New Directions in Digital Library Publishing: Increasing Access to Non-Textual Cultural Narratives

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Background: Publishing Without Walls

Mellon Foundation-funded initiative at the University of Illinois, 2015-2019

- University Library
- School of Information Sciences
- Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities
- Department of African American Studies

PWW

PUBLIS
WITHO
WAL

Goals of PWW

- Build capacity for participation in innovative publishing initiatives
- Conduct research and assessment of how emerging technologies align with the expressed needs of participating scholars
- Create a new model for the conceptual development of scholarly communication

Background: AFRO PWW

AFRO PWW's goal is to provide access to and training for open-source digital publishing tools. In collaboration with scholars in Black Studies and at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the project intends to develop initiatives that serve as models for those institutions and academics exploring digital publishing.

Digital publishing + cultural narratives

"Examining indigenous systems of knowledge circulation and indigenous mobilizations of digital technologies widens the frame of digital analysis, re-defines the contours of digital sociality, and loosens the stranglehold of open access models on the way we imagine information circulation."

Kimberly A. Christen (2012)

Traditional Cultural Expression

"Traditional cultural expression is used by the international legal community to refer to works of indigenous peoples and traditional communities, but the term does not have a precise definition.... The criterion of self-identification among traditional communities is an important principle guiding the understanding of unique works and expressions across diverse cultures. There is no single definition that embraces all forms and manifestations of traditional cultural expression."

Pilch, *Library Copyright Alliance Issue Brief: Traditional Cultural Expression* (2009)

Triangle SCI Project

[A New Digital Publishing Framework for Exploring and Reflecting Non-Textual Cultural Narratives](#)

- Proposal for 2018 Triangle Scholarly Communication Institute that focused on the AFRO PWW project by Dr. Camee Maddox-Wingfield about the Bélé dance movement in Martinique
- Project aims to stimulate a broader discussion about "scholarly storytelling" and how to tell a story in the digital medium that focuses on a non-textual data source (dance).

Research Questions

- How do we design research publications with cultural heritage artifacts to be accessible and contributable by the involved communities?
- What are the particular functionalities needed for building publications with audio and visual cultural data?
- What are the key elements to be exposed publicly and to be curated internally with TCE digital artifacts?

Research Team

- **Sara Benson,** Copyright Librarian, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library
- **Harriett Green**, Head of Scholarly Communication and Publishing, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library
- **Dr. Camee Maddox-Wingfield**, Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
- **Brad Tober**, Graphic Design Professional in Boston, MA

Project Focus: Dance Anthropology and Data

Camee Maddox-Wingfield: Anthropology Scholar

- Accumulated a rich body of digital dance data on the Bélé dance movement
- Working on a print book and sought to develop an accompanying digital publication and digital dance archive with AFRO PWW
- Aims to develop strategies for publishing research on African diaspora dance traditions in digital platforms

Focus: Digital videos of Bélé Dance

https://www.dropbox.com/l/scl/AAC9haN3_4XxJ4jah_bnhN-TMRwA4bPay28

https://www.dropbox.com/l/scl/AADA18TKEQi0atE-UgcgvqUGdSTmC1E-LNk

Project Focus: Copyright

Sara Benson: Interested in how to obtain appropriate permission to use traditional cultural expressions and consulting with the community

- Examining the rights management issues for working with video and audio TCE data in a digital publication platform
- Drawing upon the work of the Mukurtu Project's Traditional Knowledge licensing and ARL white paper on TCE

Project Focus: Design

Brad Tober: Interested in design thinking and how to illustrate design in non-traditional formats

- Build upon his previous collaboration with the library and University of Illinois Press on a digital publishing, *Women In Print* (http://womeninprint.press.illinois.edu)
- Expertise related to the way in which design holds the potential to empower the recipient of information communicated via non-textual cultural knowledge sharing

Project Focus: Digital Publishing with Non-Textual Data

Harriett Green: Interested in how to create a digital publication that dynamically and effectively conveys non-textual data and cultural heritage works

- Project manager for Publishing Without Walls and directs editorial workflows for publications, including the AFRO PWW series
- Expertise in developing policies, workflows, and infrastructure for digital publishing

Accomplishments at Triangle SCI

- Outlined a production plan for a multimedia digital publication
- Brainstormed a plan for connecting with the Martinique community about Bélé toward a potential digital index or repository
- Began conversations with leaders in the field around digital works with traditional cultural expressions
- Outlined principles for a framework

Goals for the Future

- Forthcoming article on digital anthropology in *American Anthropologist*
- Developing a digital, multimedia publication with Camee Maddox-Wingfield, *Digitizing Diaspora Dance Identities*
- Based on production of digital publication, develop a framework of principles for digital publishing with TCE works
- Exploring funding opportunities for beginning work on a digital archive of the Bélé dance movement

Challenges

- Connecting with communities and ethics of featuring TCE works in digital publications
- Gathering the resources to create a digital publication
- Faculty engagement in digital projects and intersection with P&T requirements
  - Does it count as public engagement?
  - Does it count as a research publication?

Potential Impact

- Expand diversity among digital publications and projects
- Address the Digital Divide and cultural heritage: How do we provide access to underserved communities to digital technologies for access, dissemination, and preservation of works?
- Ethics of publishing: ethically carry out digital projects that involve cultural heritage works?

Works Cited

Pilch, J. (2009). *Library Copyright Alliance Issue Brief: Traditional Cultural Expression.*
http://www.librarycopyrightalliance.org/storage/documents/issuebrieftce.pdf

Christen, K. A. (2012). Does Information Really Want to be Free? Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the Question of Openness. *International Journal of Communication.* 6, 2880. http://ijoc.org/ojs/index.php/ijoc/article/view/1618

Questions?

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