Launching the Digital Research Commons

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UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
LIBRARIES
Digital Research Commons
Presentation Outline

I. Planning for the Digital Research Commons
II. Developing the facility
III. Outlining initial expertise and programming
IV. Reflecting on lessons learned (so far)
Early Digital Scholarship Efforts at UH Libraries

- Strategic hires and expanding needs
- Growing interest in aspects of digital scholarship, including GIS and text analysis
Planning for Digital Scholarship

- **2015**: Ad Hoc Digital Scholarship Working Group
- **2016**: Digital Scholarship Services Team (DSST)
- **2017**: Digital Research Commons Engagement Team
Ad Hoc

- Compiled “snapshot” data on current collaborations, services, and needs
- Recommended that a new team develop strategies for launching a digital scholarship program
DSST

- Performed needs assessment
- Conducted environmental scan
- Identified current areas of expertise
- Recommended next steps as a “road map”
DSST Roadmap

The Task Force recommended a phased approach.

**Phase 1**
Create “umbrella” brand for marketing and communication plan.

**Phase 2**
Physical DS space within library; hire two additional staff.

**Phase 3**
Formal DS unit; hire Coordinator and technical specialist.

**Phase 4**
Advanced programming and services; video, Open Access and Scholarly Communication.
UH Libraries Strategic Plan

- DSST recommendations integrated into the Libraries’ Strategic Plan
- Goal on “Advancing Research Productivity” heavily influenced by expanding digital scholarship services
- Accelerated and rearranged tasks outlined in roadmap
Engagement Team

- Updated perceived needs of faculty, researchers, and students
- Translated these needs into use cases that informed the kinds of services, spaces, and technology to be found in the commons
Physical Space

- Multi-purpose space
- Adaptable setup
- Higher-performance computing
- Visualization screens
Beginnings: Startup philosophy

- Outreach-based
- Momentum
- 1-on-1 meetings
Beginnings: infrastructure

Charter for first year of operations includes:

- Project intake
- Campus stakeholders
- Advocated for budget
- Timeline
- Schedule of events
- Future collaboration
Beginnings: Expertise and initial programming

- Skills workshops
- Reading group on current topics
- Sponsored projects
- Ad hoc consultations
- Outreach
Beginnings: First semester workshop offerings

- Network Analysis I & II
- Data Visualization I & II
- Topic Modeling
- Data Cleaning
- GIS

Data Visualization II
Monday February 12, 2-3.30 pm
DRC, 266-C, M. D. Anderson Library
Flagship research enterprise: sponsored projects

- Bibliometric transatlantic study of printing in 1771
- Topic modeling and text mining C20th Russian war letters
- GIS project on ecological and social transformations around Lake Charles
- Integrating podcasting assignment into a professor’s pedagogy
- Building a virtual environment to manipulate 3D scans
- NEH collaboration on enriching metadata with the MFAH
Next steps

- Mechanisms to gather feedback on DRC performance
- Develop assessment criteria
- Develop 3-year strategic plan
Beginnings: culture shift

- DRC is first research center in UH Libraries
- From knowledge curation to knowledge production
- Budgetary discretion
- Sponsored projects
Lessons Learned

- Service Model
- Changing Culture
- Integration
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