Creating Digital and Interactive Projects as a form of Peer-Reviewed Research

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Creating Digital and Interactive Projects as a form of Peer-Reviewed Research

- Today's lecture will discuss composing interactive and digital projects as a form of research

- Review difficulties associated with creating digital projects

- Discuss strategies that one can use to highlight the scholarly nature of digital projects
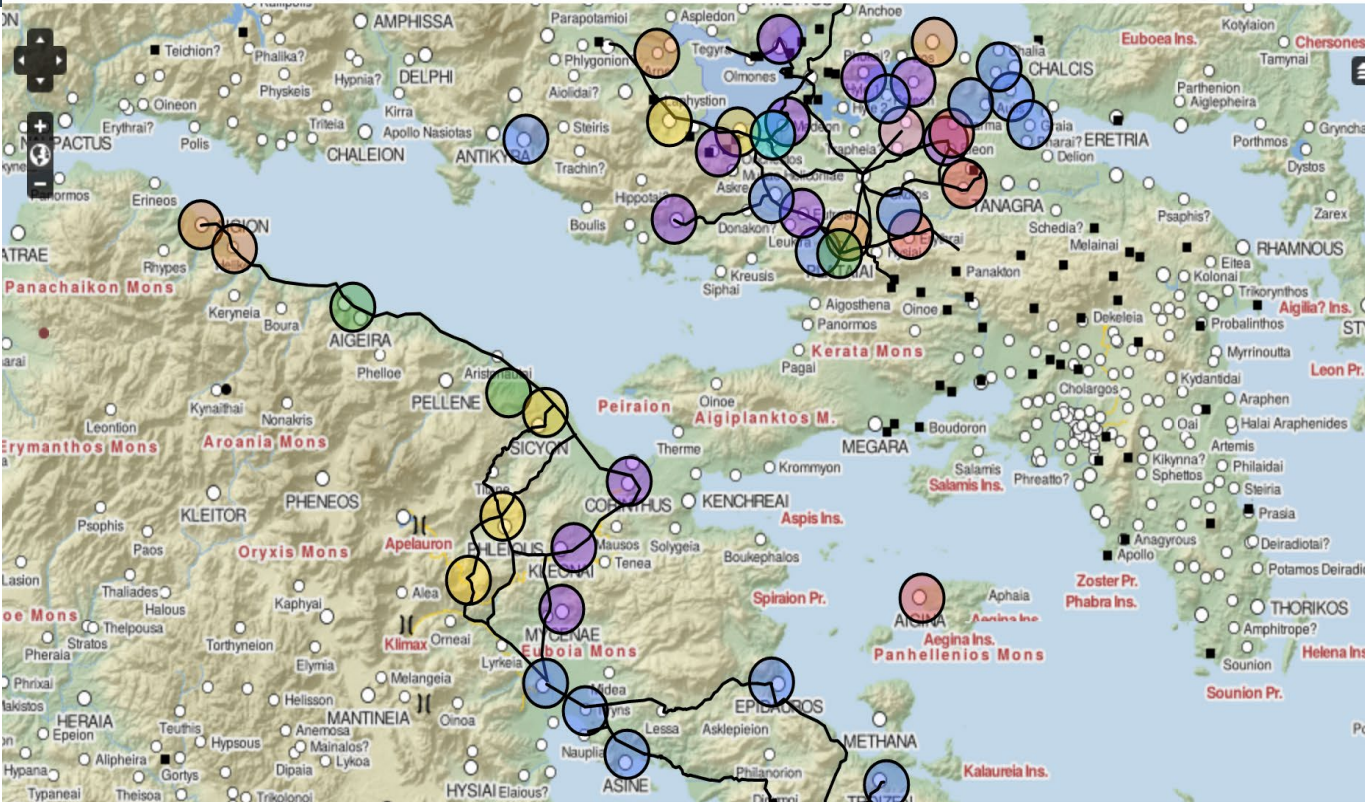
Viewing Digital Projects as Research

- The Humanities and Social Sciences have become more open to seeing digital projects as having scholarly merit

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Viewing Digital Projects as Research

- Mapping the Catalogue of Ships by Jenny Strauss Clay, Courtney Evans, and Ben Jasnow (https://ships.lib.virginia.edu/)

- This project uses GIS technologies to map out naval trade routes that were referenced in The Iliad by Homer

The Iliad, Book 2 (View Fullscreen)

Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ᾽ ἔχουσαι·

ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε πάρεστέ τε ἴστέ τε πάντα, (485)

ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν·

οἵ τινες ἡγεμόνες Δαναῶν καὶ κοίρανοι ἦσαν·

πληθὺν δ᾽ οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ᾽ ὀνομήνω,

οὐδ᾽ εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν γλῶσσαι, δέκα δὲ στόματ᾽ εἶεν,

φωνὴ δ᾽ ἄρρηκτος, χάλκεον δέ μοι ἦτορ ἐνείη, (490)

εἰ μὴ Ὀλυμπιάδες Μοῦσαι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο

θυγατέρες μνησαίαθ᾽ ὅσοι ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθον·

ἀρχοὺς αὖ νηῶν ἐρέω νῆάς τε προπάσας.

Βοιωτῶν μὲν Πηνέλεως καὶ Λήϊτος ἦρχον

Ἀρκεσίλαός τε Προθοήνωρ τε Κλονίος τε, (495)

οἵ θ᾽ Ὑρίην ἐνέμοντο καὶ Αὐλίδα πετρήεσσαν

Catalogue of Ships is designed and maintained by the Scholars' Lab at the University of Virginia Library.

Viewing Digital Projects as Research

- Clay et al specifically identify the scholarly contribution that this project makes to their field

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- "Scholars had already recognized the geospatial principle that underlies Homer's inter-contingent narrative. Mapping the Catalogue of Ships demonstrates that the poet employs topography as an organizing principle and spatial mnemonic device even at an intra-contingent level."

Viewing Digital Projects as Research

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- Interactivity is not there for the sake of interactivity

- Interactive and digital nature enhances key ideas that may be hard to visualize in a standard written format

Clarifying Research Criteria

- A bias against digital projects: they aggregate information as opposed to analyzing information

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- Yes, digital projects may not look like a typical academic journal article

- However, Clay et al demonstrate how authors can reinforce the scholarly integrity and legitimacy of digital undertakings

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Making Your Work Visible

- Let's review some strategies for ensuring that the scholarly merit is on full display

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- Explain how digital projects can satisfy the criteria associated with the IMRAD structure of a standard academic journal article

- IMRAD = Intro, methods, results, and discussion

Making Your Work Visible

- Intros should offer context

Making Your Work Visible

- Intros should offer context → there are opportunities to offer context in digital projects

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- Homepage of digital projects can reference trends or issues in a field-of-study

- Homepage can also identify an author's research question, hypothesis, or underlying goals

Making Your Work Visible

- **Methods sections explain theoretical frameworks underlying data collection**

Making Your Work Visible

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- Having detailed explanations of how you gathered data can highlight the frameworks influencing your own work

- This can be on a homepage or its own section

Making Your Work Visible

- Analysis sections explain important findings

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- Analysis sections explain important findings → you can guide audience's attention to important details or patterns

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- You can explain what an audience should be focusing on while engaging with a project

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- However, you can also be a bit more prescriptive in the specific ideas, patterns, or trends that are being highlighted

- In a sense, your audience is actively "testing out" the data you aggregated and analyzed

Making Your Work Visible

- Conclusions identify avenues for future inquiry or research

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- Digital projects often discuss how others can undertake similar initiatives

- Also discuss how researchers/instructors might use this project in their own classes

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Clarifying Research Standards

- Some important clarifications before starting a digital or interactive project

Clarifying Research Standards

- Discuss this work with your chair and any other institutional figures

- Want to ensure that this work meets their criteria for research and will benefit you professionally

- Explain what form of peer review will be used in these situations

Clarifying Research Standards

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- Questions of authorship need to be explicitly agreed upon by all participants

- Realistic workload is also important. Digital projects can be very labor-intensive

Clarifying Research Standards

- Develop a plan for long-term preservation of this project

Clarifying Research Standards

- Develop a plan for long-term preservation of this project

- Having a project rendered inaccessible due to tech obsolescence is a possibility

- Archiving digital work can be difficult but universities are creating more resources

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Conclusion

- Please consult the ORS Lab website for pre-recorded webinars and worksheets that discuss different writing strategies

- Resources and webinars dedicated to different research methods (qualitative, quantitative, and AI-assisted)

- Consultants available to discuss best practices for different research methodologies