

Digital Humanities Resources

A personal journey

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MY MOM STARTED WORKING at a bank in 1970 and over her career, computers were introduced and she had to learn this new technology in order to keep her job. Moving all her work to computers was a fundamental shift, and she is not a particularly adventurous or technology savvy woman. She didn't bother to learn to drive until she was thirty-seven because it looked complicated, and trusted my dad would drive her when and where she needed to go. Seeing the necessity of acquiring these new skills for her to remain employed, my mom worked conscientiously to learn how to use computers, and especially at mastering the specific software she needed for her job. By 2005, she had become adept enough that she was sent by her office to test the new software that was being built for her department (getting an all-expenses paid, month-long stay in a nice hotel and being flown across the country each way was a nice perk), developing the training program that she would then lead when she returned to the national headquarters.

New technology is constantly being developed and integrated into our work. Taking a cue from my mother, I want to continuously explore and learn new technology that can aid my work, keep me relevant, and make sure I have the skills to adapt to the constantly evolving landscape.

As an environmental psychologist, I am trained in working in an interdisciplinary approach. My research draws from social psychology, human development, geography, political science, urban studies, and is informed by sociology and anthropology. In trying to learn and research how technology plays a role in my area of research, I have been exposed to new perspectives on my topic, pushing me to not only learn new skills but new methods for critical analysis and intervention. Furthermore, it has connected me with other scholars that I may not have known about, extending my thinking and opening up new channels for collaboration.

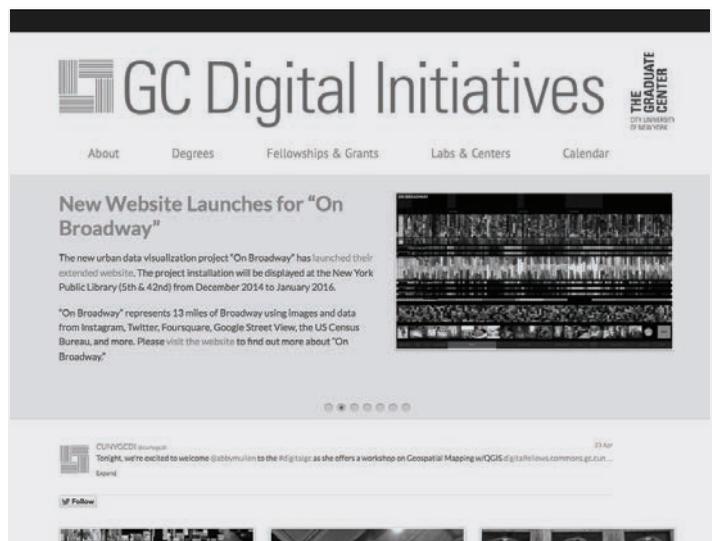
Luckily, the Graduate Center, CUNY, and New York City provides a robust and fertile physical and digital environment for technological newbies like myself to wade into and learn from. The thing is, there are now so many different groups, offices, labs, workshops that it started to become a little overwhelming as I tried to figure out what I needed, and where I could go for help. Below, I try to describe in my own plain words some of the various groups, platforms, and resources I've learned about. It's kind of a glossary of names

and phrases you might have seen around, but aren't sure what they refer to. This is by no means an exhaustive list, just what I have discovered and found useful, especially in connection to my particular interests. I wrote it as a memo to my earlier self. Please take this as an invitation to support people like me, and share any other groups, projects, or training opportunities that you think might be helpful to other students interested in figuring out how technology fits into their research and pedagogical training at the Graduate Center.

Groups/Centers/Communities

GC DIGITAL INITIATIVES (GCDI), supported by the Provost's Office, is kind of like the hub for all the institutionally supported digital and techie things. It not only lists all the labs that the Graduate Center supports (I give short summaries below of some of them), but it also lists the different data centers and repositories affiliated with the CUNY system that you can access. The GCDI administers the Digital, Social Media, and Videography Fellowships that train and support faculty and students at the Graduate Center to implement digital projects, and the Digital Innovation Grant for a digital project of your own design. Under the calendars tab, you'll find a pretty comprehensive calendar of all the workshops that are offered and available to you.

Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory (HASTAC) is a hub for scholars across many institutions, but has a big GC presence by virtue that its chief administrator, Cathy Davidson, moved to the GC last fall.



HASTAC is a hub for scholars, researchers, and teachers who are actively integrating technology into their work. On their website, you can surf topics, connect with people with similar interests, find fellowships, and calls for proposals. Of course, they also collate events such as conferences, symposia, and workshops happening outside the Graduate Center.

New Media Lab brings faculty and students together to create projects that use and analyze the use of digital technologies. I think of the NML as an incubator space where scholars in different phases of their training bandy ideas, problems, and tools around. Their general meetings are open to everyone, and focus on presenting and workshopping the projects of the NML members.

The GC Digital Scholarship Lab is the space for producing public-facing, open-source software for academics. Their most famous and inaugural product is Commons in a Box. After building and piloting the CUNY Commons, they made the infrastructure available to other academic institutions. They have and are now developing other new technological tools for scholars to collaboratively analyze and present digital research.

The Digital Humanities Initiative is a group of faculty and students who are applying digital technology in their work, specifically in the humanities. The CUNY DHI keep a blog that announces their public events, and host a discussion forum on the commons, but most interestingly, they also collaborate on a resource wiki. The CUNY Digital Humanities Resource Guide, like some of the groups above, also lists trainings, conferences, and funding opportunities, but also goes further to list other related blogs, journals, and a whole host of tools for data management, citation, and writing.

Website Platforms

INTERESTED IN MAKING A website for your class, student group, conference, or just for yourself? There are two main places to build it from, both basically use a Wordpress architecture.

OpenCUNY is an online medium built by students for students. It has a deep commitment to participatory governance, which means that a board of elected students decide on how the initiative is run. Any student who makes an account on OpenCUNY is a participant, not a user, who owns their own data. The three graduate students who coordinate OpenCUNY are extremely approachable, willing to meet with you in physical space or virtually, making it much less intimidating if you are new to building and maintaining websites.

CUNY Academic Commons is a social network platform for people and groups to collaboratively create documents, host discussion forums, as well as create websites using a

WordPress platform. The Commons is the digital home of many CUNY groups, as well offices, initiatives and committees. Two groups of note are the Internet Research Team and the WordPress Help Forum where members can throw out any questions you might have or problems for troubleshooting.

Classes for Credit

THE INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND Pedagogy Certificate is a sequence of courses that combine the theoretical and historical with the practical skills of integrating technology and pedagogy. It includes two core courses, followed by a selection of workshops, capped off by an independent study that puts all of this together. The certificate can be completed in two years totaling nine credits that go towards your degree. The workshops are designed for people who are in the ITP certificate program, but are open to everyone (that's why they are listed below). The group also runs the Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy. The Digital Praxis Seminar is its two course sequence designed to initiate doctoral students into the philosophy and methods of integrating digital tools into their training. The seminar also includes some standalone workshops where additional spots that are available become opened up to those not enrolled in the seminar.

Workshops

JUST LOOKING TO LEARN a specific tech skill, without having to take a whole course (especially if you are level III)? Luckily, lots of groups offer workshops! The GC Digital Initiatives probably manages the most visually simple, yet comprehensive calendar of workshops at the GC, including those run by the Digital Fellows. The GCDI calendar also catalogues those offered by the Interactive Technology and Pedagogy (ITP) Certificate Program and the Digital Praxis Program (check the GCDI event calendar). I definitely cannot fail to mention all the great workshops offered by the GC Library, with a special shout-out to the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Practicum offered at the Newman Library at Baruch College.

JustPublics365 has hosted a series of workshops geared towards bringing academics and journalists with an interest of communicating work with a social justice mission to a broad audience, but these seem to have stopped after fall 2014. The Office of Career Planning occasionally hosts some, but not many, as it is not the focus of their mission. Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory (HASTAC) lists a diverse set of events, including workshops and webinars beyond the GC. In New York though, the NYC Digital Humanities site collects listings of events, including workshops offered in the city. 🌐