

Doing Digital Humanities and Social Sciences in Your Classroom

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Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Navigating this Guide</u>	iii
<u>Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Territories</u>	iv
 <u>Theory</u>	
<u>DHSS in the Classroom</u>	7
<u>Our Project</u>	13
<u>Pedagogical Commitments</u>	15
<u>Helpful Resources</u>	18
<u>Bibliography and Reading List</u>	20
 <u>Practice</u>	
<u>Step 1: Choose a DHSS assignment</u>	27
<u>Step 2: Select appropriate materials</u>	CC BY (Attribution) 29
<u>Step 3: Explore examples</u>	34
<u>Step 4: Provide clear expectations</u>	36
<u>Step 5: Invite students to engage</u>	38
<u>Step 6: Assess accordingly</u>	48
<u>“Metadata for thought”: Reflections on creating digital projects for a non-DH history course</u>	50
<u>Denise Challenger</u>	
<u>DHSS Tools</u>	55
 <u>DHSS Assignment Guides</u>	
<u>Metadata Creation/Archival Description</u>	59
<u>Transcription and Data Visualization</u>	64
<u>Mapping Primary Sources</u>	68
<u>Proving/Disproving an Argument</u>	71
<u>Historical Image Analysis</u>	74
<u>Public Education-Style Image Analysis</u>	78
<u>Online Exhibit</u>	82
<u>Oral History Digital Story</u>	86

Digital Archive	90
Links to Other Assignments	95
Further Help	97
Author Information	98

Introduction

So you want to incorporate DHSS into your classroom, but don't know where to start?

Digital Humanities and Social Sciences (DHSS) is an umbrella of convergent practices that enhance and expand the work of the Humanities and/or Social Sciences through the intersection of digital tools and technologies with Humanities and/or Social Science practices and pedagogies.

By explicitly using digital technologies in teaching, research, analysis, and knowledge-sharing, the Digital Humanities and Social Sciences (DHSS) invite new or deeper methods of data collection, organization, analysis, and presentation into the ways we interact in, and with, the Humanities and Social Sciences.

In [The Digital Humanities: A primer for students and scholars](#), Gardiner and Musto (2015) summarize that there are two ways for thinking of DHSS:

1. Humanities or Social Science *computing*: The development or augmentation of tools and technologies that can enhance data generation, collection, analysis, and publication
2. Humanities or Social Science *meaning-making* enhanced through the digital: "Harnessing computer power to facilitate, improve, expand and perhaps change" the generation, collection, analysis, and publication of work in Humanities and Social Sciences (Gardiner and Musto 2015, 4-5)



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In this way, when one talks of "DHSS," one could be talking about **developing software** or one could be talking about **extending the possibilities of critical interpretation** *because* of that software.

DHSS can have a reputation for being cliquish or exclusionary because many of the DHSS conversations over the last 20 years have seemed to be on *computing*. One may have felt as if one had to understand elements of programming (the back-end of the technologies we see and use) to fully appreciate or participate in conversations about the potential of digital technologies in the Humanities and Social Sciences. This expectation is sure to isolate those who do not know or understand computer programming.

However, digital technologies have developed to such an extent that their inclusion in our lives is now a "total social fact" (Mauss 1966) and thus our participation in harnessing the power of digital technologies to enhance or complement meaning making is no longer contingent on us understanding computing or programming.

Rather, our use and interest in digital technologies can centre on enhancing *meaning making* by using already developed technologies to develop what we can do with, and in, research and teaching.

Many of us already do this in our classrooms without calling it “DHSS.” When we ask our students to search for a website or an article, to map something on Google, to collaborate on an online document, or to participate in a discussion on Facebook, we are inviting our students to find, collect, organize, and/or analyse using digital technologies. What makes these practices explicitly *DHSS practices*, is when we thoughtfully and explicitly use these technologies to develop students’ skills of critical thinking, doing, and communicating.



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DHSS assignments and activities that are explicitly planned, developed, and taught with the aim of engaging with, and enhancing, critical and active opportunities for meaning making in and with the digital world are able to explore new modalities and invitations for accessing and developing knowledge. DHSS can then help students (and researchers) come to know in ways that traditional research and learning may not be able achieve (Marres 2017, Mortara et al. 2014, Ng 2015). In this way, DHSS can provide opportunities for reflective problem-posing critical literacy (Freire 2006) and greater opportunities for accessing knowledge and engaging with communities across and beyond our digital world.

To engage in the Digital Humanities and Social Sciences is to engage in the Humanities and Social Sciences *differently*, perhaps more interactively, perhaps more visually, perhaps more connectedly, because of the ways we are exploring meaning by using tools, sources, and platforms enabled by the digital.

Our project, as well as the projects and scholars we have drawn inspiration and examples from, align with the *meaning-making* approach to DHSS. That is, in this Instructor’s Guide, we have not focused on Humanities and Social Sciences *computing* – we have not developed code nor built elaborate databases. Instead, we have explored what can be done with digital materials in ways that allow us to understand and think through ideas, cultures, experiences, texts, documents, and images differently than analogue engagements alone. To ask and answer “research questions that cannot be reduced to a single genre, medium, discipline, or institution” (Burdick et al. 2012).

This Guide is interested in these ideas becoming part of our teaching practice.

Navigating this Guide

THIS INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE IS SPLIT INTO THREE SECTIONS: THEORY, PRACTICE, AND ASSIGNMENT GUIDES

In the Theory section, we've provided an introduction to DHSS in your classroom, a description of the project that contributed to this Guide, an outline of the pedagogical commitments that frame this work, and other resources and readings to support further study of DHSS.

In the Practice section, we've identified six steps for incorporating DHSS into your teaching practice: Choosing an assignment, selecting appropriate materials, exploring examples with your students, providing clear expectations, engaging in the work, and assessing final products. In this section there is also a list of DHSS tools that may be helpful for your practice and an essay by historian Denise Challenger reflecting on using DHSS into non-DHSS course.

In our Assignment Guides section, we've provided nine unique Assignment Guides for different DHSS assignments. These written are in a narrative, rather than didactic style, to introduce assignments or activities, such as creating an archive, exhibit, oral history digital story, metadata, map of primary sources, proof of an argument, transcribed and visualized document, or a historical or public education-style image analysis. In this section we have also provided links to other DHSS assignments.

To navigate this Pressbook, you can read linearly by clicking the arrows to the right or you can click "Contents" on the top left of each page to skip around to the areas that best suit your needs.

Our expectation is that a reader will jump around to find bits and pieces to suit their thinking. As such, this Guide has many links amongst the different sections to help you read through different lines of thinking.

Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Territories

This Instructor's Guide was developed at York University.

At York University, we recognize that many Indigenous nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which the York campuses are located; relationships that precede the establishment of the university.

York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as *Tkaronto* has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat, and the Métis. It is now home to many Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This territory is subject to the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.



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THEORY

To engage in the Digital Humanities and Social Sciences is to engage in the Humanities and Social Sciences *differently*, perhaps more interactively, perhaps more visually, perhaps more connectedly, because of the ways we are exploring meaning through the use of sources, tools, and platforms enabled by the digital.

Explore this section to learn more about the foundational ideas that informed this Instructor's Guide:

- [DHSS in the Classroom](#)
- [Our Project](#)
- [Pedagogical Commitments](#)
- [Helpful Resources](#)
- [Bibliography and Reading List](#)



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DHSS in the Classroom

We've created this Instructor's Guide with the assumption that instructors will bring DHSS into their courses, at least initially, as an assignment or class activity. Although we have framed this Guide to focus on assignments, each assignment can be modified to be an in-class activity as well.

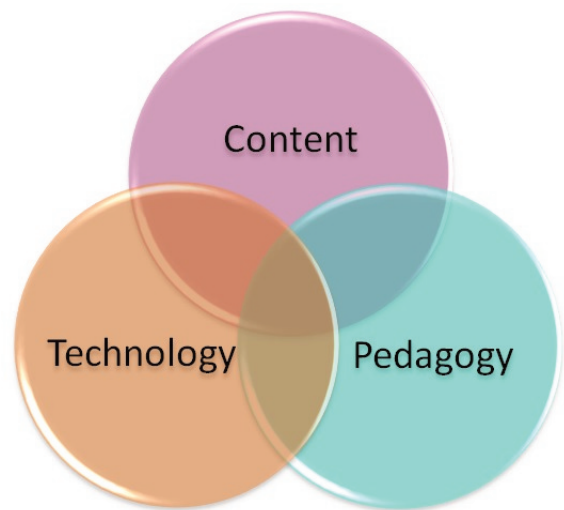
In this section, we will talk about the pedagogy and set-up of a general DHSS assignment; however, you can also skip to our six step [Practice](#) section or our nine unique [Assignment Guides](#) to get right into it.

Dr. Mary Chaktsiris, a 2018 [Wilson Institute for Canadian History fellow](#) at McMaster University, identified that effective DHSS pedagogy involves mastering three domains of knowledge:

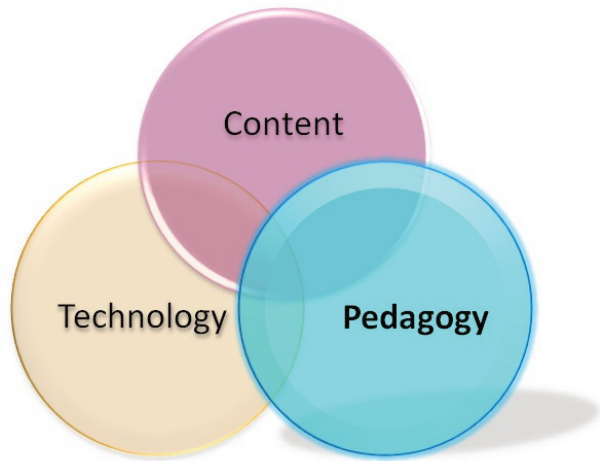
- Factual/Conceptual (ie Content)
- Pedagogical
- Technological

This means, as a professor, to engage in DHSS in your classroom, there is an expectation that you'll know your course content, you'll know how to teach effectively, *and* you'll know how to use the technologies you're bringing to class. You may be the most comfortable with the content and the pedagogy, but with the addition of the *technological* aspect of this work, you may feel like you're starting from scratch in developing effective assignments or activities for your students.

We recognize this fear and have designed this Instructor's Guide to focus less on mastering new technologies, and more on expanding your *pedagogy*, your ideas behind teaching and learning practices, to include more of the meaning making possibilities of DHSS.



A traditional DHSS focus: Equal knowledge of all three domains of knowledge



Our DHSS Focus: A greater emphasis on pedagogy.

This Instructor's Guide was created by novices in the field of DHSS for novices in the field of DHSS in order to be aware of the "expert blind spot" that can happen when experts are too versed in their fields to remember what it was like to be a novice. We did not, for example, want to inadvertently talk about coding when we wanted to really talk about meaning making. **We instead wanted to demonstrate the ways into which DHSS can complement and enhance the work you are doing with your students by being more explicit with the ways you use digital technologies to create meaning.**

Thus, while we have identified different tools and technologies you could use in your class, in our Assignment Guides we have also suggested doing this work with low-tech tools such as Word or PowerPoint because our focus is on the *pedagogy*, not the technology. By using technologies you are familiar with in your exploration of the meaning making potential of DHSS, you can get progressively more comfortable in developing the multimodal, experiential

teaching and assessment practices that are part of DHSS *before* you explore specific DHSS technologies. In this way, our goal in this Instructor's Guide was to invite you into DHSS conversations in ways that could be both accessible and complementary to your own work as educators in higher education.

Preparing for a DHSS Assignment

In your classroom, a DHSS assignment would involve:

- Creating, manipulating, and/or analyzing digital materials
- Communicating and presenting materials and analysis using digital tools
- Collaborating and receiving feedback on process and product
- Reflecting on and solving problems that arose during students' learning

Each assignment would involve:

- Choosing materials
- Choosing appropriate tools
- Exploring other projects
- Creating a plan for completion
- Space/time for practise
- Space/time for collaboration and feedback
- Reflecting and solving problems
- Presenting completed projects

While these elements many seem daunting, they don't need to be. The amount of work that goes into each element expands or contracts based on how large the assignment is.

In a **Large** assignment, worth the majority of a student's mark, students would complete many elements on their own. They would digitize, organize, and present a full DHSS project as their assessment for the course because the course would be based around the full process and product of the creation of a full DHSS project. This "large" engagement in DHSS would be similar to a Capstone or Honours thesis.

But in a **Small** or **Medium** assignment, an assignment worth 10 to 50% of a student's mark, an assignment you may be more familiar assigning in a course, you would have to prepare many of the scaffolds before students engage in their project. You, for example, would need to choose or identify materials and tools ahead of time, you would need to create and provide a project plan template, you would need to set aside class time for collaboration and problem solving, and/or you would need to identify a forum for students to present their work and reflections.

But this isn't so different than the work you prepare for traditional assignments. Just like with a traditional assignment, the work needed by you and the student changes and develops depending on how big the assignment is and where students are in their learning process.

Digital tools and technologies are used to *support* the work in these assignments, but not replace them.

	Small	Medium	Large
Like...	One assignment	Half or full course	Full course or Capstone
Similar to...	A small review essay or critical analysis	As main pieces of work to organize course and course collaboration	Capstone
Course weight	10-25%	25-60%	65-100%
Will need	One or two documents per student	Approx. two to six documents per student per project	Unlimited <i>Selection done through project</i>
Assignment Guides provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Image Analysis • Mapping Primary Sources • Metadata Creation • Proving/Disproving an Argument • Public Education-style Image Analysis • Transcription and Data Visualization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibit • Mapping Primary Sources • Metadata Creation • Oral History Digital Story • Proving/Disproving an Argument • Transcription and Data Visualization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archive • Exhibit • Oral History Digital Story

If a DHSS assignment still seems **overwhelming**, I recommend bolstering your pedagogical and/or instructional knowledge to strengthen the parallels between how you may usually approach an assignment or lesson and how you could approach a DHSS assignment. One instructional framework you could use to support your pedagogy is **Madeline Hunter's Instructional Design**.

Madeline Hunter's Instructional Design

[Madeline Hunter](#) was a Canadian-American educational theorist who outlined [seven steps for designing an effective lesson plan](#). However, these steps can also be used to introduce any new ideas and assignments into a classroom.

In the chart below, each element of Hunter’s instructional design is correlated with bringing DHSS assignments into class. Like Hunter’s work more generally, all the “steps” can actually be mixed and matched to work in any order that works best for your class.

HUNTER	DHSS
Hook	Connection to course content
Objective and purpose	Why DHSS? How will digital materials/tools/technologies assist a student in creating new meanings?
Input	Sharing <u>digital materials</u> , tools, and desires for <u>final assignment</u>
Modelling	<u>Examples</u> shared and discussed in class
Check for understanding	Clear <u>expectations</u> and emphasis on reflection as a key element of final product
Guided practice	Opportunities for collaboration and feedback
Independent practice	Students <u>engage</u> in the work of completion
Closure	Provide opportunities for students to share their work and learning

From this breakdown, we can see that bringing a DHSS assignment into our classrooms requires the same thoughtfulness needed for planning any lesson: you need to hook your students, identify your objective, provide/input content, model what you want done, allow them to practise, provide feedback on their work, and then give them a chance to do the work on their own.

Yes, perhaps the *input* or *modelling* is more extensive with a DHSS assignment than a traditional assignment because a new DHSS assignment would include the technological layer, but learning how to effectively use technologies to support and present one’s argument is a central element of the digital literacy that students want from their education (Davidson 2015).

Furthermore, the experience of learning from, and with, technologies as part of learning about content, supports students’ *experiential learning* in the classroom and thus shouldn’t be seen as a distraction from the content, but a way to augment the *meaning* they get from the content.

Experiential Learning

Perhaps one of the most important distinctions between a traditional assignment and a DHSS assignment, is the emphasis on *process* as much (if not more) as *product*.

Students should certainly be focused on completing an analytical and well-presented assignment in DHSS, but the learning with DHSS comes from the *doing*, not only/just the *done*. When we assign students an essay, we don’t often check with them to see how their ideas are expanding because of the *medium* of the essay. We don’t often ask them to be cognisant of the

ways an *audience* may respond to their ideas. We don't often challenge them to think about how *font and spacing* influence how their argument will be read. In DHSS, these questions point to the *experience of doing* an assignment and thus are central for students' learning of, and with, content. This is what can be understood as *experiential learning*: learning from experience.

Experiential learning can be understood as *activating* your students' learning by having students experience the application of content in context. In some programs – such as nursing, business, or biology – these “activations” are second nature because students have to actively demonstrate their learning of new concepts. But in disciplines within the Humanities and Social Sciences – disciplines like history, geography, political science, or anthropology – these activations may seem less natural and even a distraction from students' learning the content and ideas within a field.

However, as Cathy N. Davidson wrote in her book *The New Education*, our disciplinary structure in higher education developed in the late-19th/early-20th century and isn't the best or only way to learn concepts within the Humanities or Social Sciences. In fact, having your students activate or use knowledge, can invite new or deeper ways into learning and enhance retention, understanding, and application of content. **This is where DHSS can come in.**

You may currently assign students an essay as a way for them to develop an argument and support it with evidence, but what if they created an online exhibit or a digital story instead? Could they track their decision-making process and be reflective on what they are learning about presenting different elements of their argument? Could they develop a statement about the intended audience of their work as a way to develop their thesis?

DHSS can help identify tools and technologies for your students to answer these questions by *activating* their content knowledge and be reflective in these activations. In this way, with DHSS, your students are learning the content, learning from the *experience* of learning the content, and learning how this content has an impact outside the walls of their classroom.

York's Teaching Commons has provided many resources to support experiential education in your classroom, such as a template for developing and incorporating Experiential Education and a planning activities worksheet. York follows the Kolb's Experiential Learning model, which involves four steps: *experience*, reflection, *abstraction*, and *next steps*. The steps are cyclical, so that *next steps* should then (re)invite a change and development in one's approach to the next piece of work. York's Teaching Commons has also provided a planning worksheet for this cycle. Thinking of experiential learning as part of your teaching practice can help develop your classroom as a learning space that can support students' learning over a wide variety of learning styles (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

This Instructor's Guide will assist you in thinking through DHSS assignments by breaking down the process in six steps:

- Step 1: Choosing a DHSS assignment
- Step 2: Selecting appropriate materials: Materials that are available, accessible, and free from copyright restrictions
- Step 3: Demonstrating examples of DHSS projects
- Step 4: Providing clear expectations
- Step 5: Invite students to engage
- Step 6: Assessing accordingly

Each step will also lead you to [Assignment Guides](#), which were developed based on the work completed by the students in this [project](#).

We hope you find this Instructor's Guide useful for your teaching practice!

Note that both the [Library](#) and the [Teaching Commons](#) can support your classroom practice when more support is needed.

To navigate this Pressbook, you can read linearly by clicking the arrows to the left or right or you can click "Contents" on the top left of each page to skip around to the areas that best suit your needs.

Happy creating!

Our Project

In 2017, the Office of the Vice Provost Academic (VPA) at York University and the York University Libraries (YUL) received an Academic Innovations Fund (AIF) grant from the Office of the Vice President, Teaching and Learning for the 2017-2018 academic year. This grant funded a unique collaboration between the VPA and YUL to manage different Digital Humanities and Social Sciences (DHSS) projects that could model pedagogy and practice related to experiential and e-learning. In doing so, this project supported the VPA's portfolio of access and community engagement and the development of the YUL's Digital Scholarship Centre.

This project also developed as a way to digitize and mobilize York University's unique archival holdings; specifically the archival holdings associated with the Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC), Centre for Refugee Studies, and the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on Africa and Its Diasporas, and York Centre for Asian Research (YCAR). The director of each Organized Research Unit (ORU) chose, or worked with the Library to choose, one collection that would be mobilized for this project and one Research Assistant (RA) who would work with this collection. The RA then selected 200 items from the collection and created a digital archive, exhibit, and document analysis examples, which formed the basis of the Assignment Guides featured in this Guide.

This project was lead by Samantha Cutrara, Curriculum Specialist, Office of the Vice Provost Academic, and Anna St. Onge, Director, Digital Scholarship Infrastructure, York University Libraries.

The four Research Assistants whose work inspired this Guide were:

Denise Challenger

- Exhibit: "Playin' Mas, Play and Mas: A pedagogical journey of children and Caribana, 1970-1974" based on a collection from the Harriet Tubman Institute
- Denise is the Coordinator of the Network for the Advancement of Black Communities (NABC). Her passion for community engagement and expertise in digital humanities motivates her to find collaborative and creative ways for agencies across Ontario to share resources, mobilize knowledge, and communicate effectively in lived and virtual spaces. Before joining the NABC, Denise was the coordinator of the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on Africa and Its Diasporas, York University. She remains the curator of Tubman's Caribana digital collection. Denise is currently completing her Doctorate in the Faculty of Education at York University.
Twitter: @Digitaldenz

Wendy Alejandra Medina De Loera

- Exhibit: "The Making of a Digital Archive, By a Non-archivist: The David Wurfel Fonds" based on a collection from the York Centre for Asian Research
- Wendy holds a M.A. in Southeast Asian Studies from the Center for Asian and African Studies at El Colegio de México, in Mexico City. She is currently an international doctoral student in the Department of Geography at York University. Her research analyzes the ways the extraction of river and sea sand in Indonesia (re)shapes the livelihoods of people dependent on agricultural and fishing resources. Wendy is now a student representative for the Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies (CCSEAS) and participates as editor of CCSEAS Newsletter. She also teaches courses online as part of the "Prepa en Línea-SEP" program, a national program in Mexico that attempts to provide Mexican students with the opportunity to complete high school.

Robyn Le Lacheur

- Exhibit: "Looking Back: Temporal and Spatial Connections of Post-war Migration and Displacement Through the Eyes of the *Toronto Telegram*" based on a collection from the Centre for Refugee Studies
- In 2018, Robyn graduated from York University's Glendon College with a B.A., Specialized Honours in Political Science. Over the course of her degree, she focused on international peace, security, and human rights, particularly in relation to the European Union and the Schengen Territory. Robyn hopes to continue this research as she enters her master's program in political science at the University of Toronto in fall 2018. LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/robyn-lelacheur-8b1b2998/>

Juan Pablo Pinto Mendoza

- Exhibit: "Popular Education in Revolutionary Times: Reflecting on Nicaragua's Popular Education Program in the 1980s" based on a collection from the Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean
- Juan Pablo is a digital storyteller who utilizes photography and film as his primary narrative form. Born in Colombia, Juan Pablo immigrated to Canada at the age of 19. He completed a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science at the University of Toronto, a Master of Arts in Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of Guelph, and a Master of Fine Arts in Documentary Media at Ryerson University. Juan Pablo draws on his experience as an immigrant as well as his academic background to explore identity, culture, memory, and discourse. He enjoys using poetic and experimental approaches as well as magical realism to fulfill his artistic vision. Juan Pablo is currently a graduate student at York University in Social Anthropology. Website: <http://juanpablopinto.com/>



May 10, AIF DHSS Presentation.
Photo taken by Anna St.Onge @deantiquate

Pedagogical Commitments

We come to this project with a few explicit pedagogical commitments:

1. Access and community engagement
 2. Students are not “digital natives”
 3. DHSS develops 21st-century competencies
 4. Digital literacy includes embracing copyright
 5. You have to be open to learning too!
-

ACCESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

“... digital humanities should promote traditional humanistic values such as access to knowledge and civic responsibility by embracing collaboration, cross-disciplinary, innovation, participation, and openness.”

Lisa Spiro. (2012). ‘This is why we fight’: Defining the values of the Digital Humanities. In M. K. Gold (Ed.), *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (p. 23). Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.)

As a project co-chaired by the Office of the Vice Provost Academic at York University, we see DHSS as facilitating greater opportunities for access and community engagement in classrooms. By engaging in DHSS, a body of scholarship designed for democratized public access, students’ work can go from the walls of the classroom to the fora of online spaces, and in these online spaces, an audience larger than just the professor or TA can see, learn from, and interact with students’ work. With DHSS, students can come to understand that academic work is not just an opportunity for academics to talk to each other, but a collection of opportunities that invite, even require, greater audience for developing and interpreting meaning. In this way, DHSS assignments can provide greater access to academic work and digital materials than traditional assignments are designed to do.

Concurrent with the greater opportunities for access, by presenting course content as work that is public-facing, students can be introduced to new ways to demonstrate their learning as members of different communities. With public-facing work, students can identify different audiences to present their work to, which may include their own extra-curricular communities. These links with students’ extra-curricular communities may spark interest in developing greater scholarly relationships with these communities as ways to create new, or deeper, layers of meaning within academic work. In this way, DHSS can invite opportunities to work with community groups outside the classroom to collaborate on sharing content, mobilizing stories, and developing new material. The possibilities for creating a course that is designed around greater access and community engagements is both exciting and possible from a DHSS perspective.

STUDENTS ARE NOT “DIGITAL NATIVES”

“We may live in a highly technologised world, but it is conceivable that it has become so through evolution, rather than revolution. Young people may do things differently, but there are no grounds to consider them alien to us.”

Sue Bennett, Karl Maton, & Lisa Kervin. (2018). The ‘Digital Natives’ Debate: A critical review of the evidence. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 39(5), p. 738.

Despite their ubiquitous use of digital technologies, today’s students are not “digital natives” with an innate understanding of the use and power of digital technologies (see, for example, Paul Kirschner and Pedro De Bruyckere’s 2017 article “The Myths of the Digital Native and the Multitasker”). Research shows that students use technology in higher-education to organize and manage the logistics of studying, not necessarily to augment or invite new ways of seeing learning materials (Henderson, Selwyn, & Aston, 2017). This does not mean students are not interested in these activities, only that they are not doing them innately. In fact, when asked, Cathy Davidson, formerly of Duke University, found that students *wanted* to develop digital literacies such as:

- Using online sources to network, mobilize knowledge, publicize content, collaborate, and innovate
- Collecting, managing, and interpreting multimedia and online data and/or content
- Appreciating the complex ethics surrounding online practices

Professors, however, have to guide students in explicitly developing these skills and knowledges in their courses.

Thus, we’ve built into our Assignment Guides invitations for students to network, to augment, to collaborate, to innovate, and to see the complexity of online materials by learning experientially with digital tools and technologies. This means we have flagged the moments in which you can be explicit in exploring these ideas with your students in the *process* of students’ assignments, not just the products. We also recognize that there will be learning curves with using new tools and technologies, so we have focused on how your students, and yourself, can come to understand the DHSS assignment holistically in terms of tools, content, and aims. Therefore, neither you nor your students need to know the more advanced technologies to do this work. Rather, to engage in DHSS, as we have presented it here, just needs a willingness to do and explore different, more digitally, than you have before.

DHSS DEVELOPS 21ST-CENTURY COMPETENCIES

“The digital humanities should not be about the digital at all. It’s all about innovation and disruption.”

Mark Sample. (2009). “What’s Wrong With Writing Essays.” *SampleReality*, paras. 6 & 7.

We would be remiss not to acknowledge the resistance amongst faculty members toward what has been called the “professionalization” of the Humanities and Social Sciences, and the ways DHSS have been brought (unjustly?) into this conversation. We hope that this Instructor’s Guide does not read as a manual for skills but rather as a helpful guide for thinking through new ways of meaning making by explicitly incorporating digital tools and technologies into the process and product of students’ assignments.

Twenty-first-century competencies are, and will continue to be, key elements of students' education. After an international literature review, the Ontario government identified that four main 21st-century competencies that employers are looking for are:

- Critical thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Creativity and innovation

These competencies are built into each assignment featured in this Guide in explicit and implicit ways. You can also hear their presence in how our students talk about their experiences with DHSS. In this way, DHSS is not about training students for work, but about providing greater opportunities for students to explore and solve "messy, complex problems – including problems we don't yet know about – associated with living in a competitive, globally connected, and technologically intensive world" (Ontario, 2016, p. 3). These problems may be professional, but they may also be academic or personal. Developing students' digital literacies can help them understand content in the networked ways they already, and will continue to, interact with the world. This allows them to use, develop, innovate, and disrupt knowledge, not just process it.

DIGITAL LITERACY INCLUDES EMBRACING COPYRIGHT

"The effective use of copyrighted materials enhances the teaching and learning process."

Renee Hobbs. (2010). *Copyright Clarity: How fair use supports digital learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, p. 5.

Students' digital literacy skills include understanding and respecting copyright law and other rights related to creation and distribution. Your role as a professor is to also understand and respect copyright legislation, but more importantly model how copyright, like the ethics review process, is meant to create more ethical relationships amongst those who create and those who use information. Issues with copyright and other considerations (intellectual property rights, creative commons licensing, traditional knowledge, community consultations, etc.) should not be seen as a barrier for engaging in DHSS, but rather as an opportunity to understand copyright laws *in situ* and identify legal and ethical sources that can be used in the classroom. Our Assignment Guides use digital materials that are selected appropriately but also invite the creation of digital materials that can be shared in public spaces. These student-created work, including their digitization and final assignments, can invite opportunities to discuss copyright by using your students' own rights as creators as fodder for the discussion.

DHSS SUPPORTS FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

These assignments will not run on auto-pilot. To engage in DHSS in your classroom requires that you are open to learning, along with your students, about the processes and products of DHSS. We see this as an exciting opportunity for collaboration, experiential learning, and critical thinking, and we hope you do too.

Helpful Resources

Find below a list of associations, groups, and other resources to help you explore the field of DHSS.

Also see the [Practice](#) section for DHSS [Tools](#), links to others' [assignments and syllabi](#), and the [Bibliography and Reading List](#) for recommended readings.

- **[Canadian Society for Digital Humanities/Société canadienne des humanités numériques](#)** (CSDH/SCHN): A Canada-wide association that draws together humanists who engage in digital and computer-assisted research, teaching, and creation.
- **[Collaborators' Bill of Rights](#)**: Recommendations for "laying new lines" for digital humanities scholars based on the "Off The Tracks" workshop in 2011.
- **[CUNY Digital Humanities Resource Guide](#)**: A collaboratively produced introduction to the field of Digital Humanities by the CUNY [Digital Humanities Initiative](#) (DHI).
- **[Debates in Digital Humanities](#)**: An open-access edition of the article collections *Debates in the Digital Humanities*.
- **[Digital Humanities Syllabus](#)**: A wiki that shares key bibliographic content and academic knowledge to DH practitioners.
- **[Digital Medievalist](#)**: An international web-based community for medievalists working with digital media.
- **[Digital Scholarship in the Humanities](#)**: An international, peer reviewed journal that publishes original contributions on all aspects of digital scholarship in the humanities.
- **[Digital Tools & Resources for History Faculty](#)**: An annotated list of resources, tools, and readings to support the integration of digital humanities in history courses.
- **[DiRT](#)**: A registry of digital research tools for scholarly use.
- **[eLearning Resources](#)**: York University Teaching Commons' eLearning Guide for the development of knowledge and skills through the use of information and communication technologies.
- **[HASTAC \(Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory\)](#)**: An interdisciplinary community of humanists, artists, social scientists, scientists, and technologists inspiring changes to teaching and learning practices through sharing ideas, news, tools, research, insights, pedagogy, methods, and projects.
- **[Harvard Digital Lab for Social Sciences](#)** (DLABSS): An online experiments and survey community for social science research.
- **[Humanities + Design](#)**: A Research Lab at Stanford University that supports new modes of thinking in design and computer science to serve data-driven research in the humanities.
- **[Intro to Digital Humanities](#)**: Readings and tutorials for students and instructors from the UCLA Center for Digital Humanities.
- **[Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media](#)**: A multi-disciplinary team that develops online teaching resources, digital collections and exhibits, open-source software, and training in digital literacy and skills.

- **University of Toledo Digital Humanities guide**: A guide with links to online publications, collaboration and visualization tools, and resources to inspire and support Digital Humanities projects.
- **Web Archives for Historical Research (WAHR)**: A group with the goal of linking history and big data to give historians the tools required to find and interpret digital sources from web archives.
- **"Who Teaches Digital History in Canada?"**: A blog post on ActiveHistory.ca by York professor Sean Kheraj about the digital history community in Canada with links to DH syllabi.

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PRACTICE

We've identified six steps for incorporating DHSS assignments into your teaching practice:

Step 1: Choose a DHSS assignment or identify the scale of the project you want your students to engage in

Step 2: Select appropriate materials. Ensure that the material your students use is free from copyright restrictions

Step 3: Explore examples of DHSS projects for your students to review

Step 4: Provide clear expectations

Step 5: Invite students to engage

Step 6: Assess accordingly



York University Image Collection

Step 1: Choose a DHSS assignment

You've decided to bring DHSS into your classroom, where do you begin?

We've created this Instructor's Guide with the assumption that you'll bring DHSS into your courses, at least initially, as an **assignment or class activity**. Although we have framed this Guide to focus on assignments, each assignment can be modified to be an in-class activity as well.

The first step in bringing DHSS into your classroom is to identify which DHSS assignment would work best for you. Or, more accurately, which assignment on your current syllabus you could replace or augment with DHSS.

As stated in the introduction, a DHSS assignment involves:

- Creating, manipulating, and/or analyzing digital materials
- Communicating and presenting materials and analysis using digital tools
- Collaborating and receiving feedback on process and product
- Reflecting on and solving problems that arose during students' learning

Each assignment would then also involve:

1. Choosing materials
2. Choosing appropriate tools
3. Exploring other projects
4. Creating a plan for completion
5. Space/time for practice
6. Space/time for collaboration and feedback
7. Reflecting and solving problems
8. Presenting completed projects

We have provided nine Assignment Guides in this Instructor's Guide that may work in a Humanities or Social Science course, all of which can be modified to be a Small (10-20% of a student's mark), Medium (20-55%), or Large assignment (55%-100%). In a Small or Medium assignment, you would need to provide greater scaffolds for student completion, but in a Large assignment, students would complete many elements on their own.

For example, let's say that you wanted your students to complete a Public Education-Style Image Analysis as a way to support digital literacy and reflection of course content. A "Large" version of this assignment could involve students finding and digitizing a photograph and identifying an appropriate web venue for presenting their analysis. A "Medium" version of this assignment would involve you providing them with an already digitized image and having them upload their work to a blog post or a WordPress site. However, if this was a "Small" assignment, you would provide students with a digitized image and have them create a reflection using technology they are familiar with, such as PowerPoint or an Instagram story. Each version of this assignment, be it Large, Medium, or Small, would have the same goals – completing a Public Education Style Image Analysis – but the work involved would expanded or contract depending on how much weight the assignment was given in the course.

	Small	Medium	Large
	One assignment	Half or full course	Full course or Capstone
Similar to...	A small review essay or critical analysis	As main pieces of work to organize course and course collaboration	Capstone
Course weight	10-25%	25-60%	65-100%
Will need	One or two documents per student	Approx. two to six documents per student per project	Unlimited <i>Selection done through project</i>
Assignment Guides provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Image Analysis • Mapping Primary Sources • Metadata Creation • Proving/Disproving an Argument • Public Education-style Image Analysis • Transcription and Data Visualization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibit • Mapping Primary Sources • Metadata Creation • Oral History Digital Story • Proving/Disproving an Argument • Transcription and Data Visualization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archive • Exhibit • Oral History Digital Story

We've organized the assignments in our [Assignment Guides](#) to replace traditional writing assignments such as essays. While a DHSS assignment may not seem to do the same work as an essay, Digital Humanist Mark Sample cautions that "the student essay has come to stand in for all the research, dialogue, revision, and work that professional scholars engage in," and that this does not encapsulate the full breadth and depth of the work that academics do.

Sample reminds us that "the word *text*, derives from the Latin *textus*, meaning that which is woven, strands of different material intertwined together." In his teaching practice, he states that he is "moving away from asking students to write toward asking them to weave. To build, to fabricate, to design" (Sample, 2009, paras. 6 & 7). This vision for a complex and integrated piece of work is similar to what Ng (2015) has called a "reflexive remix" (p. 221) or what [Dr. Amanda Starling Gould](#) called a "(re)mediated element" in a "[transmedia essay](#)".

DHSS assignments are thus not like essays. They do more. A DHSS assignment can develop a range of innovations and explorations with course content that a linear essay cannot achieve. Digital tools and technologies invite a *woven remix* of students' ideas with digital material in ways that can demonstrate critical and creative learning with the content you teach.

Remember that this work will be new to students. Anne Burdick and colleagues (2012) identify that the *project* is the basic unit of DHSS scholarship (p. 214). Thus framing your students' assignments as "projects" may better help them tap into the new ways of engagement that you are asking from them and help them develop the project management skills that can assist their experiential learning (Kim, Warg, & Moen, 2013).

Also, as much as we like to believe that young people are digital natives, they are not, so you have to be clear about your expectations of the process and product of their assignment so they explicitly learn how to use digital technologies to develop and enhance their understanding of the content. It is this explicit use of digital technologies for creating and presenting an assignment that turns a traditional assignment into a DHSS assignment that *expands meaning through digital technologies*.

Step 2: Select appropriate materials

Just Because You Can, Doesn't Mean You Should

BY ANNA ST. ONGE, DIRECTOR, DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP INFRASTRUCTURE, YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Selecting appropriate materials for your DHSS project should be informed by several factors that could impact student success and the outcome of the project. Technology allows for exciting experimentation and narrative display. However, a robust scholarly assignment should involve critical reflection and documentation about how students selected their content. What follows are some elements to help guide this aspect of project planning around an assignment.

- [General considerations](#)
 - [Selecting content](#)
 - [Copyright and other rights](#)
 - [Constraints](#)
-

Selecting appropriate materials for a DHSS project ensures that the project can be hosted in a public forum, that materials are cited and contributors are given appropriate credit, and that permissions (be they legal, community, ethical, or moral) have been cleared and documented. One of the appeals of engaging with rich, underused archival fonds and collections can also be a liability: if the scope, intention, and boundaries of a project are not thought through prior to engaging with the material, there is a risk that students will get lost in the details or prioritize content that requires additional permissions or preservation considerations that fall outside the timelines and resources of the work. While the role of failure in DHSS scholarship is an important pedagogical factor, planning ahead and establishing selection criteria can reduce the risk that students will be prevented from completing and sharing their work.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Purpose of the project

Will digitization facilitate discovery, access, and wider use of selected material? If not, seriously consider your motivations for digitization. Will digitization be in service to larger goals? Will the digitized objects provide illustrative images? Will they provide samples to help contextualize a larger collection? Will digitized objects help contribute to an argument or add dimension to the project's narrative or an educational resource?

Target audience(s)

Your students are the primary users of their assignment, but will the broader community have access to these digitized items? Will they be able to reuse and repurpose them? Since considerable time and resources are invested in digitization, it is useful to think about how content can appeal to different kinds of audiences and stakeholders.

Students will also want to consider what content, context, and additional details are required for audiences to understand and make the best use of digitized materials.

Intellectual value¹

Scholars have also emphasized the need for researchers to consider the intellectual value of their selections when it comes to digitization. Will digitization add intellectual value to the original source material? Will digitization provide new opportunities for access and scholarship? Will it address gaps in current scholarship?

Ethical considerations

Having custody of material is not analogous to having the right to copy or digitize said material. In addition to seeking and clearing copyright with rights holders (and retaining documentation of said permission), scholars should also consider other kinds of rights and permissions they may need to seek from individuals, families, literary estates, organizations, and communities before proceeding with their work. Could digitization of material and hosting it in an unmediated online environment pose undue risk and harm to marginalized individuals or communities? Have third parties been consulted and their consent solicited regarding use of archival material on hold with institutions? Obtaining a copy of an item from an institution is a separate process from obtaining the right to publish and circulate a copy of the item online. Having access to a content provider does not automatically sanction your ability to share it with other researchers. Similarly, you may want to consider how the use of particular types of proprietary software, engagement on certain online platforms, or integration of certain applications may mean that you will not be able to extract, migrate, or reuse your work in the future.

SELECTION OF MATERIAL

Who is selecting?

We recommend that whenever possible, students should be directly engaged in the selection process. By experiencing some aspect of the digitization process or the records creation and curation life cycle, students gain an appreciation for the time, labour, resources, and skill required to generate, interpret, document, and preserve “born digital” and digitized resources. Actively engaging in selection also implicates students in critical knowledge creation and curation. If students are making selections on behalf of a larger project, build in opportunities for the project team to discuss criteria as a group.

Some aspects that should be considered when going about selecting items include:

Quality

What is the quality of the content you wish to digitize? Different uses of the digital surrogate may require different qualities of digitization (e.g. a thumbnail JPEG may be used to reference a complex data set, whereas a high resolution TIFF may be required to capture all of the richness of a photographic negative). Higher digitization quality supports long-term preservation of the original source material since it minimizes the need to handle original material. Higher digitization standards will impact storage, project timelines, and software used to manipulate the content you develop. When selecting from an existing

1. Adapted from: Dan Hazen, Jeffrey Horrell, Jan Merrill-Oldham's *Selecting Research Collections for Digitization-Full Report* — Council on Library and Information Resources. August 1998. Retrieved November 16, 2017, from <https://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/hazen/pub74.html#intellectual>

collection or archives, which objects will provide representative samples of the whole collection? What are some of the exceptional characteristics of a sample that could be selected for close study in a digital environment?

Fragility and format

Analogue material held in archives and libraries may require special handling due to its fragility. Conditions that contribute to the fragility of material include deterioration, sensitivity to handling or the environment, oversized or awkwardness in handling, and loss of critical aspects of value or authenticity through digitization. Part of your selection process should include the consideration of which digitization tools and methods are best suited, based on the format and fragility of the material you wish to digitize. Do you have access to the appropriate resources to complete your work without placing unnecessary strain on the original materials. Always consult with the institution responsible for the material, as it may be aware of additional factors that you may not have considered.

Uniqueness

How unique are the items you wish to digitize? Archival holdings and special collections are made up of an assortment of unique and mass-produced materials. Materials may be deposited in archives due to their association with a particular individual or organization, rather than their uniqueness. Due to the proliferation of mass digitization efforts in North America and Europe, it is possible that objects that you have selected for digitization have already been digitized. If so, we would advise that students work through a strategy of how to integrate that material through linking and reuse.

Provenance

Do you know the provenance (e.g. the chain of custody) of the object? Who created it? Who preserved it? What circumstances led to its creation, preservation, and deposit at an institution? Do you have (or how might you obtain) citations for the objects that you wish to digitize? Will online users be able to retrace your steps to the institution that holds the objects? If the provenance is not clear, how might you build in methods that users could contact you with information?

Visual appeal

Finally, many of the assignments that this manual recommends are visual in nature. Is the material you are selecting visually appealing in an online environment? Which aspects or parts of the material are important to highlight? Are there particular items that embody the spirit of the project that you would want to highlight? Will digitization of the material reduce its visual appeal? Will relevant text be legible? Will you be transcribing and describing content in a way that will allow the greatest degree of accessibility possible? Will images translate well in an online environment?

COPYRIGHT AND OTHER RIGHTS

Copyright is a key consideration when selecting material for digitization, or incorporating digitized material into an exhibit, project, or teaching tool. This manual advocates for the use of textual or visual material in assignments that are now in the public domain to minimize potential risk and liability for students working on online projects. If an instructor wishes to select material in other formats or material that requires permissions and clearance, we strongly recommend that students be involved in this process and that additional time be budgeted to account for the necessary communication that is required.

Remember to retain all contracts and permissions if the content falls outside the public domain. In the event of any copyright

inquiries instructors will be able to quickly retrieve these records. Provide contact information to receive and respond to any inquiries and provide that information with the digitized content.

Copyright at York University

Here are some key online resources related to copyright at York University:

- [Copyright and You](#)
- [Workshops and training on copyright](#) offered by eServices Office, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies
- [“Creative Commons and Beyond.”](#) Presentation by York University Librarians on Creative Commons Licensing, 2013
- Workshops and training on copyright in your classroom are offered by the Copyright Support Office. A list of current workshops is available here: <http://copyright.info.yorku.ca/>. Contact them at copy@yorku.ca to request a consultation on your course materials.

PUBLIC DOMAIN²

Works that are *not* protected by copyright are said to be in the *Public Domain*, and you are free to use them in any way you choose. That means no restrictions on copying and adapting, no need to seek permission, and no uncertainty about your rights as a user.

A work typically enters the Public Domain when its term of copyright expires. Determining whether or not a work is in the Public Domain can be complicated, however, as the term of copyright often differs depending on a work's authorship, format, date of publication, and country of origin.

For more details on how to determine if a document or object is in the Public Domain, see the [Public Domain](#) chapter in the York University Libraries' Open Educational Resource: *Planning and Selecting for Digitization*.

OTHER RIGHTS & CONCERNS

While you may have the legal right to copy and digitize material, other rights and ethical issues should be considered. Instructors and students should identify and discuss any concerns that are not typically covered by copyright legislation. Consult with the community of origin to seek permission, buy-in, and feedback prior to digitization. This might involve documenting any elements of [Traditional Knowledge](#) that may require additional protocols or context prior to digitization. Students may need to seek out or identify third parties who may have not consented to broad distribution (e.g. online publication) of archival material and may not be aware that their records are held by the institution. Instructors and students should investigate if digitization could pose undue risk to privacy or personal security of vulnerable community members. Wherever possi-

2. Adapted from content created by the University of British Columbia available at https://copyright.ubc.ca/guidelines-and-resources/support-guides/public-domain/#Public_Domain_outside_Canada. Additional input from Patricia Lynch, Director, Information, Privacy and Copyright, York University.

ble, projects should have expanded practices of attribution to acknowledge contributors to content that has been obscured or underdocumented.

Examples

For additional case studies and readings on user rights, community consultation, and other considerations prior to digitization, we recommend assigning these three short readings:

- Robertson, Tara. "[digitization: just because you can, doesn't mean you should.](#)" *tararobinson.ca*. 20 March 2016.
- Moravec, Michelle. "[What would you do? Historians' ethics and digitized archives.](#)" *On Archivy*. 14 April 2016.
- Jules, Bergis. "[Some Thoughts on Ethics and DocNow.](#)" *DocNow*. 3 June 2016.

For additional resources and readings about copyright and DHSS in a Canadian context, see the Resource section of York University Libraries' Open Education Resource: [*Planning and Selecting for Digitization*](#).

CONSTRAINTS

Are there additional constraints that you must consider when making your selections? What kind of storage infrastructure do you have access to for this assignment? Can you and your students access software platforms and tools through the Libraries? What about your target audience: what tools will they use to access the assignments? Do they face connectivity challenges?

For more detailed information, see York University Libraries' Open Education Resource: [*Planning and Selecting for Digitization*](#).

Step 3: Explore examples

Invite your students to think about DHSS by looking at finished DHSS projects. You can use our students' exhibits, or individual pieces of their exhibits, as models for their own DHSS projects:

- Denise Challenger ([Harriet Tubman Institute](#)): "Playin' Mas, Play and Mas: A pedagogical Journey of children and caribana, 1970-1974"
- Juan Pablo Pinto Mendoza ([CERLAC](#)): "Popular Education in Revolutionary Times: Reflecting on Nicaragua's popular education program in the 1980s"
- Robyn Le Lacheur ([CRS](#)): "Looking Back: Temporal and spatial connections of post-war migration and displacement through the eyes of the *Toronto Telegram*"
- Wendy Alejandra Medina De Loera ([YCAR](#)): "The Making of a Digital Archive, By a Non-Archivist: The David Wurfel Fonds"

You can also explore other projects we liked:

- York University Libraries was also involved in the creation and curation of the Scalar exhibit *Yorkville and the Folk Revival in Toronto* (written by undergraduate public history student Michael Primiani under the supervision of [Stacy Allison-Cassin](#), the W.P. Scott Chair in E-Librarianship).
- The [Portuguese Canadian History Project | Projeto de História Luso Canadiana](#) (PCHP | PHLC) worked with the York University Libraries to create an exhibit that traces the community-based history of the Portuguese in Toronto.
- *Digital Paxton: Digital Collection, Critical Edition, and Teaching Platform* is a Scalar exhibit supported by [The Historical Society of Pennsylvania](#) and [The Library Company of Philadelphia](#) that our project team often used as an example of showcasing how Scalar could be used to host a digital collection, or digital archive, with historical material.
- Queen's University Library has a collection of Virtual Exhibits hosted through WordPress and developed by undergraduate students. Our project team often used these exhibits as examples of scale and scope of an undergraduate exhibit, focusing the most on The Young Ladies' Journal and Stereoscopic Views.
- Members of our project team were drawn to maps as ways to exhibit their digitized material. Both the Negro Travelers' Green Book and OldNYC are large examples of exhibiting digital material through maps. See also Digital Harlem, which maps and presents information drawn from legal records, newspapers and other archival and published sources, about everyday life in New York City's Harlem neighborhood in the years 1915-1930. Toronto the Bad is another example of mapping on a smaller scale. Toronto the Bad was designed as an undergraduate project in the "Development of Toronto" course taught in the Department of History, York University by [PCHP | PHLC](#)'s Gilberto Fernandes. Each "node" on the map was a contribution of one student.
- In building archives, we were inspired by Michelle Caswell's article "Inventing New Archival Imaginaries: Theoretical Foundations for Identity-Based Community Archives" (2017), based on the [South Asian American Digital Archive \(SAADA\)](#). As well as K.J. Rawson's article "The Rhetorical Power of Archival Description: Classifying Images of Gender Transgression" (2017) based on the [Digital Transgender Archive](#) and the [Human Sexuality Collection](#) at Cornell University Library.
- Dear Sadie: Loves, lives, and remembrance is an exhibit directed and managed by Samantha Cutrara in her work at the

Archives of Ontario. It is not a “flashy” exhibit but it demonstrates a good ratio of interpretive text to digital images that may work for an undergraduate assignment.

Compiled August 15, 2018

Step 4: Provide clear expectations

As with any assignment, students must be given clear expectations for a successful DHSS project. Product is important, but assessing students on process is even more important in a DHSS project where students may be working with concepts, tools, technologies, and materials that are different than what they are used to. Instructors must have patience with students so that students can come to understand the ways they are being pushed to do and think in new ways because of DHSS. This may involve explaining the expectations in different ways, providing clear rubrics, and pointing students back to the course's overall learning outcomes. Most realistically, however, the assignment will require you to do all of those things.

A traditional essay is (usually) just evaluated on the final product: the written paper. But DHSS, as it is framed in this Instructor's Guide, is based on learning through experience – experiential learning. Students' experiences – the process behind the product – need to come to the fore in evaluation and assessment. Your articulation of the assignment and assessment criteria can help students in making the shift from *just* product to product *and* process.

With clearly written assessment criteria, students learn what you want, how it fits into the course, and how it will be assessed. At the same time, however, you should also be open to a final product that may look different than you originally expected; time, resources, and space for interpretation can morph a final DHSS product in ways you may not be able to predict at the start. This is how students will learn from the *experience* of creating their DHSS project. They need to know that sometimes failures and false starts are part of the process of engaging in DHSS and that your assessment has room for this exploration.

In an example of a professor needing to be clear about, and thus clarifying, her expectations for a DHSS assignment, Dr. Amanda Starling Gould taught a course at for Duke University in 2013 titled "Augmenting Realities: Technoscience, Digital Art, & Electronic Literature". The final assignment was a "transmedia essay," which she described in the syllabus as "the equivalent of an 8-12 page (double-spaced) scholarly article." She explained to her students that they would "augment" the traditional format of an essay by inserting media, links, and the integration of a "(Re)Mediated Element" into their assignment. Although this "(Re)Mediated Element" may have been clear to Dr. Gould, students had questions about it and logically asked whether they were just adding a media to a traditional essay.

Students' questions provided the opportunity for Dr. Gould to (re)explain her vision of a "transmedia essay" to her students and to clarify what the assignment involved. Gould explained to her students that rather than adding media to a standard essay, "I want you to **CREATE something or ANALYZE something or MAP something or REMEDIATE something.**" This new media element, she explained, "should be chosen based on its ability to do something that paper cannot do." In this way, she encouraged her students to "**think of your media element as an experiment that extends and/or explores the questions you are asking in your work.**" This element of their assignment would expand students' critical exploration of the subject matter because, she argued, "presenting data in a different format, if done thoughtfully and accompanied by a critical essay exploring what those different format presentations mean (or say, or do, or are commenting on, etc.), CAN be an argument or relevant contribution to a written work."

Articulating this shift in expectations – from adding media to an essay to *creating and integrating media* in an essay in a way to demonstrate, develop, or prove an argument – **prepared students to think about the act of creation as central to their work.** Gould emphasized that it was not just the final "transmedia essay" that students should focus on, but rather the investment in thinking about what a "(Re)Mediated Element" may, can, and will do in the service of advancing their ideas in the course. Gould also mentioned that she would bring in and show examples to the class, grounding her vision with references that she can discuss with her students.

Through these exchanges with her students, Gould identified what she wanted from a "transmedia essay," explaining to stu-

dents how her expectations were both similar and different to a traditional essay and how this work tied back to overall learning in the course. This is good pedagogical practice overall, as identified by [Madeleine Hunter](#), but is especially important because of the newness involved in a DHSS assignment.

Dr. [Shannon Mattern](#), Associate Professor in the School of Media Studies at The New School in New York, explored how to [evaluate assignments with multiple forms of media](#), like the transmedia essay, and identified the key themes one should use to evaluate these types of students' projects. These include:

- Concept & content
- Concept/content-driven design & technique
- Transparent, collaborative development, and documentation
- Academic integrity & openness
- Review & critique

Under each theme she provided a list of questions that framed her evaluation of that theme. I encourage you to [visit her article](#) in the *Journal of Digital Humanities* to read these questions and follow the links to the community discussion that inspired this work. Note the importance of *process* in the evaluation themes and questions. Also visit Dalhousie University Library's [Digital Humanities Project Planning template](#) for a list of questions that align with the managerial, communication, and technical competencies that can be developed through DHSS. Both resources emphasize the *experiential* aspect of students' DHSS assignments, which is a key aspect of the work of DHSS.

In your rubrics, we recommend providing expectations that cover:

- [Experiential learning](#)
- Project management – timelines, articulated goals for completion
- [Question/answer structure \(thesis\) and use of evidence](#)
- Presentation/use of tools and technologies
- Collaboration (if relevant)

Visit [Step 6: Assessment](#) for links to helpful rubrics to engage in your DHSS assignments. Also see the different [Assignment Guides](#) in this Instructor's Guide for tips about assignment-specific elements for evaluation and assessment. You may also find *Evaluating E-learning: A Guide to the Evaluation of E-learning*, edited by Graham Attwell, a helpful resource for thinking about evaluation and learning outcomes for e-learning more generally.

Step 5: Invite students to engage

in the summer of 2018, we asked the students who participated in this project to reflect on the process of engagement with DHSS. As novices to DHSS, these students shared what their experiences were like working with DHSS and the advice they'd pass on to professors and to students who were just beginning this work. See their responses below and use them as insight for bringing DHSS into your own practice.

Our students were:

- Wendy Alejandra Medina De Loera, PhD student and TA in Geography, York University
- Robyn Le Lacheur, upper-level undergraduate student in Political Science at Glendon College, York University
- Juan Pablo Pinto Mendoza, MA student in Anthropology, York University
- Denise Challenger, ABD in History, York University

The questions we asked them were:

1. How would you define Digital Humanities and Social Sciences (DHSS)? How did this definition change over the course of the project?
2. Before this project, had you ever considered the ways the digital can enhance the Humanities and/or Social Sciences?
3. What was your experience engaging in a DHSS project?
4. What were the DHSS project(s) you created?
5. What were the challenges you may have had with your DHSS project?
6. What were the successes of your DHSS project?
7. Many DHSS scholars have written about how failure, collaboration, and iterative processes are staples of DHSS. How did these elements play out in your project?
8. Many professors may be hesitant to bring DHSS into their classrooms because they may suspect that a DHSS project wouldn't engage in the same work as traditional academic work, like an essay. How would you respond to this criticism of DHSS? Do you think you did less work or less complicated work with your project(s) than if you wrote an essay on the same topic?
9. What was something you learned engaging in a DHSS project that is unique to DHSS?
10. What advice would you give for undergraduate students who may be given a DHSS assignment that would produce a similar project to the project you did?
11. Final thoughts?

1. How would you define Digital Humanities and Social Sciences (DHSS)? How did this definition change over the course of the project?

Wendy: The DHSS is an academic area where the humanities and social sciences intersect with digital technologies to produce, use, and share social sciences knowledge in new ways and to encourage a more holistic development of skills. Over time, my perception about the incorporation of digital resources into the making of social sciences changed and became more complex. In the beginning, my understanding of the combination of social sciences and digital resources was limited to a view where the digital aspect was only a tool to be employed by the social sciences for them to be presented in new

forms. Over the course of the project I came to see the DHSS as an academic area that enables the development of skills other than research and analysis; these include technological, communication, and teamwork skills as well.

Robyn: Prior to starting this project, I had never considered humanities nor social sciences to be aligned with the digital.

What I considered to be aligned with the digital were the sources of information, such as journal articles, databases, and news sources, which held exclusive authority on the digital, while the academic side utilized those digital sources to conduct research. I never thought of traditional assignments of essays, reports, and exams taking a digital form, but after participating in this project, I can see how the humanities and the social sciences need to move into the digital world to disseminate information, encourage discussion, and continue to succeed in the future.

Denise: When asked what is digital humanities, I often start with the caveat, "There is no one definition." For me at its core, digital humanities involves a set of interdisciplinary and collaborative practices that use computing technology (software and hardware) to ask questions, reveal patterns and unearth meanings about human experiences, both past and present, that are often obscured by traditional humanistic methods

As for the second part of your question, completing the project has not changed my definition of DH. If anything, it reinforced that collaboration was not just a trendy term, but the essence of DH work. As an historian, who rarely engages in collaborations, doing so was a welcomed change. In fact, if I were to be "100% real", in as much as I love doing historical research, at times its solitary nature can be both daunting and isolating. With this project, however, having had to interact with a curriculum specialist, archivists and computing platform experts on a routine basis was enlightening, stimulating and fun.

Juan Pablo: DHSS is the process of embracing and engaging with long existing digital practices and formats within more traditional humanities and social science projects and disciplines.

Over the course of this project I was able to see a variety of approaches to DHSS, both in my research about DHSS and through my colleagues' work. This broadened my understanding of the different ways that projects can be made digital. In addition I learnt more about the process behind creating DHSS projects.

2. Before this project, had you ever considered the ways the digital can enhance the Humanities and/or Social Sciences?

Wendy: I had teaching experience prior to my participation in this project. As course director and as online instructor in Mexico, I had considered how the employment of digital resources in the social sciences have the potential to improve the learning experiences and outcomes of students, but did not consider the improvement of the social sciences *per se*. Considering the existence of different learning styles I could see the benefits of incorporating digital technologies to my teaching strategies as they enabled me to meet the needs of a diversity of linguistic, visual, and kinesthetic learners. Based specifically on my experience as online instructor of high school social sciences courses, I also had considered the benefits of DHSS in terms of accessibility, the sense of giving people opportunities to access free education but also in the sense of sharing knowledge in different forms rather than just text.

Robyn: I have definitely acknowledged how the digital can enhance a student's experience in a classroom setting. Throughout the majority of my schooling experience (primary, secondary, and post-secondary), my teachers and professors used Moodle for teaching and study purposes. But I had never thought of how the digital could enhance a professor's experience when marking student assignments. Additionally, having more digital resources that host the humanities and social sciences allows more information to be widely accessible for anyone wishing to access it.

Denise: Yes, as a Caribbeanist I think constantly about how digital practices can better assist in capturing the cultural experiences central to the region – those rooted in music, body, movement and oral traditions. I first began to think about DH, however, in terms of pedagogy. When I was the course director for a Caribbean history class, I attended a teacher training

workshop. The facilitator demonstrated how one instructor used Second Life, a virtual reality platform, as a tool to teach eighteenth century art history. It blew my mind. I immediately began to think about the ways Second Life could be used to recreate a slave society, in terms of its material, social and legal conditions. I had always been uncomfortable with the tendency of some instructors to include 'role play' as a way to teach such a traumatic experience as slavery. A virtual format, I thought would allow students to think more deeply about how the system was designed on all levels to dehumanize the enslaved.

Juan Pablo: As an anthropologist and documentary media artist, I am deeply engaged with the digital in my academic and artistic practice. For me this has meant capturing and presenting my work in and with different digital formats and platforms. Prior to this project, I had not given much thought as to the importance of DHSS within academia more broadly. This project has challenged me to consider how DHSS can strengthen academic teaching and research, how it can be taught and adopted by those not familiar with DHSS, and what it means to deeply embrace DHSS, rather than incorporating tokenistic elements of the approach.

3. What was your experience engaging in a DHSS project?

Wendy: I had a great experience engaging in my DHSS project!

The different stages in the project pushed me to learn new things and processes, to develop a diversity of skills, to work with my colleagues and to continuously be self-critical. The various aspects of the project also provided the opportunity to conduct varied tasks and I was always able to shift from one kind of task to another or combine them (from a more practical one to an intellectual one for example). My experience was also great in the sense that was productive of collaborative relationships with other research assistants but also with the coordinators of the project. In this sense, to share with others and rely on each other was stimulating since one not only feels in community but also realizes that everyone has ways of contributing and enriching other's experiences, skills, and knowledge.

Robyn: My experience engaging in this DHSS project had been very challenging and extremely rewarding. Although, at the end, it was hard to conceptualize that what I had produced was worthy of a final assignment from an undergrad student. Despite the number of hours invested in this project, the final product did not feel as though it held the same weight as 10-12-page research paper. Rather than creating a product that was of equivalent weight to a final research project, I felt I had spent more time learning how to use the program, and the accompanying platforms and widgets, despite investing more time in a DHSS project that I would have in a traditional assignment. I also felt that I didn't learn as much as I would have liked to within my subject. I typically choose essay topics on something that I would like to learn more about, and because I was confined to photographs as my primary source, I was restricted from exploring the topic from a more academic viewpoint.

However, the host of skills I acquired from this project are unparalleled. In a world that is rapidly moving online, the computer techniques I learned help me in ways that are beyond DHSS.

Denise: My experience was fantastic from beginning to end. Since we only had four months to meet all of our objectives, there was a steep learning curve. The challenge was made easier with strong support from the project coordinators, Samantha and Anna. The theoretical readings were useful, not so much in thinking about DH, but more so in introducing me to the wider debates about DH within archival communities.

Prior to this project, I had not thought much about the process of creating an archive, digital or otherwise. I had always envisioned archives as physical spaces that housed documents which subsequently privileged some voices over others. The layers of power archivists had in our access to knowledge were far more complex and went to greater depths than I had previously imagined. I certainly not an archivist in the professional sense, but I have deeper appreciation and respect for those engaged in archival practice.

Juan Pablo: This experience working on a DHSS project was both very challenging and rewarding. I enjoyed learning about DHSS practices within a team context, and having my colleagues and the project staff available to consult with, and support me in creating my project. Even though I have a strong background in digital media, I enjoyed being challenged to convert physical materials to digital objects, learn how to navigate a different platform and to create a digital archive and familiarizing myself with the procedures around creating metadata for the digital materials.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the experience was learning more about the subject and project I was assigned.

4. What were the DHSS project(s) you created?

Wendy: I created two main DHSS projects: A digital archive from the David Wurfel fonds and the online exhibit titled "The making of a digital archive, by a non archivist." Wurfel's digital archive consists of 200 photographic slides selected from over 1,800 photographic slides and other materials such as articles and newspapers that comprise the physical David Wurfel fonds held at Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections in Scott Library, at York University. Wurfel's digital archive has both preserved part of the material donated by David Wurfel to York University in early 2000s and has given people free access to his material. The online exhibit created presents an analysis of my own experience creating Wurfel's digital archive. In my online exhibit I especially attempted to emphasize some of the challenges I went through when making Wurfel's digital archive. (See the link about making digital archives with your students here)

Robyn: On Scalar, I used a timeline to put my photographs into chronological context, as well as maps to show global and local connections. I also transcribed an article originally published by the Toronto Telegram in 1964, provided a theoretical analysis of the photographs based on a theory by a scholar in refugee studies, and conducted an analysis of the language used by Telegram reporters and photographers during the Cold War (i.e., refugee vs. (im)migrant vs. war guest).

Denise: Using photos of the Caribana parade from 1970-1974, donated to the Harriet Tubman Institute by the family of mas leader Kenn Shah, I created an exhibit that showcased multiple stages of the historian's craft. The exhibit modeled the process of singular document analysis to a structured, multiple document analysis and contextualization that appeared in the form of a photo essay. I did this work on the Scalar platform. In tracing the life of a photo from primary source to essay material, my exhibit was intended for both the general audience interested in Caribana history and for instructors interested in pedagogical approaches to teaching the Caribbean diaspora and culture in general.

Juan Pablo: The DHSS project I created was a digital exhibit entitled: "Popular Education in Revolutionary Times: Reflecting on Nicaragua's Popular Education Program in the 1980s". The materials for the archive were donated to CERLAC by Deborah Barnes.

The archive includes digitized materials depicting Nicaragua's national campaign on popular and adult education during the Sandinista revolutionary government (Deborah's photographs from her time in Nicaragua, as well as a book on the Nicaraguan Popular Education Campaign: "Caminemos"). I also interviewed Deborah and created several videos incorporating her reflections about the material and her time in Nicaragua, conducted an image analysis using the methodology presenting in Caminemos and digitized an essay written by Deborah on the subject.

5. What were the challenges you may have had with your DHSS project?

Wendy: Two were the main challenges I had with my DHSS project.

First, I found challenging the process of making decisions regarding what material I should digitization and incorporate into the digital archive. This challenge was overcome through deep research and critical work about my positionality within

the project; more specifically, understanding Wurfel as researcher and the material he donated.

The second challenge I had relates to my own lack of familiarity with new technologies, specifically using Scalar for creating my online exhibit. This second challenge was not insurmountable, of course, and it did not take long to become familiar with Scalar as digital resource and tool. The training and support I had from the coordinators of the project were essential to tackle this challenge.

Robyn: Many of the challenges I experienced were with the timeline the project was meant to follow, customizing Scalar to what I envisioned, and previewing each exhibit before I published my project. We were expected to digitize and upload every object we planned to use in our exhibits, establish metadata for each object, and then organize and curate our material in a way to support our end goals. Originally, the goal was to finish digitizing our material within two weeks, however, it took nearly two months for everyone, including myself, to scan, clean up, and upload all our images. Despite this being a pilot project, I still found it discouraging to start the project off in a way where I felt behind schedule; I also acknowledge this was something that was beyond anyone's control, but nonetheless, still discouraging.

The next challenge pertain not to the project itself but are difficulties of the platform I used. Scalar is not an easy platform to customize. A user is very restricted to the templates Scalar offers, and cannot choose preferred fonts, or position photos easily. I disliked that I had to create a new version of each page on Scalar to preview any changes I made (no matter how minor they might have been). the result was that some of the pages of my exhibit had 20+ versions because I couldn't view my changes prior to making them permanent!

Denise: Thanks to the team I worked with, I experienced very few challenges on the technical front. Mine were more conceptual. It took me a long time to figure out which photos to use since there are over one thousand in the collection. I decided to use chronology as my guide starting with the earliest pack I could find. It helped that we were limited to 200 photos. The other conceptual challenge I faced was coming to terms with the differences between a photo exhibit and the standard argumentative historical essays that I am more accustomed to producing. The idea that a project with less written text could be as analytical and critical as a written one was not instinctual to me. The volume of material in combination of the various readings also made it challenging to settle on the topic of "Children in Caribana." I was so stimulated by new ideas about what is an archive, power structures within archives, the challenges of labeling documents/records and organizing them in an accessible fashion, and how questions of race, gender and non-binary identities fit in or not with the wider objectives of archivists that my topic seemed to change weekly.

Juan Pablo: One of the biggest challenges for my DHSS project was decided on the best format to present the archival materials. I wanted to select a format that would enable be to share the impressive collective of photographs collected, while also incorporating the author's reflections on not just the context of the images, but the process of collecting them. In the end I felt this could best be achieved by mixing photo carousels, where viewers can take their time in viewing and appreciating the images, with videos, where the images are contextualized with the author's reflections.

The second challenge was working with the digital platform itself. Learning how to work with the platform takes time and is mostly a process of trial and error. There were times I had to compromise the idea of what I wanted for a more practical solution, so as to better work within the limitations of the platform and the available time frame.

6. What were the successes of your DHSS project?

Wendy: I identify my DHSS project had successes in four main aspects.

First, my DHSS project enabled me to develop various skills. My project provided the opportunity to work on my reading, research, analytical, critical, and writing skills. I also could enhance both my communication skills by working in collaboration with my project team and my technological skills by working with scalar and undertaking the digitization activities the project involved.

Second, my DHSS project gave me the opportunity to use my creativity at all times.

Third, I acquired knowledge over the course of the project both in the operational aspect of it, but also in terms of content. This knowledge encompassed my exploration of David Wurfel's trajectory as a researcher of Southeast Asia, his work, and the context within his research activities took place.

Fourth, my DHSS project showed me the possibilities of presenting research results in other ways -unconventional ones for the social sciences.

Robyn: I think the biggest success of my DHSS project was how much I learned. Not only did I learn a lot within my topic (WWII and post-war migration and displacement), but I also learned a lot about computers, academic integrity, and the future of humanities and the social sciences (as well as the liberal arts in general). After the many trial and errors of Scalar, once I felt like I had mastered the platform, became an expert on my topic and the digital, and then presenting my findings in front of the steering committee, the elation was unparalleled.

The myriad of new skills I acquired outweighs any of the challenges, or "failures," I might have experienced, and I'm excited to see where DHSS heads within York University.

Denise: Although I had used Scalar for research, being able to think about how to use it as an exhibit was a tremendous accomplishment for me. Although, I most likely won't, I feel that I could teach a Scalar course. I now have a robust understanding of Scalar paths and tags. I have also learned how to annotate images and videos.

Another success, as I mentioned before, was gaining a working knowledge of the archival process and finding out how much I love the profession even though I am a trained historian. At times, I joked to myself that I should pursue a career as an archivist and abandon the PhD. Finally, due to the community nature of the project, and the fact that Caribana is such a part of my life, I feel a great sense of satisfaction about making a contribution to public history. When I mentioned my project to a Trinidadian woman who is deeply involved in Caribana, she was pleased that York University funded a project that recognized her culture.

Juan Pablo: One of the successes of my DHSS project was to be able to work collaboratively with the author of the archival material, Deborah Barndt, and create a final project that she had input in and presented her material in a way captured her vision and passion on this subject.

I also think one of the successes was to be able to present the project in front of an audience and receive positive constructive criticism. After the project was shared, several individuals within the academic community reached out about the project, and I was able to take on their feedback in finalizing the online archive.

7. Many DHSS scholars have written about how failure, collaboration, and iterative processes are staples of DHSS. How did these elements play out in your project?

Wendy: Failure, collaboration, and repetition were constitutive parts of my DHSS project since they made my project possible. Failure was present in the initial stage of my learning process of each new task I started such as digitization, metadata, the creation of Wurfel's digital archive, and the creation of my online exhibit with scalar. Collaboration with my project team and iterative processes enabled me to overcome failure and improve my techniques, strategies, and knowledge. At the end, both of them helped me to produce an outcome with which I am satisfied. Collaboration was key as it provided the space for exchanging ideas, posing questions, and getting support and guidance. A relevant aspect of collaboration was the training I received as part of the project.

Robyn: Every element mentioned are staples of DHSS, and are imperative to the learning and transitioning from the traditional to the digital. It is always easier to detail the negatives and the dislikes of anything—and the same can be said for Scalar and DHSS in place of traditional projects such as essays and presentations. But regardless of the difficulties and the failures, the entire process was well worth the challenges, and I'm leaving this project with an abundance of new skills. What really surprised me was the collaborative nature of this project. It is so easy to work and produce a final project on

my own, but collaborating with a team composed of experts in their own fields, as well as other individuals navigating DHSS for the first time made it feel as though I wasn't on my own, and the stress was meant to be shared. The iterative process was frustrating at times, having to redo and repeat the same processes over and over again was tedious and irritating; although, anything that is iterative, is. But without repetition, I don't think the skills I've learned would have been embedded into knowledge as well as they have, which in turn, made it easier and a more natural process engaging with the digital.

Denise: Any 'failures' associated with my project were minimal. At one time was the metadata that I had inputted on the York University Digital Library platform (Islandora) failed to upload. It turns out that Islandora was updating the system or there was some other type of technical glitch. I collaborated with Anna, the archivist, to figure out a temporary solution to the problem which enabled me to proceed to upload my photos into Scalar with the appropriate metadata. In fact, the part where collaboration was essential was with the digitizing of the photos. Scanning 200 images took much longer than Samantha and Anna realized, and we had to rely heavily on the assistance of work study students to get scans uploaded. Collaboration was also helpful when introducing the group to Scalar and during our subsequent meetings about it. Having a team member dedicated to Scalar was useful when thinking about how to layout the project and for minor technical aspects. Stephanie, also assisted me in thinking about how best to annotate and create my paths and tags.

Juan Pablo: Throughout this project I was very appreciative of the support and feedback I received from my colleagues and the project staff. However, I felt the archival projects were more individual than collaborative in nature. We each took ownership of our projects, and while we provided advice or help, we didn't do much collaborative work across the projects themselves. I think this stems from a difference in how the idea of "collaboration" is understood. In this case, I think the model was helpful in that as the primary author of the project I had to take responsibility and familiarize myself with all the different aspects of the project. On the other hand, on a more collaborative process, there would have been more teamwork in creating each element of the project, and this would have allowed for more voices and points of view to be captured within the projects.

The process of creating the archive was very iterative in nature. The individual videos went through many different edits, and the format of the online archive also evolved over the course of the project through trial and error. For example, I learnt that it was easier to upload all the content first, even if it didn't look the way I wanted it to, and then experiment to figure out how I could optimize the presentation after. In this sense, it's important to be able to embrace failure, and learn from initial failures so as to be able to develop a more refined outcome.

8. Many professors may be hesitant to bring DHSS into their classrooms because they may suspect that a DHSS project wouldn't engage in the same work as traditional academic work, like an essay. How would you respond to this criticism of DHSS? Do you think you did less work or less complicated work with your project(s) than if you wrote an essay on the same topic?

Wendy: The work, time, and energy put into my DHSS project can be comparable to the work that writing an essay involves. In the same way, like an essay, a DHSS project also demands to do research, to critically read, to analyze the information collected, to organize it, to engage with debates, to discuss ideas and so on. In this sense, I would respond a DHSS project does not differ much from traditional academic work in terms of the skills and work invested in it. Academic quality is not lost by incorporating digital technologies. Moreover, a DHSS project also enables learners to go beyond the mere development of intellectual capacities and academic knowledge to develop abilities such as the use of digital resources that contribute to a more holistic academic training, professional development, and personal preparation.

Robyn: I would respond by saying that they're correct: a DHSS project doesn't engage in the same work as traditional academic work, but that doesn't make a DHSS project any less academic. I don't think I did less work or less complicated work

than if I had done an essay on the same topic, but I engaged in different work. As an overall project, I definitely feel as though I didn't produce as complete of a product as if I had done an essay (something I indicated earlier), but I feel as though the work was much more complicated than a traditional research paper. I had to learn a completely different software and interact with a media I wasn't familiar with. With an essay, there is a set routine in conducting research, creating an outline, writing rough drafts, etc.; the same could not be said for this DHSS project.

Moving academic work into a digital realm is going to be an awkward and extremely uncomfortable process, especially for professors. Grading criteria has to change, expectations for students have to change, and most importantly, the mindset towards the digital has to change. Professors will have to adopt the perspective that essays can become digital and visual representations of the same information and undertaking this means there will be a lot of growing pains until it is considered successful.

Another response I would give professors, is for them to think of the expectations for an assignment, and how they differ depending on what year-level they're teaching; the expectations for a fourth-year student would be much higher than for a first-year student. Those expectations are critical in grasping the conception of digital assignments. When selecting the photographs for my exhibit, I realized that as a fifth-year student, I was much more careful and conscientious of the photographs I chose than I would have been in my first year; the same considerations would have to be applied when marking digital assignments.

Denise: I think because my target audience was someone like my mother who is interested in Caribana and its history, but turned off from "academic speak", I used more plain language than I would have in an essay. I did not locate my work within deeper theoretical debates, although the debates ultimately shaped how I crafted the exhibit. The language aside, the work involved from document scanning to exhibit presentation, was certainly on par with if not exceeding that of searching for primary and secondary sources required for a standard research essay. Also, in a standard research essay the format is known – introduction, middling paragraphs, and a conclusion. With an exhibit, much more thought is given to connectivity, layout and overall visual presentation.

Juan Pablo: DHSS allows for the same level of critical engagement and academic thought and research, however, this work is carried out across a different platform. Rather than being a drawback, this difference adds to the works potential. For example, with DHSS projects, various online digital platforms allow for a greater engagement with the visual aspects of a given subject. This is something that is often lost in traditional academic work. In fact, many researchers do observe, collect and analyze live processes that they capture using audio-visual materials, and yet these materials are left out of traditionally recognized publications that rely primarily on the written work. DHSS allows for a better integration of the written word with audio-visual data.

In this sense, DHSS projects might be more complicated because they involve mastering different procedures for capturing and presenting data. However, it is possible to narrow down the scope of the project to be one that is feasible to specific academic demands.

An interesting challenge that DHSS brings is how best to embrace collaborate work. While essays are often individual projects, DHSS projects tend to be stronger and more feasible when they are completed collectively. This requires careful consideration to how grading will be carried out, but this is true of any group work activity.

9. What was something you learned engaging in a DHSS project that is unique to DHSS?

Wendy: What I found unique in my DHSS project is that it gives the opportunity to organize and present knowledge in multiple and interactive ways. This is relevant for all kinds of learners as DHSS projects can potentially provide them with the possibility to explore and engage with different learning styles and select the one that better suits their needs. I also found that because of the combination of traditional academic work (research, reading, writing, etc) and work with digital tech-

nologies in DHSS projects the tedium that students may develop over the course of a research can be more easily dissipated as these projects demand from them to engage in activities other than reading and writing. Undertaking both repetitive tasks (such as scanning) and creative activities (such as the production of an online exhibit) gives learners simultaneously the opportunity to have breaks from intellectual work and keep engaged in their projects.

Robyn: The visualization process of the digital was a major takeaway that I am not able to do with a traditional assignment. In the past, I print out a regional map, pin it to a bulletin board, and use pushpins to indicate relations that help me understand the regional context of the topic I'm engaging in. For exams, I take a large piece of paper to create a timeline to remember facts and theories in chronological order. With Scalar, I was able to use my research methods as an assignment, rather than just research. Although my project did not include audio-visual material, incorporating videos and audio clips becomes easier, and an assortment of new academic sources can be included as reference to research. Another aspect unique to DHSS, was the new structure of a bibliography. Instead of a reference list cited in MLA, APA, or Chicago format, metadata was the new way material maintained academic integrity. Although metadata isn't new to the digital in general, in terms of humanities and social sciences, it isn't often used or thought of because it has been outside their realm of expertise.

Denise: The main thing I learned is that interdisciplinarity and collaboration are truly practiced in DHSS projects. This project was a mix of higher theoretical learning and granular almost mundane but equally important scanning. Moreover, working on the project pushed my creative limits and took me outside my comfort zone. At times just a comment, suggestion and knowing I had a team to work with got me through a difficult patch. I truly lived the motto, "two heads are better than one." The level of sharing knowledge, time, intellect and skills truly expresses itself in the DH projects in a way I have yet to experience in traditional historical works.

Juan Pablo: As a media artist, I was trained on working with the digital and have learned to embrace it, yet as an academic I sometimes have difficulties to integrate the digital/visual into my work practice. DHSS provided a perfect framework of integrating the two, and through this project I learnt specific methods of how this can be achieved.

10. What advice would you give for undergraduate students who may be given a DHSS assignment that would produce a similar project to the project you did?

Wendy: I would advise them to spend time working on either a mind map or a project outline that will enable them to organize their ideas regarding what they are interested in presenting in their DHSS project. The visual organization of their ideas will make easier for them to design their project. I would advise them that a key component of their planning will be the identification of a main idea or a thesis statement that will shape their DHSS project. I would advise them to do all this prior to the search of information and the accumulation of this information, and always in constant consultation with their professors and TAs. Finally, I would also advise them to tackle tasks separately in order to avoid feeling overwhelmed but also to achieve more without investing time at the extent that will wear them down and make them feel frustrated with the progress of their work.

Robyn: I have mentored first-year political science students for two years and I always tell them the same thing: you may find you love political science or you may find that you hate it, but you'll always have an opinion about it. DHSS is similar in this respect. There are parts that you'll love about DHSS and parts of it that you'll hate, but the most important aspect to DHSS is that you have to acknowledge that it's a different platform, and it comes with different expectations and different requirements. Take your time learning the different widgets and tools your platform uses, and understand them before you upload media and content. If this is your first time using DHSS, it will take longer to learn the necessary digital skills than uploading media and creating content, because most likely you'll know how to upload media because of social media plat-

forms like Facebook, and you'll know how to create content from previous academic assignments. And lastly, allow yourself to "fail", and allow yourself to ask for help—this is a learning curve for everyone.

Denise: I would advise the undergraduates to spend a lot of time getting to know the photos. By that I mean give adequate time for scanning all of the photos and analyzing them. It is vital to be familiar with your content. At first, my envelope of photos seemed to be about the same thing, "the Caribana parade." But it was only after doing the deep data analysis did I realize how different these similarly themed photos truly were from one another. With a firm grasp of the primary source material it will be much easier to generate an exhibit question and to curate an answer.

Juan Pablo: Look for inspiration from existing projects.

Reach out to others in your networks and online for help troubleshooting

Look for university resources on DHSS

It's helpful to start with an outline for the project that you can always come back to if things start to feel disorganized.

Start early. With DHSS there's no room for procrastination. Each step can take longer than you expect.

Be willing to experiment. Your initial idea is probably not going to be the same as the final project. Don't get discouraged if it looks rough at first. You can refine the presentation, layout and content with trial and error over the course of the project.

11. Any final thoughts?

Robyn: I love writing essays, doing research, and writing draft after draft after draft. What I'm really surprised about is how much I liked using the digital for a topic that I adore. I don't necessarily think I would use the digital platform for my own assignments because I really do love writing essays, but because I would like to be a professor one day, I can see myself asking students to submit a DHSS assignment.

Throughout this project, I learned so many new digital skills, and before this, I never felt confident in my knowledge or using computers to their full potential, but now I feel as though I have cracked the surface and I am capable of learning so much more.

I owe a huge thank you to the incredible team I was given the opportunity to work with. I couldn't have accomplished what I did without their support.

Denise: I love history, but enjoy doing digital history even more. Working on this project allowed me to engage with more facets of my personality and intellect than writing a traditional paper ever has done. The impact is immediate and I love that. It is only through DH that I simultaneously bring my organizational, analytical, computing, writing, visualization and creative tools in the context of collaboration and sharing to a project. It was a fantastic, non-competitive and soul enriching journey for me. Hey...I might even switch over to library sciences now!

Step 6: Assess accordingly

Professors [Claire Battershill](#) and [Shawna Ross](#) identified that assessing DHSS assignments can be more complex than assessing traditional assignments because there are many different, concurrent, aspects of the assignment that students would engage in. To remedy this complexity, in their book *[Using Digital Humanities in the Classroom](#)* (2017), they advocate for developing clear rubrics for evaluating students' DHSS work. With a rubric, Battershill and Ross state, you can "check the consistency and objectivity of your judgements, while also showing students where their efforts are best directed to succeed in an assignment" (pp. 130-131). In this way, DHSS rubrics, like all rubrics, help students understand how to meet, even exceed, the [expectations](#) you provided for them. Rubrics can provide clear guidelines for what you're looking for, how much these elements are worth, what "ideal" looks like, what error looks like, and where you will be placing your emphasis during marking.

Battershill and Ross identify that a well-designed DHSS rubric identifies five things:

1. The evaluation criteria
2. The numerical grading scheme
3. The characteristics of work that meets the evaluation criteria
4. The stakes of error
5. The role that effort plays in assessment

Mary J. Allen, Professor Emeritus from California State University Bakersfield, created a [handout](#) to support professors at Miami-Dade College in rubric writing, which you can find here: "[Using Rubrics to Grade, Assess, and Improve Student Learning](#)." In that document she discusses the process of creating a rubric, and also provides examples of rubrics for writing, critical thinking, oral presentations, collaboration, and more. You can also find sample rubrics she provided to the [University of Guam](#) in the document: "[Developing and Using Rubrics for Assessing, Grading, and Improving Student Learning](#)" (note: this will open in a Word document).

To see specific rubrics for different elements of DHSS projects, see the links below. Feel free to mix and match elements to customize your own assessment:

- [Critical thinking rubric](#) from the [Association of American Colleges & Universities](#): In their DHSS assignments, students shouldn't just be presenting content in a digital way, but critical meaning making. How will you assess this?
- [Collaborative learning rubric](#) from [Reading Apprenticeship at WestEd](#). The Buck Institute for Education also has a [Collaborative learning rubric](#), which you may want to modify for your higher education students.
- [Multimedia assignment rubric](#) from the [Utah Education Network](#): A rubric for more general multimedia assignments.
- [Reflecting writing rubric](#) from [ReadWriteThink](#) part of the [International Literacy Association](#): Reflecting is a key element of your students' DHSS projects. Ensure your standards are clear regarding what you're expecting in their reflections.
- [Digital exhibit rubric](#) from [De Paul Library at University of St. Mary](#), Chicago: This rubric provides a nice overview of the different elements one may assess in a DHSS project.

Danica Savonick's article "[On Crafting an Assignment Sequence for a Collaborative, Web-Based Final Project in a Composition Course](#)" may be a helpful resource for thinking about these things holistically. Also visit the Dalhousie University Library's

[Digital Humanities Project Planning template](#) for a list of managerial, communication, and technical questions that can support students' progress through their DHSS projects. Finally, Battershill and Ross created a web-enhanced version of their print book *Using Digital Humanities in the Classroom* with a page on [writing rubrics](#). This page includes links to blog posts about grading in the DH community and discusses other experiential grading methods.

[Dr. Shannon Mattern](#), Associate Professor in the School of Media Studies at The New School in New York, has also explored how to [evaluate assignments with multiple forms of media](#) and identified the key themes one should use to evaluate these types of students' projects, which include:

- Concept & content
- Concept/content-driven design & technique
- Transparent, collaborative development, and documentation
- Academic integrity & openness
- Review & critique

Under each theme she provided a list of questions that framed the evaluation of that theme. I encourage you to [visit her article](#) in the *Journal of Digital Humanities* to read these questions and follow the links to the community discussion that inspired this work. Note the importance of *process* in the evaluation themes and questions. Also visit Dalhousie University Library's [Digital Humanities Project Planning template](#) for a list of questions that align with the managerial, communication, and technical competencies that can be developed through DHSS. Both resources emphasize the *experiential* aspect of students' DHSS assignments, which is a key aspect of the work of DHSS.

In your rubrics, we recommend providing expectations that cover:

- [Experiential learning](#)
- Project management – timelines, articulated goals for completion
- Question/answer structure (thesis) and use of evidence
- Presentation/use of tools and technologies
- Collaboration (if relevant)

“Metadata for thought”: Reflections on creating digital projects for a non-DH history course

DENISE CHALLENGER

Denise Challenger's exhibit, "Playin' Mas, Play and Mas: A pedagogical journey of children and Caribana, 1970-1974" based on a collection from the Harriet Tubman Institute, is one of the four exhibits developed in our project. In this chapter, Denise shares some of her learning that will inform how she will teach Digital Humanities/Digital History (DH) in the future.

When I first encountered the virtual reality game Second Life, it was as a platform to teach Art History. From that point onwards, I was sold on the infinite potential of computing and teaching. Throughout my career as a graduate student, whenever possible I attended various Digital Humanities (DH) Institutes, organized a Digital Oral History conference, and facilitated youth camps to forge deeper connections between Black high school students and digital practitioners in a culturally meaningful way. While completing my PhD in History, I also worked as the coordinator of the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on Africa and Its Diasporas where I developed a reputation as "the DHer." I wasn't ashamed of my DH title; I wore it proudly. Anytime I could arrange for a speaker, a workshop, a training session on digital humanities, I did so. I believed then and still do now that Tubman is an ideal research centre to take the lead on fostering digital projects as they relate to the experiences of people from Africa and its Diasporas. Therefore, when the director of Tubman approached me to take part in this DHSS project, I jumped at the chance. I knew Tubman had recently received over 20 boxes of materials related to the Caribana festival – photos, promotional materials, diagrams, film reels, newspaper clippings, and ephemera – from Kenn Shah's estate. Kenn Shah was one of the founding members of Caribana, and a mas' leader who passed away unexpectedly in 2002. I thought if nothing else, the ALF project would have given Tubman an opportunity to get some scanning done.

While I overestimated how much scanning could be done in four months, I underestimated how much intellectual growth I could experience over the same time period. My task seemed quite straight forward at first. Three other graduate students and I were each expected to create a digital archive, an exhibit, and smaller document analysis pieces that undergraduates could replicate in their course work. The digital projects were based on primary source material from our respective research units. What seemed simple, I was soon to learn, became more complicated as we began to unpack terms such as "archive," "record," "metadata," "identity," "community," and "power" through stimulating readings and intellectual debates. Thus, throughout this interdisciplinary pedagogical exercise we had the opportunity to merge theory with practice. For this reason alone, incorporating digital projects into a course is worthwhile.

Now that I have completed the project as a "student," I would like to reflect on how I would incorporate my learning into the design of a non-DH history course.

Three main factors stand out for me that need to be considered by a course director: First, collaboration must be built into the curriculum from the onset; Second, tutorials need to provide time to work with the tools and to incorporate theoretical debates from various disciplines, along with covering course content; Third, for public projects, issues of ethics, copyright, sustainability, ownership, and responsibility to community need to be built into the course content and structure.

With these ideas in mind, I hope not only to provide insight into my experiences but also to supply "metadata for thought" for instructors considering on embarking on a digital pedagogical journey. Let me state up front, however, in as much as I am intrigued by DH, I am not a coder nor computing expert. I don't think having these skills are necessary. I believe it is more

important to know why you want to use a particular tool rather than how to build it. Hence, collaboration is essential to any digital initiative.

I've organized my thoughts into three areas:

- Build collaboration into the curriculum
 - Metadata: More than "data about data"
 - Engaging the "community"
-

BUILD COLLABORATION INTO THE CURRICULUM

One of the advantages of doing DH at York is that it is a well-funded research university. The main library has a digital scholarship unit; take full advantage of it while planning your course. The digital archivists, Scalar experts, and undergraduate students were essential in helping me adhere to best practices as they related to selecting material to be digitized, scanning the documents, creating metadata, and using Scalar, the digital platform that houses my work.



A constant anxiety I faced when doing this project was related to time. There was an overwhelming amount of material to choose from: Kenn Shah leftover 23 boxes of material; one box had over 1,000 photos and negatives. When I connected with the archivist on our team, however, she reviewed the boxes with me and provided me with suggestions both on how to organize the file and examine the material quickly while building an inventory. Through our discussions, we decided that it was best to use dates rather than a theme as a guide for photo selection. Even after the photo negatives were selected, however, it took a few weeks before I felt comfortable enough to scan them quickly and upload them onto York's digital library database (YUDL). To my surprise, approximately 50% of my time was spent on photo selection, scanning,

and uploading. I eventually required the assistance of two workstudy students to assist me in meeting the project deadline. Scalar was the final area that technical or practical collaboration was needed. Although, I had some familiarity with Scalar for research purposes, I had not used it to build an exhibit. Building an exhibit required me to have a different level of understanding of the paths and tags that allow users to navigate the platform than I previously needed. Again, while competent in the program, and even after having completed the Scalar webinars, it was extremely helpful speaking with the library assistant who had expertise in it. Admittedly, due to unforeseen set backs, we started our Scalar training later in the schedule than we anticipated. Had we begun early, then I may have had more time to familiarize myself with all of its fantastic features. Students may experience setbacks and face similar anxieties related to time. Hence, encouraging them to work in teams and to make use of all available resources may mitigate stress factors.

In essence, the hands-on aspect of the project taught me that if I were to implement a similar project into a Caribbean history course, **I would have to build the course as collaborative and interdisciplinary from the outset.** While the lectures could cover the historical material, contact hours outside of lecture would have to be equally divided between readings and discussion on archival theory, as well as practicums on digital scanning and Scalar training. The earlier in the course that students engage with the technology, both individually and as a group, the more dynamic their final exhibits. I described all of the people who assisted me to stress the inherently collaborative nature of DH. As an instructor, you should not be expected to

know everything. It would be fruitful to invite guest lecturers and experts from the [York Libraries](#) or elsewhere to assist in facilitating the course. More importantly, encouraging students to work with one another in a non-competitive format is essential to digital projects. Demonstrating team teaching is one way of encouraging student collaboration. In many ways, however, the steepest learning curve for me throughout this project was connected to archival theory rather than digital practice.

METADATA: MORE THAN "DATA ABOUT DATA"

I often thought about the archive as a physical space where I would go to extract a diamond that was a "perfect primary source." As a historian of the Caribbean, I viewed "archival power" in terms of matters that vexed my research process which ranged from the housing of so many Caribbean documents in European archives, the conditions of the records in Caribbean archives, to the bureaucratic permissions needed to view and even photograph documents, to name a few. Ever pervasive is the silencing power of the archive itself. Its inability to capture the voices of the masses, the illiterate, those considered less important meant many of my historical subjects were difficult to trace. To me, the archivist was the gatekeeper of all knowledge and determined what would be collected as well as if and how users could access it. Not until I embarked on creating a digital archive, however, did I realize the full complexity of archival power.

In this project, I shifted disciplinary gears and became an archivist. In some ways archivists experience issues related to power and positionality somewhat differently to historians. **Historians read documents for the bias within them, whereas archivists assign status or power to documents through the labeling process.** The power of the archive rests not only in what is collected, but how information is labelled and organized which is a highly subjective process. In fact as K.J. Rawson (2017) contends, "metadata creation is a highly political act" (p. 17).

One of the biggest challenges for me was the labeling process. Take for example the image below entitled, "A man in a female costume." I am still not certain that is the best title and I might change it again. Although, I thought about referring to the ethnicity of the masquerader in the title, I did not. Caribbean societies are racially hybrid spaces, so it was difficult for me to label him as Black or Indian. Perhaps he was a descendant of Afro and Indo Caribbean parents? More importantly, even if I did decide on one racial term or the other, I ran the risk as Rawson (2017) notes, of marking difference and normalizing whiteness, if I didn't use racial markers for all the photos (p. 18). Beyond these reasons, how certain could I be of how he identified himself at that time? Yet, as many scholars have noted, the problem with not labeling the race or ethnicity of subjects is that these racialized people become increasingly difficult to find within the database. In the popular culture, Caribana is primarily affiliated with "Black bodies," failing to identify Indo Caribbean participants, further obfuscates their role in Caribana. How would users interested in Indian participation in Caribana locate this photo? This question is of particular importance since the donor was Indo-Caribbean.



Man in female costume in Caribana parade (1970)

Additionally, I was particularly struck by the costume in the picture. This photo suggests a shifting notion of masculinity from the 1970s to 2000s. The title reflects my own positionality in that men from my generation would not wear a skirt or dress as part of a Caribana costume for fear of ridicule. But, what has also given me pause about the photo title is the reaction of a mas' maker when I showed her the exhibit. She pointed out the hem of his skirt differed from the woman's in the photo, hence he may not have been wearing a "female" costume after all. How do I then indicate that men and women wore very similar costumes in a way that present-day masqueraders do not?

Based on my experience labeling a photo, in terms of a course, switch the order that I did the labeling versus the primary source analysis. For instance, I labelled the documents before I did the primary source analysis. **I would structure the assignment in such a way that students did a traditional primary source analysis first and one of the tasks would be to label the photo.** Given that labeling is so

closely tied to effective searches within the digital archive, a good amount of time should be spent doing it. Labels should also be discussed in a group setting to minimize bias and a consistent labeling technique applied. At the end of the labeling phase, students will have had ample time to become familiar with their primary source photos and be more prepared as they enter the exhibit stage of the project. If grappling with issues of metadata was the most intellectually rigorous aspect of the project, engaging with community members and showcasing Caribbean culture was the most emotionally satisfying.

ENGAGING THE "COMMUNITY"

Perhaps the most unexpected outcomes from working on this project was **the deep sense of satisfaction I derived when I realized the members of the Caribana community valued the work.** When I mentioned to a mas' designer who knew Kenn Shah that York University was supporting this initiative, she smiled broadly and asked excitedly, "Will it be open to the public or just students?" At that point, we got into further discussion about Kenn Shah and Caribana in the 1970s. It was at this moment that I felt an incredible obligation to "get it right" whatever that meant. I felt a responsibility to portray the culture accurately, as it meant so much to this woman, as well as others I am certain, that Caribana was being recognized by an institution of higher learning.

Beyond feeling obligated to discern and meet the expectations of the general user, I felt deeply indebted to Kenn Shah and his family for donating his material to Tubman. They described Kenn's love for Caribana as follows,

[During Caribana Kenn] was openly emotional and the happiest person on the planet; he danced and intermingled with his family and friends as the band was propelled towards its destination by the exploding sounds of the Caribbean. Kenn was never concerned about winning the event but more about being there to foster the development of Caribana and ensuring that all were having a great time. He was the only carnival leader to have annually produced a Canadian Government Carnival Band for the Caribana parade. Kenn viewed the government's involvement as strong endorsement of this art form and, frequently talked to the Press about how excited he was to see Caribana gradually being embedded into the main stream arts and culture of Canada. *(An excerpt from a brief biography on Kenn Shah written by his siblings.)*

My experiences with technology, theory, and community engagement speak to the very collaborative and interdisciplinary

nature of DH projects that make them so fascinating. Including a DH project in your course will challenge students to think beyond the established boundaries. Working in the realm of DH not only engenders engaging exchanges but also holds creators to task regarding issues of power and responsibility in ways that working in one discipline could not. DH is not a saviour of the humanities, but it certainly allows us to ask new questions of the human experience and to shape it in untold ways.

DHSS Tools

TOOLS

- **Annotation Studio**: Collaborative web-based annotation tools
- **Carto**: Create maps and visualize geospatial data
- **Easel.ly**: Infographics
- **FromThePage**: Transcription tool for individuals and/or collaboration
- **KnightEyes**: Storytelling tools for journalists
- **Neatline**: Tell stories with maps and timelines
- **Poemage**: A visualization tool to support close reading of poems
- **Scripto**: A community transcription tool
- **VisualEyes**: Historical visualizations using data, maps, charts, images, and video
- **VOSviewer**: A tool for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks.
- **Voyant**: A web-based reading and analysis environment for digital texts

Also see tool collections such as:

- **DiRT** (Digital Research Tools)
- **DH Toychest**
- **McGill Digital Humanities Resources**
- **Pedagogy Toolkit for English**
- **TAPoR** (Text Analysis Portal for Research)

Complied August 15, 2018

DHSS ASSIGNMENT GUIDES

In this section, find nine different Assignment Guides that can support the integration of DHSS assignments into your pedagogical repertoire.

"The word *text*, after all, derives from the Latin *textus*, meaning that which is woven, strands of different material intertwined together. Let the warp be words and the weft be something else entirely... I am moving away from asking students to write toward asking them to weave. To build, to fabricate, to design."

Mark Sample. (2009). "[What's Wrong With Writing Essays](#)." SampleReality, paras. 6 & 7.

The following Assignment Guides were envisioned to replace traditional writing assignments such as essays. While a DHSS assignment may not seem to do the same work as an essay, Digital Humanist Mark Sample cautions that "the student essay has come to stand in for all the research, dialogue, revision, and work that professional scholars engage in," and that this does not encapsulate the full breadth and depth of the work academics can, have, and should be doing. Sample reminds us that "the word *text*, derives from the Latin *textus*, meaning that which is woven, strands of different material intertwined together." In his teaching practice, he states that he is "moving away from asking students to write toward asking them to weave. To build, to fabricate, to design" (Sample, 2009, paras. 6 & 7). This vision for a complex and integrated piece of work is similar to what Ng (2015) has called a "reflexive remix" (p. 221) and what [Dr. Amanda Starling Gould](#) called a "(re)mediated element" in a "[transmedia essay](#)".

DHSS assignments are thus not like essays. They can do more. DHSS assignments can develop a range of innovations and explorations with course content that linear essays cannot achieve.

Digital tools and technologies invite a *woven remix* of students' ideas in ways that can demonstrate critical and creative learning with materials in ways that [experientially activate](#) your students' learning of content.

See the nine different Assignment Guides below as a way to begin this work.

These Assignment Guides were written in a narrative rather than didactic style in order for you to think about how to blend your pedagogy with the purpose and goal(s) of DHSS. Each Guide is based on work created by our [Research Assistants](#) and provides suggestions for how to interpret this work as an assignment for your class.

- [Metadata Creation](#)
- [Transcription and Data Visualization](#)
- [Mapping Primary Sources](#)
- [Proving/Disproving an Argument](#)
- [Historical Image Analysis](#)
- [Public Education-Style Image Analysis](#)
- [Online Exhibit](#)
- [Oral History Digital Story](#)
- [Digital Archive](#)



York University Image Collection

Metadata Creation/Archival Description

Creating Metadata as a DHSS Assignment

Featuring work from Wendy Alejandra Medina De Loera's exhibit "The Making of a Digital Archive, By a Non-archivist."

Metadata is "data about data." They are pieces of information like location, date, time, format, and source, which allows digital items, such as photographs and documents, to be found and used again. You could also think about metadata as archival description for digital items. Creating metadata involves students tagging and describing digital materials. This process can then illuminate the process that goes into making materials available in digital spaces.

Metadata creation may not seem like the type of work that could replace a short essay, but getting your students to thoughtfully develop metadata for digital items can be a rich, critical, and analytical task for students to think about how and what can available in digital spaces. It can also allow students to think about the ways theory can be applied to different practical situations both inside and outside academia.



*Illustration by Jørgen
Stamp digitalbevaring.dk
CC BY 2.5 Denmark*

Summary

Description:

- The organization and description of a digital item

Possible tools/technologies:

- WordPress
- Word
- Excel

Elements of Process:

- Identify material
- Discuss the subjectivity of metadata, perhaps using a reading such as K.J. Rawson's 2017 article "[The Rhetorical Power of Archival Description: Classifying Images of Gender Transgression](#)"
- Create, or have your students create, a mechanism for recording metadata
- Create and discuss metadata

Size of assignment:

- Small

Difficulty:

- Easy. The tech element of this assignment is minimal. The "digital" element of this assignment is getting students to work through the ideas associated with organizing and accessing digital materials, not in working with specific digital technologies.

Metadata is "[data about data](#)." On digital items, metadata provides information such as location, date, time, format, and source that allows items to be found and used again. **Without metadata, we would have to browse multiple items rather than directly search for the one(s) we were looking for, because we would not have any specific information attached to the item.** Attaching specific information to a digital item means we are able to do keyword searches to find and access that item again. Metadata thus frames our lives in the digital world by shaping objects and items with language and ideas that inform what and how we can access.

Think, for example, about a photograph we take on our phones. We could easily find a specific photograph if we remember the date we took it. If your location services were on, you could also find that image through a mapping tool your phone provides. If you have tagged people in your photograph, you could also find that photograph by searching for a person in the photo. If you've created specialized folders or had "favourited" a photograph, you could go right to those folders and find that photograph that way too.



Gemmill Library at University of Colorado by Patrick Campbell/University of Colorado

However, if you are looking for a photograph that you took at the library, for example, which had a book in it that you wanted to find again, how could you easily find that photo? You could go through each picture from that library visit, but this could be both time and labour intensive. But, if you “tagged” that picture with information related to that book – maybe the word “book” or the name of the book itself – you could find that photograph very quickly by searching keywords or tags ascribed to this photo. This “tag” is metadata; the data *about* the data – the keywords about your photograph.

Your phone already creates a set of metadata on the photographs you take – date, place, perhaps person – and you can also create metadata by creating folders or tagging people, but unique elements of a photograph may get lost without the active creation of specific metadata.

The specificity of what can be identified through metadata is why understanding metadata is so important, especially in our digital world. How we find and access digital items – not just photographs on our phones but archival documents and images as well – is based on the metadata that is assigned to them. Similar to archival description, metadata may seem objective, but the ideas and concepts assigned to items are developed by people for other people and thus are bound by subjective understandings of what an item is, what it shows, and what values it has. See archivists Wendy M. Duff and Verne Harris’ article “[Stories and Names: Archival description as narrating records and constructing meanings](#)” found in *Archival Science* for discussion of these ideas from an archival perspective.

Thus, metadata creation – or archival description – is an interesting task for your students to engage in because of how it demonstrates the layers of subjectivities we bring to an item or object. You may tag your library photo with the name of the book, but someone else may look at the photo and see different things: other books, the general subject matter, the Library Congress organization, or the colour blue. Which metadata are more correct? Which information best describes what is there? Which description will have the greatest long-term value? Also, how would our experience at the library shape what we see and tag as important? How would our perception of future needs or past recollections frame how this item is categorized in the present?

This example can expand outward to get your students to think about the creation and limits of what is knowable, and how that interacts with what is digitally available and accessible. Ask your students to question whether a creator or the subject(s) of a digital document/image would develop the same metadata as an archivist, historian, sociologist, political scientist, or student? Which metadata would be more correct? Why? What if you were a sociologist with a critical race theory background – would your metadata be the same as a sociologist with a queer theory background? What if you were a political science student using material to understand the operation of feminist theory in policy – would you be able to find those materials if the metadata associated with them were based on Marxist theory? How general should metadata be? How specific? In the example of the photograph of the book, should the metadata identify a general “book” or the specific name of the book? If you forget the name of the book, you can no longer find it with the specific title, but a general category of “book” may bring up too many results.

All of these questions demonstrate the layers of questions that your students can work through (but not necessarily answer) by engaging in a metadata assignment. These questions can also prompt classroom discussion and be an opportunity for crowdsourcing metadata in the ways that are similar to crowdsourcing [transcription](#).

When framing the assignment of metadata creation with [21st-century competencies](#) like critical thinking, communication, col-

laboration, and creativity and innovation as found by the [Ontario government's international review](#) of 21st-century competencies, each task can be transformed to have your students think about the role they are playing in developing space for greater access to materials and thus the responsibilities they hold when creating, organizing, and/or presenting materials to the public (similar ideas are discussed in the [Transcription and Data Visualization](#) assignment).

While a metadata assignment can be engaged on its own or as part of a larger [digitization project](#), digitization does not have to be part of this assignment. You can get your students to engage in a metadata assignment with already [digitized and catalogued materials](#) and focus solely on metadata creation. You can also connect with the Library to see if there are materials in their [archives and special collections](#) that could benefit from collaborative partnerships with your class.

Either way, after materials have been chosen for this assignment, either by you or your students, introduce your students to the [Dublin Core](#), a metadata standard, and get them to develop and create a tracking mechanism, such as a [form](#) or spreadsheet, to ensure all the central datum is captured. Students can also "tag" the metadata they identify worthy of note on a website or even through Word or Excel.

Remember that your students may identify aspects of the document or image that you would not identify as important. Rather than correcting them, have your students explain and rationalize their choices. Again, the emphasis on an experiential assignment such as this one is *process* as well as product. Students should articulate their *process* of metadata creation as a way to make evident the process of knowledge creation. Like with the [Archives](#) assignment, I direct you to K.J. Rawson's article "[The Rhetorical Power of Archival Description: Classifying Images of Gender Transgression](#)" (2017) based on the [Digital Transgender Archive](#) and the [Human Sexuality Collection](#) at Cornell University Library. This article can be a starting point for your students to think about the power and process of metadata creation and archival description and how it functions to shape knowing and knowledge.



Girl working in tea plantation at Pangalinan, Java, postcolonial Indonesia (1956), David Wurfel

In our project, [Wendy Alejandra Medina De Loera](#) created an exhibit that highlighted the process of [creating an archive](#). Developing metadata was a large part of this work.

In her exhibit, Wendy [narrated](#) how she developing metadata as it related to creating [titles and descriptions](#) of her photographic slides. However, she also demonstrated how the [metadata could change](#) if she adopted different perspectives to read the slides, such as a feminist or postcolonial perspective.

Project member [Denise Challenger](#) also wrote about the collaborative and thoughtful process of metadata creation in her essay for this Instructor's Guide, "[Metadata for Thought](#)." As she outlined, these discussions were central to the [archives](#) and the [exhibits](#) students created in our [project](#).

Metadata creation suggestions for your students

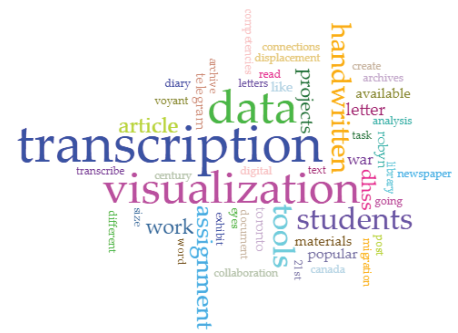
- Have students develop metadata for a photograph they have taken. How would they want/expect a future academic to use this photograph? What metadata can ensure this photograph is found to do this work?
- Show a photograph or document during class and, independently, have students identify three to five subject tags they would ascribe to this photograph/document. Collect all the words and have students sort them into categories. Initiate a discussion about the similarities and differences of these subject tags as a way to demonstrate the ways knowledge is constructed.
- Have students ascribe metadata to a found or unknown photograph (a photograph with no identification, such as the ones found on Instagram accounts [@PhotosObscura](#), [@HouseofMirthPhotos](#), or [@SaveFamilyPhotos](#)) using a class reading to guide the tags ascribed to the photograph
- Compare the metadata ascribed to an archival image or document by the class, with the metadata ascribed to the same image or document by a librarian and/or archivist. What is captured and/or missing from the “official” metadata that is captured and/or missing from the interpretation from the class?
- Work with the [Library](#) to identify if there are materials in their [archives](#) and [special collections](#) that needed metadata assigned. There may be an ongoing project that could benefit from the collaborative partnership of your students.

Transcription and Data Visualization

Transcription and Data Visualization as a DHSS Assignment

Featuring work from Robyn Le Lacheur's exhibit "Looking Back: Temporal and spatial connections of post-war migration and displacement through the eyes of the *Toronto Telegram*"

Though transcription and data visualization are both popular DHSS projects, your students could engage in each task together or separately. With transcription and data visualization, students would transcribe a document and then use data visualization or data analysis tools to demonstrate discursive patterns in the text.



Summary

Description:

- The transcription and visualization of a digitized document

Possible tools/technologies:

- Voyant
- Wordcloud
- Scripto
- WordPress
- Word

Elements of Process:

- Select an item for student(s) to work on
- Create, or get students to create, a mechanism for recording their transcription
- Transcribe document
- Run transcription through a data visualization tool

- Analyze meaning of document through visualization

Size of assignment:

- Small to Medium

Difficulty:

- Easy to Moderate. The size and difficulty level of this assignment depends on the format and length of the original source. A handwritten letter, for example, would be more intensive than a printed newspaper article.

Robyn Le Lacheur did both transcription and data visualization as part of her exhibit "Looking Back: Temporal and spatial connections of Post-War migration and displacement through the eyes of the *Toronto Telegram*." However, if framed differently, each task could be enough for one assignment. Robyn did both transcription and data visualization because part of her task was finding the source and making it presentable on a website.

Robyn's focus for her project was on the images from the *Toronto Telegram* filed under "refugee." Working so closely with these images got Robyn interested in seeing how the images were actually used in the newspaper. So, to explore this more closely, she chose one photograph that she found intriguing, did a library search to find the article that used that photograph, and then, with assistance from the Library, she found the article on microfilm. After saving the article in a digital format, Robyn "cleaned" it for "noise" in order to post it on-line. After this work, she then transcribed the article – deciding if she should keep the same line breaks or just type it with standard margins in Word – and put the text through a word cloud generator to identify key words and concepts from the text. Robyn played with different tools for the visualization, including Voyant, an easy and very user friendly data analysis tool, before she settled on Word-Cloud because she liked how she could customize the words that could be featured.



Robyn Le Lacheur's word cloud for "*Their War Goes On: Opulence Hides Gray Refugees*"

The result of Robyn's work is that now Ron Poulton's 1964 article "Their War Goes On: Opulence Hides Gray Refugees" is available online and situated in a larger exhibit and discussion about post-war migration and displacement through the eyes of the *Toronto Telegram*.

As mentioned, both transcription and data visualization are popular DHSS activities. A quick internet search can identify resources outside this Guide to support the work of transcription and data visualization. Transcription is a popular DHSS method for history because of the value in transcribing handwritten documents. Data visualization is a popular DHSS method in literature or political science because of the ways in which the tools help identify discursive patterns that may not be as visible by traditional reading.

When framing transcription and data visualization with [21st-century competencies](#) like critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation, as found by the [Ontario government's international review](#) of 21st-century competencies, each task can be transformed to have your students think about the role they are playing in developing space for greater access to materials and thus the responsibilities they hold when creating, organizing, and/or presenting materials to the public (similar ideas are discussed in the [Metadata](#) assignment).

To think about the scale of this assignment for your students, ask yourself organizational questions such as: will students use a document from an already organized and digitized corpus like [The Globe and Mail archive](#), or will they have to find something on their own using microfilm like [Robyn](#) did, which will then need to be digitally edited for the web? Will they have to find materials by going to an archive and working with an archivist? Will the original material be typed (like a newspaper article or broadsheet) or will they be handwritten, and if they are handwritten (like a letter), has enough support been given to students to read and understand it? Note: it's not that young people "don't know how to read handwriting," it's just that handwriting is hard to read. They should be supported in their efforts.

In Dr. Mary Chaktsiris's course "[Digital Humanities: Digital Editing and Publishing](#)" for [Wilfrid Laurier University](#), she got her students to "crowdsource" the transcription of 19th-century handwritten letters by showing the letters in class and inviting students to transcribe each letter together. This activity encouraged both collaboration and discussion about the words in the letter and the context in which they were written. Doing this work as a class also destigmatized any difficulties students may have had in reading the letters on their own.

To support collaborative transcription projects, Library and Archives Canada has provided [transcription guidelines](#) for their digitization and transcription projects. These may be good inspiration in your own classroom.

Transcription and Data Visualization suggestions for your students

There are many tools and projects available for transcription and data visualization. Visit our [Tools page](#) to explore different options, but find below a few of our favourite tools and projects:

- [From the Page](#): Crowdsourcing manuscript transcription
- [Lady Macdonald's Handwritten Diary](#): A now-completed project from Library and Archives Canada that transcribed Lady Macdonald's handwritten diary and made it available online for transcription and tagging
- [Scripto](#): Community transcriptions of document and multimedia files
- [Voyant](#): Data analysis and visualization tools



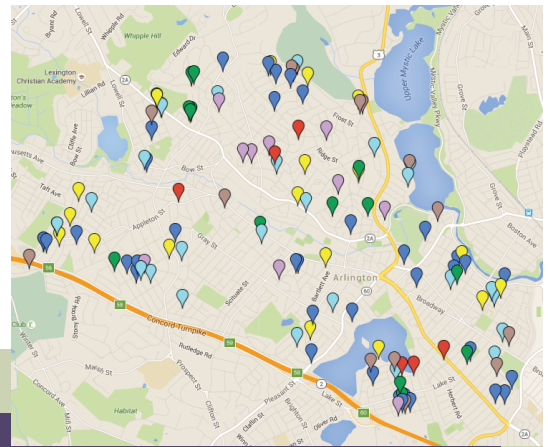
Mapping Primary Sources

Mapping Primary Sources as a DHSS Assignment

Featuring work from Robyn Le Lacheur's exhibit "Looking Back: Temporal and spatial connections of post-war migration and displacement through the eyes of the *Toronto Telegram*"

Mapping primary sources may be the easiest way into DHSS for you and your students because many of us are already familiar with using online maps and mapping tools to make sense of space and place.

But because DHSS can help us make meaning in new ways, we have to think not just of how your students might create a digital map, but *why*. *Why* will plotting primary sources on a map help us understand a particular idea or concept better than if the sources were not on a map? *How* will students be able to communicate these new layers of meaning?



Summary

Description:

- Plotting and annotating digital materials on a map

Possible tools/technologies:

- Google Maps
- StoryMap
- Voyant

Elements of process:

- Choose locations and materials
- Choose how and with what a location would be indicated

- Write a description of location and item

Size of the assignment:

- Small to Medium

Difficulty:

- Low to Moderate

In her exhibit, "Looking Back: Temporal and spatial connections of Post-War migration and displacement through the eyes of the *Toronto Telegram*" Robyn Le Lacheur created two maps: "Refugees & Displaced Peoples: Where they came from" and "Local Context: War Guests in Toronto." Robyn took photographs from the *Toronto Telegram* that had been previously identified by archivists as images representing post-Second World War refugees or migrants. Robyn was interested in where the refugees came from and where they settled, so she created two maps to demonstrate where migrants "came from" and the "local context" of their settlement. She also transcribed the caption and editorial information included with each image so that this information would be now part of the map.



"From the four corners of Europe,"
Toronto Telegram (04/10/1944)

Robyn's maps were part of her Scalar exhibit, but your students could also use Google maps to do this work outside of Scalar. Robyn also digitized her material, which made mapping one piece of a much larger project. However, if your students were using already digitized materials, rather than scanning them like Robyn did, your students' focus should be on contextualizing the primary sources with more secondary analysis. In this way, as with all DHSS assignments, each project can expand or contract based on where the material is coming from and if it needs to be digitized. Adjust expectations for final product accordingly. See below for other mapping assignment suggestions.

Digital Mapping suggestions for your students

- For his "Development of Toronto" course taught in the Department of History,

York University, Dr. Gilberto Fernandes had each one of his students research, write, and map one “node” on a public [Toronto the Bad](#) map. Using Dr. Fernandes assignment as an example, you can do the same thing with your students, but with primary sources that align with your course content.

- [Mapping the Republic of Letters](#) is a large project that demonstrates networks of scholars over time as seen through the exchange of letters. Similarly, you could invite students to map the physical and textual networks of primary sources to highlight the transnational connections across time and place.
- Take a novel, like [Mrs. Dalloway](#), and have students map the character’s movements through the plot.
- Get students to understand the overlapping uses and understandings of space by having them map different community maps and/or individual recollections of a space. University of Victoria’s [Community Mapping project](#) could be used as inspiration.
- There are many new projects that are mapping structural racism across time and place. Get students to review the projects identified in the article “[How Is Digital Mapping Changing The Way We Visualize Racism and Segregation?](#)” (2017) and have them replicate an abbreviated version of the method for historical and/or contemporary instances of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and/or transphobia

Proving/Disproving an Argument

Proving or Disproving an Argument as a DHSS Assignment

Featuring work from Robyn Le Lacheur's exhibit "Looking Back: Temporal and spatial connections of post-war migration and displacement through the eyes of the *Toronto Telegram*"

Having students engage with scholarly material to understand the process of argument development is an expectation in higher education. Using a DHSS approach, your students can understand and demonstrate how academics develop and prove their arguments by using digitized material to prove or disprove an academic argument and visually present their findings to a wider audience.



Summary

Description:

- The organization of digital materials to support or refute an argument put forth in a secondary source.

Possible tools/technologies:

- WordPress
- Scalar
- Omeka
- Word
- PowerPoint

Elements of Process:

- Identify a corpus of materials
- Identify argument
- Identify a medium for presentation
- Sort materials as evidence for/against argument

- Present materials

Size of assignment:

- Medium

Difficulty:

- Moderate

In Robyn Le Lacheur's exhibit: "Looking Back: Temporal and spatial connections of post-war migration and displacement through the eyes of the *Toronto Telegram*," she used photographs published by the *Toronto Telegram* to explore patterns of migration and settlement after World War Two. However, she also used a corpus of digitized materials to compare what she saw in these photographs to others' analysis of similar materials.



"Woman reading *The Evening Telegram*,"
Toronto Telegram (07/1940)

One of the comparisons she made was against Terrence Wright's article "Moving Images: The Media Representation of Refugees" published in *Visual Studies* in 2002. Robyn reviewed the article, highlighted Wright's findings, and then assessed whether his argument held water in relation to the archive she was working with by tagging the photographs in her digital archive that aligned with Wright's argument.

While Robyn explored this argument in one page of a larger exhibit, your students could create a whole exhibit proving or disproving an argument found in an academic article using the digital materials explored in class. Using Scalar, WordPress, or another web publishing forum, have students demonstrate their understanding of an article and then showcase how and why they support, or contest, the scholars' conclusions based on digital materials they would showcase across multiple pages of their exhibit.

This task can be done with any number of academic articles and digitized collections (if your students are not digitizing materials themselves) and can invite creative ways for your students to think through, and present, an academic argument for something like an exhibit.

Proving/Disproving suggestions

- In 1993 Peter Geller looked at the representation in HBC's *The Beaver* between 1920-1945. Can your students showcase the "particular meanings" Geller identified when looking at digitized copies of *The Beaver* after this time period?
- Can your students use digitized poems from Canadian poets using a tool like Voyant, to support Shannon Wiltsey Stirman and James Pennebaker's argument that suicidal poets are more apt to write about self than others?
- How does masculine identity interact with consumption in older advertisements, as Jonathan E. Schroeder and Detlev Zwick found in their 2007 article "Mirrors of Masculinity: Representation and Identity in Advertising Images"?
- Can your students explore the "regime of translation" in their neighbourhoods by photographing and posting examples of translated signs on public streets, like Brett Neilson did with signs in Australia and Italy in 2009?
- Or can they replicate the work that Robert Gutsche and his colleagues did in "'No Outlet': A critical visual analysis of neoliberal narratives in mediated geographies" (2017) to explore the process of "geosemiotics" in their own cities?

Historical Image Analysis

Historical Image Analysis as a DHSS Assignment

Featuring work from Denise Challenger's exhibit "Playin' Mas, Play and Mas: A pedagogical journey of children and Caribana, 1970-1974"

For a historian, engaging in image analysis is not an unusual task. There are several image analysis worksheets available online for different levels of learners, including ones from the National Park Service (American), the National Archives (American), the Canadian War Museum, the North Dakota State Government, the Illinois State Museum, and the Virginia Museum of History & Culture (some worksheets are designed for younger learners but can be adapted for students in higher education).

Historian and project member Denise Challenger demonstrated the process of image analysis in her exhibit, "Playin' Mas, Play and Mas: A pedagogical journey of children and Caribana, 1970-1974". In her exhibit, she tracked her initial reflections of photographs in her digitized archive and then engaged in a more structured reflection of selected images.



Cindy Sherman, Untitled Film Still #21, 1978

However, the real "meaning making" potential for photo analysis in DHSS is that your students can engage in photo analysis with a range of historical images that were not created as digital objects. Digital photos are now so ubiquitous that we can forget that photos that are at least 20 years old, especially popular photos, were not created digitally and were taken in a finite series with unexpected results (i.e. a roll of 24 photos that you had to wait to see until they were developed).

What DHSS can bring to historical image analysis then, is having images themselves – originally digitally or not – available to us on our laptops, phones, or tablets for analysis and, with appropriate permissions, "remixing" and creatively transforming them to tell new stories about the past.

Summary

Description:

- The examination of digital images from a historical point of view

Possible tools/technologies:

- Scalar
- Omeka
- Flickr
- PowerPoint
- Prezi
- Instagram

Elements of Process:

- Identify photographs
- View the photograph and answer specific questions about their content and context
- Put ideas together to make a historical argument based on one's analysis
- Present the analysis

Size of assignment:

- Small to Medium

Difficulty:

- Low to Moderate

For her exhibit "Playin' Mas, Play and Mas: A pedagogical journey of children and Caribana, 1970-1974." Denise did two stages of historical photo analysis: initial reflection and structured reflection. In the initial reflection, she made notes about what she saw and then moved to structured reflection where she asked 10 questions of each photograph:

1. Are there people in the photograph?
2. What are they doing?
3. What expressions are on their faces? What is their body language?
4. What objects are in the photograph?
5. When was the photograph taken?
6. Where was the photograph taken?
7. Where is the photographer standing in relation to the subject (above, below, in front of, beside, etc.)?
8. How would the picture change if he or she was standing in a different place?
9. Is this photo spontaneous or posed? How can you tell?
10. What is the general mood of the photograph? How can you tell?



A young girl in a white costume

Denise shared the answers to her questions through “pop up,” interactive annotations in a Scalar exhibit like Juan Pablo’s public education analysis. To replicate their work, one would have to be familiar with using Scalar; however, your students can present their analysis of a digital image using something they are more familiar with like WordPress or in a photosharing site like Flickr. There are surprisingly not as many photo analysis tools for DHSS as one would think. Thus, to show students’ analyses, you can be creative in the tools your students already know, such as PowerPoint or Prezi, as well as integrate their formal analysis into other assignments, such as developing an exhibit, creating metadata, mapping, or proving/disproving an argument.

However, engaging in analysis through the lens of DHSS should invite students to think about the “digitalness,” for lack of a better word, of a historical photograph that was not created digital. Or other words, the historical specificity of viewing these photographs as digital items should be a highlight of your students’ analyses DHSS. Historical photo analysis should therefore not just ask Denise’s questions above, but also questions such as:

1. What is the meaning behind capturing this image?
2. Who was the intended audience?
3. What is familiar about this image?
4. What is surprising?
5. What insight does this give us into the past that we would not have without this image?
6. How does this image demonstrate the “we were there/they were there” element that historical photographs can demonstrate?

Historical Photo Analysis suggestions

Images can be chosen from archived sources but also collections of unidentified photos that can be found on Instagram, Flickr, and other photosharing sites. In many ways, asking your students to analyze less-common photographs than the ones used in class may elicit more complex discussions during content analysis.

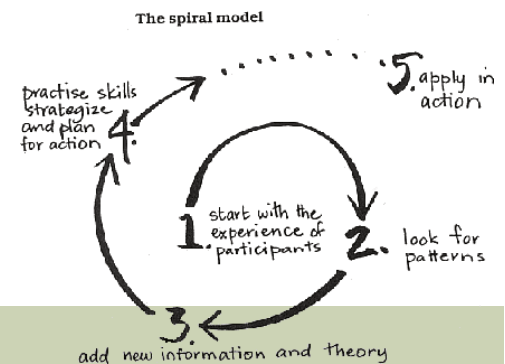
Public Education-Style Image Analysis

Public Education-Style Image Analysis as a DHSS Assignment

Featuring work from Juan Pablo Pinto Mendoza's exhibit "Popular Education in Revolutionary Times: Reflecting on Nicaragua's popular education program in the 1980s"

Based on Paulo Freire's popular education pedagogy, Popular Education-Style Image Analysis invites the student to reflect on self and society in a way that can lead to a critical consciousness and action.

Similar to, yet different from, the Historical Image Analysis approach familiar to many historians, the Popular Education-Style Image Analysis can be incorporated into Social Sciences courses as a way to connect theory to action and develop students' digital and visual literacy skills.



Summary

Spiral Model of Popular Education. From the Bob Hale Youth College for Social Justice: Participants' Handbook.

Description:

- The examination of images using Paulo Freire's popular education method

Possible tools/technologies:

- Scalar
- Omeka
- Flickr
- PowerPoint
- Prezi
- Instagram

Elements of Process:

- Identify photographs
- View the photograph and answer specific questions about their content and context
- Put ideas together to identify routes for possible social and/or political action based on one's analysis
- Present the analysis

Size of assignment:

- Small to Medium

Difficulty:

- Low to Moderate

In 1968, Paulo Freire published *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a key text outlining his popular education program designed to teach illiterate Brazilian farmers how to read. Given that literacy was a requirement for voting in Brazil, teaching literacy had the possibility of significantly shifting political power and so popular education was not just about literacy but about significantly transforming the world.

Based on Freire's work, Professor Emerita Deborah Barndt from York University worked in Nicaragua's Adult/Popular Education program in the 1980s. In 2017, she donated many of her papers to York's Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC) for digitization. Project member Juan Pablo Pinto Mendoza worked with her on developing an online archive, which holds papers and photographs from this time.

In the process of working with these materials and learning about Popular Education, Juan Pablo wanted to bring a Popular Education analysis to his exhibit. He drew on Dr. Barndt's experience with Popular Education to develop an image analysis method he applied to multiple photographs.

Juan Pablo's analysis involved asking one's self about:

- **Description:** What did you see, hear, or feel in their stories? What do you think is happening? Tell how you feel about it?
- **Personal Association:** Have you ever had an experience like that? Can you identify with the problem presented?
- **Social Relationship:** How is your experience similar to the experience of others? How is it different? Do you see problems that other people also have?
- **Analysis:** Why does this problem exist? What happens because of it? How does it relate to other problems?
- **Action:** What resources (person, group, or community) could help solve this problem in the short and/or the long run?



Photograph by Deborah Barndt. Annotation by Juan Pablo Pinto Mendoza.

Juan Pablo then engaged in the analysis of one photograph from Dr. Barndt's collection. This style of analysis allowed for a deeper, more personal, and more political exploration of the image and the context of its creation and (re)presentation.

In the Assignment Guide for Historical Image Analysis, I identified that you can find image analysis worksheets online from several sources. However, "Popular Education" Image Analysis invites the viewer to reflect on self and society in a way that can lead to a critical consciousness and action in ways that standard Historical Image Analysis does not.

I also identified in the Assignment Guide for Historical Image Analysis that one of the strengths of engaging in historical photo analysis with DHSS is that many of the images were not created digitally and thus having the digital historical images available to us on a laptop, phone, or tablet, available to be "remixed" and creatively transformed, is where the meaning making potential lays.

Juan Pablo's analysis from a public education point of view, as well as a view from a filmmaker, highlights personal reflection, as well as the development of digital literacy by looking at images' visual rhetoric. To explore this more, I recommend Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)'s Visual Rhetoric PowerPoint video created by Karl Stolley and Allen Brizee (a PPT file will download and open), as well as this Visual Analysis slide deck developed from the composition textbook *Frames of Mind*.

The presentation of Juan Pablo's Popular Education analysis, like Denise's "pop-up" historical image analysis, was done through Scalar. To replicate their work, one would have to be familiar with Scalar, but an alternative to this is to use a platform like WordPress or a photosharing site like Flickr. that students may be more familiar with There are surprisingly not as many photo analysis tools for DHSS as one would think. Thus, to show students' analyses, you can be creative in the tools your students already know, such as PowerPoint or Prezi, as well as integrate their formal analysis into other assignments, such as developing an exhibit, creating metadata, mapping, or proving/disproving an argument.

Images can be chosen from archived sources but also collections of unidentified photos that can be found on Instagram, Flickr, and other photosharing sites. In many ways, asking your students to analyze less-common photographs than the ones used in class may elicit more complicated ways into content analysis.

Public Education-Style Photo Analysis suggestions

Images can be chosen from archived photographs, but engaging in this work with common or familiar media such as advertisements, Instagram posts, or memes may encourage greater critical analysis of the images that make up students' worlds.

Online Exhibit

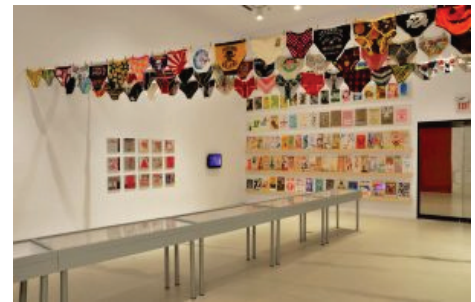
Creating an Exhibit as a DHSS Assignment

Featuring work from Denise Challenger's exhibit "Playin' Mas, Play and Mas: A pedagogical journey of children and Caribana, 1970-1974"

When we ask students to write an essay, we're looking for them to develop an argument and draw evidence from scholarly sources to support that argument.

Developing an online exhibit can achieve similar goals as an essay in that it can answer a research question and provide a thesis – an *answer* to that research question – but in an online exhibit, your students can use both primary and secondary digital material to curate and prove their thesis in a public, online forum. In this way, an online exhibit assignment can achieve the "weaving" together of text and other media that digital humanist Mark Sample (2010) has advocated for.

Students can use multiple forms of digitized media to develop and communicate a position, because with DHSS we are **innovating, remixing, weaving, building, and designing** a woven, curated argument to be presented to the public.



Will Munro at the Art Gallery of York University, 2012. Cheryl O'Brien, AGYU

Summary

Description:

- The curation of digital materials to demonstrate a particular argument or point of view

Possible tools/technologies:

- Omeka

- Scalar
- WordPress
- Blogger
- Google Sites
- Tumblr
- Powerpoint
- Word

Elements of Process:

- Identify materials
- Digitize materials if materials need to be digitized
- Develop a research question
- Organize materials in a way that explores a research question
- Post materials in a way that demonstrates an answer to the research question

Size of Assignment:

- Medium to Large

Difficulty:

- Moderate. The selection of materials and how they will be “read” will be difficult elements of this assignment. Depending on the tool/technologies your student uses, this could also be difficult. Note, however, that York University Libraries has provided [support](#) for using Scalar if you are also interested in this technology. A way to counter both difficulties is to encourage students to follow a five paragraph model as a way to present their materials. An exhibit outline has been provided to support this approach.

All four of our students created exhibits through this [project](#), but [Denise Challenge](#)’s mini-exhibit “[Locating Children in Carib-ana](#)” was designed the most like an essay your students could replicate in a course.



A child dressed as fruit. Kenn Shah's Caribana photographs.

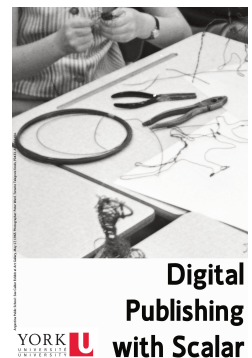
Just like if she was writing an essay, Denise started her exhibit with a research question, which was: **How do the photographs of *Kiddies Carnival* founder Kenn Shah demonstrate the different ways children "officially" participated in Caribana from 1967 to 1977?**

Denise then engaged in a reflective and then a structured analysis of photos from her digitized archive. From these reflections, Denise developed an answer to her research question, her *thesis*, which was: Kenn Shah's photographs demonstrate that children both received and transmitted Caribbean culture during Caribana in three locations: *fixed* stage, as competitive performers or ceremonial ambassadors; the *moving* stage of the main road, as masqueraders or costumed accompaniments; and the *side road*, without costumes but as spectators.

As a way to exhibit her findings, Denise then created a "carousel" of primary source images that provided evidence for each of these locations.

Denise created her exhibit, and her fancy "carousels," with Scalar, an online exhibit tool. York University Libraries has provided support for using Scalar, if you are also interested in this software. Omeka is also a popular online archive and exhibit software, and York University Libraries have also hosted a number of digital exhibits using the Omeka platform.

However, an exhibit does not have to have a lot of bells and whistles to tell an intriguing story; the Archives of Ontario's online exhibit "Dear Sadie: Love, lives, and remembrance" is a good example of this. An digital exhibit is essentially a visual essay based on primary sources and thus only needs a platform to demonstrate its research question, thesis, and a breakdown of its argument into different areas supported by evidence. So, your students can use a standard web-hosting site such as Word-Press, Blogger, or Google Sites to post their exhibit, but they can also use non-online options such as Powerpoint or even Word to demonstrate their argument and the positioning of materials.



Digital Publishing with Scalar

In our project, to keep the focus on developing an exhibit that is organized like an essay, **we developed an exhibit outline form to guide students' work**. You'll notice that this exhibit outline is very similar to an essay outline, and this was not an accident. For a DHSS assignment, especially for faculty and students new to DHSS, mimicking a familiar essay structure will help with adapting and developing new DHSS elements into their final assignment. This outline was designed to keep students focused on the relationship between their question/topic, the breakdown of their exhibit pages, the evidence they will use to support their thesis, and their imagined audience for the exhibit. Having this outline meant our conversation about exhibits constantly refined and defined the elements of students' arguments and how they were curated this argument in the online space.

Because Denise's work involved the identification, digitization, and metadata creation of the Kenn Shah's archive and the development of her digital-essay, "Locating Children in Caribana," Denise provided little textual explanation for each position. However, **if your students are already using materials that have been digitized, you could require them to write more text or incorporate an additional element, like an Oral History Digital Story or Map, into the exhibit**. You could also design a collaborative exhibit for your whole class to engage in where each student would develop one page to support a larger project.

See the York University Libraries' Pressbook on *Digital Publishing with Scalar* and *Planning and Selecting for Digi-*

tization for more support on the larger parts of this assignment, as well as our examples page for exhibits created through or inspired by our project.

Oral History Digital Story

Creating Oral History Digital Stories as a DHSS Assignment

Featuring work from Juan Pablo Pinto Mendoza's exhibit "Popular Education in Revolutionary Times: Reflecting on Nicaragua's Popular Education Program in the 1980s"

Digital storytelling is a popular assignment for students at all levels because of how they can develop students' multimodal literacy. Teacher educator Roland Case (2006) defines digital stories as "multimedia movies that combine photographs, video, animation, sound, music, text, and a narrative voice."

Combining digital storytelling with oral histories can be an even more valuable way for your students to layer meaning in a digital space. While students can engage in both oral histories and archival research outside the digital world, blending recollection and archival record together in a digital story can animate meaning in ways students may not get from text alone.



Summary

Description:

- A layered short film that combines oral history with archival materials

Possible Tools/Technologies:

- iMovie
- Windows Movie Maker
- PowerPoint
- Snapchat
- Many others

Elements of Process:

- Assemble archival materials
- Interview someone about their connection to materials
- Storyboard a short film
- Create a short film

Size of Assignment:

- Large

Difficulty Level:

- Moderate to high.

This assignment has many different parts: Finding/digitizing materials, interviewing someone with connection/knowledge with those materials, storyboarding, and creating. Your students may already be comfortable using digital tools to create and edit a short film, and so the technological aspect of this assignment could be the least difficult aspect of this assignment. Instead, to focus more on content and less on technology, an emphasis on storyboarding can help curb the difficulties of integrating oral histories with archival materials.

Remember that oral histories and interviews need to be conducted ethically and with permission from your Research Ethics Board/Office. Visit York's [Office of Research Ethics](#) (ORE) for support on how to obtain permission for your projects from the Ethics Board.

In [Juan Pablo Pinto Mendoza's](#) exhibit, "[Popular Education in Revolutionary Times: Reflecting on Nicaragua's Popular Education Program in the 1980s](#)," Juan Pablo created a digital story that blended [Dr. Deborah Barndt's](#) archival materials with an interview he conducted with her about these materials.

In the 1980s, Dr. Barndt taught in a Freire-inspired popular education program in Nicaragua, and she saved many documents from her time there. When [CERLAC](#) contacted Dr. Barndt about being part of this [project](#), she enthusiastically agreed and worked with [Juan Pablo](#) to identify materials to digitize and archive. Juan Pablo also organized formal, video recorded interviews with Dr. Barndt to talk about the materials and her experiences in Nicaragua more broadly.

As a [documentary filmmaker](#), Juan Pablo was very comfortable telling stories in a video format. So, once the digitization and interviews were complete, Juan Pablo interspersed the interviews he conducted with Dr. Barndt with the images he digitized. The result was a series of [short videos](#) that Juan Pablo created to narrate a story far richer than archival material or a oral his-

tory alone. Digital tools and technologies, in this case, invited a *weaving* together of story and record (Sample 2009) that Juan Pablo used to make, and present, greater meaning from Dr. Barndt's experiences.

An interesting moment in our project was when Juan Pablo completed one video and showed it to Dr. Barndt. She loved what he had done but immediately thought of other materials that could better reflect the story. Dr. Barndt then offered new, non-digitized photographs for Juan Pablo to digitize and splice into the video. The result was that the video became more of a "living archive" or a "living inquiry" than just a digital story alone (Sinner 2013), which enriched Juan Pablo's experience working with Dr. Barndt.

Your students can also engage in oral histories or interviews, edit them with multimedia objects, and make them available online as a DHSS project. Your students may already be familiar with creating a digital story through Snapchat or Instagram and thus this assignment could be an opportunity for them to use these skills to activate the meaning(s) they are making in your class.

In the spirit of creating a DHSS project that is woven, curated, or remixed, students' digital stories can combine interview and materials to "talk" to each other in ways that expand analysis. Materials can augment an interview (like Juan Pablo's) or an interview could explain materials (like Denise wanted to do). Because these are different approaches, you'll need to decide if finding materials or interviewees would come first. Students could also be the subject themselves, as is the case with digital autoethnographies.

To break down the steps of this assignment for your students, identify the topic or materials you want your students to use, the purpose of the assignment, and why and how engaging in an oral history/interview will create meaning making in new ways. Also give your students some options of what tools they can use to record their interviews and create their videos – there are many tools available and you may find that students have more experience than you in creating videos for distribution! For students with less technological experience, there are models out there for creating an animated PowerPoint with a voiceover as a digital story. Also visit the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University for a great set of tools for both oral histories and digital stories. Following the creation of their videos, you may want to create a class-based YouTube channel where everyone can post their videos and solicit comments from classmates and/or community members.

Oral History Digital Story suggestions for your students

- Have students walk a neighbourhood and either record their own impressions/memories of what they see/hear/smell/remember or conduct short interviews with community members about the neighbourhood. Have students create short videos interspersing these interviews with digitized community materials (menus, advertisements, posters, etc.) or archived materials about/from the neighbourhood to tell a larger story about the lived experiences of that neighbourhood. Jeff Zeitler created a manual for the Seward Neighborhood Group Archive Committee on "How to Record the Oral History of Your Neighborhood." This may be a helpful start for your students thinking about the richness of their neighbourhood

as a source of information.

- Have students engage in oral histories with family members or elders and intersperse these stories with the family member's own materials. See Pier 21's digital stories as potential examples your students could replicate that focus on migration.
- Have students work through their understanding of, and implication in, different historical processes; see this example of elementary students engaging in digital stories to better understand the treaty relationships. Have them engage in archival research to find examples of how "we were there/they were there."
- Like Juan Pablo, students can interview someone who knows about an archival collection, such as the creator or the archivist, and digitize and create a story around the interaction between the stories the person told and the materials.

Other Resources for Digital Storytelling:

- Alexander, B. (2017). *The New Digital Storytelling: Creating narratives with new media*—Revised and Updated Edition. ABC-CLIO.
- Lambert, J. (2013). *Digital Storytelling: Capturing lives, creating community*. New York: Routledge.
- Ohler, J. B. (2013). *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New media pathways to literacy, learning, and creativity*. Corwin Press.

Digital Archive

Creating an Archive as a DHSS Assignment

Featuring work from Wendy Alejandra Medina De Loera's exhibit "The Making of a Digital Archive, By a Non-archivist: The David Wurfel Fonds"

A fairly substantial DHSS assignment your students could engage in, is a digital archive. A digital archive would involve the collection, organization, digitization, and description a corpus of materials and then publishing them in a public forum.

While an archive may seem to lack interpretative opportunities for your students, archival theory demonstrates that the archive is a *creation*, a piece of work that needs thoughtfulness and documentation to "argue for its existence" (Bacon 2013). When developed into an assignment, a digital archive can support many program learning outcomes, such as understanding the limits of knowledge; developing an applied and contextual digital literacy; and learning through the experience, the *experiential* learning, of selecting, organizing, digitizing, and posting a collection of materials.



Creating an archive in a digital space can invite students "to critically consider how the structure of the database [the archive] necessarily shapes the information they can retrieve" (drawing on Ehnes & Higston in Kennedy 2017, para. 30). They can think about how the archive is a *configuration* of materials, not an standalone object, created through a series of decisions. The "archive reveals those decisions, making clear the curatorial process of archive creation" (Bacon 2013, p. 77). With the foregrounding of one's decisions in creating an archive in/for a digital space, the archive can be imagined as scholarly "collaboration" that "offers new ways to share knowledge and create connections between scholars and the public" (Gardiner & Musto 2015, p. 99).

Although archives are often associated with the Humanities, creating a digital archive can also work in the Social Sciences, as our students in geography, anthropology, and political science have demonstrated.

Summary

Description:

- The collection, organization, digitization, description, and publication of a group of items

Possible tools/technologies:

- Omeka
- Scalar
- WordPress

Elements of Process:

- Identify a collection to archive
- Digitize items
- Organize items
- Assign metadata/descriptions to items
- Publish items

Size of assignment:

- Large

Difficulty:

- Moderate. The elements of the work is not difficult, but organizing and managing the whole assignment may be.

Developing an archive as an analytical assignment would require students to understand the archive as a product that is created, similar to an essay. To open up this discussion, I recommend assigning students the following articles. These articles are listed in order of least to most complicated so for lower-level undergraduates, you could assign them only the first reading and for advanced undergraduates, you could assign them all three:

- K.J. Rawson's "[The Rhetorical Power of Archival Description: Classifying Images of Gender Transgression](#)" based on the [Digital Transgender Archive](#) and the [Human Sexuality Collection](#) at Cornell University Library.
- Michelle Caswell's "[Inventing New Archival Imaginaries: Theoretical Foundations for Identity-Based Community Archives](#)," based on the [South Asian American Digital Archive \(SAADA\)](#)
- Wendy M. Duff and Verne Harris' "[Stories and Names: Archival description as narrating records and constructing meanings](#)" found in *Archival Science*, 2(3-4): 263-285.

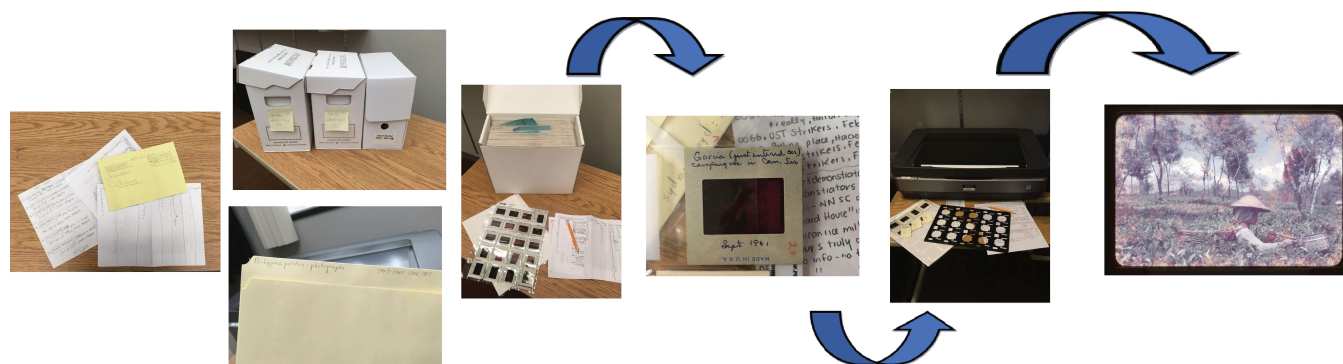
Before you begin digitization: Connect with the [Library](#) and establish a relationship for tools and support. We recommend developing a project charter with them to be clear about roles, responsibilities, and time commitments.

The process of creating an archive may seem daunting, but as a series of creative and analytical decisions about the ways materials are organized and accessed, an archive can be a stimulating project for your students.

While all our students in [this project](#) created an online archive, one student, [Wendy Alejandra Medina De Loera](#), was so engaged with the process of creating a digital archive that she reflected on this process in her exhibit, "[The Making of a Digital Archive, By a Non-Archivist](#)".

Visit her exhibit to learn about how she, as a non-archivist, even as a non-humanist, engaged in the [familiarization process](#), the [decision-making process](#), the process of [copyright clearance](#), and the process of description and [metadata](#) ascription to create a digital archive from the David Worfel fonds.

We've used Wendy's experience creating this archive as a way to break down the steps of an archive assignment for your students.



Wendy's process of creating an archive

Step 1: Layout the learning objectives with your students. Discuss the archive as a subjective and analytical object that is created. Use [readings and metadata samples](#) for discussion. Have your students visit [Wendy's](#) exhibit, "[The Making of a Digital Archive, By a Non-Archivist](#)" to learn about her process of creating a digital archive. It could also be helpful to have students look up the archival home of a primary source you have used and/or discussed in class to see how a primary source is contextualized within an archive.

Step 2: Have students identify what they'll [digitize](#) and archive. Identify materials for your students to archive and digitize. Material should be in the Public Domain, free from copyright, and/or have the appropriate permissions for digitization and publication. Click [here](#) for more about the process of selection. Once materials have been chosen, liaise with the Library to reaffirm timelines. [Digitizing](#), creating [metadata](#), and posting materials takes longer than you expect, as our [students will attest](#). For a course-based project, we recommend each student digitizes and archives no more than 10 to 20 unique items, for example 15 photographs or 5 pamphlets of 3 pages each. Also, identify if students will be digitizing and archiving or also [transcribing](#) items. Modify timelines accordingly.

Step 3: Draft out archive and the plan for completion. Developing a plan and establishing criteria for selection is a key element of creating an archive. Students should think about purpose, quality, and format of materials, as well as the time and resources they have available.

Also, as a *process* of creation and as an assignment, **encourage students to think about the organization of their archive as having a thesis or answering a research question.** These guiding ideas will influence description and metadata creation, which can be a very creative process. For example, the same material could be positioned differently if the material was collected to show the work of the creator or if it was collected to write or imagine a history of a community. Your students should become familiar with the Dublin Core, a metadata standard, and create a tracking mechanism, such as a form or a spreadsheet, to ensure the central datum is captured for each item. This organization is a key element of archival practice no matter which perspective you bring to it.

Step 4: Have students engage in digitization and metadata creation. As our project members will attest, both of these pieces take a lot of time and while this will take up the majority of their time in this project, your students should come to understand this work as the assignment, not the work that gets in the way of finishing the assignment. To support this, your students should formally track both their process as a way to track their learning and you should be evaluating them on the process and progress of their work.

Experiential learning, or learning by experience, involves four steps: *experience*, reflection, *abstraction*, and *next steps*. The steps are cyclical, so that *next steps* should (re)invite more *experience*. This model is an important way for you students to understand the work of the digital archive. Your students should not only think about the final product – the completed archive – but what they are learning through the *process* of creating such a big piece of work: how they are managing their time, articulating the scope of their work, breaking down the tasks, using what they know to solve problems, and how their work meets their purpose and/or method of presentation. All of these reflections should help students constantly adjust their work and workflows according to what they've been learning.

To encourage reflection, especially critical reflection, students should create field notes, a work log/blog, or even a wiki to track their progress and their learning. This reflective piece should be worth at least 10-20% of their grade to emphasize the importance process as much as final product.

Step 5: Have students write an introduction to the archive. Students could also create a video or audio introduction rather than a textual one. This introduction should introduce the materials but also the decisions that went into the way the materials can be accessed and used. In this introduction students should also reflect on the process of selection and description and how these materials could look different if created by a different archivist.

Archive suggestions for your students

- Work with the Library to identify if there are materials in their archives and special collections that could be digitized. There may be an ongoing digitization project that could benefit from the collaborative partnership of your students.

- Work with a community group or a smaller library or archive to see if they have materials that could be digitized.
- Work with a community group to organize and develop one's own archives. See The 519's [personal archiving project](#) for young Muslim women as an example.
- Have students create their own archive or an archive of their family. There are plenty of articles supporting the creation of personal archives; see for example the BBC's "[Why Everyone Has to be a Historian in the Digital Age](#)", the *Financial Times*' "[Personal Archives: Documenting the stories of our lives](#)" (will need to sign in or have institutional access to read), or The Smithsonian's Q&A on "[Taking Care of your Personal Archives](#)" republished by *The Atlantic*. The Library of Congress's blog *The Signal* provided a "[Where do you start](#)" guide for personal archiving projects.

Links to Other Assignments

- Archive Review – A critical report on a digital archive or edition from Battershill and Ross's *Using Digital Humanities in the Classroom*: [Assignment Sheet](#) with [Matching Rubric](#)
- Digital Edition – Creating your own digital text from Battershill and Ross's *Using Digital Humanities in the Classroom*: [Assignment Sheet](#) with [Matching Rubric](#)
- Digital Life-Writing – A narrative essay using social media from Battershill and Ross's *Using Digital Humanities in the Classroom*: [Assignment Sheet](#) with [Matching Rubric](#)
- Digital Mapping – Text to interactive project from Battershill and Ross's *Using Digital Humanities in the Classroom*: [Assignment Sheet](#) with [Matching Rubric](#)
- Evaluating Digital Humanities Projects – Ben Wright's [criteria](#) for undergraduate and graduate student evaluation of completed DH projects
- Mediated Text – A research paper on book history from Battershill and Ross's *Using Digital Humanities in the Classroom*: [Assignment Sheet](#) with [Matching Rubric](#)
- Novel Analysis – Created by Ashley Reese on behalf of University of South Florida's Scholar Commons: [Assignment sheet](#)
- Style Lab Report – A quantitative investigation of authorial style from Battershill and Ross's *Using Digital Humanities in the Classroom*: [Assignment Sheet](#) with [Matching Rubric](#)

On her [blog](#), Miriam Posner, assistant professor of information studies and digital humanities at the University of California, Los Angeles, provided descriptions for the following assignments:

- [Primary source gallery](#)
- [Digital scholarly edition](#)
- [Mapping](#)
- [Network visualization](#)
- [Computer-aided text analysis](#)
- [Historical 3D model](#)
- [Longform, media-rich narrative](#)

On his "[Introduction to Digital Humanities](#)" course page, Brian Croxall from Emory University has provided descriptions of his DH [Assignments](#):

- [Blogging](#)
- [Mapping a novel](#)
- [Evaluating Digital Humanities projects](#)
- [Sharing and re-networking novel](#)
- [Distant reading of poem](#)

Compiled August 5, 2018

Further Help

For further help in integrating DHSS into your teaching practice, York University's [Library](#) and [Teaching Commons](#) can provide support throughout the school year.

Author Information

With a PhD from York University in Education (2012) and a focus on meaningful learning in Canadian history education, Dr. Samantha Cutrara has become an expert in her field of teaching and learning history in both traditional and non-traditional sites of education.

As a *History Education Strategist*, Dr. Cutrara develops strategies, projects, and programs to help organizations and individuals teach history in interesting, meaningful, and comprehensive ways. This has been done by developing museum exhibits and related programming, writing curriculum and creating resources for archives, leading professional development sessions for educators, and building partnerships amongst organizations and individuals.

In 2017-2018, Dr. Cutrara was hired by the Office of the Vice Provost Academic at York University as a Curriculum Specialist to manage the Academic Innovation Project (AIF): Digital Humanities and Social Sciences for Teaching & Learning. In 2019, she continued her work at York University developing curriculum related to experiential education for the Office of the Associate Vice President, Teaching and Learning.

Dr. Cutrara's first manuscript, *Imagining a New "We": Canadian history education for the 21st century*, will be published by UBC Press in 2020.

Visit her website at www.SamanthaCutrara.com for more information about her work.

