Digital Humanities & Social Sciences Project Helper

This pamphlet will guide you through the creation of a Digital Humanities & Social Sciences project
What is DHSS?

Digital Humanities and Social Sciences (DHSS) is a dynamic and interdisciplinary field of research that intersects computing, design, and traditional humanistic or social science research methods. As a field, DHSS employs technologies to make discoveries using data—from traditionally-collected data on demographic trends to the data produced in a piece of literature or by interviews in an ethnographic study. DHSS scholars creatively combine research and innovative technologies to develop projects that engage the public, encourage interaction, and inspire further academic inquiry.

Common applications of the DHSS field:

• 3D design visualization
• Geospatial technology and geographic information systems (GIS)
• Electronic literature and digital publishing
• Critical analysis of digital culture
• Analysis of social media
• Development of digital games
• Text analysis and text encoding (TEI)
• Digital archiving
• Digital exhibit-building
Building a DHSS Project can be complicated and time-consuming. Collaborative, technology-based, public-facing projects are the touchstone of the DHSS field, and with those characteristics comes an array of considerations and processes one needs to take into account for planning and execution. Projects often involve multiple digital tools and a group of scholars, students, and technicians. These disparate elements of people, technologies, and research need to align for a project to launch successfully.

The following pages provide guiding questions and considerations for individual portions of a DHSS project: broad project considerations (Project); Data; People; and Resources. These four elements need to work in tandem to produce a successful project that meets your goals and is sustainable long-term.
GOALS
What exactly is your goal for this project? Do you have a guiding research question?

ESSENTIALS
What parts are absolutely necessary? What parts could be cut if needed?

AUDIENCE
Who is your audience? How will your audience interact with your project?

SIMILAR PROJECTS
Have you looked at similar projects in the field? Can you reach out to the project creators?

SUSTAINABILITY
How will you document your project? How long will your project need to be accessible?

EVALUATE
Have you identified project markers to use? How will you evaluate the project’s success?

TIMELINE
How will you manage your time for this project? Is there a deadline?

CONTINGENCIES
What are possible setbacks you may encounter? Do you have a plan if you need to migrate content?
CREATING
What data do you want to capture?
Do you need Internal Review Board approval?

STORAGE
Where will you store your data long-term?
How long will your data need to be accessible?

STRUCTURE
How will you structure your data?
How will your data be organized? Standardized?

ACCESS
Who will need to access your data?
How will you share it with them?
Will multiple users need to edit simultaneously?

UTILIZING EXISTING
Do you know where to find your data?
Does the data need to be scrubbed?

STORAGE
Where will you store the data long-term?

STRUCTURE
How is the data structured?

ACCESS
How will you access the data?
Do you need to share it with others?
Resources

FUNDING SOURCES
Where can you find funding for your project? Have you checked the Foundation Directory for opportunities or grants? Have you reviewed successful grants in the field?

REQUIREMENTS
Do you have a Data Management Plan (DMP)? Do you understand all your funding requirements?

COSTS
Do you have a detailed budget proposal?

SKILLS & TECH ACCESS
How many people need access to the project? Do you need to have different levels of access?

EXPECTATIONS
What technology can accomplish your goals? What do you expect from your technology? How will users interact with the project? How will you interact with the project’s backend?

KNOW-HOW
Do you know how to use the ideal technology? Do you have time to learn it? Do you need any special skills or knowledge (e.g. foreign language, interview skills)?
AUDIENCE
Who is the intended audience?
How will your audience discover your project?
How will you market your project to other audiences?

STAKEHOLDERS
Who is affected by this project?
How should they be involved?
How will you coordinate with them?
Do you have a communication strategy?

TEAM
Who will you work with?
Have you talked to your librarians?
Does your team meet all of your skill needs?
Do you need partners to cover unmet needs?
Can you contact anyone who has worked on a similar project for guidance?

SUPPORTERS
Who will maintain the project long-term?
Does your project rely on continued funding?
Have you acknowledged everyone who’s work you’ve drawn on?
For additional help and questions, contact:

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