Conclusion

GO FORTH AND PURSUE DH: THE LIBRARY COMMUNITY IS SUPPORTING YOU.

Of all scholarly pursuits, Digital Humanities most clearly represents the spirit that animated the ancient foundations at Alexandria, Pergamum, and Memphis, the great monastic libraries of the Middle Ages, and even the first research libraries of the German Enlightenment. It is obsessed with varieties of representation, the organization of knowledge, the technology of communication and dissemination, and the production of useful tools for scholarly inquiry. (Ramsay, 2010)

Very often librarians tend to downplay their roles in the scholarly community. As service-providers we often forget that it is our profession that has laid many of the foundations for the creation of new knowledge. Digital humanities is a logical partnership for librarians to embrace given our history and training. The editors of Supporting Digital Humanities for Knowledge Acquisition began this book project seeking unanswered questions about the involvement of librarians in DH. It is clear from the contributors of this book that libraries are participating and creating DH in many unique and exciting ways. Digital Humanities offers libraries and librarians an exciting opportunity to build upon the scholarly pursuits Ramsay so eloquently describes above. The chapter authors have provided unique and exciting research and best practices as inspiration for colleagues to begin or continue their pursuits.

As personified by the bibliographies and further reading sections offered by our contributing authors, there is a lot of information available within the Library and Information Science (LIS) community of scholars that encompasses DH. As discussed in Digital Humanities and Libraries: A Conceptual Model, Sula (2013) illustrates how publications surrounding Digital Humanities within the library literature have more than doubled since 2005 (p.12). Searching the Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA), Sula (2013) uncovers five topics that show the variety of ways in which librarians are interacting with DH. They include: arts & humanities librarianship, digital infrastructure, knowledge production & collaboration, digital scholarship and research communities (p. 13). These five areas are reflected by the contributing authors of this book. Mining the sources provided by these authors will further your knowledge of DH.

These five categories also align with the American Library Association (ALA) Core Competencies of Librarianship which “a person graduating from an ALA-accredited master’s program in library and information studies should know and, where appropriate, be able to employ” (American Library Association, 2009). As Sula (2013) further discusses:
Conclusion

Among the most germane [of these core] competencies to DH are those concerning information resources (esp. digital resources), knowledge organization (esp. cataloging and classification of DH materials), technological knowledge and skills (including the analytical, visualization, and content management tools used by digital humanists) and user services. (pp. 14-15)

By illustrating the correlation of the ALA Core Competencies of Librarianship and DH, Sula (2013) has uncovered how our accrediting body and, in turn, our LIS graduates have the foundation to pursue and see DH projects to fruition (pp. 14-15). Furthermore, librarians currently working in the field may already perform tasks and possess skills that also complement the DH competencies highlighted by Sula. In the article “On Remembering There are Librarians in the Library”, Gustafson-Sundell (2013) remarks that:

As the survey results summarized in ARLSPEC Kit 326, “Digital Humanities,” showed, library services to support DH projects run an extremely broad gamut, including: application of metadata, scanning and OCR, and selection of resources for digitization (Bryson, Posner, St. Pierre, & Varner, 2011, p. 31), none of which involves skills that are so very rare in libraries. (n.p.)

ALA is providing some unique sources of information that support librarian/library initiatives in DH. In the founding edition of ALA’s Keeping Up With...series, authors Adams and Gunn present “Keeping Up With the Digital Humanities”. (The Keeping Up With series is a “current awareness publication featuring concise briefs on trends in academic librarianship and higher education” (Adams & Gunn, 2013, n.p.). Strengths of this issue on Digital Humanities include suggestions for additional training and a very tangible discussion on data curation and its importance to DH projects. There is also a rich further reading section which highlights relevant associations, courses and continuing education opportunities, and online tutorials.

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), a division of ALA, has dedicated several resources to assist and inform its academic library constituencies. This includes a digital humanities discussion group and the accompanying website, which grew from membership discussions, called “dh+lib: where the Digital Humanities and libraries meet” (http://acrl.alanet.org/dh). This website contains a wealth of resources and features the dh+lib Mini Series which offers full-length articles discussing DH topics. The dh+lib Review on this website provides readers with “a weekly roundup of recommended readings, resources, posts, calls for papers/participation, jobs, and other items of potential interest to dh+lib readers” (“ACRL,” n.d.). In June of 2014, ACRL also included digital humanities as one of its Top Trends in Academic Libraries, as part of its overall theme of deeper collaboration. The ACRL Research Planning and Review Committee, after exhaustive research, offers these trends every two years in an effort to highlight “collaborations or current collaborations within higher education that we believe could benefit from library participation” (“Top Trends,” 2014).

Outside of the traditional journal or association publications and resources, one of the most unique contributions comes from the librarians at St. Edwards University’s Munday Library. In response to the question “I am interested in the digital humanities. Where do I start?”, posed on their Ask A Librarian website (http://ask.stedwards.edu/), the librarians provide a great outline for users interested in DH. The answer offers links to articles, blogs and even Twitter hashtags, including a public Twitter list for scholars in the digital humanities.
Without a doubt, the library community through both formal and informal means, is providing support for DH projects and the librarians leading them. This listing is only a sample of the many helpful tools designed to either get you going or keep you going with DH. As Vandegrift (2012) so eloquently states, “stop asking if the library has a role [in DH], or what it is, and start getting involved” (n.p.). DH was described by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as “the first ‘next big thing’ in a long time” (Pannapacker, 2009, n.p.). It is a great opportunity for librarians and the library community. Embrace it, your colleagues are here to support you.

REFERENCES


