

Scholarly Commons Annual Report

FY 2017

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I Unit Narrative

Major activities and accomplishments and contributions to Library-wide programs

A. Consultations

One of the most impactful activities of the Scholarly Commons is consulting with library users. While some users come into our space to use equipment or software that is only here, most Scholarly Commons users have complex questions about using digital scholarship methods. Few questions can be answered by phone or email: 79% of the 1,128 questions we answered this year were in person, 187 took 30 minutes or longer, and 226 were level 5 or 6 on the READ scale. All these numbers are up significantly from FY2016. Also, many of the shorter, less complex interactions were referrals to our partners in Scholarly Communication and Publishing and the Research Data Service. The breakdown of questions among our service areas follows:

<i>Service Area</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
GIS	189	24%
Software Assistance	146	19%
About the Scholarly Commons	135	17%
Scanner Use	46	11%
Data Discovery and Support	61	8%
Survey Research	55	7%
Scholarly Communication	22	3%
Savvy Researcher	21	3%
Research Data	17	2%
Digital Humanities	14	2%
IDEALS/Electronic Theses and Dissertations	13	2%
Data Analysis and Visualization*	13	2%
Usability	6	1%
Copyright	5	1%
Open Access	3	<1%

*The Data Analysis and Visualization category was not in use at the beginning of the year. The first semester of data is included in Data Discovery and Access. This category does not include the statistical consulting provided by CITL Data Analytics.

** *Report generated from Desktracker. Because some of our services are provided by people outside of

the Scholarly Commons and outside of the Library, these numbers are almost certainly low. Digital Humanities in particular is a well utilized service.

B. Statistical Consulting

Over the course of the year, we have worked on ways to meet the needs of Library users who need help not with finding data or loading it into software, but with analyzing data using statistical software and methods. None of the staff in the Scholarly Commons has these skills, but in FY2017 we were able to hire a graduate assistant who was finishing his Sociology PhD and was familiar with all the statistical software in the Scholarly Commons. Although we did not feel we could advertise this service based on a student who would only be available for nine months, he did help people who contacted us with statistical questions. He consulted on over 40 questions per semester, with only word of mouth publicity.

This experience confirmed that statistical consulting is a largely unmet need on campus (the Illinois Statistics Office does analysis for people rather than consulting). At the beginning of FY2017, only the CITL Data Analytics group provided this service, and only to the College of LAS. During the spring semester, we started discussions with the CITL Data Analytics Group and with the Research Information Technology Group at Technology Services about making statistical consultants available to all of campus. We put together a pilot project where CITL provided the consultants, Technology Services provided the wages, and Scholarly Commons provided the space for consultations during the summer. This project only began two weeks before the end of the fiscal year, but in those two weeks 122 people contacted the service. Throughout the summer, consultants have been consistently busy for three hours per day so CITL has gathered funding and tuition waivers to staff six hours per day for the 2017-2018 academic year.

C. Residency Program and Internships

Another way that the Scholarly Commons is working to expand its services is by participating in the Library Residency program that will start in FY2018. We worked with Jim Hahn and Jen-Chien Yu to propose a position for data analysis and visualization, and Megan Ozeran will start as a Visiting Assistant Professor on August 16. She is tasked to shape a data visualization service, which will be a good complement to the other services offered in the Scholarly Commons. FY2017 was also the year that the Scholarly Commons established internships for PhD students who are engaged in digital scholarship and have finished their coursework, funded by gift funds. Two interns will be joining us in the fall, one with Python and R skills and the other working on social media analytics. They will be blogging and doing consultations for the Scholarly Commons, as well as outreach events and other projects based on their interests.

D. Workshops

Savvy Researcher workshops are the most visible contribution that the Scholarly Commons makes to the Library's instruction program. Merinda Hensley coordinated them during FY17, finishing the spring semester schedule before she left on sabbatical. These workshops are the venue for almost all the digital scholarship training on campus, on topics from text mining to gathering GIS data. The Scholarly Commons and its partners taught 38 instruction sessions in FY17. An additional 12 sessions were course-integrated, and total attendance was 461. Merinda also started a Lunch and Learn series in Fall 2016, which gave all library staff a chance to talk about issues related to digital scholarship. These events were held weekly in the fall, and monthly in the Spring (coordinated by Eleanor Dickson during Merinda's sabbatical).

E. Events

A crucial part of fulfilling the mission of the Scholarly Commons to create cross-disciplinary community around digital scholarship is the events we sponsor and co-sponsor. This year we brought Juan Pablo Alperin to campus as part of our speaker series. Dr. Alperin is an open access champion from Simon Fraser University who is affiliated with the Public Knowledge Project (PKP). PKP created and maintains some of the software that the Library uses to publish open access journals and monographs. He met with several individuals and groups on campus and gave a public talk titled “Does Our Research Serve the Public, or Only Ourselves?” His visit enabled the Scholarly Commons to connect with the Public History program and editors of undergraduate journals, as well as other researchers on campus. We also organized a visit to campus for the President of Oxford University Press, who spoke to about twenty graduate students on careers in academic publishing, as well as meeting with librarians and staff from the iSchool.

GIS Day is an annual event on our calendar, managed by James Whitacre and a staff member from the CyberGIS Center. GIS Day 2016 had about 250 attendees, and a highlight was a student poster competition with 20 entries. We also co-sponsor two Image of Research competitions every year. The graduate version is co-sponsored with the Graduate College and had 47 entries this year; the undergraduate version is co-sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Research and had 11 entries. Finally, we contribute to events like the Food Science and Human Nutrition Graduate Symposium and make sure that we have a presence at orientations for faculty and graduate students, as well as several resource fairs that are relevant to our work. These events are all funded by gift money that the Scholarly Commons received from the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

F. Undergraduate Research

Five undergraduate journals published issues this year, including the School of Social Work’s inaugural issue. The Scholarly Commons trains editors and helps with the actual publication process in Open Journal Systems and IDEALS.

G. Main Library 220 Planning

Most personnel in the unit have been involved in planning for the move of our services to Room 220. James Whitacre, Karen Hogenboom (co-chair), and Merinda Hensley were members of the planning team, which met from October to March in FY2017. Other members of the unit provided extensive feedback and devoted many staff meeting hours to the planning process. It is impossible to overemphasize the intellectual energy that everyone on the planning team put into the team’s report, which was approved by the Executive Committee over the summer. Work continues this year on fundraising, detailed planning, program development, and outreach.

H. Social Media

Since August 2016, our social media presence has improved dramatically. According to Twitter Analytics, our tweets earned 3,900 impressions during the month of August 2016, with our top tweet making only 300 impressions. Since then, our number of impressions has increased significantly, with an average of about 17,800 impressions a month. Our top month was March 2017 with 28,400 impressions. Our top tweet of the year earned 4,518 impressions. We have increased our number of followers from 820 to 907 and increased our use of hashtags to engage with a larger scholarly community. Our blog, *Commons Knowledge*,

has moved from a sporadic posting schedule to posts twice a week during the semester. In 2017, we received ten comments on blog posts, our first comments since 2015. We also recently launched a Facebook page, which is meant to promote our events and resources to a new audience.

Major Challenges

Our biggest challenge this year was stretching our staffing to cover everything that the department feels like it should be doing. As described above, we have many major projects in development and many relationships that take time to nurture, and all of this translates to a burden for existing staff. We have accomplished a lot this year and are looking forward to another good year, but as GAs and staff come and go our services fluctuate more than we would like. We are very happy to have the Data Analysis and Visualization Resident Librarian working with us for the next two years, but the future of these services is unclear after that appointment ends. Our graduate assistants also bring a variety of expertise to the Scholarly Commons, and we rely on them to provide services, but they are never here longer than two years and often stay for shorter times.

The other challenge that is important to mention is summer desk coverage. Summer 2017 was particularly acute because one GA left in May rather than accepting hourly work, Eleanor Dickson left the Library in May and Merinda Hensley was on sabbatical over the summer. Our summer graduate hourly allocation was also not enough to cover our normal hours, so we had to shorten our open hours.

Significant changes to unit operations, personnel, service profile, or service programs

The biggest change in unit operations was in our digital humanities services. Eleanor Dickson left in May, and later in the year Harriett Green took on the Head of Scholarly Communication and Publishing and Dan Tracy took on digital humanities as half of his job. This change has decreased the unit's ability to be proactive in providing digital humanities services, since it reduced coverage from approximately 1.5 FTE to .5 FTE. A more positive change was the kickoff of a statistical consulting service, described above.

Another positive change during FY2017 was that Carissa Phillips began reporting to the Scholarly Commons for half her time as the Data Discovery and Business Librarian. She is refocusing the position to increase the discoverability of the data in the Library's collection, in addition to consulting with users who need to locate data. She also is engaging with other librarians who have purchased or would like to purchase data and working with others to solve a variety of problems related to access to data.

Progress on goals from FY2016 Annual Report

- Nurture more robust partnerships with IT units in the Library and on campus in order to provide specialized consultations and training for campus researchers, as well as in order to make robust referrals (Framework 2.B).

Several Scholarly Commons projects addressed this goal in FY2017. Library IT and the Scholarly Commons set up a referral process to tap the expertise in Library IT for users working with various programming languages, or server issues. The Scholarly Commons also initiated discussions among the Library's digital scholarship centers (IDEA Lab, Media Commons, and Scholarly Commons) that resulted in reviving the idea of an Advanced Technology Group in the Library. That group took shape as the Library Emerging and Integrated Technologies Coordination Committee that is part of CAPT and started its work in August 2017.

The Scholarly Commons also worked closely on two projects with Technology Services this year. The collaboration to provide statistical consulting services to campus is described above, and Karen Hogenboom is part of the team working to create a portal to all the technology and services available to researchers on campus. This project is a high priority for the Research Division of Technology Services and is currently in the interface design phase, working with Pixo.

- With the Collaboratory Planning Team and in consultation with campus researchers and library staff, create a plan for robust services and collaboration space in Main Library 220 that takes advantage of this central location to encourage teamwork among library staff in order to meet complex and interdisciplinary user needs (Framework 3.B)

The Collaboratory Planning Team worked throughout FY17, producing an initial report in May 2017 describing the services and programs the Team hopes will be offered in Room 220. Toward the end of the year, an implementation group was charged to work toward making those plans a reality, and this group has been advising on program development, continued input from stakeholders, and details of the physical space.

- Collect and analyze stories from users of the Scholarly Commons' space and services in order to assess the quality of our services and inform planning in the future.

This project was postponed until FY2018 because of staffing shortages in the Scholarly Commons.

- Establish at least two quarter-time graduate fellowships in the Scholarly Commons for ABD PhD students to participate in the work of a digital scholarship center (Framework 2.B).

Two PhD students from the Philosophy and Communications departments began working as interns in the Scholarly Commons in Fall 2017. They have skills in text analysis, Python programming, R, and topic modelling that will be useful to expand the services of the Scholarly Commons, and have been networking with their peers and departments as well as teaching workshops and hosting brown bags in the Library. This program is designed to jump-start the type of collaboration and deep engagement that we hope will be a defining characteristic of the services we will offer in Room 220.

Annual goals for FY2018 and unit needs to support annual goals

- Collect and analyze stories from users of the Scholarly Commons' space and services in order to assess the quality of our services and inform planning (carried over from FY2016).
- In collaboration with the Collaboratory Implementation Team, prepare a program statement for Main Library 220 that builds on the Collaboratory Planning Team report (Strategic Framework 3.2).
- Collaborate with CITL Data Analytics and Technology Services to obtain stable funding for statistical consulting services in the Scholarly Commons (Strategic Framework 1.5)
- Increase Scholarly Commons support for gatherings of researchers in various formats to discuss and conduct digital scholarship.

Contributions of Graduate Assistants

In FY2017, the Scholarly Commons had four GAs (1.75 FTE) funded by state funds. The biggest GA

responsibility in the unit is to staff the front desk, helping users who are working in the room as well as fielding questions and referring complex issues to experts in our service areas. The GAs also had major responsibilities for our web content, social media presence, and workshop offerings.

Major Responsibilities	Examples
Workshops	Revamped and taught Optical Character Recognition workshop; created and taught Github workshop; assisted with and taught GIS workshops
Training	Peer training in Photoshop, Scalar, GIS
Social Media	Write and schedule tweets; review feed for items to retweet; create and maintain Facebook page; write and manage blog posts
Other	Created metadata for datasets; analyzed data for Digital Humanities Needs Assessment; investigated updated and duplicate items for collection development

II Statistical Profile

1. Facilities

- User seating counts
 - 10 seats at tables
 - 11 seats at public workstations
 - 7 seats across from public workstations for collaborators
 - 4 seats in group study rooms
 - 8 seats at soft seating
- Number of hours open to the public per week (if applicable)
 - Summer II 2016: 40 hours
 - Fall 2016: 45 hours
 - Spring 2017: 45 hours
 - Summer I 2017: 35 hours

2. Personnel

- Claire Berman, Graduate Assistant and Graduate Hourly. .25 FTE (paired with RBML)(August 15, 2016 to present)
- Eleanor Dickson, Academic Professional (until May 2017)
- Merinda Hensley, Associate Professor. 1.0 FTE (on sabbatical 1/16/17 through end of FY17).
- Ian Harmon, Academic Hourly (gift funds). 1.0 FTE (until August 5, 2016)
- Ian Harmon, Graduate Assistant and Graduate Hourly. .5 FTE (August 16, 2016 to present)

- Karen Hogenboom, Associate Professor. 1.0 FTE.
- Jasmine Kirby, Graduate Assistant and Graduate Hourly. .5 FTE (August 16, 2016 to present)
- Carissa Phillips, Associate Professor. .5 FTE (February 16, 2017 to present; located in Room 300)
- Cameron Riopelle, Graduate Assistant. .5 FTE (August 16, 2016 to May 15, 2017)
- Emilie Staubs, Academic Hourly (gift funds). 1.0 FTE (September 22, 2016 to present)
- James Whitacre, Academic Professional. 1.0 FTE.

3. User Services

Head count: 1,847 (from Desktracker); 2,528 (from Sweeps Week)

Reference interactions: 1,128 (see Section 1 for detail)

Circulation: Not applicable

Presentations (statistics incomplete due to problems with Savvy Researcher data entry):

Number of presentations: 50

Number of participants in group presentations: 461