Title: Reading Response 5

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About: This piece is a more developed form of the “Manifesto” on the principles of which the final website will be created. The Manifesto is 639 words in length.

Title: A Digital Humanities Manifesto on The Colonial Mindset

In last weeks "manifesto", I talked about finding the several routes the internalization of colonialism takes, and the potential for DH to be both a perpetuator of colonial models as well as a possible alternative to the colonial Eurocentric model of knowledge production and perpetuation. In the process of laying my ideas out, I forgot that I myself was following a pseudo-colonialist thought process by completely ignoring the human aspect behind the production of DH websites and the labor and histories that goes into the creation of DH projects. I would Like to thank Thara for her comment on my previous post, as both her comment, her own discussion board post from last week and the readings for this week have made me realize the need for viewing through a critical lens, not only the topics that I plan to work upon through the medium of DH, but also the modes of creation and production related to a DH project.

In last week’s post, I very briefly touched upon accessibility and decentralization of digital tools as a way of counteracting the profit driven capitalistic model that big tech companies follow today. Those are the values that are almost automatically superimposed onto any institution that incorporates the tech company's technology into their functioning. For any DH project to potentially counteract the imperialistic colonial models, I believe that firstly it is important to address the exclusionary barriers set up by the functioning of big tech company sponsored digital tools, The articles for this week touch upon how to do exactly that, through the concept of minimal computing. By taking low tech alternatives to the big tech digital solutions, a digital project can address the sustainability question that bounds up DH projects to institutional and big tech agendas. It also addresses the accessibility question by reducing the economic barrier to a large extent, and making static websites that are not dependent on high-speed internet access or high-tech hardware, is immune to a lot of modern hacking tools by means of being reusable code. In this way, minimal computing creates scope for personalized DH projects from people and communities previously excluded from the framework of traditional corporate dependent digital projects. But it raises a different accessibility question based on the fact that minimal computing requires the potential creator to be quite well versed in a variety of coding languages means that scholars of various fields, with very little or no knowledge of coding languages cannot create a website for their digital project as they might be able to with WordPress. They must rely on technical experts and their skills to either encode the entire project for them, or to actively guide and teach them the skills in a hands-on way. The availability of such experts creates another barrier, and the solution offered by the text is to incorporate basic coding education as part of the educational framework, to create self-reliant digital practitioners. For my project, this week’s readings and the overall discussion surrounding minimal computing added another level of nuance to the ways in which DH can promote decentralization and accessibility, through promoting minimal computing practices. But, in this way may also create another interesting intersection between imperialistic imposition of agendas and digital projects in the way that minimal computing in trying to promote independent technical autonomy among people, creates an immediate dependance on technical expertise at the moment, to help them with their projects immediately or teach them the code and how to use it for themselves, creating another potential avenue for indoctrinative agenda to flow in through. The readings also reinforced within me through the conversation surrounding the role of current technical experts in promoting and supporting minimal computing practices, the need to recognize, acknowledge and reward the technical expertise and labor that goes into the creation of a digital project.