarianship, either. So I asked Karin and others whether taking the fellowship would destroy my chances on the academic teaching job market; they said No, absolutely not, that in fact a postdoctoral fellowship of any kind was quite a plum in the humanities. I therefore applied with the comforting certainty of uncertainty: I didn't have to decide quite yet. For me, applying for and taking the fellowship wasn't at all a sign that I had decided on librarianship—it was just a sign that I was willing to explore it.

Amanda Watson: I didn't want to jump off the fence either—not at first, anyway. Not after spending six years in graduate school and another year lecturing. The thought of immediately going back for another degree just made me cringe, and anyway, how would I pay for it? I had a hunch I'd like being a librarian, but I didn't know enough about being a librarian at that point to take the plunge all at once. I knew my way around a lot of specialized library resources in my field, but I had no idea what went on behind the scenes.

It's a perennial problem if you're changing careers: how do you figure out what you want to do if you've never done it before? I had a bit of library-related job experience, and I went for an extremely helpful informational interview with John Price Wilkin, the Associate University Librarian for Library Information Technology at the University of Michigan. That helped me realize that maybe my hunch about librarianship was more

than just a hunch. But what really changed my mind was dropping feet-first into the library world, and discovering what I really liked to do in a library setting: not just the things I thought I'd enjoy (faculty outreach, web design) but the things I'd never done before (reference service, collection development). I wasn't expecting to like working with the public; I had an image of myself as a solitary scholar in my little monastic cell thinking great thoughts and avoiding all human contact. But very early on I realized I'd been wrong about that.

Christa Williford: My motives for considering the fellowship were primarily personal: at the time I was in need of a change, and wanted to be closer to family for a while. The fellowship at Bryn Mawr gave me both of these things, as well as being in the service of a worthy cause. Coming into my fellowship with zero experience working in libraries, I found the novelty appealing. To be honest, the vagueness of the role was also a strong draw. Libraries' cultures are much more nine-to-five and interactive than academic departments' tend to be, but even when I made that shift, the privilege of being a fellow gave me a chance to hold myself apart from that culture, since my outsider's perspective was what my new colleagues most valued. I was able to maintain the independence and to indulge in reflection on big, important issues, which were the aspects of professional scholarship I most enjoyed. Professional librarians generally have less time for such indulgences; certainly they have much less time than they should.

At the time it was a healthy choice for me, but I definitely thought of it as temporary. In fact, I'm not exactly sure when I started thinking of it as a long-term commitment, or even if I have. But since the work has kept me interested and has opened new doors exactly when I needed them, it seems the library world has made a commitment to *me*, and I'm clearly the luckier for it. I don't know that libraries are the right home for all sorts of academics, but I never hesitate to encourage young scholars who express an interest in learning more about librarianship to take the time to explore it if they can. The professional boundaries between librarianship and academic teaching and research are pretty blurry, anyway. Both professions are undergoing tremendous change. Any effort built upon the strengths of both sets of communities is worth supporting.

Patricia Hswe: Two things drew me to this fellowship. First, it wasn't typical then (circa 2003), nor is it necessarily typical now, to see an advertisement for a post-doc in the humanities. That really caught my eye. There are any number of these positions in the sciences and even in mathematics, but the humanities are not known for offering them. (This norm is changing somewhat, given the spate of post-doctoral appointments in the digital humanities in the last couple of years.) So, it was the "newness" of this opportunity, its implicit paving of a different path, that led me to give it serious

consideration. I also realized that the fellowship would stand out in a CV and spark lots of curiosity. The second reason why I considered this fellowship is that I saw it as my chance to re-enter a university environment. Unlike Amanda French, Amanda Watson, and Christa Williford, I was not based at a university when I applied for the fellowship. I had been working at a small publishing company in Columbia, South Carolina, for two years. As collegial as that situation was, I missed being firmly in a place of learning. I saw the postdoctoral fellowship as re-opening the door to that possibility. I talked with no one beforehand about working in a library, but there are librarians in my family with whom I'd had conversations over the years, so I had some sense of what I might be getting myself into. What I knew from my librarian relatives, however, eventually compared little to what I learned on the job as a fellow.

Because of where I was placed—at the University of Illinois, which has a first-rate graduate program in library and information science—the question was ultimately, Why *not* librarianship? I first took a class at GSLIS, the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, during the second semester of my first year of the post-doc; as a full-time employee of the university, I could take courses for free. (Later, after the fellowship ended, I had graduate assistantships and other fellowship funds that paid for tuition.) Moreover, the class I took, Document Modeling, was taught by Allen Renear, who holds a Ph.D in philosophy and thus not in library and information science; partly because of this, he offers an untraditional take on the field. The course also introduced me to markup languages and the challenges of electronic publishing, of encoding text. For someone who'd spent the last twenty years involved in textual analysis, the methods I learned about were eye-opening. A world I never knew existed —but which some of my fellow Fellows had known about and gained experience in before their post-doc appointments—emerged before me. I was hooked, and I never looked back.

I should add that I did not attend library school to help ensure employment beyond the fellowship, although undoubtedly the degree has not hurt. Besides trying to take advantage of some of the perks of being a full-time university employee, I was also seeking a programmatic approach to what I was learning on the job as a post-doc. Very early on in the fellowship I could see gaps in my knowledge, and I wanted to fill those in as soon as possible—but in a classroom context, rather than through readings I might do on my own (which I was doing anyway), or through the many conversations I was having with librarian colleagues about the profession. I also felt the need for another kind of cohort in this new endeavor, not unlike what I had enjoyed during the early years of grad school (which by this time was a distant experience for me).

What kind of impact has your CLIR fellowship experience had on your subsequent career?

Amanda French: To be honest, I'm not sure that I've had a "career" in the four years since the postdoc: I've had instead a series of term-limited jobs. For better or for worse, I'm more or less ignoring the question of what my professional identity actually is—I self-identify as a "digital humanist" at the moment (a usefully vague cognomen) rather than as a librarian or a teacher or a web developer or a scholar or an administrator. In this respect I know that I'm different from the CLIR fellows who have happily and decisively gone on to reinvent themselves as librarians and from those who have gone back to teaching—a few fellows even hopped on the tenure track after the fellowship. What I am certain of is that I wouldn't have been able to get any one of the three jobs I've had since the fellowship without the fellowship. The first position I held afterward was as a "Teaching Assistant Professor" at NCSU, the site of my fellowship. This was a one-year "visiting" position in the English department there, and I got the position not only because I was on the spot after the fellowship, but because the course on advanced academic research skills for the digital age that I had helped teach during the fellowship more than qualified me to teach the graduate-level research methods course in the English department, which no one else wanted to teach. However, that position was a year-to-year job, and I figured it wouldn't turn into a permanent job, and so I applied for various positions in libraries. The position I landed was with Emory Libraries in Atlanta, and I certainly would never have gotten that position if not for the CLIR fellowship. However, the position, though permanent, turned out to be entirely wrong for me, and so I moved on yet again to yet another temporary position at New York University. At NYU I worked on a grant-funded project called "Digital History Across the Curriculum" whose goal was to create a model digital curriculum for the Archives and Public History M.A. program. That was a marvelous position, one that I could never have earned without the knowledge of archival issues that I'd gained during the CLIR fellowship.

What that narrative of bouncing from job to job might not convey is that the CLIR fellowship taught me to value myself and my skills more highly than I learned to in graduate school. Let's be crude and talk about money, shall we? The CLIR fellowship paid a decent salary, though probably not as much as I'd have earned at the same university as a newly hired tenure-tack Assistant Professor in the English Department. But in order to teach in the NCSU English department in what was essentially an adjunct position, I had to take a $9,000 per year pay cut. That was certainly a factor in my decision not to keep teaching there. When I was interviewing for the position at Emory, I negotiated a higher salary than they offered, which was about $20,000 more per year than I earned in my one year of adjunct teaching at NCSU. Having never even

made it as far as to an interview at MLA, that was balm to my wounded soul, and I don't mind admitting it. The fellowship introduced me to areas of inquiry that I hadn't previously known of (web usability and information literacy, just to name two), and I found them both fascinating and professionally useful. In general, I feel that I'm far more employable than my graduate school colleagues who've taught and published and published and taught, but have done nothing else—even though I haven't quite found my niche yet.

Less crudely, I'd also say that the CLIR fellowship has given me a permanent sense of astonished gratitude for academic libraries and librarians, a sense that wasn't developed nearly enough in graduate school. No matter where I go in my career, that gratitude will remain.

Amanda Watson: Since Amanda French brings up money, I'll share an anecdote: after I defended my dissertation, a nonacademic friend (whose background is in the IT world) said "So you have your Ph.D. now? Congratulations! That means you'll earn more money, right?" He was very puzzled when I burst into semi-hysterical laughter at the thought of my English degree earning me any kind of substantial salary bump. At that point, I'd pretty much resigned myself to a life of what the Victorians used to call "genteel poverty." Nowadays I joke that I finally found a job where my Ph.D did actually increase my salary—and it's not a professorial job. I don't want to exaggerate—librarians don't get paid on the scale that doctors or lawyers or various other types of professionals do—but I'm a whole lot more financially comfortable now as a librarian than I was as a lecturer in English. And for all my high-minded rejection of worldly concerns in my 20s, the ascetic lifestyle of the underpaid and tenuously employed scholar looks much less appealing once you start getting older. Virginia Woolf (in *A Room of One's Own*) was right: there's nothing like a steady income to banish the "rust and corrosion" of bitterness from the soul.

I've also found that I've become something of an ambassador both for the fellowship itself (because everyone I've met in a professional context has been curious about it) and for post-academic and alt-ac careers more generally. Christa, Patricia, and I were all part of a roundtable on Ph.Ds in libraries at the 2009 Association of College and Research Libraries conference, which spawned an online chat hosted by ACRL later. More recently, my dissertation adviser, who was terrifically supportive when I admitted that I didn't want a faculty job, asked me to be on a panel on alternate careers for Ph.Ds at a future Modern Language Association conference. It's a bit startling to go from thinking of myself as a failure to thinking of myself as a role model.

Patricia Hswe: Apart from the fact that the CLIR fellowship experience led me to pursue librarianship as a career, it continues to a part of my professional life. My association with CLIR enhanced my competitiveness on the job market after I graduated from library school; prospective employers would convey in interviews that they viewed both my post-doc experience and the connection with CLIR as a plus. In addition, I am currently involved, along with Christa Williford and other former fellows, in a multi-year study, funded by CLIR, on scholarly engagement with special collections and archives. (The institutions we are working with have been awarded funding through the grant program, Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Building a New Research Environment.) Largely because of the CLIR post-doctoral experience, other opportunities, such as an invitation to participate in a grant proposal review panel, have arisen. My contribution to this very volume is evidence of continuing impact from the fellowship.

And as Amanda Watson says, we former fellows can serve an ambassadorial role for the program and its goals and purpose. As we move forward in our careers, we are poised to offer encouragement and advice to new fellows, as well as contribute to the planning and programming of CLIR post-doc-related events, such as the mid-year meeting at which current fellows report on their progress and receive feedback on their accomplishments to date. This continuing involvement bespeaks not only a giving-back to the program and its leaders (such as Elliott Shore, CIO of Bryn Mawr College, and Chuck Henry, President of CLIR) but also a way of keeping track: that is, past fellows can learn from present fellows new ways of thinking and doing, of applying technology, of facilitating collaboration—of rocking the proverbial boat, all toward effecting change in libraries and in the academy.

Christa Williford: Obviously, since I'm now employed by CLIR, the impact has been enormous. I have felt it in some of the ways already mentioned. Like Amanda French, I have come to appreciate a broader range of my talents and have been turned on to new interests, like the problems of cataloging and description for special materials, project management, and facilitating collaboration and change in the workplace. I share her "permanent sense of astonished gratitude."

As Amanda Watson and Patricia have said, the cultivation of new fellows and fellowships and maintaining the connections among the growing number of fellowship alumni has been a major focus of my working life. I'm not sure how many people have noticed this yet, but leveraging the expertise of this group toward new projects has been the one key ingredient to my post-fellowship career's success. I literally could not do my current job without being a part of the fellowship community, both in the context of the

Hidden Collections grant program that Patricia has already mentioned, but also in other, less prominent but equally important ways, such as helping me to keep current on developments in technology and the digital humanities, and having contacts who can help me deepen my understanding of complex issues when working to tight deadlines. CLIR's fellows tend to be creative, broad-minded, trustworthy, and actively engaged people who give generously of their talents. I owe the people of CLIR and the entire the group of visionary library leaders who created this program a great debt.

Amanda Watson: Amen to that. When we all first met, we had a sense of starting the next phase of our professional lives with a ready-made Rolodex of smart, dedicated, creative people working in various types of academic and library jobs all over the country. And that's still true!

How do you see your current role in the larger landscape of libraries/academia/the knowledge professions/cultural memory institutions?

Amanda Watson: The idea of the "scholar-librarian" is a somewhat old-fashioned one—it dates back to the era when faculty held librarian positions—but I think of the career path I'm carving out for myself as an updated variation on the concept. I don't do research as an official part of my job, but I've been pursuing new and old scholarly interests in my spare time, with my supervisors' encouragement. There's no place like an academic library to discover new scholarly interests: you have access to tons of information, and you're surrounded by smart, curious people who like to read and like to talk about what they're reading.

I do worry about avoiding the stereotype of the clueless humanities Ph.D who grudgingly takes a library job after failing to land a faculty job, and then looks down on his or her library colleagues. (I've never met anyone like that in person, though I did encounter one particularly egregious example on a mailing list. But I'm acutely aware that the stereotype is out there.) So I want to make it clear that I don't see the "scholar-librarian" as a wannabe faculty member who's had to settle for a backup career. I wouldn't give up my current setup for anything: instead of frantically cranking out articles and books to meet tenure requirements, I get to spend a lot of my professional time helping people do research on a multitude of topics I'd never have gotten to explore otherwise, and building up collections in familiar and less familiar subject areas. I get a much wider view of the field of literary scholarship, without the obligation to stay on top of everything in my narrow little subfield. I can read what I like, and write what I like, on my own terms and on my own schedule. So even though most of my current scholarly activity takes place on my own time, I still wouldn't trade it for a faculty job with the tenure gun pointed at my head.

Speaking of scholar-librarians, NYU and Long Island University just started offering a dual masters' program, half in library science and half in a subject field, aimed at producing subject specialist librarians. I think that's a terrific idea, and I'd love to see more collaboration between LIS programs and academic programs in the future. Future faculty members can only benefit from knowing something about how scholarly information is organized and accessed (and about what librarians do besides buying and shelving books); future academic librarians can benefit just as much from experiencing the research process firsthand.

Amanda French: I'm not at all sure what my current role is, but in that, I think I'm a harbinger of the future. It's clear to me that roles that were once very separate—librarians, scholars, technologists—are becoming less so. And by "less separate" I mean both that librarians and scholars and technologists are now working together on projects, and that librarians and scholars and technologists are now having to acquire knowledge and skills from one another. I'm someone who can tell scholars what they need to know about libraries and vice versa, and I'm also someone who can translate academia to technology businesses and vice versa.

Patricia Hswe: I want to build on Amanda Watson's comments by saying that while I've attributed the label "Plan B" to this stage of my career, it is actually more than that. It may have started out as a back-up plan, but it is very much *the* plan now. I don't regret pursuing this path, nor would I wish to be doing anything else. My situation is also a little different from my co-authors, in that I have a tenure-track library faculty position. Thus, I am expected to publish as part of my university library's requirements for promotion and tenure. But this is my preference, too. I want my scholarship to feed into my librarianship, and vice versa. Blending research with practice suits the explorer-cum-pragmatist in me.

There are many facets to my current role as Digital Collections Curator: assessment (monitoring usability and usage of our digital collections); data/content management (which includes the development of policies, standards, and best practices); and planning for repository-based services (for document-deposit purposes, or even deposit of research data). Through attention to these areas, I am really striving to keep digital data and content around *and* useful for years to come —as long as is necessary, in some cases, and beyond that, in others, because the question of "how long" isn't immediately evident, nor can it always be answered in absolute terms. Perhaps more important and pressing, however, is fostering awareness among faculty about their data and content management needs and gaps —making the case to them that the scholarly record risks incomplete representation in the future if those needs are not met and those gaps are

not filled. Without a commitment to curation, we also risk missing out on new audiences and thus new uses for research data, both of which can add value to data. Some faculty understand this urgency, while others, for whatever reason, have yet to "get it." Thus, I see my current role—and the role of digital curators in general—in the larger landscape of libraries and academia as pivotal to shaping how science and humanities faculty think in the long term about their research practices and the data and scholarship that result from them. In a sense, I have come full circle, since my fellowship experience focused almost exclusively on the creation and description of digital resources. Now, I tend to hone in, as well, on what happens, or should happen, once digital content and data have been created.

I'll add, finally, that Amanda French is spot on in her observation that the roles of librarians, scholars, and technologists are much less separate than they once were. In the curation work that I do, certainly, I need to have an understanding of the architecture or framework underlying systems that are already familiar to technologists and be comfortable with the parlance of programmers. In order to understand the data management needs of scholars, I have to familiarize myself with their research domains and gain a sense of context —a holistic view of their teaching, research, and writing activities. At the same time, these two parties must also understand what *I* am trying to achieve and how they contribute to that effort. One of the key outcomes I hope for, in my current position, by working with scholars and technologists is a sense of community, a realization that our coming together reflects complementary abilities, commitments, goals, interests, and talents, all of which empower us to accomplish far more together than we would as individuals. The digital humanities have modeled this kind of community and collaboration well, and there are extant examples at various institutions, such as Brown University, the University of Nebraska, and the University of Virginia. The digital curation field is only beginning to realize something similar.

Christa Williford: As a Program Officer, I'm challenged to take this entire landscape into account in everything I do. As one might imagine, this gets pretty overwhelming, but the way I look at it, CLIR's wide-ranging viewpoint gives its staff opportunities to focus on nurturing the connections between communities of stakeholders that can benefit from each others work. We are not the decision-makers, nor the folks solving day-to-day problems in the field, but we are the people trying to help these groups avoid duplication of effort, inform one another's practice, and imagine a collective future that is more richly and efficiently interconnected than before. Rapid developments in technology have created tremendous opportunities in each of these areas of the landscape, but these changes are leaving sinkholes right and left. Patricia's example of the curation and long-term maintenance of digital materials is particularly

treacherous area at the moment, as are the areas of scholarly publishing, collection development, and teaching and learning in a liberal arts context.

In my work with librarians and archivists who receive grants through our Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives program, which is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, it's my role to encourage creative approaches to the description of special materials. We at CLIR are especially eager to prompt the most innovative thinkers attacking this problem to share what they are learning as broadly as possible, especially beyond their discrete professional circles. With the postdoctoral fellowship and its other leadership programs, CLIR staff tries to create opportunities for people to explore their skills in new contexts and to reflect on ways they can contribute to finding solutions to the challenges facing today's libraries.

Sometimes, *our* role is to provoke these different groups of academic professionals to think about *their* roles in new ways. At their very core, both librarianship and teaching are about service to others; if you think about it, the curation of collections and the production of research are also about service to others—it's just that they are directed at others in the future. But these groups don't always focus on the ways that they serve one another; in particular, faculty-librarian relationships tend to be unidirectional in this regard. I'm hoping that through my work at CLIR I can help people find other ways to define these relationships, for mutual benefit. By building programs that bring smart people with different kinds of expertise together—technologists, teachers, students, librarians, archivists, managers—we at CLIR are hopeful that they will stop taking one another's work for granted and start collaborating; we're convinced that this kind of cross-fertilization is critical to the future of our academic institutions and to our cultural heritage.

Where do you see the most potential for humanities Ph.Ds in the information fields?

Amanda French: People with M.A.s and Ph.Ds in the humanities have for many years gone into librarianship, usually (if I'm not mistaken) as reference librarians, collection development librarians, or special collections librarians where their deep subject knowledge stands them in good stead. I don't think that that has changed much, and if there are traditionally-trained humanities Ph.Ds who are reading this now who think they might not want to teach, I'd highly recommend that they look into those careers. But humanities Ph.Ds who've been fortunate enough to acquire some significant technological skills along the way will be much better prospects for those positions, as well as for all kinds of new positions that keep cropping up in libraries.

Amanda Watson: What Patricia said earlier about markup languages is right on—I think there's a lot in common between the kind of textual analysis that graduate students in some humanities fields do and the kind of textual analysis required to turn a block of plain digital text into something that's useful for a scholar or a student or a general reader. When I started working with markup of early modern texts, I was amazed by how well it fit with my scholarly background, and how satisfying it was to be able to say, in effect, "Here's a poem; here's each line and each stanza of the poem; here's a marginal note connected to this sentence over here," and so on. Not every humanities Ph.D will have a technology background, but I didn't find some of the basic skills all that hard to pick up on my own. And if "the digital humanities" continues to grow the way they've been growing in the past few years, I think we might see a whole lot more young scholars with crossover skills.

In another area of librarianship, I see a lot of room for Ph.Ds who *do* want to teach. Academic librarians are very aware of what's called "information literacy" (a.k.a. "research skills" or, more descriptively, "knowing how to find what you're looking for and understand the difference between reliable and dubious information"). Those of us who work at reference desks see students struggling with the research process in ways that faculty don't always see. Information literacy programs are sometimes a tough sell for faculty; it's not always obvious that students need help, and it can be hard to modify a carefully-planned syllabus to allow time for library exploration. It can also be hard to allow another person with a different set of expertise (or a "mere" master's degree) into one's classroom. Plus, when you've been doing academic research for upwards of a decade, a lot of the processes and tools you use become so familiar as to be almost invisible, so it might not occur to you that students don't know all of it already. I think people with a dual background in academia and information science are in a good position to perform the often delicate diplomatic work of reaching out to faculty and encouraging them to think about incorporating research skills into their pedagogy and their assignments.

Ironically enough, I think I'm a better teacher now than I was when I was teaching composition. Probably because I'm so much more relaxed about it now that most of my teaching takes place one-on-one at a reference desk, or in highly focused class sessions organized around a few definite goals.

Patricia Hswe: As much as I deal in the digital, I actually see great promise for humanities Ph.Ds in the area of special collections and archives. In this age of mass digitization of books and serials, it is the unique materials from special collections and archives that increasingly give distinction to libraries. Humanities Ph.Ds, working

together with archivists and special collections librarians, have the expertise to build on the meaning—and thus deepen the research potential and use—of such materials.

In recent years there has been a kind of re-consideration of special collections and archives. The Association of Research Libraries' Committee on Research, Teaching, and Learning appointed a working group to advise it on issues in special collections and archives; a major point made by the group in its 2009 discussion report is the need for more user contributions, such as from faculty and graduate students, particularly toward describing collections that have remained obscure because of backlogs or staff shortages. Some institutions have started to meet this need in creative ways, such as at UCLA's Center for Primary Research and Training Opportunities, which works to incorporate materials from the libraries' special collections "more fully into the teaching and research mission of the university." By training graduate students in archival practice and giving them a chance to construct guides, or finding aids, to little-known collections, the Center is helping to nurture a generation of emerging scholars who will be more informed about the world of special collections and archives and impart that knowledge to *their* future students. Finally, university presses —a veritable endangered species these days —might take to heart the example of Oxford University's Bodleian Library Publishing, which puts out books that highlight rarities from their special collections, not unlike what museums have been doing for years with their publications. Through this approach, the Bodleian Library is able to attract new audiences and thus gain new perspectives on its unique items, key criteria for sustainability.

Humanities Ph.Ds thus have a rich role to play in this arena. In a sense, the study on scholarly engagement with hidden special collections and archives, mentioned above, is making a case for this role. As part of the study, we're meeting with scholars to find out what their experiences of discovery, access, sense-making, and usage have been like as they carry out research with special collections and archival materials. But, as importantly, we're asking questions of the hidden collections project staff about assessment, institutional contexts, planning for the future, processing and record creation, uses for teaching and research, outreach, services, and —perhaps most important —outcomes and measures of success. Arguably, perhaps it isn't typical of humanities Ph.Ds to consider the relevance of special collections beyond teaching and research, but that may have to change as the humanities themselves fight to stay relevant —and libraries, too.

Amanda Watson: Can I jump in and add that I wish there'd been something like the UCLA Center for Primary Research and Training program when I was in grad school? I've done so much more archival research in my alt-ac life than I ever did as a Ph.D

student, and I really wish I'd had that kind of training. Of course, in retrospect, I'd have done a whole lot of things differently, but "learning how to work with archives and special collections" would be high on the list.

Christa Williford: Naturally from my connection with the Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives Program, I'm deeply interested in having humanities scholars explore ways to contribute to the description of the collections they use. Just as in Amanda Watson's comparison of textual analysis and markup practices for digital and digitized text, collection guides and finding aids in the archives are intellectual products that can have similar, or even greater, impacts than the production of scholarly articles. Learning more about how these are constructed can reap tremendous benefits for researchers, particularly graduate students. For these reasons, I must second everything Patricia has said.

But I'd like to put aside for a moment the question of specific professional tracks that Ph.Ds in the humanities could follow. I think my colleagues have demonstrated here that, at least in our experience, these tracks are much less clearly defined than our advisors in graduate school would have us believe. This lack of clarity may be frustrating, confusing, and downright depressing at times, but if we choose to look at the ongoing evolution of higher education more broadly, it's the murky, liminal, not-yet-institutionalized aspects that have the most potential for growth.

I think the biggest opportunity for all humanists, regardless of their current status or professional inclinations, is to build connections with library colleagues that will foster their immediate professional development needs. As practiced teachers and learners, by the time we reach graduate student status the general assumption is that we can take care of this by ourselves, or at least within our strict disciplinary contexts, but this isolationist mentality can hurt us down the road.

Scholarly publishing is a much more volatile universe than in the past, so I would challenge humanists to look to the library for opportunities to broaden the impact of their work. Contributing from the best of one's teaching and research to workshops, public lectures, live and online exhibits, research guides, inter-professional conference publications, peer-reviewed open access publications, or catalog descriptions may not carry the same weight with a tenure committee that your monograph will, but each of these activities has the potential to increase one's readership many times over. Learning how to share one's expertise in these varied contexts is also well worth the time it takes, and these skills can help you become a better scholar, regardless of how traditional or "mixed" your professional identity may be.

For most of us, in a library somewhere in the world, there are collections and ongoing projects that could benefit from our hard-won specialist knowledge. If we find that place, we will come into contact with professionals who can help us envision a way to do what we do better. The path to mutual betterment will require us to loosen up the tradition-bound institutional structures and working practices on both sides of what Fran Blouin, the director of the Bentley Library at the University of Michigan, has called the "Archival Divide."

Conclusion

As the four of us were finishing this piece, the CLIR postdoctoral fellowship program entered its seventh year. The 2010-11 cohort includes seven new fellows (one of whom, Brian Croxall, is also a contributor to this collection) and six continuing fellows, in fields ranging from classics, English, and comparative literature to anthropology, geography and geology, and history of medicine. A total of eleven institutions are hosting new or continuing CLIR fellows for the 2010-11 year.

As Christa Williford says above, professional "tracks" for humanities Ph.Ds are often unclear: an overgrown and rocky path rather than a well-marked, signposted trail complete with a map. And yet one of the themes that emerges from the conversation in this chapter is that expanding possibilities. The hybridity that the fellowship program encourages can reshape both individual careers and entire fields. While the CLIR fellowship program initially provoked concern in the library world about how to integrate what James Neal called "the new generation of feral professionals" into librarianship, the fellows' experience suggests a more varied set of professional opportunities including, but not limited to, careers in academic libraries. In an article on the fellowship program, former CLIR fellow Marta Brunner (now Librarian for Digital Humanities, U.S./U.K. Literature and History, Comparative Literature, and the History of Science at the Charles E. Young Research Library at UCLA) writes that for many fellows, "academic librarianship was definitely not a substitute for a tenure-track faculty job, but a strategically pursued career track, and this opportunity helped to identify and shape that less standard career track" (Brunner, 11). Brunner found, while conducting a survey of current and past CLIR fellows, that the "outsider's perspective" that often follows from the dual nature of the fellowship is frequently "a valuable resource" for the fellows and "a unique contribution of the program" (Brunner, 15).

We asked Elliott Shore, CIO of Bryn Mawr College and Dean of the CLIR Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, to comment on the program and its impact on the future needs of academics in the library. His reply emphasizes the benefits of the blended positions that

CLIR fellows tend to fill, not only for the fellows themselves but for libraries and academic institutions more generally:

> This program has actually grown through the most recent times of economic turmoil and library upheaval: as some of the most progressive library leaders have realized, the changes that linked information technologies have brought mean the library needs to be radically redefined. CLIR fellows are perfectly positioned to navigate these times, scholar-librarians who combine in their background and their experience the habits of mind and the curiosity about the world needed to imagine how teaching and scholarship can thrive. In the most recent year, we could have filled more positions if we could have found more complete matches between what the libraries were looking for and the skills in our fine pool. Perhaps libraries could cast their nets more widely and not look for exact matches between job descriptions and potential fellows and perhaps CLIR could be more aggressive in advertising the opportunities.
>
> The future potential of this program and the way our colleges and universities evolve could be usefully entwined if creative partnerships could could continue to develop between the library and academic administrations. As is attested to in this article, these four scholar librarians would not trade their work for the traditional gold standard of academia— the tenured professor. As libraries grow and change, the notion not only of the nature of the library but also of the faculty needs to be examined and rethought— the hybrid skills of CLIR fellows, scholars who are at the nexus of change in research skills and electronic publications, who combine the talents of the teacher, the scholar and the librarian, will be central to higher education. So I would recommend that the original idea behind the fellowship be brought back centrally: that fellows have joint appointments in the appropriate academic departments and the library. This has happened in several places and is starting to gain traction— thoughtful provosts, departmental chairs and librarians should be working to find a way between the notion of tenure and the increasing adjunctification crisis towards a vigorous hybrid model of the new teacher/scholar/librarian. I think our students deserve this kind of thoughtful scholar as their guides to the future. *(Elliott Shore, personal communication, 8/7/2010)*

The fellowship program is still in its early years, and it remains to be seen whether this model of the teacher/scholar/librarian (or "hybrarian," in the words of another member of the first cohort of CLIR fellows) will become more widespread within academia. What is clear, however, is that those who have participated in the program so far have

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already begun to embody this model. Their experiences suggest the great variety within one of many approaches to the alt-ac career trajectory.

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On the Vocation of Public History

Suzanne Fischer

I am a public historian. This is not exactly a professional affiliation, but instead a broad affirmation of the value of the work history can do in the world. Public historians have not only a particular kind of audience for our publications, exhibits, and other projects, but a duty to serve particular communities. It's history as social work. It's cracking open history as a democratic project, and doing it transparently, in public. If I sound impassioned, that's because public history has convinced me that scholarship and historical work can be passionate, emotional, deeply involved in how the messy business of being human is worked out in communities. It's a meaningful alternate career for humanities scholars.

Though as "public history" the field has existed for less than half a century—our major professional organization, the National Council on Public History (NCPH), just celebrated its thirtieth birthday—historians have long sought alternate venues for public-facing work. Public history happens in museums, historic houses, historic sites, national parks, libraries and archives, all levels of government, and through consulting work and on the web. Public history does not have to be done by public historians; conversely, people who do history in public are public historians, whether or not they self-identify as such. It is done by PhD historians, community activists, digital historians, people with museum studies degrees, librarians and archivists, historic preservationists, genealogists, oral historians, volunteers at the local historical society, and even people with specialists' degrees in public history.

Public history is difficult to define precisely. It is often easier, as I have just done, to point to practices and examples of places where public history work happens. In the late 2000s NCPH members decided, as a form of outreach, to expand Wikipedia's definition of public history[1], but there is nothing so wearying as debating the slippery boundaries of such a field. Public history, then, very broadly, *uses the methods of the historical discipline to facilitate the usefulness of history in the world*.

I feel fortunate to have discovered public history, history museum work in particular, as a vocation. When I was in graduate school studying the history of science, technology and medicine, I felt a disconnect between my academic work and teaching and the

volunteerism and activism I was doing in my neighborhood. I also felt drawn to analyze the material culture of medical practice: how could I write about wax anatomical figures without seeing them?   A longstanding fascination with museums, both in a previous life as a scientist and as a historian of natural history and medical museums, led me to seek out museum volunteer work. Eventually, I sought employment in this field. As a history museum professional, my work foregrounds visitor experience and meaning-making around historic objects and environments, a publics-based material culture practice that combines both my political and intellectual commitments.

Vocation is not a word I use lightly. Cultural heritage institutions like libraries, archives and museums are mission-based. Besides the particular mission of whatever museum I am serving (generally to collect, preserve and interpret a particular subject or region), public history has a mission: to put history to work in the world, to facilitate a deeper understanding of the past for multiple publics. "The life of a museum worker," in the words of the 1925 first Code of Ethics of the American Association of Museums, "is essentially one of service." The life of a public historian is also one of service: good public history serves both historic stories and objects but also the multiple publics who seek meaning from the past.

Alternative academic professionals can put their skills and training to productive, satisfying use in public history. Public historians do research on stories and artifacts to support exhibits, publications, or web products. We consult, on our own or in firms, and do research on legal cases and other projects. We help governments understand their history and the historical impacts of their policies. We lead tours, give lectures, produce podcasts, do educational programs with schoolchildren and other audiences. We write everything from exhibit labels to popular history books, to (accurate!) historical fiction to monographs on highly specialized topics.

The idea of the public intellectual, a thinker who brings insight from the world of ideas to mainstream discourse, shares with our field only a common ancestor, since public history focuses on the work practitioners produce and facilitate in communities, rather than on the figure of the public historian herself: "you…know that your work is more important than you are."[2]

Though historians have been working in public at least since the rise of history as a profession in the nineteenth century, public history as a field was born, appropriately or not, in the university. Spurred both by a rising commitment to the democratic potential of the new social history and by worries about careers for historians, in 1976 Robert

Kelley and G. Wesley Johnson developed the first public history graduate program at the University of California, Santa Barbara.[3] At the same time historians working in the federal government had begun to organize; the Society for History in the Federal Government was founded in 1979. The first issue of *The Public Historian* was published in Santa Barbara in 1978; NCPH was founded the following year. Many of the historians involved in these projects had been galvanized by the leadership of Arnita Jones at the National Coordinating Council for the Promotion of History, a 1970s project of the American Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians. This public history organizing work helped provide practitioners with supportive professional communities and venues for critical reflection on history work.

Terminology and identity were and continue to be challenging. Another possible term for the field discussed in the early days was "applied history," which has an unpleasant connotation of second-class history work. Some practitioners today insist that they are practicing historians, with no qualifiers, calling "public historian" "the professor's euphemism for nonprofessional historians."[4]A prominent federal historian says that "we…knew that our professional mission and purpose were not tied to the success of the public history movement in academia."[5] Historians continue to do public history work whatever their organizational affiliation.

Defining public history as history done by professionals rather than amateurs is a more recent point of contestation. Much of the grassroots work at small history organizations is done by volunteers. The academic foundation of the 1970s organizing in many cases bypassed an important group of what I would call public historians: state and local historians with a diversity of educational backgrounds. These practitioners were organized in the early twentieth century by another offshoot of the American Historical Association, the Conference of State and Local Historical Societies, which in 1940 would become the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). Many historians at local historical societies remain quite outside of the academy. The web's ability to empower amateur historians to participate more directly in the historical enterprise continues to raise definitional questions.

Though a tension between academic and public history lingers in the field, historians of all stripes are increasingly finding common cause. Though the first generation of public historians created new academic programs and organizations to serve their needs, the rapid process of institutionalization since the 1980s has meant that a new generation of public historians has been trained in academic graduate programs that, in structure if not in theory, view public history as a subfield of "regular history." As of 2010, there are fifteen universities in North America offering either PhDs in public history or PhDs in

history with a concentration or certificate in public history, and fifty universities in North America similarly offering MAs in public history as either major field or subfield. What this training should include is a major concern for the field. However, in many corners ofthe public history world—particularly in small museums, whose staff have been underserved by the academic public history movement—experience is weighted moreheavily than training, and a model of apprenticeship or "serving your time" persists.I usually suggest that aspiring public historians, whatever their educational preparation,volunteer in the field as much as possible, both to acquire experience and to understand the diversity of working environments in public history.

From the other side of the public history/academic history split, public historians embedded in the academy have struggled to find respect for their work. An excellent development is the 2010 recommendation of the Working Group on Evaluating Public History Scholarship, on the place of public history projects in promotion and tenure decisions for academics. This report, endorsed by the Organization of American Historians, the American Historical Association, and the National Coalition on Public History, insists that contribution to public history is of import in evaluating a scholar's professional work.[6]Public historians inside and outside the academy are working together to support the field.

Public history is a big tent. There's room for everyone who is convicted of the value of historical critical thinking in the world. The field is still in development: the future of public history is in flux as new technologies change what it means to be public, what publics we engage and address and what counts as an object to be collected, preserved, shared and interpreted.[7]And like the academic world and the nonprofit world in general, public history has suffered from an economic crisis. History institutions often rely on contributed revenue, and with funding down from all directions, public history venues are not hiring at an appropriate rate to keep up with the current production of public history and museum studies graduates, or even with the pace of normal work. Public history is not a field to enter into because of worries about the academic job market. Become a public historian because you love the potential of history to change, enrich and help make sense of people's lives.

[1] This Wikipedia entry, including the definition, is an excellent overview of the field; Also see Cathy Stanton, "What is Public History Redux," *Public History News*, September 2007.

[2] Robert Weible, "The Blind Man and His Dog: The Public and its Historians," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 28, No. 4, p 15.

[3] See Barbara Howe, "NCPH's First Decade," *The Public Historian* Vol. 11, No. 3 (Summer 1989), pp. 69-85.

[4] Jack M. Holl, "Cultures in Conflict: An Argument against "Common Ground" between Practicing Professional Historians and Academics," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 30, No. 2, p. 31. This excellent contrarian essay speaks to the separate culture of practicing professional historians, particularly historians in the federal government.

[5] Holl, "Cultures in Conflict," p. 49.

[6] Working Group on Evaluating Public History Scholarship, "Tenure, Promotion and the Publicly Engaged Historian." June 2010.

[7] The *Forward Capture* site solicited visions of the future of public history.

What's a Librarian?

Vika Zafrin

Growing up, my very clear idea of what a librarian did was this: act as intermediary among books and patrons. That understanding gradually evolved into an awareness that librarians received specialized training and that libraries were not just places but *institutions*, possessed of their own inner lives.

Working in a library for two years has shown me the beautiful organisms they are. In an age of exponential information growth, libraries somehow manage to apply vast knowledge about organizing that information to create tools that enabling us to find whatever is needed.

This is a challenging time. Many people with specialized library expertise are working on intricate problems. And I'm a digital humanist, as much humanities scholar as networked geek, working in a library without a library degree. Like most other digital humanists, I arrived to where I am by a route both new to higher education, and deeply rooted in it.

This essay will outline the "alternative academic" path I've taken, through an untraditional PhD in the digital humanities, to an equally untraditional library position (from which I moved on six months ago to another library position, managing BU's institutional repository). Along the way, I will discuss the divide between research and service, validate decision-making based on happiness in one's personal life, and address particular digital humanities projects and communities and the lessons I learned within them.

Trajectory

I applied to Italian studies graduate programs right out of college. When acceptance and rejection letters came in, my decision to go to Brown University seemed a no-brainer: they had the Decameron Web project. It was about Italy, and it was online—and I wanted to work on it. This happened. I matriculated at Brown and almost immediately got involved with DWeb, which was based in my department.

Two years in, I was a regular contributor to DWeb, doing text encoding as well as website design and maintenance. At the same time it became clear that, while I might make a decent Italian *teacher*, I would be unhappy pursuing life as a *scholar*, at least in the U.S. tenure-based system. I talked to my advisor about quitting. He was supportive: better to quit and retain my love for the subject than to stay and lose it. He advised me to think of a Master's thesis topic.

That was the last time I felt like a professional failure. Within the following six months I discovered three things. One was the field of humanities computing. The second was that my institution was one of its U.S. hubs: I'd been part of it for some years, doing semantic encoding and web design for the Decameron Web, but hadn't put two and two together. The third discovery was that my university allows its graduate students to propose and pursue their own programs of study, if they find that none of the institutionalized ones fit their interests.

Perspective thus shifted, and inspiration hit. My Master's thesis turned out to be a website that made an argument using a combination of HTML code and scholarly humanistic language.1 I don't know how I talked three senior scholars into backing me as a dissertation committee in my proposal of a Special Graduate Studies PhD program to the university, but it happened. I took a year off to create the program, got it approved, came back from leave in 2002 to undertake the work, and defended my dissertation in 2007. (Two of those five final years were spent managing our NEH-funded Virtual Humanities Lab, for which I took another leave.)

After graduation, I was unemployed for eleven months and before finding my current position at BU. Over the past two years this position has mutated, as such things tend do—but more on this later.

Lessons

What I learned in graduate school about the digital humanities and alternative career paths came through four venues: the Decameron Web project, the Virtual Humanities Lab, my dissertation project, and the DH community.

Decameron Web

Decameron Web gave me my first experience in text encoding. It was a pretty hardcore, if controlled, introduction. SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language) was the main tool of the trade, and we were following the encoding guidelines of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), already extensive in 1998. The DWeb encoding itself was

reasonably intricate. It required some decision-making: for example, professions and social roles in Boccaccio's *Decameron* were sometimes ambiguous. Aside from some rudimentary search-and-replace, I did all the encoding by hand. Tricks for doing this faster came later.

Working on this project, I learned about crafting web resources. The basics of web design and editing, yes—but also questions of audience and discoverability of material informed the fundamental redesign of the project site in which I took part.

It was DWeb, too, that gave me my first taste of what happens (or what happened then) when humanities academics are uncomfortable making a scholarly argument through text encoding. SGML was an unfamiliar expressive medium for most involved, and its declarative nature seemed to imply too much empiricism, leaving too little room for the subjectivity usually taken for granted in the humanities. For several years the team combed through the code again and again, arguing about the finer points of our classifications. All of that intellectual work was invisible on the website throughout the period.

Since then, thought about semantic encoding both at Brown and elsewhere in the field has evolved. There's been discussion of the importance of embracing and foregrounding subjectivity in this medium, of separating code from empirical work. In that context, code should be treated as any other academic writing and made available for formal and informal peer review. 2 To date there are no dedicated tools that make online conversations about code very efficient, and sharing it is not common practice in the digital humanities. But all the recent attention this topic has received is bound to resolve into tools sooner rather than later.

VHL

Out of DWeb and its sibling Pico Project was born the Virtual Humanities Lab, a project that I managed for its two NEH-funded years in 2004-6. VHL had the ambitious purpose of doing two things: encoding some fairly long, intricate, historically-significant texts; and then putting them on the web together with an annotation engine that would allow users to view and comment on our code.

By the time VHL got funded, the eXtensible Markup Language (XML) was in widespread use, so we went with that over SGML. And we decided to try something different from what we'd done before: idiosyncratic encoding. The idea seemed logical. None of us knew the intricacies of these texts; we would learn them in the encoding

process. We had some hunches about what would be encoded, but most of the work ahead was nebulous. We decided that the tag set would have to *emerge* from the encoding.

So I sat down with my three encoders (an Italian Studies scholar, a historian, and a graduate student in Italian) and taught them the few basic rules of XML. We then spent some time talking about what they wanted to communicate and propose to their colleagues through the encoding. Once we had that, I set them loose on the encoding—using whatever tags made sense to them. No TEI, no pre-existing tag set.

In this, VHL was my first taste of experimental humanities work. We took risks, learned a ton, and mostly succeeded in doing what we had set out to do. It wasn't exactly equivalent to Google's twenty percent rule: Google allows its employees to spend a fifth of their working hours pursuing personal projects. But VHL came remarkably close in its impact on the participants' views of what constitutes humanities work, and its willingness to invest significant resources into working differently and seeing what happens.

Perhaps the most useful lesson I learned from that project was how to act as a go-between with traditional humanists on one side of a project, and a software design team on the other. The humanists produced deliverables, without which the programmers could not do their part. (This is a working process largely unknown in the humanities.) And the software engineers, in addition to building the infrastructure for both the site and its annotation engine, later translated our encoding into a TEI-compliant tag set. I am told this was not an easy process, but it was also indispensable. If the humanists whose expertise we were trying to distill in code had had to learn TEI encoding guidelines, we might not have ever gotten off the ground. We certainly would not have gotten as deep into the actual expression of scholarly thought based on close reading. And starting out with no pre-existing tag set was liberating in terms of what actually got encoded.

RolandHT

That peculiar experience with VHL made a big impression on me, and I adopted the same approach in coding my dissertation *RolandHT* for recurrent themes and imagery. This worked well. It went smoothly enough to allow me to spend adequate time collaborating with a web programmer on designing the interface, and writing the critical-reflective half of the dissertation.

I gained an immense amount of useful knowledge from building and writing my dissertation. Like every graduate student in the humanities, I learned how to undertake a book-length project and see it through to completion. Project management was also an important lesson; accountability to oneself is very different from accountability to others. I filled out my bag of research tricks, too, including becoming skilled at online research, at keeping up with the latest coding tools, and at regular expressions—a kind of shortcut that speeds up repetitive encoding (think of typing Roland's name several hundred times).

In other words, I learned everything that any other dissertating graduate student learns, and added to that a slightly different—expanded—set of tools.

The DH community

No scholar is an island, and in digital humanities that's particularly true. It's a small but quickly-growing community of scholars and administrators who always seem to want more time for conversation than we have, whenever we get together. I discovered this community by serendipitous accident. In June of 2001, a colleague at Brown sent email alerting me to an annual conference (then called ACH-ALLC), being held in New York City that year. I'd had no plans to do so, but hopped on a bus and headed down to NYU to check it out.

It was different from any academic event I'd ever attended. With only about 300 people present, it was electric. Discussion time at paper sessions was jealously guarded and clearly valued. Coffee breaks were many, and long enough to meet people, who *sought you out* just to find out what you were working on. Knowing that I was about to leave for a year in London, to work remotely with DWeb and apply for the Special Studies PhD program at Brown, my colleague introduced me to the humanities computing folks from King's College London. They asked about my research, told me a bit about theirs, and next thing I knew, they were inviting me to be a visiting scholar at their Center for Computing in the Humanities. We can't offer you any money, they said, or anything else really—but we can get together and talk about work, and you'll probably get into more libraries.

I was floored. This kind of thing just didn't happen in the academe I'd known before. But this kindness, this openness turned out to be a core characteristic of the DH community—and a core value consciously upheld. Senior scholars act as mentors to their juniors. There is open discussion about the job market, and practical advice available to those entering it. Intellectual rigor is both prized and—this is the unusual part—evenly divided between research and administrative positions. (I'll come back to

this.) So many people are pursuing so many projects that, given enough drive, you can find one—or four—to participate in. Work actually performed is valued, noticed and put to rigorous scrutiny that manages to leave most people feeling inspired and not beat down. The collaborative and collegial DH environment creates ample opportunities for scholars to find their own voices, test their ideas, and create new knowledge.

It's hard to pin down what being around digital humanists has taught me so far. Mostly it's the meta-stuff. How to collaborate. The languages that higher ed administrators, scholars and librarians speak—and how many of us fit into more than one of those categories. Where to look, whom to ask, for certain kinds of information. How to think out of the box. How to politely ignore arbitrary barriers until they break down or I get thrown out—and so far, the latter hasn't happened.

After school

So, in 2007 I graduated; wanted to keep working in the digital humanities; didn't feel either qualified or particularly desirous of a tenure-track position in Italian; oh, and I wanted to live in the Boston area. Tall order.

This is where I made a decision that in most academic circles would immediately label me as not serious about working in academe. I decided to move back to Boston from Providence and stay here, to privilege some aspects of my personal life over my professional prospects. This meant passing up some sweet opportunities, mostly for post-docs that would have undoubtedly been fun—but would have meant not seeing my friends or their growing children, never quite feeling at home, and always looking for ways to get back to Boston. So I stayed, and eleven months of unemployment later was hired into my current position at BU.

I can't exactly recommend this course of action to anyone else. For one thing, while digital humanities job opportunities are on the rise, in any reasonably small area they're still incredibly scarce. You'd think, this can't be right. You're in Boston, for goodness' sake, CollegeTown USA. But you've seen how these things go. It's both administratively and conceptually hard, fundamentally to change the way research is done, and viewed, and funded; and that's exactly what DH is doing in the humanities. So it's slow to catch on in institutions where it doesn't already exist. DH needs significant investment of resources—both time and money—that are scarce even in the best of economic circumstances.

Counterbalancing that *for me* were several things. I was never a particularly good scholar in the traditional humanities. The tenure track would've killed any love I had for scholarship: nothing against the system: I came to realize it was just a personality mismatch. And also, all of my communities—not just the academic—are important to me. Sacrificing one of them altogether is what would've happened had I chosen to live elsewhere after grad school. That would have made me unhappy and unproductive. It would have been bad for everyone.

So I followed a particular bliss, without any idea of what opportunities would present themselves, aware that I was risking finding nothing at all in my field. One consequence of this decision was sinking even deeper into debt on top of my graduate school loans. This is a real consideration: if increased poverty and/or debt for the sake of a professional gamble is just not an option, emotionally or otherwise, then it's not an option. You see why I can't recommend this geographically-limited course of action to anyone else.

All of that said, scholars deciding to go the alt-ac route could scarcely find a better field for a terrifying experiment than the digital humanities. It's growing in influence and visibility. So many corners of humanities and social sciences are positively affected by DH work that its importance to more traditional scholarship will only increase. As it does, scholars will need support, people to build things with them, people with whom to consult, people who speak hacker *and* humanist *and* funder.

So... librarian? Really?

Well, see, it's complicated. My official title is Digital Collections and Computing Support Librarian, based in one of BU's several schools and colleges. This title, right here, is where things get dicey for digital humanists, and for that matter digital librarians. It's hard to assign a single pay grade to all of what we could be doing in our positions. It's hard to categorize us within existing administrative structures in higher education. Mine is considered an information technology job, and although I draw both on humanistic and IT knowledge, overall that seems like its correct classification. On the other hand, as my title and others' experiences suggest, most IT work is often conflated with technical support. In my case, this aspect mostly involves desktop support and oversight of classroom audio-visual and networked technologies.

I *like* doing tech support. I'm good at it, and it's gratifying work. I get to help people out and at the same time demystify computing a bit, help them be more comfortable with the electronic tools of their trade. In an institution with so many humanities scholars

working in a field with no particular love of computation, I view this work as laying the foundation for more, and more intricate, digital work than what already exists.3

However, doing digital scholarship *and* tech support creates two significant hurdles. The first is a matter of perception. Tech support is viewed in a completely different register by scholars than, for example, research and development. This is how it should be, since the two *are* fundamentally different pursuits. Most people I encounter on the job have never met a person doing both at the same time in an academic setting. Since most of their interactions with me revolve around tech support, they tend not to view me as a resource for more intellectual pursuits like pedagogy and research.

As I said, that's mere perception, and perception can change. Just over two years into my job, I've developed working relationships with some members of the faculty, and we're doing interesting things that benefit from my DH expertise. The other hurdle is rather more serious in its persistence.

Support of over a hundred desktops and roughly seventy faculty and staff is officially supposed to take twenty-five percent of my time. I'll pause here to wait for those of you who have ever done tech support to stop ruefully laughing. It never works that way. When a computer catches a virus, or when someone can't print or access email, or needs permissions to access certain shared files, or is a new employee needing setting up—that all takes precedence over whatever else is going on. And it's a double-whammy, too. These incidents (to use support-speak) are frequent and erratic, and they occupy an unpredictable amount of time each day. By the very nature of their unpredictability and relative urgency, they tend to fragment the day in such a way as to make it difficult to concentrate on writing, coding, reading, or thinking—quotidian activities of many digital humanists.

It's possible to acculturate oneself to this mode of working, and I'm guessing, for some people, it's possible to be able to switch into scholar-mode at a moment's notice. The administration at my school has been fantastically receptive to the idea that we need more IT staff: I've had a half-time colleague for several months now, and it's been brilliant (if not quite liberating yet: we're still working on infrastructure). But ultimately the conflation of these two sets of activities signals a certain institutional mindset that positions DH entirely within the service sector, instead of in the interstices between that and scholarship, where it belongs. That liminal place is an institutional blind-spot where the digital humanities field has not yet asserted itself.

Slowly driving a wedge into a big wall —so that you can make space for something good and useful —can be dispiriting, even if that *something* is inevitable. When this wedge-driving works, however, it's also the most exciting stuff I've ever done professionally. So I take the trade-off, and it doesn't feel like an "alternate" career. It feels exactly right.

And what are you doing with your days?

Wearing my digital librarian hat, I've done a delightful variety of things at BU. I've overseen digitization (through the Internet Archive) of just under a thousand books from our Research Collections, and am working on digitizing a lot more in-house. I was part of a team that made the Digital Common, BU's institutional repository, happen. I've presented workshops on social media in teaching and research, and on the basics of digital literacy, to students and faculty university-wide. With two co-authors, I wrote a paper on re-imagining the library and presented it at a DH conference. I've begun to figure out how to require, accept, and sustainably archive electronic theses and dissertations. I've migrated the School's website to a different platform and I've re-organized it for better information flow. As part of the School's administrative cabinet, I've contributed to the past year's intense ten-year strategic planning process, ensuring that digital scholarship is part of it. I bring humanities scholars' concerns to university-wide academic IT support meetings.

…And what's a librarian?

I still don't know. I do have some operating assumptions, which will change as I learn more. This is how I see it right now.

Librarians are keepers and sorters of information, as formulated and/or recorded by the human mind. Librarians are the scribes of their world. Classifying intellectual product is a science, an activity, a principle that can never be static; librarians endlessly recombine descriptive elements in an effort most accurately to represent what we know.

This job is requiring me to think big-picture about the nature of information, and of the electronic tools which make it progressively easier and more effective to navigate the vast stores of information that are growing at a breakneck pace. Coming as I do from a humanistic and digital-humanities background, I can guess at which of my quotidian revelations may be of interest to humanities scholars. Conversations I have with faculty, students, and staff at BU and elsewhere are enriched not only by these moments of genuinely new understanding, but also by clear recognition of what is new or not obvious to people in their own lines of work.

In an ideal world, my work time would be split among experimental recombination of knowledge, talking to people about their research, and making things. It is difficult to pursue all this and do IT support at the same time. But easily the most gratifying moments of my job involve the practical application of knowledge I've gained in it to catapult scholars' thinking about their research topics.

It would be unproductive to merge this bridge-like identity with the conceit of a One True Path to new knowledge. Libraries and librarians are less gatekeepers and toll collectors than routers. As a librarian, I think about how to classify and deliver information; my digital humanities training gives me both a knowledge-base on which to build tools and a contextual awareness of how the humanistic mind works. Handy.

1. That was quite an inefficient way to do anything, and I don't recommend it. But it was the best thing available to me at the time, and turned out to be a brilliant exercise in making an argument using both code and English.

2. For more on this topic, see Jeremy Boggs' excellent blog post "Participating in the Bazaar: Sharing Code in the Digital Humanities"

3. To be clear: comfort with computing here varies widely, and we do have some online projects, foremost of them the History of Missiology site.

The "Life of the Mind" Lost?

Patrick Murray-John

> Som natural tears they drop'd, but wip'd them soon;
> The World was all before them, where to choose
> Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide:
> They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow,
> Through Eden took thir solitarie way.
> *Paradise Lost*, Book XII, 636-649

Commencements

As I was entering graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I probably had the same feeling about it that most new graduate students have. Relief, that I was accepted to a school that I wanted to attend. Excitement, that I'd be studying with and learning from well-respected scholars and classmates. Anxiety, that I'd be going into more debt while my friends were (mostly) moving on to paying jobs. And a sense of fulfillment and confirmation, that I was on the right track with the direction of my life and my goals. After all, I had studied long and hard and made sacrifices, all with the faith that I was meant to be a professor and that my life was meant to be "the life of the mind."

I knew – at least in the abstract – that it would be a profound amount of work, and that I was taking a huge risk. But the sense of promise in the moment of getting the acceptance letter easily trumped that. I had a vision of an ideal life, and I had just been admitted through the first gate on the way to it. It was the threshold between two very different types of life. On one hand, there was the getting of a regular job with a nice, stable nine-to-five kind of work, the sort of life that, to me, conjured up images of drudgery and boredom so well depicted in the movie "Office Space." On the other hand, there was the life of a professor. A life of the kind of mental engagement that I had experienced over the course of my undergraduate life. A life of constant learning, both individually and alongside others. As someone who deeply enjoyed school, it was obvious that I was cut out to be a professor, and being accepted for graduate education confirmed that.

Moreover, during my time as an undergraduate, I had held two different positions, in teaching roles, that were extraordinarily fulfilling to me. One was with a program in which I had participated during high school, so I closely associated my role as teacher with my positive experience as a student. Through those experiences, I embraced part of what I'll call a "teacher attitude", the idea that by being a teacher, I could improve the world in some small ways here and there. And, indeed, I saw it as my obligation as a human being to improve the world in whatever ways I could, just as I had benefited from my own learning experiences. I had been described as a gifted student during high school, and in one evaluation of a small-group tutoring session I led, I was described as a gifted teacher. Clearly, I was obligated to pursue a future in which I would continue in the same vein.

Much of that feeling was contingent on the fact that I was moving, on commencement, directly from undergraduate to graduate study. A commencement ceremony is designed to be liminal, so it's no wonder that questions about personal identity are involved. Indeed, much of our rhetoric around the value of an undergraduate education emphasizes its role in developing one's identity. We want our students to have the space to explore new ideas and expand their minds for exactly this reason. Many pedagogical approaches have an explicit or implicit goal of shaking up students' world views in order to help them reflect on their own lives and their priorities. The liminality of commencement is therefore also an odd transition out of liminality. After four (or more) years enjoying the experience of constantly reflecting, thinking, and transforming my understanding of the world through learning and analysis, commencement represents an end to that life.

It is impossible to reflect on that choice without comparing it with the issues and motivations for attending graduate school Thomas Benton outlines in a Chronicle of Higher Education article, "Graduate School in the Humanities: Just Don't Go".[1] He describes one factor leading successful undergraduates in the humanities to pursue graduate study:

They are emerging from 16 years of institutional living: a clear, step-by-step process of advancement toward a goal, with measured outcomes, constant reinforcement and support, and clearly defined hierarchies. The world outside school seems so unstructured, ambiguous, difficult to navigate, and frightening.

Rather than the world outside school seeming unstructured, the world outside seemed to me to be *too* structured. It was a world in which the constant, life-enriching growth that I had experienced for so many years was to be squeezed out in the confines of the jobs I saw my friends taking. By moving directly into graduate school, I had

successfully avoided that closure. I could continue in a state of constant transformation, and make it the natural condition of my life, a life of the mind.

Transformations

Few if any people, I think, can say that their years in graduate school were just as enjoyable as their undergraduate years. For me, the feeling of constant transformation was certainly present, but with a heavy dose of harsh reality. There was adjusting to the work load, and its related isolation from others. There was adjusting to no longer feeling confident that even my best work would be well-received.

But the hardest adjustments were in confrontations with a radically shifting sense of my identity. This was ironic, since the opportunity for constant reflection on my identity had been such a large part of the appeal of graduate school, where I felt I could continue the life of the mind I knew from my undergraduate career. I was among the "almost unlimited supply of [undergraduate] students with perfect grades and glowing letters" Benton describes[2]. The abrupt advent of less-than-perfect grades in my life stopped me in my tracks. This was the beginning, for me, of a common phenomenon that graduate students encounter, one that I find often endures even among the faculty: "impostor syndrome", the fear that at any time one might be found out as someone who never really belonged in graduate school, let alone in a tenure-track position. After four years of undergraduate academic success, the sharp scholarship-curve of graduate study creates sudden and dramatic moments of self-doubt. Often, this is reinforced by the politics and one-upmanship that too often permeates academic environments— though I was luckily spared much of that in my field and in department.[3]

The term "impostor syndrome" implies in part an inwardly-oriented doubt about one's own abilities. It also, more importantly, touches on an outwardly-oriented doubt about one's place in the world and one's identity within a group. The increasing isolation of graduate school surely contributes to both. For me, the much-touted specialness of the life of the mind also contributed to the feeling that I was on a path to membership in a very special group. Everything that I wrote as part of graduate school needed to be good, because these were the "papers" that gave me safe travel in the land of Life-of-the-Mind. My "impostor syndrome" was a fear that the campus police would catch me, find that my papers were not in order, and give me twenty-four hours to leave the country. Worse, the further through graduate school I went, the less likely it seemed I would have a country of origin to return to.

That feeling is an important extension to Benton's view that graduate school "teaches [graduate students] that life outside of academe means failure, which explains the large

numbers of graduates who labor for decades as adjuncts."[4] I see it more as a view that life outside of academe equates to expatriation from the only land they have known or can call their own.

There is also a common, even inevitable, conversation that occurs among literature graduate students—and I expect that students in other disciplines have similar experiences. When revealing in conversation with a stranger that you are pursuing a Ph.D. in literature, the other person exclaims, "Oh! You must have read [insert favorite book or poem]! Don't you just love it?" Often, it is a work remembered from a beloved undergraduate elective, not really relevant to their current employment, and sometimes the stranger is puzzled to discover that a graduate student might not even have heard of, for example, that particular experimental Russian novel. That is an obvious symptom of disciplinary fragmentation, and a symptom of how such fragmentation also serves to increase the isolation of graduate school. I had given up trying to explain my work to my mother years before, but now trying to explain to strangers why it was not a shortcoming of my graduate education that I hadn't read (and probably never would read) some particular work made it impossible to avoid confronting the distance between my world and theirs. Paradoxically, any effort to find a common ground with me only reinforced its absence.[5]

But all of that inner turmoil and acceptance of uncomfortable new realities about myself and how I interact with others was worth it, for the sake of living the life of the mind. Even as internal changes began to wear on me, I held on to the idea that this was a natural part of the life I had chosen. In fact, it ultimately reinforced that idea. After all, earning the title of "Doctor" is no small achievement, and undoubtedly signals a privileged position. It would be selfish, even arrogant, to think that such an achievement did not involve sacrifices and difficult choices. The hardships, fear, uncertainty, and doubt of graduate school were all just part of the deal.

Dissertations

Getting started on my dissertation was a powerful moment. Once I had written up my proposal and discussed it with my director, A. N. Doane, he said something to the effect of, "Good. Now go and read all the scholarship. All of it. And we'll talk after you've done that." What could exemplify the life of the mind more than that? That kind of devoted, intensely focused, and complete pursuit of knowledge is, rightly, the final achievement required for acceptance into the small group of people who can claim that they are living a life of the mind.

In retrospect, the most important advice of my advisor wasn't advising at all, it was an off-hand observation made in a quick hallway-conversation. He said that I should enjoy my time as a dissertator as much as I could, because I would never have it this good again. After completing my dissertation, he said, I would have committee meetings to attend and all kinds of additional administrative and service duties. I understood that in the abstract, and thought of it as a good note about what else would be part of the deal in taking my place in academia. To both of us, that was implicitly the natural course of events I should expect after completing my dissertation.

The required intensity and focus of working through my dissertation continued my process of separating myself from others and of embracing that fact as a further development toward an identity as a professor. By this time, this future identity seemed firmly established in my self-perception. The final destination felt inevitable. It's hard for that not to become true, as part of the coping mechanisms required for completing graduate school. Going through the tribulations of graduate school only made sense in the context of becoming a professor, and so adopting the identity of a professor-to-be becomes essential. I had a similar feeling when I became a husband-to-be. Beginning writing my dissertation was like becoming engaged. The proposal was an act of forsaking some things and embracing others, and the initiation of a transitional period from one identity to another. Every moment in that transitional period affirmed a new identity and commitment.

As such, each act of self-abnegation in pursuit of my dissertation was an affirmation of my identity as a professor-to-be, and my commitment to the life of the mind. It was the Promised Land that I had been pursuing and hoping for all my life. Completing my dissertation was an inevitable step toward fulfilling my fate.

Contingencies

After I took my Ph.D. in Anglo-Saxon literature, I spent about two and a half years in contingent faculty positions. I am really quite lucky that I can honestly use the word "contingent", which covers more kinds of positions than "adjunct". I spent one year as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Mary Washington, one year simultaneously adjuncting there and at the University of Richmond, and held a second one-year position as Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Mary Washington. Throughout that time, I taught a 4-4 load, an even split of two classes at each school while adjuncting, and at the University of Mary Washington a 4-4 was the normal course load for everyone.

I worked with two different department chairs during my tenure at UMW. Both were extraordinarily helpful to me, encouraging me to develop new courses that enriched my curriculum vitae and assisting me to improve as a scholar—at least as much as they could within necessary departmental constraints, such as needing me to teach a lot of first-year composition and introduction to literature courses. The fact that, as contingent faculty, I had the opportunity to develop courses reflecting my research was particularly fortunate. And the first few semesters of any teaching, regardless of the course, is exciting, especially if the word "professor" (even qualified) appears somewhere in one's job title. It keeps the taste of the tenure-track alive.

As I suspect others in similar positions would do, I dove in, and tried to become known and respected on campus. I would need to build up a new set of references for job applications, bolster my record as a teacher with positive student evaluations, and demonstrate service to the campus community. Most importantly, I would need to make good connections with well-respected scholars in the area. If there was a relevant committee with an open attendance policy, I would be there. I attended department meetings, so I could learn more about the how the decision-making processes in academia works. I was learning, and continuing to transform myself through new experiences. It was an exciting time.

After a few more cycles on the job market, though, that excitement wore thin. I was gaining more and more insight into all that was involved in tenure-track professorship, both from the semi-public vantage of meetings and what I was learning through informal, less public conversations.

It turned out that often those committee meetings had less to do with reasoned and thoughtful reflection and analysis—you know, that "life-of-the-mindy" stuff—than I had expected. As I built relationships with some of the faculty, I discovered how often various meetings were seen as dreadful gatherings with fiery politics, and also that most had accepted this state of affairs as just a part of the deal in academia. Maybe if I had been exposed to more departmental politics during my time in graduate school, I would not have been so disappointed in the realization. Worse, because I was a new arrival with no authority or standing in the community—and as contingent faculty there was little political advantage to be gained in drawing me into that thicket—I remained in limbo as a community member. I knew that my understanding of what was happening around me was limited, and I had little way to imagine my place in the institution.

But I was still doing research. And because I was still doing research, I was still constantly learning and developing, living the life of the mind—right? Trick was, my research happened increasingly within a "publish or perish" context. It was a task that I undertook with increasing desperation every job cycle. Without my noticing it, the unity between researching and learning broke down. Research became a task performed for the sake of remaining on the job market. In that way, it reflected a disjunction similar to Michael Wesch's observation that students say they like learning, but do not like school. [6] The life of the job market was increasingly the only place my research had significance or relevance, just as the life of a course is the only place in which students often see the course's content or their work in it as being relevant. I was no longer living the life of the mind. I was doing paper-work in an effort to retain my life-of-the-mind card.

Similarly, my teaching was becoming less fulfilling, in no small part due to the related anxiety of needing strong student evaluations to include in my teaching portfolio. At first, I did enjoy teaching first-year composition and intro-to-literature courses. I saw them as playing a crucial role in introducing new college students to a broader way of thinking, and to analyzing the world around them. One of the greatest compliments I ever received (albeit an inadvertent one) was in hearing a former student say in a public forum that she didn't learn much about writing in my class, but that she learned a lot about how to think. Composition and Rhetoric folks may chuckle knowingly at that, and think that that signals my failure adequately to convey the close relationship between writing and thinking. That is probably true, but I still count it as a semester's victory. At least one student of mine had made a connection to the life of the mind, even if she did not know it. That was a bit of an exception, though, the kind of thing that makes a student stand out, a bright spot of connection in academia. However, there's no getting away from the fact that a course designed to teach university-level writing and critical analysis to a generation of scantron-centric thinkers is a grueling task. It carried a heavy mental toll. But at least I was teaching, and could focus on those bright spots.

Once in a while, in the midst of those efforts, I had the chance to step back and reflect. Even though I had stacks of papers to grade, another round of job applications to get out, and meetings to attend just to remind people that I was involved and engaged in academia despite my subaltern position, I was still connected to the life of the mind. I would take up my reward after I got through all the rest of academia. That's part of the deal.

What a life.

Code

Throughout my years on the job market, I had been tinkering with emerging online technologies in my teaching and research. I thought that I had a good plan: by building up skills with new technology, I aimed to market myself as both an "old and new" kind of professor. That is, I could say that I was conversant with both the very oldest texts in English, and with the very newest. I still think that that was a good theory. Like many a beautiful theory, though, it was killed by an ugly fact. In this case, that fact was the state of the job market for English Ph.D.'s. But I continued undaunted. After all, perseverance through adversity had been essential to completing my doctorate.

Then, two things happened. First, I started to realize how much I was enjoying time spent exploring new technologies, even teaching myself how to write some simple javascript applications. The time that I spent learning how to use and how to control online technologies in order to enrich my teaching became more and more valuable for its own sake. At some point, I found myself wishing that I could finish my lesson plans more quickly so that I could get back to learning how to write code. Eventually, I found myself thinking about lesson plans specifically in terms of the technology problems and possibilities they would bring up, giving me a good excuse to spend more time thinking about and exploring technology.

The second thing that happened was more abrupt. A position in the Instructional Technology Division came open at the University of Mary Washington, where I was in the middle of my second stint as Visiting Assistant Professor. Both the supervisor for the position—also a professor in the English department—and the department chair encouraged me to apply. I suspect that their motivations were partly based on the interest in instructional technology I demonstrated at various department and university meetings, and partly on the fact that they did not have high hopes for me getting established in a tenure-track position in the geographical region in which my job searches were necessarily and happily bound.

So I applied. I made the cut and was offered the position. I felt a little like I was reaching desperately to maintain any bond to the life of the mind, no matter how contingent, but I took the job. I spent some time looking back, thinking that the prospects of a life of the mind had disappeared. But it was time to move on to a new adventure.

It was the best choice I ever made.

Bazaars

One of the first things I did in my new state was to install Linux[7] on my computer. Installing Linux was something that had been on my to-do list for a long time, but what with grading, job applications, and research, I had never gotten around to it. No more grading, no more job applications, no more research requirements left me a chance to try something completely new and see what happened. It was a more important step than I knew at the time. Even more than being a Mac fan-boy or -girl, being a Linux user involves adopting a particular identity, and claiming membership in a relatively small and distinct coterie. "Are you Mac or PC?" "Door number three: I run Linux." And so, once again, I was exploring a new identity. And again it involved fairly unique experiences. The first time you crash your Linux system because you overreached your grasp is itself a rite of passage. The adventure of retracing what you've done, then doing the research to understand just what happened and how to reconcile it is a wonderful learning experience. However, given Microsoft's ubiquity, alongside the increasing number of Mac users on campus, for my new job I maintained and developed my working knowledge of those systems, as well.

My supervisor and mentor during the transition, Gardner Campbell, was a wonderful guide for me into this new world. He encouraged everyone in the instructional technology group to actively experiment with new technologies and to explore how they work and what value they might have for higher education. A key step for all of us was to get an account with a web hosting company and use it to install interesting open source applications and explore how to think about them in the specific context of higher education. This was a sandbox space in which to try new things. I adopted a motto of "When in doubt, try it out".

A broader goal Campbell encouraged was experimentation with what was then the relatively new phenomenon of blogging in academia—especially in order to narrate publicly our thought processes as we explored our sandboxes, and to make connections into the network of academic bloggers. Unavoidably, narrating our thought processes called for self-reflection, and making self-reflection public is an act of self-construction. That is, we were constantly developing new identities, and the conscious creation of digital identity remains a strong element in our thinking about our professional lives, both online and off.

Collaborations with faculty to help them with their projects were also new adventures. I had to learn about methodologies and practices and goals within each person's discipline, and try to identify what, exactly, his or her expectations were for a project. It did not take long, though, to realize that very often those expectations were firmly

grounded in assumptions about printed texts. What I was discovering about the web told me that things could be different. Sometimes technological constraints meant that they *had* to be different. When I realized that, I realized that part of my job would be shaking up faculty worldviews about scholarly communication and pedagogy through the insights I could offer from my growing technological expertise.

I also started spending time with books that I previously could not justify reading while I had teaching and research to do. Eric Raymond's *The Cathedral and The Bazaar* was essential.[8] It is a seminal essay (republished along with others in an O'Reilly book[9] of the same title) about open source software development, methodologies, and culture. It includes an appendix called "How To Become A Hacker."[10] with the following guide to the "hacker attitude":

> The world is full of fascinating problems waiting to be solved.
> No problem should ever have to be solved twice.
> Boredom and drudgery are evil.
> Freedom is good.
> Attitude is no substitute for competence.

The first notable detail is that Raymond starts with the *world*. He is not writing specifically about computers, or technology, or code. Instead, he offers a worldview: we live in an interesting place, teeming with interesting problems. Moreover, he makes clear that there is no shortage of situations that call for the application of thoughtful thinking and analysis.

The second point, that "No problem should every have to be solved twice," contains the core idea that work done once should not be redone – it would be a waste of time for everyone involved, especially when the list of problems to be solved continues to grow. No problem should be solved twice, because we share a mission to use our abilities to improve the world in whatever small way we can. To solve the same problem twice would be counterproductive. But, in order to achieve that goal, the process of problem-solving must take place in an open context. The open context is essential so that all problem-solvers can see what solutions already exist, forming communities in which potential solutions to problems can be shared and improved.

As for the rest of the hacker attitude: "Boredom and drudgery are evil?" "Freedom is good?" "Attitude is no substitute for competence?" I vaguely remembered those ideals from somewhere in my past.

Alternatives

When I look back, I still feel a lingering sense of loss. I miss teaching, but I do not miss the administrative drudgery that it entails, nor the mental effort involved in assuming a positive game-face, both in person and in written comments. I sometimes even miss research. In their place, I have more collaborations and implementable ideas than I can handle. There are a lot of intriguing and innovative options out there for rethinking academia and our humanities methodologies, just waiting to be picked up and implemented. It is easy, and enjoyable, to wander through that world and choose what to pick up and pursue.

A key component of this life is the openness of alternate academic positions, which I see in stark contrast to the protectionism of traditional scholarly work. The emergence of THATCamps[11] within Digital Humanities has been a watershed for the field, and for me personally. These events bring the worlds of open source coding and of scholarship in the humanities together physically, where collaborations start flying. This situation is especially noticeable in the proliferation of regional THATCamps, quite literally across the world. It would be misleading to suggest that such collaborations did not exist before—certainly, they did. The new addition is an increased openness for all to observe and to learn from the various types of digital humanities practitioners—coders, public historians, librarians, professors, and more, who attend[12]. Like Raymond's principle about open source code, which he calls "Linus's Law" after Linux founder Linus Torvalds ("Given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow"), THATCamp has demonstrated that both the bugs and the possibilities in the humanities are articulable and addressable. Institutional bugs are more complicated than bugs in code, of course, and so clear and immediate solutions are not necessarily forthcoming. Rather, the immediate outcome is a better understanding of some very big problems and potentials in academia, and a shared focus among the particular groups who commit to pursuing responses that address them.

Not all of the problems, and certainly not all responses, are rooted in technology. The ones that I gravitate toward, though, typically involve technology and code in one way or another. Pursuing them has more and more pushed me to combine my background in the humanities with a need to learn better coding in order to implement solutions and responses. And so it was after the first THATCamp in 2008 that I began to embrace the open source spirit in earnest, writing code specifically intended to be made public for others to use and learn from, and importantly to facilitate my learning from others. Jeremy Boggs (one of the people I learn from), similarly writes about how "developing open source code has made [him] a better practitioner of digital humanities, and why

more digital humanities scholars and projects should be participating on the open-source bazaar."[13]

Extensions

These experiences have prepared me to offer some extensions of Raymond's principles for open source hackers into the "alternative academic" world of the digital humanities. I'm uncertain about to what extent he or other real coders (I still hesitate to use the term of myself) would agree about these extensions, but I think they merit consideration.

Risk-taking is good. One of the most common complaints about teaching in the conventional academic structure is that it discourages the risk-taking that is so essential to the creation of knowledge. The "teach-to-the-test" mentality that inevitably emerges from current policy in high school education trains everyone that taking risks and trying new approaches could have detrimental consequences that could cost teachers their jobs and students their acceptances into universities. By the time students matriculate from such a system, aversion to risk is deeply ingrained. The pressures on junior academics to publish and generate positive evaluations from such students create a similar risk-aversion. By contrast, the "alternate academic track" reinforces an idea that risk is an essential part of the life of the mind.

With enough openness, all risk becomes non-constraining. Another quality Raymond describes about the open source community is that it is a "gift culture," one in which "social status is determined not by what you control but by *what you give away*." The idealized view of the academic publication system is that we share our work in order to help others improve their own scholarship, and that one's status within the academic community is measured by the extent to which such contributions are recognized as helping move forward the state of knowledge in a particular domain. This is traditionally measured along two axes: number of citations, and the status of the peer-reviewed journals or of the presses in which cited articles or monographs appear.

Scholars are now exploring alternate publication models for open, as opposed to closed, peer-review. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, a clear leader in the idea of open review[14]writes: "We're moving from a pre-publishing review process to a post-publishing filtering process."[15] In such an environment, taking the risk of publishing your work in preliminary states has the virtue of bringing one into a community of scholars more quickly, and of generating feedback directly from the people who will find your work the most useful. Instead of polishing and re-polishing an article for submission to a journal, to be read by who knows whom with the risk of a rejection letter that only

comes months later, you can submit it directly to your audience, and in the process discover more about who your audience actually is.

Fruitful collaborations happen in surprising places, and on surprising scales. Just as THATCamps have been a convergence point for scholars and technologists with similar itches, developing projects to scratch them, Twitter has been a boon for spontaneous, small-scale collaborations through which scholars discover their audiences and their needs. Common examples of the types of mini-collaborations I see are tweets asking for suggestions for course reading lists, tweets asking about sources for particular ideas, and tweets asking for help with a particular code or technology-related problem. Of course, those kinds of questions are not unique to Twitter. They have appeared in forums and on mailing lists for years. The difference is that, with the openness and interconnectedness of Twitter, responses come from people with a wider array of backgrounds and that new collaborators can appear almost instantly. Forums and mailing lists tend to be limited to a narrowly-focused area of study (observe disciplinary fragmentation again!), and so it is unlikely to receive responses from a rich array of backgrounds. A healthy Twitter network will include people from many different disciplines, and each person in the network can become a conduit for building connections among different networks, helping them grow. That leads to people discovering others with shared interests, and to the springing up of surprise collaborations.[16]

The (humanities) world is full of interesting problems and possibilities. I tend to use technology and my work with it as a foil onto current practices in academia, and in the humanities in particular. In general, technologies develop in response to particular needs perceived within society. As such, the design of a technology reflects an interpretation of the perceived need, as well as a particular vision about how it is best addressed. The success of a technology in being adopted will in large part reflect how broadly that combination of interpretation and vision is shared among others. Importantly, the emergence of a new technology to address needs in one domain usually brings about opportunities to use the technology to look anew at needs in another domain. Often, this exposes needs in the second domain that had never been articulated or considered. For example, the rise of easy web publishing for the general public through WordPress offered academics an opportunity to look anew at their own publishing mechanisms, and at mechanisms for communication among faculty and students. The presence of an alternative, more public, publishing mechanism encouraged practical consideration of the strengths and weakness of traditional mechanisms. As we collectively explored these new alternatives, a weakness in the core publishing mechanism of WordPress was discovered: scholars need and expect the

ability to comment on individual paragraphs in addition to commenting on an entire page. Hence, because of the open and modular nature of WordPress, the CommentPress plugin was born[17]. In a natural progression, additional particular scholarly needs were revealed when a social networking project of Kathleen Fitzpatrick called for using a second application, Drupal, in conjunction with WordPress. And so, after a conversation with her about this issue at THATCamp 2010 at George Mason University, I began working on a module for Drupal similar to CommentPress.[18]

Similarly, it was in communication between teachers and students that course management systems like Blackboard were designed. However, such systems are typically designed with a vision that compartmentalizes courses, with the result that it is difficult to use them to foster interaction with other courses, or with people outside the course. They are widely recognized as being oriented toward administrative needs, not pedagogical needs. In this case, the vision of how to best implement a solution to a need highlighted a disconnection between the problem and the solution, which served to better articulate what, exactly, the problem was. And so, with the emergence of alternatives, faculty and academic technologists became more acutely aware of the desire to foster broader interactions, which lead to greater reflection on the nature and purpose of courses, especially at publicly-funded institutions[19].

I outline these specific examples to demonstrate that, in the healthy feedback cycle between emerging technologies and practices, needs, goals, and aspirations of the humanities better understandings of existing methodologies and the best ways to implement them are revealed. The closer and closer relationships and mutual understandings between humanities practitioners and technologists that an alternative-academic track represents, creates stronger and stronger responses to both problems and possibilities within the humanities.

[1] http://chronicle.com/article/Graduate-School-in-the/44846 There are many intersections between this essay and the series of responses to that article in the Chronicle. This is not a specific response to them, nor am I ultimately trying to discourage people from graduate school, but it is impossible to avoid numerous points of contrast. I will refer directly to the most salient ones in terms of my journey toward alternate-academia.

[2] http://chronicle.com/article/Graduate-School-in-the/44846

[3]   Medievalists, I think, tend to be a pretty friendly bunch. Maybe it's the mead. Maybe it's the affinity for Monty Python-esque humor, or the willingness to self-satirize so wonderfully seen every year at the Pseudo-Society presentation at the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

[4]   "Just Don't Go" http://chronicle.com/article/Graduate-School-in-the/44846

[5]   A similar, and perhaps more broadly recognized phenomenon in the humanities, is for someone to notice that you are writing a piece of extended prose and to ask what kind of novel you are writing, and whether it contains their favorite type of character. I was reminded of that experience because it happened to me just now, in the middle writing my first piece of extended prose in years. Granted, that might be my fault for doing my work in a public place.

[6]   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LF-NCesqOuw#t=1m15s

[7]   For the curious, it was the Mandriva distribution. (http://mandriva.com) For some technical reasons, I switched to the Ubuntu distribution (http://ubuntu.com), but I anticipate switching back to Mandriva soon.

[8]   http://www.catb.org/~esr/writings/cathedral-bazaar/cathedral-bazaar

[9]   Raymond, Eric S. *The Cathedral & the Bazaar: Musings on Linux and Open Source by an Accidental Revolutionary*. O'Reilly Media, 2001.

[10] http://catb.org/~esr/faqs/hacker-howto.html

[11] http://thatcamp.org

[12] I would like, though, to see more MFAs and writers, as well as independent booksellers, join the party.

[13] "Participating in the Bazaar: Sharing Code in the Digital Humanities", http://clioweb.org/2010/06/10/participating-in-the-bazaar-sharing-code-in-the-digital-humanities

[14] See, for example, her monograph, *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy,* appearing both in print and online, with a sophisticated commenting mechanism: http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/mcpress/plannedobsolescence See also the exchange between Dan Cohen, Stephen Ramsay, and Kitzpatrick in their blogs: http://www.dancohen.org/2010/05/27/open-access-publishing-and-scholarly-values, http://lenz.unl.edu/wordpress/?p=190, http://www.plannedobsolescence.net/open-access-publishing-and-scholarly-values-part-three

[15] http://twitter.com/dancohen/status/14512738374

[16] My first experience of this nature came when I was working on a WordPress plugin to show the RSS feed from Zotero in the sidebar. I tweeted about it, and it received several retweets, spreading out into several different networks. Before long, someone I had never met contacted me about it. Over the next few hours, we collaborated on the testing and development of the plugin, and we are now in each others' twitter networks. The full story is on my blog: http://www.patrickgmj.net/node/179

[17] http://www.futureofthebook.org/commentpress

[18] http://www.patrickgmj.net/node/188 In the time since then, the project slipped into inactivity. In the open source spirit of sharing and keeping ideas alive, it has been picked up by another developer community, and I hope it has a richer life there.

[19] Jeremy Boggs' post, "Participating in the Bazaar" (http://clioweb.org/2010/06/10/participating-in-the-bazaar-sharing-code-in-the-digital-humanities) describes a wonderful, concrete example of this process as it unfolded with the Scholarpress Courseware WordPress plugin (http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/scholarpress-courseware): Boggs "started it with Josh Greenberg initially to scratch an itch I had about how to set up my own course website when I started teaching. We wrote it mainly to satisfy my needs at the time, but I shared it with others, who then suggested features, and found bugs that I (and others!) could fix. Dave Lester added BibTeX import. Zac Gordon updated the admin interface to work with a later version of WordPress. Now, Stas Sushcov is using Courseware as part of a Google Summer of Code project."

From Scratch: Creating a Career in Scholarly Publishing

Shana Kimball

For the past five years I have been working in the scholarly publishing division of an academic research library. I have an MA in English literature. I am not a librarian. I have never held a job in a publishing house. This essay attempts to explain how all of these things came to pass.

Publishing in the Library; or, What do I do all day?
The publishing division of the University of Michigan Library is a unique player in the scholarly publishing scene – it remixes, in a sense, our library's resources and services to support scholarly publishing in its myriad and emerging forms. Publishing services were developed several years ago to provide sustainable, cost-effective publication venues responsive to the needs of authors and readers.

In brief, nearly a decade ago, the Library (and a supportive campus administration) saw a troubled scholarly communication environment and an opportunity to make a positive change. On the one hand, we see that commercial publishing economics are unsustainable and out of sync with the economics and the ethics of scholarly communication – and that libraries were having a hard time coping. On the other hand, we understand that while the open Web makes self-publishing easier and more effective than ever before, it can be risky – both in lacking clear quality indicators and in being difficult sustain over time. Technologies change, interest levels rise and fall, web-savvy editors disappear—and so can scholars' content. Given this troubled situation, it makes sense for academic libraries, as the core stewards of the scholarly record, to transition into the publishing arena.

Libraries are a natural fit for this role, since we are involved in every other part of the scholarly communication lifecycle. We purchase, organize, make available, preserve, and vet scholarly information, and we have considerable infrastructure that can be leveraged to serve the emerging needs of publishing.

This remixing of our services and resources in support of publishing is in the process of becoming even more hybrid as, at the time of this writing, we are in the midst of a major transition; MPublishing is bringing together the complementary strengths of

various publishing units—our university press, the copyright office, our institutional repository, and my office—to provide a synthesized set of publishing services to disseminate information as freely and widely as possible, while preserving the integrity of traditionally published scholarship.

So what does this all mean in practice, and for me?

As someone who has worked closely with our press for the past few years, but is still firmly located in the library, I feel I can make a useful contribution to this collection simply by providing a glimpse into what I do all day. That is, as someone who is firmly situated within an institution actively "doing" digital publishing, my own experience and the collaborations I've had with others might help ground an "alt-ac" discussion in specific examples.

My typical day might include meetings with:

- an emeritus professor who has an out of print, university-press published book, to which she owns the copyright. Can we put it online? Yes, we can, and we'll put it back into print as well.
- a UMP author who would like to put a portion of a manuscript draft into an online, publicly-commentable form. Will that work? I coordinate with our publishing technology team to make it happen.
- a graduate student who would like to pursue an "open publishing" strategy as he begins his dissertation. We discuss the use of the open Web to extend and enliven his research and writing process, as well as the role of institutional and disciplinary repositories in his publishing decisions.
- editors of an open access publishing project who need an effective way to build community with the kinds of scholars they're hoping to reach, and to lay groundwork for future publicity efforts of specific book titles. I explain why and how to set up a Twitter account.
- project managers and technologists from the library to map future directions for our digital publishing platform, to ensure that it will align with our publishing services and continue to meet the needs of our editors, authors, and readers.

These examples show that the work of scholarly publishing in this digital age is characterized by a high degree of collaboration and transition: exciting changes are underway in the academy, with broad implications for how we conduct our research and communicate its results. This work is primarily digital but not exclusively so; it

requires input and expertise from various parts of the university. Each example shows that scholarly publishing is in the midst of great change, and that roles, expertise, and relationships are all in flux. I've been attracted to this work for those very reasons.

Leaving Grad School & Learning at SPO

Three years into my graduate program in English literature at the University of Michigan, I saw that really great people in the department weren't getting jobs. I listened to horror stories about job seekers not having much say in their work conditions or geographic location. I felt a bit stultified by what I perceived to be a need to fit into my advisor's ideas about my scholarly trajectory. After receiving my Master's degree, I considered my options and changed my course.

During this period, I read numerous articles in the Chronicle of Higher Ed about people with PhDs who pursued non-academic careers. This was a great support and comfort to me. I started thinking about career paths that would keep one foot in the world of research and scholarship. My full-time waitressing job in a local fine-dining restaurant was fine for a spell—I ate exceptionally well and learned a great deal about wine during those months—but I needed to build career skills. I wanted to explore career paths in publishing, with an eye to becoming an editor at a university press in literary and cultural studies. Having spent seven years as a student of English literature and theory, I felt like I was qualified to do this— and, to tell the truth, not much else.

To my dismay, I realized after talking to the Associate Director of the University of Michigan Press (who was blessedly candid with me about job prospects) that presses were struggling under the pressure of a crisis in scholarly communication: the economics of publishing scholarly monographs were becoming unsustainable. This was bad for scholarship, of course, but also bad, I felt, for my new career choice. (This news also forced me to ask myself why I kept choosing career paths with terrible job prospects, but that's the subject of another essay.)

My change in direction had required a re-assessment of my skills. I had little digital experience to speak of, but I did have experience in research methods, scholarly writing and editing. And I had read my fair share of scholarly monographs and articles (in fact, I had done nothing but read articles and monographs for three years) and had used key scholarly research products such as EEBO and journal article databases to conduct research. I knew my way around the humanities grad student scholarly landscape.

I'd done some jobs on the side before and during graduate school that, in hindsight, now seem applicable to the publishing industry. During the dot-com boom I lived in

Brooklyn, NY, and worked part-time at America Online's Digital City, where I surfed the web all day, entered event information into databases, and wrote "Editor's Picks" blurbs about concerts in Midwestern cities. I worked with a scholar on finalizing her university-press published manuscript—proofreading, fact-checking, conducting citation verification, and the like. I edited dissertations of non-native English speakers. One summer, I helped an author shape up a manuscript and proposal for submission to a literary agency.

The summer after my first year in graduate school, I had found my way to the University Library's nascent Scholarly Publishing Office. The Library needed help with metadata creation for digitized back issues of Michigan Quarterly Review, the University's flagship literary journal. I spent the summer listening to archives of This American Life on my headphones and entering metadata into a database. It was tedious, but everyone at SPO was whip-smart and had advanced degrees in humanities fields and information science. I remember feeling like I had come home.

Years later, when I left my program without a real plan about what I should do next, I thought to call up the good, liberal-artsy, publishing-savvy librarians SPO to see if they needed more part-time help. They did.

Back at SPO, I learned about XML markup for scholarly literature and became increasingly interested in the mission that this office was pursuing—building on library resources and infrastructure to provide alternative, cost-effective, and sustainable publishing services. I thought of SPO as an indie scholarly publisher, and that aligned well with my values and interests.

After working on a part-time, hourly basis for a few months, SPO took me on full time in January 2005, first on a temporary basis while I filled in for a colleague who was on a Fulbright scholarship, and then in a regular two-year position they created for me. In my first year or so in the office, I did a good deal of publication management—converting documents into TEI-based XML, establishing workflows with publishing partners, performing quality assurance, and the like. I taught myself HTML and CSS and became the office's ad hoc web designer and marketer.

I've found a fulfilling professional home in the Library's Scholarly Publishing Office for the past five years. Its staff is an eclectic mix of librarians and non-librarians who fill a variety of roles along the spectrum of programmers, digital content specialists, and project managers. At SPO, I have worn many hats: text encoder, self-taught web designer, project manager, publishing & technology trend-follower, social media maven,

public speaker, communicator, liaison with our Press, and co-director. And now that we have re-organized SPO into MPublishing, our expanded publishing division in the library, I'm the head of a new department devoted to developing publishing services, recruiting publishing partners and projects, nurturing divisional synergies, and promoting the role of MPublishing to our local campus and the broader scholarly community.

Directions

I've been fortunate in my career—I've learned on the job and gotten paid for it, by a terrific boss, Maria Bonn, who has always nurtured the talent in her group, and saw potential in me even when I didn't. My position allows me to continue to track trends in the fields of digital publishing, scholarship, and the humanities. I've been able to advance professionally and pursue my intellectual interests. These are experiences that compel me to tell other graduate students in the humanities that there is another way. There are other options. You have skills, and you can develop ones you don't have. Your ability to read and write and think and analyze and to exercise judgment, aesthetic and otherwise, will serve you well in charting alternative career paths.

My own path is either a fluke or an insight into what's to come for others like me. I offer it here as an example of positive outcomes for humanities graduate students, even when first plans don't quite pan out. Alternative academic careers can be challenging and fulfilling in ways you might not even imagine—and scholarly publishing needs more of us.

As publishing continues to transition away from its traditional model into new ones, new institutional configurations arise. New skill sets are needed to facilitate collaboration across campus—skills that do not rest in scholars, technologists, university presses, libraries, research centers and institutes alone. The work of translation among these groups is key, as is an ability to manage projects, prioritize, and provide leadership. The involvement of alternative academics—people who understand the scholarly communication process, the requirements and attitudes of researchers, and who have a familiarity with or interest in digital technologies, contemporary web communication, digital literacy, social media, metadata, intellectual property, e-books, digital preservation, or sustainable business models—are vital partners in our great and forward-moving conversation.

Infinite Roads in a Yellow Wood
or, Why Following an Alternative Career Path is Sometimes More Fun

James Cummings

Introduction

The following narrative outlines the career path that I have taken in becoming what some call an 'alternative' academic. I currently hold the post of manager of InfoDev of the Computing Services of the University of Oxford. Previous to this I was the Senior Research Technologist in the Research Technologies Service in the same service department. I publish academic articles, present conference papers and posters, and—although it is not core to my job description—also undertake some teaching. Here, I follow the road through my higher education, postgraduate qualifications, and a few of my posts, before looking at how many of my contributions to various communities, while not a formal part of my employment, have helped me gain experiences that are useful to it. As I trace the road I have taken so far I attempt to examine the implications of my career choices and how they might encourage and reassure others undertaking similar routes. While Frost's metaphor of roads diverging in a wood as applied to life choices (or in this case academic and employment decisions) is necessarily cliché, I offer it here to highlight not only that there is no single road, but that there exist many useful and interesting ways to explore.

Past

My family background was an academic one, my father being a professor of pure mathematics and my mother a librarian at the University of Waterloo in Canada. That I was going to do an undergraduate qualification was a certainty, and further qualifications would definitely be seen as a beneficial start in life. My academic goals were fairly clear by the time I started my undergraduate degree: I was completing a medieval studies specialist BA with a Latin minor at the University of Toronto. I had chosen to attend St Michael's College because it contained the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies (in whose library I later worked in as a student assistant) and had a good reputation in that field. I was interested in researching medieval textual culture, specifically the historical basis for medieval drama, and so chose the path of a BA which would give me a good grounding in medieval studies.

It was certainly my intention to undertake (post)graduate work, and I had no doubt that I was going to do an MA and hopefully a PhD. No other career paths had really

occurred to me—what other road does one follow with a BA in medieval studies? By the time I was finishing my undergraduate degree I was already planning to do a PhD concentrating on the specialised sub-discipline of archival records-based research in early drama. Mostly this has been inspired by volunteer work I undertook at the Records of Early English Drama project, centred at the University of Toronto, which edit extracts from manuscripts that provide external evidence of drama, and other communal entertainment from the Middle Ages until 1642, when the Puritans closed the London theatres.

I was probably unusual as an undergraduate in that I had made a point of attending academic conferences in Toronto, and even had been going to the well-known (to medievalists) International Congress on Medieval Studies at the University of Western Michigan, Kalamazoo. Following on from my undergraduate degree I chose to go to the Centre for Medieval Studies (now the Institute for Medieval Studies) at the University of Leeds in England, for a number of reasons. One reason was that they allowed me to do two research projects instead of the usual single one, in addition to their offerings of courses with well-known scholars in the field of Early Drama. This allowed me to further explore my interests in the documentary evidence for our understanding of the past. This degree was excellently inter-disciplinary, as was my undergraduate one but, like many such programmes at the time, it suffered from an emphasis in training people for the standard notion of an assumed academic career. Few would have thought an MA in medieval studies appropriate training for what is now being come to be called an 'alternative academic' career path. Although I am sure they may have have existed if I had looked, my assumptions of where my career was going meant that I saw no forks in the road.

Following my MA, I decided to build on my research projects and do a PhD in a similar academic area at the School of English, also at the University of Leeds. One aspect of the PhD which interested me was how we construct our modern interpretations of historical culture based on extremely skimpy, decontextualised fragments of text records. Hence my work was developed from a firm base of many appendices of archival transcription of late Middle English and Latin documents. Part of the point was to demonstrate that, through the examination of these records of early English drama in their original manuscript context, we could come to a greater understanding of their nuances and simultaneously widen our sometimes-limiting scope to include overlooked or otherwise discounted but useful records. With a title (modified by my upgrade committee) of "Contextual studies of the dramatic records in the area around The Wash, c. 1350-1550", I always knew my PhD would only ever have the small readership of those already interested in this field. It could be argued that doing this PhD in the UK

was the major diversion from the road I was on, because of the financial implications that the required student loans for overseas student tuition would have on my career.

While working on this PhD I was undertaking a significant amount of teaching, not only at the University of Leeds but in commuting to a number of universities around this area of England. One obvious reason was to supplement the meagre remnants of the substantial loans I had taken to pay my overseas student tuition fees—but partly this was also because I still imagined myself pursuing a traditional academic career. I was planning ahead, and assumed that traditional university lecturing would be an important aspect of my CV for future employment. This would not turn out to be the case; however, the experience I gained in lecturing, seminar teaching, structuring courses, and in administration would prove invaluable to my career regardless.

As it happens, I had always been very familiar with computers. I grew up using the mainframes of the University of Waterloo thanks to my father, and quickly migrated to programming and pushing the (policy and technical) boundaries of those infrastructures and networks to which I had access. Partly owing to my long experience, during my PhD I was also employed to manage a cluster of computers used by postgraduates in the department and I assisted in teaching some 'Computing for Arts Students' courses. The notion of Digital Humanities as a field in its own right was an idea only starting to blossom. If I had wanted to pursue a more traditional academic career, I probably would have better spent more of this time publishing. While I did publish some amount, and certainly gave quite a number of conference papers, the reality of teaching a heavy load while finishing my PhD meant my CV was not as rich in publications (at that point) as I would have liked.

However, as I was writing up the final revision to my PhD, two major roads diverged in my career path: while one was a traditional academic highway, the other was a scenic route from which I could branch off from a standard alternative career path to an 'alternative academic' one. As I would be finishing soon I was looking for employment, and having settled in the UK for personal reasons was restricting my search geographically. I needed to be gainfully employed partly because of the large student loans I had taken out, and I was fortunate to find a three year research associate post on the CURSUS project[1] at the University of East Anglia. This project involved editing medieval Benedictine liturgical service books, along with the related sources, and using some innovative digital humanities methodologies to build a useful online research site. Although I had never been interested in the study of liturgy, this seemed ideal as it was merging both my medieval and computing interests. With the CURSUS project I was responsible not only for the transcription and editing of medieval manuscripts, but also

the transformation, manipulation, and online publication of the data we were creating. To accomplish this I had to extend my existing skills in web technologies and become familiar with the Guidelines of the Text Encoding Initiative (then in their P4 version) and with associated technologies (such as XSLT and XQuery). The ability to transform textual data in order to facilitate research was gratifying and allowed me to blend my interests in medieval textual studies with those in computing.

Sadly the three-year funding for the CURSUS project, which I had enjoyed immensely, came to an end and I was again looking down the career path for a job. Such a funded research associate position in the UK is frequently an intermediate roadside stop on the way to a standard academic lecturing post, and for a while I assumed this was the road I was still on. During my time at UEA I had also undertaken a fair amount of teaching of early drama and Chaucer, at times being wholly responsible for the course content, but when a full lecturing post came up to teach the very same courses I was not even given a courtesy shortlisting. While, of course, I can't know the comparative field of applicants and it is reasonable for the shortlisting committee presumably sought someone more senior, it might have been polite to pretend to consider me. I honestly don't mention this out of bitterness (I think my resulting career has been better suited to my interests and wouldn't have expected actually to get the job in any case), but in addition to my recently post-doctoral status one of the reasons I think I was dismissed out of hand is that I was already being viewed as a digital humanities specialist rather than a humanities researcher with information technology skills. This might not have been an inaccurate assessment: I applied for a number of mainstream academic positions but was increasingly attracted to those with at least a technological component.

After working for the CURSUS project, I found a position as a research officer specialising in text encoding best practice at the Oxford Text Archive (OTA) at the University of Oxford. Founded in 1976, this is probably one of the oldest of the electronic text archives and it played a seminal role in the history of humanities computing. At this point in its history it was also hosting the UK's Arts and Humanities Data Service: Literature, Languages, and Linguistics (one of 5 AHDS subject centres). One the services the AHDS provided for the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) was to assess the technical appendices of funding bids and to attend the funding panels of applications with significant digital aspects, to provide advice on technical feasibility and best practices. Simultaneously the AHDS would give free advice to those completing funding applications, to attempt to assist in detailing their technical aspects. Slowly, over the course of its existence, the AHDS had a significant iterative effect on the overall quality of the technical appendices of AHRC applications,

with those funded becoming increasingly detailed and much more likely to adhere to international standards. In a similar sentiment to Bethany Nowviskie's "self-satisfied tweet," which helped to spawn this #alt-ac collection, I felt privileged, in providing advice on behalf of the AHDS, to be participating in a system that was attempting to improve the quality of research undertaken in the digital humanities. I was also mindful of the responsibility this entailed. This section of my road had some very scenic views but, as it happened, eventually contained a road-closed sign part way down.

Another aspect of the the AHDS was that it acted as an archive for the significant digital outputs for the projects the AHRC funded. Although they were required to deposit their data (for later potential re-use) as a condition of their funding, many of those in receipt of funding attempted to avoid this responsibility. In 2008 the AHRC (and later JISC), for various reasons and in the face of financial cuts, ceased their funding of the AHDS as a whole. The loss of free, detailed advice on the technical aspects of digital humanities projects is still felt in UK higher education. I am regularly contacted by academics wishing to get best-effort advice concerning their projects and who, regardless of what the funding bodies appear to believe, don't have access to such specialised advice at their own institutions. Moreover, the closure of a nationally-funded archive for arts and humanities research data has had a significant impact on the long-term preservation of these materials. Although individual institutional repositories were meant to take up the slack, a majority of these are still not archiving research data in a useful or discoverable manner.

Present

With the closure of the AHDS I stopped working directly for the OTA and instead took on a more senior role in the superstructure which contains this and other similar projects in Computing Services: the Research Technologies Service (RTS). This meant I could work across a number of projects at institutional, national, and international levels, becoming more directly involved with the funding process and acting as principal investigator on research bids. Working across a larger range of projects has given me a chance not only to explore my interests in medieval textual culture but also gain an increasing interest in textual phenomena across larger segments of the historical range of mankind's production of texts—while becoming even more familiar with digital tools for their interrogation. I feel that working on many projects from different disciplines across a wide time range of historical interest gives me more far-reaching insights into the history of text.

As part of a desired centralisation of those providing data solutions and information development, we formed a new team InfoDev which undertakes data transformation,

consultation, and web application development for research projects and institutions both inside and outside of the University of Oxford. This brings together a number of individuals working on disparate projects in the department and under the time I have been co-manager of this group they have increasingly started working as an interconnected team of individuals. We've provided research support and data solutions to those inside the university and also for a variety of external institutions. We've developed an agreed set of technologies and are building up a workflow for certain types of projects. All of this results in less expensive work for clients as they are charged on a notional (less than) cost-recovery basis of time spent on the work after a pro-bono period has been exhausted.

Even before working for the OTA, RTS, and InfoDev I was also involved with the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). It was central to the work of the CURSUS project that I become familiar with their Guidelines. Although I started participating by asking lots of questions on the TEI-L mailing list, soon I was able to answer other people's questions. Every two years from 2004 onward I have been re-elected to the TEI's Technical Council, the body responsible for the technical maintenance and improvement of its Guidelines. [2] This means that I've been involved in forming, suggesting, or implementing many of the new aspects of the TEI, especially with respect to the TEI P5 release. Moreover, I've become intimately familiar with many of the more esoteric recommendations of the Guidelines and the background processes which help users constrain or extend the TEI for specific projects.[3] My contributions to the TEI Consortium have also included being its Assistant Webmaster, designing and implementing its newsfeed, and representing the TEI community at various levels. Becoming this familiar with the TEI and contributing to its infrastructure has repaid me richly. I'm regularly approached for consultation on a wide variety of interesting projects, and to run bespoke TEI workshops in many exotic foreign locations along my diverging road. How many traditional academics at this point in their careers get to help to maintain an international standard used on such a wide range of projects and in so many different fields?

While working at the OTA and attempting to encourage the spread of best practice in humanities text encoding, I was invited to join a then-fledgling project called Digital Medievalist (DM). This is an international community of practice providing an umbrella group and forum for those creating or using digital media for medieval studies. Starting as a concerned group with shared interests, it has developed into a volunteer-based community with a fully-elected board running a peer-reviewed open access journal, a well-subscribed mailing list, wiki, and newsfeed, which organises conference sessions at major medieval conferences. I've had the pleasure to be continually re-elected to the

DM board and am currently its director. Over my time with DM I have been responsible for the implementation of the majority of its technical infrastructure. At the moment, this includes maintaining a Linux virtual machine that runs the website, an Apache Coocon instance transforming subversion-backed TEI P5 XML with custom XSLT for the site and its journal, and a variety of other scripts and software. DM continues to encourage knowledge exchange amongst the digital humanities and medievalist communities, especially in the areas of best practices for digital resources creation in the field of medieval studies.

Involvement with both the TEI and DM have provided real and tangible benefits to my career, but in both cases these originate from ongoing voluntary contributions to open communities. The same is true in academic as in 'alternative academic' communities, though it sounds trite: you get out of it what you put in. Large portions of the academic community work because people contribute their time and effort on matters which, strictly speaking, are not within the remit of their jobs. Academics (and 'alternative academics' alike) donate time in peer-reviewing articles or abstracts for conferences and even in writing articles for commercial publishers who then sell them back to the same academic community. 'Alternative academics' in Digital Humanities are even more likely to be involved in running websites, email lists, editing online journals, and contributing to community initiatives. In some cases these may be, like DM, communities in a social and academic sense, or they might be open source software or standards-developing communities such as the TEI.

The formal recognition of these contributions is where a difference sometimes becomes evident, between an academic and an 'alternative academic'. Academic contracts often describe a research portion for posts that assumes such participation in related communities and in the standard academia publication model. In many 'alternative academic' posts, similar participation holds less importance or is even not considered part of the job despite its great benefits. My own department is a service department, not an academic one—our academic achievements (such as publishing articles or giving conference papers) are not viewed as central to the services we provide to the University of Oxford or other institutions. Although voluntarily keep a of academic articles that we have published, the work of writing these is usually undertaken on evenings and weekends and, unlike in a traditional academic job, such work certainly does not count toward demonstration of some research or publication requirement. I believe my involvement (such as participation in communities and publications) in the Digital Humanities field to be both beneficial to the services I provide as part of my post and often consider them academic in nature. But in terms of moving me a few more miles down the road on my career path, they are an uneven surface and may indeed

exist as a bit of a hill, in that they add nothing helpful to the journey (as perceived by my employers) and probably slow me down by sapping intellectual and physical energy that I could be using toward other sorts of progress.

It is not that this labour is uncompensated that bothers me, but that it is unrecognised as improving part of the services we provide. The work that many 'alternative academics' do is compensated to some degree through the rewards (mostly social) that they receive from the communities in which they participate. Many, perhaps most, traditional academics labor outside of usual working hours in providing exactly the same kinds of contributions to their own fields, but crucially this is seen as part of their jobs. It is partly in recognition of this that they often do not have set hours and on days they don't have teaching or departmental meetings can flexibly work from home on their research. They don't have "hours," just a job to do and the metrics for that job are often in the form of teaching evaluations and publications lists of their research. While some in alternative academic careers do enjoy such flexibility, it becomes increasingly rare if the job comes to be seen as a solely service-providing one with regular hours. Since becoming 'academic-related' staff at the University of Oxford I've had to work on any personal research and articles (such as this one) in my own time, even when research or publications are a direct outgrowth of work I undertake for the University or could be clearly shown to benefit the job role I undertake.

Futures?

"But why is this a problem?", some will say. I am employed to do a certain job which, at its core, does not privilege academic contributions to the field of Digital Humanities as part of the services my department provides to the University. If I choose to be involved in this field *in my spare time* then why should I expect any recognition for the involvement? While in some ways it would be nice if the University officially recognised academic contributions by its 'alternative academic' members of staff in a similar vein as the recognition it provides for those employed specifically for the purpose, it is completely understandable that it does not—that this work is simply not our job. But should more jobs exist where this state of affairs is not the case? Is it short-sighted not to nurture effort, which—more often than not—appears to inform, educate, and improve services and those delivering them?

This is perhaps a failing of Digital Humanities in the UK: although there are a thankfully an increasing (if still small) number of digital humanities centres where Digital Humanities research is understood as research in and of itself, outside of them those involved in DH are often seen as providing services to 'real' academics— academics who are unable or unwilling to learn digital tools at the expense of

engagment in their own 'real' research. Although many point to fruitful and interesting collaborations between humanities departments and digital humanities scholars, from the outside these collaborations often appear as the academic providing subject-specific knowledge and the digital humanities scholar as a mere technician realising the dream of an academic. Often, inside the collaborations, the academic is quite aware of the scholarly nature of the contributions by his Digital Humanities partner, but this is not made plain to those outside this collaboration. Obviously there are times when such a collaboration will involve non-academic technical work undertaken by the Digital Humanities scholar, but many other times this work involves creating new intellectual content or highly interpretative analysis, and breaking barriers that were entirely unknown to his academic collaborator. Is the lack of awareness in such situations the faults of collaborators, of the expectations of the institution or the field as a whole, or—as is much more likely—some combination of all of these and more? It may comfort those in Digital Humanities to consider that, as it becomes increasingly recognised as an academic field, these problems will likely lessen. One day the road will be paved and well-lit, but until then there are an infinite number of paths to follow.

My current post is rewarding and interesting and I am happy about the road I've taken. I'm not wandering aimlessly, I'm just navigating by alternate means. The problem is that there is no Google Maps or OpenStreetMap to visualize our route for those who do not see that there really is a footpath across this field and that it should be a right-of-way. There are many who simply do not understand a decision not to continually seek standard academic employment. Here I don't mean those who (mistakenly) think it is my job to help people with their printers; the worst are not those who are simply ignorant. No, the worst are those who themselves learn about and approach digital humanities from the perspective of a tenured and well-established post in their respective academic fields. These people gain many skills and insights, perhaps even coming to think of themselves as digital humanists as well. But, because they retain their academic appointments (where they come to be seen as the people in the department who do their subject + computers), they assume in a self-justifying manner that those on superficially less-rewarding 'alternative academic' career paths really must only be struggling through a muddy rut on the way back to the more traditional road that they themselves have taken. Often it is expressed in the kindest and most well-meaning terms, that this 'alternative academic' career post that you currently hold is a good and useful post-doctoral collector lane to your future, 'real academic' employment destination.

While some are happy to get back to the main road, others are abandoning the well-paved multi-lane highways of traditional academic careers and walking on less-trodden

hiking paths of the 'alternative academic.' While I've stretched this analogy to more than its breaking point: I hope to have suggested that these paths—often less well-explored, and certainly muddier—sometimes, when we are lucky, lead to even more interesting views where we can see that more traditional highways merge and split from each other, while cutting their followers off from many natural wonders around them. I'm not always sure where the next stopping point is, nor am I in a hurry to get to the destination, because I'm really enjoying the views.

[11] http://www.cursus.uea.ac.uk/ is currently, and hopefully temporarily, down but see also the Wayback Machine cached copy at http://web.archive.org/web/20080620035929/www.cursus.uea.ac.uk/

[2] I was re-elected to the TEI Technical Council in 2010 for two years when I first wrote this.

[3] For example, with the workings of Roma and the TEI's ODD system.