Collaboration and Research Practices in the Humanities:

Supporting Scholarly Needs and Promoting Innovative Research

The preliminary discussion paper for the Humanities Collaborations and Research Practices Summit, October 24, 2016

Harriett Green, Angela Courtney, Megan Senseney, Maria Bonn, and Justin Williams

Introduction

"Humanities Collaboration and Research Practices: Exploring Scholarship in the Global Midwest" is a project funded by a Humanities Without Walls (HWW) Global Midwest award that aims to explore the community of practice engaged in the HWW Global Midwest initiative. Led by Harriett Green from the University of Illinois of Urbana-Champaign and Angela Courtney from Indiana University Bloomington, the "Humanities Collaboration and Research Practices" project (hereafter referred to as HCRP) examines the collaborative research practices of HWW Global Midwest awardees to understand how humanities research happens at the level of practice, process, and collaboration.

Background: Humanities Without Walls

Humanities Without Walls (HWW) is a consortium that links the humanities centers at fifteen research universities throughout the Midwest.[1] Informed in part by the decade-long work of the Central New York Humanities Corridor,[2] HWW was first conceived in 2012, and the consortium was awarded $3,000,000 the following year from the Andrew W. Mellon foundation to launch "set of innovative and experimental initiatives enabling them to advance education and research in the humanities."[3] The two core HWW initiatives were a series of pre-doctoral workshops for scholars in the humanities interested in exploring alternative academic (alt-ac) career paths and a competitive RFP to fund multi-institutional collaborative teams to conduct projects that explore grand research challenges.

The first grand research challenge invited scholars to submit proposals for research projects related to the theme of the "Global Midwest." The first round of funding awarded $727,000 to 14 projects to be completed by the end of 2016. With its emphasis on multi-institutional, interdisciplinary collaboration; its focus on innovative, applied research; and its inclusive approach to recruiting tenure-line scholars with varying degrees of experience with digital humanities and collaborative research, the HWW Global Midwest program presented a rich and highly refined set of research cases for the HCRP project to explore the evolving nature of humanities research. The value of such study can be seen in previous social scientific studies of scholarly information use and research practices in the humanities.

Background: Literature Review

Tracking shifts in humanities scholars' information seeking and other research practices has been a recurring topic of study among social scientists. Over the past fifteen years, most studies have placed

[1] See Humanities Without Walls website, http://www.humanitieswithoutwalls.illinois.edu/
[2] "About the Central New York Humanities Corridor," http://www.syracusehumanities.org/mellon/
[3] "About Humanities WIthout Walls," http://www.humanitieswithoutwalls.illinois.edu/about/history.html

particular emphasis on how information behavior changes in digital environments (Brockman et al., 2001; Palmer & Neumann, 2002; Palmer, 2005; Bernardou, 2010; Bulger et al., 2011). In 2006, the American Council for Learned Societies' Commission on Cyberinfrastructure released a groundbreaking report on cyberinfrastructure for the social sciences and humanities that made key recommendations for treating cyberinfrastructure as a strategic priority but also encouraged digital scholarship more generally with an emphasis on collaborative research projects. A few years later, Christine Borgman explored the possibility of "mak[ing] digital scholarship a leading force in humanities research," and explicitly called upon the humanities community to "invite more social scientists as research partners" and "make themselves available as objects of study" (2009). Concurrently, studies of collaboration among scholars engaged in the digital humanities and its impact on humanities scholarship began to proliferate (Siemens, 2009; Siemens, 2011; Deegan & McCary, 2012; Given & Wilson, 2015). With increased attention to scholarly collaboration in the digital humanities, further themes emerged around credit and authorship (Nowviskie, 2011; Nowviskie, 2012), the relationship between collaboration and infrastructure (Edmond, 2015), and the role of project management for alternative academics and other scholars in the humanities (Leon, 2011). While the majority of the social scientific studies above employ qualitative methods, quantitative methods have also been employed to study collaboration networks in terms of project membership (Quan-Haase, Suarez & Brown, 2015) and co-authorship (Ossenblok, Verleysen, & Engels, 2014).

In the vein of these previous studies, our aim for the HCRP project is to explore the evolving nature of humanities research, and the HWW Global Midwest project awardees comprise a cohort of humanists well situated to reflect upon how collaborative and experimental research initiatives affect their research practices and requirements, scholarly communication throughout the research process, and final research outcomes.

This preliminary white paper reports on initial findings from analysis of interviews with twenty-nine project team members from twelve HWW funded Global Midwest projects, with the goal of seeding further discussion at a stakeholders' summit on collaboration in the humanities to be held in Chicago, IL on October 24, 2016. Future publications will incorporate the outcomes of this stakeholder summit, along with more fine grained analysis of interview responses based on project membership, institutional affiliation, and personal and professional demographics.

Methods

We examine the HWW community through two forms of empirical study: qualitative interviews with Global Midwest awardees and a series of quantitative visualizations that explore the extended community's spheres of influence through network analysis. The project team conducted semi-structured interviews between fall 2015 through spring 2016 primarily by telephone and Skype with twenty-eight researchers who participated in projects funded by the first round of HWW Global Midwest awards.

Participants were asked about the aims of their collaborative projects, the processes for developing their collaborations, the types of resources used to support collaboration and project management (and whether additional resources are required), the challenges they encountered, data sharing practices, and how their research approaches and methodologies were influenced by engaging in collaborative research (see Appendix A for full interview protocol).

We recorded, transcribed, and coded the interviews in ATLAS.ti 7. Preliminary codes were developed inductively based on themes identified in the raw transcripts, and each transcription was coded multiple times to ensure inter-coder reliability (see Appendix B for project codebook). This study applies a qualitative analysis method that expands upon prior studies by Brockman et al. (2001), Palmer & Neumann (2002), and Palmer (2005), along with a theoretical grounding in qualitative content analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Our preliminary analysis is presented here in this early discussion paper, with further in-depth analysis ongoing.

Demographics

We interviewed twenty-eight project awardees, including nine principal investigators and 18 team members, from twelve projects funded in the first round of HWW Global Midwest grant awards. In addition to the HWW Global Midwest project awardees, we also interviewed one staff member of the overarching Humanities Without Walls project team. Our initial goal was to interview the principal investigators for each project and at least one project researcher from each collaborating institution. Ultimately, we reached one third of the total pool of potential interviewees, falling slightly short of our initial goal. But we succeeded in ensuring that respondents adequately represented the wide range of disciplinary and institutional affiliations associated with awarded projects, in addition to reaching team members from all but one of the awarded projects (excluding our own project, n = 13).

The majority (79 percent) of interviewees were tenured faculty, having achieved the rank of associate or full professor at the time of the interview. Only 11 percent of interviewees were assistant professors, and the remaining interviewees were in non-tenure-line positions. Compared to the broader pool of HWW Global Midwest awardees, the demographic group most underrepresented among our respondents are non-tenure-line project participants. Tenured professors are slightly overrepresented, due primarily to our emphasis on prioritizing interviews with project PIs (86 percent of whom are tenured faculty).

While the gender identification among participants is nearly evenly split between male and female (49 and 51 percent respectively) across all HWW Global Midwest awardees, interview respondents were slightly skewed. Among respondents, 57 percent identified as male and 43 percent identified as female.

For a visual demographic breakdown of round one awardees in the HWW Global Midwest initiative, see Appendix C. For a visual demographic breakdown of interview respondents, see Appendix D.

Preliminary Analysis

We identified several major thematic areas that reflect the issues, concerns, and pressing needs concerning humanities research collaborations, both in general and unique to the HWW Global Midwest initiative. The major themes that emerged in our preliminary analysis include: research practices, collaboration processes, project management, and scholarly communication practices. The respondents also identified notable challenges and benefits in engaging in collaborative and experimental humanities research. As the HWW Global Midwest initiative is still ongoing, our analysis tries to give a picture of the project's potential dynamics at the present moment, while reporting on the responses that respondents provided over the past year.

Research Practices

The HWW Global Midwest researchers often encounter situations that require them to step outside their own research practices, to investigate their methods, and to be open to the unfamiliar techniques of their collaborators. Respondents frequently find themselves working with partners who have widely different research practices, while sharing common topical interests. The researchers have coalesced into groups that engage in sometimes uncomfortable experimentation in order to pursue in-depth research explorations that range from movement and dance to water quality in Midwestern communities. Interdisciplinary approaches bring surprising discoveries as well as complex disagreements that linger beyond the projects. They use new and unfamiliar tools, as well as more traditional and familiar methods and approaches, while others creatively push themselves and their colleagues to experiment with approaches beyond their established academic milieu.

Interdisciplinary and Cross-Disciplinary Work

Broad inter- and cross-disciplinary work characterize the research foci as well as teams' make-up of HWW Global Midwest projects. Projects include diverse treatments of an initial concept: For example, research that originally focused on waterways may also include "ethnic leisure and labor in the Great Lakes." Interests, rather than methodologies, frequently bring the groups together. Scholars and performers learn from each other and sometimes find themselves in unfamiliar territory, such as improvisational dance for one scholar. Teams comprise filmmakers, historians, oral historians, independent scholars, teachers, museum personnel, librarians, and more. One respondent suggested that the value of this initiative was "almost more about the process … what we would call project- based learning has afforded individual faculty members to do work in the humanities, but stretching it even further, to do collaboration with non-university experts." One notable challenge observed by another respondent was the lack of truly interdisciplinary journals for disseminating such research, and that could be a potential barrier these types of collaboration.

Methods of Collaborative Analysis and Investigation

Methodologies vary greatly within HWW Global Midwest projects: Project leaders often mediate group differences, and in some projects, graduate research assistants also mediate the cross-disciplinary encounters, as in one project where the students asked "focused questions... to help figure out how their areas of expertise would come together." Respondents noted that several groups felt it was important to be in the same place in order to talk about the project, and preferred face to face conversation. One group had a week long residency that included dinner meetings, at which they would review what they discovered that day and how it affected their perception of the Global Midwest.

Many groups work very carefully to develop a method of analysis. One respondent noted, "We've really been in constant dialogue with a lot of different groups about what the shape of the project should in fact be and what sort of questions we should focus on." Another respondent characterized a group's work as having "a lot of cross-fertilization of methodologies … not so much about content." Another interviewed historian explained that s/he started to understand "how a performer uses historical research ...to produce "amazing things." The same respondent's project planned to employ several methods of analysis, including a short film, a series of interviews, investigating precise research questions, and a performance of dancers and scholars rolling around on the floor "because to resist was not going to happen." This type of development of collaborative methods was described by one group as a process that "unfolds in an uncertain and, in that sense, an egalitarian manner because no one knows yet what the thing will be. It makes some people anxious. It makes members uncomfortable sometimes, but it has been very productive. You go on an inkling. You go on a hunch and you see where it takes you. That is typical of ethnography, but also, I think, of collaboration, as well." These dynamic and educational elements of collaboration influenced how the participants' research approaches evolved as well.

Shifting Approaches to Research

Evidence of shifting approaches emerged throughout the interviews, as participants described shifts in their research, publication, and even pedagogical opportunities. One interviewee described her work as "like a loop. It is not a straight line." Others placed great value on "working with other scholars," leading to "discovering different research areas." Individually, some respondents noted that they now write "stuff that is not very academic, but that is intended for policy makers or community leaders." Respondents also observed shifts in their pedagogical approaches, as one described: "we might try to produce like a website or something that talked about the curriculum and how we did it." One respondent shared a visionary project goal to "create a collaborative teaching and education process that would bring in folks from outside the community." Researchers also sought ways to make more immediate community impacts through shifts in their approaches to research, as scholars applied their humanistic methods "to address important political, cultural and social issues."

Tools for Research

Most interviewed HWW Global Midwest research groups used popular file sharing and communications software and tools (See table A). A selection of teams described how they used unique platforms, including one group that made use of the digital humanities software built for the NINES and 18thConnect projects. But whether they used popular or specialized tools, the prevailing ethos in research tool choice and use is captured in one respondent's declaration that "we're using an existing infrastructure and we're applying it in a quite different way."

Another important piece of collaborative research infrastructure is storage for backing up and storing recorded data. Several respondents mentioned storage needs for data from interviews and video recordings, especially in regards to archiving and research protocol policies. One participant explained that in order to "protect what we had agreed to for IRB was much, much more complicated than when you're doing it on your own." Research policies per the IRB also factored into technical project workflows: Another team became so frustrated with the varying IRB processes among schools that they are trying to create a "kind of gentle IRB" process that would facilitate research and data sharing via "a protocol that could be approved at all of our universities."

Table A: Tools for Research

File Sharing and Communication	Software
Box	Final Cut 10
Dropbox	YouTube
Google Drive	Omeka
Zotero	Project Websites
Email	Garage Band
Video and cameras	NINES Platform
Telephone/Skype	GIS and mapping software

Epistemology

Merging epistemological approaches can enhance the research process, but the difficult combination of methods can also fracture research partnerships. Respondents appreciated being able to "see how each other was thinking," yet there were also difficulties, like the romanticized view of history that some historians perceived from performers. Another respondent note how they disagreed with a performance interpretation, but acknowledged it resulted from "a different leverage on the material." One participant

discussed the “epistemological difference between divides... that take a long, long time to sort out and a high level of trust. The constraints were pretty real.”

Respondents had notably positive and optimistic viewpoints overall toward their experiences. One respondent noted, “I’m hoping that this project re-centers anthropology… for some sort of reclaiming of what it is and what it ought to be in the contemporary moment.” Another respondent similarly observed, “to now spend a week in residence dealing with material that turned out to be very personal and emotional… I’m very grateful to the artists and the group who are used to working in these ways and kind of took me along.” Several participants echoed one respondent’s sentiment that the experience was “a very rich and rewarding project because we came from different disciplines. We could learn from each other.”

Discussion Questions

- What are potential outlets or venues for scholarly dissemination that could be developed to support outputs of interdisciplinary research collaborations?
- What tools and infrastructures should we consider developing or expanding to support research collaborations?
- How can shifts in research approaches and epistemologies be captured in documentation of the research process?

On Collaboration

When reflecting on the nature of collaboration, respondents described their engagement as “a form of collective learning,”; “a virtual program”; an effort to “bring people together in a common intellectual space”; and a process that “involves determining shared goals, finding a diversity of resources in the room, figuring out when to work collegially”. Another respondent observed the changes in technological infrastructures that support collaborative work: “It’s stunning that we’re able to do this across these kinds of distances. It’s a matter of really in-zone collaboration now. You know, ten years ago that was utterly impossible.”

How Collaborations Developed

Projects selected for HWW Global Midwest awards represent a mixture of pre-existing and newly developed collaborative teams. Responses among interviewees suggest a difference in motivation for formation of collaborations: For some, they desired to work with a particular set of colleagues, while others sought to find colleagues as a means of securing funding. The nature of the collaboration varied considerably across the projects of the interviewed respondents. Among respondents who were not the principal investigators, they described collaboration processes in a variety of ways, ranging from full engagement (e.g., “a democracy of participation” and a “real partnership”) to language that suggests removal or distancing (e.g., “I was invited to join into a collaboration which someone else had designed”).

Another respondent remarked that different collaborators assumed leadership positions at different times. As discussed above, several respondents also emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of their projects.

Related and External Collaborations

Respondents were quick to comment on their past experiences with collaboration, or lack thereof. Interviewed researchers who specialized in film and performance cited an existing culture of collaboration within their fields. Others remarked on their prior collaborations as being "unusual." Still others expressed their own discomfort with the practice of collaboration. One respondent remarked, "what I recall about sitting on the panel in front of the Chicago public to talk about processes of collaboration was that [we] both said we're terrified." Another dimension of the research collaborations mentioned by respondents was the involvement of colleagues from outside the Humanities Without Walls consortium. Engagement clearly extends beyond the HWW, as several interviewed respondents cited colleagues beyond the Midwest and internationally who are directly invested in their Global Midwest projects.

Credit, Co-authorship, and Collaboration

As respondents discussed collaborative initiatives, many were mindful of the importance of providing appropriate credit and recognition for project partners. One respondent noted that "for us, the notion of collaboration was built around the idea that both parties would be equally acknowledged." Negotiating appropriate credit, however, also can reveal moments of tension within projects. Another respondent observed that "there was a little bit of misunderstanding, and some disagreements […] had to do with who is being acknowledged for what."

Respondents differed on whether they planned for their collaboration to culminate in co-authored publications. One respondent noted, "I didn't expect a lot of co-authoring, more of a co-design of the platform." Another viewed co-authorship as an important "end product collaboration."

While discussion of evaluation for tenure and promotion were present within the interviews, they were not as prevalent as might be expected. One respondent noted that "Humanities have sort of a hard time understanding how to evaluate joint publications." In an anecdote about a colleague, another respondent described how co-authored publications in a tenure portfolio made the process of evaluation more difficult, but did not ultimately impede the scholar's promotion.

Sustaining Collaborative Relationships

Multiple respondents discussed the goal of sustaining collaborative relationships in their project beyond the grant period. The most common approach that respondents expressed pursing was to develop follow-on proposals for financial support from other granting agencies. Where sustaining the outcomes of the project supersedes the continuing collaborative relationship, an alternate approach frequently cited by respondents was to embed project materials in courses. Perhaps the most exciting form of

sustainability is respondents' openness to future collaboration, often stemming from the original HWW Global Midwest projects.

Discussion Questions:

- How can funding agencies shape CFPs to encourage deeper levels of collaborative engagement?
- What are successful models for easing tensions around credit and acknowledgement?
- How can Humanities Without Walls (and other initiatives) develop support for sustained post-project collaboration?

Project Management

Tools and Practices

Questions about project management methods inevitably brought forth voluble explanations, complaints and sometimes confessions. Descriptions of project management strategies were often rueful, even apologetic in tone: "it's absolutely [the] Wild West . . . It's all very loose."

Project collaborators maintained communication both remotely and in person. The most common tool cited for remote collaboration was email. Other frequently cited modes of engagement included conference calls (via Skype, Google Hangouts, or Phone), as well as file sharing and collaborative authoring tools (via Google Drive, Box, and Dropbox). Email was by far the most commonly named management tool. Some scholars had very strong opinions about how project management should work, and argued for "a timeline that's very clear, weekly updates and regular project meetings." One participant very self-consciously modeled good project management behavior, as they worked with a research assistant to distribute weekly updates to team members across a number of projects.

Many interviewees seemed chagrined about their project management methods or lack thereof, but one did highlight the HWW Global Midwest process as a positive learning experience: "I think that my experience with the Humanities Without Walls project and the other project have sort of together kind of pushed me to be more enthusiastic and more diligent in using these online tools for collaboration and sharing work."

Personnel and Project Meetings

Consideration of tools aside, the most consistently identified need by interviewees was for project managers--people with responsibilities dedicated to keeping the projects moving forward. In general, there seems to have been a dawning awareness of this need. One participant who had budgeted for a project manager did not immediately find her collaborators to be sympathetic to this budget allocation: "When we were planning this project, that was the big budget item and some of my collaborators were

like 'this is too much for the project manager' and I was like 'I think this is a big complicated project and we need somebody who really can deal with logistics'."

The growing sense of need for assistance and dedicated project management engenders a parallel sense of both the potential value of and for graduate students. Interviewed respondents repeatedly attested to the value of graduate assistants who shouldered the management burden of the projects or about the (unfulfilled) need for such students. Along with email and (graduate student) assistance, another common element of successful projects is in-person meetings between remote collaborators. On the negative side, we heard, "One of the challenges is that our project team has not been able to get together and that's a challenge on many levels," and, from one team, "nobody has met." Positive experiences were cited, such as getting together at the coffee shop, and for dinner and going on a field trip. "I really think that the in-person meetings are the most effective. That's when we're focused. That's when we're engaged. I mean the technology helps, but the in-person interaction is very important to the life of the project."

Logistical Challenges

The participants identified many project challenges with this new model of activity and funding. These included personnel challenges, the difficulty of identifying collaborators eligible to participate, the challenge of coordinating review by multiple IRBs, and having "to coordinate financial arrangements between 3 institutions, which are not necessarily used to doing this together." The participants highlighted some positive models of institutional support for effective project planning and organization, specifically the workshops held at Michigan State "where you could prototype your proposals, you get feedback on your proposals from peers, where you were given presentations by people from outside the university about collaborating with communities, so it's in a sense, professional development."

In reflecting on project planning and management, one participant summed up the sentiments of many, saying "that was definitely a learning curve for all of us." A steep learning curve for many, but one that most deemed worth undertaking. One interviewee shared that "this HWW process, which included certain professional development and information for faculty and then the opportunity to work together in teams to develop the proposal, was just priceless." Perhaps most positively, another respondent reported among their collaborators that "we all agreed that we'd like to do this again."

Discussion Questions:

- What existing institutional services are well suited to support humanities collaboration? How can we make scholars aware of those services?
- Are there opportunities to build centralized/shared/consortial services that might better support humanities collaboration at scale than the current distributed and variegated campus based services?
- What professional, intellectual and economic considerations should be taken into account when building a humanities research culture that optimizes the value of and for graduate student assistants?

- How can academic institutions, scholarly organization and funding agencies best encourage and support in-person engagement of scholars collaborating in the humanities?

Dissemination and Scholarly Communication

Respondents discussed varied approaches for disseminating their research, both in interim phases along the way as well as final products. Several themes emerged around issues of formats, impact, teaching, venues, and modes of representation.

Formats

Respondents cited a host of different formats for expressing and sharing their project work: Performances, films, websites were among the formats they used, as well as traditional written texts and academic presentations. And a number of respondents envisioned using a hybrid of formats to fully express their research products. One respondent described that they intended "to create some kind of interactive map [and] ideally a repository of sounds." Another discussed their strategies for sharing interview data as a format of dissemination, noting that "we're still processing the data [and] deciding how to feature it… we're not tweeting the results or something like that. We made a clear decision, because of the vulnerability of the population, to really wait for the dissemination of the results until we're able to ensure that we can protect our subjects in how we present the information." This response also highlights the complex characteristics of humanities data, and the multiplicity of factors that must be considered as part of the processes of data sharing and archiving.

The variety of data formats utilized by the interviewed researchers suggests that scholars increasingly may break away from traditional journal articles and monographs to explore the multitude of other ways that their scholarship can be shared.

Impact

Respondents identified diverse ways in which their work and scholarly products could have impact. As noted earlier, one major impact is in the sustainability and continuation of research work beyond HWW Global Midwest. Respondents cited how the grant awards are catalyzed longer-term collaborations, as one respondent observed that "sticking that group together and letting them work some of this stuff out is going to lead to more collaborations."

Respondents also saw avenues for making impact via their dissemination through different platforms. As one respondent explained, "I think what we've contemplated is public dissemination of research using new platforms. I think we've contemplated scholarly output in the traditional platforms…journals, whether they're online or in print, but we have contemplated getting research into the hands of stakeholders who are not scholars."

Teaching

The respondents both envisioned and actively incorporated their project content, research products, and research activities into their teaching. “One thing that we proposed initially and that wasn’t funded in the end was translating research to teaching,” one respondent explained. “So we’ve talked about sharing resources across campus and creating maybe team-taught seminars in heritage language teaching that really highlight this regional impact and regional nuance in the study of the teaching of heritage languages.” Another respondent described how they aim to develop curricular materials from of the project, explaining how they “would like to produce some sort of educational modules that other professors could incorporate into courses that would be taught in different departments on different themes.”

Graduate training was another key aspect of several projects: One investigator noted, “Our intention was, I think, twofold: we wanted to continue to work together on these things where we would forge joint-research products, where we would write co-authored articles, build a database of materials we have, develop new ways of doing analysis and so-on. That’s the one side. The other side, the more important side for us, I think, ultimately is to bring along graduate students in this tradition.”

Venues

Respondents saw their work being published in multiple outlets, often in ways that evolved with the project itself. As one respondent described their project as having multiple facets in which “initially it’s a web presence, but I can see process papers coming out of this in more humanities journals.” The community interactions and public outreach of several HWW Global Midwest projects also influenced how and where researchers published their work. As one researcher explained, “For a lot of my work, I’ve recently been writing stuff that’s not very academic, but that’s intended for policy makers or community leaders and those are all writing styles I’ve kind of had to learn on the fly.” Public accessibility characterized a notable number of non-traditional venues where respondents disseminated their works, including museum exhibitions, cinemas, YouTube, classrooms, at conferences, and online.

And for some, the platform where the project was built also functioned as a publication venue: One respondent observed, “in my field at least, there are few kinds of places where scholarship, once published, then has a continuing life… to me, one of the promises of Scalar that existing online there is a potential for people to comment on and add to and use in different ways.” This particular quote suggests that the ways in which audiences can interact with the scholarship can be a critical part of research, and venues that facilitate interactivity may become increasingly important to scholars’ publishing desires and needs.

Modes of Representation

Respondents drew upon multi-media and analog forms to represent their data, findings, and ultimate project results. We found that the researchers frequently employed fluid and hybrid modes of representing their work, ranging from a combination of transitory performance, written choreography,

and workshop; to a WordPress website blog that accompanied the larger project. One respondent described how new modes offered by digital tools and diverse media are critical to deepening humanities inquiry:

> A lot of Humanities fields deal in some way in interpretation and trying to understand the different ways that we can think about all kinds of different texts and we've also been really limited in the Humanities in the peer review system to what we can tell about our projects. In most peer-reviewed journals, it's very hard to put pictures or video or, you know, further tell the story that we're trying to tell.

In their chosen modes of representation, respondents had to critically think about how their data and scholarship was reaching the intended audiences. As one person questioned, "This is the critical question when we look at new platforms and new forms of dissemination. Are they serving the technologies? Are they serving the institutions that get grants to build these digital archives and laboratories for this sort of thing or are they serving those that want to receive the materials themselves."

Discussion Questions

- What should publication platforms for digital scholarship in the humanities have as features and functionalities?
- How can we facilitate collaborations among scholars through publication platforms?
- How can we promote new philosophies and conceptions of scholarly products in the humanities?

Challenge and Benefits

Challenges

Interviewees encountered a range of challenges in the course of their projects. Reported examples included challenges in collaborative processes, including concerns about the consistency among research group members in following project procedures (e.g., storage locations for project data, research procedures, or use online sharing tools). Many respondents also described major challenges in managing project budgets and personnel administration.

Several respondents recalled feelings of frustration about the demanding administrative overhead, which drew time and energy away from been conducting valuable research. Other respondents highlighted constraints and bureaucratic barriers to hiring and funding graduate assistance with their research: Examples of problems and challenges included graduate students' inability to pay for costly research expenses upfront, and researchers being limited in how much student assistance they had due to students' limitations on contracted work hours. Other interviewees expressed difficulties collaborating across universities in terms of research protocols, budgets, and policies.

Benefits

Many interviewees noted that participation in the Global Midwest projects also benefited their own research, their scholarly communities, and the wider public. In particular, the growth and expansion of scholarly networks was a prevalent theme across a number of interviews, as respondents repeatedly expressed the sentiment that their work contributed to and provided broader exposure for local scholarly networks in the Midwest. As one respondent noted, "I think the grant was intended to activate networks within the global Midwest—the people who wanted to work together, but I think that most of the people working in the Global Midwest haven't done research about the Midwest before."

Seven different respondents expressed the value of being able to educate and interact with the public during their project work, and to expand a community of research. One respondent discussed the relationship between scholars and the public arts community, noting that project outcomes will create an opportunity to provide a valuable space for intellectual engagement and exchange that reaches scholars, local arts communities, and the general public. Another respondent called for an expansion of public humanities through publicly accessible and still peer-reviewed dissemination venues, so that "people outside of the academy can encounter [humanities research] and in some ways not feel entirely excluded."

HWW Global Midwest activity also spurred many researchers to pursue new interests and work with others both in and outside of their field who they otherwise never would have had met. One participant explained that until she worked on the HWW Global Midwest project, she had never previously considered the opportunity to produce alternative forms of publication outside of those traditional to academia. Another respondent reflected on a bond that formed between herself and others working to produce a public performance: "I thought it was totally unique because...leading these colleagues at different universities definitely deepened my relationship with them." Another respondent reported that her time doing research on the global Midwest expanded her research interests and led to another regional research opportunity. These examples from the interviewed researchers' experiences even more strongly underscore how research collaborations can lead to future opportunities for social bonds and deepened professional opportunities.

Discussion Questions:

- In what ways could institutional entities such as humanities research centers create effective collaborative relationships to help ease the burden of managing budgets between multiple institutions?
- Can challenges within the collaborative processes ultimately aid in research practice? In what ways?
- What tools and platforms could be used to help manage IRB restrictions and allowances between multiple collaborating institutions in the future?

Network Analysis

The network analysis component of this project is still ongoing, but the project team is including two basic network graphs within this discussion paper to provide readers with a preliminary overview of how THE HWW Global Midwest projects are connected to universities within the consortium (see Fig. 1). For our purposes, the HCRP project is excluded. In this network, the size of orange nodes corresponds to number of awardees at each institution, size of blue nodes correspond to number of team members on each project, and thickness of lines corresponds to number of connections between a project and an institution.

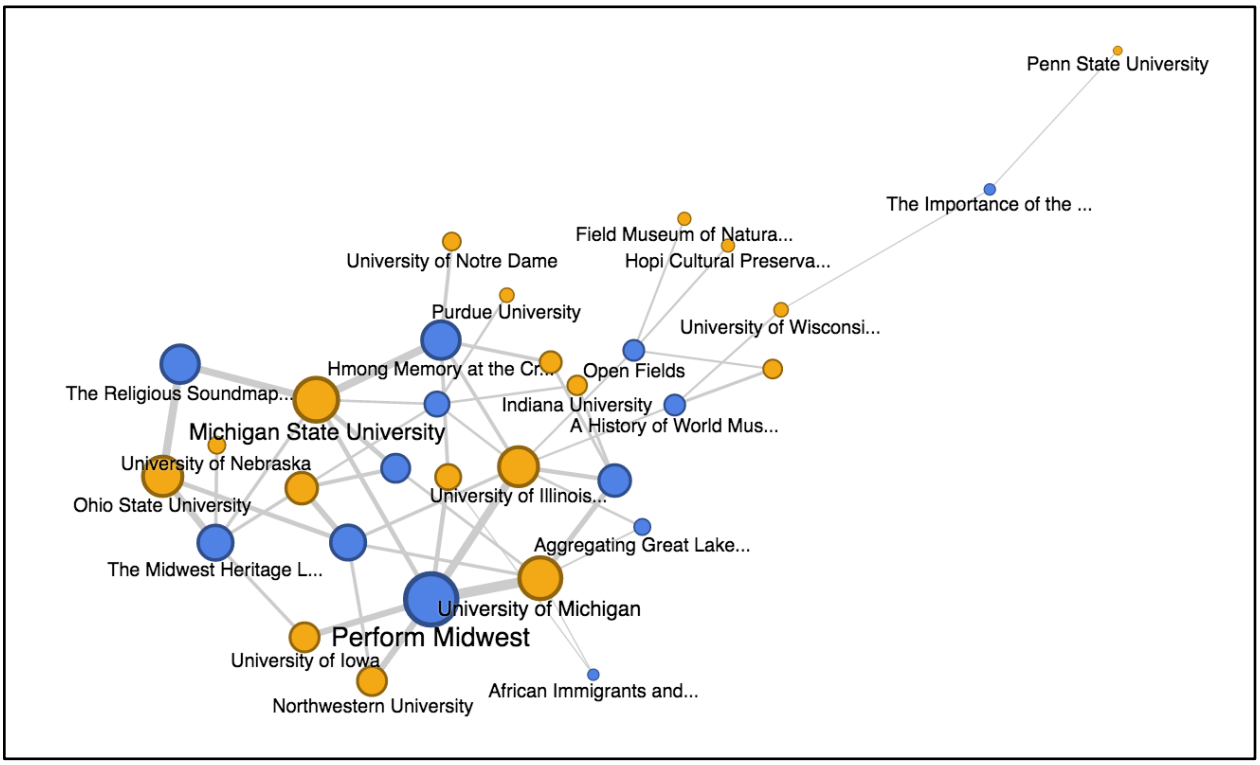

Fig. 1 Network diagram illustrating relationship between projects and institutions.

"Perform Midwest" was the project with the largest number of team members and the largest degree of multi-institutional collaboration with team members drawn from six different universities within the consortium. Other projects, including "Hmong Memory at the Crossroads" and "The Midwest Heritage Language Network" also assembled project teams from a large number of institutions. Additional content analysis that incorporates this knowledge may help determine if there is an optimal number of institutional partners for collaborative research. More partners may provide more perspectives and cross-fertilization of ideas, but as the number of partners increase so, too, does the administrative overhead.

The above diagram also invites insights about which institutions have proven the most successful in participating in funded projects during the first round of the HWW Global Midwest initiative. The University of Illinois is home of the Humanities Without Walls initiative, and thus it is unsurprising to see its position as an institutional partner on seven different projects. Its prominence in this regard is followed by Michigan State University and the University of Michigan, with members from both institutions partnering on six different projects. Penn State is a notable outlier within the consortium, as it has only participated in one HWW Global Midwest project. The "Open Fields" project is also notable as the only project to have formalized partnerships with institutions from outside the consortium. This network may suggest that particular institutions within the consortium may have done more to incentive faculty to submit proposal or facilitate in proposal development. A follow on project will pursue this line of inquiry through an in-depth study of humanities center directors and other key institutional stakeholders within the consortium.

Conclusion/Looking Ahead

As we move forward, we propose these issues to consider in discussing humanities research collaborations:

- How can connections between teaching and research be more strongly supported through engaging students in collaborations?
- How can we encourage a culture of sharing data and interim phase research within the humanities?
- How can institutional investments in collaborations can be encouraged to ensure research sustainability?
- What forms, venues, and methods of dissemination are best suited to collaborative work?

This discussion paper offers a preliminary review of the gathered interview data and the early findings from our initial analysis. We encourage readers to engage with the proposed discussion questions as we undertake one of the critical final elements of the HCRP study, the October 24 HCRP Stakeholder Summit. The goal of the Summit is to gather reflections from prominent scholars in the humanities, leaders in higher education, information professionals and publishers, funders, and other key stakeholders on the strategies for aligning scholarly requirements and needs with current practices and services for digital scholarship. The discussions, responses, and generated recommendations from the Summit will be summarized and incorporated in the final white paper report.

The HCRP project team will continue to apply in-depth qualitative content analysis that will be reported in the final white paper. A series of ongoing quantitative data visualizations will be included in the final white paper report, and we anticipate that the data analysis and resulting visualizations will reveal various networks of collaboration and thematic concerns emerging from the HWW Global Midwest research projects.

We ultimately envision that the full findings and reporting of the Humanities Collaborations and Research Practices project will offer new insights and point to new avenues for exploring the dynamics of experimental and innovative research collaborations in the humanities and humanistic social sciences.

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APPENDIX A:

Interview Guide for Humanities Collaborations and Research Practices:
Exploring Scholarship in the Global Midwest

Estimated length: 45 to 60 minutes

Goals of the interview:

1) Identify how scholars participate in research practices and how collaboration affects their research processes
2) Determine how humanities scholars define collaboration and the types of information sharing workflows and research infrastructures they build in collaborative research
3) Understand the impact of humanities initiatives focusing on collaboration, like the Global Midwest, and how they expand the global impact of scholarship in the humanities.

Introduction

Hello, my name is [ ] from the University of Illinois / Indiana University. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the study "Humanities Collaborations and Research Practices: Exploring Scholarship in the Global Midwest."

First let me tell you about the study. The research team is headed by Harriett Green at the University Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This project is supported by a "Global Midwest" grant from the Humanities Without Walls (HWW) consortium, a Mellon Foundation-funded initiative to support large-scale humanities collaborations across institutions in the Midwest.

The full study consists of a set of interviews designed to discover how humanities scholars share data, build self-generated research environment infrastructures for supporting data sharing and research dialogues, and frame their collaborations in the context of their broader research aims and project goals.

Your responses to the interview questions are confidential. Only summary data will be reported, and no individual or institutional names will be used unless you have given explicit permission in the consent form to be quoted directly. Before we begin, let me review the consent form and ask for your verbal consent.

Interview Questions

<u>Background</u>

1. What is your position and area of research?

2. Please briefly describe the focus and goals of your HWW-funded Global Midwest project.

Structures of Collaboration

3. How did you initially envision the "collaboration" element for your project - how do you define "collaboration"?

4. What tools did you decide to use for managing project workflow processes between your collaborators? What would help make the process smoother/what do you need?

5. What are the formats / methods you are considering for publishing your project results?

Data Sharing and Scholarly Communication

6. How are you sharing/disseminating updates about your ongoing project?

7. How has this collaborative project affected the ways that you share research, store data, or conduct your research in general?

8. Where and how are you storing the data for your project?

9. What kinds of challenges did you encounter during this project?

Scholarly Impact and Future Outcomes

10. How do you envision the impact of your project work and publications?

11. Do new platforms and tools open up possibilities for changed scholarly publications and research outputs in the humanities? Could you elaborate?

Demographics

This information will help us to characterize responses, minimize bias, ensure representative series of focus groups, inform recruitment and is optional.

Title and rank:
Academic degrees:
Gender:
Nationality:
Native language:
Other languages used for research:
Years working in this research area:

Closing

Thank you for your time. Your responses will be combined with those of others to provide information about how HWW-funded projects are developing and the types of collaborative research and data sharing practices emerging among humanities scholars.

Appendix B:

Codebook for Humanities Collaborations and Research Practices:
Exploring Scholarship in the Global Midwest

Category: Area / Role / Project

Codes	Code Definition
GM Projects	Mention of specific HWW-funded Global Midwest project
Related Projects	Mention of any non-HWW-funded projects
Research Area	The interviewee's specific area of expertise (i.e., mention of specific disciplines)
Institutional Affiliation	Affiliation within a university/department/unit; specific scholarly or professional society; museums, non-profits, etc.
Role (on a given project)	Explanation of what, specifically, the interviewee contributed to the project

Category: Research Practices

Codes	Code Definition
Methods of Analysis/Investigation	Mention of specific research methodologies (e.g., ethnography, qualitative analysis), approaches to praxis/production, or particular ways of generating the research outcomes (e.g., development of a journal, development of a performance)
Interdisciplinarity/Cross-disciplinarity	Mention of working across disciplines or incorporating practices from multiple disciplines
Shifting Approaches	Acknowledged changes in research practices in relation to this project or following the collaboration
Epistemology	Overall philosophy and approach to actual project; mention of specific modes of interpretation or schools of thought
Tools for Research	Mention of any tools (whether analog or digital) that were necessary for conducting research (e.g., digital platform, physical objects, collaborative authoring or file sharing)

Category: Dissemination / Scholarly Communication

Codes	Code Definition
Formats	Primary format for publication or distribution (e.g., conference presentation, poster, article, website, performance, film)
Modes of Representation	How scholars choose to communicate specific project products or results (text, media, illustration, graphs, visualizations, etc.) -- this represents a more granular understanding of what is included in an overarching format
Venue	Mention of a named location, host, or publisher for a given dissemination (e.g., a university press, a film festival, a specific conference or journal, a physical location) OR specific qualities of the aforementioned
Teaching and Curricular Integration	Explanation of modes of dissemination relating to pedagogy and instruction (e.g., the creation of curricular materials, the development of new syllabi, the use of research products/outcomes in the classroom)
Impact	Mentions of the visible and potential impacts of the project's outcomes/results or envisioned impacts on disciplines, a particular area of scholarship, and/or general scholarly practices

Category: Collaboration

Codes	Code Definition
Non-Project Interactions (external)	Discussion of collaborative interactions or projects in addition to or outside of the Global Midwest project; interactions with collaborators other than the direct Global Midwest team
Credit and Reputation	Mentions of prestige, visibility, reputation accruing due to results of project; concerns about diminished reputation or lack of credit; consequences of differing research methods in terms of credit; also, discussions of authorship credit
Formation of Collaboration	How collaboration was established and formed for Global Midwest project
Sustainability	Plans for keeping the project and/or collaboration going or for developing new projects with the Global Midwest team
Mode of Communication	Types of communication/interaction (e.g. face-to-face, virtual synchronous, virtual asynchronous, mixed)

Category: Project Management

Codes	Code Definition
Project Planning	Mentions and descriptions of how the project was scoped, the

	structuring of the project's steps and tasks, and workflows involved in project planning
Budget and Funding	Mentions of how the project budget was developed, applications for funding, how budget affected project outcomes, challenges in budgeting, and descriptions of other funding sources outside of HWW
Tools for Project Management	Specific mentions and/or descriptions of software, tools, methods, or workflow processes used for project management
Personnel/Human Resources	Specific mentions of project managers, graduate assistants, and other key people involved in project coordination and management

Category: Networks

Codes	Code Definition
Geographic Connections	Mention of geographic relationships between entities or locations that are key to the project's scope, research methods, results, findings, etc.; mention of new connections due to geographic relationships. These can be specific areas mentioned or generalized regions, including the Midwest or elsewhere
Institutional Connections	Mention of relationships between project group members at other organizations or places of work (universities, professional groups, associations, etc.)
Connections Across Research Areas	Mention of relationships developed either between people or methods across different areas of research. This could include differing/similar research methods, past involvement in a different research field, collaborative methods applied in tandem to create compatible and effective interdisciplinary research strategies, etc.
Social/Professional Connections	Indications of relationships between collaborators on a social/professional level. This could include a history between two collaborators, the reason for collaboration (ex. notorious in the field), past collaboration projects between two or more members, etc.

Category: Challenges

Codes	Code Definition
Challenges	Any challenges encountered during the course of the project;

	this will overlap across categories

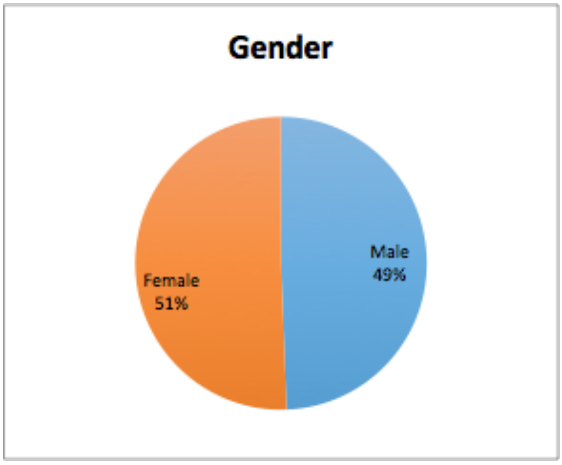
Category: Benefits

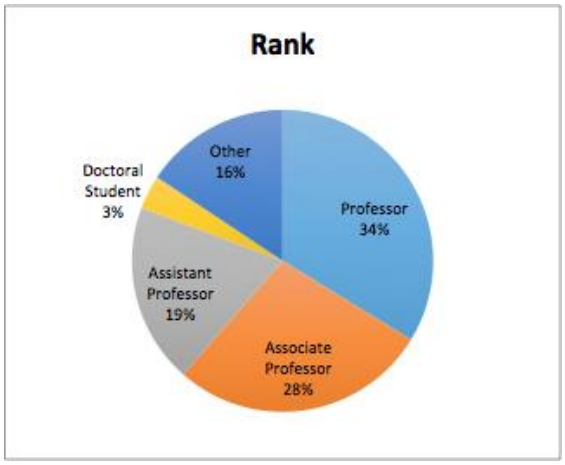
Codes	Code Definition
Benefits	Mentions of specific benefits of the project outcomes, the benefits of engaging in the collaborative process, and benefits to the individual researcher's practices and experiences; this will overlap across categories

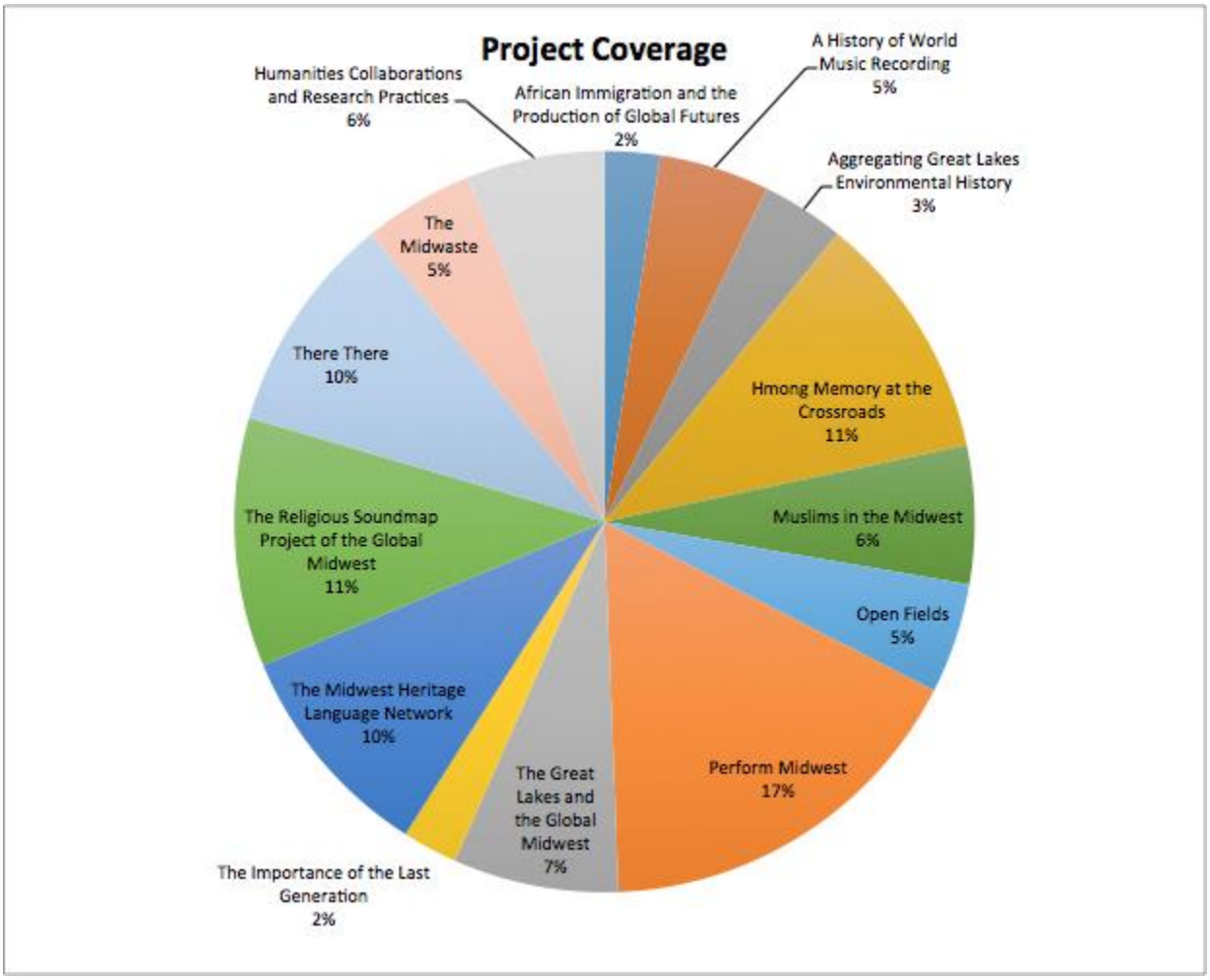
Category: Dates

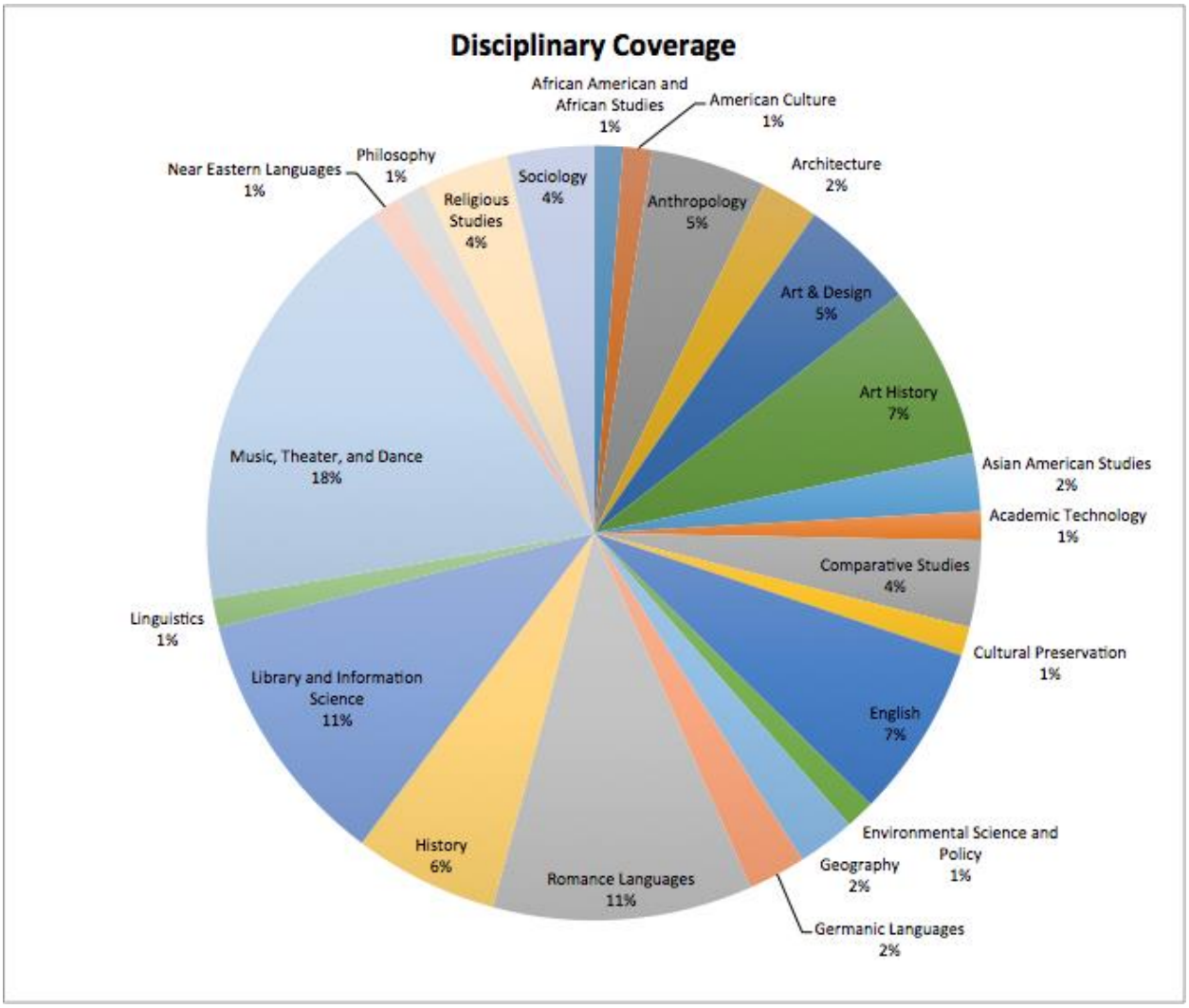
Codes	Code Definition
Dates	Dates of specific events

Appendix C: Demographics for Humanities Without Walls Global Midwest Initiative

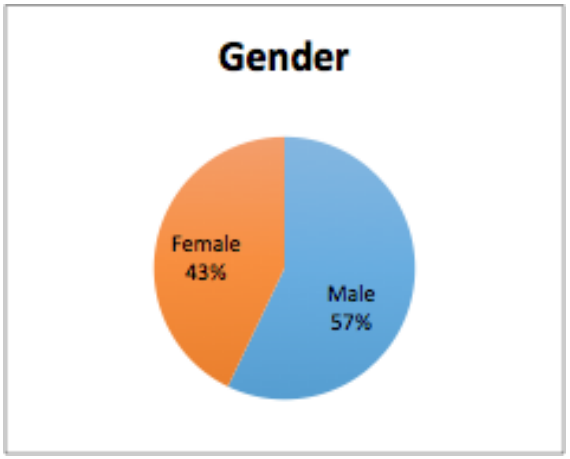


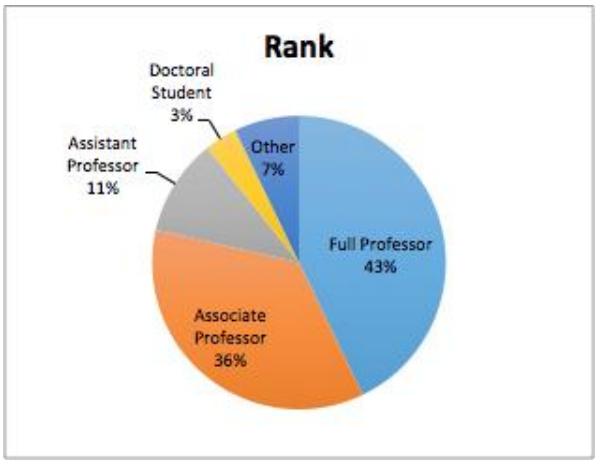


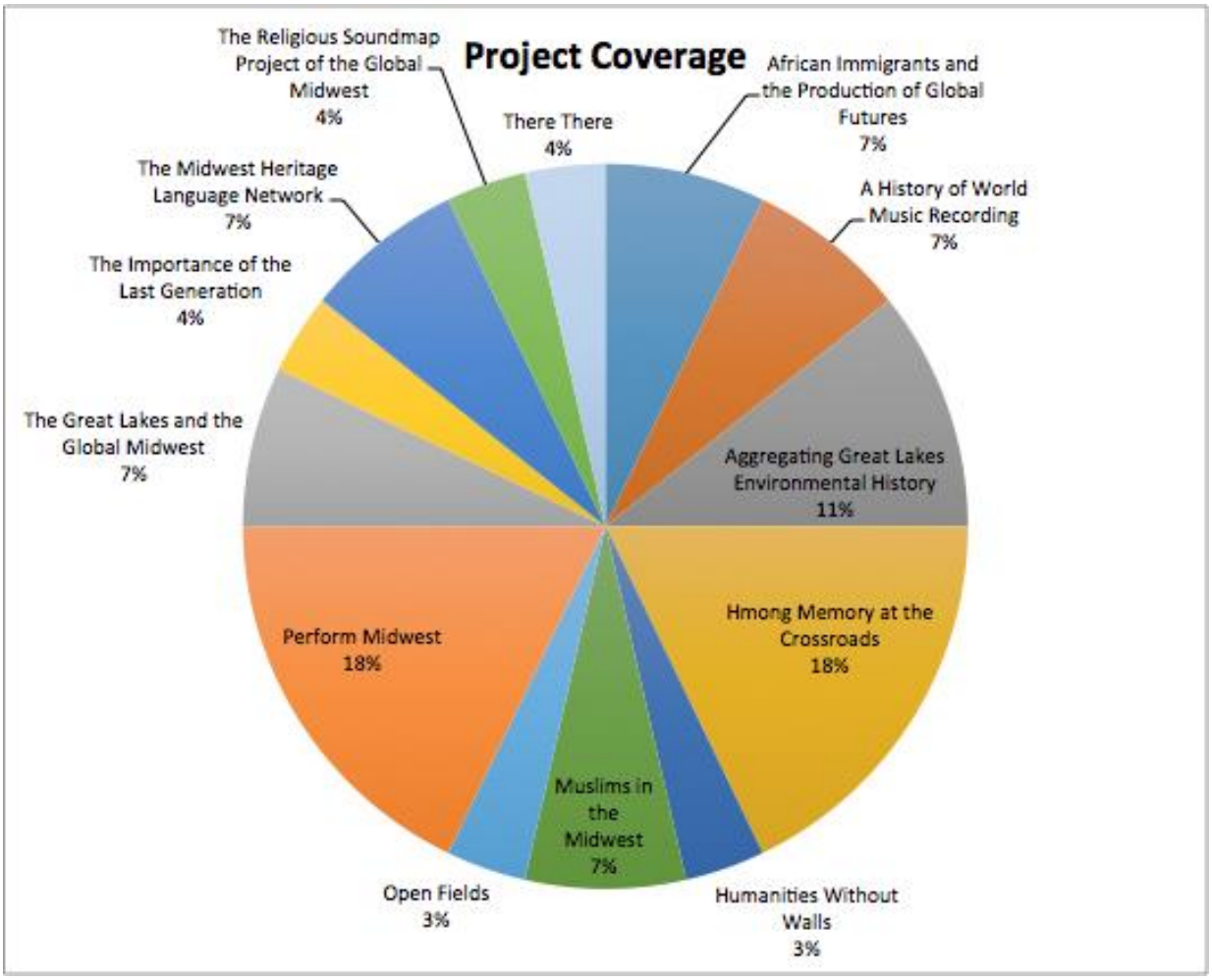


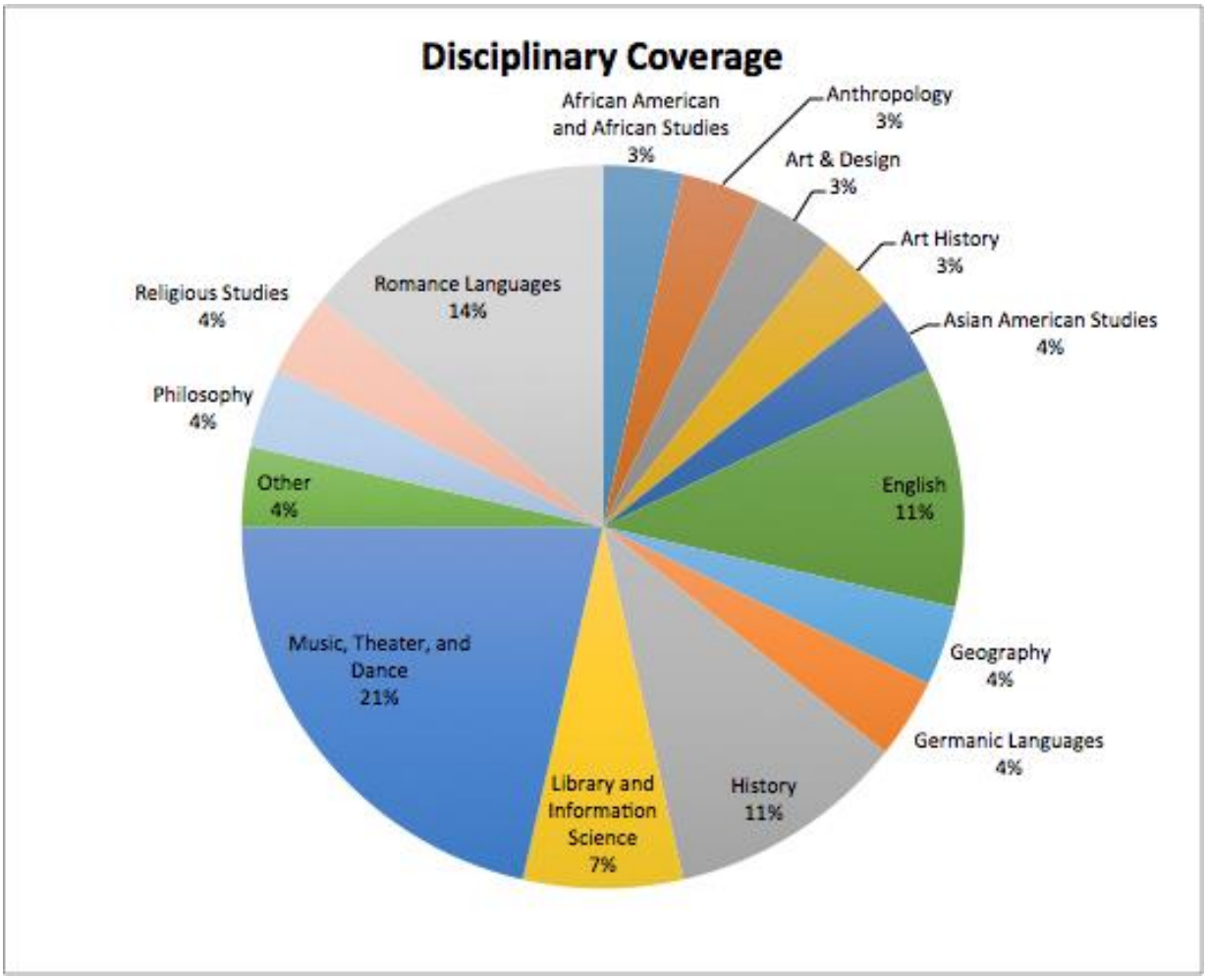

Disciplinary Coverage
African American and African Studies 1%
American Culture 1%
Architecture 2%
Anthropology 5%
Art & Design 5%
Art History 7%
Asian American Studies 2%
Academic Technology 1%
Comparative Studies 4%
Cultural Preservation 1%
English 7%
Environmental Science and Policy 1%
Geography 2%
Germanic Languages 2%
Romance Languages 11%
History 6%
Library and Information Science 11%
Linguistics 1%
Music, Theater, and Dance 18%
Near Eastern Languages 1%
Philosophy 1%
Religious Studies 4%
Sociology 4%

Appendix D: Demographics for Interview Respondents








Disciplinary Coverage
African American and African Studies 3%
Anthropology 3%
Art & Design 3%
Art History 3%
Asian American Studies 4%
English 11%
Geography 4%
Germanic Languages 4%
History 11%
Library and Information Science 7%
Music, Theater, and Dance 21%
Other 4%
Philosophy 4%
Religious Studies 4%
Romance Languages 14%