

Knowledge & Skill Capacity for Digital Scholarship: A Global Benchmarking Study

Granting Agency:

- The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Scholarly Communications and Information Technology Program

Primary Investigators:

- Jon Cawthorne, Associate University Librarian, Florida State University
- Vivian Lewis, University Librarian, McMaster University
- Xuemao Wang, Dean and University Librarian, University of Cincinnati Libraries
- Lisa Spiro, Executive Director, Digital Scholarship Services, Rice University

Our Working Definition of Digital Scholarship:

- The creation, production, analysis, and or dissemination of scholarship using new technologies with emphasis on non-traditional, digital and computational techniques.
 - o both the research content and the tools.
 - o both “born digital” content and efforts that focus on bringing new meaning to “old” content (e.g., textual analysis of a specific author).
 - o across multiple disciplines (humanities, social sciences, sciences....)
 - o both physical centers and distributed DS services.
 - o often, but not always localized in a university library.

Our Working Definitions of Skills and Competencies

- **Skill:** A learned capacity to carry out a specific task (e.g., a proficiency in a specific piece of software). Often gained through formal training and repetition.
- **Competency:** A more abstract ability or fitness for success in a specific area. Psychologist David Middleton categorizes competencies as falling into one of three categories: cognitive (e.g., computational expertise); emotional (e.g., self awareness); and social (e.g., entrepreneurialism, inter and trans-disciplinary collaboration).

Scope of Our Project:

- This project will focus on identifying the skills and competencies required to support DS
 - o Across multiple professions (not focused just on library staff)
 - o Across multiple disciplines (not just humanities)

- o Across multiple countries (10 sites – 4 U.S., 1 Canada, 2 Europe, 3 [BRICS](#))

Research Objectives:

- Identify “best in class” DS programs and determine, through site visits and interviews, the key workforce related factors associated with these centers’ success.
- Identify where more research is needed.
- Test the research design, instruments (benchmark data, interview questions...)
- Consider the value of expanding the research to more locations, etc.

Research Design:

- Gather preliminary benchmark data to identify possible “best in class” DS programs.
- Conduct in-person semi structured interviews with key faculty, administrators, librarians, and technologists engaged in DS at 10 locations.

Site Selection:

- Strong record of successful projects
- National / international recognitions
- Clearly articulated vision
- Overall, looking for a broad spectrum of subject domains.
- Expressed willingness to share their experiences and learn from others.

Sample Questions [varies by constituency]:

- What competencies and skills do your staff members currently have? What competencies and skills do you wish they had? [Center Directors]
- What kind of support are you getting from the X Center on campus? Is there a service you wish they provided that they currently don’t? [DS scholar]

Work to Date:

- Attended the Digital Humanities Conference (Lincoln Nebraska)
- Conducted a full site visit to the University of Virginia (Scholars Lab, Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities...)
- Some informal visits – including a recent short visit to Johns Hopkins.
- Finalizing the slate of locations with assistance from the global DS community (listservs, etc.)

Expected Completion Date:

- March 1, 2015 (pending approval)