WHY DOES THE CULTURAL COMMUNITY NEED BEST PRACTICES?

Why We Want to Create Digital Resources Useful to All the Humanities

Creating and Managing Content:

ENABLE CONTENT CREATION

LEVERAGE INVESTMENT

Providing Access to Content:

FACILITATE USE

IMPROVE RESEARCH RESULTS

IMPLICATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

Creating and Managing Content

Best Practices...

ENABLE CONTENT CREATION

- create a body of digital material to support advanced research in the humanities;
- enable the combination of source materials from multiple repositories or digitization projects (with some kind of hope for comparability);
- produce comparable results from projects in different circumstances;
- support preservation efforts by creating standardized products that can be managed in a consistent and therefore economical and predicatable way;
- ensure predicatability in digital source material made available for study;
- make assumptions of digitization explicit, to enable the evaluation of the results;
- assist in the preservation and longevity of information, by developing coherence in "digital archives."

LEVERAGE INVESTMENT

- best practices reduce redundancy of effort;
- add value efficiently;
- ensure investment in digitization creates content of broadest use (biggest bang for the buck);
- produce economies of scale;
- maximize the benefit of digitization projects (greatest good);
- give best results for least investment (through tested methods and processes).

Providing Access to Content

Best Practices...

FACILITATE USE

- ensure the reuse of primary materials beyond the context within which they were first digitized;
- encourage interdisciplinarity (e.g.William Blake Archive, where art history and literature intersect), reuse and interchange of information across disciplines, methodological boundaries and institutional types;
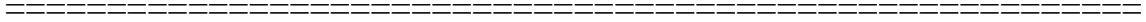
IMPROVE RESEARCH RESULTS

- enable scholars to focus on the research questions rather than on the technology;
- develop technological literacy among the academy essential to ensure validity of results that rely on technology;
- support scholarship, by reducing the possibility that technological artefacts will influence research results;
- ensure that research results are replicable, and that future research can build on past discoveries.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

- articulating our own assumptions of what is "best" will further our understanding of the digital resources the cultural community is creating;
- developing a rigorous and self-conscious methodology is essential for evaluating existing practices;
- well articulated guidelines must be tested beyond the domains in which they were created;

- neutral recommendations whenever possibe will enable the broadest possible use.

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- *methods and perspectives embodied in content need to be expressed explicitly;*
- *data must have broad or documented tolerances to be used beyond the domain of its creation;*