Digital Liaisons: Building Communities and Empowering Culture through Digital Libraries

ABSTRACT
Definitions of digital libraries frequently include the community of users as an essential component. Indeed, information science as a discipline is grounded in theories like Human Computer Interaction and methodologies such as usability that emphasize the role of users in the information ecosystem. Given the increasingly symbiotic relationship between information technology and community, users are no longer just consumers but also partners in, and in effect co-creators of, digital libraries. In this panel, up-and-coming information professionals will explore the intersection of digital collections and services with their associated community of users while reflecting upon the mutual interplay between collections, community, and culture. The session will feature posters and lightning talks by Undergraduate and Master’s LIS students or newly minted professionals and may be theoretical in nature or report on practical applications of theory.

Keywords
Digital libraries, community, culture, digital collections, human computer interaction, students, master’s students, undergraduate students, student research

INTRODUCTION
The relationship between digital libraries and their user communities is one of the core research interests in the information science discipline and a perennial topic within the professional literature. For instance, a scan of recent JASIST issues turned up numerous articles in this area, ranging from a new theoretical framework comparing citation behaviors within scientific communities to an autopoietic system (Riviera, 2013) to a study of the impact of anonymity on individuals’ behavior within the Wikipedia users’ community (Tsikerdekis, 2013). Given this year’s conference theme, Connecting Collections, Cultures, and Communities, SIG-DL proposes a Digital Liaisons panel focused on the intersection of digital collections and services with their associated community of users.

Digital Liaisons panels provide Master’s and undergraduate students as well as early-career professionals with an opportunity to present poster sessions and lightning talks on a timely and broad theme. Two keynote speakers are invited to frame the theme in the beginning of the session and to wrap up the various threads of the students’ presentations at the conclusion. Over the past several years, this format has successfully achieved three goals. First, it gives students an opportunity to present their research at a national conference, thus serving as a form of outreach for new professionals who wish to take part in the information science research community. It also provides a venue where presenters can exchange ideas with their peers and experienced colleagues, who in turn can learn from the presenters’ fresh perspectives and recent involvement in LIS programs. Finally, the Digital Liaisons panel increases student participation as well as recruitment of both individual members and student chapters.

TOPIC
This year’s panel will focus on digital libraries from the perspective of community and culture, in keeping with the 2014 annual conference theme. The open-ended theme will allow students with a broad range of interests to participate and may cover subtopics such as social network analysis, linked data, open access and new publishing models, crowd-sourced metadata, digital humanities, big data, and citizen science.

Exploring digital collections through the lens of community and culture allows presenters a great deal of latitude in the subjects that they cover. The following examples show the broad range of focused talks that students may develop for the session.

- Leveraging linked open data to bridge different populations
- Developing ontologies for specialized communities of practice
- Current/proposed applications of big data and their cultural implications
- Usability studies that focus on particular populations
- The impact of citizen science on the practice of science (or scientific community)
- Innovative collections and services that support a given group
- Practice of digital humanities within specific academic disciplines

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• An ethnographic study of the impact of open access on publishing or academic communities
• Crowd-sourced content or metadata
• Social networks, and network analysis
(This list is meant to be illustrative, not inclusive.)

MODERATOR AND PRESENTERS
Student presenters will be selected through an open call for papers (June-September). Judges will take care to select presenters whose proposals cover a broad spectrum of timely topics within the given theme. Dr. Michael Eisenberg, Professor and founding Dean, University of Washington Information School will make opening remarks to frame the session. Eisenberg’s current research interests include digital literacy and virtual worlds, among other subjects, thus bringing an educational focus to the topic. Dr. Karen Fisher, Professor, University of Washington Information School, will conclude the session with a plenary address that wraps up the themes and ideas raised in the students’ submissions. Her areas of expertise cover digital culture, cultural adaptation to technology, and information in social settings which are well suited to the theme of community and culture in the context of digital libraries.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT
The Digital Liaisons panel will be a multi-part, interactive session in which students and early-stage professionals have an opportunity to present posters or lightning talks on their research, course work, work experience, or independent interests. Attendees will engage with the presenters’ offerings, giving them an opportunity to learn from and network with seasoned professionals. In turn, attendees will benefit from learning about current research and work occurring in LIS programs. Two keynote speakers have been invited to give brief opening and closing remarks that frame the topic and tie together the various sub-themes. At the conclusion of the session, there will be ample time for discussion among all participants.

If the panel is approved, SIG-DL will make a call for session proposals in June. Current students or professionals with less than 2 years of work experience may submit individually-authored or group proposals that report on research projects, course work, internships, work experiences, etc. SIG-DL will form a panel of three reviewers to judge the submissions and select up to ten posters and five lightning talks, based on criteria such as relevance to the panel theme, research merit, timeliness of the topic, and appropriate scope for the poster/lightning talk format. SIG-DL will also award monetary prizes to the best lightning talk and posters and to runners-up in both categories to help offset travel expenses.

Proposed Timetable

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to panel</td>
<td>15 minutes Presenters set up posters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>During the panel</td>
<td>25 minutes Attendees browse posters.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10 minutes Keynote speaker gives opening remarks.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>30 minutes Presenters give lightning talks or play video presentations.</td>
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<td>10 minutes Second plenary speaker makes summarizing remarks.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15 minutes (minimum) Attendees, presenters, and plenary speakers engage in a discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>After the panel</td>
<td>15 minutes Presenters take down posters</td>
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</tbody>
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This order of events fits within a 90 minute block of time. If longer slots are available, we would like more time for attendees to view the posters and a longer period for discussion.

RECRUITMENT
SIG-DL members will announce a call for posters and lightning talks beginning in June using a variety of media channels including LIS programs and other relevant professional listservs, as well as social media outlets. SIG-DL members will also contact ASIST student chapters and LIS program faculty teaching pertinent coursework. Student submissions to the Digital Liaisons panel have grown every year over the three years the session has been held at the annual conference. If the panel is approved, we anticipate another strong pool of student participants.

POTENTIALLY INTERESTED SIGS
In addition to Digital Libraries, this panel is relevant to several other SIGs including Human Computer Interaction, Education for Information Science, and Information Needs, Seeking and Use. Individual posters or lightning talks may address issues that fall within the domain of Arts and Humanities, BioInformatics, Classification Research, Health Informatics, Scientific and Technical Information, or Social Informatics, among others. The chair of the SIG-AH has agreed to co-sponsor this panel and will serve as a judge for the student submissions.
REFERENCES