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Sustaining Digital Humanities Training Through THATCamp

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Summary

The THATCamp program has offered low-cost digital methods training to hundreds of humanities scholars. Largely as a result of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's 2010-2012 investment of \$260,000, THATCamp has succeeded at providing digital humanities training at scale to the scholarly community, serving more than 4000 participants since its inception in 2008. This is more than double the ambitious target of 1750 participants set in the original proposal, and it means that the overall cost of the program to Mellon has been less than \$75 per participant. We are asking for two further and final years of funding to ensure that THATCamp survives and flourishes for many years to come. With Mellon's help, we will support at least thirty more THATCamps, establish a volunteer THATCamp Coordinating Council to assume the responsibilities of the THATCamp Coordinator, review and expand the documentation available for THATCamp organizers and participants, add community strengthening social networking features to the THATCamp website, and hold an event called THATCamp Leadership for the purpose of obtaining support for the THATCamp model from university administrators and scholarly association heads.

Background

In 2008, THATCamp (The Humanities and Technology Camp) was started as an unfunded experiment aimed at lowering barriers to participation in academic conferences and reducing the financial and administrative costs of scholarly communication. In 2009, THATCamp's name and "unconference" model were extended to several regional events: these events were organized by local volunteers committed to the new concept and were paid for mainly through small donations. Since 2010, with generous assistance from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, THATCamp has added a core digital methods training component to its model and has expanded to include nearly seventy events—all organized and funded locally—in nearly twenty different states and more than a dozen different countries.

The THATCamp program has provided digital methods training at scale to hundreds of humanities scholars. As a result of Mellon's support for a Regional THATCamp Coordinator and modest support for graduate students and early-career scholars in the form of "micro-fellowships" of \$500, THATCamp has served upwards of 4000 participants. This is more than double the ambitious target of 1750 participants set in the original proposal, and it means that the overall cost of the program to Mellon has been less than \$75 per participant.

THATCamp is a signature project of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University. Through projects like THATCamp, CHNM combines cutting-edge digital media with the latest and best scholarship to promote an inclusive understanding of history and the humanities. THATCamp is the primary vehicle for advancing CHNM's mission of using digital media and computer technology to democratize history and the humanities—to incorporate multiple voices, reach diverse audiences, and encourage popular participation in presenting and preserving the past—among the community of professional scholars.

Since 1994, CHNM has been a leader in improving students' understanding of history and the humanities through digital media, in building digital archives and mounting online exhibitions, and in developing software tools for scholarship. CHNM maintains a stable of very popular and award-winning educational projects such as *History Matters* <historymatters.gmu.edu>, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution* <chnm.gmu.edu/revolution>, and the *National History Education Clearinghouse* <teachinghistory.org>. CHNM has assembled and actively maintains several large-scale and award-winning digital archives and online exhibitions, including the *September 11 Digital Archive* <911digitalarchive.org>, the *Bracero History Archive* <braceroarchive.org>, the *Papers of the War Department 1784-1800* <wardepartmentpapers.org>, and *Gulag: Many Days, Many Lives* <gulaghistory.org>. CHNM has also emerged as a leading developer of free tools and software for scholars and students in all humanities disciplines. CHNM currently heads two major open-source software development projects: Zotero <zotero.org>, a free, open-source, easy-to-use research tool that helps researchers gather and organize resources, and then annotate, organize, and share the results of their research and Omeka <omeka.org>, an open-source web publishing tool oriented toward the needs of cultural heritage institutions. In 2010, CHNM's websites had almost 500 million hits and nearly 20 million unique users, and its software tools are used by more than a million scholars and students every day.

CHNM has conducted more than \$20 million in grant-funded research, boasts an annual budget of nearly \$3 million, and enjoys a nearly \$3 million endowment (achieved with the assistance of two Challenge Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities), all of which guarantee its long-term stability. CHNM's work has been recognized with major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Department of Education, the Library of Congress, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Historic Records and Publication Commission, and the Sloan, Mellon, Hewlett, Rockefeller, Gould, Delmas, and Kellogg foundations. CHNM has won (or shared) the American Historical Association's James Harvey Robinson Prize an unprecedented four times, the National Council on Public History's Public History Project Award, and the Mellon Award for Technology Collaboration, among other honors. CHNM's staff of more than forty people (including more than a dozen with doctoral degrees) includes those skilled in all aspects of digital humanities—database architecture, software engineering, web development and design, preservation, and archiving.

CHNM's longstanding position of leadership in digital humanities and its open, democratic, public mission has allowed it to serve as a hub for the community of scholars working at the intersection of technology and the humanities. It is this unique position that has enabled THATCamp to grow and flourish under CHNM's direction. We have been gratified to serve this coordinating function, but we are keenly aware of the need for THATCamp to become an entirely self-sustaining entity. Fortunately, the ingredients for self-sufficiency are already in place. From the beginning, THATCamp has been a decentralized, largely locally organized and funded, effectively viral "movement" more than a CHNM-based project. Over the next two years, we hope to strengthen THATCamp's distributed social, technical, and management infrastructure to allow THATCamp to flourish in the eventual absence of CHNM's (and Mellon's) direct involvement.

Rationale

In the 2010-2012 Mellon grant narrative for "Digital Methods Training at Scale: Leveraging THATCamp through a Regional System," we promised four key outcomes: to facilitate at least twenty-five THATCamps, to create a comprehensive package of instructional documentation and technology resources for THATCamp organizers ("THATCamp-in-a-box"), to design and foster a program of basic training in digital humanities for THATCamps ("BootCamp"), and to award one hundred micro-fellowships. Here we offer a brief summary of our progress to date and outline our future plans to build on our successes and address our missteps in each of these four areas.

Regional THATCamps

As of this writing, there have been or will be at least forty-six THATCamps in the period covered by Mellon's support from April 1, 2010 to March 31st, 2012, a number nearly double our ambitious goal of twenty-five. Each THATCamp averaged 70 participants. In evaluations, 57% of respondents strongly agreed and 38% of respondents agreed that "Overall, I found the THATCamp useful." In other words, 95% of respondents found THATCamp useful, while only 5% were neutral or did not find it useful. (The full set of evaluations is publicly available at <http://j.mp/thatcampresults>.) Responding to the question "What worked about the THATCamp, overall?" it was clear that what people most liked was the opportunity to have

informal discussions with other THATCamp participants, although workshops were also welcomed. In a word cloud generated from responses to that question, the most prominent nouns were “people, session(s), topics, [the] mix, discussion(s), format, ideas, participants, attendees, conversations, workshops” with prominent adjectives being “great, good, collaborative, open.” (See <http://www.wordle.net/show/wrdl/4465397/What_works_about_THATCamp>.) Responses to the question “What didn’t work about the THATCamp, overall, and how could it be improved?” showed less of a consensus, although by far the most common words were “session(s)” and “people,” suggesting that, as THATCamp organizer Matt Herbison said at THATCamp Philly, “You get out of THATCamp what you put into it.” The other common word in suggestions for improvement was “time,” and while some uses of this word were not meaningful (in phrases such as “some of the time”), some respondents did suggest shorter or longer sessions, fewer sessions at once, or different durations for THATCamp itself. (See <http://www.wordle.net/thumb/wrdl/4465536/What_didn%27t_work_about_THATCamp>.)

We therefore propose to support thirty THATCamps over the next two years, a number that allows for some lessening in the initial “THATCamp gold rush” and yet reflects our confidence that people will continue to volunteer to organize THATCamps at a higher rate than we initially expected. We also hope to keep THATCamp evaluations at or near their current high level, with at least 90% of respondents agreeing that THATCamp is useful for them.

THATCamp-in-a-box

We have also succeeded in our plans for “THATCamp-in-a-box” (our term for both the tools and the documents that help THATCamp organizers). As proposed, we have created an infrastructure to help organizers that includes the following:

- A website network that enables THATCamp organizers easily to set up a THATCamp website;
- Profiles of attendees listing research interests, social networking identities, and conference activities;
- Instructions on how to create a schedule;
- Four WordPress themes;
- An evaluation survey for any and all THATCamps; and
- Instructional documents to help THATCamp organizers.

This list represents the full range of tools and texts promised in our original proposal, with one exception: an attendee registration plugin was prototyped and abandoned based on organizer feedback which indicated that organizers would prefer to use a more flexible tool such as an embedded Google spreadsheet.

These tools have proven essential to local organizers’ ability to plan and carry out THATCamps. But now that it is built, we can more clearly see the gaps in our infrastructure. Perhaps most importantly, while most THATCamp participants do indeed have profiles on our WordPress website network, these profiles remain relatively unconnected, siloed on the various individual THATCamp sites. Similarly, session proposals and session notes on related topics at different THATCamps remain effectively separate, even when they are all stored on the THATCamp website network (which is not always the case: many session notes are collaboratively created in

Google Docs, for instance). We would therefore like to build a technical infrastructure that enables automated or semi-automated collection of all or most THATCamp documents, blog posts, tweets, images, and so forth, and we would further like that infrastructure to function more like a social network, allowing the 1,899 registered users on the THATCamp network to communicate more easily with one another and to learn more about one another than they can at present.

As for documentation, which was given less attention than tools in our original project plan, we have gone further than initially proposed in response to demands from local organizers. We now have what could be called a fair draft of a guide to planning and running a THATCamp and another fair draft of a guide to attending a THATCamp. Our website currently lists the following pages, and these constitute the majority of our THATCamp documentation:

- About
 - Contact
 - Blog
 - Calendar
 - Map
 - Wiki
 - Sponsors
- Go to a THATCamp
 - Propose a session
 - Get training at workshops
 - Apply for a fellowship
 - Record your experience
 - Give us feedback
- Help a THATCamp
 - Become a sponsor
 - Teach a workshop
 - Buy merchandise
- Plan a THATCamp
 - First of all
 - Register a new THATCamp
 - Design a logo
 - Build a website
 - Arrange a space
 - Set a date
 - Make a budget
 - Plan workshops
 - Before
 - Beef up your technology
 - Accept registrations
 - Make badges
 - Run through the checklists
 - During
 - Schedule sessions

- After
 - Evaluate how it went

Organizers have remarked that the documentation pages addressed to them are helpful, but they also continue to ask questions that could be resolved by better documentation. For instance, organizers would like more guidance on how to recruit sponsors, more precise instructions for setting up a THATCamp website, case studies from other THATCamps about such issues as how much food to order and where to purchase t-shirts, lists of appropriate e-mail lists where they can announce their event, and advice on what to say to participants about facilitating and taking notes on sessions. Moreover, our access statistics show that documentation pages addressed to participants are especially popular, and many THATCamp organizers choose (with our encouragement) to reproduce these pages with some modification on their own individual websites (see, for instance, THATCamp Kansas's use of an early version of the "Propose a session" page at <http://kansas2011.thatcamp.org/propose-a-session/>). Organizers have also asked for templates for communicating with participants and potential participants, and we have so far not provided these in any systematic way. We had not given much emphasis to documentation in our original grant, and to the extent we had proposed documentation, we proposed to write documentation for THATCamp organizers rather than for THATCamp participants. We would therefore like to expand what we have written for both organizers and participants, adding pages such as those we detail below in our project description.

Now that the basic infrastructure and documentation is in place, we can easily see what more we can do to cement the THATCamp community. We propose to concentrate our technological efforts on making the THATCamp website network more social in the specific ways we detail below. Furthermore, we would like to have the documentation written by the Regional THATCamp Coordinator evaluated by people who have organized THATCamps and people who have gone to THATCamps. If what we have now can be considered a fair draft, we would like to send those drafts out to readers for comments and suggested revisions. We would also like to include more concrete details from the actual experiences of THATCamp organizers and participants: much of this knowledge is available in fellows' reports and in organizers' blog posts, but it has not been gathered and edited. Our efforts to create a "THATCamp-in-a-box" over the past two years have yielded a well-used package, but experience has taught us that its contents need changing and more thorough integration, and that is what we are proposing here.

BootCamp

The "BootCamp" (digital methods training) portion of our work has certainly been successful, though not quite in the way we originally envisioned. Organizers proved more than willing to take on the additional work of arranging technology skills and digital methods workshops in conjunction with a THATCamp: 36 out of the 46 THATCamps held in the period of Mellon's support held a workshop series, and by far the majority of instructors volunteered their time. Of \$24,000 allotted for instructor stipends, we have spent only \$5,500, less than a quarter of what we budgeted for.

Attendees were very pleased with the workshops overall. In our evaluations, 48.5% of respondents strongly agreed and 40% of respondents agreed that the workshops were useful for them, meaning that only 10.5% of respondents were neutral or did not find them useful. (Again,

see the full set of evaluations at <http://j.mp/thatcampresults>.) Very early on, however, we realized that our plan of creating a highly specific and limited curriculum would greatly inhibit THATCamp organizers from drawing on local expertise and local desires, and so the BootCamp curriculum we developed was quite broad indeed, and was designed to allow THATCamp organizers a great deal of flexibility in what they chose to offer. (See the curriculum at <http://thatcamp.org/workshops>.) Still, many workshop offerings showed up at several THATCamps: subjects frequently offered included humanistic uses of mapping and geographic technologies; basic web publishing skills and systems such as HTML, CSS, and WordPress; and administrative topics such as project management and applying for grants. (See Appendix I for sample offerings.) Fairly recently, we decided to remove the “BootCamp” nomenclature from our website and to encourage THATCamp organizers to do likewise, since participants were almost inevitably confused about whether “BootCamp” and “THATCamp” were separate events or (as intended) part of the same event and sometimes even what kind of animal a “BootCamp” might be. We have therefore settled on the generic term “workshops” in place of “BootCamp.”

Before the emergence of THATCamp, digital humanities training and professional development was the province of the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO) and the Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI). ADHO holds an annual meeting where digital humanities projects are presented and discussed, but the costs of attending can be prohibitive for graduate students and for scholars whose institutions have initiated cutbacks in travel funding. Usually about 300-400 scholars and digital humanities professionals attend this meeting, which alternates annually between the U.S. and Europe, and whose registration fees range upwards to \$500. DHSI, which takes place annually at the University of Victoria, is similarly expensive, with registration fees running as much as \$1250 in addition to travel and lodging costs. Whatever additional training and development digital humanists have been able to find has been at his or her own institution or through their own diligent self-instruction.

The workshop component of THATCamp has made digital methods training much more accessible: there is nothing else quite like THATCamp, which is free to attend and, because events are planned and held locally, cheap to get to. Even though the workshop curriculum varies a great deal from THATCamp to THATCamp, there have never been so many chances as there are now to begin learning at least a little about digital humanities methods. We are certain that most THATCamp organizers will continue to arrange workshops in conjunction with their unconferences, that instructors will continue to volunteer, and that participants will continue to attend. THATCamps are now virtually expected to include workshops--workshops have become part of what a THATCamp *is*, and this welcome development has surely been due entirely to Mellon's support. Because workshops have become so ingrained into THATCamp, we feel that not much more is required to sustain them: they are almost entirely a voluntary and self-sustaining phenomenon. If THATCamps survive, they will have workshops.

Micro-fellowships

Similarly, although we will shortly meet our goal of awarding 100 micro-fellowships in the amount of \$500 to humanities scholars for the purpose of attending THATCamps with workshops, we think that little or no more work needs to be done to encourage people to obtain digital methods training at THATCamp. The average number of applicants for fellowships has been only 11 (see Appendix II). We originally planned on giving away four \$500 micro-

fellowships each for 25 THATCamps; instead, it has taken us 29 eligible THATCamps to award the entirety of our micro-fellowship funds, since for several THATCamps we did not have even four eligible applicants. The Regional THATCamp Coordinator did make sure that every eligible THATCamp website included a page about the micro-fellowship program, that every eligible THATCamp organizer publicized the micro-fellowship program, that the micro-fellowship program was publicized through the THATCamp newsletter and Twitter stream, and that the application process was clear and simple, but applicants for the program remained low.

It is true that we could redouble our efforts to attract applicants: we could conduct a broad publicity campaign aimed at the hundreds of scholarly associations in the humanities whose members might attend THATCamp, for instance, and we could make it extremely easy for scholars to apply by eliminating the separate fellowship application form and programming a fellowship application option into our registration plugin that would allow users to apply for a micro-fellowship simply by checking a box on their THATCamp application (as THATCamp New England did in both 2010 and 2011, which resulted in a high number of fellowship applicants). However, we believe that the low numbers of applicants to the program signal that the micro-fellowship program is not necessary, since THATCamps and their associated “BootCamp” workshops are free to attend and are increasingly likely to be located near participants’ homes, eliminating most of the need for assistance with registration and travel costs. Three graduate student micro-fellowship applicants for THATCamp New England 2011 made this point in their applications for funds:

- My understanding is that I can attend for free as a Public Humanities student at Brown. If that's not the case I do want to be considered for fellowships but if that IS the case then please don't consider me. :)
- I would be interested in funding, if, and only if, there is a cost for the BootCamp portion of the event. As a graduate student, money's a bit tight. However, if there is no cost for BootCamp, then please ignore this application for funding.
- Well, I'm a broke grad student who moved back in with his parents to go to school. That sums up most of the funding benefits. That said, I live locally so I don't need to fly anywhere.

With these considerations in mind, we even began offering \$250 fellowships that are even more “micro” than originally planned, hoping to attract applicants who needed only gas money and perhaps one night in a hotel. Of course, some participants do need to travel farther to attend a THATCamp, especially THATCamps in the Midwest and the increasingly popular themed THATCamps such as THATCamp Pedagogy. It is also true that some participants have mentioned that their institution’s travel policies are not flexible enough to include new-model meetings such as THATCamp: many scholars are only allotted travel funds for conferences at which they are presenting, which makes it difficult to justify travel to THATCamp, where there are no formal presentations (workshops perhaps excluded). And, to be sure, many of those who did receive micro-fellowship funds would not have attended THATCamp without that financial support.

Nevertheless, we believe that it would be better to phase out the micro-fellowship program now, with the guidance of the Regional THATCamp Coordinator, rather than ending that position and the micro-fellowship program all at once and leaving THATCamp organizers with no plan to replace (where necessary) Mellon's micro-fellowship support. Especially with our current emphasis on THATCamp sustainability, we think it would be better in the long run to encourage and teach THATCamp organizers how to obtain funding for any necessary micro-fellowships themselves from the many universities and scholarly organizations who are happy to support THATCamp.

Conclusion: Sustaining THATCamp

The wider scholarly establishment, certainly, has taken up the THATCamp model and, indeed, the THATCamp brand. Scholarly associations as varied as the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, the Digital Library Federation, the Oral History Association, the American Historical Association, and the Modern Language Association have added THATCamp-branded pre-conferences to their annual meeting programs, and inquiries about THATCamp and the unconference model continue to arrive from program committee members of associations such as the Society of Architectural Historians and the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition. Other organizations are building on the lessons of THATCamp to reform their core offerings: the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) recently awarded CHNM a contract to organize WebWise 2012 (IMLS's marquis event for its digital programs) largely on the strength of its association with THATCamp: IMLS's surveys show that WebWise attendees are increasingly clamoring for more collaborative learning and more interactivity on the program. Universities such as Brandeis, Emory, and the University of Washington have also been happy to sponsor THATCamps, not just with space and staff time, but also with funds; while organizations such as the Northeast Regional Computing Program and the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education have given funds and sent their members to THATCamps.

This high-level support for THATCamp's unconference model suggests that the innovations the program has introduced may easily be sustainable, and indeed, sustainability is at the core of our plans for THATCamp. CHNM, with its talent for creating self-sustaining, distributed communities like those surrounding Zotero and Omeka, has proven an ideal organization to foster a distributed-model program like THATCamp. Rather than forming a scholarly association that holds an annual meeting, we have built a structure that enables THATCamps to be held at almost any time in almost any place by almost anyone who can manage to raise \$4000. In difficult budgetary times, CHNM has hit upon an engaging and productive yet affordable and replicable model of humanities training and scholarly communication, and both scholars and administrators have embraced it. Most instructors volunteer to teach workshops at THATCamps without being paid for it, and the vast majority of participants come to THATCamp without even applying for Mellon micro-fellowship funds to defray their costs. The sheer number and geographic distribution of THATCamps have made instructor and attendee support from Mellon largely unnecessary. Indeed, lately we have been having trouble attracting applicants to the micro-fellowship program. When we started, a young faculty member at, say, Union College in Schenectady may have required external funding to get her to a THATCamp in Boston or Washington. Now she can simply drive ninety miles to THATCamp Pedagogy in Poughkeepsie.

The number and distribution of locally organized and financed events thus represents a big step toward sustainability for the entire THATCamp enterprise.

Still, because THATCamp is so decentralized, with so many diverse organizers and funders, if it is to survive, it must shore up its social network infrastructure to the point where it can do without any material investment by CHNM or Mellon. The need for instructor and participant support by Mellon has naturally diminished with the growth of local events. But the other primary object of Mellon support, the THATCamp Coordinator, is still very much in demand by the increasing numbers of local organizers. Our first grant grew THATCamp to the point where individual micro-fellowships have become largely obsolete. If awarded, our second grant will aim to strengthen the community support systems (the THATCamp website, THATCamp listserv, organizer guides and documentation, a new volunteer coordinating council) and engender the kind of high-level institutional support (commitments from local organizers' deans, provosts, and executive directors) necessary to make the THATCamp Coordinator similarly unnecessary. By building an even stronger distributed network of support for THATCamp organizers and by shoring up awareness and support of the model from university and scholarly association leadership, we think we can achieve our goal of making THATCamp a permanent fixture of the scholarly communication landscape and a new model for how to sustain productive, decentralized academic communities.

Project Description and Outcomes

First and foremost, we must make sure that THATCamps already planned for 2012 and beyond are successful. A dozen THATCamps are already planned for after Mellon's funding is due to cease, and new THATCamps are proposed almost weekly. The continued success local events is the cornerstone of THATCamp's sustainability—momentum is extremely important in attracting new and repeat volunteer organizers and attendees—and in the near term the THATCamp Coordinator must continue to play an active supporting role.

In the meantime, however, we will conduct a comprehensive review of the resources we have built for local organizers, including the THATCamp website and the documentation we have written, and embark on a concerted program of improvement all our web tools and our web documentation. The documentation and website are the key resources that will provide the THATCamp community—to be led at grant's end by a newly formed THATCamp Coordinating Council—with the tools necessary to continue its voluntary work after the position of Regional THATCamp Coordinator has been phased out. First, we will gather, revise, expand, reconfigure and repackage the textual and other information resources the community has created and make sure the new documentation package is disseminated widely in multiple formats for maximum accessibility and usability. Second, it is also crucial that the THATCamp community and Coordinating Council have the technology tools they will need to be able to talk and work collaboratively without central administration. To that end, we will build a new messaging platform and social network built on THATCamp's existing website infrastructure.

Finally, sustainability will depend on solidifying burgeoning interest among higher level university administrators and scholarly association leadership, the decision makers who will provide the modest but necessary support for future THATCamps: space, funding, and above all, understanding of and enthusiasm for the THATCamp model. Here we will host an event called

“THATCamp Leadership” whose purpose will be to consolidate support for THATCamp among higher education leaders—especially leaders at the home institutions of our local organizers. THATCamp Leadership will aim to show these decision makers, many of them unfamiliar with the unconference model, how THATCamp works and the kind of productive dialog it supports by bringing them to an actual THATCamp. Rather than telling them about the virtues of THATCamp, we will show them by making THATCampers of them. Our expectation is that, when a local organizer approaches his dean or the executive director of his membership association with a request for support for a second, third, or fourth year of THATCamp, that dean or director will be more likely to provide the modest resources required if she has attended and understands what THATCamp is.

Support for these key sustainability measures—1) ensuring the success of THATCamps already planned for the coming months, 2) creating a THATCamp Coordinating Council, 3) improving THATCamp resources, 4) building tools to sustain the wider THATCamp community, and 5) creating commitment among leaders in higher education—is the subject of this proposal. With Mellon’s continued support, over the next two years we will strive to ensure that THATCamp flourishes for many years to come.

Outcomes

1) *Thirty additional THATCamps* – Through the continued efforts of Dr. French, Regional THATCamp Coordinator, we will facilitate at least thirty THATCamps, serving at least 1500 participants over the course of the two-year grant period. Workshops at these THATCamps will continue to provide digital methods training at scale to the community of humanities scholars. The Regional THATCamp Coordinator will also continue to gather and analyze evaluations of and reports from these events.

2) *THATCamp Coordinating Council* – Over the course of the grant period, the Regional THATCamp Coordinator will recruit organizers and enthusiastic participants from previous THATCamps to help ensure the continuance of THATCamp. Specifically, she will prepare the community to be managed by a new “THATCamp Coordinating Council.” The Regional THATCamp Coordinator will invite the community of local THATCamp organizers to choose six or more of their number to comprise this executive body, which will also include Drs. French and Scheinfeldt (ex officio), and which will include at least one representative from outside North America who will agree to support non-U.S., non-Anglophone THATCamps. This council would replace the Regional THATCamp Coordinator, performing such functions as answering questions about THATCamp, moderating forums, creating and maintaining documentation, and setting what little THATCamp policy is needed. The council would communicate frequently online and might meet once every year via Skype or a similar virtual conferencing technology, eliminating the need for financial support to enable face-to-face meetings. THATCamp, as a movement, is already lightly administered and highly decentralized: the Regional THATCamp Coordinator has not so much directed the initiative as she has supported it. We would be careful to retain these features of THATCamp in the creation of the Coordinating Council, since THATCamp’s identity has been based on its independence from traditional organizational structures. The THATCamp Coordinating Council will therefore be made up of enthusiastic volunteers—drawn from the knowledgeable ranks of past local organizers—who are willing to

share governance and who will commit to finding other enthusiastic volunteers to replace themselves when necessary.

3) *Comprehensive THATCamp documentation* – With part-time help from one or more assistants drawn from the THATCamp community, we will expand, consolidate, and make more accessible the various guides, checklists, and how-to materials developed both centrally and by local organizers with an eye towards publishing a soup-to-nuts, print-on-demand guide to hosting an unconference. These materials will provide the accessible source of information future organizers will need to plan and carry out a THATCamp in the absence of the Regional THATCamp Coordinator. The engagement of one or more community documentation coordinators in this effort will further re-orient THATCamp away from CHNM and the Regional THATCamp Coordinator and towards the decentralized THATCamp community.

The past two years have given us a much better sense of how important documentation is for those who are interested in organizing or going to a THATCamp. The unconference model is difficult to explain to scholars and students who are used to traditional conferences, and many (even most) of those who are interested in organizing a THATCamp have never organized a professional event of that scale before, let alone one whose format needs explaining to potential participants. We had not, in our original grant proposal, realized the depth of that need for help and advice, and therefore we did not plan sufficiently for that effort. By now we already know of many examples of needed documentation: a simple checklist for THATCamp participants telling them how to prepare for their unconference, email templates for organizers faced with such tasks as seeking sponsorships or calling for session proposals, guidelines for scholarly associations interested in hosting a THATCamp, a bibliography of blog posts written by THATCamp organizers, and more. We also know that some organizers and participants have asked for documentation in multiple formats: short screencasts and videos of such difficult-to-describe THATCamp features as Dork Shorts (the THATCamp community's name for lightning talks) and impromptu scheduling, for instance, and documents optimized for mobile phones and tablets, which are much in use at THATCamp. During the grant period, we will create these items as well as surveying the community to help determine more systematically what other support materials would be helpful for both organizers and participants. We are also interested in inviting the THATCamp community, beyond our paid community documentation coordinators, to help create these materials, and to contribute specific examples and case studies from their own experience.

4) *Socially-networked THATCamp website* – To increase collaboration and mutual support among local organizers and to improve communication, information sharing, and social networking amongst them, we will make a set of improvements to the thatcamp.org <thatcamp.org> website. We are already hosting most of the local THATCamp websites through our WordPress Multisite installation at thatcamp.org. As one crucial community-building measure, we will employ the BuddyPress social-networking application for WordPress to link these websites and the communities that use them more productively, setting up the lines of mutual support upon which local organizers will rely in the absence of the Regional THATCamp Coordinator.

In addition to the core social networking features that a customized installation of BuddyPress will provide, we can also build other socially-oriented services, some of which participants and organizers have already asked for: a customized tag vocabulary to aggregate content from across diverse THATCamp sites, a group note taking environment, various Zotero groups for building shared resources, a bulletin board where those planning to go to a THATCamp can find roommates and rides, and photo galleries that aggregate pictures posted on such sites as Flickr, Picasa, yfrog, TwitPic, and elsewhere. Moreover, we will need to devote considerable effort to developing preservation strategies for THATCamp content, especially THATCamp content that does not reside on THATCamp servers. The THATCamp community currently uses services such as Twitter and Google Docs to communicate and collaborate, but these materials are uncertainly archived and sometimes difficult to find, dispersed as they are. Our goal will be to make as much THATCamp activity as possible easy to use at a THATCamp and easy to find thereafter, without losing the record.

5) *THATCamp Leadership event* – With an eye toward THATCamp’s sustainability, we will host one “THATCamp Leadership” event. This special, invitation-only THATCamp, organized and held at CHNM in October 2013, will bring senior officials (provosts, deans, and executive directors of scholarly associations) together with leading digital humanists who have organized THATCamps. This key meeting will expose higher education leaders—particularly those at the home institutions of existing local organizers—to the latest research in and particular demands of digital scholarship. At the same time, this meeting will educate digital humanists about the concerns and priorities of the administrators they are increasingly calling on for support. Our hope is that these conversations will help advance broad understanding and support for digital humanities and for THATCamp.

More directly relevant to THATCamp’s long term sustainability, however, will be introducing university and scholarly association administrators to THATCamp’s unconference model and to the entrepreneurial local organizers in their charge. THATCamp Leadership will show decision makers—as no second hand report can—the scholarly energy THATCamp has brought to their campuses and annual meetings. It will show them the value of their initial investment (the few hundred dollars or provision of facilities) and encourage their continuing support. It will build relationships between them and their local organizers. THATCamp Leadership will not aim to exact promises from decision makers, but it will give them a better sense of the THATCamp value proposition and the extraordinary energy of the faculty, graduate students, or members who have organized them. We expect this will be enough to motivate some of them to make those promises themselves. At the very least, THATCamp Leadership will give the extraordinary efforts of local organizers the high level recognition they deserve.

Last but not least, THATCamp Leadership will provide the THATCamp team at CHNM an opportunity to meet with some of its most dedicated local volunteers and hammer out final plans for handing responsibility for THATCamp’s future over to its community.

Personnel

Tom Scheinfeldt (Primary Investigator) has overall responsibility for program vision and implementation and particular oversight of staffing, budgets, technology development, quality control, and THATCamp Leadership planning.

Amanda French (Regional THATCamp Coordinator) has primary responsibility for outreach and publicity, local organizer support and community building, documentation, website and social networking facilities, and program evaluation.

Boone Gorges (WordPress Consultant) has primary responsibility for implementing BuddyPress and other social technologies on the THATCamp website network.

Ammon Shepherd (Systems Administrator) has primary responsibility for ensuring the performance and security of the server that runs the THATCamp website network.

Jeny Martínez (Administrative Assistant) has primary responsibility for general administrative support and logistical support of THATCamp Leadership.

Timeline

We propose a period of two years for the project, beginning on April 1, 2012 and ending on March 31st, 2014.

April 2012 - June 2012

- Internal review of THATCamp planning documentation and website (Scheinfeldt, French, Gorges, Shepherd)
- Survey THATCamp community regarding technology and documentation needs (French)
- Develop technical specifications for improved and redesigned website and describe social network feature requirements (Scheinfeldt, French, Gorges, Shepherd)

July 2012 - September 2012

- Begin writing needed documentation (French, community documentation coordinators)
- Begin working on website improvements and social networking features (Gorges, Shepherd, web developer, web designer)
- Announce and publicize THATCamp Leadership (Scheinfeldt, French, Martinez)

October 2012 - December 2012

- Continue writing needed documentation (French, community documentation coordinators)
- Continue working on website improvements and social networking features (Gorges, Shepherd, web developer, web designer)
- Continue THATCamp Leadership publicity and outreach (Scheinfeldt, French, Martinez)

January 2013 - March 2013

- Complete and release new documentation (French, community documentation coordinators)
- Test and launch improved THATCamp.org website and social network (Gorges, Shepherd, web developer, web designer)
- First fifteen THATCamps completed (French)

April 2013 - June 2013

- Solicit THATCamp Coordinating Council volunteers (Scheinfeldt, French)
- Solicit user feedback on documentation and website (French)
- THATCamp Leadership planning and logistics (Scheinfeldt, French, Martinez)

July 2013 - September 2013

- Confirm appointments of THATCamp Coordinating Council members (Scheinfeldt, French)
- Revise documentation and improve website (bug fixes, etc.) according to user feedback (French, community documentation coordinators, web developer, web designer)
- Continue THATCamp Leadership planning (Scheinfeldt, French, Martinez)

October 2013 - December 2013

- Hold THATCamp Leadership (Scheinfeldt, French, Martinez)
- Convene first THATCamp Coordinating Council meeting at THATCamp Leadership (Scheinfeldt, French)

January 2014 - March 2014

- Plan and host two additional (virtual) THATCamp Coordinating Council meetings (Scheinfeldt, French)
- Final hand-off to THATCamp Coordinating Council (Scheinfeldt, French)
- Second fifteen THATCamps completed (French)

Intellectual Property

As in the past, any and all technology developed as part of this project, including original WordPress plugins and themes developed for thatcamp.org and any modifications to BuddyPress or other existing WordPress plugins and themes, will be released as open source software under the GNU General Public License, the same license as WordPress itself. The GNU General Public License is available at <http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/gpl.html> <<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/gpl.html>>. Each will be distributed freely on the THATCamp website, through GitHub, and via the central WordPress plugins directory, where they should attract a wide user base, not only among scholars, but among any group seeking lightweight, flexible, and open conference management tools. THATCamp documentation, including the print-on-demand guide, will be released under an open access *Creative Commons Attribution 3.0* license, whose stipulations can be read at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/us/> <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/us/>>

Reporting

Narrative and financial reports will be submitted jointly by Dr. Scheinfeldt and George Mason University's Office of Sponsored Programs on two occasions. We will submit a report by June 30, 2013 that covers the first half of the grant period for the period beginning April 1, 2012 and ending March 30, 2013. We will submit a final report by June 30, 2014, three months after the project's end on March 30, 2014. Key performance metrics will be numbers of THATCamps launched, numbers of scholars served, quantitative and qualitative assessments of the web tools and documentary materials, and outcomes and evaluations of THATCamp Leadership. Narrative

reports will also include comments on the project's actual expenses as compared to those in the original budget.

Budget Narrative

We request a total of \$267,456 for the two-year *Sustaining Digital Humanities Training Through THATCamp* project, comprising \$199,003 to support program personnel (including fringe benefits costs and personnel services contracts); \$11,685 for staff travel to THATCamps; \$45,720 to bring invited participants to THATCamp Leadership, and \$11,048 for meeting supplies and promotional materials. This request will fully cover the five deliverables described above, including all management, authoring, web design and development, and administrative costs. We have also earmarked some funds for our system administration, since the THATCamp website network has been increasing in size and complexity, demanding a higher level of support in that regard.

We have calculated costs for THATCamp Leadership as follows: The Bureau of Transportation Statistics estimates the average cost of airfare to Washington Dulles at \$464.57 (see <<http://www.bts.gov/xml/atpi/src/index100.xml>>); George Mason University allows \$226 in lodging costs to out-of-state travelers for the greater Washington DC area and Fairfax, VA (see <<http://fiscal.gmu.edu/Departments/Travel%20Office/Travel%20Docs/LodgingAndMealRates.pdf>>, although our experience suggests that significantly lower rates are obtainable); and George Mason University also allows \$71 in per diem rates for travelers (see the above source). We have allowed one day of per diem support for THATCamp Leadership participants, which will apply to their day of travel to the event. The rate given by George Mason University's Mason Inn for a "daily meeting package" that includes meeting space, audiovisual equipment, and breakfast and lunch is \$109 per participant plus a 20% administrative fee, for a total of \$7,848 (see <<http://www.acc-masoninnandconferencecenter.com/media/docs/georgeMason/CompletePackage2011CateringMenusTheMasonInnConferenceCenterandHotelwithbar.pdf>>).

We have used the same airfare and per diem rate for staff travel to THATCamps, and we have averaged the Virginia state maximum allowable lodging expense for Boston, Atlanta, Chicago, San Diego, and San Francisco to calculate a lodging cost of \$172 per night for staff travel to THATCamps. We received quotes from Fairfax Screen Printing for printing costs of THATCamp Leadership t-shirts at \$8 per t-shirt for 60 t-shirts and for 3,000 THATCamp stickers at \$.88 per sticker to be distributed to THATCamp organizers and participants. The cost of one 100-count package of Avery 2922 badges and badge holders is \$75.30 before taxes from avery.com, which we have rounded up to \$80.

Budget Line Item	Description	Number Project Years	Cost Calculation Methodology	Total Request
	Promotional Stickers	Two	Printing 3000 THATCamp and stickers (100 per THATCamp for 30 THATCamps)	\$2,640

At this funding level, we anticipate assisting at least thirty regional THATCamps serving seventy attendees each for a total of 2100 scholars served. This amounts to a cost to Mellon per attendee of less than \$130, with the strong likelihood that still more THATCamps will be held, lowering the average costs even more. Moreover, since our efforts in this period will be toward making THATCamp sustainable by a community led by the THATCamp Coordinating Council, this investment should bring dividends for years to come.

Appendix I: Sample curricula

See also the broad general curriculum outlined at <http://thatcamp.org/workshops>.

THATCamp Philly, September 2011

See also <<http://philly2011.thatcamp.org/bootcamps/>>

General Workshop One, 9:00AM-10:45AM

[*Data Manipulation for Non-Programmers*](#) (Dianne Dietrich, Cornell University)

Location: [Ullyot \(combined\) room](#)

We all have a ton of data, and in a lot of cases, we don't have the programming "power tools" to manage it quickly and effectively. Programming doesn't have to be hard, and it isn't just for [insert stereotype here]. Anyone can learn! This workshop will teach some basic scripting, but will also discuss how to use tools we all already have (Excel, common database programs, Yahoo! pipes, Google Refine, etc.) to make your data manageable.

Breakout Workshop A, 11:00AM-12:45PM

[*How to Get What You Want out of Oral Histories*](#) (Charlie Hardy, West Chester University)

Location: [Rohm and Haas room](#)

Oral histories are hard. Even the most honest interviewees have their own agendas about how they want to be remembered. At the same time, oral histories are often necessary to fill in holes in documentary and material records. Here are some good basic techniques for conducting oral histories that will get the results you want, and good things to think about when curating and preserving the records of oral histories.

Breakout Workshop B, 11:00AM-12:45PM

[*Making Content Shine Online with Omeka*](#) (Amanda French, George Mason University; Rebecca Goldman, Drexel University)

Location: [Franklin \(combined\) room](#)

Why doesn't my page look like the pretty ones on the Omeka website? Does Omeka now mean that I have an image repository? What is Dublin Core, and how does it relate to my materials? How do I re-purpose the metadata that I already have? During this hands-on workshop, you will work with your existing Omeka site or build a new one, and work out some of the finer points of how to make Omeka do what you want by installing plugins, customizing themes, and building exhibits. **Please come with a functioning [Omeka installation](#) on your own server space to which you have FTP access, and bring a laptop with an FTP client.** We will have a few Omeka installations set up for people to work with, but it will be easiest if you have Omeka installed already in your own environment.

Breakout Workshop C, 11:00AM-12:45PM

[*Making Your Data Web-Ready — Intro to XML*](#) (Terry Catapano, Columbia University; Jordon Steele, Johns Hopkins University)

Location: [Ullyot South room](#)

It was a wise information professional who once said "structured data is the only useful data there is." This workshop will explore this statement, explore what structured data can do for your

research (or the materials in your custody), and give a brief overview to the tenets of XML. We will then go on to explain TEI, EAD and MODS, how they're used, and when they're useful. We'll also talk about good tools to use for creating this data, and how to store and present it.

Lunch Jam 12:45PM-2:00PM

Location: [Ullyot \(combined\) room](#)

Everyone will have the opportunity to list a specific technical problem s/he is grappling with on the board. For example, this might include figuring out how to store GIS data, how to write a participant agreement for oral histories, or how to transform legacy data. Once we have a good number of problems on the board, everyone else will sign up to talk through or help with a particular problem over lunch.

General Workshop Two, 2:00PM-3:45PM

[Herding Cats: Project Management for Collaborative Work](#) (Delphine Khanna, Temple University)

Location: [Ullyot \(combined\) room](#)

How can you make sure that the project gets done when you're not the "boss" and you don't even work for the same institution? This workshop will give participants project management skills to help make sure that all stakeholders are heard, happy, involved and invested.

THATCamp Switzerland, November 2011

See also <<http://switzerland2011.thatcamp.org/program/>>

Knowledge Organization and Representation

Litlink et al.

Resp : Stefan A. Keller

Introduction to Digital Information Literacy

Bookmarking, Blogs, RSS Feeds, mailing lists.

Resp: Peter Haber

Swiss Digital Historical Landscape

Spotlights

Resp: Marco Majoleth; Enrico Natale

Individual Digital Preservation

Mails and Pictures

Resp: Alexandre Garcia

Bibliographical Management Software

Zotero

Resp: Frédéric Clavert

Science blogging for digital humanists

Who ? Why ? When ? Where ? and.... How?

Resp: Mareike König, Pierre Mounier, Aurélien Berra

Social Media for Scientific Research

Social Bookmarking, Twitter, Facebook.

Resp: René Schneider

The Future of the Digital Archives

Accessing genuine computer sources by “Emulation”

Resp: Patrick Kammerer

THATCamp Southeast, March 2011

See also <<http://southeast2011.thatcamp.org/bootcamp-se>>

Digital Humanities Project Track (30 people, laptops required)

Visualizing Time and Space with Simile Widgets and Google: In this session, you’ll learn to build dynamic, interactive geospatial timelines using some simple tools: basic HTML, Google Docs, and the Simile Widgets. No previous coding experience is necessary!

The Civil War Papers Project: Learn about digital scholarship by encoding, geolocating, and then presenting a page from a Civil War-era letter or diary on a site you create together. Participants will be credited on the website.

Intro to Encoding Texts: Encoding texts allows you to do amazing things by making them accessible and searchable. You will learn how to mark up text using the TEI encoding scheme.

Intro to GIS: Maps can reveal spatial and temporal relationships that transform your scholarship. In this workshop you’ll learn how to use Google Earth to tie artifacts to their associated locations.

Presenting Research on the Web: You’ll learn how to put all your work together by presenting text, maps, and images on one interactive website.

Programming Track (15 people, laptops required)

Introduction to Programming I, using Python: In this session, you’ll learn the basics of programming using Python. Using the interactive shell or a simple text editor you will move from the very simple “hello world” script up through simple parsing and manipulation of XML files.

Introduction to the Django Framework using Python: In this session, you will learn the basics of using the Django Framework to rapidly develop simple web applications. The session will cover the basic design of Models, rapid access to the application through the Administration Module and creation of various views for a simple Poetry Portal.

Introduction to Content Management Systems: What are the advantages and disadvantages to different content management systems? Is there something that one can do and the others can’t?

What tasks are particular CMSes designed for? You'll learn about the ins and outs of WordPress, Drupal, and Omeka.

Creating a Web Presence for Yourself or Your Projects: You know you're supposed to take control of your online presence, but how? This workshop will cover basics like professionalizing your Facebook profile, using RSS feeds, and why anyone would bother with Twitter. We'll also touch on creating your own professional-looking website.

Pedagogy Track (16 people)

Teaching with the Cloud: In this session, you'll learn about collaboration and presentation work tools that live online "in the cloud" and their use in teaching. We'll cover include PBWorks, Blogger, and GoogleDocs.

Visualizing Course Content: There are many tools you can use to build a visual component to course content. This session includes hands-on learning with Google Gadgets, Prezi, and Simile-powered timelines.

Engaging Students through Digital Storytelling: Discover how Digital Storytelling can be used to engage students differently. We'll discuss key elements of a successful digital story and explore using Camtasia and iMovie to create digital stories.

Introduction to Content Management Systems: What are the advantages and disadvantages to different content management systems? Is there something that one can do and the others can't? What tasks are particular CMSes designed for? You'll learn about the ins and outs of WordPress, Drupal, and Omeka.

Creating a Web Presence for Yourself or Your Projects: You know you're supposed to take control of your online presence, but how? This workshop will cover basics like professionalizing your Facebook profile, using RSS feeds, and why anyone would bother with Twitter. We'll also touch on creating your own professional-looking website.

Appendix II: Micro-fellowship Applications

THATCamp	Number of applicants
Canberra 2010	13
New Mexico 2010	6
Bay Area 2010	7
New England 2010	29
Pacific Northwest 2010	10
Chicago 2010	23
Virginia 2010	17
SoCal 2011	7
Southeast 2011	18
Florence 2011	19
Melbourne 2011	2
Texas 2011	10
Jersey Shore 2011	9
Great Lakes 2011	2
Liberal Arts Colleges 2011	8
University of Western Ontario 2011	7
Center for History and New Media 2011	13
Kansas 2011	4
Philly 2011	2
Bay Area 2011	9
Greater Toronto Area 2011	3

Canberra 2011	5
New England 2011	50
Pedagogy 2011	18
Publishing 2011	3
Switzerland 2011	4
Pacific Northwest 2011	10
Madrid 2011	1
Games 2012	21
TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS	330
TOTAL NUMBER OF THATCAMPS	29
AVERAGE # OF APPLICANTS	11.4