Managing Scope and Scale: Applying the Incubator Model to Digital Scholarship

FSU, UCLA, U-Nebraska, (UMich)
https://adholibdh.github.io/ds.incubators/
dlfforum #t2d
Introduction

This panel was conceived in spring 2016, via the DH Slack:

micahvandegrift 9:29 AM
Digital Library Federation CFP!
https://www.diglib.org/archives/11627/
@alixk @agilchristpike wanna put together something on “digital project incubators”? Our program will be running at FSU by then.

#t2d || @alix_rae
Digital Scholarship Incubators

- Adapting the mentor model from tech incubators
- A team of experts (researchers, librarians, and/or administrators) who work with an individual or project team
- Provide an environment for researchers to develop prototypes and workflows

#t2d || @alix_rae
Outcomes

To name a few:

- Building community
- Increase community knowledge base
- Model collaborative research and new methods

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PEN and Inc. @ Florida State

- Project development "course"
- A scholarly network for campus
- Digital Scholarship is people!

Our first cohort: Rachel Duke, Melissa Hughes, Tanya Peres, Zach Stoltzfus

#t2d || @sarcathic || @micahvandegrift
PEN and Inc.: Highlights

- In-person & remote conversations
- Most useful discussions:
  - Risk assessment; scope; collaborative partnerships

Detail from flowchart: [Does your historical collection need a database-driven website?](Crymble) This section asks morality questions about impact and using public/charity funding.

#t2d || @sarcathic || @micahvandegrift
PEN and Inc.: Next Steps

- Move to a less class-based model
- Encourage future incubator participants to become project mentors!

#t2d || @sarcastic || @micahvandegrift
Context - UNL Digital Scholarship Incubator

- Promotes & supports student-led digital scholarship through a funded fellowship
- Funded by Dean's Office; further support from Center for Digital Research in the Humanities
- Runs for 12 weeks during the summer
- To date, 3 cohorts & 11 fellows

http://go.unl.edu/incubate

@lizlorang
Highlights - UNL Digital Scholarship Incubator

Fellows:
- spend 15 hours/week coworking
- are responsible for all content & tech development
- deliver a presentation to the university community

UNL Libraries:
- create a supportive environment
- provide consultations (disciplinary expertise, methods, technology)
- connect fellows with resources

http://go.unl.edu/incubate  @lizlorang
Future - UNL Digital Scholarship Incubator

- Engage more departments and disciplines
- Develop more of a curriculum
- Engage more people from within the libraries
- Encourage further conversation among fellows outside of their disciplinary comfort zones

http://go.unl.edu/incubate  @lizlorang
UCLA Library
DResSUP

Zoe Borovsky
@zoepster

Dawn Childress
@kirschbombe
Strategy

**When:** 6-week Summer Program

**Who:** 5 library staff, 1 (full-time) grad student assistant ($5k), 4-6 grad students with projects

**What:** Partnerships rather than fellowships

**How:** User-focused, Project-based, Process, Prototypes, and Workflows

How to turn raw data **into**....?

UCLA Library
Flexible framework, based on research data lifecycle

web-scraping, geo-coding, mapping and visualization -- a tutorial created by Yan Liang, our graduate-student employee

Scheduled workshops            Open office hours
Obviously, students love DResSUP,

“It felt like a **real collaboration** as they truly listened to what we wanted to try and accomplish and helped to make that happen”. 

(but, what’s in it for the Library?)
What’s in it for the LIBRARY?

1. Transform collection development

2. Programs that integrate library content with tools and methods

3. Build infrastructure, connecting staff who work in separate departments

Collect and develop library expertise, methods, tools, data sets

Paid graduate student assistant allows staff to focus on teaching, prototypes, and workflows

Build communities around users, library as research team
UCLA - What’s next?

- Open DResSUP to our librarian colleagues
- Support a shared librarian digital project
- Encourage train-the-trainer system
- Focus on collections-related datasets and research projects

With our increased capacity:

- Accept larger grad student cohort
- Integrate faculty through their grad students / Academic Senate funding
Incubators - A Student's Perspective

1. What is the primary humanities research question you're exploring?
2. What is your data?
3. What is your theoretical framework/system of values?
4. What is your method?
5. What are the (scholarly, other) contexts of your work?
6. How will you manage these contexts of your work?
7. What is your minimum viable product?
8. How/when will you communicate about your project?

http://go.unl.edu/refuge @activistHistori
Incubators - A Student's Perspective

• Jettisoned the idea of single scholar in producing content and ideas
• Emphasized collaborative approach to content creation
• Consistent feedback from cohort

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Incubators - A Student's Perspective

Analyzing enslaved runaway data before creating the spreadsheet

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Thank you!

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Questions and Conversation

Panel:

1. Why was your particular model chosen?
2. How did you select projects to incubate? What, exactly, is being incubated?
3. How are your incubators funded & staffed?

Audience:

1. How many of you are planning an incubator-of-sorts?
2. Would any of these models resonate at your institution? Why or why not?

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