



## Digital Humanities initiative

### DHi @ Hamilton College

The Digital Humanities Initiative (DHi) at Hamilton College: Creating a Collaboratory for Digital Humanities in a Liberal Arts Setting.

The Digital Humanities Initiative (DHi) at Hamilton College is a collaboratory where new media and computing technologies are used to promote humanities-based teaching, research, and scholarship across the liberal arts. DHi creates opportunities for new interdisciplinary models and methods of collaboration between faculty and students. These activities support a fundamental shift in humanities research, leveraging the potential of technology to access and manipulate rich media collections in ways that increase collaborative scholarship (not only within Hamilton humanities but also, potentially, with other institutions around the world) and lead to the generation of new knowledge formation.

Hamilton's DHi models collaboration across academic and administrative units and prioritizes curricular integration and undergraduate collaborative research. Co-Directors: Angel David Nieves, Ph.D., Associate Professor & Chair of Africana Studies and Janet Thomas Simons, M.S., ITS, unite faculty research goals, technology and library science resources to build upon Hamilton's significant strengths in teaching and research. The liberal arts environment places emphasis on the undergraduate curriculum and integration of undergraduates in humanities based research questions. DHi benefits from the existing foundations of Hamilton's Information and Learning Liaisons (HILLgroup - a collaboration of instructional technologists and reference librarians to support learning), existing humanities curriculum with a new Cinema and New Media Studies (CNMS), and institutional support for humanities research involving undergraduates.

DHi at Hamilton is defined by, and we seek collaborators in, the four components of our *Mission Statement*:

**I. Liberal Arts Initiative** – developing an infrastructure and model for collaborative digital humanities scholarship including undergraduate researchers with the ultimate goal of creating a consortium of liberal arts collaborative projects in the digital humanities. These include:

- Fedora/Islandora/Duracloud Infrastructure for DHi projects
- CLASS (Culture, Liberal Arts and Society Scholars) Program for Undergraduates
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**II. Faculty/Student Digital Scholarship** (<http://www.dhinitiative.org/projects/>) – research projects and non-copyrighted objects in collections will be shared in progress with the broader

scholarly community for feedback, collaboration, and review. As such:

- Nine (9) digital humanities projects are actively being developed. Five additional projects are in the initial stages of development.
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- Eight (8) digital collections from seven (7) faculty and one (1) Burke library collection are in progress.
- Four (4) additional research projects are in preliminary stages.

**III. Direct Connections to Curriculum (<http://www.dhinitiative.org/projects/class/>)** – integration of Digital Humanities approaches into existing courses, emphasizing the pivotal role of undergraduate student research fellows, and creation of courses in which the outcomes of projects will be used to advance new/ongoing research. These approaches have included:

- Twelve (12) student collaborative researchers representing eleven (11) different departments and programs (Asian Studies, Economics, English, Chinese, World Politics, Hispanic Studies, Africana Studies, Religious Studies, East Asian Languages, Anthropology & Archaeology) worked with Hamilton faculty on DHI projects.
- Three (3) DHI undergraduate student fellows presented their research projects at conferences. Gabriela Arias and Alexander Benkhart presented at the Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges undergraduate digital humanities conference, Re:Humanities, November 11-12. Erica Kowsz presented her documentary at the Archaeology Society Meeting.
- Two (2) DHI undergraduate student fellows (Benkhart & Kowsz) received Fulbright Awards in 2011. Benkhart <http://www.hamilton.edu/news/story/alex-benkhart-11-awarded-fulbright-to-japan> and Kowsz <http://www.hamilton.edu/news/story/erica-kowsz-1-awarded-fulbright-to-canada>
- One (1) DHI undergraduate student fellow (Arias) was interviewed by *The NY Times*
- One (1) DHI undergraduate student fellow (Kowsz) and Professor Nathan Goodale screened the documentary film she created, “The Long Journey Upstream” for members of the Sinixt Nation in Fall 2011 <<http://www.perryridge.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/rivers-day-poster-copy.jpg>>

DHI *sponsors* a wide range of activities, including faculty development workshops, media literacy programs, scholarly conferences and symposia, undergraduate seminars, a fellows program for Hamilton College students and faculty, and humanities programs designed for the public-at-large. These activities have included:

- Nine (9) faculty development opportunities
- One (1) three-day workshop on Geospatial Analysis for Humanities Research and Teaching with over 40 participants



- Five (5) invited guest speakers comprising faculty and staff involved in digital humanities work presenting public lectures to the Hamilton community
- Five (5) invited guest speakers leading public workshops to the Hamilton community

**IV. Sustainable** – projects originate from departments and programs across the humanities (and beyond), integrating the DHi into the fabric of the division. The technology infrastructure and research support model reduces the need for cyclical revamping of existing static research web pages by creating infrastructure and processes that maintain research outcomes as ‘living’ web presences accessible for faculty and student collaborative scholarship over time.

Infrastructure development (see <<http://dora.hpc.hamilton.edu/>>) to date has included:

- DHi development and production servers set up and configured with Fedora Commons and Islandora.
- DHi Collection Development Team hiring a graduate student from Syracuse University as a Metadata assistant. We anticipate building a relationship with The Graduate School at Syracuse University.
- DHi Collection Development Team in collaboration with Discovery Garden Consultants ingesting, indexing, and theming two digital collections.

DHi *establishes* a cohort of faculty well-trained in the digital humanities who can mentor colleagues, enhance faculty development, and assist in outreach. To date:

- Five (5) Hamilton faculty have presented their projects to the larger community
- Four (4) Hamilton faculty have presented their projects at national and international inter & disciplinary conferences (Goodale, Omori, O’Neill, and Nieves)
- Two (2) Hamilton faculty have participated in workshop in extended workshops in Geospatial and Oral History and Two faculty members have attended the week long Digital Humanities Summer Institute.

In summary, our model will help determine what it takes to build a faculty digital scholarship infrastructure that combines library preservation standards with open source presentation platforms, including recyclable components that are tailored for individual research projects while also reducing the maintenance overhead for projects. Standard research university models do not include development of sustainable infrastructure architecture for faculty research projects. Instead, most digital humanities centers build projects one by one with little recyclable and/or easily maintained web presences. The programming and maintenance costs of such models are prohibitive for small liberal arts schools.

**We seek collaborators in any of the four areas of our mission!**