

CHAPTER 23

Case Study: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Digital Humanities Lab

This case study was provided through an interview conducted by the author with Ann Hanlon, Head, Digital Collections and Initiatives and Digital Humanities (DH) Lab at UW-Milwaukee.

23.1 TYPE OF SPACE OFFERED

DH Lab, also has workshops on data management and data visualization; GIS workshops; faculty and guest speakers; and other events.

23.2 MAIN IMPETUS FOR PROJECT

There was a new strategic plan for the Libraries and in it, one of the strategic directions was to become a campus leader for DH. This was driven by campus initiatives such as the Digital Futures Initiative and the Digital Arts and Culture curriculum, which was getting a new certificate program off the ground.

To read more about the Digital Futures Initiative, please visit: http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/digitalfuture/

To read more about the Digital Arts and Cultures curriculum, visit: <https://uwm.edu/digital-arts-culture/>

The DH Lab at UW-Milwaukee is run by the Head of Digital Collections and Initiatives and DH Lab and advised by an advisory board. She is assisted in the Library by the DH Lab Team, which includes the Data Services Librarian and the Metadata Librarian, as well as the DH Lab graduate intern. More information about the people running the lab can be found here: <http://uwm.edu/libraries/dhlab/people/>

23.3 BRIEF TIMELINE OF PROJECT

2012

- New strategic plan for the Libraries was created with DH as one of the Libraries' focus areas

2013

- DH Lab is opened as a small lab and a space for lecture series
- The first *Directions in the Digital Humanities* speaker series is held in September of 2013, as well as an open house for the space

2015

- DH Lab Advisory Board approved and chartered by the Provost

23.4 APPROXIMATE COST OF PROJECT

We transformed a formerly under-used space with windows in the library into the lab. We received a small amount of startup money that has been used for equipment and to bring in speakers. The rest of the cost of running the DH Lab is through already existing staff salaries, including the librarian who manages the Lab, others in the libraries as appropriate, and a graduate intern (20 hours a week).

23.5 CAMPUS PARTNERS AND THEIR ROLE

The UWM Libraries DH Lab began as a collaboration between the Libraries, the Center for Instructional and Professional Development (CIPD), and the College of Letters and Science. The Libraries is the primary administrative unit running the Lab now, though with a strong partnership with the College of Letters and Science Information Technology Department. We have additionally collaborated with many campus partners to host speakers, workshops, and marquee events. This can help to spread the cost of bringing in a big name DH scholar to speak and encourage others to have a stake in the Lab. We also have had campus partners teach workshops and events. For example, the Office of Research presented on how best to support collaborative research and we had someone from the Letters and Sciences IT department teach about Twitter scraping.

23.6 OUTSIDE PARTNERS AND THEIR ROLE

We have worked with faculty from with nearby Marquette University to share events and advise on projects; and we have invited community members, such as the founder of the Milwaukee Data Initiative, to speak and participate in projects. We are interested in taking part in other methods of community engagement with groups in Milwaukee, as this also matches up with faculty interests.

23.7 DID YOU VISIT OR RESEARCH ANY OTHER SPACES FOR IDEAS BEFORE STARTING THE PROJECT? IF SO, WHICH ONES?

We did not conduct site visits, but we looked at the websites and literature for a number of faculty-led DH centers, faculty/library copartnerships, and library digital scholarship centers, including the following:

- Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities
- Nebraska
- Kansas City
- Notre Dame
- Ohio
- Columbia

23.8 DID YOU CONDUCT A NEEDS ANALYSIS OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF ANALYSIS? DID IT REVEAL ANYTHING SURPRISING?

Early on, we identified possible stakeholders for the space, which at the time mostly consisted of faculty already engaged in DH work. We invited them to a focus group and asked them what faculty might need in using the space. The focus group told us that they felt the library was an appropriate place for the lab because it was not owned by any school or department and the work was likely to be interdisciplinary. This gave us the confidence that we were on the right track. We did not conduct a formal needs analysis, since the need was being driven from the campus mission

23.9 LESSONS LEARNED DURING RESEARCH OR BUILDING PHASE

We looked at the library-based DH centers we researched and how they were offering services. We also thought a lot about how libraries have



Picture 23.1 UW Milwaukee's Digital Humanities Lab.

offered services traditionally. It helped us to think outside of the box about the lab filling a need without a lot of large grants (Picture 23.1).

23.10 EXAMPLES OF STUDENT PROJECTS

We offer consultations for students if their instructor is having them use a particular tool in their class. We have also been experimenting with hosting student groups. The lab has had a graduate intern since the beginning. A graduate student also serves on the advisory board.

23.11 EXAMPLES OF FACULTY COLLABORATIONS

There is a high level of faculty involvement with the advisory board, which consists of disciplinary faculty and affiliated staff, and key administrators. The lab works closely with faculty on their projects and grant applications and gives them opportunities to come speak about their projects to others who may be interested in conducting DH research. A list of past events and descriptions of some of the projects can be found here: <http://uwm.edu/libraries/dhlab/events/digital-humanities-lab-past-events/>

23.12 USAGE STATISTICS AND METHOD OF COLLECTION

We do not currently use a formal assessment tool but we are working with the Libraries to implement a tool that will be used library-wide to track events and workshops.

23.13 ANY OTHER TYPES OF ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

Focus groups

23.14 LESSONS LEARNED AFTER OPENING THE SPACE

Collaborations and partnerships to pull in faculty, students, and affiliated staff are key. It is important to be part of the campus conversation, since this gives you an audience, credibility, and a point of view. Think of your space as being a hub for building and developing partnerships across campus.

23.15 CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THIS SPACE

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