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Abigail Norris

*University of Mississippi*, [abigailn@olemiss.edu](mailto:abigailn@olemiss.edu)

Adam Clemons

*University of Mississippi*, [jaclemon@olemiss.edu](mailto:jaclemon@olemiss.edu)

Alex Watson

*University of Mississippi*, [apwatson@olemiss.edu](mailto:apwatson@olemiss.edu)

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## Scanning the Digital: Using Survey Data to Support Digital Scholarship Initiatives at the University of Mississippi

Abigail Norris<sup>a</sup> ([abigailn@olemiss.edu](mailto:abigailn@olemiss.edu)), Adam Clemons<sup>a</sup> ([jaclemon@olemiss.edu](mailto:jaclemon@olemiss.edu)), & Alex Watson<sup>a</sup> ([apwatson@olemiss.edu](mailto:apwatson@olemiss.edu))

<sup>a</sup>The University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi, USA

### ABSTRACT

Digital scholarship (the use of digital technology in research or teaching applications) is a new and growing field but many Mississippi libraries, including the University of Mississippi, are not officially supporting digital scholarship. To change this, librarians at the University of Mississippi sent out an online survey to faculty, staff, postdocs, and graduate students in order to gauge their interest in and experience with digital scholarship methods and tools and how the library can best support digital scholarship on campus. The results showed a wide variety of interest and expertise across several fields, mostly in the humanities, with important data and suggestions for future digital scholarship initiatives. The authors hope to use this data to improve digital scholarship support at the university library, and to offer it as a template to other libraries interested in digital scholarship that do not yet have a formal program of support.

### KEYWORDS

digital scholarship, digital humanities, digital initiatives, outreach, library services

### INTRODUCTION

Lippincott (2017) defined digital scholarship as the “use of digital tools and methods to support research, teaching, content creation, and stewardship” (p. 51). She further explained that this multifaceted area includes “digitization and the use or creation of digitized collections; data acquisition, description, analysis, visualization, stewardship and curation; digital content creation and sharing, including digital publishing; GIS and mapping; text mining and analysis; and the hardware, software, and infrastructure to support all of the above” (p. 51). Digital scholarship has become a pervasive concept in higher education libraries, with many institutions benefiting from strong buy-in from their schools in the form of resources and dedicated personnel. As with any paradigm shift, however, some institutions may find themselves behind in terms of funding, staffing, or other essential resources—despite a strong interest in digital scholarship or digital humanities from their communities. This raises an important question: Where, and how, can librarians begin building infrastructure and services for digital scholarship or digital humanities in the absence of dedicated funding, staffing, or administrative support?

A group of librarians from the University of Mississippi Libraries set out to answer these questions as part of their work on the Digital Scholarship Committee (DSC). DSC is made up of members from across library departments including Research and Instruction, Metadata and Digital Initiatives, Archives and Special Collections, and Library Administration. Formed to support and promote digital scholarship on campus, the DSC:

- Provides functional expertise in the areas of data across the research life cycle, open access, copyright and author’s rights, and scholarly metrics and profiles.
- Provides support in the areas of digital science, scholarly publishing, and digital humanities.
- Actively looks to expand the Libraries’ expertise in emerging areas of digital scholarship both through its members and through assistance to individual librarians and assess the needs of the campus regarding support for digital scholarship (University of Mississippi Libraries, 2020).

Members of the DSC, including the authors, recently conducted a survey to identify stakeholders already working on digital projects on their own, as well as those who were interested but had no active projects. The results of this survey form the basis of this paper, which is organized into four distinct sections beginning with a literature review that contextualizes this research project within the larger scholarly conversation around best practices for supporting digital scholarship at academic institutions. Next, the methodology section outlines the survey's development process, from survey design to data collection and clean-up. The results and analysis section provides a review of the results of the survey including a breakdown of respondents' campus affiliation, their interest and/or experience with digital scholarship methods and tools, and what role, if any, they see the library playing in supporting digital scholarship on campus. This section also considers the implications of the collected responses, both individually and as a whole. In the final section, the authors provide recommendations for the library to implement based on survey results.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Since digital scholarship is a relatively new and emerging field, it should come as no surprise that research is limited on conducting surveys to gauge interest in and support for digital scholarship at academic institutions. In the last ten years, however, there have been a number of studies conducted by academic librarians that proved to be especially helpful in identifying best practices for developing a digital scholarship survey. The authors were especially interested in research from other institutions with little or no history of digital scholarship support. The remainder of this section will provide a chronological overview of the scholarship about supporting digital scholarship at other institutions that helped inform the present study.

Some of the earliest research on library support for digital scholarship came in the form of meta surveys. Bryson's SPEC Kit 326: Digital Humanities (2011) used a more restrictive definition of digital scholarship, limiting its scope to digital humanities only. Its questionnaire was a meta-survey, quizzing libraries instead of library users on their use of and support for digital humanities (Bryson, 2011). Bryson's findings indicated that library services were being provided on a provisional basis and that there was an increasing demand for these services. The survey also found that libraries engaged in self-assessment and that staff members desired to increase their available services. This desire has been echoed in many other publications in the proceeding decade. In a meta-survey two years later, for example, Vinopal and McCormick (2013) reported similar results to Bryson, highlighting library staff's problems with scalability and sustainability of digital scholarship resources. These early surveys provide both a baseline for later research and confirmed the authors' assumptions about the challenges of supporting digital scholarship at institutions with no history of such support.

In another early example of a similar approach, an audit on support for digital scholarship at the University of Pittsburgh, Brenner (2014) quizzed faculty about library support, using interviews rather than a survey. Faculty interviewees were selected based on their use of or interest in "digital technologies, computationally-supported investigation, or data-intensive research or teaching," and were therefore a more focused group than representatives of faculty interests at large (Brenner, 2014, p. 5). He found that faculty were enthusiastic about increased support for digital scholarship from the library, having worked and struggled to create a digital scholarship community of practice among themselves (Brenner). The faculty at Pittsburgh also demonstrated enormous variation in their needs, and many were unaware of the library's existing digital scholarship services. Through using interviews rather than a survey, the focus on improving library support for digital scholarship through gauging stakeholder opinions is one shared by the current project.

Lindquist et al. (2015), at the University of Colorado at Boulder, completed a campus assessment of digital humanities that included a survey administered to faculty and graduate students. The most useful feature of this approach to the current project was collecting data from a diverse group, including those who had indicated no interest in digital scholarship. The survey discovered key differences between established practitioners and campus as a whole: wider adoption of digital scholarship was stunted by lack of interest or perceived applicability, while lack of time, lack of access to technology

training, and lack of funding were the key obstacles for those already engaged in the area. Responses came from scholars in humanities, education, and engineering, with the most support in the arts and humanities: 17% of faculty surveyed in those areas responded positively, with History, Philosophy, and English standing out in particular. Finally, the "lack of a coherent community of practitioners" (Lindquist et al., 2015, para 19) was an issue also raised at Boulder, which led to lack of awareness of what resources already existed on the campus. Similar issues confronted the University of Mississippi group, particularly the lack of a coherent practitioner community and lack of perceived resources and support.

Three years later, other scholars at UC Boulder distributed a survey to 3,612 researchers in an attempt to capture a snapshot of their current digital scholarship (Eichmann-Kalwara et al., 2018). After receiving a 12.5% response rate, with 68% graduate students, 25% faculty, and the remainder from miscellaneous areas, the UC Boulder team found that they had the highest response rate from the sciences, 90% of which indicated current or previous use of digital research methods. Graduate students and faculty were interested in learning about new digital scholarship methods, tool selection, identifying funding opportunities, and data and project management (Eichmann-Kalwara et al.). Respondents also indicated interest in a variety of learning methods, including consultations, workshops, web-based resources, and fellowships and graduate assistantships (Eichmann-Kalwara et al.). The authors noted with some evident frustration that UC Boulder had already provided that digital scholarship support in the past), once again highlighting a lack of awareness of resources provided by libraries similar to what has been encountered at the University of Mississippi.

To prepare for the development of a digital scholarship center at Appalachian State University, Mitchem and Rice (2017) completed a faculty-only survey. This survey aimed to determine overall knowledge of digital scholarship and scholarly communications practices and to glean information on current projects, tool usage, and areas that needed support. After receiving only 58 responses, 8% of the total eligible faculty, the surveyors followed up with their local digital humanities working group about the climate in various departments. Their survey and climate results indicated that many faculty projects fell under the umbrella of digital scholarship, but faculty themselves did not define their undertakings as such (Mitchem and Rice). Furthermore, the survey uncovered an apparent lack of awareness regarding what constituted digital scholarship and a conflict in humanities areas between "traditional and new forms of scholarship" (Mitchem and Rice, 2017, p. 833). Forty percent of the 58 faculty used some sort of digital tool, while 43% were interested in learning more; when asked if they would join a workshop about classroom use of digital tools, 38% of Mitchem and Rice's faculty agreed, while 57% indicated interest but wanted more information, and 86% were interested in some form of support for publishing digital journal articles. The Appalachian State researchers concluded that the survey had shown that digital scholarship was practiced by a focused group, while a broader range of faculty expressed enough interest to warrant increased education on the topic; a similar insight for a group that also included faculty was the goal of the University of Mississippi project.

Lippincott's (2017) digital scholarship survey at Harvard used a preexisting pool of graduate students, departmental library liaisons, and direct invitations. An overwhelming majority of their responses were from the graduate student pool, with Arts and Sciences being by far the largest in terms of respondents. The survey found that 51% of their graduate students participated in some form of digital scholarship, and that a further 18% were interested in doing so, with only a few respondents remaining totally uninterested. The faculty responses (n=18) were perhaps too small to be meaningfully compared to the graduate student responses (n=230) in this case. This mixture of response types, albeit without the luxury of a preexisting survey pool to draw upon, was similar to what was hoped for with the University of Mississippi survey.

Finally, an internal survey by the Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology (2019) at Iowa State University presented a thorough data-gathering questionnaire on digital scholarship, digital humanities, and scholarly communications. Sending a mass direct email using addresses controlled by the university, they reached out to four distinct groups within their academic community: faculty, research staff, graduate students, and postdocs. The surveyors received responses from 18.4% of targeted individ-

uals. Contrary to similar surveys reviewed for this project, the Iowa State group had higher response rates from faculty (23.3%) than graduate students (16.8%), with the other two categories of postdocs (21.4%) and research staff (16.8%) falling somewhere in between.

In all of the aforementioned attempts at data gathering, respondents were asked how they were engaged in digital scholarship. The results showed that, while digital scholarship certainly was a broad and amorphous term, there is some cohesion across institutions. Forms of digital scholarship cited by three or more institutions were text mining and analysis, production and editing of audiovisual materials, data visualization, geospatial analysis, digital publication, machine learning and computational linguistics, and programming. Methods cited by at least two institutions were media analysis, digital archives and databases, and digital exhibit production. Respondents indicated interest in learning to use tools like Tableau, Plotly, Google Charts, Microsoft Excel, as well as coding languages like Python or R and mathematics tools like MATLAB and Mathematica. Lindquist et al. (2015) found that desire for experience in these areas was particularly high among graduate students. These commonalities between prior surveys helped to shape and guide the University of Mississippi's efforts in its survey, both in terms of content and execution.

In summary, this literature review finds that while campus surveys were part of an overall framework used at many institutions, previous surveys were often targeted toward existing digital scholarship centers or personnel, who were routinely used for survey purposes. Though relatively early in the process of building digital scholarship programs, most of the institutions had secured the infrastructure – funding, staff time, and access to tools – required to get their programs started. Conspicuously absent from the literature were any examples of institutional surveys conducted before they secured that infrastructure. As such, the present study, detailed below, both builds upon the existing body of scholarship covered in this section and fills an important gap in the literature.

## METHOD

Inspired by the scholarship referenced in the previous section, the University of Mississippi team built its survey to collect data for designing an implementation framework for the University and capturing a snapshot of whatever ad hoc activity was already taking place. Specific attention was also paid to the lack of digital scholarship infrastructure (staffing, funding, and support) at the University of Mississippi in general, with the hope that a survey would provide evidence of digital scholarship activity on campus.

The authors hoped that the survey would answer several questions:

- How much interest in digital scholarship is there on campus?
- What types of digital scholarship research methods or tools are being used on campus?
- Are there any digital scholarship research methods or tools that campus users would like to learn more about?
- What is the level of expertise of campus users with digital scholarship research methods and tools?
- How much support, if any, has campus provided to those interested in digital scholarship?
- What support or resource(s) can the library provide to those interested in digital scholarship?

The online survey, built on the Qualtrics platform, was designed with these questions in mind. A user consent form was included at the beginning of the survey that asked each participant to acknowledge that they were over the age of 18 and confirm their understanding that the survey was voluntary and confidential. The survey questions fell into three broad categories: university affiliation of each participant, including department as well as research and teaching focus; participant experience with digital scholarship for research and teaching; and participant opinions on how the library can best support digital scholarship on campus. A recruitment script was also developed that served as an invitation to participate in the survey along with a description of its purpose. Both the survey and the recruitment script were sent to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Mississippi for ap-

proval, which was received in mid-February 2021. With IRB approval in-hand, the next step was distributing the survey across campus. Calls for participation were sent to the campus community using UM Today, a daily, campus-wide email newsletter. Additionally, library liaisons were provided with the recruitment script and asked to distribute it to their respective departments. The survey was open for a period of approximately six weeks, from mid-March until late April 2021.

Processing survey responses began in early summer 2021. Cleaning up the raw data included removing time stamps and other information not directly relevant to the project's scope. The authors also disaggregated data where multiple selections could be made in response to a single question.

Once the process of data clean-up was complete, the authors added qualitative coding to open response fields. The coding process was independently performed ahead of time to fulfill the requirements of an inter-rater reliability experiment (Gwet, 2014). Once the independent coding was complete, the authors met to review and compare codes. The majority of independent coding resulted in high inter-rater reliability thus establishing controlled coding vocabulary to the responses in the open response fields. This vocabulary was essential to categorizing and sorting open responses for data visualization purposes. Once the data clean-up and qualitative tagging was complete, the authors used Tableau Public software to generate data visualizations of the survey findings.

## **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

For the semester in which the survey was administered (spring 2021), the University of Mississippi employed 3,272 people. Of these employees, 1,181 (36%) were current, full-time faculty members and 2,091 (64%) were full or part-time staff members. Additionally, there were 46 post docs and approximately 2,000 graduate students. Combined, the total possible population of the survey target audience was approximately 5,318.

Overall, the response rate of the campus community excluding undergraduates was less than one percent. When disaggregated along university affiliation lines, a slightly higher response rate among faculty members (4%) is detectible. While these response rates were low, the survey was designed for those who had some level of interest in or experience with digital scholarship. As a result, data was collected using convenience sampling, a method of sampling where respondents are "convenient" and there is no pattern in acquiring survey responses (Galloway, 2005). This approach allowed individuals who saw the survey invitation to self-select based on their awareness of, interest in, or experience with digital scholarship methods and tools and their willingness to participate in the survey. Selectively targeting respondents with some level of interest in or experience with digital scholarship outweighed any fears of convenience sampling or the high likelihood of bias (Galloway, 2005). Moreover, the authors used descriptive statistics to analyze the data collected and were not interested in making inferential claims from the data such as identifying patterns or making predictions, testing hypotheses, or assessing whether the data was otherwise generalizable to the broader campus population.

From this pool of potential survey respondents, 79 members of the campus community participated in the survey. Of these, five previewed the survey but did not progress any further, one did not consent to the terms, and six did not answer any questions. Participants were asked to disclose their departmental affiliation and role at the university (faculty, staff, post-doctoral researcher, or other). Forty-eight (73%) were current faculty members, 11 (17%) were graduate students, two (3%) were staff members, and five (7%) were categorized as "other," a mixture of retired faculty, individuals who were both graduate students and staff, and undergraduate students. No post-docs participated. After completing affiliation questions, 46 participants continued the survey. The results of this study are based on the responses of this core group, as seen in Tables 1, 2, and 3:

**Table 1.** Core Group of Participants by Department Affiliation

School or Unit	Department	Total
Academic Support	Academic Innovations Group	1
Academic Support	Office of Global Engagement	1
School of Engineering	Civil Engineering	1
College of Liberal Arts	Art and Art History	2
College of Liberal Arts	English	10
College of Liberal Arts	History	10
College of Liberal Arts	Modern Languages	7
College of Liberal Arts	Philosophy and Religion	4
College of Liberal Arts	Political Science	3
College of Liberal Arts	Theatre and Film	1
College of Liberal Arts	Writing and Rhetoric	4
Unknown	Unknown	2
Total:		46

**Table 2.** Core Group of Participants by University of Mississippi Affiliation

Faculty	Graduate Student	Staff	Other
35	10	0	1

**Table 3.** Core Group of Participants by University of Mississippi Affiliation and Department Affiliation

School or Unit	Faculty	Graduate Student	Other
Academic Innovations Group	1		
Office of Global Engagement	1		
Civil Engineering		1	
Art and Art History	2		
English	2	8	
History	9	1	
Modern Languages	7		
Philosophy and Religion	4		
Political Science	3		
Theatre and Film	1		
Writing and Rhetoric	4		
Unknown	1		1*
Total:	35	10	1

\*self-identified as a Civil Engineering Emeritus Faculty

### Digital Scholarship Interest and Experience

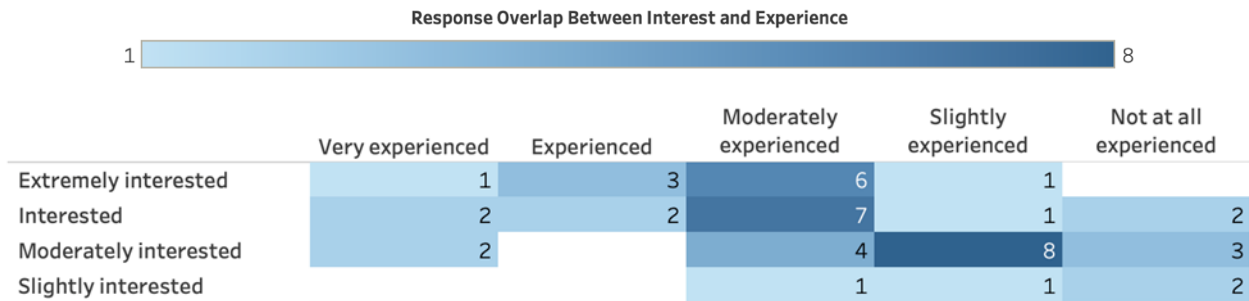
After disclosing their departmental affiliation and role at the university, the core group of participants were asked about their interest in and experience with digital scholarship. Their responses reflected wide-ranging interest in and experience with digital scholarship methods and tools among the campus community. For instance, when asked to describe their interest in digital scholarship, 11 (24%) respondents from the core group of survey participants indicated they were “extremely interested” followed by 14 (30%) who were “interested,” 17 (37%) who were “moderately interested” and four (9%) who indicated they were “slightly interested.”

Likewise, when survey participants were asked to describe their level of experience with digital scholarship, 10 (22 %) respondents from the core group of survey participants indicated they were either “very experienced” or “experienced,” 18 (39%) said that they were “moderately experienced,” 11 (24%) said they were “slightly experienced,” and seven (15%) described themselves as “not at all experienced.”

Overall, of the 46 survey participants who self-rated their interest in and experience with digital scholarship, 25 (54%) rated themselves as either interested or extremely interested while 36 (78%) participants rated themselves as either moderately, slightly, or not at all experienced. As Hidi (2006) noted, Interest in an area or a topic is usually a crucial motivational variable for building expertise by informing

“attentional processes, quantity and levels of learning, learners’ organization of tasks, their goals and choices...[p]ersistence in engagements and positive affect” (p.70). Comparing participants’ interest in digital scholarship methods and tools with their experience reveals that the majority of survey participants who self-reported being moderately, slightly, or not at all experienced with digital scholarship also reported being either extremely interested, interested, or moderately interested in digital scholarship. This is visible in Figure 1 where the darker the shade of blue represents a higher concentration of response overlap between interest and experience.

**Figure 1.** Comparing Survey Participants’ Interest in and Experience with Digital Scholarship



Since interest in something is a critical motivational factor for developing expertise, the high rate of reported interest in digital scholarship methods and tools coupled with an equally low rate of reported expertise by the same survey participants indicates a promising opportunity for the library to support users who are interested in building expertise with digital scholarship tools and methodologies.

**Digital Scholarship in Research and Teaching**

In order to gauge digital scholarship activity currently taking place at the university, participants were asked if digital scholarship was used in their research or teaching. Slightly more than half (26 or 57%) indicated that digital scholarship was involved in their research, though only two stated that it was a majority of their research. Of the 20 respondents who indicated that they do not use digital scholarship in their research, 16 (43%) stated that they use digital tools but would not consider it digital scholarship. One respondent said that they were interested in integrating digital scholarship into their research, and three said that they did not use digital scholarship in their research and had no interest in doing so.

The responses were similar when survey participants were asked about the use of digital scholarship in their teaching. Twenty-nine (63%) indicated that they use or have used digital scholarship methods in their courses, seven of whom listed it as a core component of at least one class a semester. Twenty-two respondents (48%) indicated that digital scholarship methods are used in some of their courses but not every semester and 18 (39%) answered that they were currently working on a digital scholarship project or implementing it into their teaching. Seventeen respondents (37%) indicated that they do not currently use digital scholarship methods in their courses. Of this group, 14 (30%) indicated interest in implementing some digital scholarship into their teaching.

Overall, 33 survey participants (72%) indicated that they use digital scholarship tools either in their teaching, research, or a combination of both. Of that number, 22 (67%) use digital tools in both their research and teaching, seven (21%) use digital scholarship tools for teaching only, and four (12%) use digital scholarship tools for research only.

**Digital Scholarship Methods and Tools**

Survey participants were next asked to list the specific digital scholarships methods and tools they have used. Survey participants reported experience using the following digital scholarship methods:

- Data analysis/visualization: 12 (26%)
- Text editing and annotation: 15 (33%)



- Digital platform or archive: development 4 (9%)
- Text mining and analysis: 8 (17%)
- Digital publishing: 16 (35%)
- GIS and mapping: 6 (13%)
- Hardware or software development: 1 (2%)
- Data management: 6 (13%)
- 3D modeling/printing: 1 (2%)
- Transcription: 3 (7%)
- Other (please explain): 3 (7%)

The respondents who selected “other” worked in pedagogy of digital history, facial and deepfake analysis, and building digital portals to dispersed collections.

Survey participants were also asked about their experience with digital scholarship tools. Their responses included specific digital scholarship tools, which were then qualitatively coded to match the tool with the appropriate method. The following list of tools is, therefore, organized around each method:

- *Mapping*: GIS, StoryMaps, Geo Media Pro, TheClio
- *Visualization and Analysis*: Voyant, SPSS, Timeline.JS, Kumu.io
- *Website and Application Building*: Wordpress, Weebly, Claris FileMaker, Testmoz, UCraft, Scalar
- *Coding*: Python, R, XML, UNIX/Linux shell scripting
- *Image Editing and Recognition*: Adobe Photoshop, Pictriv, Betaface
- *Databases and Digital Archives*: Wikidata, JSTOR, various unnamed sources

### Support for Digital Scholarship

Lastly, survey participants were asked about support for digital scholarship. When asked whether they received adequate support from the university, two (4%) selected “strongly agree,” eleven (24%) selected “agree,” eight (17%) selected “somewhat agree,” nineteen (41%) said that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement, three (7%) selected “somewhat disagree,” two (4%) selected “disagree,” and one (2%) selected “strongly disagree.” When asked specifically how the library can support digital scholarship, respondents indicated a preference for:

- Digital collections 32(70%)
- Tools 24(52%)
- Workshops 23(50%)
- Consultations 20(43%)
- Library guides 14(30%)
- Datasets 12(26%)
- Campus-wide communication 9(19%)

In text-entry responses, participants requested a variety of different methods for library digital scholarship support. These included acquiring more digital collections and resources such as journals, databases, and digital archival materials, building infrastructure for communication and collaboration between digital scholars on campus, and workshops and showcases. Overall, survey participants indicated an interest in gaining access to new digital scholarship tools, workshops or training opportunities, and connecting with other members of the campus community who share interest in digital scholarship methods and tools.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the survey results, the survey authors developed a list of recommendations for the library to implement, which are listed below.

*Recommendation 1: Promote and expand library access to digital collections and digital tools.*

When asked how the library could promote the use of digital scholarship methods on campus (Appendix A: Survey Instrument, Q17) or if there was anything else respondents would like to share (Appendix A: Survey Instrument, Q29), the most frequently requested service was to expand the library's access to digital collections and resources, such as journals, databases, and digital archival materials. Many of these requests were generic ("More journals", "More access to digital archives"), while some requested specific resources ("Access to ancestry.com"). The next step will involve liaison librarians discussing digital scholarship resources with all interested parties.

Furthermore, it is apparent that the library and academic departments need to further collaborate on advertising library resources to faculty, staff, and students. Many librarians are familiar with the frustration that stems from patrons who lack awareness of the full extent of their institution's resources. Therefore, the goal for this first recommendation is to mindfully promote and expand library collections – especially regarding digital scholarship tools.

*Recommendation 2: Offer workshops on various digital scholarship tools and methods.*

The second most popular request was for library-hosted workshops. Many of the survey responses revealed that faculty and students know digital scholarship resources exist, but they do not know how to identify or use them. Hosting in-house workshops would give librarians the opportunity to expand community knowledge of digital scholarship while helping patrons gain applicable skills. Offering a series of workshops also has the advantage of exposing people previously unaware of digital scholarship (whether the practice as a whole or certain methods) to the general campus population.

*Recommendation 3: Offer one-on-one or classroom consultations about digital scholarship.*

Building off library-hosted workshops, another popular request was for consultations from qualified librarians. Librarians could offer one-on-one consults for specific tools, or visit classrooms in person or online to provide workshops or overviews on digital scholarship principles. This approach offers the added benefit of exposing undergraduate and graduate students to digital scholarship fields they are unfamiliar with. These consultations could be modeled off the existing liaison librarian system, in which patrons can schedule time with a specific librarian depending on the skill they want to enhance.

*Recommendation 4: Start a campus-wide digital scholarship interest group and/or listserv.*

Prior to taking the survey, the authors were aware of several disparate digital scholarship projects taking place on campus and suspected there was a larger digital scholarship community than was known. Throughout the survey, this assumption was repeatedly confirmed. The survey authors believe that it would be beneficial to individual scholars and the community as a whole to have a network of those interested in digital scholarship. This network, which could comprise of an interest group and listserv, will give scholars opportunities to exhibit their work, find collaborators, and share news from the broader digital scholarship community.

*Recommendation 5: Write a library guide on digital scholarship.*

Several respondents requested a library guide or webpage dedicated to digital scholarship. An environmental scan of digital scholarship services at peer institutions revealed that this is a common

practice. This recommendation also supports the first four recommendations as it will provide a central online location where information can be shared. The library guide (currently in progress) will have sections such as overviews of various disciplines within digital scholarship, a list of tools and resources, and sample projects from within the university.

*Recommendation 6: Expand the digital services team.*

Through the course of developing, distributing, and analyzing this survey, it became clear that more personnel are needed if the library wishes to enhance its digital services. Currently, the Digital Initiatives Librarian is the only position solely dedicated to digital projects. Personnel from other departments, including Metadata and Digital Initiatives, Research and Instruction, and Archives and Special Collections, work on digital projects but are able to dedicate only a fraction of their work time to such projects resulting in longer start-to-finish times. With more digitally-focused personnel, such as a Data Services Librarian, the library would be able to expand its digital services and ensure that support remains relevant as digital scholarship services develop.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the survey results show that there is interest in and experience with digital scholarship at the University of Mississippi. The survey results provide the University of Mississippi Libraries not only with a clearer sense of who on campus is interested in and has experience with digital scholarship methods and tools but also how it can better support this group. A good place to start is by promoting and expanding library access to digital collections and digital tools, by offering workshops that showcase the variety of digital scholarship methods and tools available to researchers, by supporting digital scholarship inquiry at all levels by offering one-on-one consultations, in-class instruction, and creating research guides and tutorials that encourage self-guided learning, and by fostering a campus-wide community for those interested in digital scholarship.

Moving forward, routine assessment of digital scholarship activity on campus is important and necessary. Using the data collected and lessons learned from this first survey, future iterations may be expanded upon in order to reveal, for instance, if interest in and experience with digital scholarship tools and methods has increased or decreased over time or if new and emerging approaches to digital scholarship are present on campus. Additionally, while initial survey response rates were low, as already noted, the resulting data was never intended to be used to make inferential claims such as identifying patterns or making predictions. If future iterations of a digital scholarship survey intend to make such inferences, a higher response rate will be needed necessitating a different methodological approach including a more aggressive marketing and promotion campaign along with other common methods for encouraging participation such as incentives.

In conclusion, by supporting and promoting current digital scholarship activity, the library is well positioned to increase digital scholarship's profile on campus as a potentially powerful research and teaching tool among practitioners and non-practitioners alike. But digital scholarship's utility goes beyond the halls of academia. Increasingly, employers value the kind of skills that are utilized by digital scholarship practitioners such as text mining and data visualization. By facilitating the growth of digital scholarship on campus, there is the added benefit of equipping University of Mississippi students, regardless of academic major or background, with the skills that employers are seeking, thereby making them more competitive applicants on the job market. The library can be the hub for all of this.

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## **Appendix A Survey Instrument**

Q1 - By submitting this form, you are indicating that you have read the description of the study, are over the age of 18, that you agree to the terms as described, and that you consent to participate in this study.

- Yes
- No

Q2 - What is your affiliation with the University of Mississippi?

- Faculty
- Staff
- Postdoctoral Researcher
- Graduate Student
- Other

Q3 - What is your department affiliation?

(Free response)

Q4 - What is your teaching/research focus?

(Free response)

Q5 - Harvard University defines digital scholarship as the, "use of digital tools and methods to support research, teaching, content creation, and stewardship." Examples include: "digitization and the use or creation of digitized collections; data acquisition, description, analysis, visualization, stewardship and curation; digital content creation and sharing, including digital publishing; GIS and mapping; text mining and analysis; and the hardware, software, and infrastructure to support all of the above." Do you have any additions or alternate definitions of Digital Scholarship?

(Free response)

Q6 - Are you interested in digital scholarship?

- Extremely interested
- Interested
- Moderately interested
- Slightly interested
- Not at all interested

Q7 - Do you use digital scholarship methods in your research? Please select the answer that best describes your research. "Digital scholarship" includes using tools/methods such as GIS, text mining, digital annotation, digital archives, or building websites/blogs/digital archives as part of your scholarship.

- Yes, that's the majority of my research
- Yes, but it's only part of my research
- No, but I use digital tools
- No
- No, but I'm interested

Q8 - Do you use digital scholarship methods in your teaching? Please select the answer that best describes your teaching. "Digital scholarship" includes using tools/methods such as GIS, text mining, digital annotation, digital archives, or building websites/blogs/digital archives as part of a class reading or assignment.

- Yes, it is a core component of at least one class a semester
- Yes, I have used it in some classes, but not every semester

No, but I am interested in implementing digital tools in my courses  
No, and I'm not interested in using digital methods in my courses

Q9 - What is your level of experience with digital scholarship?

Very experienced  
Experienced  
Moderately experienced  
Slightly experienced  
Not at all experienced

Q10 - Are you currently working on any digital scholarship projects or implementing digital scholarship into your teaching? If yes, please explain.

(Free response)

Q11 - What is your area of specialization or experience within digital scholarship? Select all that apply

GIS and mapping  
Text mining and analysis  
Data analysis/visualization  
Text editing and annotation  
Digital publishing  
Transcription  
Hardware or software development  
Data management  
Digital platform or archive development  
3D modeling/printing  
Other (please explain)

Q12 - Please list any digital scholarship tools you have used. Include your confidence level with each tool listed.

(Free response)

Q13 - Describe any previous experience you have with digital scholarship outside of the University of Mississippi.

(Free response)

Q14 - You receive adequate support for your digital scholarship needs at the University of Mississippi

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Somewhat agree  
Neither agree nor disagree  
Somewhat disagree  
Disagree  
Strongly disagree

Q15 - How can the library support digital scholarship activities on campus?

Digital collections  
Datasets  
Tools  
Workshops  
Library guides

Consultations  
Campus-wide communication  
Other

Q16 - What are some ways the library can promote use of digital scholarship methods on campus?  
(Free response)

Q17 - Are there any research methods/tools you would like to learn more about?  
(Free response)

Q18 - Are you currently part of a digital scholarship working group, listserv, or similar initiative?  
Yes  
No

Q19 - Are you interested in being part of a digital scholarship listserv, working group, roster, or similar? If yes, please include your email address.  
(Free response)

Q20 - Is there anything else you would like to share?  
(Free response)

**Appendix B**  
**Recruitment Script**

Dear [*insert name*],

On behalf of the Digital Scholarship Committee at the University of Mississippi Libraries, I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project designed to ascertain how the library can best support digital scholarship on campus. Digital scholarship is understood as any use of digital technology in research or teaching applications, and is known by several other names, including digital humanities and public history. You are invited to participate in this research project because you are a faculty member, staff member, postdoctoral researcher, or graduate student at the University of Mississippi.

The procedure involves completing an online survey that will take approximately 10-15 minutes. Your responses will be confidential, and we do not collect identifying information such as your name and email address unless you voluntarily choose to include that information. The survey questions will be about your university affiliation, your experience with digital scholarship, and how the library can best support digital scholarship initiatives going forward.

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Mississippi IRB procedures for research involving human subjects and was approved in mid-February 2021.