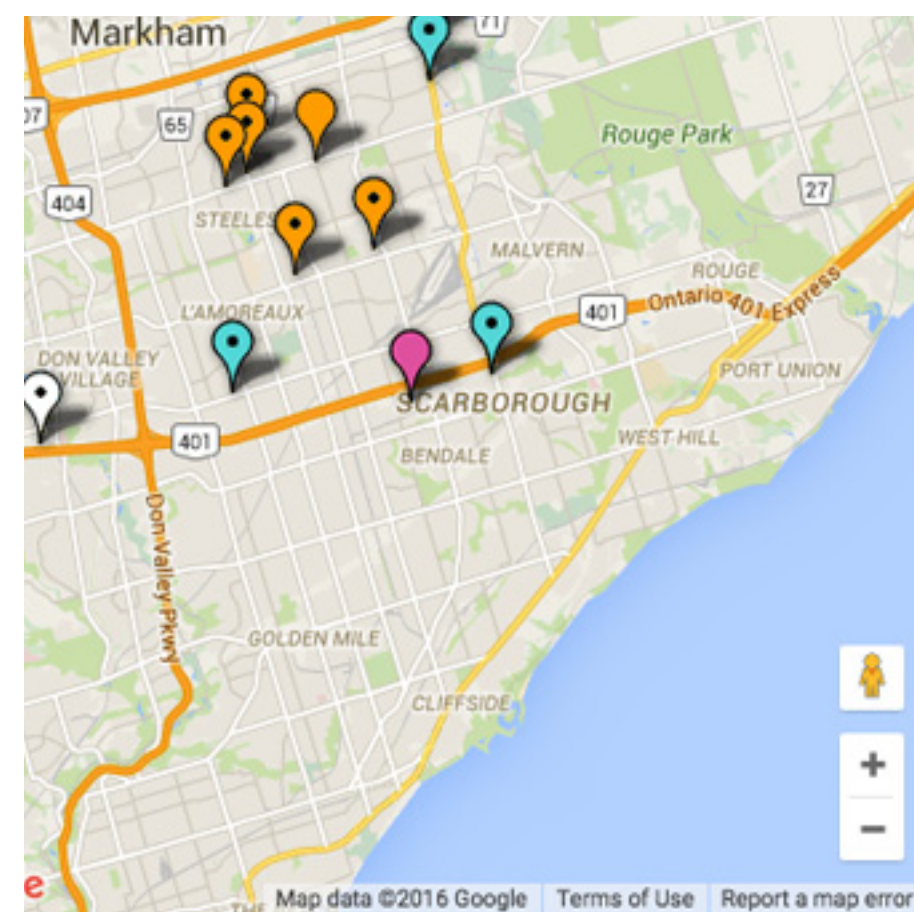


Building on digital projects: Developing a course infrastructure for digital humanities

Kim Pham - Twitter: @tolloid

Lydia Zvyagintseva - Twitter: @lydia_zv

Contact: University of Toronto Scarborough Library, Digital Scholarship Unit dsu@utsc.utoronto.ca

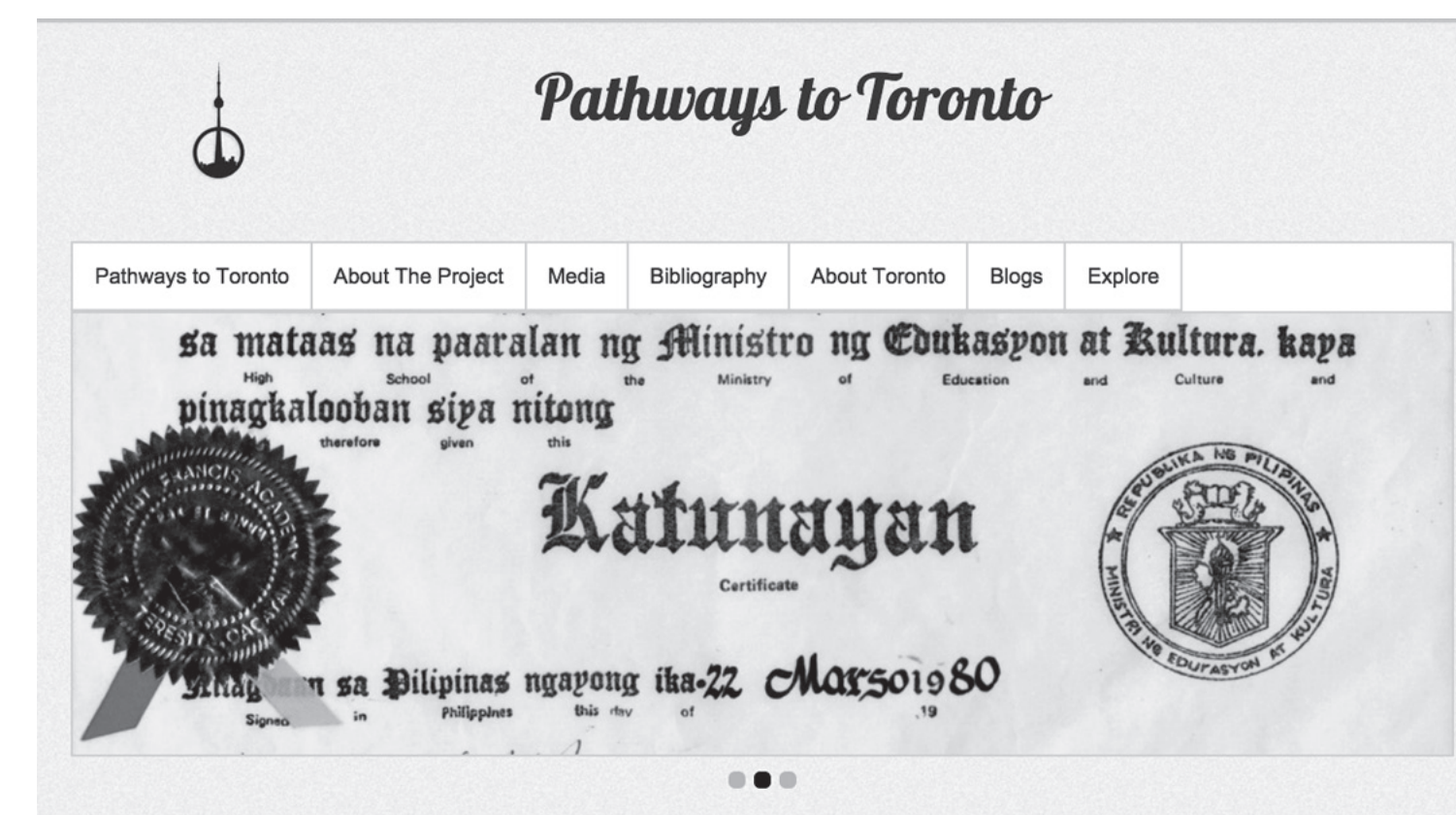


GTA Restaurant Picks



Hong Kong Restaurant Picks

While data curation lifecycles for faculty research projects have become fairly formalized, preserving student work requires a new set of data lifecycles, with modified timelines and strong documentation. In fact, preserving student research is arguably not worth its high costs: such efforts may not be sustainable or rewarding, for example. However, in many institutions, such as the University of Toronto Scarborough, where emphasis is placed on experiential learning, digital curation initiatives relate well to research methods and digital literacy, where learning outcomes are valuable and are folded into larger curriculum goals. As such, Mihailidis & Cohen argue that curation can function “as a pedagogical tool to embolden critical inquiry and engagement in a digital age” (2013, p.2). For example, students enrolled in a senior-level Digital History course at UTSC were tasked with creating a collaborative exhibit made up of individually-researched timelines, contextualizing the work in the form of a website. This type of project is markedly different from traditional individually-authored research papers typical in a humanities class. In the case of the above digital exhibit, the students had an active relationship to the entire class, while the project plan and central lifecycle for the data selection, enrichment, preservation and assessment was guided by the instructor and librarians. This process aligned well with digital and historical methods that the course fostered as well as modelled real-world project management practices as elements key to the success of the entire class.



Welcome to Digital History

Welcome to “Pathways to Toronto”. This website was designed to explore and study migration patterns that connect Toronto to other parts of the country, and the world through the stories of migrants who lived within Toronto’s borders for a period in their lives. These individuals represent the different nationalities, races, and genders, that have settled or started their Canadian lives in Toronto. Our goal was to engage and encourage the visitors of this site to a discussion of the meaning of migration across time and space.

We were a group of senior students enrolled in a digital history course at the University of Toronto Scarborough. Together with our professor, Dr. Donna

Case Studies

Librarians from the Digital Scholarship Unit (DSU) participated as co-instructors in two courses for Department of Historical and Cultural Studies in Fall 2015: Global Asia Studies and Digital History, acting as curators of student work to ensure longevity and follow best practices for long-term access. The library was brought in at the early stages of course development, from the initial planning of the curriculum to the continued maintenance of students’ digital materials.

GASD71 - Global Asia Studies

This course focused on exploring interdisciplinary perspectives on Cuisine and Society in the context of Global Asia. Its methodologies cover perspectives in the humanities and social sciences with a specific emphasis on ethnographies and digital mapping to build research skills. Students contributed to the development a rich body of work with the aim to preserve and build upon existing material for future iterations of this course.

Planning: Assignments were structured in a manner to maximize potential for data reuse. Librarians researched and tested a number of digital tools that could be used in the course, with the focus on free and open standards. As an initial exercise students practiced analyzing open datasets to understand how to create a meaningful visualization component as a complement to their research.

Collection: Students conducted interviews with human subjects, translating their content into discrete data points on spreadsheets. The instructors aided students in developing common metadata fields and identifying gaps in their data, which would then be required for its visualization. Filling in these gaps meant that students had to gather more data through online research or in follow up interviews with their study participants. At the end of this process, all datasets were combined into a global map as a single reference point to access and use this data, also reflecting patterns of interaction and revealing the focus of research in distinct areas in Asia. In other words, the combined map of student data also represented the collective knowledge about Global Asia as seen through this course.

Preservation: Students were required to use the tools and formats put forward by the library. This resulted in data outputs already suitable for preservation, reducing the effort needed to prepare digital data for deposit. The students designed websites using a platform that allowed for a full export of site code and project files. These sites were deposited onto the DSU’s server.

HISD18 - Digital History

Students examined digital methods by exploring archival materials, family histories, and oral histories to tell the story of a single individual migrant’s journey in and through Toronto. Each “pathway” maps a journey and aims to provide historical context for migration in the greater Toronto area. This includes neighbourhood(s) of early settlement and adjustment to life in Toronto. The course also brought in an external partnership with the Ward Museum, which would select and incorporate certain student projects into their online exhibit to be launched later in 2016.

Planning: The library helped design and structure the course capstone assignment. Students had to map and document important milestones during the migration period of an individual’s life. At the end, students designed a collective online exhibit site containing supplementary materials with blog posts to document the process, sources of information maps and other narrative interpretations of their journey.

Home » Collections » Elise Von Koerber

Elise Von Koerber



Circassian



Circassian Front View



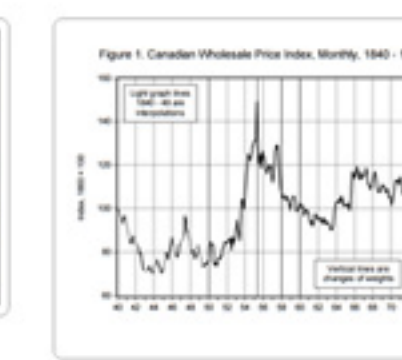
Circassian side View



Plaque of Community founded by Elise Von Koerber



Shaftesbury Hall



Wholesale Price Index 1840-1871

Collection: Materials were deposited by individual students into the DSU’s Islandora repository system, including following a metadata creation guidelines developed by the Library. A bulk data export was created for the Ward Museum so that a duplicate copy of student materials could be hosted in their digital exhibit suitable for frequent access.

Preservation: The DSU signed a memorandum of agreement committing to preserve student materials in Islandora for 2 years after the course completion. This includes providing technical expertise, backup, and general maintenance of the repository.

Project links:

HISD18: <http://digitalscholarship.utsc.utoronto.ca/projects/dighist>
GASD71: <http://digitalscholarship.utsc.utoronto.ca/projects/culinarial/classroom>

Work Cited:

Mihailidis, P., & Cohen, J. N. (2013). Exploring Curation as a Core Competency in Digital and Media Literacy Education. *Journal Of Interactive Media In Education*.



Advertisement announcing reward for runaway slave

ON THE RUN: JEFFERY

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 guaranteed that even free states in the North to enslave Thornton and Lucie declared themselves before the River by ferry, carrying forged documents to get aboard the Versailles ship, heading north

Challenges

GASD71: Currently there is only bit-level preservation of student websites until a plan is institutionalized for the preservation web projects. The challenge is to figure out how to host a number of different webpages that contain complex dependencies, embedded content, and features that reference external sites. The original media files are saved on the DSU’s backup drive, where as student sites contain audio clips hosted on Soundcloud, videos on Youtube, and maps through Google.

HISD18: Considerable amount of in-class instruction was required to coordinate students of varying technical skill levels to use Drupal and Islandora. Students were required to develop detailed metadata and documentation about their digital materials, not typical for undergraduate classes yet necessary for proper curation. This was an iterative process, which required the library to teach concepts of data management. The library also had to address concerns of privacy and ethics by checking copyright, collecting consent forms at the beginning of the course, and revisiting them at the end. The projects with privacy concerns required additional work to anonymize the data or shadow them in the repository for public access.

Outcomes

- The data curation process aligns well with historical research methods, each informing the other in the classroom and online.
- Project management skills are crucial to contemporary scholarly and workplace environments, and complex data curation initiatives foster such skills.
- Experiential learning opportunities integrated into humanities curricula can aid students in exploring new ways of working with data, supporting data and digital literacies.
- Incorporating elements of data curation into humanities courses can contribute to larger research projects, as well as build and improve upon work of others rather than reinforce traditional model of siloed work. By integrating several collections of student work captures memory, history and identity of student body and the university.
- Data curation projects that emphasize data use and sharing provide recognition and legitimacy to undergraduate research by ensuring accountability and motivation to publish reputable, publicly-accessible results. Such projects also support the broader learning outcomes of undergraduate research movement in postsecondary institutions today.