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RESEARCH

Digital Doctorates

Randa El Khatib, Reese Alexandra Irwin, Caroline Winter, and
Michelle Levy

This essay cluster addresses the curriculum design of graduate programs, asking how Digital Humanities projects might be integrated into them. From the perspectives of M.A. and PhD students, these essays explore the risks and rewards of integrating digital research into a traditional degree program or reshaping the degree requirements altogether. Randa El Khatib opens the cluster with an argument in favour of a digital dissertation, wherein the digital component comprises a significant part of the intellectual work of the dissertation by informing its argument either through the theoretical framework, methodology, or some other significant aspect integral to the original contribution that it makes. Reese Alexandra Irwin considers the institutional and administrative complications of integrating digital research into graduate programs, contending that that the library is the most advantageous place from which to draw support for graduate student digital projects, but that in order for the library to adequately support student projects it must be treated as a pedagogical partner by the student's home department. Caroline Winter uses her experience digitizing Mary Shelley's Gothic tales to explore how developing satellite digital projects that complement monograph-style doctoral dissertations is an opportunity for graduate students to develop digital skills, explore different modes of research, and experience being part of a strong community of practice. In her response, Michelle Levy weighs the risks of the various approaches to digital projects outlined in the previous essays and concludes that the institutions that house these students must offer greater support by adapting to the changing and increasingly digital landscape of humanities disciplines.

Keywords: graduate curriculum design; digital humanities; digital pedagogy; digital dissertation; portfolio dissertation; digital humanities librarianship; digital satellite project

Ce regroupement de dissertations aborde la conception de curriculum des programmes d'études supérieures, en demandant comment les projets des Humanités Numériques peuvent y être intégrés. Du point de vue d'étudiants de maîtrise et de doctorat, ces dissertations examinent les risques et les avantages de l'intégration de la recherche numérique au programme

de diplôme traditionnel ou d'une réorganisation totale des exigences du diplôme. Randa El Khatib commence ce regroupement par un argument en faveur d'une dissertation numérique dont l'élément numérique contribue une part significative du travail intellectuel de la dissertation en présentant ses arguments au moyen du cadre théorique, de la méthodologie, ou d'un autre aspect important et essentiel à sa contribution originale. Reese Alexandra Irwin examine les complications institutionnelles et administratives d'une intégration de la recherche numérique à des programmes d'études supérieures, en soutenant que la bibliothèque est le lieu le plus favorable à partir duquel les étudiants de cycle supérieur peuvent recueillir de l'aide pour leurs projets numériques, mais, pour cela, il faut que le département universitaire d'un étudiant traite la bibliothèque comme un partenaire pédagogique. Caroline Winter tire parti de ses expériences faites en numérisant les histoires gothiques de Mary Shelley afin d'examiner comment le développement de projets satellites numériques qui conviennent à des dissertations doctorales de style monographique offre une opportunité aux étudiants de cycle supérieur pour développer des compétences numériques, d'explorer de divers modes de recherche et de faire partie d'une communauté forte de pratique. Dans sa réponse, Michelle Levy considère les risques des diverses approches à des projets numériques présentées dans les dissertations précédentes et conclut que les institutions qui accueillent ces étudiants doivent offrir davantage de soutien en s'adaptant au contexte changeant et de plus en plus numérique dans les disciplines des humanités.

Mots-clés: conception de curriculum d'études supérieures; humanités Numériques

The Humanities Dissertation in the 21st Century”

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Introduction

An integral part of humanities disciplines, doctoral programs are designed to reflect the scholarly landscape and prepare candidates for the type of work they will be expected to carry out upon graduation. The dissertation—the *sine qua non* of the humanities doctoral program—is intended to produce scholarship that emulates the values of academia. Today, the humanities dissertation primarily follows the monograph model that culminates five or more single-authored chapters, ideally to be submitted as a book proposal in the subsequent stages of an academic career. The format of the dissertation has largely withstood the changes in the scholarly landscape over the past few decades and the ever more robust integration of digital scholarship into the doctoral dissertation and training. While the monograph dissertation model is still effective for preparing graduate students for an academic career trajectory, it less readily applies to doctoral work that includes digital components, primarily because the workflow required for a monograph dissertation does not integrate neatly with the fast-paced, collaborative, interactive nature of the type of digital intellectual work that graduate students are increasingly engaged with.

Despite the change in the medium and methods for carrying out scholarship, a majority of English departments today still default to the monograph model. This necessarily raises the following questions: are the expectations of graduate students entering the academic profession and engaging with digital intellectual work today still the same as they were of graduate students a decade, two, and even three ago? Should their training and dissertation follow the same format as those graduate students engaged in non-digital work? What does the monograph prove about its author? What academic values ought to be emulated in the dissertation’s format?

And finally – when the pace, scope, and type of research that the digital medium facilitates have changed from those in the pre-digital age, as well as the very means and methodologies that underlie them, does it still make sense to default to the pre-digital dissertation model?

Reflecting on the structure and goals of the doctoral dissertation as a dynamic form of knowledge production and means of scholarly communication that is representative of its scholarly landscape ought to be an essential and iterative practice of the academy, and their results iteratively implemented as we move forward. In this article, I describe what the digital dissertation is and how it can reflect the type of environments that digital humanists are already engaged in—ones that value collaboration, access, and dynamicity. Drawing on the portfolio dissertation more common in the sciences and social sciences, I discuss how this model has been adapted for my doctoral dissertation carried out in the English Department at the University of Victoria (UVic). To be clear, this article does not argue against the monograph model, which has been and continues to be successful for many graduate students who engage in digital or other work—rather, it prompts us to consider alternative models that can be more formally implemented alongside the monograph model instead of emphatically defaulting to a one size fits all monograph dissertation.

Digital Humanities values

The turn of the decade marked a substantial debate about what digital humanities (DH) is, carried out by scholars such as Budrick et al. (2012), Kirschenbaum (2012), and Rockwell (2011), among others. Rather than reopening the discourse about what DH is, one way of discerning what the DH scholarly landscape looks like today is to identify what some its defining qualities, or values, are across its many branches, highlighted by scholars including Risam (2014), Robertson (2016), and many others; these are 1) DH is collaborative: reflecting its interdisciplinary nature, most DH work is carried out collaboratively. In doing so, DH is challenging the concept of the siloed researcher and values social, interdisciplinary, collaborative scholarship. 2) DH is open: DH largely values the “open” movement, most

regularly expressed through the dissemination of open access and open source resources. A considerable number of DH journals, websites, projects, and tools are available under Creative Commons and other open licenses, and many tools are published in open source. 3) DH is dynamic: DH is a fast-paced field that involves experimenting with novel forms of scholarly research and communication. The type, scope, and format of research are quickly evolving with the ever-changing methodologies, tools, and platforms. These prevailing qualities or values of DH point to a different research workflow from non-DH knowledge production processes that happen on the ground and encourage a revisit of the current dissertation model.

With the emergence of DH and new forms of digital scholarly communication, formal scholarly bodies in the humanities are starting to recognize alternative dissertation formats. For example, the Modern Language Association's (MLA) former president Russell Berman has called to reform doctoral education, detailed in *Huffpost's* "Reforming Doctoral Study: Shaping a Better Future for Humanities Ph.Ds" (Starkman 2013); MLA Commons' *Literary Studies in the Digital Age: An Evolving Anthology* has also published an article by Jojo Karlin (2019) titled "Our Digital Literary Legacy: Producing and Preserving Digital Dissertations in English" that makes a case for digital dissertations. The American Historical Association's (AHA) guidelines for "Professional Evaluation of Digital Projects in History" and MLA's "Guidelines for Evaluating Work in Digital Humanities and Digital Media" both recognize digital work as part of the robust academic conversation and scholarly output. In Celeste Sharpe's interview with *AHA Today*, AHA's newsletter, Kritika Agarwal refers to Sharpe's dissertation "A History Dissertation Goes Digital" (2017) as exemplary scholarship in the field—a piece that reflects a positive reception of digital scholarship by AHA. Other similar examples exist, but they are far from the norm.

In a digital dissertation, the digital component comprises a significant part of the intellectual work of the dissertation—it informs its argument either through the theoretical framework, methodology, or some other significant aspect integral to the

original contribution that the dissertation makes. A dissertation that simply has a digital component for the purpose of visualizing or elaborating part of its content is not a 'digital dissertation.' Digital dissertations do not adhere to any specific format; some combine the monograph model with a digital project and put them in conversation with each other, while others adopt digital intellectual work more fully. Around the mid-2010's mark, digital dissertations started gaining some traction, with DH becoming more widely practiced. An example of a successful digital dissertation is Amanda Visconti's, "How Can You Love a Work If You Don't Know It?: Critical Code and Design Towards Participatory Digital Editions," (2015) carried out at the University of Maryland. This dissertation is in the form of a whitepaper that reports on the process of building and the findings of her platform "Infinite Ulysses" (Visconti 2014), an open access, participatory, social digital edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, where members of the public were invited to highlight, annotate, and tag different parts of the work, together meant to serve as an experiment in a community reading of *Ulysses*. Another example is Erin Glass's open dissertation or #SocialDiss from CUNY titled "Software of the Oppressed: Reprogramming the Invisible Discipline" (2017). This work is written in an open access platform that invited members of the public to give feedback on the different components of Glass's dissertation, after which that feedback was drawn into the revision process. Uncoincidentally, the two examples involve a social element, and at the time of development, were open access, interactive, expanding platforms—reflecting the qualities of DH research identified earlier.

The portfolio dissertation model and program requirements

Non-monograph-style dissertations are still more common outside of the humanities. In a study by Bonnie Fong (2017) on the predominant format of dissertations in roughly ten departments in each of the sciences (chemistry department), social sciences (political science) and humanities (English department), Fong found that although the sciences still accepted monograph-style dissertations, they seemed to prefer portfolio dissertations—namely dissertations made up of multiple articles that

are published in reputable journals in the field. Notably, multi-authored articles were admissible. In the social sciences, portfolio dissertations are also widely acceptable, but single-authored works are preferred, since they reflect the predominant trend of publication in the field. Finally, Fong observed that traditional monographs are still the mainstream format in the humanities, and, whereas accompanying digital components are starting to become accepted in some universities in recent years, departments encourage students to hold off on publishing their research until after completion. Despite the small sample used for the study, it does commend the wider acceptance of the portfolio dissertation model in the sciences and social sciences than in the humanities.

Most universities will have different program requirements for the dissertation. Portfolio dissertations are admissible at UVic; in fact, the university does not specify the format for the dissertation, and rather states that it “must embody original work and constitute a significant contribution to knowledge” and “[m]aterial embodied in the dissertation should, in the opinion of scholars in the field, merit publication” (UVic 2019). The guidelines do not specify that publication must take place after defense, but rather that “the dissertation may include materials already published by the candidate, whether alone or in conjunction with others.” Published, multi-authored works are accepted as part of a dissertation, but multi-authored publications must be accompanied with “a description of the student’s contribution to the research and the student’s role in each publication must be provided.” This document typically outlines the exact role of the graduate student in the publication(s) and is approved by all co-authors before the defense date. However, the program requirements make it clear that the student is responsible for the entire content of the dissertation at the oral defense, including “portions of co-authored papers which comprise the dissertation.” What is reinforced in this model is that rigorous academic standards concerning the dissertation’s contribution to the field and quality of work are upheld and are measured by whether they “merit publication”; in the case of pre-published works then, they *demonstrate* that they merit publication.

Geospatial research prototyping: Visualizing literary space

Modelled after a portfolio dissertation, my dissertation comprises six peer reviewed articles or book chapters that have been published or are currently awaiting publication. Publication venues are directed at audiences interested in DH, early modern studies, scholarly communication, or a combination of the three. The dissertation proper draws all the materials together through a theoretical framework, argument, and connecting pieces between each part, that, together, meet the length and criteria of a dissertation according to the aforementioned UVic requirements for a doctoral dissertation, where the overarching argument “[is] the intellectual and conceptual glue that holds the (port)folio together” (Walker 1998, 94). The dissertation is also accompanied by three prototypes that I describe below. In what follows, I give an overview of my dissertation, explain why I chose the portfolio dissertation format, and provide more pragmatic details about the process of writing a portfolio dissertation and the role of my committee.

“Geospatial Research Prototyping: Visualizing Literary Space” is my digital dissertation that approaches the full scope of geospatial humanities, a subfield of DH that marries literary spatial analysis and GIS technology. While many existing geospatial humanities projects exist, they primarily focus on the literary, spatial aspects of the research. My dissertation acknowledges that geospatial humanities projects are rarely solely literature and location focused: they often involve building and running software in collaborative, multidisciplinary environments. Together, my dissertation asks “why map literary texts?” in each aspect of this multidisciplinary endeavour and explores this question by building various prototypes to visualize literary space at a distant, large scale level and at a closer, multilayered, rich level. By drawing on geospatial methodologies, software prototyping, and early modern literature, the dissertation essentially argues for the validity of prototyping as a research methodology for scholarly inquiry into literary spatial representation, as well as for developing enhanced models for interdisciplinary collaboration and data visualization.

The dissertation itself consists of three main, interrelated components. The first part, geospatial humanities and literature, explores how rendering elements of a

research framework such as geocriticism—a term introduced by Westphal (2011) that refers to a multifocal, geocentered approach to analyzing literary space—into concrete functionalities of a digital tool can help study the literary space of a text and explore the affordances and limitations of the research approach itself (here referring to geocriticism). The prototype —TopoText—is a response to Westphal and Tally’s speculation that geocritical research will necessarily involve collaborative work using digital means in order to analyze corpora of texts organized around spatial criteria (Tally 2013, 143). This part of the dissertation draws on my role as the project lead and manager of two software prototypes—TopoText (2015) and TopoText 2.0 (2016)—that were developed through an interdisciplinary collaboration with the Computer Science department at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Available in open source on GitHub, these tools perform “text to map” conversion; users can simply upload a text, and TopoText automatically extracts all the place names that are mentioned in the text and visualizes them on a map. TopoText also supports word-place collocation that allows users to trace most frequent topics in selected passages or across the entire text. For example, a user can explore what the most frequent words collocated with Vancouver are in a text. They can also select a part of speech to collocate with a place, such as the most frequent nouns or verbs collocated with Vancouver. This type of collocation can help track themes and patterns of words related to place names across an author’s career or by multiple authors in a specific year, for instance. The second version (TopoText 2.0) has some additional features; the prototype allows users to export the geoparsed data (geoparsing refers to identifying place names in a text and linking them to their geographic coordinates) produced from the text-to-map conversion and reuse it on other platforms. It also provides an option to correct mismatched geographical points; for example, if the geoparsing linked Vancouver with the city in British Columbia, Canada, but in fact the author intended Vancouver, Washington in the US, the user can easily correct this information in the dataset. This version of TopoText also allows for the inclusion of text annotations in the dataset that can be visualized on the map. Together, the second prototype is a more accurate mapping tool and an open geodata provider. In this part of the dissertation, I address the questions: how can a geospatial prototype

integrate the elements of a research approach, such as geocriticism, to analyze spatial representation in texts? What are the affordances and limitations of automatic and semi-automatic geoparsing techniques? And: how can a literary map advance our understanding of the spatial project of an author? As open source tools, TopoText and TopoText 2.0 have been applied in multiple DH classes and workshops, including the Digital Humanities Summer Institute, the European Summer University in Digital Humanities, and term-long DH courses at AUB. A study using TopoText 2.0 was also implemented in Thomas Baur's (University of Cologne) double major Bachelor thesis in Information Processing and Geography, titled "The Use of Geographic Information Systems in the Humanities (Spatial Humanities). Problems and Limitations of GIS: A Research Experiment with TopoText 2.0." (2018), which led to Baur's current MA project to start developing a plan for a third, web-based iteration of TopoText (2020).

The second part of the dissertation, research prototyping, addresses collaborative prototyping in the humanities and across the disciplines. In this section, I explore what it means to build prototypes for humanities research, how prototyping can serve as a method for exploring research questions, and what multidisciplinary collaboration with software developers and computer scientists entails. Some questions I address are: what forged vocabularies do collaborators coming from different fields need to share in order to effectively communicate? How do we ensure that collaborators coming from different disciplines are making contributions to their field while still sharing overarching project goals?

Rather than taking a broad-scope text-to-map approach like TopoText, the final part offers a deep dive into the spatiality of a single text—John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Written in the 17th century, a time that witnessed many leaps in cartography, Milton draws on texts, but also on maps in order to build his intricate spatial project. *A Map of Paradise Lost*, co-created with Marcel Schaeben from the University of Cologne, is an exploratory map, or geo-edition, that offers a visual entry point into the complex and multitemporal terrestrial space of John Milton's epic poem. The project is an interactive digital map that includes locatable place-name references, the passage in which a place name appears, editorial context that explains the significance of a place, and an experimental visualization of a close reading (in this case, to test the

hypothesis that Milton gives 'moral' connotations to places in *Paradise Lost*, such as associating places around the Mediterranean basin occupied by the Ottoman Empire with pagan worshipers and those mentioned in the Bible with holy deities or muses), all against a backdrop of the historical and biblical maps that inspired Milton's spatial imagination when writing *Paradise Lost*. In this part of the dissertation, I address the questions: what can a digital geo-edition tell us about a literary work? How can mapping a literary text advance our knowledge of the text and how does it contribute to DH scholarship? How can prototyping in collaborative teams enhance models for interdisciplinary collaboration? And: how can we productively merge GIS-based scholarly inquiry and early modern spatial thought?

One of the defining features of the digital is that its infrastructure, methods, and tools are rapidly evolving; many digital resources become outdated, are superseded with more advanced methodologies, make leaps, or take falls. Digital work makes its biggest impact when shared, engaged with, integrated, and built-upon in a timely manner. Taking the monograph route in this case would require writing a book-length work and creating all three prototypes before searching for a publication venue for the research—whether in the form of a monograph or a series of articles. This delay in publishing research that is engaging with the rapidly developing GIS methodologies and their application in the humanities will risk missing the metaphorical train, and render the work meant for timely scholarly contribution obsolete, or at best, substandard. At the same time, publishing research and projects as they are conceptualized and carried out allows others to engage with the materials and provide feedback. This is especially useful in research prototyping work, which is based on iterative development, where new versions build more advanced prototypes based on previous ones, such as in the case of TopoText 2.0 that builds on TopoText. Another option for still producing this type of work would be to write a monograph dissertation, while at the same time building prototypes and publishing separate articles about them, since prototypes do not yet stand as contributions to knowledge in themselves, despite efforts by scholars such as Alan Galey and Stan Rucker (2010) and others. Although this route is possible, it is an unnecessarily labour-intensive model that does not fit within the timeline of a doctoral program, which involves other elements such as coursework, comprehensive

exams, teaching, participating in conferences, holding research assistantships, publishing, and preparing for the job market, to name a few.

By publishing the dissertation as I go, my dissertation committee, comprised of Ray Siemens (UVic English; academic advisor), Stephen Ross (UVic English), Jonathan Bengtson (UVic Libraries), and David Wrisley (NYU Abu Dhabi Humanities) take on a similar role to peer reviewers of an article or book chapter. Each piece that is submitted for publication is also submitted to the dissertation committee that provides feedback on the work. When revising the work, I integrate the feedback of reviewers and committee members, and turn it around until I receive approval for publication from both parties. This has been a successful approach for me since my committee is involved in the entirety of the process; the feedback I receive along the way helps shape each article and build a stronger foundation for the work to follow. This approach also means that once an article has moved into the copyediting phase, my committee has signed off on it and I can work on integrating that piece into the larger overarching framework of the dissertation. In each article, the prototype and content inform each other and, together, attempt to expand our understanding of the various processes involved in building geospatial humanities projects and the type of knowledge they produce.

In addition to researching and writing, my dissertation involves international interdisciplinary collaborations with multiple research groups and scholars with whom we built the aforementioned prototypes. This is reflected in the dissertation proper, where some of the articles are co-authored to reflect the team that was involved in building the prototype and contributing to the related article; in these cases, I appear as first author to reflect my role as project manager and lead author, alongside my collaborators. All publications (except for one book chapter) are available in open access, and the prototypes are shared in open source, inviting others to engage with our research. The skills developed from this dissertation overlap with those produced from the monograph dissertation in that both are concerned with producing quality research that provides new insights into the fields it relates to, which is communicated through scholarly publications. However, the digital dissertation also simulates the real-life settings digital humanists often find

themselves working in, namely in interdisciplinary, collaborative environments that involve developing a digital component, such as a methodology, prototype, platform, or edition, most likely to be shared as an open access or open source project.

Conclusion

Many arguments are made about the importance of training humanities graduate students to work in collaborative teams and acquire digital skills in order to prepare them for alt- and non-academic jobs that many may end up pursuing. However, this type of training is also necessary to prepare students for academic work that is already happening in the humanities: increasingly more projects require multidisciplinary teams to carry out research and produce public-facing platforms that showcase research findings. This article does not argue that the monograph dissertation model ought to be abandoned, nor that DH research cannot be communicated through a monograph. On the contrary, countless excellent examples of monograph dissertations and books on DH exist and continue to be published every day. Instead, this article argues that rather than defaulting to the monograph dissertation model, other means of knowledge production and academic workflows that are already happening in the field ought to be recognized and offered as an option for graduate students. One of these models is the digital dissertation that can take many different forms, where the digital aspect is integral to the scholarly contribution of the work. My interpretation of the digital dissertation takes on the portfolio model—a series of published articles and prototypes developed with multidisciplinary teams. The dissertation is not just a 'portfolio' of related works but is developed with an overarching argument across each of its components and is reflective of the environment in which it evolved, which is collaborative, open, and dynamic. Although this article is meant to showcase just one take on the digital dissertation, it also demonstrates that alternative forms to the monograph model exist, and that there can be a more direct continuation between the work that many graduate students are engaged in and the type of scholarship they are expected to produce.

Competing interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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The Library as Pedagogical Collaborator in Graduate Student Digital Humanities Projects

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Introduction

Last November, I gave a talk at the Student Digital Showcase, a one-day event hosted jointly by Simon Fraser University (SFU) and the University of Victoria that consisted of presentations from students on their respective projects, as well as on digital pedagogy more generally. I had been asked to reflect on my own digital project, which I began in 2015 as an undergraduate assignment and completed in 2018 as a master's project—my cohort (2016) being the first in the SFU English Department to be offered the option of a digital project in lieu of a master's thesis or further coursework. My completed project is a digital edition of the first two published versions of Jane Austen's last, unfinished manuscript *Sanditon*, began and abandoned by Austen in 1817. The fragment was not published until 1871, when excerpts of it were included in the second edition of *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (Austen-Leigh 1871), and not printed in its entirety until 1925, part of R. W. Chapman's Oxford University Press Jane Austen editions (Austen 1925). My digital edition includes a link to the digitized manuscript at the *Jane Austen Fiction Manuscripts (JAFM)* website (Sutherland 2010), meant to guide users to compare the manuscript to the published versions. I also have a critical section investigating the editorial interventions done by Chapman and Austen's nephew, the author and editor of *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, asking what these men's modifications do to the fragment and why they matter to its publication history. The project is largely comparative, with digitized copies of the 1871 and 1925 print editions embedded into the site. Initially begun as a WordPress site in 2015, for the graduate version I began the work in Omeka, but due to frustrations and limited

knowledge on my end, decided to revert to WordPress. The project is currently (2020) offline, as I opted for the paid version of WordPress in order to support plug-ins I needed such as a PDF viewer which would display like a book reader, but have not renewed my paid WordPress account.

While my talk in November focused on choosing WordPress over Omeka as a platform, I now want to use that frustration and subsequent choice as a springboard to explore a larger issue I see facing graduate digital projects: that of support. I do not want to discount the support I did receive for my work, namely from Rebecca Dowson, Kim O'Donnell, and Michael Joyce at the Digital Humanities Innovation Lab (DHIL) at SFU, my supervisor Dr. Michelle Levy, and my second reader Dr. Matt Hussey. Instead, I would like to examine the institutional structures currently in place for the digital project option—and if I am to criticize any individual, it is myself for allowing frustration of my lack of digital skills and my anxiety over the written portion to get in the way of receiving support.

But where would further support come from, and how might it be formally integrated into the project? This paper takes the stance that the academic library is the most advantageous place from which to draw support for graduate digital projects. In a 2014 report, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) recommended broader collaboration between library and information professionals and the wider academic community (Jacobson and Gibson 2014), and in February 2018 the ACRL revised its “Standards for Libraries in Higher Education,” which “are designed to guide academic libraries in advancing and sustaining their role as partners in educating students, achieving their institutions’ missions, and positioning libraries as leaders in assessment and continuous improvement on their campuses” (ACRL 2018). The suggestion that libraries are ideal to support graduate digital projects—particularly considering the ACRL’s recommendations and standards—may seem obvious; however, there are several factors inhibiting students from approaching the library for digital help, or even knowing about the library as a place to go for this help. Even within the literature I have consulted for this paper, I have found that while graduate students are named as an interested party in digital

work, they are often left to discover ways to do their project work on their own, or are guided by supervisors who might be drawing on a limited, or small, knowledge base of digital tools from their own experience. Individual graduate projects were only mentioned occasionally and were not considered within digital pedagogy as much as formal workshops in graduate classrooms, or certificates for graduate programs. I can only conclude that, as graduate digital projects are relatively new alternatives to theses or capstones, their unique needs have not been fully considered within digital pedagogy, an oversight that graduate programs now need to address. As Claire Battershill and Shawna Ross (2017) point out in their book *Digital Humanities in the Classroom*, these digital projects are often solitary, unusual for digital humanities (DH) work, which is usually collaborative in nature and involves many players from the library, faculty, and student body. In addition to their solitary nature, these graduate projects, because they are alternatives to theses or capstones, often have a traditional academic structure mapped onto them: a master's thesis, for example, has a faculty supervisor and a faculty second reader from within the department, so a master's digital project carries this same structure, at least within SFU's English Department SFU English MA Project Guidelines (Simon Fraser University 2020b). Digital pedagogy asks us to consider shifting how academic instruction has been traditionally conducted (Spiro 2012; Mahony and Pierazzo 2012), and the graduate digital project is one avenue in which this shift might occur, rather than replicating past, analogue models verbatim.

The library should be a key player in this shift in terms of the graduate digital project, as others have seen the library in classroom digital pedagogy more broadly (Arianne Hartsell-Gundy, Laura Braunstein, and Liorah Golomb's 2015 book contains prime examples). Further, the graduate digital project is an opportunity for more parties than the student; faculty and library staff can collaborate and learn as they work with and supervise students' work. Trevor Muñoz (2013) and Bethany Nowwiskie (2013) contend that librarians should be collaborative partners in DH projects, taking on roles that fulfill this function, rather than only providing services for faculty and students. Fred Truyen and Demmy Verbeke (2015), more recently,

explain that the question is *how* the library should join DH work, not *whether* or not they should (28). I would like to map out the *how* in the context of graduate digital project work, and argue that librarians can provide services for students, and also be a collaborative partner in the DH project with the faculty supervisor and with the student. To illustrate how this pedagogical partnership between the library and the initiating department of the project would functionally look and work, I will be drawing on my digital project experience as a graduate student within the English Department. I first want to discuss why the library is best equipped to support graduate DH project work, before looking at ways the department and the library might collaborate, offering practical solutions, to support and teach graduate students doing DH projects.

The library and DH

Truyen and Verbeke (2015) remark that libraries are “traditionally expected” to be responsible for activities such as “preservation, curation, discovery, dissemination, and/or digitization” (29), activities often required for DH projects. Margaret King (2018) explains how “[f]or more than a decade the digitization of libraries and their development of digital services for users have been growing up and developing parallel to the evolution of digital humanities research” (40). As researchers have gone digital, so too have libraries. Within the context of digital knowledge, Brian Rosenblum et al. (2015) describe how “DH’s ... engagement with issues such [as] publishing and dissemination of knowledge, copyright and intellectual property, file formats, metadata and preservation, and managing and structuring data ... are a natural alignment with the goals, activities, and professional expertise of librarians” (165). In fact, some DH scholars may not know how to tackle all of the areas Rosenblum et al. list and helping to fill in these knowledge gaps is one way in which librarians become an integral part of the process of DH work.

Katie Gibson, Marcus Ladd, and Jenny Presnell (2015) emphasize that within DH, “[l]ibrarians need to be perceived as integral players on a team because they can offer both technical and intellectual skills” (15). Kathleen A. Langan and Ilse Schweitzer VanDonkelaar (2015) concur, maintaining that librarians’ diverse educational

backgrounds “allow librarians to be professionally ambidextrous to institutions of higher education (IOHE) in ways that one does not expect of other faculty on campus” (19). This position allows librarians to work across disciplines in a way perhaps “easier” than traditional faculty, and, as interdisciplinarity is a key feature of DH, they can leverage this ability for DH work specifically. Truyen and Verbeke (2015), as well, see support and research as complementary, rather than mutually exclusive, in the library’s role in DH, once again allowing librarians to oscillate between skills (29).

Battershill and Ross (2017) describe how “[l]ibraries have been working broadly in the field of DH since long before the discipline was called by that name, and they often form the nerve center of DH innovation and training at individual institutions” (170). As part of the “nerve center” Battershill and Ross (2017) refer to, many institutions now have digital scholarship librarians, digital humanities librarians, and/or digital humanities centres within the library. Housing DH work inside the library makes logical sense due to the history of libraries and digital work, as well as librarians’ “fundamental interest in information, its histories, its forms, and its disseminations” (Battershill and Ross 2017, 171). Faculty, Battershill and Ross (2017) state, can leverage this interest, especially given that DH “is a growth area in higher education information services[; therefore], faculty have a lot of opportunity to work with and develop the library’s support in ways that [...] will be mutually beneficial” (171).

Librarians, then, and libraries, have the educational background, interests, and tools to support and educate graduate students in preparation for and during their digital project work. There is also perceived value in this knowledge for both graduate students and librarians, elucidated in several instances by Kathleen Langan and Schweitzer VanDonkelaar (2015):

[l]ibrary faculty, particularly those fluent in digital research methods, seem to be the ideal candidates to supplement traditional humanities training [...] [librarians teach] DH skills, pedagogy, and methodology not only to faculty but also, and arguably more important, to graduate students [...] [and t]hese collaborations also provide recruitment and mentorship opportunities for

librarians as they work together with graduate students in a newly emerging academic model where technology, humanities, research, and teaching intersect. (24; 20; 24; 34–35)

Based on these examples, libraries are (a) interested in DH work and collaboration, and (b) qualified to perform tasks in a diverse range of DH activities. While this list may appear ideal, in practice these examples may not be so clearly delineated. Without a plan and a clear understanding of the role of faculty members, librarians, and students, implementing librarians as mentors and educators of DH work could result in issues of compensation, or be met with resistance by all parties, especially as digital project work can be outside the norm of traditional academic instruction. In order for librarians to be fairly compensated, faculty to maintain an active role, and students to feel adequately supported, implementation needs to be clear, and institutions and their departments, including the library unit, need to be open to these emerging models of digital pedagogy with the library as a partner. Through ideal implementation, librarians can mentor willing graduate students in “the new academic model,” and may inspire them to pursue “alt-ac” (“alternative academic”) careers through newly acquired digital knowledge, including the possibility of librarianship, particularly as traditional academic positions in the humanities become harder to find (Langan and Schweitzer VanDonkelaar 2015, 21–24; Battershill and Ross 2017, 147–165).

Of course, how or whether librarians contribute to DH work relies heavily on budgetary considerations as well. If the library does not view the work as financially viable or valuable, and departments are not willing to compensate librarians' contributions, this work is not possible. As mentioned in my introduction, the ACRL encourages academic libraries to advance their role in educational collaboration; to that, they suggest that the budget be “sufficient to provide resources to meet the reasonable expectations of library users when balanced against other institutional needs” (ACRL 2018). The phrase “reasonable expectations” is vague, but given their guidance to promote librarians as partners in education, the ACRL seems to advocate for space in academic libraries' budgets for things like consultation, instruction, and

collaboration. In other words, the library as an academic unit should be able to fund librarians involved in DH work, but that is an ideal situation, and not always the case.

As John White (2016) writes, “adding digital humanities to the core mission of the academic library requires a clear understanding of the resources and skills required. This knowledge is especially important to library administrators who routinely struggle with resource allocation in times of high demand and shrinking budgets” (xiv). It is not enough to desire your library be involved in DH work; the library must also ensure competency of DH so administrators understand the value behind the work as a service for library users and as an opportunity for librarians and library staff. Beyond competency, shrinking budgets is a real concern, and it may be that librarian involvement in graduate digital projects has to take alternative forms beyond the modes I mention in this paper while budgets shift. Brian Rosenblum and Arienne Dwyer (2016) speak to this challenge, stating: “any coadministrators need to work toward a compatible vision of their unit and its place within the university ecosystem. Beyond learning who our core clientele, colleagues, and interested allies were, we learned to adjust our joint vision of our institute to the needs and budget of our institution, also in discussion with our stakeholders” (121). While budget is and will remain a concern for academic library units, those who are interested in helping students and faculty with DH work more largely will have likely done something to allocate funding for such a project; but, how much budget space can be given, and how much librarian involvement in DH the library can afford, will depend on the institution. While I don’t explicitly discuss budget as I am neither an administrator nor currently a librarian, the solutions for DH collaboration I suggest below are scaled from least costly to most costly, as I am cognizant that financial considerations are essential to implementing strategy.

The library and the department: Pedagogical collaborators

How might graduate students and their digital projects work with the library, which aligns well with DH’s calls for interdisciplinarity, collaboration, and digital knowledge? Much of the literature I consulted called for formal instruction in DH

at the graduate level, either through a certificate or degree program, or through workshops over the course of a semester. In SFU's English department, the graduate digital project is typically three semesters' worth of commitment, usually adding an additional year and turning what is typically a one-year program, when only coursework is completed, into two years (Simon Fraser University 2020a). In this context a semester-long DH workshop may be adding too much and requiring students to have a formal certificate or degree in DH wouldn't be possible in the current structure. In SFU's English department, and departments in similar situations where graduate students work on DH projects, I believe there are three solutions the library could provide which would alleviate this large time commitment, introduce students to a broad range of options for their project, and continue to support them throughout the time spent on the project—whether that is three semesters as in SFU English, or otherwise. These solutions are:

1. creating a detailed research guide, made available through the library catalogue and website, and linked on the department website in the section with documentation for the digital project;
2. offering an introductory overview to DH first to all graduate students through graduate professional development courses in coordination with library services, and, at a later date, providing an introductory overview to DH tools and possible project structures to only those students interested in pursuing the digital project option;
3. and inviting a librarian or member of a DH centre to be a “technical supervisor” of the digital project, fairly compensated within the library unit.

These activities are all spokes out from the hub of the department itself, which I think is imperative to bringing students into contact with librarians and library resources. Facilitating contact with the library for DH work through the student's department greatly reduces the stress on students of attempting to find places to learn digital skills in tandem with conducting the traditional research portion of the project. Battershill and Ross (2017) state that “[d]igital projects will generally divide the students' labors between efforts regarding the academic topic or problem

and the efforts required to wrangle the digital aspects of the project,” so that “[t]he technical aspects of a project tend to take a lot more time and effort than originally estimated, therefore endangering that necessary interpretive stage that takes data or results and crafts a sophisticated scholarly argument by engaging with it” (153).

In my experience, this situation worked the opposite way: I spent my time and effort with the interpretive stage, and relied on my limited digital knowledge to “wrangle” that aspect, realizing too late that the digital aspects would take more time and effort than I had planned. Had I been provided access to resources within the library through my department—I needed to read graduate project guidelines regardless, for example, so a gesture to the library as a place to find support in this documentation would have been useful— I think this issue would have been circumnavigated and I would have been more prepared in terms of knowing my options for digital tools, as well as the time commitment involved.

Battershill and Ross (2017) summarize this solution by “emphasiz[ing that the department help] students find the resources and opportunities that will provide necessary digital instruction, rather than directly providing that instruction [in the department]” (149). Connecting with the library digitally, through linking to a DH research guide, and physically, by inviting librarians into the department through workshops and supervision, connects graduate students to librarians in a way that removes stress from the student, and allows them to see the support available without needing to look elsewhere on their own. Initiating library contact through the department also helps libraries: if they know departments are informing their students about the services and support available, librarians can create a plan within the library and with departments’ faculty and staff in anticipation of potential workload, ensuring compensation for their time is handled appropriately and ensuring a consistent connection is upheld between the library and the department. The subject librarian for that department, for example, may be the most appropriate person to maintain the connection, which is already part of their position; through this connection, the subject librarian can channel students to the appropriate contact within the library for DH work, who would need to ensure the library is willing and able to compensate them for time spent helping the student(s).

The research guide is an online document with DH resources hosted on the library website as a “Lib Guide,” searchable through the library catalogue. Lib Guides are excellent resources of information that can be updated easily, but they depend on a few things: they need to be maintained by staff, and students need to know they exist and how to find them. I think it would be easier for departments to include a link to the DH resource guide within any documentation regarding the graduate digital project, as there is a high likelihood of interested students reading that type of document. Students may not look at the DH research guide in great detail, but signposting to it on the department website, embedded within digital project information, would help drive traffic to the guide so students can be informed of their options from the library when conducting DH work.

In an example of a particularly effective DH research guide, librarians at the University of Pennsylvania created a publicly editable Google Doc which they tied to the guide, “to collect data from [their] librarians about their own expertise with DH tools” (Anu Vedantham and Dot Porter 2015, 186). Providing students and researchers with a live list of those in the library with DH knowledge is one way the research guide could stay up to date, without relying on one person to keep the guide updated regularly on a static webpage. Further, tying in resources on campus to a guide that includes external links to DH tools and the DIRT Directory is an easy way to orient students and researchers to the people and tools available on and off campus.

The second proposed solution involves bringing librarian(s) into graduate professional development courses. Within the course in SFU English, students learn about the different streams available to them for master's degree completion, and past graduate students bring their expertise to a session in which they describe their experiences. It would be valuable to have a session that includes a librarian or librarians or faculty-librarian teams to provide an overview of the digital tools available to students, and which tools are supported by the library for project preservation beyond the student's time at SFU, if that is wanted. Gibson, Ladd, and Presnell (2015) call this sort of connection with graduate students in humanities

programs, “especially those who have not yet begun the thesis or dissertation process” a “low commitment” activity in which librarians can engage (15). From this initial session through the mandatory course, students who become interested in the digital project option can sign up for another session with the librarian(s), either hosted by the department or in the library, where they can learn more about DH tools and methods, and begin to get a sense of the tool they would like to use.

SFU’s DHIL offers this type of support to faculty through “course-integrated training,” in which they can provide 10 hours per instructor per semester to teach digital tools or offer input about digital assignments (Simon Fraser University Library 2019). The availability of DHIL staff for course-integrated training is contingent on the current workload at the lab. This example demonstrates how DH centres or libraries can allocate resources for providing workshops within classrooms, without taking time away from staffs’ central roles within their units. Providing clear documentation on their website protects library staff from being in danger of taking on too much, and also gives faculty the opportunity to discover course-integrated learning as an option; faculty do not necessarily have to rely on their own knowledge, which may be blossoming yet, to show their students the myriad options available to them when conducting DH project work.

Bringing librarians in to co-teach or discuss options with students for the digital project brings them out of the library and into digital pedagogy, not only beneficial for librarians and faculty, but also for students. In an era when students prefer to consult Internet resources before or instead of coming into the library, it is important to create connections between students and the library that begin in their own departments. The library can also be an intimidating space for students, so removing that environmental factor and replacing it with one the students are familiar with can alleviate potential stress and foster relationship building.

Conclusion: Is there space for librarian supervision?

As my heading suggests, I want to end by exploring the possibility of librarians as supervisors of graduate digital projects. There are institutional barriers to supervision by a non-faculty member, including issues with time, or with conducting

formal assessment. However, working through these hurdles would allow students to form a connection with the library that is two-sided, rather than viewing the unit as disembodied external support. Librarians, after all, are “professionally ambidextrous,” as Langan and Schweitzer VanDonkelaar (2015) point out (19), and this flexible knowledge base could help institutions avoid the siloed nature of academic departments and embrace the interdisciplinarity of DH work. I don’t see collaboration with the library as building tools for the student or co-authorship—tool-building for researchers is an adjacent DH service which the librarian supervisor can facilitate if resources and funds are available—rather, the collaborative opportunity is primarily between the faculty member and the librarian.

Time constraints would need to be addressed in library policy, and explicitly understood by the faculty member, the librarian, and the student. Library units, ideally, would allocate time for supervision, but adding this role to already existing structure may be met with challenges if librarians are not willing to take on the work. To avoid time issues, the library could state supervision is contingent on current workload, as SFU’s DHIL does for course-integrated training. Students and faculty could also invite librarians on a case-by-case basis to supervise; for example, if a student is working with rare materials, they may ask a librarian in Rare Books and Special Collections to be their supervisor. In some instances, as Joan K. Lippincott explains, some librarians “see this [engagement] as time away from librarians’ core responsibilities” (x), while others may feel pressured to agree to supervise when they may not have the time. To alleviate these issues, libraries could implement financial and practical measures. The library’s budget should reflect its aspiration to engage librarians in assessment and educational partnerships; if nothing else, embedding this potential role within the unit’s budget structure would indicate that this level of engagement with students is financially feasible, which may remove reluctance to take on the role. In a practical sense, libraries could create a live document in which librarians can document their interest in supervision, and in which departments, much like the document created at the University of Pennsylvania mentioned above.

I have been supervised twice by librarians: once in my MLIS program, where the librarian was my only supervisor, and the course was a professional experience with a pass/fail grade, and once in my English MA, where I did a directed study in Special Collections and also had a faculty member as a supervisor. In the latter situation, the faculty member graded my final report; the librarian, from Special Collections, was available throughout my time there to assist me with my work and familiarize me with the Special Collections environment. When supervision involves a librarian, assessment could take the shape of my situation, or it could involve the librarian. However, barriers may exist that prevent the librarian from formally assessing student work, such as those experienced at Western Michigan University when they asked a librarian to teach a DH course; she had to be nominated by a degree-conferring department in order to teach and formally assess student work (Langan and Schweitzer VanDonkelaar 2015, 31). Further, there may be issues if a faculty member and librarian cannot agree on assessment, and institutional hierarchy could prevent cooperation from either party.

In spite of these challenges, it is important to consider the ways librarians could be more hands-on and collaborative within digital pedagogy. DH pushes the boundaries of traditional pedagogy, and by its nature creates interdisciplinary connections; the graduate digital project can create relationships between the library, department faculty, and the student body, where each group can tap into the others' unique skill sets. Not only is the student creating a project that is fairly new in terms of its digital component, but the project is creating a workflow and a set of protocols that transcends the initiating academic department. Library collaboration in DH can help faculty teach tools with which they may be unfamiliar, while students are exposed to a perspective that may inspire them to pursue librarianship as an "alt-ac" career. Finally, rather than the library waiting for researchers and students to come to them with questions about DH work, the exchanges I have proposed within the pedagogy of the graduate digital project give the library agency to create relationships and offer their expertise in creating and teaching DH.

Competing interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

Editorial contributions

Guest Editor, DSCN Student Issue 2020: Colette Colligan, Kimberly O'Donnell and Kandice Sharren.

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From “The Sweepings of Her Desk” to Our Desktops: Building Mary Shelley’s Gothic Tales in the *Keepsake* as a Digital Dissertation Satellite Project

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Concerns about the purpose and structure of humanities graduate education are not new, but over the past several years, questions about the sustainability and value of North American humanities PhD programs—and of the monograph-style dissertation—have come sharply into focus. Reports from numerous projects and organizations foreground the importance of digital humanities (DH) scholarship in preparing PhD candidates for careers inside and outside of the academy, including the Canadian Future of Graduate Training in the Humanities Project, the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS), the Modern Language Association (MLA) Task Force on Doctoral Study in Modern Language and Literature, and the Next Generation PhD project (IPLA 2013; CAGS 2018; MLA 2014; McCarthy 2017). Alexander Reid echoes this finding in his piece about the ethics of DH for graduate education, noting that more and more job advertisements specify expertise in digital technologies as an asset, if not a requirement, for tenure-track positions (2012). Reid points out, though, that even if graduate programs include training in digital technologies, integrating those skills into candidates’ pedagogical and scholarly practices—improving their “durability”—remains challenging (2012, 361).

Although universities across Canada offer courses and MA programs in DH, PhDs in DH are much less common. The first PhD in DH program began at King’s College London in 2005, but as of 2017 there were only two more, according to a study by Sula et al.: at the National University of Ireland Maynooth and at University College London (McCarty 2012; Sula, Hackney, and Cunningham 2017). There are currently no

PhD in DH programs in Canada, although Brock University offers an Interdisciplinary PhD with a specialization in Technology and Digital Humanities and the University of British Columbia Okanagan offers a PhD in Digital Arts and Humanities (Brock University 2020; UBC Okanagan 2019). The University of Victoria (UVic), my home institution, offers DH as a major field of study within its English PhD program and provides support for digital scholarship through UVic Libraries' Digital Scholarship Commons and several research labs. It also hosts the Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHISI) every year, led by the ETCL (Electronic Textual Cultures Lab) under the direction of Ray Siemens (University of Victoria, English Department 2019, 23). Given the importance of digital skills for doctoral students and the lack of doctoral DH programs, the necessity of integrating DH into other humanities PhD programs is clear.

Although the need for doctoral programs to change in response to broader changes in academia is pressing, this is a large-scale endeavour, requiring cultural shifts as well as institutional change. In the short term, creating a digital project that complements or supplements a PhD candidate's dissertation research is one way for graduate students to develop and use digital skills, many of which are highly transferable to other scholarly projects as well as to work outside the academy, such as coding, web publishing, using content management systems, database construction, data visualization, project management, research data management, and—perhaps most importantly—collaboration. Here, I offer an account of my own experience developing what I think of as a digital satellite project—one that emerged from and augments my dissertation, but that is not part of my formal PhD program—as a way of arguing for greater recognition and support for this type of work.

In the first year of my PhD program, I began developing the project that has evolved into Mary Shelley's Gothic Tales in the *Keepsake* (Winter 2020), a digital scholarly edition of six tales that Shelley published between 1828 and 1833. The project was inspired by my research on one of the tales, "Transformation," which I discuss at length in my dissertation. There, I argue that Romantic Gothic literature pushes back against the idea of the economy as a natural system, one of the core

ideas driving the emergence of commercial society. Although Shelley's tales and their role in Gothic literary history relate strongly to my doctoral research, I have space to discuss only the one tale. In addition to helping me develop digital skills, then, working on this digital edition has given me a way to make these tales and some of my research about them available to scholars, students, and readers in a way that my dissertation cannot.

Mary Shelley's Gothic Tales in the *Keepsake* (Gothic Tales, for short) draws together several critical strands about literary annuals and Shelley's writings by presenting a thematic collection of tales as they appeared to their first readers and asking how and to what effect the tales interact with their material and textual contexts. Literary annuals, and the *Keepsake* in particular, have received some attention from literary scholars and book historians (Harris 2015; Ledbetter 2009; Reynolds and Feldman 2006), as has Gothic fiction in the annuals (Harris 2012). Although Shelley's short stories—like most of her work other than *Frankenstein*—has been largely forgotten and ignored, dismissed as hack writing unworthy of serious literary study—some critics have begun recuperating them. Judith Pascoe has examined Shelley's poetry in the annuals, and Sonia Hofkosh and Charlotte Sussman her short stories (Pascoe 2003; Hofkosh 1993; Sussman 2003). This edition stands alongside a handful of digital editions and full-text electronic versions of the tales available online, including one of "Ferdinando Eboli" in Steven E. Jones's edition of *The Last Man* and Michael Eberle Sinatra's hypertext edition of "The Mortal Immortal," both published at *Romantic Circles* (Shelley 1997a, 1997b). Full-text versions of all six tales are available online through *Project Gutenberg* and other sources, but none of these versions include images, and their reliability is unknown.

Unlike other digital editions of these stories, Gothic Tales uses metadata to situate the tales in relation to one another, to other texts in the *Keepsake*, and to the broader literary landscape. The lack of time and resources determined, to a great extent, the scope of the project and the features it includes. Its selection criteria were bibliographic and generic: the tales in this edition, "Ferdinando Eboli" (1828), "The Evil Eye" (1829), "Transformation" (1830), "The Dream" (1831), "The Invisible Girl"

(1832), and “The Mortal Immortal” (1833), were among Shelley’s 23 published short stories, many of which appeared in the *Keepsake* (Winter 2020; see also Shelley 1976). All engage with the Gothic aesthetic or its characteristic tropes. Several other tales arguably fit these criteria, including “The Mourner” and “The False Rhyme” (1829) but were omitted in order to keep the project’s scope manageable (Winter 2020; see also Shelley 1976). The edition includes bibliographic metadata for each tale and every text published in the six volumes of the *Keepsake* in which they appear, as well as lists of character names, locations, and Gothic motifs. It also includes reliable plain text versions of each tale and PDFs of the page images that can be downloaded and used for research or pedagogical purposes (**Figure 1**). All the material on the site is licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 Canada license (CC BY-NC), meaning that anyone can share, redistribute, and adapt the material on the site provided they give appropriate attribution and do not use it for commercial purposes (Creative Commons n.d.). Although Gothic Tales makes some implicit arguments about the tales—including that they are worthy objects of study—it is intended as a useful starting point for further exploration, learning, and discovery, rather than as an authoritative critical edition.

The original goal of the project was to make digital facsimiles—scanned page images—of a few of Shelley’s Gothic tales available freely online in an attempt to convey the experience of reading them as their original readers would have, in the pages of the *Keepsake*. The *Keepsake* (1827–1856) was the most successful of the literary annuals, a popular form of periodical publication that flourished from the 1820s through the 1850s, but which, like Shelley’s tales, has been largely forgotten (Feldman 2006). Most of Shelley’s tales published within the *Keepsake*’s pages have remained there, but “The Mortal Immortal” has been included in several anthologies (Robinson 1976). All of Shelley’s tales are reprinted with their illustrations in Charles Robinson’s edition of Shelley’s *Collected Tales and Stories* (1976), and some are reprinted in *The Mary Shelley Reader* (Bennett and Robinson 1990), but these anthologies, by their nature, remove the tales from their original material and textual context.

The screenshot shows a digital scholarly edition page for 'Transformation' by Mary Shelley. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links: Home, Using This Site, The Project, The Keepsake, The Tales, and The Editor. Below the menu is a header section with a portrait of Mary Shelley and the title 'Mary Shelley's Gothic Tales in the Keepsake', with a subtitle 'A Digital Scholarly Edition created by Caroline Winter'. On the left side, there are two sections: 'THE VOLUMES' listing 'The Keepsake for 1820' through '1824', and 'THE TALES' listing 'Fernando's Elix', 'The Evil Eye', 'Transformation', 'The Dream', 'The Invisible Girl', and 'The Mortal Immortal'. The main content area is titled 'Transformation' and features a small illustration of a woman. Below the illustration is a plot summary: 'In "Transformation," Guido tells the story of how, when he was a young man, he squandered his family fortune, forcing his family friend Torella to cancel the marriage contract between Guido and Torella's daughter, Juliet. When Guido's attempts to kidnap Juliet are thwarted, Guido is banished from his home city of Geneva. As Guido wanders the beach in despair, he witnesses a shipwreck and sees a strange, misshapen creature emerge out of the sea. The creature offers Guido a some treasure if he will trade bodies with her for three days. Guido agrees, and when the creature does not return after the third day, Guido returns to Geneva in the creature's body. As he feared, the creature (in Guido's body) has reconciled with Torella and is about to marry Juliet. Guido attacks the creature and kills it, but is wounded himself and loses consciousness. He awakens in his own body and makes an almost complete recovery, and he and Juliet marry.' Below the plot summary is a paragraph: 'Of all the tales in this edition, "Transformation" seems closest to Frankenstein in its engagement with the motif of doubling, its use of the supernatural, and its late-within-late structure.' This is followed by a note: 'The illustration is an engraving after a painting of Juliet from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, but the tale re-imagines the figure as the Juliet of the tale.' A link is provided for more information: 'For more information about "Transformation," visit its Wikipedia page. An HTML version of the tale is also available from Columbia University.' A metadata section follows, including: 'Title in Contents List: Transformation, a Tale', 'Creator: Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley', 'Attribution: The Author of Transformation', 'Type of Work: Tale or Short Story', 'Date of Publication: 1820', 'Venue: The Keepsake for 1821', 'Page(s): 18-39', 'Text of the Tale: [link to shelleymw_transformation.txt]', and 'PDF of the Page Images: [link to 1821_transformation-download.pdf]'. A 'Metadata' section lists terms like 'Juliet', 'blood freezing (figurative)', 'sealing a contract with blood', 'tale', 'wetting', 'squalor', 'abduction', 'luxury', 'profligacy', 'shipwreck', 'demon', 'body-snatching'. 'Named Characters' include 'Guido', 'Torella', 'Marchese Torella', and 'the dwarf (unnamed)'. 'Named Dates' is '1380-1422 (reign of Charles VI of France)'. 'Named Places' includes 'Geneva', 'Paris', 'Florence', 'Rome', 'Naples', 'Toulon', and 'San Pietro d'Alena'. Below the metadata is a map of Europe with red pins indicating locations. At the bottom is a 'PAGE IMAGE GALLERY' showing a grid of manuscript page images. At the very bottom, there is a Creative Commons license notice and 'Powered by Drupal'.

Figure 1: The page for each Gothic tale includes a plot summary, bibliographic and descriptive metadata, plain text files, and high-quality page images of the holdings of the *Keepsake* in the University of Victoria Libraries' Special Collections.

Working with the texts as material objects highlights their relationships with the other literary and visual texts in the *Keepsake* and foregrounds their significance for interpreting the tales. After taking a course about building digital editions at DHSI 2016, I decided to build the edition in Drupal, an open source content management system that combines a relational database with a user interface. Its flexibility allows users to choose how their data is modelled and how various pieces of information are displayed, and its relational database structure enables exploration of the relationships between the tales and other texts. As I realized in the process of creating the edition, intertextuality—the creation of meaning through “network[s] of textual relations”—is integral to these six Gothic tales (Allen 2011, 1). Indeed, intertextuality is built into the editorial paradigm of the *Keepsake*, a multimedia publication in which words, images, and their material context are intertwined, and is foregrounded in the Contents list for each volume. Gothic Tales remediates the Contents list in two ways: as a page image, replicating the visual field of the page and as a list generated by displaying all items published in a given volume (**Figures 2 and 3**). The edition can also be navigated through its metadata: clicking a creator’s name, for instance, displays a page listing bibliographical metadata and a list of that creator’s works across these six volumes of the *Keepsake* (**Figure 4**). Clicking on a Gothic motif, such as “abduction,” displays a list of tales that employ that motif (**Figure 5**). Capturing metadata from each tale and the volumes of the *Keepsake* in which they appear in a relational database thus makes it possible to see relationships among texts in a single volume and across multiple volumes.

By encoding the tales’ intertextuality as clickable links, Gothic Tales makes use of the properties of what Patrick Sahle calls the “digital paradigm,” through hypertextuality (2016, 28). As Sahle notes, hypertext—the direct linking of texts, generally through clickable links—is a uniquely digital way of understanding one text in relation to another: “While [printed texts] always included rather implicit links and references, the hyperlinks of [digital texts] restructure the contents of editions, open up new and manifold paths of reception and blur the boundaries

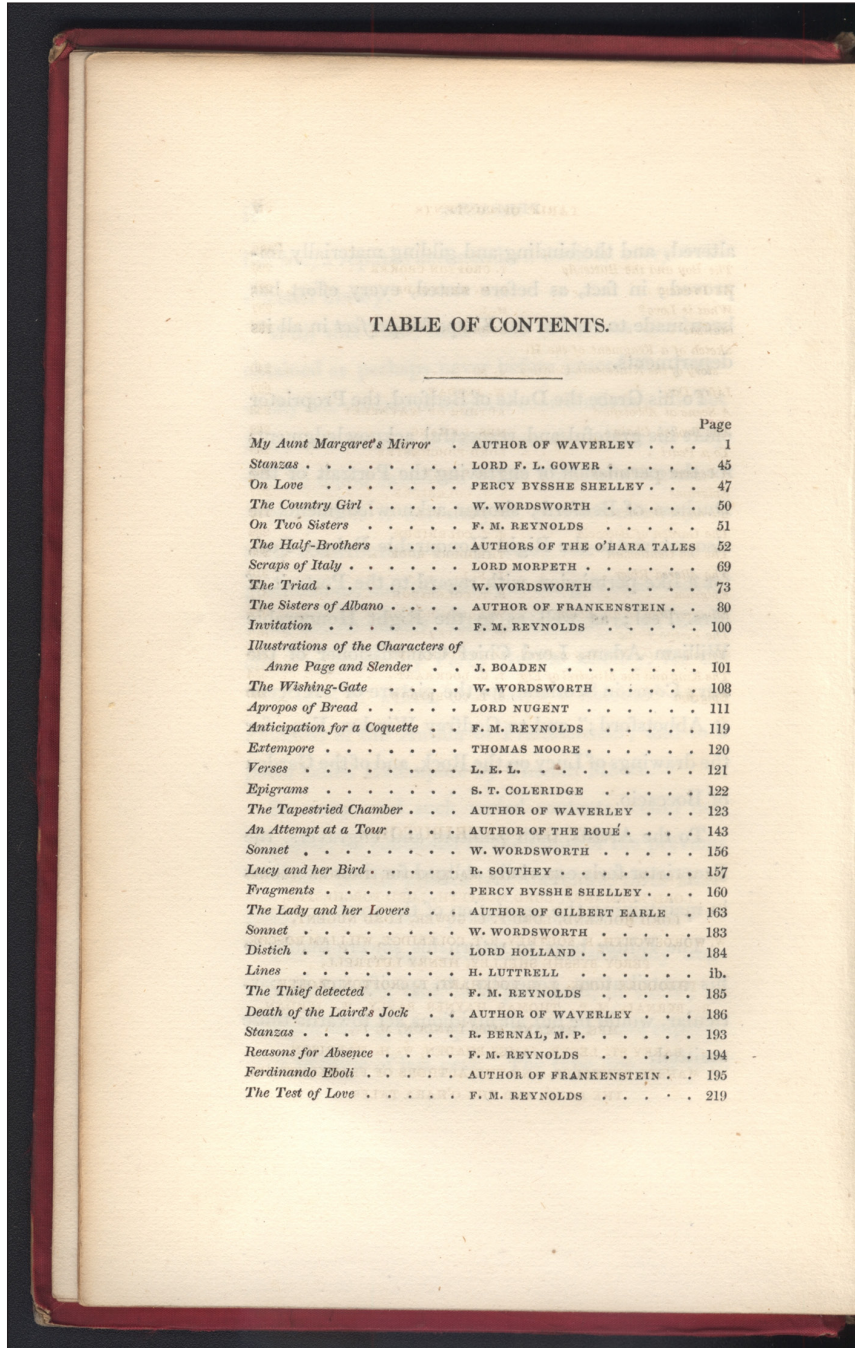



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Figure 2: A page image of the Contents page of *The Keepsake for 1829*. The page image is taken from the copy of *The Keepsake for 1829* held in the University of Victoria Libraries, Special Collections (AY13 K4 1829).

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Mary Shelley's Gothic Tales in the Keepsake

A Digital Scholarly Edition created by Caroline Winter

THE VOLUMES

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- The Keepsake for 1832
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- The Keepsake for 1834

THE TALES

- Ferdinando Eboli
- The Evil Eye
- Transformation
- The Dream
- The Invisible Girl
- The Mortal Immortal

The Keepsake for 1829

Publication Date: 1828
Editor: Frederic Mansel Reynolds
City of Publication: London
Publisher: Hurst, Chance, and Co.

CONTENTS OF THE KEEPSAKE FOR 1829

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Illustrations of the Characters of Anne Page and Slender
The Wishing-Gate
Apropos of Bread
An Anticipation for a Coquette
Extempore, To —, to Whose Interference I Chiefly Owe the Very Liberal Price Given for Lalla Rookh
Georgiana, Duchess of Bedford
[Lady, thy face is very beautiful]
Epigrams
The Tapestry Chamber, or the Lady in the Sacque
The Tapestry Chamber
An Attempt at a Tour
Sonnet [A Gravestone Upon the Floor in the Cloisters of Worcester Cathedral]
Lucy and Her Bird [Poem]
Lucy and Her Bird [Illustration]
Fragments
The Lady and her Lovers
Love
Jealousy
Sonnet [A Tradition of Darley-Dale, Derbyshire]
The Thief Detected
Death of the Laird's Jock
The Laird's Jock
Reasons for Absence
Ferdinando Eboli
Adolinda
Quatrain, Addressed to a Lady, and Written on the Envelope in which was Returned her own Letter
The Test of Love
The Boy and the Butterfly
An Incident
What is Love?
Lago Maggiore
Stanzas Addressed to R. M. W. Turner, Esq., R.A., on his View of the Lago Maggiore from the Town of Arona
Sketch of a Fragment of the History of the Nineteenth Century
Life's Day
Scene at Abbotsford
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The Victim Bride
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The Magic Mirror
Clorinda, or the Necklace of Pearl
The King and the Minstrel of Ely, from the Norman-French
Epigram [Sly Belzebub took all occasions]
Stanzas [On the Execution Militaire]
On Love
The Country Girl [Illustration]
The Country Girl [Poem]
On Two Sisters
The Half-Brothers
Lucy
Scorpe of Italy
The Triad
Lake Albano
The Sisters of Albano

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Figure 3: The mediated version of the Contents Page in Gothic Tales.

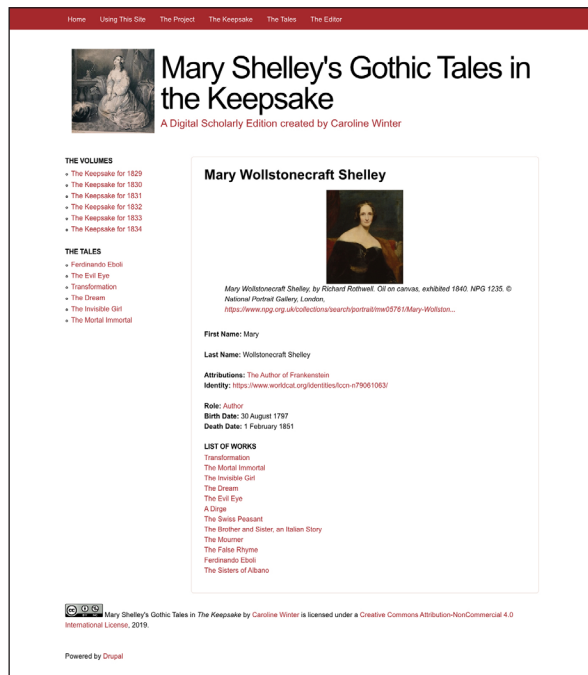


Figure 4: Clicking a creator's name displays a page with bibliographical metadata and a list of that creator's works in these six volumes of the *Keepsake*, as shown here for Shelley.

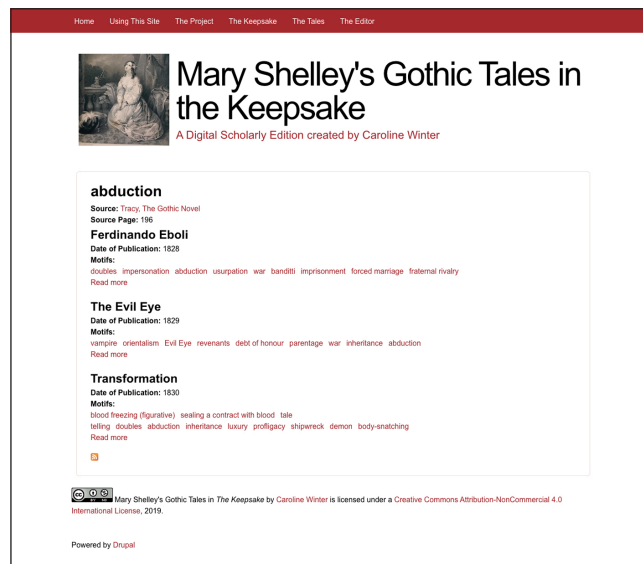


Figure 5: Clicking a Gothic motif displays a list of every tale that employs that motif, as shown here for “abduction.”

between an edition and its contexts" (2016, 29). Since *Gothic Tales* focuses on just six tales, the interpretive possibilities of this hypertextuality are limited, but future iterations of the project could be scaled up to investigate, for example, all 29 volumes of the *Keepsake* as an exceptionally rich intertextual field. Thinking in terms of intertextuality and hypertextuality has led me to understand the *Keepsake* differently than encountering it as a material object alone and has also helped me understand my field of study—Romantic Gothic literature—as a network of people, places, and things that could, with sufficient time and resources, be captured in a relational database, ready to explore.

One of the greatest frustrations of working on this digital satellite project has been knowing that it could do much more if I had the time and resources to dedicate to it. The edition has developed over a number of years in fits and starts, with the knowledge, skills, and resources available to me at the time. In the fall of 2017, though, I was able to complete the first iteration as part of an Open Knowledge Practicum at the ETCL, which provided workspace and a set time to dedicate to the project each week, as well as a community of practice to provide technical and moral support. In the future, I would like to create a version 2.0 with other features that would enrich my doctoral research and be useful for other scholars. For instance, modelling the data for this edition revealed a need for a structured vocabulary of Gothic motifs, which have traditionally characterized Gothic literature, and sometimes still do. I began creating a comprehensive structured vocabulary by adapting Ann Tracy's index of Gothic motifs (Tracy 1981), but quickly abandoned this feature as the project threatened to balloon in scope. I had also hoped to make the metadata interoperable as linked open data, but although this is possible in Drupal (Corlosquet et al. 2009), it is beyond my current level of expertise. All of this work requires time and resources to complete and, since this project is largely exploratory and not part of my formal program, taking time away from writing the dissertation in order to do it feels unjustified.

Although creating digital satellite projects has many benefits for PhD candidates, the costs are important to consider as well. Thanks to the number of openly available

digital research and publishing tools, many digital projects can be developed for free, although there are costs associated with domain name registration and web hosting. In my experience, the most significant cost of developing a digital project is time. Even out-of-the-box tools designed for ease of use take some time to learn and learning how to use less user-friendly ones like Drupal require a significant investment of time: I took a week-long course on Drupal for Humanities Projects at DHSI 2017 with Quinn Dombrowski and Erica Cavanaugh and relied heavily on Dombrowski's book *Drupal for Humanists* afterwards (Dombrowski 2020). For Gothic Tales, creating a workable data model was particularly time consuming, in part because I learned to do it through trial and error (and indeed, did not know what data modelling was when I began), but even less mentally exhausting tasks, such as scanning materials and entering metadata, took more time than I anticipated. Having never created a digital project of this scale, I had no reference point for how long each task would take or how much work would be involved. This hard-won experience, however, is something I have carried into other digital projects and even to my dissertation, another project with unpredictable timelines that is susceptible to serious scope creep.

The time it takes to create a digital satellite project is an especially pressing issue to consider in the context of doctoral programs because of how these programs are structured and funded. As Robin Saliba notes in a study of doctoral programs in Canada, most are designed to be completed in four or five years, including two years for coursework and comprehensive exams and two to three years for completing all other program requirements (2012). These may include language requirements, which sometimes necessitate more coursework, but always include a dissertation or equivalent research project, which must be researched, written, reviewed by committee members, revised, and submitted in those two or three years (Saliba 2012). Although most programs do not require students to complete their PhD in this timeframe, funding may be offered for four or five years only, and sometimes takes the form of teaching or research assistantships or sessional instruction contracts that, while providing professional experience essential for PhDs to be competitive

on the academic job market, also take time away from dissertation writing. Although recent data about times to completion in humanities PhD programs is difficult to come by, the average is likely longer than five years. Saliba's 2012 report echoes a 2006 report that puts the average closer to six or seven years in Canada (Saliba 2012; Archambault et al. 2006), and an article in *The Atlantic* from 2016 cites nine years for humanities PhDs in the US (McKenna 2016). Because time to completion has financial and other implications, the costs involved in creating a digital satellite project should be weighed carefully.

In addition to the potential for extending the doctoral program, creating a digital satellite project has opportunity costs: time spent working on a satellite project is time not spent writing a dissertation or a journal article, for instance, which have more value in the scholarly economy. The demands of research, writing, and teaching do not leave much space for experimentation, especially if it is supplemental to the dissertation rather than integral to it, but in spite of the costs, my experience has convinced me that not only are digital satellite projects worth doing but that they should be integrated into doctoral programs, especially since dissertations remain stubbornly print based (Lee 2015). The Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) report usefully summarizes changes that are already underway—or at least, under discussion—in regard to the humanities PhD. It notes that the format is starting to shift away from “a bound volume mimicking a scholarly book” to include “Digital artefacts, creative works, and publicly-relevant documents” (CAGS 2018, 2). Importantly, this report ties this format shift to a broader shift in mindset toward valuing diverse “modes of scholarship,” including “engagement, application, teaching, and integration, in addition to that of discovery” (CAGS 2018, 2).

In her study of Shelley's poetry in the annuals, Pascoe challenges the misconception held by critics since the nineteenth century that Shelley and other contributors to the annuals were hack writers, and that because they were well paid for their work, that work is necessarily lacking in literary merit and unworthy of serious study. “Mary Shelley,” Pascoe writes, “clearly did not limit her annual

publications to the sweepings of her desk but rather published work there that she counted as her very best" (2003, 197). The relationship between Shelley's work in the annuals and her more "legitimate" work provides a useful analogy for thinking through the relation between digital satellite projects and more "legitimate" scholarly publications including the dissertation and journal articles, particularly those published in subscription-only venues. Indeed, in the long grind of dissertation writing, it is highly motivating to know that at least some of your work is out in the world and reaching the wider community in a way that most journal articles and scholarly monographs never do. For instance, a Chilean publisher has used the plain-text version of "The Mortal Immortal" posted on Gothic Tales as the basis of a beautifully illustrated Spanish edition of the tale, making Shelley's work available to a new readership (Shelley 2019). As an open, public facing project, this digital satellite project makes some of my research available to the broader community in a way that my dissertation likely will not and is already introducing more readers to Shelley's long-neglected Gothic tales.

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Competing interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

Editorial contributions

Guest Editor, DSCN Student Issue 2020: Colette Colligan, Kimberly O'Donnell and Kandice Sharren.

Section Editor/Copy Editor: Darcy Tamayose, The Journal Incubator, University of Lethbridge, Canada.

Copy Editor/Bibliographies Manager: Shahina Parvin, The Journal Incubator, University of Lethbridge, Canada.

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Response

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This response considers three essays that present meaningful insights into the benefits and challenges of bringing digital work into a graduate project or dissertation. In the above articles, Reese Irwin's "The Library as Pedagogical Collaborator in Graduate Student Digital Humanities Projects," Randa El Khatib's "The Humanities Dissertation in the Contemporary Scholarly Landscape" and Caroline Winter's "From 'The Sweepings of Her Desk' to Our Desktops: Mary Shelley's Gothic Tales in the Keepsake," the benefits of digital projects emerge as these essays describe fascinating attempts to recover lost or poorly understood aspects of literary history, in innovative and critically-informed ways. In my reading of the research questions and objectives motivating these projects, the innovative methods deployed to address them, and the myriad skills needed to do the work, the value of these projects presents itself strongly. But what also emerges from these essays are the challenges and risks that underlie student work on their own digital projects. Collectively, the essays demonstrate the fault-lines, gaps, and uncertainties confronting graduate students who wish to engage in digital scholarship.

For El Khatib, Irwin, and Winter, digital projects have been enormously rewarding, but also have presented challenges. For Winter, "the most significant cost of developing a digital project is time," and it is perhaps worth exploring why these digital projects take so much time and reiterating why time is such a precious commodity for graduate students. On the latter point, Winter points out that most graduate programs have expected completion dates, and funding is tied to meeting milestones. Doing a digital project, as Winter also explains, means not doing something else; and it also presents a risk, since it is an investment of time, in new methods and approaches, that may not achieve recognition in the same way as, say, preparing an essay for publication. There is a large element of self-teaching,

trial-by-error, and exploration in digital work—all of which take time, and can also be demoralizing and isolating. Although some graduate programs allow for digital projects to be incorporated into a final project or thesis, as El Khatib describes in her portfolio dissertation, the availability of these more flexible models for the thesis are not the norm, and even when they are available may not appeal to all students wishing to do digital work. As a result, the digital project is often done in addition to a traditional dissertation (like Winter)—a significant problem that plagues digital work by graduate students (Boyles et al. 2018, 694). As Winter explains, “taking time away from writing the dissertation in order to [work on the digital project] feels unjustified.” Even the portfolio model El Khatib describes reflects an enormous amount of labour, and the kind of labour—interdisciplinary, collaborative, public-facing—that is rarely a part of the training humanities’ students receive before they begin or during graduate school.

Another way to conceptualize the problem is to think of the external (or imposed) barriers and the internal (or innate) constraints on student-led digital projects. External barriers include restrictive definitions of what constitutes a thesis, and how these can compel students interested in digital work to, in effect, double their workload—completing a traditional dissertation and a digital project of some kind. Another external barrier, related to the first, is that digital work may not be valued in the same way as more traditional scholarly outputs; as El Khatib points out, prototypes, one of the kinds of digital scholarship she engages in, “does not yet stand as contributions to knowledge in themselves.” Graduate students may lack access to training, to free software, and to funding for digital projects, and their ability to lead such projects might be even challenged (“Student Labour,” para. 32). Hence, external barriers can be high.

Internal barriers are those that appear to be inherent in Digital Humanities work itself. El Khatib notes that, within DH, the “type, scope, and format of research are quickly evolving with the ever-changing methodologies, tools, and platforms; DH is a fast-paced, dynamic field.” Such a field present challenges for anyone seeking to work within it, for students but also for the faculty, librarians, and technical experts

who are seeking to support and guide students. As El Khatib observes: “One of the defining features of the digital is that its infrastructure, methods, and tools are rapidly developing; many digital resources become outdated, are superseded with better methodologies, make leaps, or take falls.” The lack of one-size-fits-all solutions means that many DH projects remain bespoke in nature, with many elements tailored to the technical demands and specific research questions at hand, such that even those who have expertise in one or a range of projects has to, at least in some respects, begin anew. This is one of the reasons why DH projects take so long to finish, and their finished status is also rarely apparent in the same way as, say, a print publication. Other internal barriers are those that El Khatib notes as being endemic to DH itself: in addition to being a dynamic field requiring that skills be constantly upgraded and adapted, it is a collaborative and open one. Collaboration within the Humanities, with some exceptions (such as large editorial projects), remains relatively new, and we await better understandings of the nature of collaborative labour and methods for apportioning it, particularly as they apply to students (Di Pressi et al. 2015). Even the assumption that roles can be easily delineated, and credit easily divided, ought to be subject to scrutiny (Mann 2019). Working in the open, another feature of Digital Humanities scholarship identified by El Khatib, represents yet another set of challenges for students. On the one hand, students may not feel ready to present their work publicly. On the other hand, if they do publish as they go, they will not have an extended piece of research that can be transformed into a monograph, still the gold standard for tenure, if not hiring, at many institutions. Typically, a graduate student in the Humanities is encouraged to publish at most one or two articles from their dissertation, for this very reason.

El Khatib's article describes how she was able to overcome many of the obstacles that beset students wishing to do digital dissertations. Studying at an institution with flexible dissertation requirements, she was able to take advantage of the portfolio model as one that best suited her digital research and supported her work on a variety of technical and intellectual research problems, with a range of collaborators. She was able to assemble a diverse team of advisors, who provided training and support,

and it would appear she brought a considerable degree of technical expertise when she came into the program. In many ways, her narrative is a success story, depicting what is possible when internal and external barriers are lessened. Her dissertation, moreover, sacrifices none of the rigor of a traditional dissertation; indeed, that all pieces of the portfolio have gone through peer review, and are threaded together with an “overarching argument,” may exceed usual expectations. Although El Khatib does not dwell on the difficulties, the processes she describes, of learning new technical skills, of committing to working in the open, of submitting to the peer review process, of creating and maintaining relationships with faculty at her home institution and elsewhere, as well as with librarians and technical experts, requires incredible effort, “the affective and immaterial labour,” to say nothing of the material labour, that enables and sustains digital work (Anderson et al., para. 27).

Even though Winter is completing her dissertation at the University of Victoria, the same institution as El Khatib, she has not opted for the portfolio dissertation. This should remind us that providing options for the dissertation, while a crucial first step, does not resolve all issues. Many students may not wish to go all-in with a digital dissertation or be willing to undertake the heavy demands of the portfolio model. As Winter notes, “Developing satellite digital projects that complement monograph-style doctoral dissertations is an opportunity for graduate students to develop digital skills, explore different modes of research, and experience being part of a strong community of practice.” It is an attractive model that would seem to bring with it the benefits of engaging with the traditional dissertation form, while also developing an ancillary set of skills and professional relationships. Further, digital work enables a fuller, and arguably deeper understanding of the primary materials being studied, an argument that literary editors have made, and that is embedded in the title of Amanda Visconti’s digital dissertation “How Can You Love a Work If You Don’t Know It?: Critical Code and Design Towards Participatory Digital Editions” (cited by El Khatib). For Winter, it has also helped her understand the wider field of her dissertation—Gothic literature of the Romantic period. In other words, “a satellite digital project,” as Winter calls it, makes sense both practically and intellectually; it

provides opportunities for skill acquisition and networking, and also can support a more fully realized traditional dissertation.

Winter's recommendation is that digital satellite projects be integrated into doctoral programs, allowing students "to gain the benefits of doing digital work and becoming digital humanists while helping to legitimizing that work." This is an intriguing possibility, though its implementation depends on resources and student interest; and it should also depend on adjustments to expectations for a thesis. Another possibility is that digital projects be offered as possible assignments in individual courses. This is more aligned with the situation Irwin discusses, where her digital edition emerged as part of an MA project. This approach offers many advantages; most MA and PhD programs have coursework requirements, and offering exposure to DH methods within a single class can be less daunting to those without technical skills. At the same time, if limited to a semester, the work must be completed within a few short months, a constricted timeline to master both subject-matter content and technical expertise. Irwin usefully proposes a shared method of team-teaching, training and supervision, a collaborative model that, as we have seen, is essential to most DH workflows. Her proposal is that digital librarians or skilled DH experts housed in DH centres become technical supervisors of student projects.

Irwin is aware that supervision takes time, and that library structures may not allow for librarians to play this kind of role. Libraries, as part of our universities, operate under same constrained resources, and shifting the work of librarians to become more involved in teaching and research requires institutional commitment, in addition to librarians being willing, and having the skills, to do so. Moreover, I am not certain that even if libraries could take a more active role in graduate student training and supervision, the fundamental issue will be resolved: as digital work, for the reasons discussed, usually requires more time and a different skill set than a traditional research essay, or dissertation. Irwin quotes Battershill and Ross, who observe that there is always a tug of war between the technical and interpretive elements of a project: for them, "[t]he technical aspects of a project tend to take a lot more time and effort than originally estimated, therefore endangering that

necessary interpretive stage" (153; see also, Levy, Morford and Seatter 2017). Though this scenario was reversed for Irwin, who spent more time on interpretation thus leaving little time for technical work, it speaks to the core issue. This is the problem identified by Winter, of a doubling of work for students who wish to engage in both traditional and digital forms of scholarship. Although El Khatib does not speak about her portfolio dissertation in terms of challenges, it seems clear enough that such a model was only made possible by hard-work, technical ability, and extensive institutional support.

I cannot conclude with any easy solutions. Undertaking digital projects within graduate programs presents risk to our students. They must learn new methods and skills, form new collaborative relationships, almost always at the same time that they are expected to complete a standard dissertation. As a professor who supervises DH projects, I am concerned for students who undertake this kind of risk, but asking our students to turn their back on digital projects does not seem to be a viable option. Our discipline is changing, and we need to provide structures to encourage experimentation and the development of new skills, at the same time that we actively work to reduce the challenges and even dangers that present themselves. As Irwin suggests, better partnerships with our academic libraries, and DH specialists, can provide needed support to our students as they endeavour to acquire new technical knowledge. It is also important to listen to students like Winter, so we can learn what they want and need from their graduate programs. And we require more positive models of graduate work that successfully integrate traditional modes of scholarship with digital humanities work, like El Khatib's; from them, we will learn how to remove as many external barriers as we can from our programs and institutions, so that our students can flourish within them.

Competing interests

The author has not competing interests to declare.

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