Cultivating the Victorian Women Writers Project; Developing Digital Humanities Expertise

Angela Courtney, Head of Arts & Humanities
Michelle Dalmau, Digital Projects Librarian
Indiana University
IUB Libraries / Digital Library Program

Digital Library Brown Bag Series, Spring 2012
07 March 2012
VICTORIAN WOMEN WRITERS PROJECT: A BRIEF HISTORY

- 1995: Started based on English undergraduate student’s request to expand the *English Poetry Full-Text Database*
- 2007: Revisited based on inquiries from graduate students for more content and faculty recognition of digital vacuum in the curriculum
- 2010: Launched new web site: [http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/collections/vwwp](http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/collections/vwwp)
- 2011+: Ongoing improvements to the web site; ongoing contributions (encoded texts, introductions and annotations)
TRENDS: WHAT WAS HAPPENING ELSEWHERE

- **Poster: Pedagogy & Play: Revising Learning through Digital Humanities.**
  Katherine D. Harris, Department of English, San Jose State University
  “TechnoRomanticism: We create our own digital edition of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Along the way, we create a collaborative timeline using MIT's SIMILE & Timeline script.

- **Poster: The Wheaton College Digital History Project: Digital Humanities and Undergraduate Research**
  Kathryn Tomasek, Wheaton College
  Can undergraduates contribute meaningfully to a long-term digital history project? What role can transcription and markup play in the undergraduate history curriculum? How can collaborations among instructor, archivist, and technologist contribute to undergraduate research? What is the role of collaborations with other small liberal arts colleges and with large research universities?
Tutorial: Integrating Digital Humanities Projects into the Undergraduate Curriculum

Kathryn Tomasek, Wheaton College; Rebecca Frost Davis, National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education

The aim of this workshop is to invite digital humanists to work together in considering how to integrate digital scholarship into undergraduate or general introductory level graduate courses.

Paper: Knowing and Doing: Understanding the Digital Humanities Curriculum

Lisa Spiro, Rice University

In order to understand how the digital humanities are taught at universities today, I will look at both curriculum and courses. I am in the process of collecting and synthesizing information related to this research (http://www.zotero.org/groups/digital_humanities_education, http://digitalscholarship.wordpress.com/).
BROAD GOALS FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

- Introduce students to DH
  - Exploit diversity of local faculty expertise, interest, and projects
  - Explore and evaluate other projects based on student expertise
  - Discover, investigate, and experiment with tools

- Revive the VWWP
  - Leverage domain expertise in the English Department
  - Increase the profile of VWWP for teaching and research
  - Build a pool of encoding experts in the department
  - Create ongoing opportunities for students to add to the VWWP
THE CLASS

- Seminar held in the Fall semester 2010

- Cooperative effort
  - 1 faculty member
  - 1 graduate assistant
  - 2 librarians
  - 7 eager or curious students plus 2 auditors
  - Countless other guests speakers and volunteers
STUDENT PROJECTS

- Text encoding
- Secondary contextualizing materials
- Exploration and evaluation of digital humanities tools and resources
- Online exhibits
SO, THAT’S WHAT WE WERE TRYING TO DO!

- Project-based learning
- Collaboration
- Honing existing skills, Cultivating new skills
- Literacy: quantitative and qualitative
- Marketability/Professionalization

(Frost & Tomasek, THATCamp, 2011)
TEXT ENCODING: BEYOND STRUCTURAL MARKUP

- Act of marking up inspired new, closer and different readings of the text
  “The VWWP helped me develop as a scholar by giving me hands-on experience encoding and composing footnotes and an introduction. It was very exciting to know from the outset that we would be contributing to IU’s digital resources in a very tangible way. By doing line-by-line encoding, I was able to do a closer reading of the text. I feel that if students are given text with the basic TEI, such a reading would not be possible.” (student evaluation)
- Students understood the principles and philosophy of structural and semantic markup
  - Genre/topical access
  - Poetry: rhyme and form
  - Prosopography (experimental)
SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGY; MOVING TOWARD A SCHOLARLY RESOURCE

- Annotations
  - Strengthened their own research skills, and the research component of the class

- Biographies & Critical Introductions
  - Fostered and advanced research abilities
  - Created potential to expand and interrelate texts
  - Introduced collaborative practice to students

- Interactive timeline
EXPANDING THE CURRICULUM; CULTIVATING MARKETABILITY

- Research apprentices: students partner with English faculty, librarians and technologists over an extended period of time on a particular project much like the VWWP (Cavanaugh 2010)

- Scholarly encoding cultivates often lacking technical skills and refines critical thinking and interpretation
  - Establish workshops
    - Summer 2011 workshop led by Mary Borgo
    - Future SLIS workshops on TEI / English department practicum
  - Integrate a scholarly encoding component in other Victorian English courses
  - Cultivate student advocates, volunteerism and recruitment
UNEXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Partnerships beyond IU
  - Judson College (Alabama), Victorian literature course
    - Contributing biographies and introductions (content, not markup) to texts part of the initial corpus
  - Distant encoders
    - IU-affiliates encoding and contributing critical content remotely

Reframing project documentation for different levels of contributions and for distributed contributors
NEXT CHAPTERS…

❖ Evaluating and strengthening the class
  • Student evaluations (anonymous & in-person)
  • Library and English Department support
  • Digital Humanities Summer Institute 2012: Digital Pedagogy in the Humanities

❖ Continuing student involvement
  • Expanding and enhancing encoding guidelines
  • Developing unified handbook for encoding with a literary sensibility
  • Building a team of proficient and dedicated leaders
THANK YOU

- Rebecca Baumann
- Kate Boeree
- Mary Borgo
- Mara Inglezakis
- Professor Joss Marsh
- Adrianne Wadewitz
- Randall Floyd
- Julie Hardesty
Questions? Thoughts?

- Angela Courtney, Head of Arts & Humanities, Indiana University Libraries, ancourtn@indiana.edu

- Michelle Dalmau, Digital Projects & Usability Librarian, Indiana University Digital Library Program, mdalmau@indiana.edu

- VWWP: http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/collections/vwwp