Digital Humanities Projects at Stanford

The School of Humanities and Sciences and Academic Computing Services at Stanford University are pleased to announce a call for proposals for digital humanities projects. Projects should focus on the production of scholarly digital media designed to analyze, visualize, or simulate an interesting problem in the humanities. Interdisciplinary proposals that integrate data from disciplines outside the humanities within a framework prominently involving humanities scholarship are especially welcome.

While the Digital Humanities has grown to encompass a wide variety of tools, techniques, and methods, these projects will emphasize the production of digital media that are contained and amenable to peer review rather than long-term projects without clear goals. Therefore, proposals should aim to produce original research that advances either digital work or the humanities field in question. As peer review and publishing of finished scholarly digital media is considered a priority, project proposals that identify avenues for dissemination of proposed digital humanities scholarship will be given preference.

Proposals should include the following:
- Title of project and one-sentence description.
- A 2-3-page description of the project, including audience, purpose, method of knowledge presentation, available resources, and project category.
- CV for each applicant.

One-sentence description: The clear definition of a proposed project not only serves to establish its feasibility but also serves as an organizing tool such that humanities scholars can better envision the translation of traditional scholarship into a variety of digital formats.

Audience: Digital humanities media produced for researchers is going to have fundamental differences from media produced for the lay public, policymakers, undergraduates, K-12 education, or fellow scholars. These six audience categories should serve as a guideline.

Purpose: The purpose of the project should be thought of as the sum of its scope, accessibility, and analytical functionality. While these three factors are not mutually exclusive, they are competing, and a proposal needs to be clearly aware of how they rank in priority. Possible purposes of the media (as related to different audiences) include:
- To facilitate scholar-scholar communication through the presentation of research.
- To afford an analytical environment for expert/statistical analysis.
- To provide a peer-collaborative space for bringing together a spectrum of inputs in the creation
- of commons-based knowledge/media.
- To support pedagogy at the university or K-12 level.
- To serve as a resource for the lay public.

Presentation: The proposal should establish the intended interface and depth of interactivity with the presented data. While the actual interface may be implemented in a significantly divergent manner (depending on the specificity of the proposal and the ongoing input of the scholar), the expected results should be specified so as to create achievable milestones and a recognizable end-product.

The presentation of digital humanities media can be described in narrative, as a series of static mockups, or as a dynamic animation. Visualizations are encouraged, given that visualization of data flow is common in explaining the design and function of scholarly digital media.

Technical requirements need to be clearly defined. If the project is expected to be produced in a particular type of code or to exist in a particular environment (such as Google Earth or Second Life), then these requirements need to be specified.

Available Resources: The proposal should identify any existing digital or digital-ready content. The former could be data existing in a particular format that needs to be translated to a new format (such as from Access to MySQL), tabulated data, images, 3D models/textures, existing pieces of code, et cetera. The latter could be gazetteer-style geospatial information, demographic tables such as census data, well-defined processes, or other media still in a traditional format but easily scanned or entered into digital format.

Project Category: The proposal should locate the project into a recognizable category of scholarly digital media. Four broad categories are given below as examples.

- **Infrastructure** - Development of shape files, databases, code, web assets, et cetera that will allow for the production of later projects. A scholar may wish to run a series of analytical measurements on a set of data before proceeding, in which case the goal would be to provide that scholar with analyzable content.

- **Fast Prototype** - Production of a proof-of-concept. This may coincide with grant proposals or serve to increase visibility of particular programs. While the underlying theory of a fast prototype is to use "off-the-shelf" components, the creation of reusable code and designs is still a high priority.

- **Community** - Creation of a social networking-oriented web site or a web presence on an existing social networking site. The proposal will be reviewed to determine the lower limits of technical achievement necessary to establish what level of innovation is required to pursue this type of project.

- **Incremental Component** - This is perhaps the most pernicious of types, as the current mode of digital humanities scholarship promotes long-term, open-ended projects, the idea of incremental help will always crop up. To fit within the defined framework, this incremental component needs to have a well-defined scope and timeline.

Data Management Plan: As more grant-funding agencies demand formal descriptions of the disposition of data created by these endeavors, data management plans have grown in prominence. For the purpose of this proposal, a data management plan need be no more than 2-3 sentences describing the licensing of data produced by this project, its desired storage and dissemination.

Submission Process
Proposals (.doc, .rtf or .pdf) should be emailed to dhsprojects@lists.stanford.edu

Submission Deadline for 2012 Projects
Friday, 12/02/11

Questions?
If you have any questions about this process or would like to have a review of draft proposals or any other issues, please feel free to contact Elijah Meeks at: emeeks@stanford.edu