

Digital Humanities Clinics – Leading Dutch Librarians into DH

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In 2015, an initiative was started to set up a Dutch speaking DH+Lib community in the Netherlands and Belgium, based on the example of the American communal space of librarians, archivists, LIS graduate students, and information specialists to discuss topics 'Where the Digital Humanities and Libraries meet'. At the initial meeting it became apparent that most participants were there to learn more about digital humanities and were not (yet) in the situation where they were able to offer expertise on the subject. On the administrative level, the directors of the libraries participating in the consortium of Dutch academic libraries (UKB) also expressed the wish that librarians become more fluent in DH.

A year later, the National Library of the Netherlands (Koninklijke Bibliotheek), and the University Library of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam again concluded that librarians at their institutes who wanted to get involved in DH needed more training to adequately support researchers and students in this field. Therefore both institutes joined forces to develop a set of clinics on DH for librarians. The two institutes were later joined by the Leiden University Libraries. We see this as the ideal opportunity to provide these educative sessions not only to our own librarians, but also to the academic librarians of other Dutch research libraries. In essence, we want to teach our country's librarians the ins and outs of DH in order for them to take up their natural role of facilitating and supporting research and ideally become the research partner needed in DH projects.

The aim of these clinics is to provide basic methodological competencies and technical skills in DH, for a diverse group of librarians, consisting of both subject and technical librarians with basic technical skills. The content of these sessions should enable them to provide services to researchers and students,

identify remaining gaps in knowledge or skills that they could address by self-directed learning and (perhaps) to automate their daily library work. We are not setting out to turn them into programmers or data crunchers, but want to boost their knowledge level to where they feel comfortable providing information about DH projects, follow the literature and research, follow online tutorials and hopefully take up the challenge of finishing this professional development by engaging with the DH community.

In order to design this curriculum we follow a four step approach with a Working Out Loud-principle (Williams, 2010):

1. Desk research about what being a DH librarian entails (e.g. Hartsell-Gundy et al., 2015; Mulligan, 2016; also see the Zotero library of the LIBER Digital Humanities working group);
2. Identify possible subjects, based on experience, a comparison of existing teaching material related to DH (e.g. The Programming Historian, the Digital Scholarship Training Programme at the British Library and Columbia University's Developing Librarian project) and the TaDiRAH taxonomy of research activities;
3. Get feedback from researchers on possible subjects, based on the knowledge and skills they feel librarians need;
4. Get feedback from librarians on possible subjects, based on already known gaps in their knowledge and skills.

With these in hand, we will design the curriculum of clinics, based on the method of 'constructive alignment' (Biggs et al., 2011), to make sure that the intended learning objectives and the teaching/learning activities stay aligned.

Our plan is to organize a maximum of 6 clinics, each one full day. Each day starts with one or more lectures by researchers, that address the conceptual knowledge needed. The afternoon sessions will be devoted to the hands-on training of skills, following the Library Carpentry model as closely as possible. By having researchers provide the lecture sessions, we hope to fuel the enthusiasm of the librarians with the inspiration of direct contact with researchers and to provide access to a network within and across universities. With these clinics, we hope to initiate a stream of DH activities in Dutch universities, making access to support easier for new digital scholars.

The poster at DH2017 will present the curriculum, its position in the international context and offer the lessons learned from both the design process and the first clinics. We welcome discussion about our efforts and the possibilities of applying this in other contexts.

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