The Culture of Digital Scholarship in Academic Libraries [book review]

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Abstract:

Digital scholarship is a growing area of service and programming at institutions of higher education, often with the academic library at the center of support. Editors Robin Chin Roemer, Interim Director of Online Learning and Innovation, and Verletta Kern, Digital Scholarship Librarian, of the University of Washington Libraries, bring together librarians and technology experts mostly from their university to provide a detailed, compelling look at the digital scholarship landscape and the many ways that the scholarly community is supported by a rich network of services developed to respond to a wide range of needs.

Keywords: book review | academic libraries | digital scholarship | library resources

Articles:

> *The Culture of Digital Scholarship in Academic Libraries*, by Robin Chin Roemer and Verletta Kern, Chicago, IL, ALA Editions, 2019, 240 pp., $71.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-8389-1897-5

Digital scholarship is a growing area of service and programming at institutions of higher education, often with the academic library at the center of support. Editors Robin Chin Roemer, Interim Director of Online Learning and Innovation, and Verletta Kern, Digital Scholarship Librarian, of the University of Washington Libraries, bring together librarians and technology experts mostly from their university to provide a detailed, compelling look at the digital scholarship landscape and the many ways that the scholarly community is supported by a rich network of services developed to respond to a wide range of needs.

The authors all have experience in developing and leading a variety of support services that offer training and programming to faculty, students, researchers, and staff. Digital scholarship is differentiated from more traditional scholarship by its incorporation of digital tools and methods into teaching and research. There is often a collaborative, interdisciplinary aspect of digital

scholarship that draws on stakeholders with a range of expertise and knowledge. The needs often depend on the local context, but there are commonalities in techniques that can include text or data mining, data visualization, web authoring or publishing, digital mapping, digital annotation, digital storytelling, oral history, media creation, and augmented or virtual reality.

Themes emerge throughout the volume, as the authors describe how they have created and implemented services. Infrastructure is needed to provide the financial resources, space, and personnel support to introduce and sustain services beyond pilot programs. Training is at the foundation of ongoing services, for library employees first and then for faculty, students, and others on campus who are learning how to use the specialized tools required to create the desired digital scholarship often at the same time as they are creating the content. Not only do faculty and students need to gain experience with the software, and perhaps hardware and equipment as well, they may be acquiring skills that make them competitive in applying for graduate school, grants, or jobs. Familiarity with specialized tools is an asset.

The author practitioners discuss the importance of assessment of training and workshops, use of facilities and equipment, and classroom instruction, while acknowledging the challenge of assessing knowledge of content versus facility using technology tools. With a dispersed offering of services across the three UW campuses, individuals may have difficulty understanding where to go for support. The authors describe how they market their services to ensure awareness of how they contribute to a digital scholarship for the University community. Several of the authors describe the distinctive ways they have marketed services and notified faculty and students of training opportunities. Through their many successes, they demonstrate the value provided to users.

This thorough review of successful programs in digital scholarship considers aspects beyond specific services and tools by presenting information on helping faculty and students understand copyright, fair use, open licenses, and other means of responsibly using resources and protecting one's scholarly output; the means of hosting, preserving, and stewarding the results of digital scholarship; how digital scholarship in the community can provide opportunities for underrepresented and marginalized communities to share their voices; and ways that writing dissertations and the traditional promotion and tenure process may be at odds with digital scholarship in the current environment.

Each contributor to this title brings a valuable perspective on how an academic library can support digital scholarship. The chapters focus on different aspects of the services offered by UW Libraries, and similar themes unite the text and emphasize the robust programming offered to their users. The insights may be readily transferred to other institutions.

This book will be of practical interest to those working in the digital scholarship field, including librarians and staff, faculty, graduate students, technology partners on campus, and community member stakeholders.