Library Labs as experimental incubators for digital humanities research

Sally Chambers, Ghent Centre for Digital Humanities, Belgium
With many thanks to:

TPDL 2019: Connecting with Communities ...
Connecting Communities: Computer Science (CS) & Cultural Heritage (CH) & Digital Humanities (DH)

What motivates (or demotivates) us to work together?

With thanks to Isabel Martinez & Gustavo Candela
Library Labs as experimental incubators for digital humanities research

- Libraries as the laboratories of the humanities - à la Bruno Latour
- Library Labs as frameworks for interdisciplinary collaboration
- Collections as Data: providing data-level access to digitised and born-digital collections
- Towards a Digital Research Lab at KBR, the Royal Library of Belgium
- Looking towards the future
The humanities laboratory?
2 years in the lives of some biologists ...

“the approach chosen by Bruno Latour was to become part of a laboratory, to follow closely the daily and intimate processes of scientific work, while at the same time to remain an inside outside observer, a kind of anthropological probe to study a scientific 'culture' - to follow in every detail what the scientists do and how and what they think.” (p12)


With thanks to Mace Ojala, IT-University Copenhagen
What are labs?

● Places of scientific experimentation

● What does this mean in the context of humanities research?

● If libraries are the laboratories of the humanities, could they be a locus for innovation and experimentation?
https://hal-bnf.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01739730
The humanities laboratory?

- Can we consider libraries as the laboratories of the humanities?
- If so, are they good places to observe the “daily and intimate” scientific practices of the humanist at work?
- By working together with humanists in the ‘library lab’ could this increased “intimacy" lead to true partnership in research?
What are ‘library’ labs?
What are ‘library’ labs?

"Any library program, physical or digital (or a hybrid) in which innovative approaches to library services, tools, or materials are tested in some structured way before being made part of regular workflows, programs, or mission."

Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums Labs

– a space to experiment and innovate on-site and on-line with digitised and born digital collections and data

- Expert support and advice
- Essential equipment (software, hardware, storage, network)
- Essential ingredients (data, text, images)
- The ability to create, validate, capture, record, reproduce, archive, and share results
- Community, tutorials, examples
- Integrated into reference and research workflows
Scholars’ Lab, University of Virginia Library (2006-)

"The UVA Library’s community lab for the practice of experimental scholarship in all disciplines, informed by digital humanities, spatial technologies, and cultural heritage approaches"

https://scholarslab.lib.virginia.edu/
Skunks in the library?

"skunkworks, a small and nimble technical team, deliberately and self-consciously and (yes) quite unfairly freed from much of the surrounding bureaucracy of the larger organization"


Nowviskie, B. : Skunks in the library: A path to production for scholarly R&D.
https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2013.756698
Founded in 2013

British Library Labs
Experiment with our digital collections

https://www.bl.uk/projects/british-library-labs

@BL_Labs @britishlibrary @labs@bl.uk @BL_DigiSchol
British Library Labs (BL Labs)

- Promotes, inspires, and supports the use of the British Library’s digital collections and data
- Works on projects with researchers, developers, educators, entrepreneurs and artists from around the world
- Provides insight into the emerging practice of digital research and helps shape the provision of the British Library’s digital services, tools, collections, and data.
- Ensures that the intellectual digital heritage we hold is accessible to everyone for research, inspiration and enjoyment
Welcome to SBB Lab!

The digital transformation has been creating formidable challenges for research libraries for some time now – reason enough for us to continually expand and improve our services. Some of our activities have focused on selecting data sets from our digital collections and presenting them, along with a few innovative applications and prototypes, on an experimental lab platform. You can read about what motivated us to set up the SBB-Lab in the SBB-Blog.

https://lab.sbb.berlin/?lang=en
Get data here: https://goo.gl/66icov (you need a google account, you can get one here: https://goo.gl/CGdUhY)
Welcome to Labs!
A place to encourage innovation with Library of Congress digital collections.

Digital Scholars Lab Pilot Project Report

Towards a data lab at the Royal Library of Sweden


Towards an international ‘Labs’ network
Building Library Labs: 1st Event, September 2018

Programme: https://goo.gl/X3XpSY

11 SEPTEMBER 2018

Building Library Labs around the world - the event and complete our survey!

Posted by Mahendra Mahey, BL Labs Manager.

Building Library Labs

Around the world, leading national, state, university and public libraries are creating ‘digital lab type environments’ so that their digitised and born digital collections / data can be opened up and re-used for creative, innovative and inspiring projects by everyone such as digital researchers, artists, entrepreneurs and educators.

BL Labs, which has now been running for five years, is organising what we believe will be the first ever event of its kind in the world! We are bringing together national, state and university libraries with existing or planned digital ‘Labs-style’ teams for an invite-only workshop this Thursday 13 September and Friday 14 September, 2018.

Building Library Labs – Programme

13-14 September 2018, British Library, Foyle Centre for Conservation, Euston Road, NW1 3BL, UK (map for venue).

Wi-Fi details while at the British Library are available here.

Some links on these pages are only accessible to workshop delegates (including remote participants) through a Google account. If you don’t have one, you can create one here.

To request access to these links and the ‘Google event documents folder’, click here. Please remember to include your name and institution name / details about you (e.g. why you want to join) when making the request, so we know exactly who you are.

Detailed joining instructions for all participants (at the library as well as those participating remotely) are available here.

Could all participants please be sure to complete our Labs survey before the event (12/09/2018 23:59, GMT) and the event feedback form by the end of the workshop?

Day 1 – Thursday 13 September 2018

0900 – 1000 Registration, coffee / refreshments & networking (see delegate biographies) (Foyle Foyer)
1000 – 1005 Welcome to the British Library (Foyle Suite)
    Phil Sproson, Chief Operating Officer, British Library
1005 – 1015 Overview of the event - What do we want to achieve? (Foyle Suite)
    Adam Farquhar, Head of Digital Scholarship & Principal Investigator of BL Labs, British Library
1015 – 1030 Summary analysis of the ‘Building Library Labs’ survey (Foyle Suite) (followed by brief questions)
    Noreen McGregor, Digital Curator (Europe & the Americas), Digital Research team, British Library
1030 – 1110 The British Library Labs journey (Foyle Suite) (followed by questions)
    Mahendra Mahey, Manager, BL Labs, British Library & Adam Farquhar
1110 – 1245 Parallel breakout sessions (Foyle Suite) & coffee / refreshments (Foyle Foyer)
    introduced by Mahendra Mahey
Building Library Labs: 1st Event, September 2018

Building Library Labs: 2\textsuperscript{nd} Event, March 2019

28 FEBRUARY 2019

The World Wide Lab: Building Library Labs - Part II

We're setting sail for Denmark! Along with colleagues from the UK, Austria, Belgium, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Qatar, Spain, Sweden and the USA, we will be mooring at Copenhagen’s Black Diamond, waterfront home to Denmark’s Royal Library, for the second international Building Library Labs event: 4-5 March 2019.

For some time now, leading national, state, university and public libraries around the world have been creating ‘digital lab type environments’. The purpose of these ‘laboratories’ is to afford access to their institutions’ digital content - the digitised and ‘born digital’ collections as well as data - and to provide a space where users can experiment and work with that content in creative, innovative and inspiring ways. Our shared ethos is to open up our collections for everyone: digital researchers, artists, entrepreneurs, educators, and everyone in between.

Programme: https://goo.gl/JujjQ5

Building Library Labs: 2\textsuperscript{nd} Event, March 2019

[Image of lab equipment]

Building Library Labs 2

Outputs from workshop, held on 4-5, March 2019, Modelokale Diamanten E-Øst, B-Øst Lille K, B-Øst Store K, The Black Diamond, Royal Library of Denmark / Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Søren Kierkegaards Plads 1, 1016 Copenhagen

Organised by British Library Labs and Royal Danish Library

61 page collaborative Google Doc
Also Chatham House rules!

It’s all about people!

YouTube: https://bit.ly/2YMxXYj
GLAM Labs: Communication Tools

- Mailing List: http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/LIBRARYLABS.html
  Over 150 people joined!

- Wiki: https://wikis.fu-berlin.de/x/xQAxNw
  email: mahendra.mahey@bl.uk
to be added

- WhatsApp

- Slack: https://buildingglamlabs.slack.com/

Send international number to mahendra.mahey@bl.uk:
+447871287026
to be added
Growing the International Cultural Heritage Labs Community

Currently
- 250+ people
- 60+ institutions
- 30 countries

Global GLAM Labs Directory in development by Somia Salim (India) & Fidelity Phiri (Zambia) at UCL Qatar
Regional Labs Events

Publishing and reusing Linked Open Data in Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAMs): opportunities and challenges

María Dolores Sáez, Pilar Escobar, Gustavo Candela, Manuel Marco-Such and Mahendra Mahey

National Library of Australia
27-29 March 2019

Museum for All People, Madrid
2-5 April 2019
Regional Labs Events

Experimenting in the Digital Research Lab: a hands-on introduction to using digital collections for digital humanities research

Royal Library of Belgium
8 May 2019

National Library of Austria
13 June 2019
Regional Labs Events - New Territories!

Livingstone Museum, Zambia
1 August 2019

First event in Sub Saharan Africa

“Building and providing the benefits of a global digital cultural heritage Labs community”
October 13-15, 2019, Cairo, Egypt
3rd International Labs Event @ Library of Congress

- Library of Congress, Washington DC, 4-6 May 2020
- Focus: Collections as Data / Building Library Labs
- More news soon!
Digital Cultural Heritage Innovation Labs BookSprint
23-27 Sept. 2019, Doha, Qatar

International Labs Booksprint

The GLAM Labs Living Cookbook?

Over 120 pages output from 2 events

A readsprint after and regularly?

5 days 15 people! Another team in Australia/NZ editing, proofing and illustrating each day when other group sleeping.

https://www.booksprints.net/
Collections as Data
What collections are we talking about? ‘Analogue’ collections?
Metadata?

http://jennriley.com/metadatamap/
Digitised collections?

Hand-written documents?

Transkribus

Transcribe. Collaborate. Share...

...and benefit from cutting edge research in Handwritten Text Recognition!

Download version 1.0  Download

Scholars

Are you transcribing historical documents? Handwritten or printed, from the middle ages or from the 20th century? Would you like to do this in a highly standardized, flexible and reliable way? And do you appreciate to get support from automated tools such as Handwritten Text Recognition and Layout

https://transkribus.eu/Transkribus/

TPDL 2019

23rd International Conference on Theory and Practice of Digital Libraries
Born-digital collections, e.g. web-archives?

Datasets?

http://lab.kb.nl/datasets

https://data.bl.uk/research/
National Library of Scotland’s Data Foundry

Data Foundry
Data collections from the National Library of Scotland

National Library of Scotland data

Open
The National Library of Scotland publishes data openly and in re-usable formats.

Transparent
We take the provenance of our data seriously, and are open about how and why it has been produced.

Practical
We present datasets in a variety of file formats to ensure that they are as accessible as possible.

https://data.nls.uk/
‘BL Labs’ lessons 1

Policies and processes for digital re-use are critical
Having a list of digital collections vital at the start!

With thanks to Mahendra Mahey, BL Labs
Facilitating data-reuse

Heritage Data Reuse Charter
Information and developments around the Heritage Reuse Charter

Cultural Heritage Data Reuse Charter: the Mission Statement

Several European organisations (APEF, CLARIN, DARIAH, Europeana, E-RIHS) and European projects (Iperion-CH, PARTHENOS) involved in the cultural heritage domain are working together to set up principles and mechanisms for improving the use and re-use of cultural heritage data issued by cultural heritage institutions and studied and enriched by researchers. The first step in this endeavour is the definition of generic principles that CHIs and researchers could both adhere to.

Laurent Romary
01/10/2018

The heritage data reuse charter aims at fluidifying the exchanges of information between heritage institutions and researchers.

BOOKMARKS
• Data Charter related publications (HAL)

https://datacharter.hypotheses.org
Collections as Data: “Always Already Computational” & “Part to Whole”

Always Already Computational

Always Already Computational: Collections as Data has been succeeded by Collections as Data: Part to Whole. The application period for the Part to Whole regranting and cohort opportunity opened 8/1/2019. $300,000 will be awarded to six teams in this round.

https://collectionsasdata.github.io/
Collections as Data: “Always Already Computational” - Final Report


Always Already Computational: Collections as Data final report and project deliverables: https://osf.io/mx6uk/wiki/home/
Towards a Digital Research Lab at KBR Royal Library of Belgium
Welcome to KBR, Royal Library of Belgium!

Inspiration @ 1st Building Library Labs event, September 2018!

Sally Chambers
To: Sophie Vandepontseele, Frederic Lemmers
DH Lab @ the KBR?

Dear Sophie, Dear Frédéric,

Yesterday I attended an inspirational event at the British Library, organised by Mahendra Mahey, manager of the BL Labs at the British Library about "Building Library Labs" (see: Programme). The event was attended by over 40 institutions (and many National Libraries) from around the world, see Mahendra's Blogpost: http://blogs.bl.uk/digital-scholarship/digital-scholarship/

I would love to see a DH / Lab initiative at the KBR enabling the digitised, born-digital and bibliographic metadata for digital research.
KBR Labs proposal

- FED-tWIN: programme of sustainable research cooperation between the Federal Scientific Institutions & Belgian universities

- “Towards a KBR Digital Research Lab and knowledge network for the study of Belgium’s digitised and born-digital historical, literary and cultural heritage of the 19th - 21st centuries.”

- To establish a long-term cooperation between the Ghent Centre for Digital Humanities (GhentCDH) and the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) - 10 years initially
The aim of the KBR Digital Research Lab is:

- facilitate data-level access to KBR’s digitised and born-digital collections
- ensure that the digitised and born-digital collections are embedded into researcher’s workflows in a user-friendly manner
- optimise the digitised collections for using digital humanities research methods, such text and data mining
KBR Labs proposal

Phase 1: Start-up Phase (Years 1-2)
- Pilot study for establishing the KBR Labs
- Evaluate the research potential with a series of ‘research pilots’
- Develop an implementation plan for years 3-5

Phase 2: Implementation Phase (Years 3-5)
- To put the recommendations from phase 1 into action
- Establish an overarching research programme
- Develop an exploitation plan including business model

Phase 3: Exploitation Phase (Years 5+)
- KBR Labs to become ‘business as usual’ both for the KBR & for the GhentCDH
1st KBR Labs event @ DATeCH 2019

1. data access: using APIs to access digital library collections
2. data preparation: preparing the data for analysis
3. data analysis: tools and methods for analysing your data

http://datech.digitisation.eu/programme/workshop/
Next steps

- Project proposal: “DATA-KBR-BE: Facilitating Data-level Access to KBR Collections for Open Science”

- Aim: to optimise KBR’s existing ICT infrastructure to stimulate sustainable data-level access to KBR’s digitised collections for digital humanities research, i.e. to set-up data.kbr.be

- Advertise for a KBR Labs PostDoc Researcher!
TPDL 2019: Connecting with Communities ...
Libraries are the laboratories of the humanities?

- Can we see Labs in libraries as a locus for experimentation and innovation for humanities research?
- Could Library Labs enable humanities researchers, cultural heritage professionals and computer scientists to work more closely together to push the boundaries of contemporary humanistic enquiry?
Labs as a 3rd place?

“In community building, the third place is the social surroundings separate from the two usual social environments of home ("first place") and the workplace ("second place"). Examples of third places would be environments such as churches, cafes, clubs, public libraries, or parks. In his influential book The Great Good Place, Ray Oldenburg (1989, 1991) argues that third places are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place.”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_place
What motivates (or demotivates) us to work together?

With thanks to Isabel Martinez & Gustavo Candela
Thank you!

Come and join us
Thank you!

Sally Chambers | Sally.Chambers@UGent.be
University of Ghent, Belgium

http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/LIBRARYLABS.html