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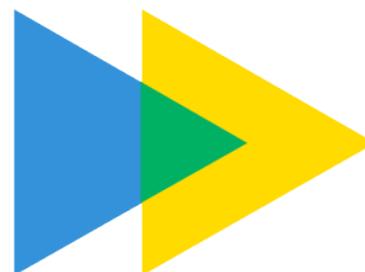
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Expanding Communities of Practice

The materials featured in this sixth issue of the *Journal of Digital Humanities* expose "communities of practice" in digital humanities beyond the constellations of people and institutions directly engaged in experimental and digitally-inflected scholarship. Communities of practice, socially constructed groups that form around shared interests or crafts, often generate forms of tacit knowledge that circulate informally. What distinguishes the works herein is their articulation of tacit knowledge produced during the course of project development. While they originate in diverse sites of digital humanities scholarship, these project strategically engage contingent audiences. Furthermore, each details conscious decisions that tailor its approach to collaborative creation and implementation.

A digital humanities project itself, *JDH* is both a member of and an advocate for the active and ever-growing community of scholars, professionals, and students who publish, share, and discuss their work

on the open web. Supported by the efforts and interests of over [10,000 readers](#) and [175 editors](#), *JDH* draws on contributions from graduate students, teachers, researchers, librarians, cultural heritage professionals, technologists, and others who surface material for [Digital Humanities Now](#), our affiliated, curated weekly publication. The first six issues of *JDH* alone represent contributions by over [100 authors](#) and ten faculty and graduate student staff editors.

By providing a formal publication venue for high-quality and salient digital humanities scholarship, *JDH* aims to broaden our communities of practice. We distribute gray literature that is timely and relevant, including scholarly research that utilizes digital tools or methods, provocations that thoughtfully engage the nuances and interrelated contexts of digital and traditional humanistic inquiry, and reports that reflect on intellectual and pragmatic project decisions. In doing so, we hope to historicize, contextualize, and make more transparent the often obscured or seemingly intuitive practices of digital humanities communities.

In the pieces that follow, each author explores situations that required balancing critical theory, the needs of the projects' constituents, and the mixed opportunities and constraints presented by a respective technology. Trey Conatser designed a composition course around a rhetorically-oriented markup scheme and, as a result, taught writing as a "metacognitive, iterative, and collaborative process." In "Changing Medium, Transforming Composition" Conatser argues that his XML-based composition course disrupted students' schemas for writing as they collaboratively encoded, revised, and shared documents. Rooted in a similar collaborative impulse, Kathryn Tomasek recounts the needs and challenges faced by social science historians and archivists as they develop TEI markup standards for manuscript financial records. Tomasek reports preliminary findings that suggest a

shared markup strategy has the potential to preserve the semantic values and tabular formatting of manuscript financial records for an invested community of scholars.

Looking beyond the walls of the academy, MediaNOLA connects students and researchers to the localized community of New Orleans and Tulane University. Vicki Mayer and Mike Griffith narrate the theory, rationale, and needs they considered while developing a community-centered platform for preserving and disseminating crowd-sourced stories of cultural production in New Orleans. Mayer and Griffiths describe collaborations between members of the project development team, initiatives to integrate service-learning into the university, and their successes reaching out to community partners. Candidly addressing choices about platforms and content development, Mayer and Griffiths's work suggests best practices for others interested in digital humanities projects that rely on community engagement.

Similarly, this issue's reviews highlight open-source tools created for digital humanists by digital humanists. Chuck Rybak considers his experience using CUNY's Commons In A Box as a community building, sharing, and publishing tool to expand students' sense of audience and to showcase multiple modes of humanistic inquiry. Rybak found that Commons In A Box encouraged students to write for a public audience by creating wiki resources, engaging in discussions, and making them the owners of their own educational data. Amber N. Wiley reviews her integration of MediaNOLA into her architecture course. Wiley's students contributed their original, scholarly research to help the New Orleans community preserve its place-based and musical cultural heritage. Projects like MediaNOLA, Wiley asserts, provide architecture a central place in digital humanities, as well as contemporary public history practice.

Each project highlighted in this issue occupies a different place within diverse and overlapping communities of practice, and were chosen with the "[community sourcing](#)" component of the *JDH* mission in mind. Gray literature found in institutional repositories, white papers produced for federal grant organizations, and conference talks all highlight tacit knowledge that, without a venue like *JDH*, might otherwise be inaccessible. For example, Conatser originally presented his course design at a campus talk, before revising it into a blog post for the HASTAC network of scholars, and then making further revisions for publication in *JDH*. Mayer and Griffith and Tomasek's papers are drawn from [an open repository of National Endowment for the Humanities](#) white papers. Grant programs such as [NEH's Start-up Grants](#) or [Institute of Museum and Library Services's Spark Grants](#) require white papers that review the grant's success, while other funders request narratives and reports. These grant-based materials deserve wider attention and circulation, as Sheila Brennan argues in her Fall 2012 article for *JDH*, because they "[provide intellectual rationales behind digital projects and illustrate the theory in practice.](#)"

Gray literature, such as these white papers, are less familiar forms of scholarly communication to humanists, whose research practices rarely include searching institutional repositories or federal databases. Yet the students, faculty, professionals, funders, and administrators looking for ways to become involved or informed about digital humanities can benefit from their wider and more visible recirculation. Our purpose is two-fold. First, we want to encourage, recognize, and improve the sharing of high-quality, open scholarship that addresses project management, development, theorization, and contextualization by distributing it to a larger and invested audience. Second, we believe that providing a formal publication venue for such scholarship moves tacit knowledge beyond closed circulation networks and serves a constant influx of new scholars into the "community of practice."

The Journal of Digital Humanities remains committed to improving upon existing publication practices as it aggregates content, brings scholarly work to formal publication more rapidly, and encourages more broadly the circulation of exemplary scholarship of lasting interest to the evolving, expanding, and always reconstituting community of readers interested in digital humanities. We are proud of *JDH* for being one of the largest collaborative digital humanities projects, but also for its ability to continually surface thoughtful examples of the broad scope of digital humanities practice.

Joan Fragazy Troyano and Lisa M. Rhody, Editors

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Changing Medium, Transforming Composition

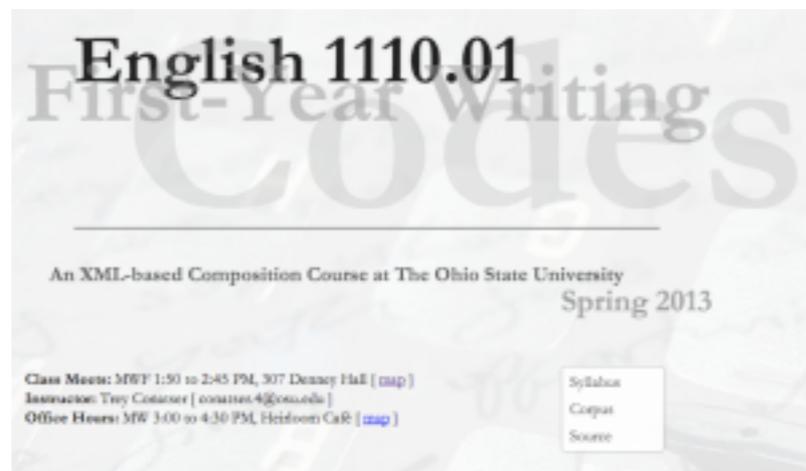


Figure 1: Class Corpus Home Page

Knowing only that they had registered for a first-year writing course, my Spring 2013 students walked into the first class meeting to discover that they had signed up for "Codes: An XML-based Composition Course" (Figure 1). Although most at the time weren't familiar with extensible markup language or even its acronym (XML), all could infer its nature as some kind of coding language. Popular media often represent code as profoundly illegible to the point that one can "read" it only as an aesthetic object (think of the vertical crush of green

symbols that ostensibly constitute the virtual world in the *Matrix* franchise). My course, however, argued that XML facilitates *hyper* legibility in the writing class. XML is a deeply rhetorical language, and it presents an opportunity to teach writing as a metacognitive, iterative, and collaborative process.

Composition scholars are increasingly calling our attention to "the new models of composing developing right in front of our eyes." They argue that writing in the 21st century is immersive, collaborative, and participatory; the writing class, then, should reflect these values and engage students with a variety of digital media.^[1] Composing videos, crafting audio essays, and analyzing social media profiles represent new and exciting ways of taking up what compositionist J. Elizabeth Clark calls "The Digital Imperative," but what about the text-based assignments that seem hopelessly old-fashioned in the face of such multimodality? My course intervenes at this point in the scholarly discourse with the conviction that the textual mode of composition and, in particular, the academic essay, remain viable and valuable ways of preparing students for writing in the 21st century.

First-year writing courses at Ohio State require students to complete a sequence of four analytical writing assignments and a [PechaKucha](#)-style presentation based on an artifact of the student's choice (Figure 2). Students most often choose to analyze the rhetoric of advertisements, film and television scenes and trailers, brief texts or excerpts of texts, songs, music videos, images, user interfaces, websites, and buildings. After selecting their artifacts, students compose (1) a primary source analysis that develops analytical claims and research questions that will yield compelling insights, (2) an annotated bibliography that establishes the relevance of a selection of secondary sources in pursuit of those research questions, (3) a secondary source integration that revises the primary source analysis with insights from and in response

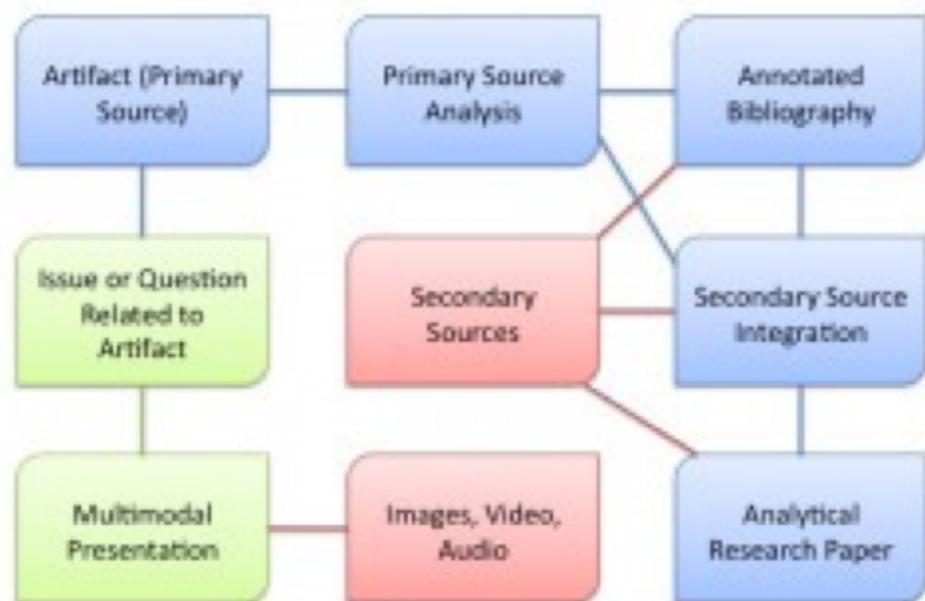


Figure 2: First-Year Writing at Ohio State

to the secondary sources from the annotated bibliography, and (4) an analytical research paper that substantiates an original claim about the artifact's rhetorical significance.

My course retained this framework of assignments but changed the medium of composition from word processing programs to [<oxygen/>](#), an XML editor. In spite of the proliferation of software programs, the word processor with its digital representation of an 8.5-inch by 11-inch sheet of white paper overwhelmingly remains the preferred medium and default user interface for composition. This course decoupled mode from medium, the word from the processor. XML is a descriptive markup language, meaning that XML tags for the most part describe what they enclose (“what is this?”) and don’t tell software what to do (“how should this look on a screen?”). For each assignment I specified

a markup scheme in line with its most urgent goals. Requiring students to compose and tag their writing within an XML editor ensured that they explicitly and deliberately identified their own rhetorical and compositional choices.

```

<seg type="ev_interp">
  <seg type="interpretation">
    Moreover, the device both threatens and supports the man's arm.
  </seg>
  <seg type="evidence">
    Rods taper to needle-like points uncomfortably close to the man's flesh, and a circular component just above the elbow seems to function as a clamp holding the arm in place: a buttress, or, conversely, a restraint.
  </seg>

```

Figure 3: XML Tags

XML inherently promotes metacognition because it requires writers to enclose portions of their text in descriptive tags. XML can be broken down into three pieces: the element, the attribute, and the attribute value. Enclosing content in descriptive tags structured like Russian dolls, one inside the other inside the other (ordered hierarchy of content objects or OHCO is the technical term for this protocol), writers have the freedom to name any part of their composition anything that they want, as many times as they want to name it. In Figure 3, for example, a segment element whose type attribute carries a value of "ev_interp" contains two segment elements whose type attributes carry values of "interpretation" and "evidence." The medium itself requires writers to compose deliberately, in specific terms regarding the task at hand. Rhetorically-oriented markup schemes make assignment goals explicit in a way that traditional prompts simply can not; they provide consistent opportunities during the writing process to reflect critically on whether the composition is successfully working toward the assigned goals.

To make the writing process iterative, collaborative, and participatory my students worked on a single "corpus" file housed in a version

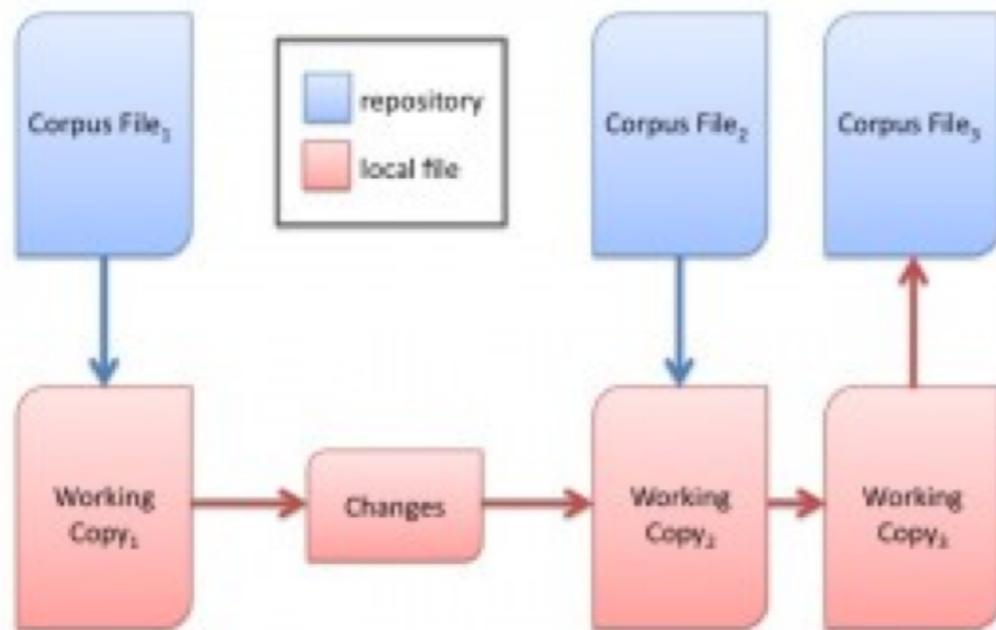


Figure 4: SVN Process

control repository. The 24 students in my class composed every assignment on an XML file that, by the end of the semester, reached over 42,000 lines in length and was edited over 1,300 times. In addition to the major assignments — primary source analysis, annotated bibliography, secondary source integration, analytical research paper — the corpus file also included daily assignments, notes, comments, and links to non-textual objects such as images and PowerPoint presentations.[2] When students began a work session they first opened the editing software's built-in SVN (subversion) client, from which they retrieved the most current version of the working copy from the repository. After editing the file, perhaps adding new material or revising work they had already done, they once again updated their working copy to the most current version from the repository (to reflect any changes made after their initial update) and "committed" the local file as the newest version of the corpus (Figure 4).

Revision	Date	Changes	Author	Message
166	2013-01-23 14:38:42	1		Updated BACKpost1 finally.
165	2013-01-23 14:36:00	1		Mark up to [REDACTED] for Postback 1
164	2013-01-23 14:35:04	1		Edited my backpost
163	2013-01-23 14:34:31	1		Photos fixed
162	2013-01-23 14:31:29	1		Fixed images in BACKpost 1
161	2013-01-23 14:30:59	1		Yep!
160	2013-01-23 14:27:58	1		wrote my name in
159	2013-01-23 14:24:35	1		wrote a response for [REDACTED] backpost
158	2013-01-23 14:09:02	1		Fixed back post 1
157	2013-01-23 14:08:13	1		Fixed back post 1
156	2013-01-23 14:11:42	1		Updated 3rd image URL for BACKpost #1.
155	2013-01-23 14:11:05	1		Put some finishing touches on my backpost 1 and got the images to link.
154	2013-01-23 14:11:15	1		Fixed back post 1
153	2013-01-23 14:10:14	1		Edited my backpost

Figure 5: SVN Commit Log

The use of colors in the playbill show that the wicked person is not always the one who we believe is wicked.

```
<ptr type="note" target="summary_assessment_5"/>
<note resp="instructor" xml:id="summary_assessment_5">
```

A transitional gesture would benefit the analysis and argument here. The previous paragraph attempts to nail down a definition of wickedness, while this paragraph seems intent to destabilize that definition via the primary source's visual rhetoric.

```
</note> An explanation for this is because often times we misunderstand the true meaning
```

```
<ptr type="note" target="summary_assessment_6"/>
<note resp="instructor" xml:id="summary_assessment_6">
```

By <ptr true meaning/> do you refer to the definition suggested in the previous paragraph?

```
</note>
```

of what is wickedness. The word, <ptr wicked/> is written in white to symbolize this

The use of colors in the playbill show that the wicked person is not always the one who we believe is wicked. [24] An explanation for this is because often times we misunderstand the true meaning [25] of what is wickedness. A transitional gesture would benefit the analysis and argument here. The previous paragraph attempts to nail down a definition of wickedness, while this paragraph seems intent to destabilize that definition via the primary source's visual rhetoric.

to symbolize this fact. This is because the actions of [REDACTED] understood by those around them. When the wicked witch's [REDACTED] Dorothy's house, Elphaba just wanted to remember her [REDACTED] he acts the wicked witch performed to steal the slippers [REDACTED] food that Glinda, the good witch, stole the slippers from [REDACTED] Elphaba in a fit of jealousy. Elphaba's actions were indeed evil, there is no doubt about that; however, Glinda's actions were wicked. Because of this, the white witch is the one who ends up being the wicked witch. The use of the white lettering in the title then shows this by using the white coloring of the letters. [26]

Figure 6: Feedback Markup and HTML Output

Requiring all students to update a single file reinforced the writing process as iterative and granular because each commit or editing session represented a focused and discrete task (Figure 5). Rather than the word processor's blank page and blinking cursor, students saw the SVN client's accretive commit log. The intellectually paralyzing proposition of producing a finished (or even finish-able) piece of writing in a single sitting dissolved in the solution of manageable tasks;

completing an assignment seemed like a sculptor shaping stone, not a magician conjuring the statue.

More importantly, the corpus's radical transparency made everyone's work visible to their colleagues, encouraging collaborative learning and providing an embodied and immediate audience: the holy grail of writing classes. Otherwise ephemeral and private marginalia such as peer and instructor comments become a lasting and public part of the corpus file and its HTML output (Figure 6), tracing a more complete model of writing and research processes.[3] Students consulted the class corpus both informally and with specific questions or problems in mind: for example, surveying how others approached a particular assignment, or getting a sense of how the instructor responded to others' assignments. The more information available to students, the more they were empowered to take command of their work.

The visibility of commit records piling up in the SVN history log also revealed how ideas and arguments develop incrementally in a public forum. Whereas Kathleen Fitzpatrick suggests a dichotomy between "editorial and curatorial labor" and "the production of new texts," the transparency of the corpus file encouraged students to conceive of the former as a way of approaching the latter.[4] It revealed the production of new texts *as* labor — the putting-together and modification of ideas — as opposed to the divine conception that students anxiously associate with isolated production. The root node `<teiCorpus>` contained all material in the corpus file, and child `<TEI>` nodes with "`@xml:id`" attribute values of "`surname_firstname`" contained each student's unique work. For comments in a colleague's `<TEI>` element we used `<note>` elements with "`@resp`" (responsibility) attributes whose values matched the commenters' `<TEI>` "`@xml:id`" attribute values (Figure 7). The corpus format reified authorship as the attribution of intellectual work and property to individuals ("who did

what?") but it also emphasized authorship as visible, participatory, and deliberate: as public-a(c)tion.

```
<teiCorpus>
  <!-- metadata here -->
  <TEI xml:id="lastname1_firstname1">
    <!-- student 1's work -->
  </TEI>
  <TEI xml:id="lastname2_firstname2">
    <!-- student 2's work -->
  </TEI>
  <TEI xml:id="lastname3_firstname3">
    <!-- student 3's work -->
  </TEI>
  <!-- and so on, for as many students in the class -->
</teiCorpus>
```

Figure 7: Basic Corpus Structure

```

<div data-bbox="70 60 455 895" data-label="Code-Block">


```

<div data-bbox="70 60 455 895" data-label="Code-Block">

```


```

Figure 8: Transforming an Annotated Bibliography Entry

Viewing work as we're used to seeing it on the printed page allows a limited range of reflection; the ability to filter and rearrange tagged content further bolsters the metacognition inherent in XML composition. Because XML does not tell a computer what to do, an additional language (extensible stylesheet language or XSL) was required to "transform" the corpus into browser-readable HTML, and some basic [jQuery UI](#) widgets and effects made the output instructively dynamic. Along with XML, then, XSL facilitates rhetorical analysis and metacognition.^[5]

XSL transformations (XSLT) allow students to view their texts not only as discrete entities but also as filtered compilations (with attributions) of all approaches to specific tasks. For the first-day writing exercise, students could filter the corpus to hone in on everyone's previous writing experiences, important reading experiences, initial thoughts on the course theme and format, or expectations for their classwork. In this case, XSLT allowed students to see how their colleagues responded to specific aspects of the assignment prompt, and they also began to think about their work not as an undifferentiated blob of text but as a complex rhetorical mechanism that attempts to perform several tasks simultaneously.

Comparing students' work, however, represents only one aspect of XSL's flexibility. For the primary source analysis, students viewed interpretive statements about their artifacts in connection with the descriptive statements that they tagged as evidence for those specific interpretations. By filtering out the rhetorical "noise" of the text in its entirety, students were able to fine-tune specific aspects of their work (Figure 9). Lastly, file links in the XML translate to embedded objects in the browser user interface, presenting nonlinguistic items (images, videos, audio), which writing instructors historically have treated as ancillary to and disconnected from orthographic composition, as

integral to the rhetorical situation. Only the XML markup scheme limits the possibilities of XSLT, and I've included the markup scheme for each major assignment as an appendix.

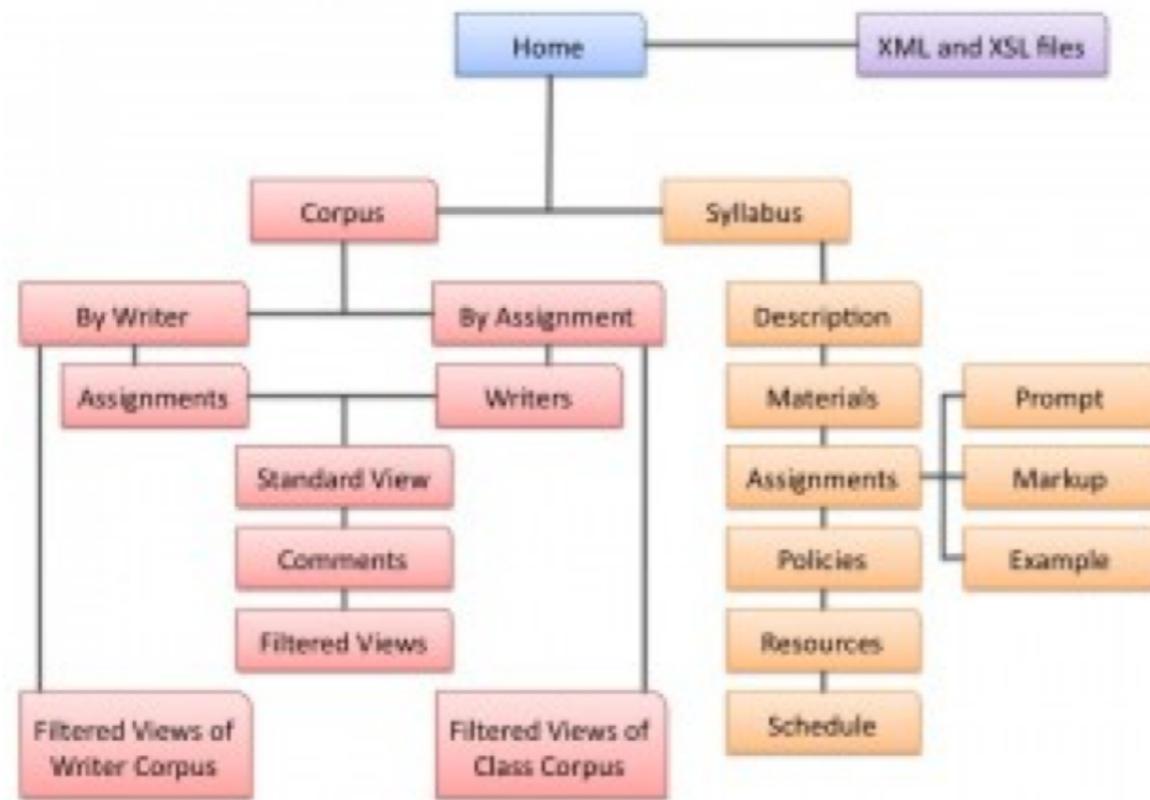


Figure 9: Corpus Site Map

One may question if markup actually expands our metacognitive repertoire, or if it's just the latest way of standardizing the writing process. Requiring students to follow a markup scheme risks teaching writing as a formulaic process (or, to take it one step further, as a digital incarnation of the infamously inflexible five-paragraph essay). The solution is to privilege *rhetorical* markup over *structural* markup. Each assignment's scheme told students *what* to tag, but not *where* to tag it. For the analytical research paper, students tagged considerations of the artifact's medium, but this could happen anywhere in the assignment, as many or as few times as needed. With such freedom

came serious consideration of why one had chosen to arrange a composition in a particular way. "Form, not formula" became a battle cry. Far from simplifying the writing process into a fill-in-the-blank exercise, markup-based composition deftly integrates the active reflection on formal choices as long as the markup scheme privileges rhetorical concepts.

Student feedback confirmed the metacognitive benefits of composing in XML. "I had to deliberately think about *how* I was writing, not just what I was writing," one student remarked. "The tags, at first, were a pain because they made me rewrite many sentences but once I understood their purpose, they helped focus my thoughts so that at the end of the papers I accomplished my goal." In course evaluations students reported that composing in XML according to specific markup schemes led them to think critically about what they were doing and why they were doing it. Just as importantly, they appreciated and learned from the corpus's transparency, which led them to approach classwork and class meetings as collaborative efforts. "The most surprising affordance from the format was being able to see my classmates' work," the same student explained. "I could read their work to gather ideas about what to write about and learn from everyone's different styles of writing." Lastly, students considered all assignments and compositions as working in concert to realize course goals because the corpus file preserved and centralized every effort, from the granular and ephemeral to the holistic and sustained. As another student commented, "It was also very cool to see how the topic manifested from a single source to a whole body of work."^[6]

Based on my use of XML in the freshman composition classroom, I found that markup, especially XML, promotes metacognition and collaboration in ways that merit further exploration in teaching and scholarship. My class met and exceeded the goals of the First-Year

Writing Program at Ohio State, but I'm not content to make such a localized argument. The XML- and corpus-based writing class merits adoption as a standard course offering at any postsecondary institution. With such growth in mind, I offer the following reflections and recommendations:

1. I used `<oxygen/>` because I was familiar with it, but there may be better XML editors for teaching composition and rhetorical analysis. I explicitly set out *not* to teach programming, and I chose XML because of its proximity to natural language and its emphasis on description over procedure. `<oxygen/>` requires writers to follow [Text Encoding Initiative guidelines](#), which distance XML from "natural" description for the sake of standardization. This obviously helps scholars and editors who want to produce electronic texts that will be legible to other scholars and editors, but the primary audience for the class corpus is the class itself. For a writing class, the tag `<evidence>` is more pedagogically useful than the TEI-compliant tag `<seg type="evidence">`.
2. Creating and teaching the course is time-intensive for a single writing instructor. I taught myself XSLT, HTML, CSS, and Javascript as the course went along, learning primarily from free tutorials, message boards, and trial-and-error. As a post-coursework, pre-dissertation graduate student I was able to commit to such a time investment (only for the one semester, and at great cost to my exam reading), but an instructor with other professional responsibilities couldn't have spared the time and energy. Were a department to offer the course, the browser-side programming would need to be developed beforehand, and ideally by professional programmers, so that instructors could focus exclusively on the XML corpus file. Tweaking extant XSL based on specific needs is a thimble-full of water compared to the ocean of composing XSL from scratch. I insist that instructors need to retain the ability to

modify the stylesheets in order to preserve students' ability to determine how they want to see their work; otherwise, we risk forcing all course sections into a "one size fits all" metacognitive model.

3. Students need a comprehensive and multimodal set of tutorials. Narrated screen-capture videos would have worked much better than the textual instructions that I distributed at the beginning of the semester. Again, time presents a barrier; the tutorials would need to be available *to* the instructor and not *by* the instructor. Class meetings are a precious resource that shouldn't be squandered on recurring technical or procedural problems. My class as a whole did not internalize the commit protocols for the subversion repository, and especially when major due dates loomed students accidentally erased each other's work. Restoring lost material from previous versions isn't impossible or even difficult, but it becomes tedious and time consuming when multiple users forget to update their working copies before committing to the repository. Those who followed the protocols became frustrated when others' mistakes affected their own work, and this speaks to the degree of accountability that the corpus format instilled.
4. The XML-based writing course should be listed as such in course catalogs. My effort was isolated and without precedent; thus, it appeared in the catalog as a standard first-year writing section. Scheduling classes is often a house of cards for undergraduates, and we shouldn't assume that they have the freedom to switch sections if the format proves unproductively challenging or alienating.

[Code.org](#) is running a well-publicized campaign to make computer science and programming a universal educational opportunity, while commentators hail coding as "the new second language."^[7] Careerist pragmatism has a well-documented history of provoking unease

among humanities scholars, and Peg Tyre's term "second language" implies an entirely new array of literacies that instructors must address *in addition to* those for which they're already responsible. In the writing class, however, code need not be considered a second language, a supplement to the "real" work to be done, nor the death knell of the embattled "life of the mind." As digital humanities scholar Matthew Kirschenbaum notes, code is "a unique and startling way of looking at the world...in fact, a kind of world-making."^[8]

The XML-based writing class treats code as a startling way of thinking and making. It transforms a medium originally adopted (by humanities scholars) for the transcription of extant texts into a medium for the composition of new texts. The metacognition and collaboration that it promotes are a way of practicing not only writing, but also humanities in the 21st century.

Acknowledgements:

I am indebted first and foremost to Dr. H Louie Ulman, Director of Digital Media Studies and Associate Professor of English at The Ohio State University. Dr. Ulman's graduate course in electronic textual editing spurred my interest in XML, and he generously served as an adviser (and promoter) for all my efforts in preparing and teaching "Codes." I'm also grateful for the support of Dr. Edgar Singleton, Director of First-Year Writing at Ohio State, who indulged a first-year GTA's desire to bite off what very well could have been more than he was able to chew. Software developers Mike Conley and Will Smelser provided valuable insight and troubleshooting, especially regarding XSLT, HTML, CSS, and Javascript. The most credit, however, goes to the 24 students who bravely stuck with me all semester long and emerged as part of the avant-garde of a changing educational landscape. Without their thoughtful and diligent efforts the class

wouldn't have been such a transformative experience. This article originated as a talk for "CODE: Codified Objects Define Evolution," a panel sponsored by the [Digital Arts and Humanities Working Group](#) at The Ohio State University on March 18, 2013. The script became a [blog post](#) for the Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Advanced Collaboratory ([HASTAC](#)), which was featured as a [Digital Humanities Now](#) Editors' Choice for April 2013.

Originally published by Trey Conatser on [April 18, 2013](#) and revised for the *Journal of Digital Humanities* August 2013.

The markup scheme for each major assignment can be found in the Code Appendix for this article.

Notes:

^[1] Kathleen Blake Yancey, "Writing in the 21st Century," National Council of Teachers of English (Feb. 2009): 7, http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Press/Yancey_final.pdf (quotation); J. Elizabeth Clark, "The Digital Imperative: Making the Case for a 21st-Century Pedagogy," *Computers and Composition* 27 (2010): 28.

^[2] Because files stored via Google Code are publicly accessible and freely searchable, I used [Assembla](#), which provides free, private storage so that student information would remain confidential (we used names as unique identifiers).

^[3] All communication pertaining to grades, of course, remained a private matter between each student and the instructor.

[4] Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 78-80.

[5] I wrote the XSL files and didn't make them available to students, not for a desire to exercise authority but as a fulfillment of my initial promise that the course would in no way involve procedural programming. It's useful for writing students to think about how they want to view their work with respect to tagged content, but considering the rhetoric and writing course's goals, it's not useful to task students with learning XSL's comparatively restrictive lexicon and syntax. The XML-based writing class is not a programming class.

[6] Student feedback forms in author's possession.

[7] Peg Tyre, "Is Coding the New Second Language?" *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 24, 2013, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/ideas-innovations/Is-Coding-the-New-Second-Language-208882061.html>.

[8] Matthew Kirschenbaum, "Hello Worlds: Why Humanities Students Should Learn to Program," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan. 23, 2009, <http://chronicle.com/article/Hello-Worlds/5476>.

Code Appendix for “Changing Medium, Transforming Composition”

Appendix A: Selections from Major Assignment Markup Schemes

Primary Source Analysis

- In at least one paragraph match evidence (details) from the primary source with the interpretations you draw from them:

```
<seg type="ev_interp">
```

```
<seg type="evidence">evidence (details) from the  
primary source</seg>
```

```
<seg type="interpretation">interpretation based  
on corresponding evidence</seg>
```

```
</seg>
```

- Tag all research questions at the end of the PSA with unique xml:id identifiers:

```
<seg type="research_question"  
xml:id="surname_rq_#">research question</seg>
```

- Tag a moment of the PSA when you complicate the seemingly obvious:

```
<seg type="complication">text here</seg>
```

- Tag at least one exact repetition that you find in the primary source:

```
<seg type="pattern">text here</seg>
```

- Tag a moment of the PSA when you identify a strand: a pattern of approximate (not exact) repetition:

```
<seg type="strand">text here</seg>
```

- Define one binary—an organizing contrast—that you are identifying in or from the primary source:

```
<seg type="binary_a">text here</seg>
```

```
<seg type="binary_b">text here</seg>
```

- Tag an anomaly in the primary source as well as your explanation of the significance of that anomaly:

```
<seg type="anomaly">text here</seg>
```

```
<seg type="anomaly_sig">text here</seg>
```

Annotated Bibliography

- Markup structure for each annotated bibliography entry; possible type attributes are "book" for a consistently authored book, "chapter" for a separately authored chapter in a collection or anthology of separately authored chapters in a book, "pr_article" for a scholarly, peer reviewed article from an academic journal, "np_article" for a newspaper article, "m_article" for a magazine article, "o_article" for other article types:

```
<bibl type="type_here" xml:id="id_here"
```

```
n="alphabetical_organizer"> MLA Works Cited Entry
```

```
<note type="ab_annotation"
corresp="xml:id_of_corresponding_research_questio
n"> Annotation here.</note>
</bibl>
```

- Professional status of author or authors for each entry:

```
<seg type="author">text here</seg>
```

- Main argument for each entry:

```
<seg type="main_argument">text here</seg>
```

- Relevance of each entry to your primary source, primary source analysis, and/or research questions:

```
<seg type="relevance">text here</seg>
```

Secondary Source Integration

- Tag in your introduction and/or conclusion your preliminary thesis, however vague it may be. Tag each part of the thesis within the overall thesis tag; see the *Writing Analytically* sections on incorporating tension and complexity into your thesis:

```
<seg type="thesis">
```

```
<seg type="thesis_part">text here</seg>
```

```
<seg type="thesis_part">text here</seg>
```

```
</seg>
```

- Tag the sequence or line of thought when you cite a secondary source to extend your line of thought:

```
<seg type="integrating_sources">
```

```
<seg type="me">your initial insight about the
primary source</seg>
```

```
<seg type="source">citation/integration of
related insight(s) from a secondary source</seg>
```

```
<seg type="synthesis">your new, clarified,
qualified, or modified insight(s)</seg>
```

```
</seg>
```

Analytical Research Paper

- Tag your thesis whenever it occurs in your ARP, as many times as it evolves. Tag each part of the thesis within the overall thesis tag; see the *Writing Analytically* sections on incorporating tension and complexity into your thesis:

```
<seg type="thesis">
```

```
<seg type="thesis_part">text here</seg>
```

```
<seg type="thesis_part">text here</seg>
```

```
</seg>
```

- Tag whenever you explore the significance of the primary source's audience:

```
<seg type="audience">text here</seg>
```

- Tag whenever you explore the significance of the primary source's medium:

```
<seg type="medium">text here</seg>
```

- Tag whenever you explore the significance of the primary source's author(s), creator(s), host(s), sponsor(s), etc.:

```
<seg type="author">text here</seg>
```

- At least twice tag an insight that you then explore in terms of its significance—in other words, following the *so what?* question—

repeat the `<seg type="so_what">` as many times as necessary, assigning the same value for the `corresp` attribute linking all so what? explorations back to the same original insight:

```
<seg type="insight"
xml:id="lastname_insight_#">text here</seg>
<seg type="so_what"
corresp="lastname_insight_#">text here</seg>
```

Appendix B: Example Primary Source Analysis with Markup^[1]

```
<div type="primary_source_analysis" n="1" xml:id="psa_example_1">
<head type="student_name" n="1">J. Q. Student</head>
<head type="instructor_name" n="2">Trey Conatser</head>
<head type="class" n="3">English 1110.01</head>
<head type="date" n="4">04 February 2012</head>
<head type="paper_title" n="5">Primary Source Analysis</head>
<p>
<seg type="introduction">
Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison's <title level="a">Summer Arm</title>, a mixed media (though mostly photographic) piece in their <title level="m">Counterpoint</title> series, presents us with a mechanical apparatus holding the outstretched arm of a man whose body for the most part lies beyond the frame.
<seg type="pattern">
Atop the arm grow three clusters of plants, including Black-eyed Susans, a Tiger Lily, and small fern stalks.
</seg>
```

```
<seg type="pattern">
```

Four butterflies of varying colors and an insect of an uncertain type fly around the flowers in front of the flat, off-white background.

```
</seg>
```

```
<seg type="thesis">
```

```
<seg type="thesis_part">
```

<title level="a">Summer Arm</title> therefore consists both compositionally and conceptually of three major parts: the mechanical, the human, and the natural, a triad that the ParkeHarrisons have made the focus of most, if not all of their work.

```
</seg>
```

```
<seg type="thesis_part">
```

In addition to raising questions about the nature of each of these parts, <title level="a">Summer Arm</title> leads us to reconsider how much they feed into or push back against each other.

```
</seg>
```

```
</seg>
```

```
</seg>
```

```
</p>
```

```
<p>
```

The apparatus occupies roughly the bottom fourth of the image.

```
<seg type="ev_interp">
```

```
<seg type="evidence">
```

Hard right angles and sickle-like curves convey a harshness and coldness matched by the silver and black of the skeletal pieces. Though obviously mechanical, the device also appears to have been assembled idiosyncratically;

```
<seg type="pattern">
```

the irregular knobs, connectors, and sections

</seg>

may very well have been scrounged from a scrap pile.

</seg>

<seg type="interpretation">

At best, therefore, the apparatus suggests a moral ambivalence; while it unavoidably points to the impersonal, mass fabrication of modern industry, it also represents a creative recycling of available resources, the castoff detritus from the engines of consumption and waste.

</seg>

</seg>

<seg type="ev_interp">

<seg type="interpretation">

Moreover, the device both threatens and supports the man's arm.

</seg>

<seg type="evidence">

Rods taper to needle-like points uncomfortably close to the man's flesh, and a circular component just above the elbow seems to function as a clamp holding the arm in place: a buttress, or, conversely, a restraint.

</seg>

</seg>

</p>

<p>

Thus, we question whether the man himself constructed the apparatus or if he simply was placed in it. His upturned arm appears hyperextended, and his shirtsleeve has been rolled back; overall, the body's position recalls the act of giving blood or having a blood sample

taken, in both cases the loss of vivifying, essential fluid. Furthermore, the man's head bolsters the appearance of exhaustion.

<seg type="anomaly">

Though we see only the very top of his head, it clearly tilts deeply in the direction of the extended arm

</seg>,</p>

<seg type="anomaly_sig">

perhaps compensating for the awkward hyperextension, or perhaps resting out of sheer exhaustion. Indeed, we don't know how long the man has been in the apparatus; if the plants actually have grown on his arm, he may very well have been in this position for quite a while.

</seg>

</p>

<p>

Returning to the question of purpose, the <hi rend="italics">why</hi> of the image's representation, we look to the plants themselves.

<seg type="binary_a">

Utility

</seg>

does not underwrite their cultivation; rather, the

<seg type="binary_b">

whimsy

</seg>

of their variety indicates that they function more as a sign of the color and bounty of summer's flora. Put simply, the man doesn't seem to be accomplishing anything substantial in the world. Growing the plants, then, evinces less of

<seg type="binary_a">

a material goal

</seg>

—human use or natural restoration—and more of

<seg type="binary_b">

a ceremonial devotion

</seg>.

Because we have no context for the ritual, because instead of on lush scenery the image foregrounds the situation atop a depthless, ascetic, white matte, the tone strikes the viewer not as celebratory but as elegiac.

</p>

<p>

Again, the ParkeHarrisons imply narrative through the questions that we're led to ask: what is the purpose of the ritual, if it is a ritual in the first place? what does the ritual elegize, and if it does elegize something, what led to that loss? At this point a narrative of ecological decline or even disaster isn't beyond the pale, and we wouldn't be out of line in postulating for the man the role of a minister of a forgotten religion.

<seg type="complication">

Despite the clear differences between the mechanical, the human, and the natural, complicating similarities slyly lie behind the organizing contrasts.

<seg type="strand">

The vertical lines of the mechanical apparatus continue in the more organic form of the plants' stems and leaves beyond the perpendicular horizon of the man's arm.

</seg>

Compositionally speaking, then, the human either divides the natural from the mechanical, or it represents a blend of the two. We often invoke technology and industry as antithetical to nature, but in <title level="a">Summer Arm</title> their purpose is specifically to support natural growth, which then attracts the additional life of the butterflies and bee-like insect. Of course, this use of mechanical technology results not from large-scale efforts but from an individual's ritualistic bricolage.

</seg>

</p>

<p>

<seg type="conclusion">

<title level="a">Summer Arm</title> leads us to several larger questions about the ParkeHarrisons' work.

<seg type="research_question" xml:id="student_rq_1">

Despite the implication that industry and technology destroy the natural world, to what degree do the ParkeHarrisons present (and endorse) the possibility that they can be harnessed as ecological adjuncts?

</seg>

<seg type="research_question" xml:id="student_rq_2">

Like the man in <title level="a">Summer Arm</title>, do the ParkeHarrisons make their artworks as elegies or as the kind of patched-together scaffolds on which the human may foster growth?

</seg>

<seg type="research_question" xml:id="student_rq_3">

Just what sort of sacrifice or support does nature require from us?

</seg>

<seg type="research_question" xml:id="student_rq_4">

Ultimately, how can we negotiate Summer Arm's various <q>selves</q>—aesthetic object, abstract symbolism, programmatic allegory, call to action, and, finally, material object whose very composition involves the mechanical-human-natural triad that it represents?

</seg>

</seg>

</p>

</div>

Notes:

[1] Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison, *Summer Arm*, mixed media, <http://static.icompendium.com/artistInfo/parkehar/big/284.jpg?o>.

Encoding Financial Records

Introduction^[1]

“[A]ccount books,” business historian Judith McGaw noted in 1985, “are among the most common but least accessible primary sources for historians...” In the intervening twenty-seven years, historians have made use of these rich sources to produce a range of articles and monographs, but few digitization projects have tackled financial records directly.^[2]

Some standardized electronic data has long been available to social science historians. The [Minnesota Population Center’s Integrated Public Use Microdata Series](#) provides harmonized data for U.S. and international population studies. The [National Historic Geographic System](#) provides data for United States historical geography, as does the [Great Britain Historical Geographic Information System](#) for Britain. A current initiative of the European Science Foundation, the [European Historical Population Samples Network](#), seeks “to create a common format for databases containing information on persons, families and households.” And while a strong tradition of monographs and journals in economic history has resulted from investigation of

archival financial records, no comparable project exists for their digitization.^[3]

In August 2011, a group of historians, archivists, and technologists met at Wheaton College in Massachusetts to discuss initial steps towards developing standards for markup and metadata for manuscript financial records using [TEI](#). Drawing on the expertise developed by pioneering projects at the [Massachusetts Historical Society](#), the [University of Virginia](#), and [MIT](#), this group explored the current state of affairs through discussion of problems and case studies, proposed some paths forward, and identified model projects to test those paths.

The first section of this paper describes the desirability of developing models and standards for markup of financial records. Data modeling will require further investigation, and the second section outlines some of the challenges presented by manuscript financial records. The third demonstrates the potential and limitations of existing TEI elements, especially the <measure> element. Examples are drawn from the Project Director’s work on the [Wheaton College Digital History Project](#).

Discussion of these models points to broad research potential should large numbers of financial records be marked up in standard formats. The examples also sketch out some of the parameters of the problem space for developing a more comprehensive tag-set capable of expressing the complexities of historical financial records, especially if guidelines can be established for expressing the more complex semantic values to be found in many types of historical financial records. One possible method that is currently being explored involves standoff markup using an investigational new tag-set, a so-called “transactionography.” The final section outlines some principles to be followed in considering development of this tag-set.

Financial Records in Historical Research

A genre of primary sources that includes such materials as bills and receipts, cashbooks, transaction journals and account ledgers, financial records are abundant in traditional archives. Most current digitization projects do not capture some of the more complex semantic values within the records, and if they do, they have yet to develop a common method for fully expressing these semantic values. For example, the [Bethlehem Digital History Project](#) displays images of a few extracts from business ledgers. The [Railroads in the Making of Modern America](#) at the University of Nebraska includes a few transcriptions of payroll records for railroad employees, and this information is stored in a searchable database. In these cases, the financial information is neither comprehensive nor presented in a manner that can be leveraged efficiently by researchers.

In the Project Director's field alone, the wealth of monographs produced since 1990 speaks to the abundance of archival financial records and their utility for historians of the early United States. Since documentary projects at the Massachusetts Historical Society and the University of Virginia coincide with the Project Director's chronological field, the activities conducted under this award focused on this rather narrow geographical and chronological area.[4]

Thus our discussions of such documents only begins to suggest the research opportunities that might eventually be available should large numbers of financial records be digitally accessible in machine processable form. As editors of the [Alcalá Account Book Project](#) have noted with regard to their digital edition of the account books of the Royal Irish College of Saint George the Martyr in Alcalá, such records promise "insight into the day-to-day running of the college with valuable information on diet, discipline, and domestic matters." Should additional accounts from similar institutions be transcribed

and marked up in standard fashion, the value of such insights would be enhanced considerably.[5]

At the Massachusetts Historical Society, editors have used TEI in the creation of digital editions of the [Adams Family Papers](#), the previously produced print editions of the Adams Papers, and a collection of Thomas Jefferson documents. In the production of those editions, they have encountered the limits of TEI for markup of financial records found within those collections. Reflecting similar dissatisfaction with the limits of the current system, editors of the [Papers of George Washington](#) at the University of Virginia are transcribing Washington's financial papers into a relational database. Their data will be convertible into TEI-conformant XML, but at this time the sheer volume of documents to be transcribed prevents the project's leaders from using the underdeveloped potentials of the TEI guidelines for this type of manuscript.

Features and Challenges of Historical Financial Records

Financial records share certain structural characteristics with such other genres of historical records as plague bills, theatre returns, and probate records. Documents from such genres are generally represented as lists or tables, and in many cases they include numerical sums that may or may not extend to totals across pages. This apparent regularity presents perhaps the most significant challenge for those who seek to mark up such records, as it often collapses in use. Thus such tabular records tend to include information that cannot be represented through simple transcription of tabular layout. In fact, they tend to contain significant variations and idiosyncrasies, often within the same document or collection.

In the subgenre of double entry accounts, the impulse to keep regular records produced a set of standards for assigning particular semantic values to financial information. By the eighteenth century, an influential textbook offered ordinary businessmen an opportunity to learn how to keep regular accounts. But the popularity of Scottish economist John Mair's *Book-keeping Methodiz'd; or, A methodical treatise of Merchant-accompts, according to the Italian form* did not guarantee perfect adherence to his principles.

Seeming regularity extends beyond double-entry accounts and can appear in numerous forms. For example, one might expect theatre receipts recorded on printed forms to display information quite systematically. Such regularity does indeed characterize the rectos of printed forms used by the *Comédie Française*. The versos however often include such additional types of information as cast lists with marked irregularity. Such lists offer significant information despite their rather haphazard distribution throughout the collection. In other cases, simple prose journals often contain financial information recorded either regularly or intermittently. Authors frequently flipped notebooks, creating texts that operated as prose journals in one direction and financial records in the other.[6] John Adams recorded financial information more irregularly. Editors at the Massachusetts Historical Society have noted that he interspersed records of expenditures for travel to and from Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War in one of his diaries.

Developing standards for marking up historical financial records thus presents many challenges. In addition to the idiosyncrasies of individual authors, historical and geographical variations in commodities, units of measure, and currencies raise questions with regard to both standardization and normalization.

In the case of commodities, for example, each project could certainly create its own taxonomy for commodities mentioned in its collections. Such a course would however decrease the utility of the data produced for analysis across projects. Ideally, a controlled vocabulary shared across projects would maximize the value of harvestable data. Our survey of the field led us to the [Harmonized System](#) established by the World Customs Organization, but this resource does not seem optimal because it is designed to represent contemporary commodities. This Harmonized System includes a code for muslin for instance, but it is unlikely to provide one for saltpeter. In addition, the nomenclature tool for this system is behind a pay wall and is thus inaccessible for most academics. Price tables that historian John J. McCusker created for Great Britain and the United States between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries offer a starting point. The [Visible Prices](#) project is developing a database that presents a model for digital representation of such data.[7]

In the case of currencies as well, standardization would foster processability, and McCusker's work again represents an exemplar. Certainly determining which standard to use introduces a puzzle for cases in which scholarly resources equivalent to McCusker's currency tables are unavailable. Thus McCusker's tables only begin to answer questions that will be raised by efforts to generate a standard applicable across time and space. And the distinction between standardization and normalization presents a particular challenge. Should references to a certain amount of a given currency be merely regularized, be normalized to a standard contemporaneous currency, be normalized to a standard modern currency, or be normalized to a reference currency?[8]

Finally, the meanings of financial records — their semantic values — might seem quite straightforward, but even apparently simple

documents actually hold connotations that might be unpacked to reveal significant information. The sample documents in the next section demonstrate some of those connotations.

Sample Markup and Complex Expressions

Manuscript financial documents tend to include three levels of data to consider: layout, textual expression, and a third, more abstract level of semantic values that are not as yet easily captured through TEI conformant markup. Attention to layout may or may not be necessary. In cases where page images are included in online publication, for example, some projects may choose to omit digital representation of layout. Similarly, the significance of some elements of textual expressions might vary across projects.

The files excerpted here demonstrate the utility of the TEI <measure> element and some of the challenges presented by complexities of even apparently simple documents. The sample documents are from the Wheaton Family Papers, a collection associated with the family that founded Wheaton Female Seminary in Norton, Massachusetts, in 1834. The documents refer to costs associated with room, board, and laundry for three adults who traveled from the Boston area to London for the international exhibition of 1862. The Wheaton College Digital History Project has focused on imaging, transcribing, and marking up documents from the Wheaton Family Papers since 2005.

Transcribed, the text of the receipt is marked up to convey descriptive information about the document. Part of this markup prescribes rendering of superscripts, a layout feature that may or may not be significant for online publication that will include a link to the document image. Including the <handNote> element adds information about textual expression that is significant at the collection level. For local users of the [Wheaton College Archives and Special Collections](#),

identifying documents written by members of the Wheaton family and their circle bears some interest. Such information might also be of interest beyond the local level since the fact that the boarder wrote out the receipt and the boardinghouse keeper signed it suggests something about the roles of the two women in the transaction. The boarder in this case eventually became a businesswoman herself, and this receipt might be read to indicate that she had an interest in keeping track of her money and how it was spent even before her occupational change.

A boarding receipt from 1862 records a single transaction in which a boarder paid a boardinghouse keeper for room and board over a specified period:

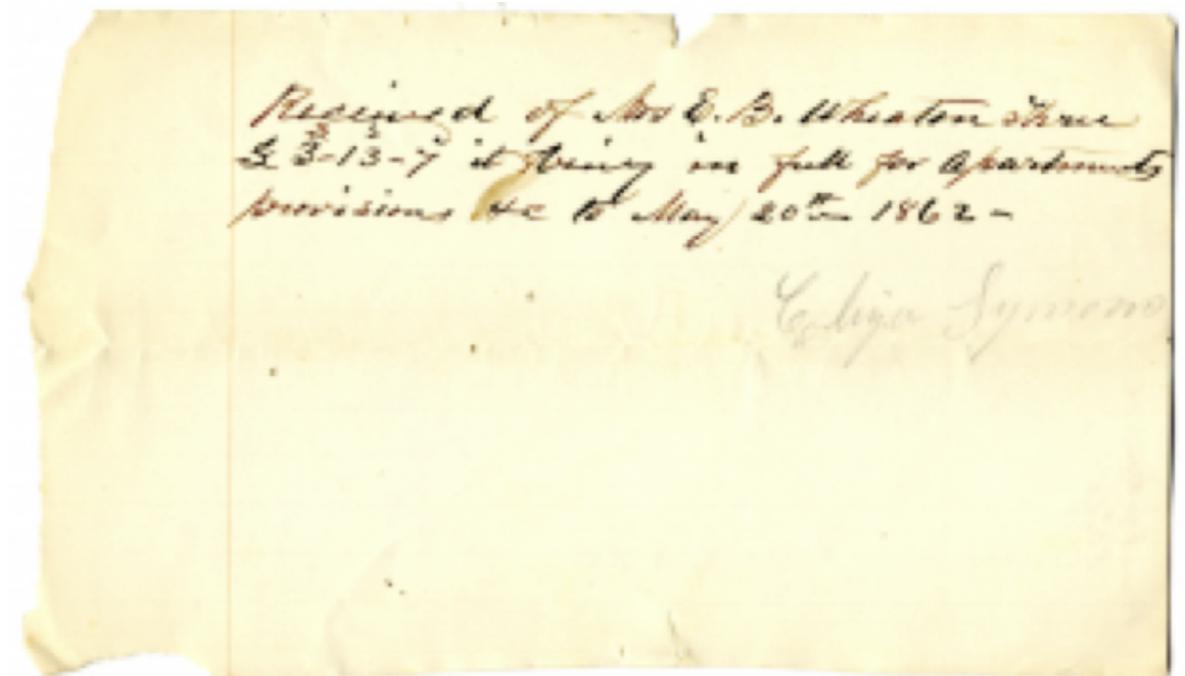


Figure 1: Boarding receipt, May 20, 1862. Wheaton Family Papers, M089, Wheaton College Archives and Special Collections. Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts. Used by permission.

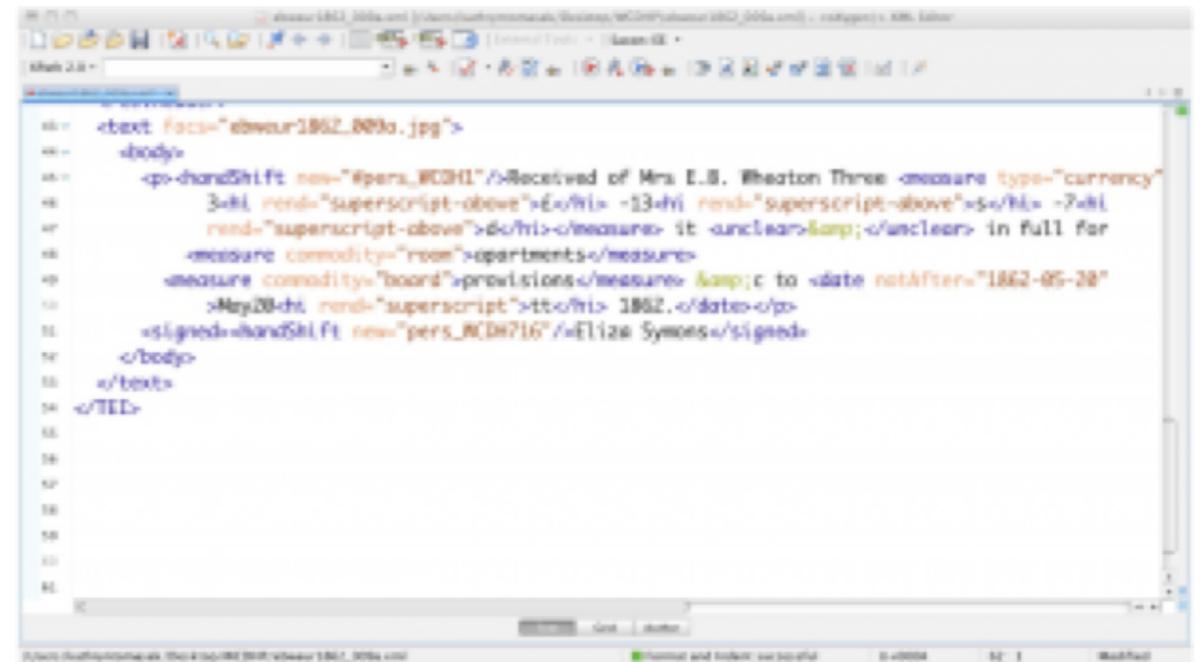
The TEI Guidelines already contain the <measure> element, which is meant to record measurements like those contained in documents that refer to monetary transactions. Examples in the P5 Guidelines demonstrate several attributes that may be used with <measure>. This sample follows one of those examples in using “type” to express the currency value attached to the room and board that lay on the other side of the transaction.

Adding the <measure> element to the markup can broaden the audience for the information conveyed by the digital edition of the document beyond that addressed in a simple representation describing layout and textual expression. With the <measure> element included, the markup would identify processable information about both currency and the commodities for which it was exchanged. A digital object of mere local interest could thus be put to broader use.

Using the attribute “commodity” here without its usual accompanying attributes “quantity” and “unit” might however be inadequate. And while the notebooks that record the “provisions” consumed on each day that the boarders stayed do accompany the receipts in this collection, they do not contain clear information about the number of “apartments” the guests occupied. Thus the documents do not provide clear “quantity” or “unit” values for the commodities “room” and “board” indicated on the receipt.

This boarding receipt is one of several in the collection for the spring and summer of 1862. These documents are also accompanied in the collection by several laundry lists and by two notebooks that contain detailed daily boarding records for the same period. Thus the collection includes sufficient details about one set of exchanges of cash for services to suggest that transcription and appropriate markup of these documents and others like them could well add to historical knowledge about market values for room and board in one London neighborhood

during an international exhibition of the Victorian era. We might expect other collections to hold comparable documents, and in the aggregate digital versions of such documents could provide significant information about an economic phenomenon common to cities in many times and places. If digital versions were to use standard markup, machine processing of the data across collections would become comparatively simple.



```
43 <text facs="abwaur1862_009a.jpg">
44 <body>
45 <p>handShift new="pers_RCD11"/>Received of Mrs E.B. Wheaton Three <measure type="currency"
46 3<sup>£</sup> 13<sup>s</sup> 7<sup>d</sup>
47 <measure commodity="room">apartments</measure> <measure commodity="board">provisions</measure> &amp;c to <date notAfter="1862-05-28"
48 >May 28<sup>th</sup> 1862.</date></p>
49 <signed>handShift new="pers_RCD16"/>Eliza Symons</signed>
50 </body>
51 </text>
52 </TEI>
```

Figure 2: Boarding Receipt XML

While the boarding receipt records a single transaction with two commodities to be measured along with their combined price, a laundry list from the same period records a single transaction involving numerous items and prices for each:

May 19 - Mrs. Wheaton's
 Re turned by Saturday P.M.
 or before

2 wool shirts	6
1 " vest	3
2 " hose	20
1 cot. hose	1
2 Brown shirts	14
1 night shirt	1
1 shinner	1
1 waist	20
1 cotton drawers	2
1 Dimmy Napkin	1
2 Towels	20
1 Little do	1
2 haps	14
1 half hdy	1
1 pr. gloves	1
5 gentl. collars	5
1 Ladies do	1
2 pr. cuffs	2
5 Laces	4
<hr/> 33 pieces	<hr/> 39
Old Bill	2-57
	<hr/> 6-2

Figure 3: Laundry List, May 19, 1862. Wheaton Family Papers, M089, Wheaton College Archives and Special Collections. Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts. Used by permission.

Here, the <measure> element conveys information about the currency as well as about the items to be washed. But some might argue that using the <measure> elements here to encode items of clothing implies that the items that are marked up were themselves traded for the sum of money encoded by the immediately following <measure>. But the boarder did not pay the boardinghouse keeper for, say, a skirt; the boarder paid for the service of laundering the skirt.[9]

One clear approach to thinking about this problem is that the encoding has it right: the <measure> element includes a normalization of what is written on the page, and the fact that the list only itemizes pieces of clothing, leaving for the reader to draw the inference that the service being provided was laundering (because it is a laundry list) is correctly represented. But computers are not nearly as good as humans at making that kind of inference, and in the study of large quantities of historical financial records, it is potentially very powerful to be able to associate goods or services with the prices paid for them in a large scale automated way.

One way around this would be greater specificity in the commodity attribute, for example introducing use values like “service-laundered-skirt.” While we have not thoroughly tested this approach, it is problematic. It seems clumsy and may not scale well; and some would say it misrepresents what was written on the page.

If even such apparently simple documents as receipts and laundry lists contain semantic values that cannot be accounted for straightforwardly with existing TEI elements, further data modeling is clearly needed. Topics to be considered include:

- generating lists of typical features of the information contained in account books and other structured records for various places and times,

- determining characteristics specific to particular genres of structured records, and
- differentiating between account books and other sorts of structured records related to exchanges of cash, property, goods, and services.

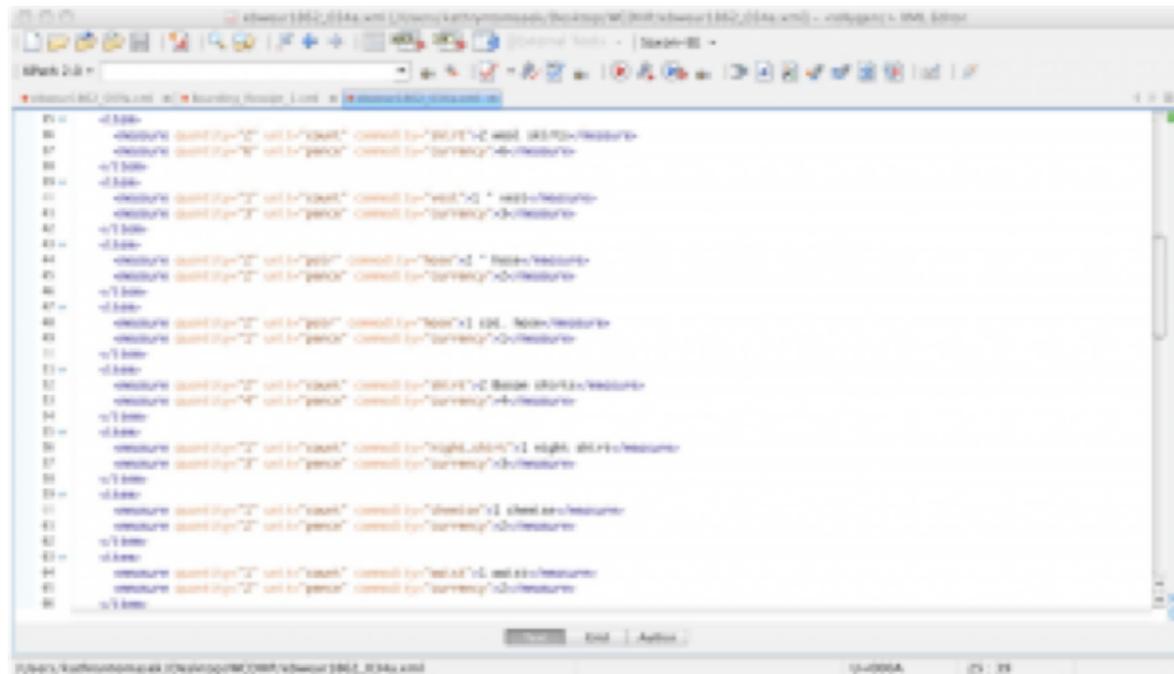


Figure 4: Laundry List XML

Double Entry Accounts

Double entry bookkeeping as developed in Italy as early as the fourteenth century and described by Mair in the eighteenth century represents a specialized vocabulary, a professional jargon that requires data modeling with attention to the special meanings of the terms “debtor” and “creditor” in this language, as well as the relationships between transactions recorded in the daybook and accounts kept in a separate ledger. We are developing a TEI customization for conveying such meanings and their expressions within the journals and ledgers of double entry account books through a “transactionography” that will represent the relationships among such records in abstracted form.

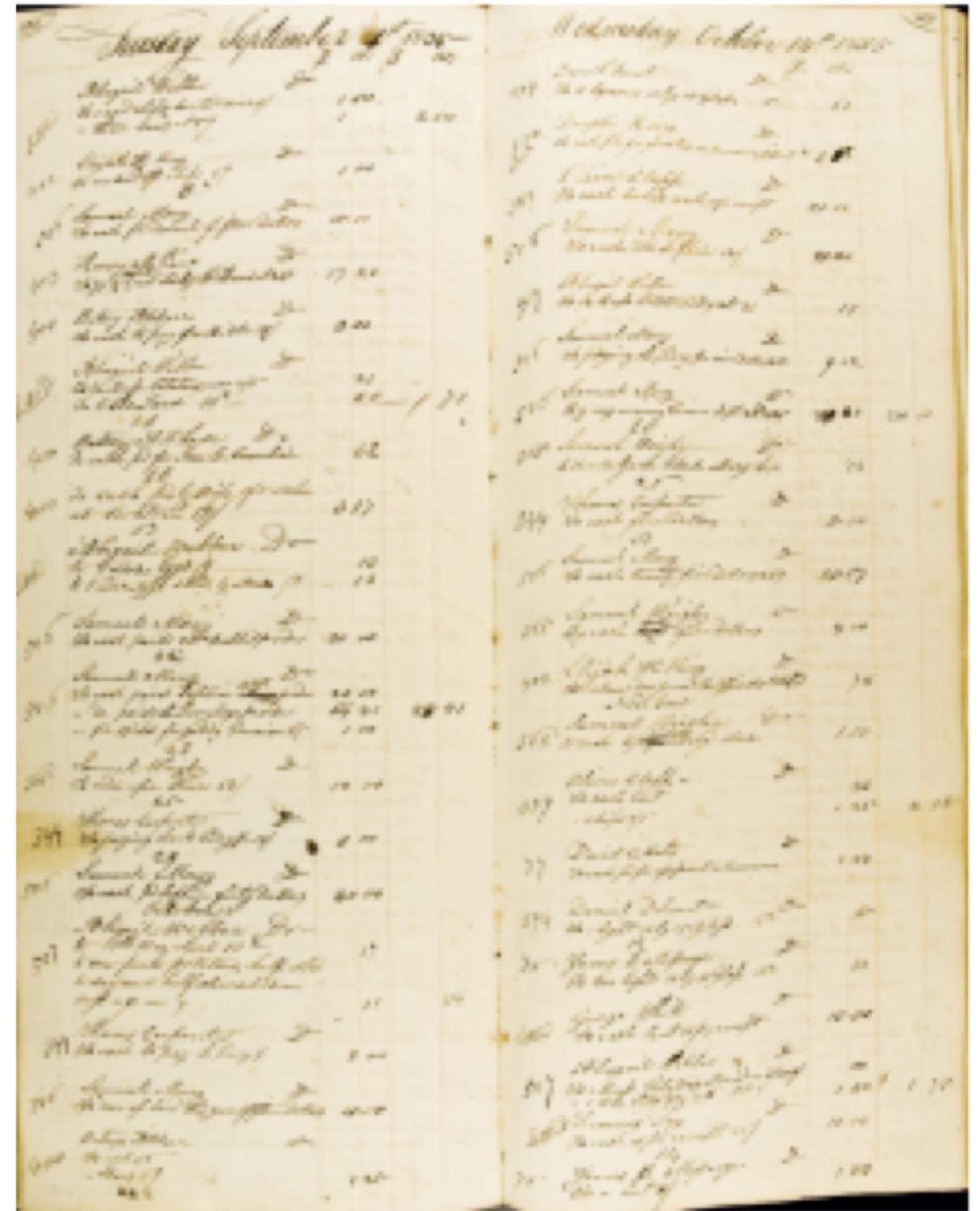


Figure 5: Laban Morey Wheaton Daybook, pp. 136-137, September 1 - November 14, 1835. Wheaton Family Papers, M089, Wheaton College Archives and Special Collections. Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts. Used by permission.

The above page spread from a daybook in the Wheaton Family Papers offers an example of some of the complex semantics represented in double entry accounts. The numbers recorded in the first column refer to accounts found in the associated ledger. Dates are written at the top of the page and subsequently centered in the second column. Each transaction may contain multiple items and refers to the individual involved. Notations at the extreme right of the second column indicate whether the transaction is classified as a debit or credit and thus on which side it may be found in the ledger. Amounts in column-pairs three & four and five & six indicate the price per unit (dollars in column 3, cents in column 4) for each item, and a total (dollars in column 5, cents in column 6) for each transaction respectively.

As currently conceived, a “transactionography” follows the principles of double entry accounting to model *transactions* as a sequence of one or more *transfers* of anything of value from one *account* to another. Thus, the simple purchase of a candy bar from a convenience store is represented as two <transfer>s: one of a candy bar from the vendor’s stock account to the buyer, and one of \$1.25 from the buyer’s cash account to the vendor’s cash account.

We believe that this model will be sufficient to represent double entry bookkeeping, though we have not yet tested it thoroughly. We have a (working) ODD file for a first cut at such a “transactionography,” and we hope to have a more refined version for presentation at the TEI meeting in fall 2012.

Conclusion

Participants in the activities funded with this award remain confident that it will be possible to develop guidelines that account for the variations and idiosyncrasies characteristic of manuscript financial records as well as similar tabular records. Documents in all of these

genres represent efforts to keep records with some attention to structure, including in many cases to the principles of double entry bookkeeping.

Standardized digitization of this rich yet currently inaccessible genre of manuscript historical records has the potential to produce harvestable data that could open significant new lines of inquiry about economic, social, and cultural history. With extensive application of standardized markup to such records from diverse places and times, researchers could compare information about continuities and changes in use of commodities and in their values over time and space.

Originally published by Kathryn Tomasek in [July 2012](#).

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Notes:

[1] Participants in the August 2011 meeting funded by the award included Syd Bauman, Kurt Fendt, Julia Flanders, Scott P. Hamlin, Nancy Heywood, Ondine LeBlanc, Lauren Pfendner, E. Patrick Rashleigh, Jeff Ravel, Mary Beth Sievens, Jennifer Stertz, Zephorene L. Stickney, Jacqueline Wernimont, Ronald Zboray, and Mary Saracino Zboray. I am grateful to all of them for fruitful discussions and continued interest in the questions raised here. Further, I wish to thank Syd Bauman for invaluable consultations as we engage in preliminary data modeling. Without Syd’s generosity in sharing his knowledge of TEI structures, none of this work would be possible.

[2] Judith A. McGaw, "Accounting for Innovation: Technological Change and Business Practice in the Berkshire County Paper Industry," *Technology and Culture*, 26/4 (October 1985), 703-725.

[3] European Historical Populations Samples Network (EHPS-Net), <http://www.esf.org/index.php?id=8361>.

[4] For the early United States, a number of such studies have appeared since 1990, see for example: Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capital: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford, 1991); Ronald J. Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (New York: Oxford, 1993); Melvyn Stokes and Stephen Conway, eds., *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1996); Catherine E. Kelly, *In the New England Fashion: Reshaping Women's Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, *Literary Dollars and Social Sense: A People's History of the Mass Market Book* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Scott C. Martin, ed., *Cultural Change and the Market Revolution in America, 1780-1860* (Lanham, Md: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005); Marla Miller, *The Needle's Eye: Women and Work in the Age of Revolution* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006); Stephen Mihm, *A Nation of Counterfeiters: Capitalists, Con Men, and the Making of the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Jane Kamensky, *The Exchange Artist: A Tale of High-Flying Speculation and America's First Banking Collapse* (New York: Penguin, 2008); Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, *Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage*

Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

[5] The Alcalá Account Book Project, <http://archives.forasfeasa.ie/index.shtml>.

[6] In addition to projects undertaken by professional historians, a family history project has led software developer Ben Brumberg to explore the uses of TEI/XML for marking up financial records. A sample page from the manuscript he is working with can be found here: http://archive.org/stream/Jeremiah_White_Graves_Diary_Volume_2_Book_01/JWGravesV ol2Book01#page/n17/mode/1up.

[7] John J. McCusker, *How Much Is That in Real Money?: A Historical Price Index for Use as a Deflator of Money Values in the Economy of the United States* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 2001).

[8] For the significance of questions of standardization and normalization, see Syd Bauman, "Interchange vs. Interoperability," presented at Balisage: The Markup Conference 2011, Montréal, Canada, August 2 -5, 2011. In *Proceedings of Balisage: The Markup Conference 2011*, Balisage Series on Markup Technologies, vol. 7 (2011), doi:10.4242/BalisageVol7.Bauman01.

[9] For discussion of the work of running a boardinghouse, see Wendy Gamber, *The Boardinghouse in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

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MediaNOLA: A Digital Humanities Project to Tell Stories of Cultural Production in New Orleans

The primary objective of [MediaNOLA](#) in the [NEH](#) planning grant was to work towards creating a website that showed the invisible contributions of ordinary people, places, and practices in the creation of New Orleans culture and its representations. The website was to provide an alternative way to examine New Orleans' culture solely through the lens of its exceptionalism in relation to the rest of the United States. The scholarly impetus motivating the project came from a series of stakeholders invested in three areas of overlapping interests: (1.) the preservation of materials related to local cultures and cultural production; (2.) the public dissemination of local cultural histories that illustrated broad senses of culture and its production; and (3.) the empowerment of ordinary residents as public historians.

As the project stakeholders met and produced deliverables for the website from 2010 to 2012, it became quickly apparent that MediaNOLA's primary objective split into two objectives that would become interdependent to the future sustainability of the project:

1. The creation of website content that would demonstrate the contributions of ordinary people, places, and practices to local culture; and,
2. The establishment of a pedagogic model for training university students to be creators of these contents in collaboration with community partners, including library archivists and nonprofit organizations.

Thus the need to coordinate the development of the website with the process for its creation, maintenance, and community outreach in terms of pedagogy came as a natural part of the planning process and in response to the inputs of new stakeholders in the project, especially university professors interested in deploying MediaNOLA in their classes. As a result, some of the initial goals of the grant shifted to respond to the relationship between website's contents and the pedagogy necessary for local cultural history research, writing, and digital production. This has become an ongoing conversation among those invested in MediaNOLA and seeking its future development.

This white paper reflects on what the MediaNOLA project has achieved during the short duration of the planning grant (2010-2012), the choices taken and lessons learned, and the future plans for the project. During the course of the grant, MediaNOLA went from an idea to an actualized service learning partner for [Tulane University](#), extending the University's commitment to its surrounding community and a virtual community of MediaNOLA producers and users. This path provides a model for best practices when considering a project of this scope.

An Overview of MediaNOLA: Past and Present

The original intention in designing MediaNOLA in 2008 was to bring together a number of stakeholders in the preservation and connection

of cultural histories from the perspectives of everyday people, places, and things. The intellectual roots of this project followed from contemporary research into invisible labor-- the everyday people and sites that help generate capital for cultural industries. It was also planned as a survey of New Orleans cultural history research, which tended to focus on both the unique genius of a few individuals to a few specific cultural genres (jazz and cuisine for example). However, the motivation to start the planning process for such a wide-ranging project originated with Hurricane Katrina. Project members realized that there needed to be a coordinated effort to stem the loss of so many physical records and human articulators of the cultural past in the city. We applied for a planning grant in 2010 to devise a project that could encompass a demotic notion of culture and cultural production in New Orleans history.

MediaNOLA's own historical transformation has occurred in a relatively short timeframe. Before the beginning of the planning grant, MediaNOLA had a wiki-based site which had been piloted in two courses: a freshman experience course on digital storytelling and an upper-level research course on media history. After the grant, the project has become an integral part of the University and its strategic goals.

Planning and the Project Team

The project team for MediaNOLA has grown and shifted over the past two years. At the time we applied for the grant, we foresaw MediaNOLA as a direct partner with a variety of community groups, such as the [New Orleans Video Access Center](#), which were in the process of digitizing their archives. This proved to be an ambitious proposal, one that could not be coordinated in light of University resources and the needs of the faculty who would come to use MediaNOLA in their classes. The need for preservation monies among

nonprofits in the city well outstripped the numbers of students eager to access them. Although MediaNOLA project leaders have done some limited digitization to address particular classes and specific collections, we realized that MediaNOLA would have to partner with these organizations for their own preservation grant processes. These would not be concluded by the end of the planning grant cycle.

Instead, MediaNOLA grew through a process of internal University needs assessments. Namely, the reorientation of the curriculum towards service-learning in the post-Katrina era created a demand for courses that could coordinate classroom research projects with publicly accessible deliverables. As a result, the project team expands each semester with the inputs of faculty from the departments of History, English, German, Studio Architecture, Music, Communication, and the interdisciplinary program housed in the [New Orleans Center for the Gulf South](#). Each of these faculty members forge their own community partnerships with archivists and nonprofit organizations.

The ability to expand and contract project membership according to the logic of University courses and schedules has been facilitated by the leadership of staff and students involved in the [Tulane Center for Public Service](#) and law students involved in the [Tulane Intellectual Property Law Clinic](#). These students work one-on-one with professors and rights-holders to ensure the smooth integration of MediaNOLA into University curricula and its role in making a wide variety of contents publicly accessible. The continuity of these relationships is managed primarily by a CPS staff member and the faculty director of the law clinic.

Expanding Users and Audiences

The demotic turn in terms of the organization and development of the website has meant that the project follows the paths and interests of its producers and supporters. The site has developed somewhat rhizomatically. Different stakeholders, such as teachers, independent study students, community participants, and archivists, have adapted the project to their own needs and aims. Some of the uses of MediaNOLA have involved the digitization of primary materials, the posting of field projects and ethnographic observations, and the plotting of large data sets related to film production in the city, and the development of partner sites for curating research, such as a video game and a mobile tour application called [New Orleans Historical](#). Along the way, students created handbooks to pass learned knowledge on to future users. While in the future, these uses may become more focused, for now they have simply demonstrated the need for a tool that can handle many types of comparative evidence and can serve as a bridge in helping libraries and community organizations communicate with new publics, especially the student participants and producers.

Users currently become participants through classes at the University. Student-generated histories and their mapping are developed in accordance with content in the course, marrying a myriad of research techniques, analytic frameworks, and digital skills to a public history commitment. Publicity for the site via the Center for Public Service and other community forums have generated more interest than can currently be accommodated. Residents representing historic neighborhoods, educational nonprofits, and personal genealogy have requested MediaNOLA's assistance in digitizing, interviewing, and archiving projects for distribution through the site.

With the new members of the planning team, MediaNOLA grew rapidly, if not exponentially. In Fall 2012, over 150 Tulane students

across three different schools (Liberal Arts, Architecture, and Business) were simultaneously using and posting information to MediaNOLA. These courses ranged from entry-level first-years to graduate students. Other classes at the University of New Orleans were using the site as part of their research sources.

Links on the library research website and librarian recommendations to go to the site bring some users to MediaNOLA. We suspect, though, that most users find the site through Google searches for materials that can only be found online through the portal. We have only anecdotal evidence from user queries for more information about family members or the places that users remember visiting. Although we only recently established Google Analytics to capture the number of users on the site and their geographic locations, we hope to see the same upward trend in user numbers to reflect the upward trend in participants on the site. Analytics data gathered in the fall of 2013 show that MediaNOLA got more than 1,000 hits per month over the previous spring, summer and fall.

Important Choices and Paths Not Taken

Any digital humanities project involves a series of interlinked choices around its contents, its users, and its technologies. MediaNOLA began on a relatively small scale, with one to two classes per semester and in partnership with a few archives and community partners. As the project scaled up in terms of its scope and stakeholders, however, project leaders had to make choices about where to scale back and focus our resources.

Content Decisions

MediaNOLA began under the assumption that the site would not promote one official way of illuminating cultural production in the city.

Rather the term "culture" was left purposely broad to allow for a diversity of stories about culture, its makers, places, and manifestations. This broad brush approach has been one of the selling points of the project to a variety of professors and student researchers who have been able to adapt the site to their own ends. In other words, by not defining what is cultural, who are producers of a culture, and where culture is located, MediaNOLA has allowed for the democratic inclusion of a range of materials that might have otherwise never been preserved. The classes using MediaNOLA span freshman intro courses to graduate seminars. These classes are housed in the Schools of Liberal Arts, Architecture and Business, and their learning objectives range from drawing historical floor plans, to learning how to read archival resources, to conducting oral histories. The results of their work, found on MediaNOLA, provide a tapestry of approaches to culture knowledge and authorship.

At the same time, we have had to become more vigilant with the accuracy of our historical narratives and data. Although individual faculty are responsible for the quality of MediaNOLA entries, not all errors are obvious, even to trained professors who may not be familiar with every citation in a research paper. It also became apparent that some histories were more initial impressions or reflections on a cultural topic. For example, many of the first-year courses focus on personal experiences in the city rather than research or the application of a particular research method. To meet these challenges, MediaNOLA took two approaches. First, the project director now hires student editors who fact-check and correct entries as they come into the system. These are students who have proven themselves as effective contributors to MediaNOLA or have particular skills (for example reading [Sanborn maps](#)) that the project needs. Second, the project launched a ["journal" page](#) in the platform. This is an open blog that cross-references the historical entries but allows more freedom for

single-author reflections without necessarily citing factual sources or community members.

Despite these efforts, there will always be a tension in the project between what makes an authoritative history and the role of replicable evidence in the form of citations. Like research papers, we have not been immune from student plagiarism and other research short-cuts that deter original contributions. We believe this is a productive tension from a pedagogic standpoint, though it may turn off some users, particularly researchers invested in particular narrative forms and evidentiary sources.

Pedagogic Choices

By becoming an official service learning organization, MediaNOLA has become integrated into the University's service learning curriculum and its mission for community engagement through classrooms, independent research projects, and community-based internships. This was a decision that recognized that MediaNOLA would be part of a pedagogic strategy that trained students to be amateur public historians, ethnographers, folklorists, preservationists, and archivists, while, at the same time, sharing our research products with the public. MediaNOLA allows students multiple points of entry to gain different skills associated with these professional roles, but also allows them a relatively safe space in which they can experiment with different ways of codifying histories and collaborative research. Different kinds of projects have produced a menu of options for faculty and students to select a project that builds on students' abilities at the appropriate level.

Even if contents for MediaNOLA are pluralistic, the participants in the project are not necessarily diverse. The majority of participants who enter histories into the database are Tulane University undergraduates

who encounter MediaNOLA as a class project. These projects may include trips to an archive or community-based interview projects, but the students, most of whom do not come from New Orleans, are the ones charged with representing local culture through their stories. Again, the burden is on individual professors and mentors to guide students' inputs into MediaNOLA. Faculty who have expected their students to become skilled ethnographers simply by attending a second-line parade have been disappointed by the touristic gaze that infuses the students' MediaNOLA entries. Conversely, faculty may decide not to teach alternatives to these outsider perspectives on culture simply because they feel time pressures and the need to simply validate students' first impressions. In these cases, we have to wait for future classes and/or students to add more layers and complexities to the original stories that are told. In this case, we hope the extensive online guides and manuals that the NEH supported will help faculty not only navigate MediaNOLA, but also give them more freedom to develop assignments that would rectify past errors and develop more varied stories about local culture.

For better or worse, MediaNOLA's role as a service-learning partner means that the sustainability of the project relies on the networks of partnerships it has developed within Tulane University, first, and between Tulane and the New Orleans community, second. That is, MediaNOLA serves community group needs via the service learning classes that elect those groups as partners and then decides that MediaNOLA is the platform for disseminating the outcomes of the partnership. This is the way that MediaNOLA works indirectly with a range of community groups and nonprofit institutions. Although MediaNOLA has been approached by several community organizations in search of our student researchers over the past two years, it has not been sought for direct access to the platform itself. This can be attributed to the relatively well-developed infrastructure at the

University and the lack of resources and staffing of potential community partners, particularly in the post-Katrina era. Once these University partnerships are stabilized through a regularly offered menu of courses, it will make sense for MediaNOLA to be able to satisfy community nonprofits' needs more directly in the future.

Technological Choices

The platform and software are among the most complicated set of choices for a digital humanities project, particularly at a university such as Tulane that lacks many in-house programming resources. While MediaNOLA had developed a productive [MediaWiki](#) instance in-house in 2009 for the collection of the historic content, the search and mapping interface proved more challenging. The platform would need to allow for flexible expansions, revisions, and adaptations to faculty and community needs; while remaining simple enough for users to enter their materials without having to master markup languages that would add another level of complexity to the instruction necessary in a typical MediaNOLA course.

Our original prototype for tying together the wiki and GIS data was short-lived as it quickly presented its own shortcomings. The [Codex](#) system was developed by a graduate student at UT-Austin for another mapping project called [Austin Memory Project](#). Grant funds subsidized the graduate student to develop a version of Codex for Tulane as well as to release the program as open source software. Unfortunately this partnership was broken by the Codex team and the MediaNOLA project was forced to find a new home. While MediaNOLA was partnered with Codex, content was basically divided over two sites. The MediaNOLA.org site was the home of Codex and the GIS data, while MediaNOLA.tulane.edu was home to the MediaWiki site which housed the historical narratives. Each media site was cataloged in both places with links passing the user from one to

the other. During this time, we piloted the program in two classes, an upper division course in media history and a freshman experience course in digital storytelling. The prototype failed on several measures. First, the Austin Memory Project, which cross-referenced census and phone book data in a searchable map, was not compatible as a model for public history mapping and storytelling. Our users expected better design and fewer bugs on the front end. It became clear that many users were entering the site through the wiki and missing the connection to the GIS data entirely. Second, as the two sites were based on different platforms, the students entering data had to learn two different processes. This became unwieldy for professors and students who wanted a one-stop shop for their class projects. Finally, the reliance on an external member of the team for technological development created some difficulties in executing the project's mission. From the perspective of Codex team the time spent in developing the program was too tempting not to move it into the commercial market. The MediaNOLA team was left with a buggy platform and restricted access to the remote project team. Given the challenges in the classroom, we needed a quick solution to transfer the XML data to a more stable program before the fall 2012 semester classes began. Data was extracted from Codex and a new team was commissioned to develop a platform which would incorporate the historical and GIS plotting features of Codex with the standard versioning and contribution tools of MediaWiki.

At that point, our saving grace came from within Tulane and its new initiative for the [New Orleans Center of the Gulf South](#) (NOCGS). Funded by alumni donations, the Center has strived to have students contribute to a website about regional musical cultures. MediaNOLA's archive of music club and music industry histories was perfectly suited for the NOCGS site, which will be called Music Rising and is still under development as of October 2013. This collaboration allowed

MediaNOLA to be relaunched in August 2012 using the same locally-made programming platform and software as Music Rising. Although the new system has the occasional bug, its stability has allowed program members to focus on content and pedagogy over the complex technical decisions that required a staff programmer. Unfortunately, it is a proprietary program, thus limiting the transferability of the project to other organizations.

In making choices about content, pedagogy and technology, we have come to see how MediaNOLA has matured as a project that integrates the digital humanities with service learning. Ultimately this has been a process of discovery. The nature of the content to be collected by students for the MediaNOLA environment was of a mostly theoretical nature when the platform was designed and launched. It was in the creation of cultural histories and other contents that the needs of the system came fully to the forefront. When this process is combined with the different pedagogical approaches of the faculty employing the platform in their classes, the growing pains explicated above are seen to arise as a natural progression of the collaborative process. The version of MediaNOLA that consisted of the combination of Codex and MediaWiki was the 1.0 version that allowed for the proper delineation of requirements for the custom 2.0 platform that has come to replace it.

Accomplishments of the Planning Grant

Once we realized the demand for a digital humanities platform that could respond flexibly to a wide range of contents about local cultural history, practices, stories, and audiovisual documents, the MediaNOLA team worked to develop the most appropriate materials for training faculty, students, and staff in using the website appropriately and effectively. At the same time, the team has responded to that primary

audience by developing digital capabilities that we did not foresee at the time we applied for the NEH grant. These include:

- A [journal](#) section for student reflections in the service-learning process;
- An [orientation video](#) explaining the history, mission, and vision for the site and its participants along with downloadable instructions for using MediaNOLA's CMS. The video was prepared in conjunction with Tulane's Faculty Technology Lab;
- A [handbook](#) on conducting interviews with community members along with a series of videos about the ethical issues involved in community interviewing. These were compiled by [NOVAC](#) from a community documentary seminar in Fall 2011;
- A downloadable [research guide](#) for using local archives, including relevant finding aids for MediaNOLA projects;
- A [creative commons agreement](#) (PDF) for MediaNOLA authors and interviewees to protect participants' contributions from theft while also encouraging future fair use of the materials. These materials were prepared by the Tulane Intellectual Property Law Clinic and approved by University General Counsel;
- [Teaching handouts](#) for uploading and formatting contents;
- Tips for history writing;
- A [pedagogic philosophy](#) for using MediaNOLA in the classroom along with sample syllabi assignments geared to appropriate learning levels.

MediaNOLA 2.0 (the site as it exists now) is a fully integrated content management system and GIS repository. The site allows for student users to create entries for media sites and build custom content and

citations related to the selected site. The content entry system mirrors that of MediaWiki in most ways including version and citation tracking. Students are also able to locate their media sites through a simple Google maps search, the coordinates of which are then fed into the custom mapping system where they can be searched by location and date. Faculty users have the ability to monitor their students in terms of the work they are doing as well as the revisions they are making. One of the advantages of the wiki environment is that a substantial amount of data has been collected on the process of writing media histories from the student perspective. This data includes types of citations used, revisions made and the process by which the form of the narrative comes together. We have only just begun to mine this data for its full pedagogical implications and long-term impacts.

Finally, MediaNOLA has created viable bridge with fellow digital humanities initiatives in the city. Our partnership with the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South became a turning point that has enriched both the MediaNOLA project, and the Center's Music Rising initiative to bring a New Orleans musical cultures curriculum into K-12 schools. We share a platform that will enable easy sharing of our contents. In Fall 2012, we became the repository for the data gathered in the Crossroads project, another web-based project maintained by an adjunct professor of architecture after the storm. In Spring 2012, MediaNOLA partnered with a [faculty member](#) at the University of New Orleans to launch [New Orleans Historical](#), a mobile app developed by the founders of [Cleveland Historical](#). We currently host interns from the [Collat Media Internship Project](#), a Tulane initiative to train women in new media and technology development. Working together, MediaNOLA contents can be curated in new and dynamic ways.

Evaluation

MediaNOLA is finally entering the lexicon of the University and has made some inroads into the knowledge base of the general public. The primary audiences thus far have been at Tulane (professors and faculty) but anecdotally, we know that researchers studying New Orleans come to the site as part of their scan of local resources. Archivists and librarians often will tell us they recommend the site to researchers. Staffers at the [Louisiana Endowment for the Arts](#) have told us that our site has better sourcing and evidence than Wikipedia sites for New Orleans culture. In addition to this, project members are just starting to do research presentations on MediaNOLA, which has enlarged our scholarly audiences and researcher networks.

The primary evaluators of the project have been the hundreds of students and professors who have worked with MediaNOLA over the past 21 months in the context of their course objectives. These have been evaluated through regular course evaluations, though the response rates to these institutional reviews have been very low overall (about 25% or 42 of 166 surveyed). The mean score that MediaNOLA received for these students was a 3 out of 5 for a general question about the service learning experience overall, and not MediaNOLA. In response, staff and participants have tried to create alternative opportunities for feedback, such as a recent evaluation “happening” in which participants can meet each other and post their reactions and advice to future users about participation in the project.

One outside evaluator Steve Zeitlin of the groundbreaking public history project [City Lore](#) provided us with invaluable feedback as we move forward with MediaNOLA. We quote his review here as it highlighted for us one of our real accomplishments, which is sustainability:

Most important, MediaNola has a quality which distinguishes it from most all of the virtual mapping initiatives with which I am familiar – it offers a model for sustainability. The project is rooted in Tulane University’s post-Katrina insight that the University’s fortunes are tied to those of the city itself. In response, the university instituted two credits of community service for every student as a requirement for graduation. Working with MediaNola helps students fulfill that requirement in an array of disciplines, and provides MediaNola with students and interns who can contribute to the project in an ongoing basis. Whereas most virtual mapping projects create a web site with no plan for the kind of labor required to sustain the site and keep it vital, MediaNOLA has a sustainable strategy and a bright future.

Best Practices Moving Forward

If anything this project has revealed the importance of strong partnerships at the outset of a digital media project, especially with regard to the creation of pedagogical goals and ideals. Our integration with the service learning curriculum, our ability to respond to faculty and community needs through training material and new digital capacities makes for not only a demotic approach for preserving history but one for training a generation of students as researchers, engaged community workers, and authors.

Along the way, we’ve also learned to pay attention to the different aspects of a good web platform. We did not pay enough attention to the aesthetics (the ‘look’) of the site in the early stages. Today, we are working with a geographer and cartographer to encode our own map overlay for the front page in order to promote our own identity and get away from the identity associated with Google maps. We also had to learn how to balance student voices as authors with the traditional forms of academic legitimacy and copious citation. As a result we’ve become more stringent with the formatting of contents and their

citation, while allowing for different forms of subjectivity and detachment to be present in the stories themselves.

We are still seeking the best ways to evaluate our ongoing performance. The platform as designed or selected is capable of tracking significant metrics across the breadth of the project. Yet, we also find that some of the best feedback has resulted from our publicity campaigns. Social media ([Facebook](#), [Tumblr](#), [Twitter](#)) and public lectures ([TEDx](#) and Tulane Digital Trends) not only introduce new audiences to the site but encourage their feedback. We can see what contents get passed on through social media networks and repostings. Time will tell how to best integrate responses from different types of users.

We also realized that MediaNOLA has to be part of an emerging digital landscape in the city's post- Katrina era. Many projects have come and gone for lack of funding and a renewable social network of users and audiences. MediaNOLA has successfully modeled how to work with other digital projects. We want to continue to find ways to build bridges with other institutions, both among universities and with other types of educational institutions, such as the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and local museums. A digital humanities network, enriched by community engagement research, would ensure that our cultural histories and memories do not wash away with the next storm.

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Appendix A: Images of Completed Work Samples

The NEH programming expenditure was used in making this prototype website, which was available December 2010-August 2012. It was too complicated to contribute to, had many bugs (see automatic dating of Pete Fountain's death in the map), and lacked curb appeal:

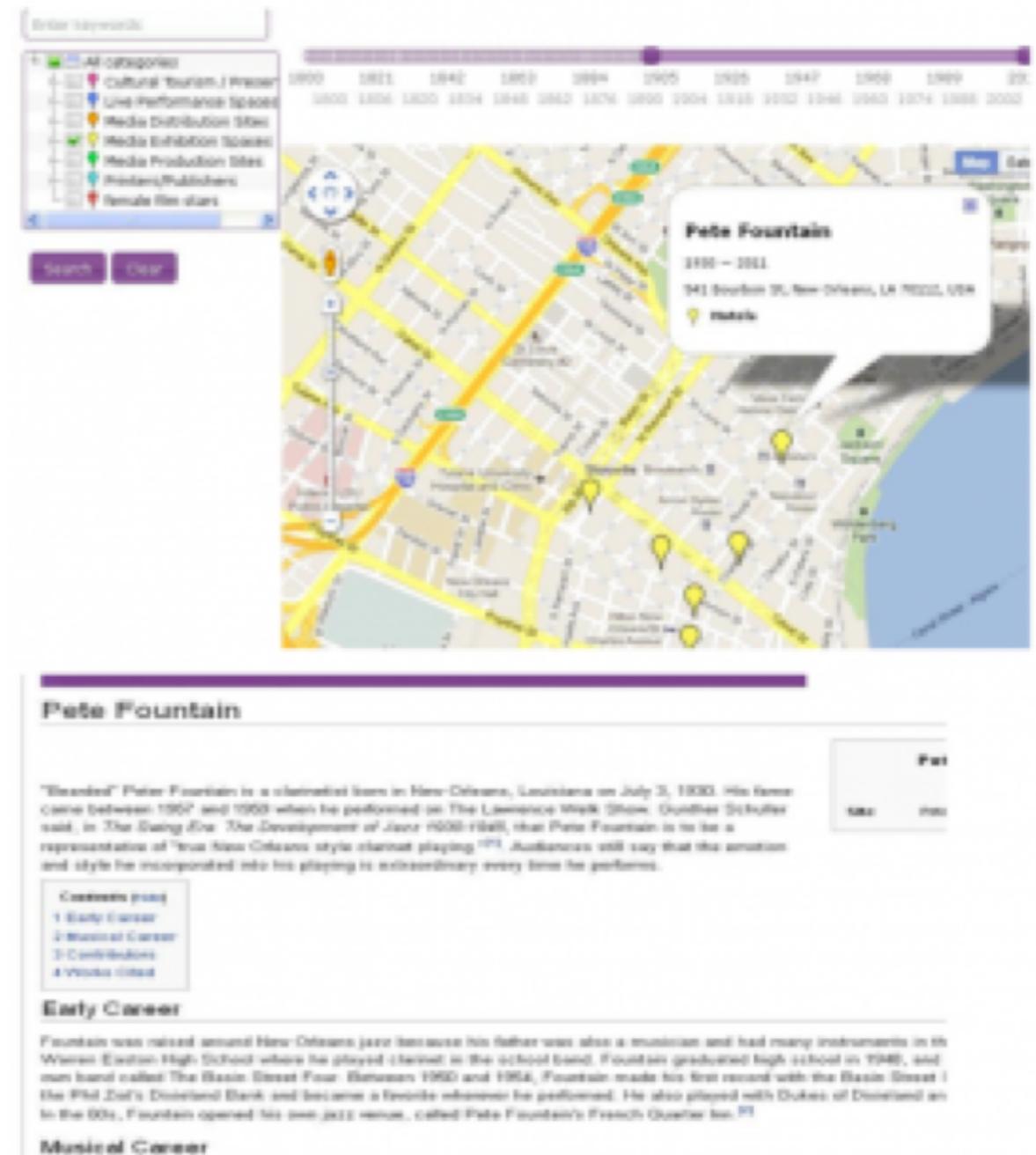


Figure 1: MediaNOLA Prototype Website

This prototype became the model for the present-day website, launched in August 2012:

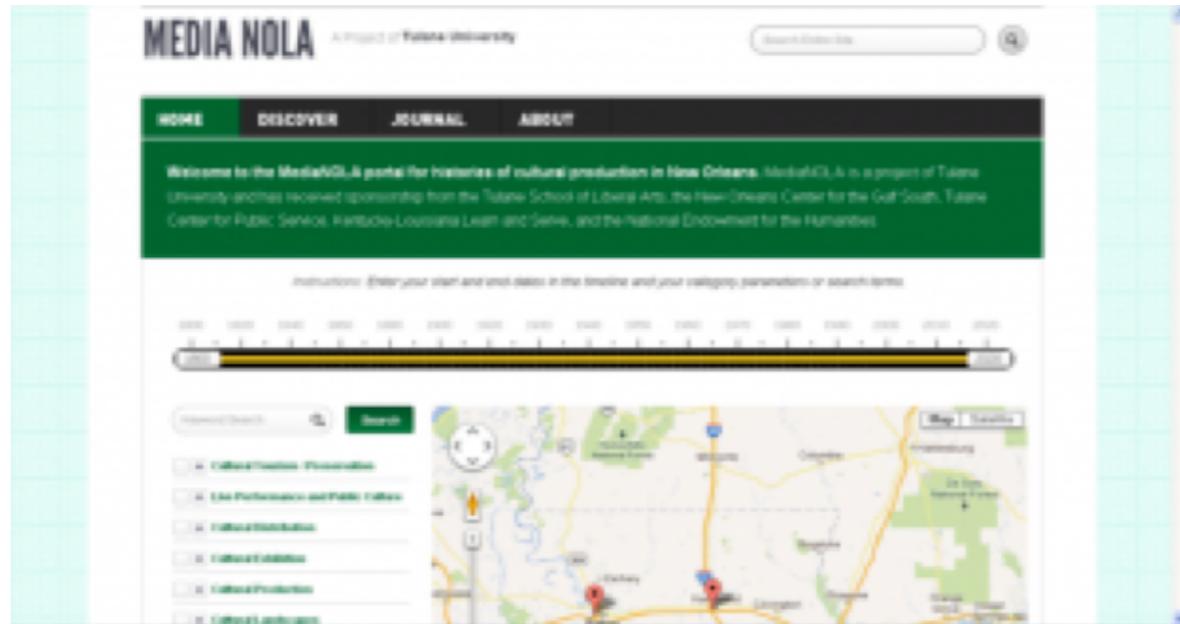


Figure 2: MediaNOLA Current Website

This is a close-up of a map search on MediaNOLA:

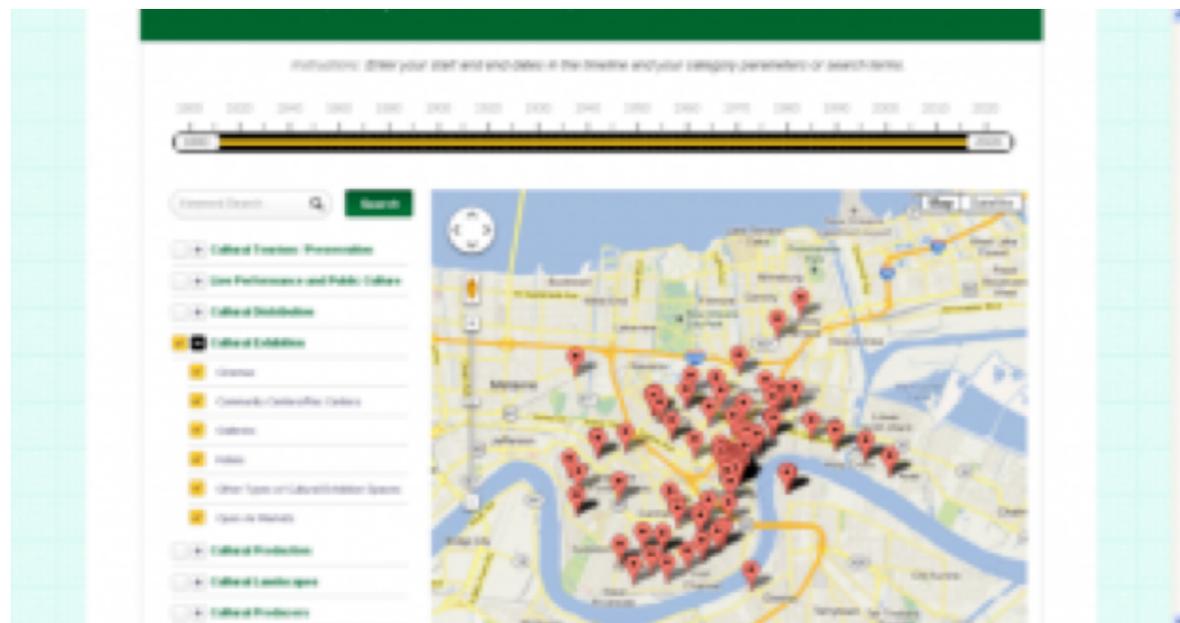


Figure 3: MediaNOLA Map Search

This is a close up of a MediaNOLA history of the Diamond Film Studios (1918-1920):



Figure 4: Diamond Film Studios Entry, MediaNOLA website

These are the handbooks for doing local archival research, history writing, and oral interviews:

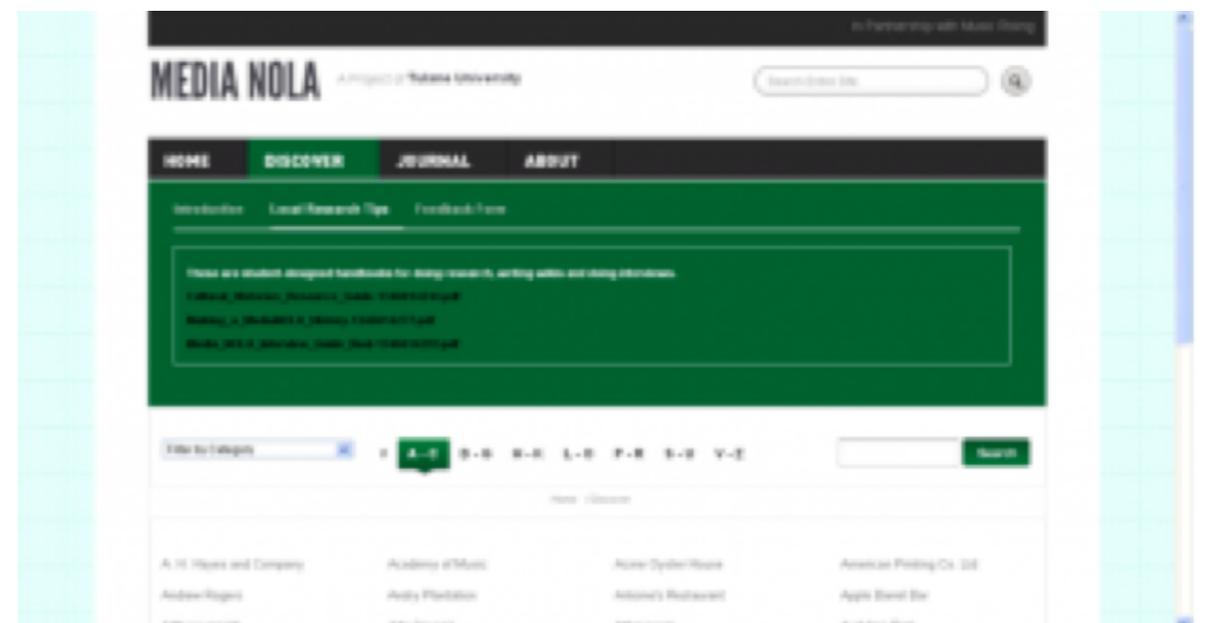


Figure 5: MediaNOLA Handbooks

This is the new journal launched for first-person storytelling and reflections about culture in the city:

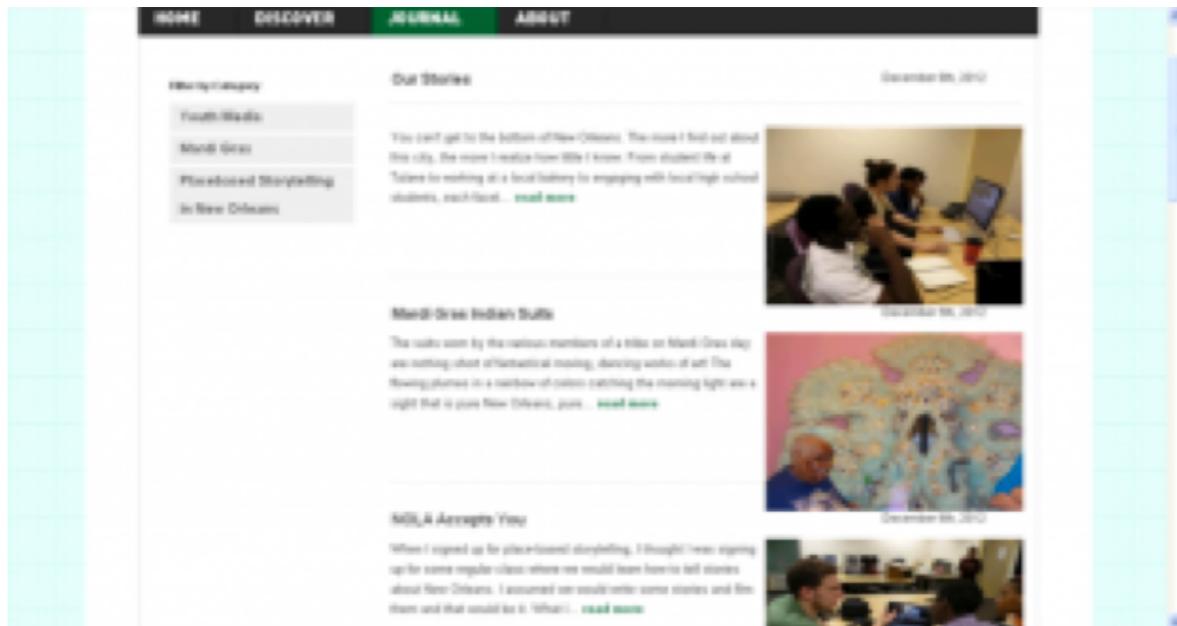


Figure 6: MediaNOLA Journal Page

These are the resources for service-learning classes, including the orientation video, how-to handouts, and creative commons licenses:

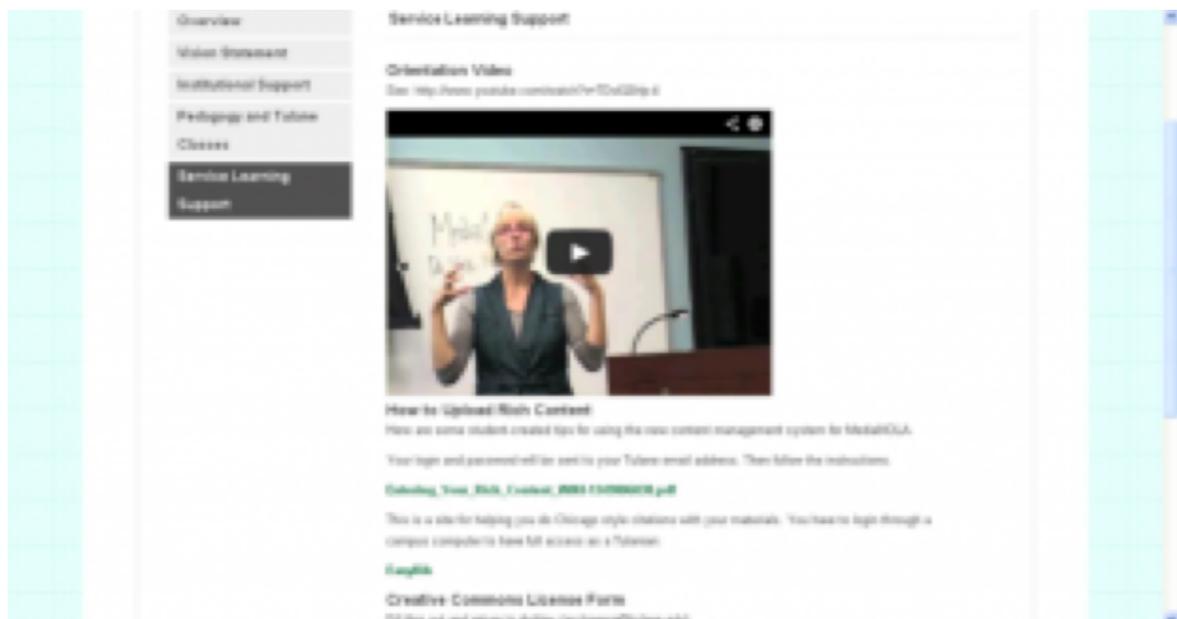


Figure 7: MediaNOLA Resources for Service Learning

Appendix B: Pedagogy, Courses and Independent Projects Using MediaNOLA:

As part of our decision to publicize MediaNOLA as part of a pedagogic strategy of engaged learning, we posted the following to the site:

Pedagogy and Tulane Classes

Beyond its function as a destination website, MediaNOLA is a pedagogic tool for training amateur historians, researchers and preservationists. MediaNOLA permits reflection on exceptional histories of New Orleans culture dialectically through the website's content and the pedagogy of its use as a teaching and research tool. In other words, as participants conduct research and post more content, the collective and additive process creates a larger mosaic for interpreting culture in multiple ways. Specific assignments for MediaNOLA match both the reflective process and creative engagement as proposed by the University's service learning standards.

The first interactions with the site involve using it to log and describe an everyday cultural place or artifact. This process registers the historical legitimacy of the object of study and allows the participant creative freedom to select its attributes and connections across categories of cultural performance, exhibition, distribution, and production. Students in classes follow this assignment with a simple reflection describing their process and questions they have about this object in relation to curricular materials.

Subsequent assignments may involve a number of creative engagements with the object or the people, places, and other objects that are linked to it by category or theme. For example:

- Use historical newspaper archives to find out about the places, people, and objects found in your scrapbook for that particular time period. Create and add to MediaNOLA pages about these items and connect to your description of the scrapbook.
- Use city directories to locate other businesses like the one you have written about.
- Add GIS entries to MediaNOLA to show the way your place was either uniquely located or clustered with others during its years as a cultural place.
- Present a list of MediaNOLA pages to a person who has lived in the city at least two decades. Ask a person to describe their personal memories of any object he or she selects from the list. With their permission, record, edit and post this memory to that MediaNOLA page.
- Go to the place you have described and interview different people who work or participate in that space. With their permission, collect at least three different ways that people see this place as part of the cultural history of the city.

Whereas the initial interaction with MediaNOLA positions users as participants, the second level of interaction deepens their engagement as amateur historians. The proper use of citation and permission to use people's voices is an important way that participants, not least of all those not familiar with the city, can gain proximity to the historical enterprise and a shared authority over historical knowledge. The assignments urge students to reflect about what is unique or common to local cultural products, producers, and places. The totality of locations and people included by the collectivity of participants forces students to recognize culture as a demotic production that spans the urban geography.

A final set of assignments encourage students to take the historical content in MediaNOLA and rework it to adapt new evidence and perspectives. Some examples of these assignments include or combine:

- Take a MediaNOLA history and rework it using five additional sources from your library archives.
- Take a MediaNOLA history and rework it to include the perspective(s) of local interviewees.
- Use secondary sources and course readings to give the historical context to a MediaNOLA entry in terms of gender, race, and/or class conditions in the city. Rewrite the history to consider the standpoint(s) of the historian in the MediaNOLA history.

This is the most advanced stage in the MediaNOLA pedagogy. It engages participants not only in questions of their own distance and proximity to the evidence they encounter, but also how to balance these implicit standpoints into a unified narrative with coherent sections. Curating in this environment becomes what Fiona Cameron and Helena Robinson call knowledge brokering (2007, p. 185), making all voices heard even if arranged hierarchically according to the evidence and analysis. Group-based assignments challenge students to negotiate their own interpretations of the materials into a narrative that allows for polyphony. Reflections about the research and decision-making process of being an amateur historian may reveal the tensions implicit in assuming historical authority and authorship. In a theoretical sense, the students practice post-foundationalism, which according to Mark Bevir (2011) prefaces the consonance between past and present, fact and narrative. From a postfoundational model, MediaNOLA participants begin to ask different ethical questions of historical narratives, such as: What is the legitimacy of reading our ideas into the values and actions of people in the past? At some point,

the juxtaposition of competing accounts may indeed destabilize the master narratives about local culture, specifically by situating different authors' standpoints through and with the textual layers in MediaNOLA.

Not all classes are suitable for each stage of the MediaNOLA pedagogy. Introductory courses may never reach the final stage of the pedagogy. Advanced classes may focus primarily on the final two stages. Independent studies may focus on one stage alone.

The following Tulane classes have used MediaNOLA:

- TIDE-1760 Narratives New Orleans Digital Storytelling
- TIDB-1010 More Than Just Business
- COMM-1000 Introduction to Communication Studies
- DSGN-2100 Architecture Studio
- MCGS-2000 Introduction to the Music Cultures of the Gulf South
- COMM-3280 Media Histories
- ENLS-3620 Workshop Creative Writing: Place-Based Storytelling
- AHST-4199 Sites/Sounds: Public History
- HISU-6610 The Old South

Reviews

Review: Commons In A Box

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Integrating Architecture into Digital and Public Humanities: Sites and Sounds + MediaNOLA

Amber N. Wiley 45

Review: Commons In A Box

One of my teaching goals is to end the practice of “[Cul-de-Sac Pedagogy](#),” where students travel down sheltered roads, drop off assignments, and then make anxious return loops to collect their grades. Much to the students’ detriment, no one outside the cul-de-sac sees their work. I’ve recently promised my students that all major assignments would invite an audience larger than me, but achieving this goal would require a technological boost: enter [Commons In A Box](#) (CBOX), a free software project developed by [Matthew K. Gold’s team](#) at the [City University of New York](#) (CUNY). In one semester’s time CBOX’s functional versatility, as well as its open, non-proprietary environment, have helped improve the practical and philosophical elements of my teaching.



Figure 1: Commons In A Box: Basic logo, dynamic product

CBOX is not exclusively for academic use, so a few words are in order concerning my specific intentions. I sought out CBOX as a teaching and community-building tool for those interested in digital and public humanities. I teach literature and creative writing in an undergraduate humanities department whose primary mission is interdisciplinarity; accordingly, I wanted a platform that would help students reach larger audiences, as well as centralize and showcase the work of multiple humanistic disciplines. As someone who teaches face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses, I needed a tool that wasn’t bogged down in a proprietary course management system or too dispersed across a digital landscape of free, online services. CBOX provided versatility and centrality. In a single location my students could blog, use wiki resources, build pages, create and manage groups, and engage in discussion forums, all while maintaining control of their needs for academic privacy and public outreach.



Figure 2: Student-created project page, with embedded media.

The need for non-proprietary centrality is up to individual users, but one practical selling point of CBOX is student access to aesthetic control, something entirely absent in rigid course management systems and most campus-supported web space. CBOX allows curricular objectives to expand into the rhetoric of presentation: document design, digital literacy, and visual rhetoric were additional, valuable skill sets added to the customary writing portion of my curriculum. If you are someone who believes that students need early and frequent exposure to composition in digital environments, CBOX's use of [WordPress/BuddyPress](#) facilitates just this: students gain experience with powerful, widely-used blogging and web design software where they are not walled off from CSS, HTML, PHP, or multi-media as it relates to the presentation of their work. CBOX's versatile settings do allow you to lock down the environment through a wide range of permissions, yet its ability to involve students in the interface is the real payoff. Because CBOX adds the BuddyPress plugin's networking capacity, students are not relegated to the role of user or consumer; the platform allows students to inhabit roles such as editor, curator, publisher, and even programmer.

Beyond this practicality, CBOX allowed me to make an important philosophical shift. In walled-off course management systems, students are relegated to being users — more accurately, customers — of an expensive educational product. I've often asked, "What is the benefit of this? What employer is starving for people who know how to use Blackboard or D2L?" The answer, of course, is none. Why not use a free product that not only saves the institution money (which ideally would come back to the students somehow), but also affords more learning opportunities in malleable, open-source environments? With CBOX, the environment can become part of the teaching-and-learning experience, and students are no longer shut out from obtaining these valuable skills.

House of Leaves Project Suite

This is for You



- **Twittering Class Discussion**
- **The 5 1/2 Minute Blog**
 1. Johnny Truant and Ben
 2. Pass and Claws
 3. Family Structure
 4. Drawing on All Art Forms
 5. A Seemingly Possible Impossibility
 6. Mommy Dearest
 7. Johnny and the Whale
 8. The Colon
 9. So, is that Actually a Thing?
 10. Names
- **Mapping [House of Leaves](#) (Right Click on name below and "Save Link/File As" to download)**
 1. Johnny Truant (Large KMZ File: May take some time to download)
 2. Will Navigation (Large KMZ File: May take some time to download)
- **[House of Leaves Podcast: Pezafina's Letters](#)**
- **[House of Leaves Timeline](#)**

Figure 3: Student-designed project suite

My main goal in utilizing CBOX was outreach; instead of being trapped in the cul-de-sac, I wanted students to see [their projects](#) emerging within larger discussions and communities, thus allowing them to reflect on their place in, and relationship with, the humanities in general (though any discipline could easily employ CBOX to good effect). For example, I ran an entire course through CBOX instead of D2L (which my university system contracts with), while at the same time I and other instructors were developing additional material for our site, called the [UWGB Commons for the Digital and Public Humanities](#).

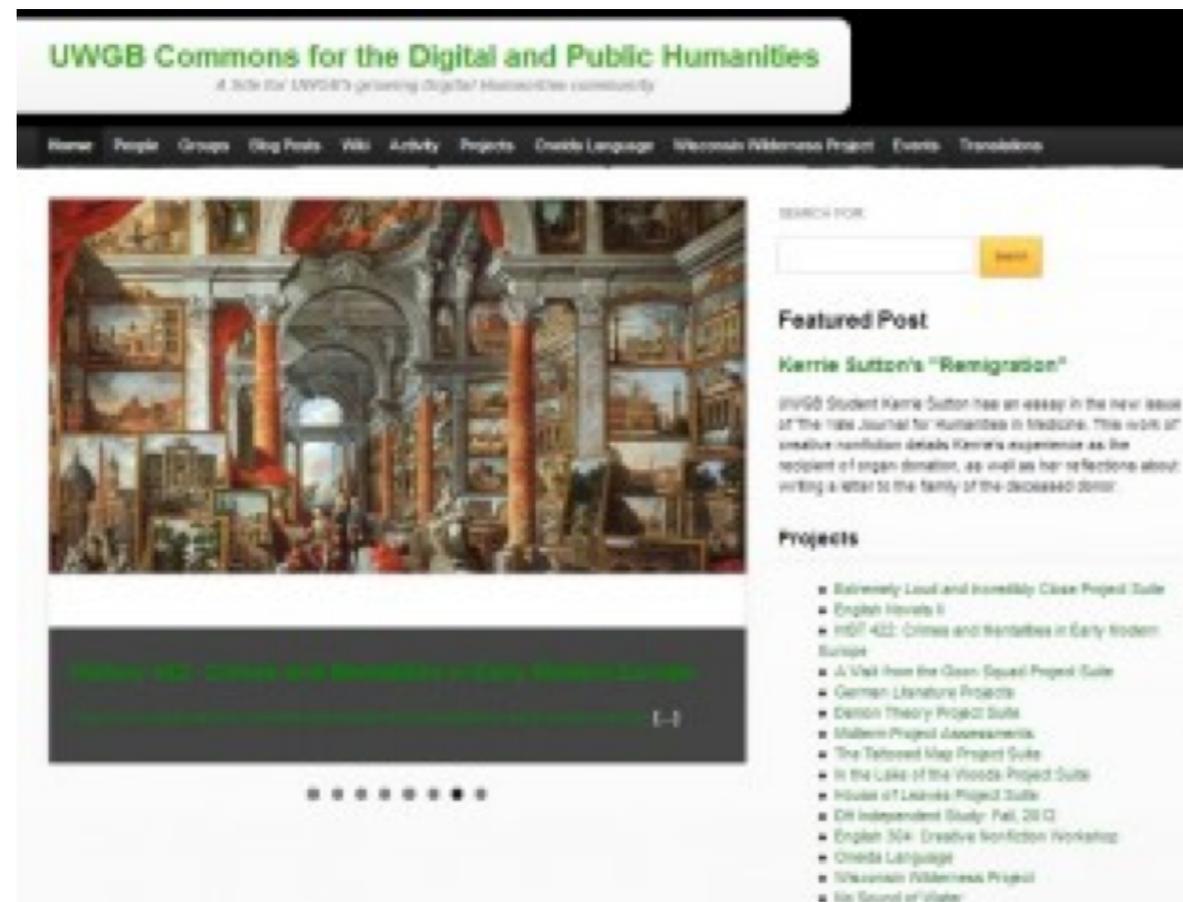


Figure 4: UWGB Commons Site

As my students began publishing their [blog posts](#) in response to course texts, the CBOX platform allowed them to see their work not in isolation, but published alongside digital projects from German and History courses, [a faculty project on the Oneida language](#), and listings for community events involving campus faculty and students. I cannot overemphasize the positive effect that publishing class work instead of merely “turning it in” has on students. Using CBOX, my students put their work into the world in a way that made it real, available, and networked; in other words, a good portion of our academic work shifted from private practice to public practice.

The centrality and accessibility of CBOX provided a coherent showcase for student and faculty projects — in my case, work specific to digital humanities — to people outside the university. It’s clear that the “value of the humanities” is always a hot topic, and since creating the UWGB Commons, I have had more requests for [information about the work we are doing](#). Because CBOX allowed my students to create and post project suites connected to our readings, author Stephen Graham Jones unexpectedly linked to my students’ work on his novel from [his author site](#). Needless to say, this was a great thrill for my class, and the CBOX platform is largely responsible for that visibility — in a previous version of the course, that work was inaccessible because it was dispersed across D2L, MediaWiki, GoogleSites, and standard Word documents. CBOX has also helped us promote our school’s humanities program, as the public nature of the site has led to new contacts with humanities-based grant offices; the first line of such emails usually reads, “I’ve been spending some time exploring your Commons site.” Unlike any other software I have used in my teaching, CBOX has facilitated more fluid connections between all of my goals, from process to product and beyond.

With any software platform there are logistical concerns, but CBOX has presented me with very few problems. [Their support forums](#) are busy and responsive, with both the creators and the user community cooperating to provide assistance. Because CBOX uses the BuddyPress plugin, the standard WordPress dashboard does become more diffuse and complicated, but if this minor inconvenience is what I have to deal with while reaping the benefits of this robust and still-developing tool, then I'll gladly take it.

Integrating Architecture into Digital and Public Humanities: Sites and Sounds + MediaNOLA

“Did you know @Tipitinas building has been a gym, radio station, juice bar, restaurant, & brothel? Not all at the same time, of course...”^[1]

In the fall of 2012, I taught an experimental and exploratory upper-level seminar at the Tulane School of Architecture entitled “Sites and Sounds: Public History.” The course grew out of an independent, applied research project that I am conducting through the [Tulane City Center](#), which investigates the cultural geography of New Orleans’ musical landscape. I began the seminar’s conversation on spatial and digital humanities with the above quote, tweeted by [Tipitina’s](#) — a music venue in the Uptown neighborhood of New Orleans — on August 16, 2012. Embodied in that quote of 140 characters (or less) is a nuanced and layered understanding of how the site has served the New Orleans community in multiple capacities. My students’ task in the course was to uncover the hidden histories of place at musical sites and to share them through new media techniques with a larger public audience. By presenting their research through MediaNOLA, a “[portal for histories of culture and cultural production in New Orleans](#),” my students foregrounded and contextualized architecture as a central type of culture production.

MediaNOLA was developed by Vicki Mayer of the Tulane University Department of Communications to “[encourage the preservation of collective memory by bringing together archival resources with members of the public to produce and reflect on the exceptional and ordinary people, places, and things associated with local culture](#).” The project combines a wiki-layout with a mapping and timeline component that enables users to pinpoint specific moments and places in the history of New Orleans and draw new meanings from those relationships. My architecture students contributed to the preservation of the collective memory of New Orleans by developing narrative histories about sites of musical production. In doing so, they demonstrated how an architecture course could fit well within the pedagogical aims of the MediaNOLA project specifically and the digital humanities more broadly.

Students in “Sites and Sounds” investigated two primary cultural forms: music and the built environment. In New Orleans, music is a significant investigative lens because it is a place-based tradition that permeates every inch of the city. Architecture is not often considered a form of cultural production, but when grounded in the theory of Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and Dolores Hayden, my students were able to talk about the social production of space, meaning in everyday life, and the power of public engagement with history. Built and natural landscapes contain a variety of narratives, and the place-based aspects of the MediaNOLA project encouraged research that focused on a particular site, while grounding the site within a specific cultural and historical milieu.

In my course, we examined traditional and avant-garde ways to disseminate information about a community. MediaNOLA presents a twenty-first century version of the important tactics of twentieth century public history methods. One decade ago students of

preservation with an inclination to public history created pamphlets, brochures, and posters to distribute and raise awareness about the buildings, landscapes, sites, and neighborhoods they were interested in preserving. Today, students using MediaNOLA are able to integrate visual materials, longer narratives, and snippets of primary sources in ways that are difficult to accomplish in academic papers. At the same time, the website builds upon the tradition of these earlier methods of public history, further advocating for the preservation of historic, overlooked, or endangered sites and creating awareness of their cultural significance.

The “Sites and Sounds: Public History” course had three main pedagogical thrusts: to serve as an introduction to cultural landscape theory, to use digital media to advance community public history, and to examine the intersections between music and the built environment in New Orleans. My learning goals for the students included nurturing an ability to set a research agenda driven by a investigative problem or question, demonstrating a working knowledge of archival research methodologies, synthesizing data in meaningful ways through narrative development and visual representation, and conducting research on emerging trends in spatial and digital media by situating MediaNOLA in a larger conversation about how new media can expand traditional pedagogies in place-based research. MediaNOLA helped me achieve those goals because I used it as both a case study and an instructional tool.

The initial two course assignments were introductory essays to ground the students in the humanities. The first was an analytic essay exploring and critiquing four spatial and digital humanities websites: [Vectors](#), [Social Explorer](#), [HyperCities](#), and [MediaNOLA](#). The next was a close reading of archival primary sources such as photographs, historical newspaper articles and advertisements,

recorded oral histories, [Sanborn maps](#), and album cover art. In these assignments, students developed informed opinions about the utility of digital humanities in a place-based research field such as architecture and cultivated skills needed to properly utilize and understand primary source archival material.

Subsequent assignments in “Sites and Sounds” dealt with refining students’ abilities to navigate the framework of the MediaNOLA website. The preliminary assignment that involved MediaNOLA was a source integration project. Many students reused the primary source that they analyzed in an earlier assignment during this first interaction with the MediaNOLA system. The goal of the project was to incorporate new sources and information into pre-existing MediaNOLA entries. One advantage to online projects such as MediaNOLA is that it iterates and grows with additional contributors, making it an increasingly useful pedagogical tool. Furthermore, students were not burdened with the task of creating a full entry from scratch but could become familiar with the system and basic HTML before developing their final projects. Their penultimate project included creating and editing a “compelling” narrative on a musical location of their choice that would eventually inform the content of their final project – their own MediaNOLA entry (See Figures 1 and 2).

Rosy's



Rosy's Jazz Hall, 2012. Photo Credit: Jordan Matthews

- 1 History
- 2 Renovations
- 3 Rosy's 1910-1970
- 4 Jazz in the 1970s
- 5 Rosy's Big Day
- 6 Rosy's Jazz Hall, Presenting
- 7 Music Hall

Contributors

Jordan Matthews

Over a period of eighteen months, Wilson personally financed the \$1 million restoration; the Times-Picayune reported on Wilson's project as an "uptown jazz palace" that "...[has] been regarded locally as something less than highly commercial and maybe just a little essential." Wilson responded to criticism directly by explaining, "But if people didn't make [the essential] moves sometimes, culture as a whole would be diminished. There would have been no [Bambino's] and no [Jazz] the way that it is." [Full article here.](#)

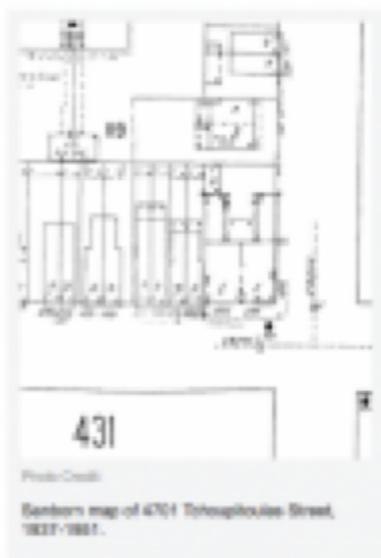
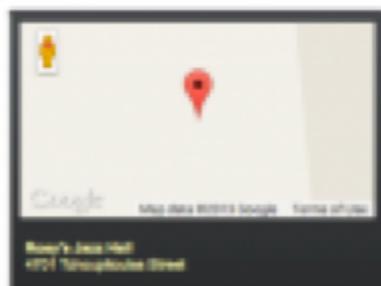
Live Performance and Public Culture

History

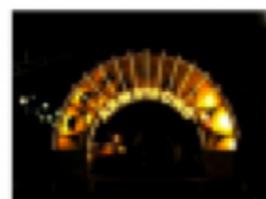
In 1910, Rosy Wilson, a twenty-one-year-old of industry heiress, renovated a 19th century brick warehouse at 4701 Througtholous Street for an Uptown music club after recognizing the density of clubs east of Canal Street. [\[1\]](#) Shortly functioning as a restaurant and performance space, Rosy's has since seen a succession of turnovers and vacancies; currently Rosy's is a wedding venue. By combining a variety of musical types with national and local performers along a busy uptown corridor, Rosy's established a well-known venue which aided in the development and accessibility of New Orleans jazz.

Renovations

The 9,000 square foot building required an enormous renovation in order to function as a jazz club. Rosy's was once a cotton depot, grocery store and Felder's, a neighborhood bazaar that closed in 1911. [\[2\]](#) A second floor balcony, punctuated with a rhythm of tall shuttered windows, wraps the corner from Througtholous to Valerius Street. Floor-to-ceiling French doors allow parties to permeate out onto the wide, heavily planted sidewalks. Within the secondary brick and steel building, a forty-foot tall glass atrium holds a sanctuary of fig trees, overlooking the back patio.



Louis Armstrong Park



Louis Armstrong Park Entrance. Photo Credit: Christine Foley

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Background
- 3 Renovation and Opening
- 4 Park Design
- 5 Armstrong Park 1980-1990
- 6 Louis Armstrong Park, Present Day
- 7 Music Hall

Contributors

Christine Foley

The vacant land surrounding the Municipal Auditorium be transformed into a park that would incorporate some of these elements. It was reported in a New Orleans States Item that the hope was that the park would help

History

Just steps away from the French Quarter is a 21-acre public park named after and dedicated to the late Louis Armstrong, a revolutionary jazz musician from the city of New Orleans. The park is located in the historic neighborhood of Tremé, a faubourg with deeply rooted music culture. The park, which is intended to celebrate the rich jazz history of New Orleans, honor New Orleans jazz prodigy, commemorate the site of Congo Square, and introduce open public space in a downtown area, has faced many trials and tribulations since its opening on April 15, 1980.

Initial Planning

The role that Louis Armstrong played in the development of jazz, and American music in general, had a monumental effect. New Orleansians wanted to honor him with a "permanent tribute" after his passing in 1971. Under Mayor Wilcox Landfieu, a Citizen's Committee formed to discuss plans for the design of a memorial for Armstrong. Planners, architects, jazz scholars, musicians, and community activists met to decide where and in what form the memorial would be implemented. [\[1\]](#) Various suggestions were proposed on what the dedication could be, including bandstands, educational systems for music and the promotion of cultural arts, fountains, monuments, among other things. [\[2\]](#) When plans for a Tremé Cultural Center fell through, mostly because of funding issues, the 14-member Citizen's Committee proposed that the vacant land surrounding the Municipal Auditorium be transformed into a park that would incorporate some of these elements. It was reported in a New Orleans States Item that the hope was that the park would help

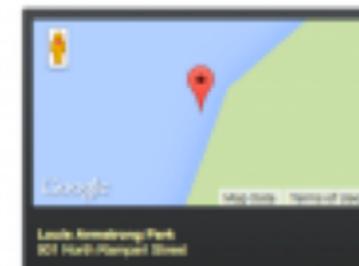


Figure 2: The research on Louis Armstrong Park highlighted a controversial urban renewal project that destroyed part of the historic Tremé neighborhood. This resulted in community involvement to turn wasted space into a park to honor one of the city's most celebrated sons.

<http://medianola.org/discover/place/902/Louis-Armstrong-Park>

Figure 1: The project on Rosy's Jazz Hall incorporated a variety of primary source archival material including a reproduction of a Sanborn map from the Southeastern Architectural Archives, a 1976 advertisement from the Times-Picayune, and announcements of forthcoming attractions from the Hogan Jazz Archive.

<http://medianola.org/discover/place/866/Rosys>

MediaNOLA features not only the physical objects that are the focus of preservation efforts, but also allows for the re-presentation, in some cases, of what has been severely altered or no longer exists. This is particularly true of the student work that highlighted the Pythian Temple Building and the Warehouse (See Figures 3 and 4).



Figure 3: The Pythian Temple Building entry included historic images the student author found in the Hogan Jazz Archive and current conditions of the unsympathetic modern alterations to the now-dilapidated building.

<http://medianola.org/discover/place/869/Pythian-Temple-Building->



Figure 4: The Warehouse was demolished in 1989. A panorama of the site created by the student author reflected present-day conditions.

<http://medianola.org/discover/place/544/The-Warehouse>

MediaNOLA's framework allows for both a historic view and contemporary view to be displayed simultaneously on the same screen, creating a powerful juxtaposition of past and present site conditions. The expansion of MediaNOLA through the [New Orleans Historical mobile app](#) adds interactivity to this dynamic by creating themed tours based on the collective research that informs the New Orleans Historical catalogue. Whereas sites of cultural production were mapped on the MediaNOLA website, the New Orleans Historical app is an on-the-ground guide to and through the spaces described on MediaNOLA. Visitors to the MediaNOLA website and users of the New Orleans Historical app grow as an informed public and can use their new knowledge to argue for the future and maintenance of New Orleans' cultural heritage, including the significant everyday spaces of musical production.

The benefit of using MediaNOLA is manifold for students. First, it gives them a place to produce work that will be published for a public audience. Not only did my students work much harder on their MediaNOLA entries to ensure their public work was of high quality, but now they also have a web link that they can include in their resumes and portfolios. Second, trained in primary research methodologies and analysis, students combined their skills with new media tactics, transforming archives' information from analog to digital. Furthermore, the majority of my students were unfamiliar with scholarly resources available at Tulane University prior to "Sites and Sounds;" however, through their MediaNOLA assignments students developed a familiarity with the [Hogan Jazz Archive](#), the [Amistad Research Center](#), the [Southeastern Architectural Archive](#), and the [Cornerstones Project](#) of the Tulane City Center. Finally, archivists play a central role in the MediaNOLA project, and because their materials were being put to use, they interacted with students who might not have otherwise known about or used these collections.

One of the biggest obstacles my architecture students faced while working with MediaNOLA pertained to scale. They had to confront this issue when reproducing archival images to display on a web screen. Some precise details found in architectural plans and renderings became illegible in the small space allocated for images on screen, and it was difficult to enlarge and scroll through the images. Architectural presentations are highly dependent on visual aids, so the framework provided by MediaNOLA, which was mainly text-based, provided a challenge for the visually oriented architecture students.

Despite these challenges, which are likely specific to architecture students, MediaNOLA is an important tool for students across various disciplines. In fact, the website has been used in architecture, history, English, and communications classes at Tulane University. Already updated from its initial launch in 2009, MediaNOLA has improved and now includes street views with mapping of the sites, as well as a timeline on the home page that allows the visitor to slide the knob to limit or expand the search. These improvements allow for easier navigation, so that a visitor to the site can control the variables of time and place, and easily locate and identify the places he or she is exploring. As the website grows, it will continue to benefit students, scholars, and archivists across the region.

MediaNOLA encourages instructors to move beyond traditional methods of scholarship and to promote engaged learning and teaching with their students, which should be the aim of teaching in a university setting. As one student noted in his/her evaluation of the “Sites and Sounds: Public History” course “there was something exciting about being apart [sic] of [Professor Wiley’s] research [as] opposed to just hearing about existing projects.” Another student noted that one of the course’s greatest strengths was that “it was a new class, and wasn't in typical format of lecture classes.”^[2] These are important lessons to

take away from bridging the gap between architectural curriculum and digital humanities. Students want to be engaged, and they want their work to be relevant to contemporary issues. The incorporation of MediaNOLA in my “Sites and Sounds: Public History” course was the addition that made the course successful in addressing those desires.

Notes:

[1] Tipitina's Uptown. "Did you know @Tipitina's building has been a gym, radio station, juice bar, restaurant, & brothel? Not all at the same time, of course...", August 16, 2012. <https://twitter.com/Tipitinas/status/236199144249769985>.

[2] Student evaluations in possession of the author.

Contributors

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Mike Griffith is the Faculty Technology Coordinator at the Faculty Technology Lab of Tulane University. In addition he is also an adjunct lecturer in the English and Communications Department. His academic background is in cultural and new media theory which he has used to develop theoretical frameworks for the development of emerging media pedagogies. He has published papers on subjects including the impact of file sharing on perceptions of music and the messiah figure in contemporary science fiction. Currently he teaches

film theory while consulting with faculty on their technological pedagogy ideas.

Vicki Mayer is a professor of communication and media at Tulane University. She has written or edited 4 books, including *Below the Line: Producers and Production Studies in the New Television Economy* (Duke UP, 2001). She continues to direct MediaNOLA and co-directs NewOrleansHistorical.org. She looks forward to future DH partnerships.

Chuck Rybak lives in Wisconsin and is currently an Associate Professor of English and Humanistic Studies at the University of Wisconsin—Green Bay, where he teaches the humanities, literature, and creative writing. He is the author of two chapbooks, *Nickel and Diming My Way Through* and *Liketown*. His full-length collection, *Tongue and Groove*, was released in 2007 by Main Street Rag. Poems of his have appeared in *The Cincinnati Review*; *Pebble Lake Review*; *War, Literature & the Arts*; *The Ledge*; *Southern Poetry Review*; *Verse Wisconsin*; and other journals. His new book, */war*, was released by Main Street Rag in 2013.

Kathryn Tomasek is Associate Professor of History at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, where she teaches U.S. Women's History and the history of the United States in the nineteenth century. With Wheaton College Archivist and Special Collections Curator Zephorene L. Stickney, she is co-director of the [Wheaton College Digital History Project](#). A paper describing preliminary work on the transactionography is forthcoming in Issue 6 of the [Journal of the Text Encoding Initiative](#), and the project's continuing development is documented at [Encodingfrs.org](#).

Amber N. Wiley, Ph.D. is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Architecture at Tulane. She is an architectural and urban historian whose research interests are centered on the social aspects of design and how it affects urban communities. She focuses on the ways local and national bodies have made the claim for the dominating narrative and collective memory of cities through design, and examines how preservation and architecture contribute to the creation and maintenance of the identity and sense of place of a city. She has conducted research on the heritage of musical sites in New Orleans, taught a public history course focused on the topic, and organized a community event entitled “Sites and Sounds” that was a collaboration between the Tulane City Center, the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South and the New Orleans Jazz National Heritage Park. Amber received her Ph.D. in American Studies from George Washington University, her Master’s in Architectural History from the University of Virginia School of Architecture, and her B.A. in Architecture from Yale University.