Humanities
Collaborations and
Research Practices

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What is Humanities Without Walls?

Funded by a Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities (IPRH) at UIUC

A consortium of fifteen humanities institutes in the Midwest and beyond

**HWW Global Midwest:** Core initiative to support multi-institutional, interdisciplinary collaborations to produce innovative research around the theme of “Global Midwest”

http://www.humanitieswithoutwalls.illinois.edu/about.html
HCRP: Exploring Scholarship in the Global Midwest

- A HWW Global Midwest-funded project jointly led by the University of Illinois and Indiana University (two lead institutions affiliated with the HathiTrust Research Center)
- Aims to explore the community of practice engaged in the Humanities Without Walls (HWW) Global Midwest initiative
- Builds upon experience and previous studies to understand how humanities research happens at the level of practice, process, and collaboration
HWW Global Midwest Awardees

- Hmong Memory at the Crossroads
- A History of World Music Recording
- Aggregating Great Lakes Environmental History
- Importance of the Last Generation
- The Great Lakes and the Global Midwest
- The Midwaste
- Perform Midwest
- African Immigration and the Production of the Global Midwest
- Muslims in the Midwest
- The Midwest Heritage Language Network
- There There
- Religious Soundmap Project of the Global Midwest
- Growing Up Hmong at the Crossroads
- BlackLivesMatter
- ¡Latinoamérica Presente!
- Collaborative Innovation and the Global Midwest
- Fields Hands Plows Shares
- A Comparative Study of the Great Lakes and the Jordan Valley
- Insurgent Midwest
- Detroit in China
- The New Ethics of Food
- Performing History
HCRP: Research Goals

- Learn how scholars build self-generated research environment infrastructures for supporting data sharing and research dialogues;
- Understand how humanities research happens at the level of practice, process, and collaboration;
- Learn how scholars frame their collaborations in the context of their broader research aims and project goals.
Humanities Scholarship and Collaborations

**Scholarly practices of humanities scholars:** Ithaka S+R, *Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Art Historians* and *Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Historians* (2013); Brockman et al. (2001); Palmer and Neumann (2002); Palmer (2005); ALCS, *Our Cultural Commonwealth* (2006); Bulger (2008); Gibbs and Owen (2012); Green and Courtney (2015)

**Digital Scholarship and Collaborations:** Edmond (2015); Nowviskie (2011); Quan-Haase et al. (2015); Siemens (2009, 2011)

**HathiTrust Research Center:** Varvel and Thomer (2011); Fenlon et al. (2014); Green et al. (2014)
HCRP: Methods of Study

- Qualitative interviews
  - Conducted 26 semi-structured interviews with awardees from the first round of HWW Global Midwest grants
  - Qualitative content analysis of interviews
- Quantitative visualizations of the community’s extended sphere of influence (ongoing)
Findings
Findings

**Adaptive Research Practices:** Scholars engage in cross-disciplinary collaborations and hybrid methodologies to pursue research aims.

**Networks of Scholarship:** The building and sustaining of networks across fields of study and institutions.

**Digital Curation and Scholarly Communication:** Many modes of sharing and publishing research.
Adaptive Research Practices

Evolving Research Practices in Collaborative Research

“Collaborations give us this kind of rich multiplicity of views and understanding.... We have a certain way of thinking and the other person can come to it from a totally different angle -- from a totally different kind of space.”

“We knew each other professionally to spend a week in residence dealing with material that turned out to be very personal and emotional.... I’m very grateful to the artists and the group who are used to working in these ways and kind of took me along.”

“One aspect of collaboration is sharing data and leveraging the different abilities we have in data gathering. I think that our collaboration goes beyond that in terms of interpretation. It’s also interpretive collaboration. Finally we envision an end product collaboration: multiple authorship on papers.”
Research Networks

Building and Sustaining Collaborative Research Networks

“I want to say this project is peripheral for everyone involved. It’s none of their central research. It all, I think, reflects some common questions and even frustrations among the researchers about available spaces for exercise of their disciplinary work and so it’s dealing with things we share in common on the periphery of what we do.”

“I think that the first set of major challenges has been organizational: trying to situate the project at the three universities--you know, the three universities work in different ways. They have different ways of disseminating funding, for example.”
## Collaboration Tools

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<td>Video and cameras</td>
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Scholarly Communications and Dissemination

*Diverse modes and tools for data sharing, communications, and publishing*

“When you're working in an interdisciplinary context, you’re trying to produce outcomes that are relevant to different fields, so I end up publishing things or speaking about things that are outside of the area that I was trained in. Also, when you’re trying to do work that has an impact on communities outside of academia, you tend to be producing all sorts of different stuff.”

“I can imagine that the collaborative tools and platforms for some of the artists would be super, super interesting, helpful, and useful, and it was fun watching the tech people find these old videos and pop them up and figure out how they’re going to work with them... Sharing platforms and all that stuff would be really important for all that work.”
Project Outcomes for HWW Global Midwest

- Documentary Film
- Digital Archive
- Exhibitions
- Digital Publication
- Digital Storytelling
- Multimedia Documentation
- Project Website
- Digital Platform
Data Sharing in the Humanities

“This is the critical question when we look at new platforms and new forms of dissemination. Are they serving the technologies? Are they serving the institutions that get grants to build these digital archives and laboratories for this sort of thing or are they serving those that want to receive the materials themselves?”

“We’re having a lot of discussion about print vs. digital in terms of the final platform for this thing. I think in some ways we sort of skip around to like the era of blogs and the era of listservs and these different kind of spaces that we think of through our scholarly careers that facilitated robust community interaction and exchange.”
HWW Global Midwest as a Case Study

Benefits:
- Rare and rich support for humanistic inquiry
- Expansion and enhancement of topics normally not studied
- Introduction of researchers to new ways of research
- Promoting interdisciplinary engagement across institutions

Challenges:
- Guidance on grants management
- Research project management: negotiating IRBs, management of labor
- Communication tools and resources to facilitate collaboration and documentation
A Networked Community
Takeaways
How do we support humanities collaborations?

- How could and should libraries support these new innovative forms of humanities research?
- What are ways that libraries and archives can engage with humanities research collaborations?
- How could these new modes of humanities research shape the future of library services and initiatives?
The HCRP Team!

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HUMANITIES WITHOUT WALLS

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

School of Information Sciences
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Thank You!

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https://publish.illinois.edu/humanitiescollaborationsandresearchpractices/