Approved by faculty 2/23/18
Approved by Provost 9/6/18

Digital Scholarship

Under whatever name it is known—Digital Humanities, Humanities Computing, Computational Humanities, etc.—scholarship involving digital tools and resources has an important and vital place in a research institution. The Department of Classics and Letters at the University of Oklahoma unequivocally supports efforts to advance the field and encourages faculty members to pursue digital scholarship if their research leads them in that direction.

Although there are some outlets for peer review of digital projects, not every digital project is suitable for those publications. Moreover, the criteria for assessment are not broadly applicable, since the task is rarely as straightforward as critiquing the quality of an argument and its supporting scholarship. Rather, digital scholarship often takes the form of research objects such as computer programs for acquiring, processing, and analyzing data, or curated databases. The impact of these research objects may be difficult to quantify, given that their use may be limited to a specific context or research problem. Accordingly, different measures of success must be taken into account, and they must be selected and applied appropriately to individual projects. Nevertheless, scholars who work in digital scholarship are producing and refining peer-review strategies appropriate to digital projects, and the views and policies of learned societies in this regard continue to evolve. Accordingly, the Department of Classics and Letters will review new standards as they develop and adopt them where appropriate.

In recognition of these issues and the fact that, the Department of Classics and Letters provides this document as guidance to individual faculty members and the colleagues who must assess their work.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy, “digital scholarship” applies not to online journals for publishing articles, reviews, and other traditional forms of scholarship, since the existing policy on tenure and promotion covers those forms of publication. Rather, “digital scholarship” applies to work in which the use of technology is central to the project’s mission. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Computer code for analyzing or manipulating data

- Applications for facilitating the use of datasets
- Databases created and curated with a view to supporting research
- Visualizations of information
- Data models for encoding and representing information.

Assessment

Above all, digital scholarship should be evaluated in the context for which it was designed, developed, and executed. Unfortunately, owing to many factors beyond the control of individual scholars (e.g., ongoing development and lifecycles of computer languages and technology in general), the nature of some digital scholarship is ephemeral. Accordingly, reasonable steps must be taken by scholars to ensure that their work is documented and made available in an accessible and stable format, at least during a period specified and mutually agreed upon by the faculty member and the members of Committee A for evaluation. It is the responsibility of the department to take this into consideration and to evaluate scholarship in a timely manner.

Digital scholarship may be documented in a variety of ways, not all of them appropriate for every project. If the project involves the use of existing tools and methods to analyze data, results of the study should be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. In the case of digital tools and resources, it is expected that computer code will be documented according to the standards and practices in place for a given platform, and that instructions will be provided for installation and use. Documentation of the related technologies and their potential effect on the lifecycle of the project should also be included. As for the purpose and results of the project, opportunities for submitting them to a peer-reviewed publication should be pursued, but the overriding concern is that documentation about the project should be openly available and accessible (e.g., in a code repository or on a project's blog).

The department recognizes that making a project available in an accessible and stable format depends on many factors beyond the control of any one person. Planned obsolescence, after all, is a reality of hardware and software development, and a scholar should not be penalized if a product ceases to function as expected because of the development cycle of a related technology. This is especially the case for projects dependent on grant funding for continued development. However, if a faculty member wishes to receive credit for digital work, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to work with Committee A to agree upon a window of time for review of a project in a functional, accessible environment by members of the department and, in some cases, external reviewers. Faculty members engaging in digital scholarship are also expected to consult the staff of relevant units (e.g., OU Libraries, the OU Supercomputing

Center for Education and Research) in the university regarding long-term storage and availability of their projects.

Criteria for Evaluation

The department recognizes that the criteria for evaluating digital scholarship are different for each project. Faculty members working on digital scholarship should consult Committee A early in the development of a project and establish mutually agreed upon goals and criteria for assessment. Those criteria **must** include the following:

- Peer review of the work, whether in the form of a published review or an independent assessment by reviewers identified by the faculty member and the department.
- Conference presentations and/or publications related to the work.
- Use of internationally accepted coding and encoding standards for data and metadata.
- Openness and accessibility of data.
- Evidence of a strategy for long-term accessibility and use.

Examples of other factors that may be considered include:

- Grant funding received.
- Collaboration with scholars at OU and/or other institutions.
- Contribution to the field.
- Technical innovation.
- Pedagogical applications.
- Evidence of adoption and use by members of the scholarly community and/or wider public.

The procedure shall be to document the agreed upon criteria for evaluation in a letter to the faculty member from the members of Committee A. Those criteria, along with a copy of this policy, will also be shared with any external referees invited to review the project.

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA
College of Arts and Sciences

TO: Sam Huskey, Chair
Department of Classics and Letters

FROM: Kelvin White, Associate Dean

DATE: September 6, 2018

RE: Digital Scholarship Policy for the Department of Classics and Letters

The Provost has reviewed and approved the Digital Scholarship Faculty Personnel Policy for the Department of Classics and Letters on September 6, 2018.

Development of these policies is an arduous but important task. Both the Provost and College extend thanks to everyone in the department who contributed to the process.

KLW/sb

Attachment

pc: file