CAA/SAH Task Force on Guidelines for Digital Art and Architectural History
Verbal Report
Tuesday, June 9, 2015, 4:00-5:30pm

Members: DeWitt Godfrey (CAA President), Ken Breisch (SAH President), Suzanne Preston Blier, Linda Downs (CAA Executive Director, ex officio), Pamela Fletcher, Gabrielle Esperdy, Betty Leigh Hutcheson (CAA staff, ex officio), Tara McPherson, Michelle Miller Fisher, Anne Collins Goodyear, Paul Jaskot, Abby Smith Rumsey, Pauline Saliga (SAH Executive Director, ex officio), Ann Whiteside, Whitney Davis, Bruce Mackh

Present: Downs, Hutcheson, Whiteside, Mackh, Jaskot, Rumsey, Esperdy, Saliga, Blier, Briesch, Fletcher, Miller Fisher, Godfrey, Goodyear. Verbal report by Alice Lynn McMichael

Absent: McPherson, Davis

I.   Alice Lynn: Verbal Report
- Variety of case studies have come out of interview process
- Sent out a questionnaire to grad students to find out where they are being trained
- Interviewed 31 scholars at 16 institutions (all art and architectural historians, balance of specializations)
- Asked open ended questions at the end
- Word "ad-hoc" came up repeatedly—in terms of evaluation, training, guidelines, etc.
- Very few institutions have explicit guidelines that address digital work, but others don't dismiss this type of work
- Obtained list of guidelines from a few institutions, including UCLA, ISAW
- ISAW is very inclusive and takes a holistic approach
- Many people said thank you for doing this work. They are appreciative of this project, which speaks to its need
- Some of the themes that emerged:
    o Intellectual rigor: concern about digital work being rigorous enough and standing up to scholarly inspection
        ▪ We should think about the definition of scholarship and definition of art history
        ▪ Want this definition to be broad
    o Are there issues specific to art history scholarship?
        ▪ Tools and methods of other disciplines are the same ones that we use
        ▪ Copyright of images is the only issue specific to art and architectural history
        ▪ CAA's Fair Use Code could help this issue
    o The need to acknowledge contributors and collaborators
        ▪ Collaboration is the future of digital work. Needs to be encouraged, not just allowed
        ▪ Several people referenced the sciences and archeology
        ▪ UCLA created student collaborative bill of rights. Could be used to fully credit collaborators at all levels
    o The need to discuss the technical decisions that constitute arguments
        ▪ Everyone was in favor of document outlining technical decisions
    o The need to discuss peer review

- o The need to address scholarship that falls into the category of public scholarship. Work that is not necessarily presenting a new argument, but bringing knowledge to a wider audience. This often gets dismissed as service.
  - o Sustainability and preservation
    - Don't have perfect solution yet, but people should still move forward with creating data plans
    - Transparency is the way to go. Say how long a project is funded for and how long it will stay alive. How long will it be available to cite? When will it switch from development to stewardship?
  - o Ways of publishing and how it relates to peer review
- We talk about these guidelines in terms of tenure, but a lot of the people doing this work are not on tenure track. Grad students want recognition for their work for credit.
- We should address a variety of projects as scholarship, so these people aren't considered a less class and will help people at all level

II.   Questions
- Suzanne: Did anything come up on financing?
- AL: Came up in a variety of conversations, but nothing concrete. One scholar tells people to do as much as they can with what they have. Administrators were in favor of digital work even if scholars weren't, because they think it's a way to bring in money.
- Did anybody talk about where they are looking for the training?
- AL: Seeing a lot of energy put into events/institutes hosting training and workshops. Intensive ones seem to be where people get their training. Also ad-hoc workshops taught by departments. Training came from all over the place. Survey respondents didn't want as much of a focus on tools and methods. The very idea of training is for these basic tools, so people can get comfortable with the digital. The second level of tools (beyond Word, PowerPoint, etc.) (such as mapping, 3D modeling) could be useful to teach people.
- Paul: Fear is a word that came up. What about hostility? Did you talk to people who don't want to value this as a skill set?
- AL: There is certainly a strand of that, but not with the people I reached out to. I let the survey capture those people. Some people think the resistance to digital is similar to resistance to theory. People say they are favor of the digital, but see it as an extra. They may say they support it, but they aren't actively supporting it.
- Paul: Based on survey results, we may be missing a silent minority or majority. Seems like most people who responded are at least casually involved with the digital.
- Michelle: In terms of not capturing the non-tenure track response, how many of those have we captured in the report?
- AL: I received 35 grad student responses from my questionnaire. A couple reported that they don't do digital work. We also didn't get a wide response from assistant professor level. My theory is that these people may be less likely to be CAA or SAH members. People are also hedging their bets. They may be interested in digital work, but feel like they need to put their effort toward projects that "count."
- AL: Digital publishing came up a lot. Where can it be published? Mention of fact that you lose control if journal moves or hosting changes. Manifold Scholarship is a platform that will be open source. An interviewee suggested that professional organizations might consider a sort of stamp of approval for digital publications. It would have the effect of peer review.
- Paul: I am mystified by the idea that there aren't enough venues to publish.

- AL: It is an issue for projects like "Mapping Gothic France"—non-linear and requires extensive technical support and upkeep. Also question of when work is published, do you lose control? Print journals sometimes still have more weight than an online journals.
- Maybe there is a role for libraries to help collect scholarship.
- AL: We definitely need to include libraries, archivists, etc. more. Functionality being preserved is a sticking point. But we can't make preservation a hindrance to creation. I think it's a matter of deciding what to preserve and how to cite. Transparency is key.
- Abby: There is a conversation between libraries, scholars, and archives. We expect this conversation to keep changing and be engaged over time as the technology changes. Scholars need to be able to distill what is important to preserve in terms of scholarship, regardless of technical elements. Criteria for scholarship and digital scholarship should be the same. Just need to normalize it for digital realm.
- AL: ISAW has a 5 point document that says the following: they do not privilege the form in assessing scholarship; seek originality, breadth, and depth; essential that scholarly work be published but publication takes many forms; take into account post-publication responses; faculty should try to document the nature of their contributions to collaborative work and have this be a part of their file.
- AL: Some people doing digital work write very traditional things. Tools and methods shouldn't be used to describe digital scholarship. But giving people the training for these tools gives them the ability to ask wider questions.
- Paul: A parallel is language learning. You wouldn't give a student credit for learning a new language, but their mastering that language will help their research and scholarship.
- AL: To alleviate pressure of time, there should be workshops to train people with basic tools.
- How is this related to tenure?
- AL: I don't think it is related. People conflate them. It keeps coming up, so I kept tabs on it. It seems like something in parallel to guidelines.
- How do we capture the nature of digital humanities research even if the output is fairly conventional? The way you capture more people acknowledging that they are doing digital work is to recognize this.
- AL: Language about creative output could accomplish this. Creative process rather than a deliverable. Several scholars mentioned that ongoing feedback is really important for digital work. Peer review is not as useful at the end. Levels of feedback and review could be built into tenure portfolio.
- AL: How does committee feel about public scholarship and scholarly communications? The IFA is in the process of putting scholarly work online as websites.
- DeWitt: Our guidelines will have to run in parallel with some of these debates about public scholarship. New form of knowledge production that needs to be assessed.
- Anne Goodyear: We should be cautious of keeping focus on things that the task force has control over—digital—and not dilute our argument with other non-traditional forms of producing knowledge.
- AL: Public work and facilitation of scholarship has come up a lot. Contributions of other types of work that we don't know what to do with, e.g. tool creation (some people think it is scholarship and some don't). Does it count if it helps someone else facilitate their scholarship? I don't think we should create a hierarchy of scholars. We should keep the door open to all forms.
- Pamela: Analogy to theory might help us think about the tool questions. Art historians who wrote pure theory would count that as scholarship. A tool is equivalent to a theoretical framework.

- Abby: Burden of the scholar to explain why X is a contribution to scholarship. This broadens the understanding on both sides.
- AL: Most of scholars felt comfortable with the impetus to explain their work.
- The presentation of the work is critical
- AL: Reviewers should be reviewing work in its original medium, but I did speak to people who said there are institutional demand to use print outs or PDFs. Not fair to have website judged in this way. Task force needs to decide whether or not to push this issue.
- DeWitt: Allow candidate to set terms of how work is reviewed.
- AL: AHA Guidelines critiqued for not pushing guidelines enough. A lot of hedging language and didn't wholeheartedly support the digital. MLA pushed the envelope more. These guidelines have a range of what they are willing to push. Archeology and art history have a lot to learn from each other.
- Betty Leigh: Do you recall any of the specific criticisms?
- AL: Doesn't take a strong position, hedging language, set aside the larger questions about whether digital would be accepted.
- Guidelines should have enough teeth that a young scholar can use them for P&T committees
- AL: One scholar said at P&T its already too late, need to be considering this issue way earlier.
- We should include some language so these could also be of value to contingent faculty.
- Linda: These guidelines are a form of advocacy.
- Anne Goodyear: Do copyright concerns stop people from pursuing these projects?
- AL: No, but it is a persistent fear. Varies widely and is so nebulous.
- Anne Goodyear: Maybe the guidelines will promote Fair Use Code as a tool.
- AL: The written report is due July 3rd. Interviewees will be anonymized.
- Linda: The eport won't be circulated outside of task force.
- AL: Will the guidelines draft be circulated for feedback from membership like the AHA ones were?
- DeWitt: That decision can be held off until we see what report looks like.