Creating Digital and Interactive Projects as a form of Peer-Reviewed Research

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Creating Digital and Interactive Projects as a form of Peer-Reviewed Research

- Today’s lecture will discuss composing interactive and digital projects as a form of research
- Review difficulties associated with creating digital projects
- Discuss strategies that one can use to highlight the scholarly nature of digital projects
The Humanities and Social Sciences have become more open to seeing digital projects as having scholarly merit.
Viewing Digital Projects as Research

- Mapping the Catalogue of Ships by Jenny Strauss Clay, Courtney Evans, and Ben Jasnow (https://ships.lib.virginia.edu/)

- This project uses GIS technologies to map out naval trade routes that were referenced in The Iliad by Homer
'Εσπετε νῦν μοι Μούσαι Ὄλυμπα δώματ' ἐχούσαι· ύμείς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε πάρεστε τε ἵστε τε πάντα, (485) ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶδον ἀκούομεν οὐδὲ τι ἴδμεν· οἱ τινες ἕγειρονς Δαναῶν καὶ κοίραν καὶ ἱδαν· πληθὺν δ’ οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ’ ὀνομήσω, οὐδ’ εἰ μοι δέκα μὲν γλώσσα, δέκα δὲ στόματ’ εἶεν, φωνή δ’ ἄρρητος, χάλκεον δέ μοι ἔνειπ̄, (490) εἰ μὴ Ὀλυμπιάδες Μούσαι Διός αἰγιόχοιο ἑυγατέρες μνησιαῖθ’ ὦσι ὑπὸ Άλων ἡλθον· ἄρχοις αὕ νην ἑρέω νήθας τε προπάσσας. Βοϊντάν μὲν Πηνέλεως καὶ Ἀήτος ἤχον Ἅρκεσίλαος τε Προθυμονὶος τε Κλεονίοις τε, (495) οἱ δ’ Ἰούνι ἐνέμοιτο καὶ Ἁοῦίδα πετοῦσαν.
Clay et al specifically identify the scholarly contribution that this project makes to their field.
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“Scholars had already recognized the geospatial principle that underlies Homer’s inter-contingent narrative. Mapping the Catalogue of Ships demonstrates that the poet employs topography as an organizing principle and spatial mnemonic device even at an intra-contingent level.”
The interactive features of this project highlight new ideas in such a way that builds upon prior scholarship in Classical Literature.
Viewing Digital Projects as Research

- The interactive features of this project highlight new ideas in such a way that builds upon prior scholarship in Classical Literature.
- Interactivity is not there for the sake of interactivity.
- Interactive and digital nature enhances key ideas that may be hard to visualize in a standard written format.
Clarifying Research Criteria

- A bias against digital projects: they aggregate information as opposed to analyzing information
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- Yes, digital projects may not look like a typical academic journal article
Clarifying Research Criteria

- A bias against digital projects: they aggregate information as opposed to analyzing information.
- Yes, digital projects may not look like a typical academic journal article.
- However, Clay et al demonstrate how authors can reinforce the scholarly integrity and legitimacy of digital undertakings.
Making Your Work Visible

- Let’s review some strategies for ensuring that the scholarly merit is on full display
Making Your Work Visible

- Let’s review some strategies for ensuring that the scholarly merit is on full display.
- Explain how digital projects can satisfy the criteria associated with the IMRAD structure of a standard academic journal article.
- IMRAD = Intro, methods, results, and discussion.
Making Your Work Visible

- Intros should offer context
Making Your Work Visible

- Intros should offer context → there are opportunities to offer context in digital projects
Making Your Work Visible

- Intros should offer context → there are opportunities to offer context in digital projects
- Homepage of digital projects can reference trends or issues in a field-of-study
- Homepage can also identify an author’s research question, hypothesis, or underlying goals
Making Your Work Visible

- Methods sections explain theoretical frameworks underlying data collection
Making Your Work Visible

- Methods sections explain theoretical frameworks underlying data collection → you can explain methods used to create a digital project
Making Your Work Visible

- Methods sections explain theoretical frameworks underlying data collection → you can explain methods used to create a digital project

- Having detailed explanations of how you gathered data can highlight the frameworks influencing your own work

- This can be on a homepage or its own section
Making Your Work Visible

- Analysis sections explain important findings
Making Your Work Visible

- Analysis sections explain important findings → you can guide audience’s attention to important details or patterns
Making Your Work Visible

- Analysis sections explain important findings → you can guide audience’s attention to important details or patterns

- You can explain what an audience should be focusing on while engaging with a project
Digital projects may encourage participation and experimentation from your audience
Making Your Work Visible

- Digital projects may encourage participation and experimentation from your audience.

- However, you can also be a bit more prescriptive in the specific ideas, patterns, or trends that are being highlighted.

- In a sense, your audience is actively “testing out” the data you aggregated and analyzed.
Conclusions identify avenues for future inquiry or research
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Digital projects often discuss how others can undertake similar initiatives

Also discuss how researchers/instructors might use this project in their own classes
Clarifying Research Standards

- Some important clarifications before starting a digital or interactive project
Clarifying Research Standards

- Discuss this work with your chair and any other institutional figures
- Want to ensure that this work meets their criteria for research and will benefit you professionally
- Explain what form of peer review will be used in these situations
Clarifying Research Standards

- If you are working with others, outline expectations for workload and authorship attribution
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- Questions of authorship need to be explicitly agreed upon by all participants

- Realistic workload is also important. Digital projects can be very labor-intensive
Clarifying Research Standards

- Develop a plan for long-term preservation of this project
Clarifying Research Standards

- Develop a plan for long-term preservation of this project
- Having a project rendered inaccessible due to tech obsolescence is a possibility
- Archiving digital work can be difficult but universities are creating more resources
Conclusion

- Please consult the ORS Lab website for pre-recorded webinars and worksheets that discuss different writing strategies

- Resources and webinars dedicated to different research methods (qualitative, quantitative, and AI-assisted)

- Consultants available to discuss best practices for different research methodologies