SUPPORTING DIGITAL HUMANITIES:
REPORT OF AN ECAR/CNI WORKING GROUP

QUINN DOMBROWSKI, UC BERKELEY
ANNELIE RUGG, UC LOS ANGELES

Internet2
Collab.
Innovative
Community

RATIONALE

- Institutions need a framework and guidance for developing programs to support digital humanities
- More institutions need to move from ad hoc support of digital humanities to integrated, institutionalized support
- IT and library organizations provide infrastructure and partner with researchers and students on projects and programs
- ECAR convenes experts to produce white papers on a variety of topics; CNI occasionally partners

OVERVIEW

- Practical guide
- Audience
  - IT staff
  - Librarians
  - Academic administrators
  - Faculty with administrative responsibilities
  - Funding agencies
- Capacity-building framework
  - Early stage
  - Established
  - High capacity

FOCUS OF PAPER

- This paper lays out a capacity-building framework for developing **institutional** digital humanities support, drawing on the experiences of **IT and library** staff from a broad range of colleges, universities, and national organizations. All major facets of **capacity building** are discussed, including the cultural shift from a solo-practitioner to a collaborative research model, organizational models, governance, and human and technical infrastructure. (emphases added)

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

- Kirk Anne, SUNY Geneseo
- Tara Carlisle, U. Oklahoma
- Quinn Dombrowski, UC Berkeley
- Erin Glass, UC San Diego
- Tasse Gniady, Indiana U.
- Jason Jones, Trinity College
- Joan Lippincott, CNI
- John MacDermott, U. Pennsylvania

- Megan Meredith-Lobay, U. British Columbia
- Barbara Rockenbach, Columbia U.
- Annelie Rugg, UCLA
- Ashley Sanders, Claremont U. Consortium
- John Simpson, U. Alberta
- Bryan Sinclair, Georgia State
- Justin Sipher, St. Lawrence U.

PROCESS

- All online interaction among working group members
- Discussion of scope, key issues
  - Relationship of support for digital humanities to support for social sciences and sciences
  - Use of terms "support" and "services" as compared to "partnerships" and "providing expertise"
- Development of framework of stages of support for digital humanities
- Drafting of sections and review/editing
- Review by an advisory group
- Continued editing
- Publication (coming soon)!

GETTING STARTED

- Environmental scan and needs assessment
  - Local landscape
  - Peer landscape
  - National landscape and beyond
- Interdisciplinarity
- Partnerships between organizations on campuses
- Organizational models
  - Centralized
  - Hub and spoke
  - Mesh network
  - Consortial

CAPACITY

- Degrees of capacity
  - Early stage
  - Established stage
  - High-capacity stage

FUNDING & INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT

- Individual
  - Workshops and conferences
  - Acquiring new skills
  - Participating in projects
  - Applying for grants
- Department
  - Recruitment & retention
  - Postdocs, new hires
  - Certificate programs
  - Course release time

- Institutional
  - Dedicated space
  - Programmer / tech positions
  - IT infrastructure
  - Software licenses
  - Workshops / training
  - External grants
- Consortial / regional
  - Fast network
  - HPC
  - AuthN systems
  - Communities of practice

GOVERNANCE

- Early stage
  - Ad hoc, inconsistent, poorly documented
  - Little transparency about how DH work happens
- Established
  - Formal governance exists, may not be well documented
  - Governance bodies broadly familiar with local landscape
- High capacity
  - Formal, documented, understood governance exists
  - Coordination with existing bodies around research IT funding and priorities

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Humanists need access to similar infrastructure (network, compute, software etc.) as sciences
- Networking, systems, data storage, compute, hardware and software devices, collaboration tools
- Importance of dedicated physical spaces
- Online "portal" for connecting people to resources
- Wide range of potential needs

ROLES AND CAPABILITIES

- Technical experts
  - Includes librarians, central / research / departmental IT
  - Important to establish MOUs for mission-critical aspects
- Champions of engagement
  - Developing relationships across organizations
  - Outreach and engagement
- Content innovators
  - Typically scholars
  - Embrace interdisciplinarity, collaboration and partnerships
- Facets of maturity
  - Communication, outreach, education & training, governance, recognition

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

- Establish central and comprehensive source of information
- Highlight projects and publications
- Include external resources / workshops / etc.
- Maturity facets: communication channels, outreach activities, education activities

DH ACCEPTANCE AND SUPPORT

- Support
  - Moving DH work from being "on the margins" to a core part
  - Staff support DH as part of their job
  - Offering DH consultation as a service
    - This may happen in multiple places, but should work towards a state of coordination
- Acceptance
  - Maturity involves moving towards formal institutional policies around assessment of DH work for tenure and promotion

OUTCOMES

- ECAR white paper – "collective wisdom"; snapshot in time
  - DH capacity building joins other ECAR working group topics
  - Step 1 for faculty, institutions seeking to start or grow DH on their campuses or in their regions
  - Assessment tool for institutions already supporting DH at some level
  - Greater clarityfor funding agencies into what is needed to build DH capacity
- ECAR working group cohort
  - Professional network, representative community of expertise in DH in North America

NEXT STEPS

- Disseminate, make this resource known!
- I2 Collaborative Innovation Community members can:
  - Become familiar with the needs and challenges of DH
  - Discuss this report in your own local institutions and consider where you currently stand and where you want to be
  - Consider DH when designing/selecting collaborative innovations; humanists do innovate!
    - Networking needs (e.g., Pacific Research Platform)
    - Data sharing needs (e.g., sharing large 3d models, data repository)
    - Licensing needs (e.g., 24/7 access worldwide to licensed resources)
    - Infrastructure needs (e.g. cloud, Iaas/Paas)

THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?

- Quinn Dombrowski quinnd@berkeley.edu
- Annelie Rugg annelie@humnet.ucla.edu

- https://www.educause.edu/ecar/ecar-working-groups