Reframing Digital Scholarly Products In Libraries and Library Publishing

Aligning the Definition of Scholarly Published Products with Today's Practices

LPF Vancouver 2019

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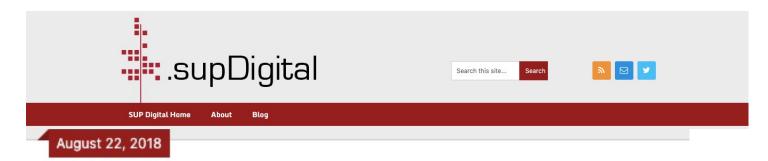# Foundation in prior work

DUKE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

A Framework for Library Support of Expansive Digital Publishing

Mattia Begali, Dave Hansen, Paolo Mangiafico, Veronica McGurrin, Liz Milewicz, and Will Shaw
This report offers a framework for how libraries can begin to embrace their role in the maturing space of digital humanities publishing, particularly as they seek to support what we call "expansive digital publishing" — challenging digital publications that can span disciplinary and institutional boundaries; use many different technologies; have multiple scholarly outputs; grow over time; operate over the long-term or are multi-phase; aim to engage with multiple audiences; and, in general, use digital tools and methods to explore or enable scholarship that would be more difficult to achieve through traditional publishing.

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August 22, 2018

3 Approaches to the Preservation of Interactive Scholarly Works

By Jasmine Mulliken   #supdigital   1 Comment

- Digital Repository and Documentation
- Web Archiving
- Emulation
- More to Consider

Blog URL: http://blog.supdigital.org/3-approaches-to-the-preservation-of-interactive-scholarly-works/

And many others

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DUKE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

A Framework for Library Support of Expansive Digital Publishing

First Words in Introduction:

By the late 1990s, **digital publications** like Valley of the Shadow had dramatically changed the world of humanities scholarship.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.21428/680f3353

Scholarly products made widely available via the Web are digital publications.

Scholarly products made widely available via the Web are digital publications. We know that's true because Duke said so.

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And there began an endless conversation about how to manage the lifecycles of digital scholarly products that did not fit prior, print-based models of academic publishing.

Craig and Brandon have highlighted many categories of new forms of scholarly publication in their talks. Keep all of those forms (and their complications) in mind as we think through their implications for libraries and library publishing.

What roles do libraries play with digital scholarly projects?

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Developer

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Developer
- partnership with the faculty and other entities on the development of specific product concepts, identification of relevant research materials, and the technical design and build of the digital product

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Publisher

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Publisher
- providing the means by which the digital scholarly product is presented in freely available form worldwide to its audiences (open assumption)

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Collector

What roles do libraries play with digital scholarly projects?

Developer

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Collector
- making the choice whether to include the scholarly digital product among the resources that the library makes discoverable and accessible in its collections (with periodic review of that collection decision), plus the related decision of what means the library will use to ensure access to the product by future generations of users (also periodically reviewed)

Each decision on role should be independent, but each should anticipate the next.

Developer

Publisher

Collector

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Developer

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Each decision has scholarly product life-cycle implications that we rarely understand ourselves, much less explain well to the creator.

How libraries select in each role:

- Good guidance and advice from multiple sources, including the Duke report (although not framed in exactly this language)
- First rule: <u>never back into selection by inheritance scenario</u>:
  - 1st contact: developer role
  - Access is hosted in library-controlled infrastructure
  - Library has made a de-facto publishing decision with all attendant responsibilities (whether or not it was discussed that way with creator or understood by library)
  - Project becomes inherited albatross for library publishers and collectors

As the technical complexity of digital scholarly products grows, so does the importance of clear delineation of these roles.

Developer

Publisher

Collector

Each role requires a specific selection decision, and few if any such decisions by one should obligate the decision of another role.

So we should just select the stuff that is easy for us to manage, right?

Our biggest mistake: too much constraint on the creator in our developer roles in hopes of easing <u>our</u> burdens in the other two roles (we often diagnose what went wrong 180 degrees incorrectly--that the problems we have with legacy projects later in their lives are because we didn't constrain them in development).

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And, in an age of rapid technological change, the innovation (and ultimate value) may be in the <u>how</u> as well as in the <u>what</u>.
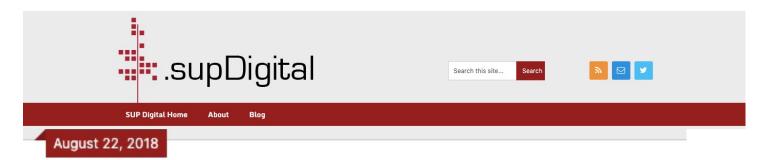
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The complexity of components in digital scholarly products is a sign of health, not chaos ==(OK, maybe both).==

Who sees things this way (other than me)?

Remember the blogpost from Jasmine at Stanford University Press?

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That post isn't one of despair. It is one of hope. There are many diverse efforts under way, including a Mellon-supported one on emulation led by Yale that involves Stanford's library and press, UVA, Carnegie Mellon, Notre Dame, UCSD, and the Software Preservation Network.

Emulation as a Service Infrastructure
https://www.softwarepreservationnetwork.org/eaasi/

Not the answer, but a strategy that may help us get to one.

As publishers, providing for preservation of our published materials is part of our responsibility. Our predecessors had the luxury of thinking on time frames of 50 years, when the last printed copy of something might no longer be findable.

Now—given complex digital scholarly publications with nearly endless technical dependencies (if we're supporting innovation)—preservation for publishers is not so much about actual disappearance but about practical disappearance. We can't any longer think about 50 years, it is 5 years (if we are very lucky).

This state, if we choose to recognize it, also points to a symbiotic relationship that must grow quickly, as Jasmine notes: in a library context, that is a close connection between those doing the publisher role and those doing the collector one. Library publishing units and university presses may never be able to manage by themselves long-term solutions for extending the functionality of their products, while collecting units must find ways to do so. They can only benefit from doing it together.

Jasmine's list, including the more-to-consider, provides a good current structure of approaching the challenge. Nothing that exists is the right answer. That said, we can't pretend that we can control the nature of complex digital products that we will want to publish and that will need to be sustained.

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And we shouldn't want to pretend that. Scholarly published-products are just not what they used to be.