

# Leveraging Expertise for Digital Scholarship Support

**Corinne Guimont**, Interim Director, Publishing Services, [gcorinne@vt.edu](mailto:gcorinne@vt.edu)

**Alan Munshower**, Digital Collections Archivist, [alanmun@vt.edu](mailto:alanmun@vt.edu)

**Alex Kinnaman**, Digital Preservation Coordinator, [alexk93@vt.edu](mailto:alexk93@vt.edu)

November 14, 2023

# Overview

- Digital Scholarship Technical Review Committee
  - Members and roles
- Types of projects
- Forms and Documentation
  - Internal Guiding Documents
  - Collaborative Project Documentation
- Outcomes
- Discussion

# Context

- Virginia Tech
- University Libraries
- Collaborate, support, and host a variety of scholarship
- Serve Southwest Virginia community



# Digital Scholarship Technical Review Committee

- Charge
- Committee Membership
  - Representative group with individual expertise
- Initial identified needs
  - Both shared and department specific

# Special Collections and University Archives: Role

## *Role of my department within the library*

- Traditional Special Collections and Archives role, established in 1970's
- 10 full time employees
- Host on-site researchers and digital content across multiple platforms

## *My role in the department*

- Define digital presence for department, including all facets of born digital and digitized content

## *My role within the committee*

- Connect historical archival collection stewardship to new digital needs
- Sharing experiences and wants and needs from donor/researchers

# Special Collections and University Archives: Challenges

- Documentation
  - Existing project documentation not suitable for variety of digital content
  - Lack of MOUs or agreements for older/inherited projects
- Communication
  - Clarity needed in setting expectations and administrative responsibilities with donors and project owners
- Technical
  - Multiple platforms
  - Storage needs and support for growing Center for Oral History

# Publishing & Digital Humanities: Role

## *Department within the library*

- Main point of DH support within Publishing Services
- 3-5 full time employees
- Publish digital scholarship (both simple and complex)

## *My role*

- Primary point of contact
- Collaborate with researchers
- Consult with researchers

## *Within the committee*

- Goal to create a technical structure to support projects
- Sharing experiences and wants and needs from researchers

# Publishing & Digital Humanities: Projects

- Books, Journals, Textbooks, etc.
- Digital Humanities
  - Small
    - out of the box technology, e.g. Omeka, Scalar, Wordpress
  - Medium
    - out of the box, but with some extra customization
  - Large
    - custom built projects, typically multi-year or ongoing
- Media (Podcasts, Video, Oral History)

# Publishing & Digital Humanities: Challenges

- Documentation
  - Lack of project documentation (especially for older projects)
    - Notes, decisions, etc.
  - Lack of MOUs or agreements for older/inherited projects
- Communication
  - Not always clear who is the point of contact in library and outside of library
  - Researchers unsure of who to contact
- Technical
  - Multiple platforms
  - Older/inherited projects in need of updates

# Publishing & Digital Humanities: Addressing Challenges

- Documentation
  - Creating documentation and sharing with others
    - Project notes
    - Requests
    - Decisions
    - Etc.
  - MOUs, MOAs, Publishing Agreements
- People
  - Assigning a point person within the library to projects
  - Building a team approach to DH
- Technical
  - Outsourcing hosting with Domain of One's Own

# Digital Libraries & Preservation: Role

## *In the Library*

- Manage digital libraries separate from our institutional repositories, and manage the digital preservation system for the Libraries
- People: Software engineers, digitization managers, collection managers, digital preservationists, metadata
- Content: 2D, 3D/VR/AR, community collections, oral histories and podcasts

## *In the Committee*

- Digital preservation support
- Ingest into the digital library or other IR
- Website takeover and maintenance

# Digital Libraries & Preservation: Challenges

- [Digital] Boxes of Chaos - stuff the Library is told to do something with
  - Specifically older digital projects and sundowning department websites
- Lack of historical and current project documentation
- Maintenance & appraisal
  - We want to do it, but who does it, how, and how much time should be dedicated?
  - Who even has the authority/autonomy to do what
  - What is the process for doing anything?
- Understaffed
  - Particularly in web development

# Digital Libraries & Preservation: Addressing Challenges

New project documentation requirements:

- Align with requirements already in place for the Digital Imaging Lab
- Provides comprehensive information on the unique needs of a project
  - Scope, level of maintenance
- Assigns stakeholders, roles, and responsibilities
  - Setting expectations
  - MVP

# Digital Libraries & Preservation: Types of Projects

“Somebody wants to save this, here you go”

- Legacy department pages + social media pages
- Long-standing project websites
- Standalone DH or 3D projects

# All Types of Projects

## Digital Humanities

- Omeka, Domain of One's Own, homegrown project pages

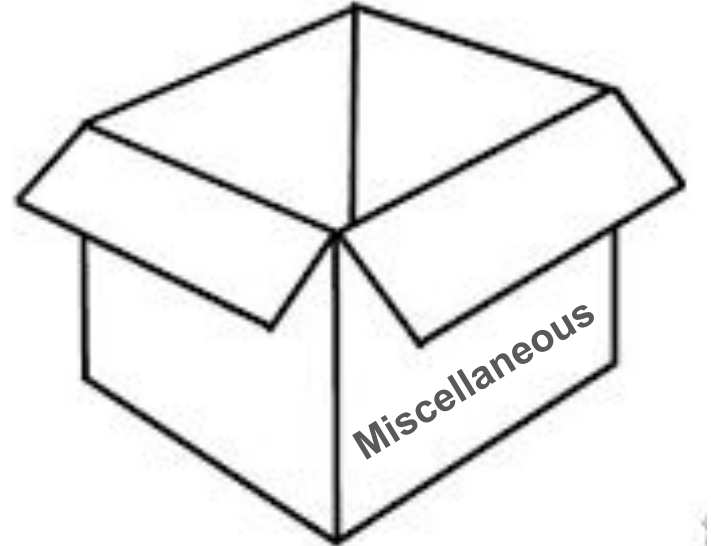
## VT Publishing

- Text, media, more DH

## Department Websites

## Social media

## 3D/VR



# Forms & Documentation

## Internal Guiding Documents

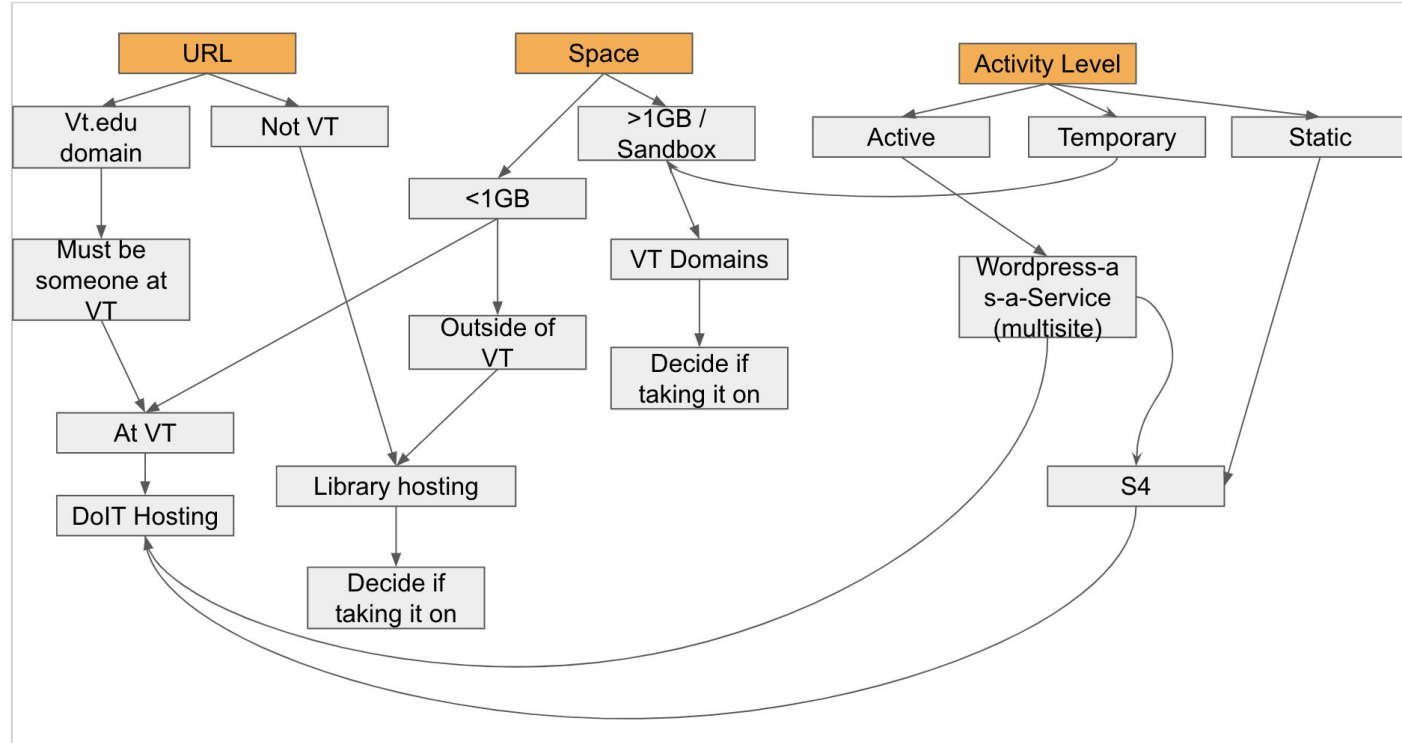
- Digital Scholarship Support Policy
- Service Matrix
- Decision Tree

## Collaborative Project Documentation

- Memorandum of Agreement
- Project Proposal Forms
- Preservation Profile

# Decision Tree

Where does  
it go?



# Project Proposal Form

- Status of the project
- Special needs and considerations
- Who has access to what
- Scope fit

<b>Project Title</b>	If this is an addition to, migration of, or further phase of a current digital project, please indicate that.
<b>Link to Project (if currently exists)</b>	A direct link to the project website
<b>Date</b>	Proposal Submission Date.
<b>Project Director(s)</b>	Name, contact information (email), and VT affiliation of the primary contact(s) for this project.
<b>Summary</b>	A concise statement that summarizes the purpose, value, and context of the project. Includes intended audience and/or benefit to the field/community. Attach grant proposal if applicable. Please include only 1-2 sentences here; there is room below for a full and complete description of your project.
<b>Background</b>	Please provide background on the project, including a summary of what led to the project including all work completed by the partner, previous partners/project directors, or the library at this time. Include any links to supporting documents (i.e., grant proposals).
<b>Purpose/aim (Goal)</b>	<p>Assessment criteria will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Content of unique or strategic value to the University or the Commonwealth of Virginia</li> <li>● Contributes to specific and deep collection strengths already established in the Library</li> <li>● Grant requirements, including timeline, methods and storage criteria that can be achieved by VTUL staff and/or resources provided by the grant</li> <li>● Evidence of ongoing collection use (for research, instruction, or other projects), especially by broad audiences both on and off campus</li> <li>● Compelling use of digital formats or technologies that open new avenues of use</li> <li>● Creates a collection of enduring value that the library commits to preserve</li> <li>● Sustainability factors related to file format and preservation activities</li> </ul>

# Memorandum of Agreement

## Define all expectations

- Services
- Timelines
- Copyright/rights
- Responsibilities
- Ongoing Support

## Scope of Work

This MOA is an agreement between both parties to follow the outlined work below for [project title]. Any changes to the scope of work should be discussed and agreed upon in writing by both parties.

The scope of work should be individual to each project and address the following:

- What work will include
  - Migration
  - Hosting
  - Preservation
  - Metrics
- Duration of project
- Is the project complete or ongoing]
- Non exhaustive overview of what we expect
- Actions we might take
- [Services matrix](#) - link to if we decide to provide public access

## Ongoing Support

Virginia Tech University Libraries reserves the right to approve all levels of ongoing support. Ongoing support will be determined on a case by case basis.

- Limitations of support will be agreed upon between VTUL and the Project Director.
- VTUL will only provide technical maintenance to sustain a project. We do not provide maintenance on website content or metadata.
- VTUL will provide best effort at uptime dependent on their current workload and will communicate regularly with the Project Director on status updates.
- VTUL will manage all user accounts associated with a project to ensure continued access.

# Outcomes

- More communication among departments
  - More clarity around materials in organization
- Better understanding of where materials can be stored
  - And websites hosted
- Increased documentation
  - Better understanding of what is needed
  - A place to start

## Interactive Discussion

**menti.com**

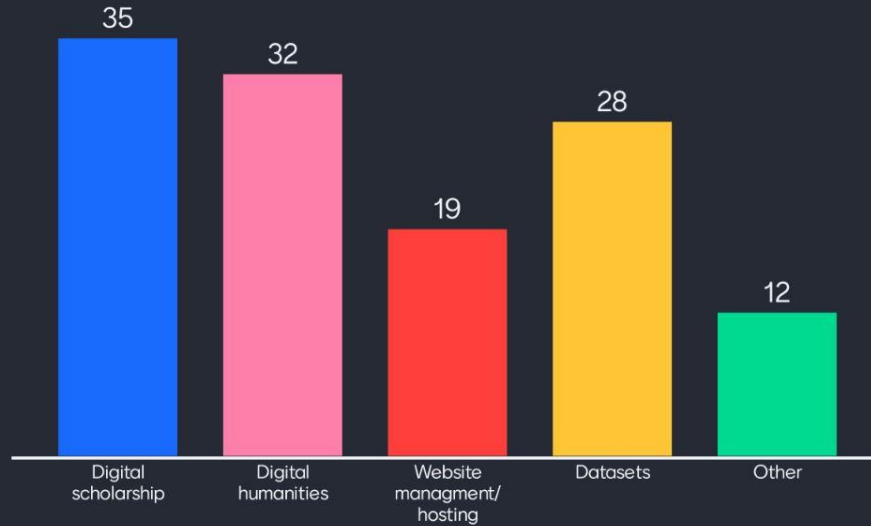
**Code: 3202 6373**

See poll results in the  
following slides!

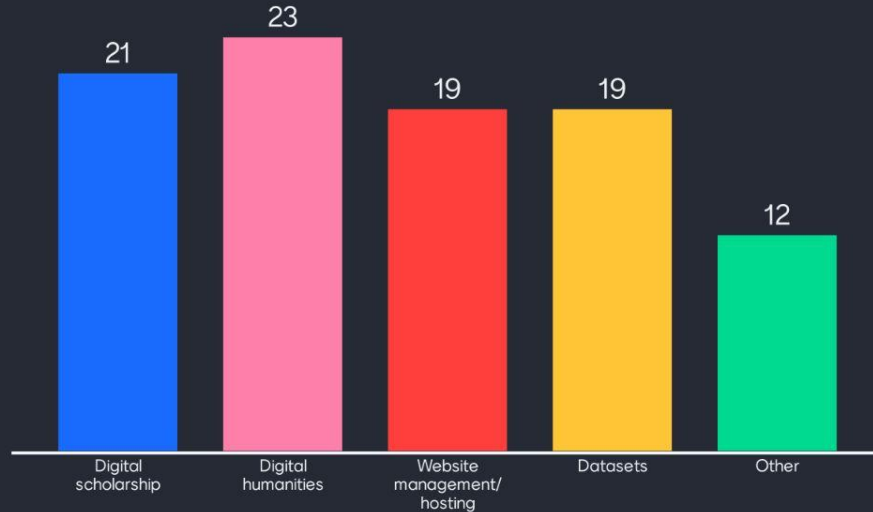




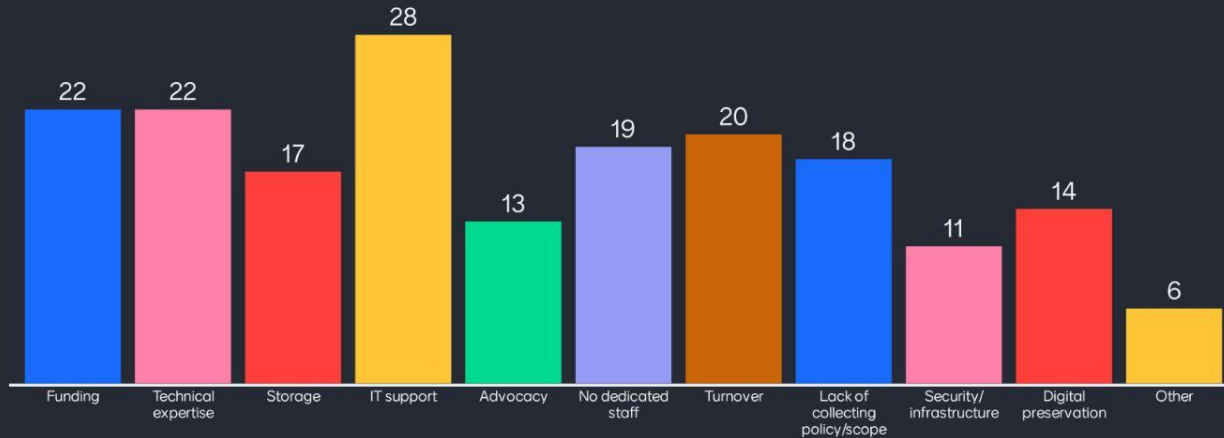
# What types of projects does your institution currently support? (select all that apply)



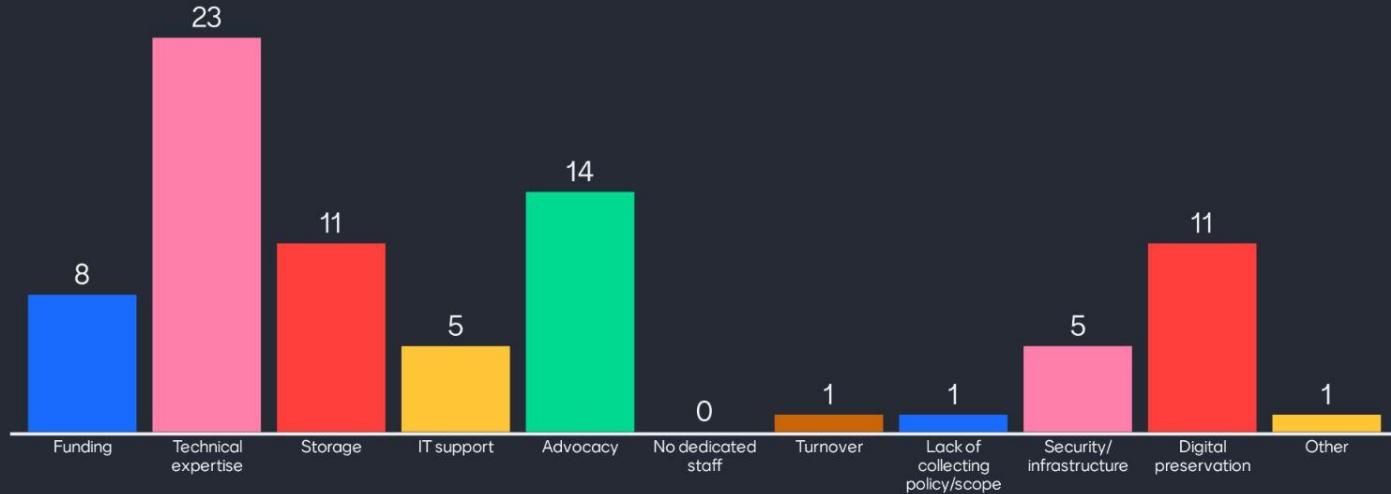
# What types of projects would your institution like to be able to support? (select all that apply)



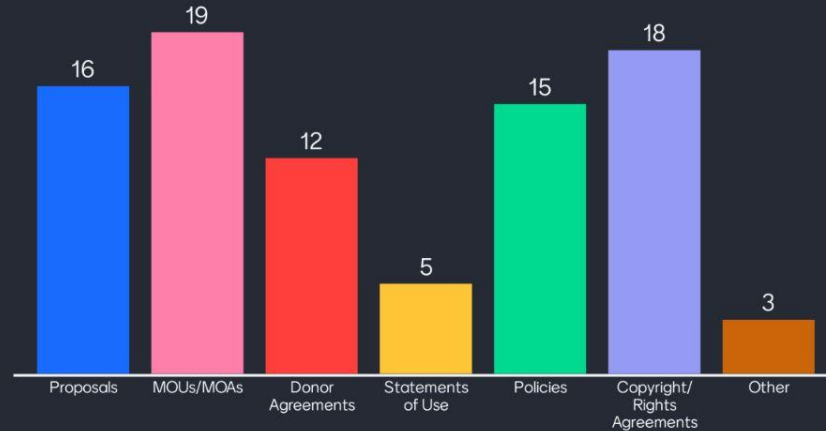
# What are the main bottlenecks within your institution for supporting digital scholarship? (select all that apply)



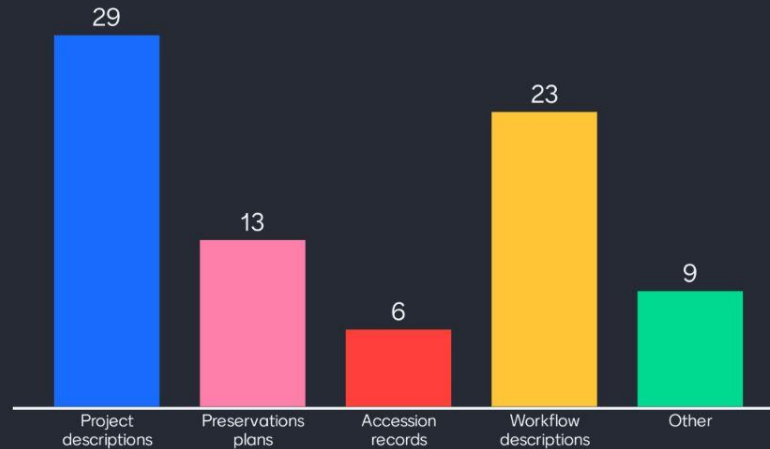
# What are the successes you've had using existing products and staff skills



# What types of forms do you currently use when working with stakeholders? (select all that apply)



What types of documentation do you create when working with digital scholarship projects? (select all that apply)



# Achievable starting places brainstorm

Migrating to 1 hosting platform

Dedication to project management

exhibits are often the end product for us, I make exhibit plans for each project so that lives on

Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration

Stakeholders never seem to comply with notify us if change of PI for your project

Use templates. Have conversations.

Start by finding someone that's interested and qualified.

Whoever fills out the forms correctly get prioritized lol

# Achievable starting places brainstorm

Project management guidelines

enforcing project charters

Better internal processes & documentation

Getting clear answers from other library folks on what their capacity for support is to shape what we can offer

Corner people in the hallways

Menu of available platforms, as little customization as humanly possible  
Sunset date

A review date for projects and a statement on the project website that provides the date!

Standardized criteria for what projects we will accept and better policies that outline roles and responsibilities.

# Achievable starting places brainstorm

Policies for different types of projects

Forever on the web means 5 years

Start with the easy stuff and scale up, expanding teams and contributions of expertise

Limiting scope creep

project charters are crucial

Service level agreements

Setting reasonable expectations up front

# Thank You!

**Corinne Guimont**, Interim Director,  
Publishing Services, [gcorinne@vt.edu](mailto:gcorinne@vt.edu)

**Alan Munshower**, Digital Collections  
Archivist, [alanmun@vt.edu](mailto:alanmun@vt.edu)

**Alex Kinnaman**, Digital Preservation  
Coordinator, [alexk93@vt.edu](mailto:alexk93@vt.edu)