

Introduction of Digital Scholarship at Walker Library

Digital Scholarship is scholarship, enhanced by the design of digital projects, incorporation of digital tools, collaboration among digital partners, and dissemination through digital platforms. Digital Scholarship is changing the nature of how research is conducted, produced, and shared with the use of digital collection building, digital preservation, digital publishing and the application of digital tools, data visualizations (timelines, maps, interactive components) and other resources.

Digital Scholarship is an extension of the mission of the Walker Library as an active partner in the scholarly communication process, and supports the educational mission of the university through providing access to information. Walker Library has invested in establishing the necessary and supportive infrastructure used in the creation and dissemination of digital resources. This infrastructure includes a Digital Scholarship Librarian, software, scanners, computers and a work space. Appropriate digital preservation processes have been put into place and extended server space for file storage. The existing information technology specialists, professional development funding and a fundraising effort for this initiative is in place as it is for all other areas of the library. The infrastructure also includes the expertise of other existing library staff including the Digital Initiatives and Web Services Librarians.

Overview of the Digital Scholarship Lab

The Digital Scholarship Lab (DSL) at Walker Library caters to research, digitization, and online editing tools that enhance the scholarship of the MTSU community and the collections of Walker Library. It is the work space for the Walker Library digital initiatives and serves as a hub for collaboration among campus partnerships, with centers, faculty and students, in the pursuit of creating and applying new technologies that enhance interdisciplinary research. *Digital Initiatives* uses the Digital Scholarship Lab as a home-base when consulting on digital collection building projects with emphasis on data management planning, data visualizations (mapping, timelines), and digital publishing platforms (institutional repository, Omeka, Viewshare). Additionally helpful is the team of digital scholarship staff that provides knowledgeable experience with project design, open access, metadata and digitization standards, and other collaborative or referral opportunities.

The Digital Scholarship Lab serves as the starting place of inquiry to digital scholarship opportunities. Regardless of the approach used, the DSL aims to help build digital collections as a service to users, but also add the newly developed content to the library's collection. This is done digitally, through inclusion in the institutional repository or as an addition to the library's digital collections. The institutional repository is managed from within the Digital Scholarship Lab at Walker Library and is an extension of the collection development mission of the library and university archive. Through this digital repository, Walker Library partners with the campus in expanding the availability and visibility of the MTSU community scholarship and documents its history in conjunction with the university archives.

Criteria for Digital Scholarship
Walker Library, Middle Tennessee State University

Digital Scholarship at Walker Library is interdisciplinary, collaborative and committed. Much like the frequently used term, *digital humanities*, it emphasizes the approach, experimentation and design of using interactive technologies to expand the participation, the modes of access, and the dissemination of scholarship.

The Digital Scholarship Lab (DSL) is *interdisciplinary*. The DSL was created to serve as the hub for such scholarship and welcomes faculty and students from variant backgrounds and academic departments.

The DSL is *collaborative*. This is met by providing the physical space and tools necessary for scholars to collaborate; through a number of campus partnerships that include the Center for Historic Preservation, the Center for Popular Music and the Albert Gore Research Center; and by working with other campus and library services that promote scholarship including the Digital Media Studio, the University Writing Center, and the Fullerton Laboratory for Spatial Technology.

The DSL is *committed*. The Walker Library and university's mission of providing information resources, expert assistance, creative collaboration, resource management and a conducive atmosphere for scholarly communication, is continued at the DSL. We explore new forms of technology and respond to the needs of our users, partners and the future design, access, and dissemination of scholarship.

To learn more about the library's mission and involvement in student success at MTSU, please see the following website <http://library.mtsu.edu/about/mission>.

Foundation of the Digital Partners

In 2012, a digital partnership was formed and comprised of the campus library and archive centers. The initial partnership includes Walker Library, Gore Research Center and University Archive, The Center for Popular Music and the Center for Historic Preservation. This partnership reflects the collaborative ideals of the Walker mission as well as the nature of digital scholarship.

Our Mission of the Digital Partnership. Through creative collaboration, the Digital Partners seek to use technology to extend the research capability and dissemination of scholarship. The DSL will support departments, faculty, and advanced students with a shared learning enterprise as the Digital Partners to discover new and innovative uses of digital technologies. The DSL will assist researchers as they build the tools needed to preserve and present information; and offer opportunities to faculty and advanced students to apply the technologies of digital scholarship. The DSL will initiate joint projects that build upon the strength of our collections and increase the visibility of these resources. The products of these endeavors will be created and sustained following best practice standards. It is the mission of Walker Library and the Digital Partners to incorporate learning opportunities for students, faculty and staff, advancing our shared knowledge and expertise.

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Goals

Digital scholarship transforms the way research is conducted. With the use of digital scholarship, scholars can develop innovative methods and new tools to advance the modes of access to scholarly materials. Although each project may have specific goals, the DSL has a goal to:

1. Serve as a place that publishes digital scholarship of the campus community
2. Host a repository of organized, discoverable and preserved collections in digital form
3. Be instructional in the process and the potential afforded by technology to advance interdisciplinary scholarship
4. Build partnerships that foster the growth of digital scholarship at MTSU
5. Enable faculty and students to consult on methods, emerging technologies and share results in new ways
6. Empower scholars and libraries to create and preserve knowledge in a digital environment and actively seek new solutions for the future growth
7. Strive for systematic and sustainable solutions which include both technical (back-up storage and maintenance) and financial (grants, funding, partnerships) requirements

Expertise

The DSL offers cross-disciplinary library expertise including digital scholarship, digital initiatives, systems, web services and metadata librarians. Our expertise is expanded beyond the library with campus partners including the Albert Gore Research Center, Center for Historic Preservation and the Center for Popular Music. Specialists, particularly GIS or subject matter experts are also collaborative partners on digital scholarship projects. Our assembly ensures that the areas of expertise will evolve with the changing demands of the university environment and scholarship of the next generation.

Digital Scholarship Resources

Current

digital collection building experience

digital publishing platforms (JEWLScholar, OJS Journals, CONTENTdm, Viewshare)

physical space for collaboration, fully equipped with hardware and software options

scanners for digitizing collections (Epson V300, Epson 10000 XL, BookEye)

consultation services on project design, open access, metadata and digitization standards

collaborative or referral opportunities (Digital Partners, GIS specialists)

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Walker Library, Middle Tennessee State University

Future

data visualizations (GIS, mapping, timelines)

digital publishing platforms (HistoryPin, Curatescape, Neatline, Spotlight, others)

hosting possible *events*

- *workshops* on institutional repository, open access, digitization, tool-specific (Omeka, Viewshare, etc) on a regular, recurring basis, or by request
- *celebrations* for sharing accomplishments of collaborative digital scholarship projects
- *forums* or discussion groups for individual faculty and student groups to present their digital projects (show and tell forum); and to spark conversation about DS related issues

Promotional Events- Informational presentations to administration, faculty, departments and graduate student groups, while working with subject liaisons for continuous promotion of DSL related matters. (May need to do self-promoting and request time at department meetings initially before it becomes routine).

Grand Opening, flyers, inclusion on website, quarterly newsletter/updates, etc.

Possible routine discussion groups for faculty and students to present their digital scholarship projects (show and tell forum), and spark conversation about DS related issues.

Possible workshops (if any) can be schedule each semester and listed on the library website and perhaps a part of the Academic Affairs email to faculty each term highlighting the upcoming events.

Possibility of hosting a symposium, conference or un-conference, working with other departments at MTSU or with other universities in the region.

Next Steps (Broad)

The DSL seeks partnerships in exploring and creating innovative uses of research tools, funding opportunities for promoting digital scholarship, and expanding our own knowledge of emerging technologies that will enhance scholarship and the resources we provide.

Walker Library explores digital scholarship around various themes:

- the changing nature of academic practices
- the impact of new technologies for scholarly research
- the role of the scholar and institution in an open and digital world
- investigating and exploring new approaches to scholarship through collaboration