Musicals, Mapping, and Markup: <code type="Literary"/>

50-word abstract:

This roundtable discussion engages the audience in learning to write code and exploring how coding enhances studies of literary history—offering orientation in space and time. We provide examples from student-led Digital Humanities projects on the musical *Hamilton* and in Victorian studies of women’s writing and the British empire.

Description:

Roundtable panelists from two University of Pittsburgh campuses discuss their shared methods in text encoding and data processing, in their work with *Hamilton: An American Musical* and with Victorian era ghost stories and imperial newspapers. Panelists will invite the audience to engage interactively with their projects, to learn about the OCR (optical character recognition process) for historic newspapers and maps, and to look “under the hood” at their underlying eXtensible Markup Language (XML). Audience members will work with panelists to code a short text from one of the projects (an excerpt from the musical or from a Victorian publication) and reflect on how the coding process alters the way we read, think, and write about literary texts and cultural artifacts.

Keeping with the conference theme of *seeking freedom*, we will discuss whether markup enchains and delimits texts or whether it can offer liberating possibilities in helping to expand access to literature. This panel is designed for discussion of intersecting interests in the ongoing projects of the participants, rather than separate presentation. Panelists and audience will investigate the following questions:

* What patterns in literary texts can we mark and study with computational tools?
* Does computer markup constrain interpretation? Or, can markup be written to expand possibilities for interpretation?
* What dimensions of literature are plottable on maps? Or how does our use of maps change when they are connected to literary texts?
* What new narratives can we tell about literary texts when we code them for sharing on the public web?

**Participants** **(two chapters: Pitt-Pittsburgh and Pitt-Greensburg):**

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1. What is XML encoding?
   1. Hierarchy, imposed by the physical/intellectual structure of a text
   2. Audience engagement?
2. Our projects
   1. Hamilton project
      1. Challenges of markup, issues of structure
   2. 1857 Indian Rebellion
      1. Challenges of mapping
3. Mapping your project
   1. Developing a work plan, collecting materials
   2. Deciding how to impose structure
      1. Distortion problems
   3. How am I supposed to implement this?
      1. Roadblocks and strategic problem solving (debugging)
4. Mapping your markup
   1. What about the structure is important?
   2. How do I create a model?
   3. Dealing with distortion
      1. LMNL and Text-as-Graph
      2. TEI simple
5. Mapping your data
   1. What do maps do?
   2. GIS is HARD, and sometimes a map is better without GIS
   3. Drawing your mental map exercise?
6. Barriers to entry: Challenges in DH praxis
   1. How can I do this if I don’t have a class for it?
   2. Open-Source Culture, Creative Commons
   3. Intersections of identity
      1. Which English/humanities students are empowered to pursue digital projects? What resources encourage that?
      2. How does the future of literature (both print and digital media) impact you as a scholar? What affordances and disadvantages do you think it allows?
      3. Franco Moretti, privilege, and Cult of Personality
7. Questions and Feedback