Mapping Metaculture

Project Update 2012
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*** In which ways did your experience at DU support your project's research and development?**

The experience at DU was most helpful in terms of introducing us to a community of like-minded researchers with whom we shared an interest in ways of incorporating digital media into humanities research and pedagogy. We have remained in touch with many of the people that we met while on campus, engaging in discussions and even working on other projects. For example, Angel Nieves participated in a workshop that I organized regarding the use of digital tools at small universities and colleges that was part of the Mobility Shifts conference held in October 2011 at the New School in New York City. I have also remained in touch with the other members of my small group (the MediaNOLA project), touching base with them at a recent conference in New Orleans.

With regard to the project itself, it is more difficult to trace direct connections between the time on campus and the project that we have been working on. The sessions themselves did not provide either the kind of skills or conceptual work that have come to shape the project as it has developed. This was also due to the fact that our team was not all present at the DU meeting, meaning that any work done in the sessions was very much marginal to our collaborative work.

At the same time, though, I would stress that the involvement with the Digital Humanities Institute at DU has been a great help with getting this project off the ground. Primarily in providing grounds to focus the project Ted and I have been working on in relation to cultural studies and collaborative authorship. It really has played an important role as catalyst for our project.

*** Which aspects / components of your project have you addressed or implemented since your visit to DU?**

In terms of the project, there are a variety of different aspects which have moved forward since the campus visit last summer. These can be divided into two areas, a) the project itself, and b) our ongoing engagement with the conceptual grounds through which we are making sense of this project. Because it is easiest to discuss, I will begin with the second

of these categories. Since the meeting in the summer, Ted and I have participated in a series of panels in which we have furthered our engagement with both the history and contemporary practice of collaborative research in cultural studies. This past November, we both participated in a roundtable on re-thinking scholarship and publication at the annual meeting of the National Communications Association. The roundtable gave space to a lively discussion about how practices of writing, research and publication intersect with one another and the role that new models of doing scholarly work might lead to different ways of engaging with both the academy and the public at large. We are also extending this work into an essay entitled "On The Virtues of Grey Literature" which will likely be part of an upcoming issue of the London-based journal *New Formations*.

With regard to the project itself: after much talk about what it might look like and searching for a model/software which might allow us to build something functional. This process took longer than hoped and wasn't always as much fun as we'd hoped (I know! What a surprise!) But eventually, we found a way to adapt Drupal to our needs and build a working model. As a pilot project, Ted and I started to use this as a way to write the above mentioned essay for *New Formations*. As a second step, we recently invited the members of another collaborative project that I am involved with that will look at the "Single Woman" in contemporary US culture. This will provide us with a chance to see how people who are not directly involved with the development of the platform (hence, like to be less tolerant of its limitations) fare when using it. This second stage just started at the beginning of February, so will likely be on the go by the time the project with DU finishes later this year.

*** What do you plan to accomplish next with your project?**

In terms of the next stage, really we are at the stage of testing. Seeing what works, what doesn't. I don't expect that much will change between now and March, but it is likely that by the time we reconvene in the Autumn that we will have a sense of how the project is faring. At that point, I expect we will be able to see with more concrete detail how the project will continue (or not.) Regardless, though, both the public presentations, publications (both directly and indirectly related to the project itself) and the research communities that the project is helping to foster will stand as evidence of the project's worth.