

Looking Backward, Linking Together, Leaping Forward: Web-Based Archival Analysis and Presentation in Writing Assignments Across Four College Campuses

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Evaluation

This project both met some grant objectives and fell short in meeting others. In terms of project-specific goals, the web pages indicate that students definitely did hone their abilities to analyze primary research materials, give oral presentations on their findings, explore the difference between print and web based writing, and strengthen their skills in web page authoring. Davidson student post project surveys and class evaluations substantiate this claim. Unfortunately, the participating students at Furman and Washington and Lee did not take the post-project survey, and we have not heard from faculty at either school about student evaluation comments. We are, however, sending a post-project evaluation form to our colleagues and will forward the results of this form to ACS as soon as possible.

In terms of the broader project goals mentioned in the proposal, which included improving source availability, publicizing each institution's archival materials, enabling institutions to address specific technical or archival gaps, and encouraging greater pedagogic collaboration between ACS institutions, the project definitely met most goals.

The grant project did not meet all goals, however. Specifically, students did not communicate with their peers at other institutions, either through the Blackboard discussion groups we set up or through streamed video presentations. And, as I noted, while the Davidson and Furman students both took a pre-project survey of technical skills, only the Davidson students completed the post-project survey.

Overall, the project revealed the difficulties as well as the possibilities of multi-campus collaborations. Gaps in timely and clear communication made the collaboration challenging. Additional challenges came because of our institutions' divergent levels of technical expertise and pedagogic commitment to the project. The project did not fail in that participation definitely enhanced information fluency on each campus; it did not, however, yield the kind of collaborative project we had envisioned.

Dissemination

We have a variety of plans for publicizing this project and analyzing it from various professional perspectives. On the publicity front, announcements of the project website will be sent to regional and national archival listservs or e-newsletters, including the

Society of North Carolina Archivists, the North Carolina Library Association, Society of American Archivists, and Mid-Atlantic Region Archives Conference.

The project will also be linked to Hugh Blackmer's GIS project housed at Washington and Lee. Our inclusion in this project will allow for more researchers to find the student websites and gain access to the primary materials on the site.

Jan, Kristen, and I will be presenting on various aspects of this project, which I've listed in chronological order.

1. 25 September 2003. "Expanding Classroom Walls: Effective Partnering of Faculty, ITS, and Librarians." North Carolina Library Association Biennial Conference. Winston Salem, NC
2. 3 October 2003. "Looking Backward, Linking Together, Leaping Forward: Web-Based Archival Analysis & Presentation in Writing Assignments Across Three College Campuses." Blackboard Southeast Users Group Conference. Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida.

We will include information from the grants partners in this presentation and hope that at least one member of the Furman team can join us. We have also submitted a proposal to the American Association for History and Computing Annual Meeting ("Digital Scholarship: 'Doing History' with Technology"), which is being held January 8th-11th in Washington, D.C.

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