Understanding the Experience of Seeking Digital Scholarship Support

Emma De Vera, Vincent Qiu   Design Thinking for Library Services

Motivation

"At U-M Library, 'digital scholarship' is a broad term applied to a range of scholarly activities including the use of digital evidence and method to answer research questions, digital authoring, digital publishing, digital curation and preservation, digital use and reuse of scholarship, digital pedagogy. Often informed by digital humanities, digital scholarship can also benefit from, or make use of, participatory culture, shifts towards greater transparency, and open source tools and ethics, Open Access, and greater transparency. Within the Library context, digital scholarship relies on information and data, various digital tools, methods, platforms, infrastructures and, most importantly, people."

Above definition informed by:

Abby Smith Rumsey, "New-Model Scholarly Communication: Road Map for Change."

Mark Murphy & Cristina Costa (2018) "Digital scholarship, higher education and the future of the public intellectual." Futures, 111:August 2019, 205-212. doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2018.04.011

John Cox (2016) "Communicating New Library Roles to Enable Digital Scholarship: A Review Article," New Review of Academic Librarianship, 22:2-3, 132-147. doi.org/10.1080/13614533.2016.1181665

Literature Review

Our literature review on academic libraries who have established digital scholarship departments revealed three key themes.

1. Digital Scholarship should approach projects as collaborative scholarship, breaking from traditional service models.

2. In order to facilitate collaborative and effective work, Digital Scholarship projects need clear and honest communication between all parties involved.

3. Institutional support is key to the success of digital scholarship work because it underlies all cross-campus partnerships and a library's ability to allocate resources.

Interviews

Our interviewees were stakeholders who had previously contacted the Digital Scholarship team seeking assistance with their research and scholarship. These individuals fell into three categories: library staff, graduate students, and faculty.

Our questions centered on the user's experience contacting and creating relationships with librarians. These data allowed us to identify further issues with the initiation process. We analysed their responses in an affinity wall.
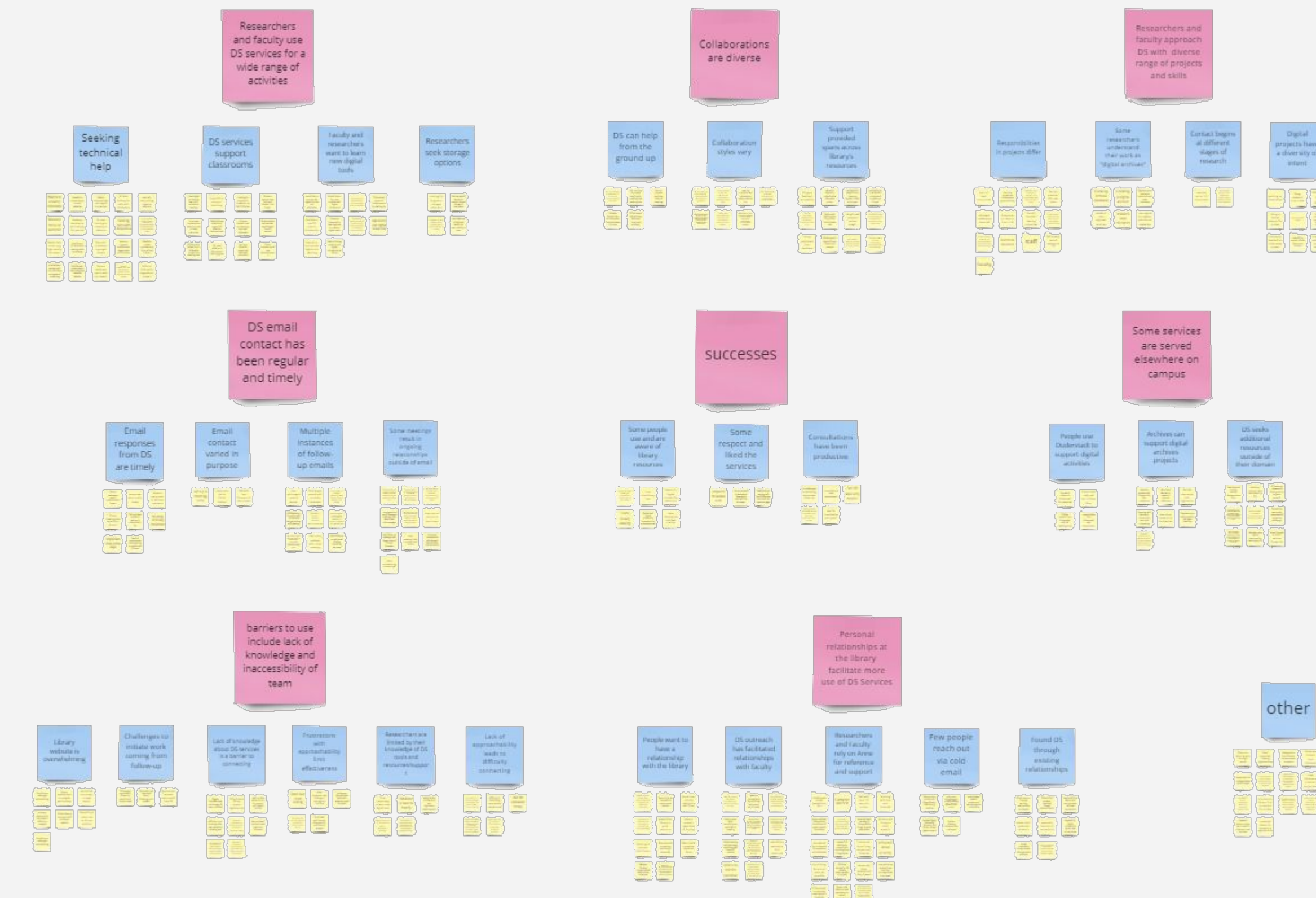
Problem Statements

People do want to learn and incorporate new digital scholarship tools, but there are barriers.

People **do not always know what digital scholarship support they need**, and as a result they do not know where to go or who to ask.

Digital scholarship **services and resources are not all centrally housed** within one university department, and some types of support are better served by some department rather than others, and as a result frustrations arise when people feel their needs are not met in individual departments.

People **rely on previously established connections** to facilitate identifying appropriate resources in the library.
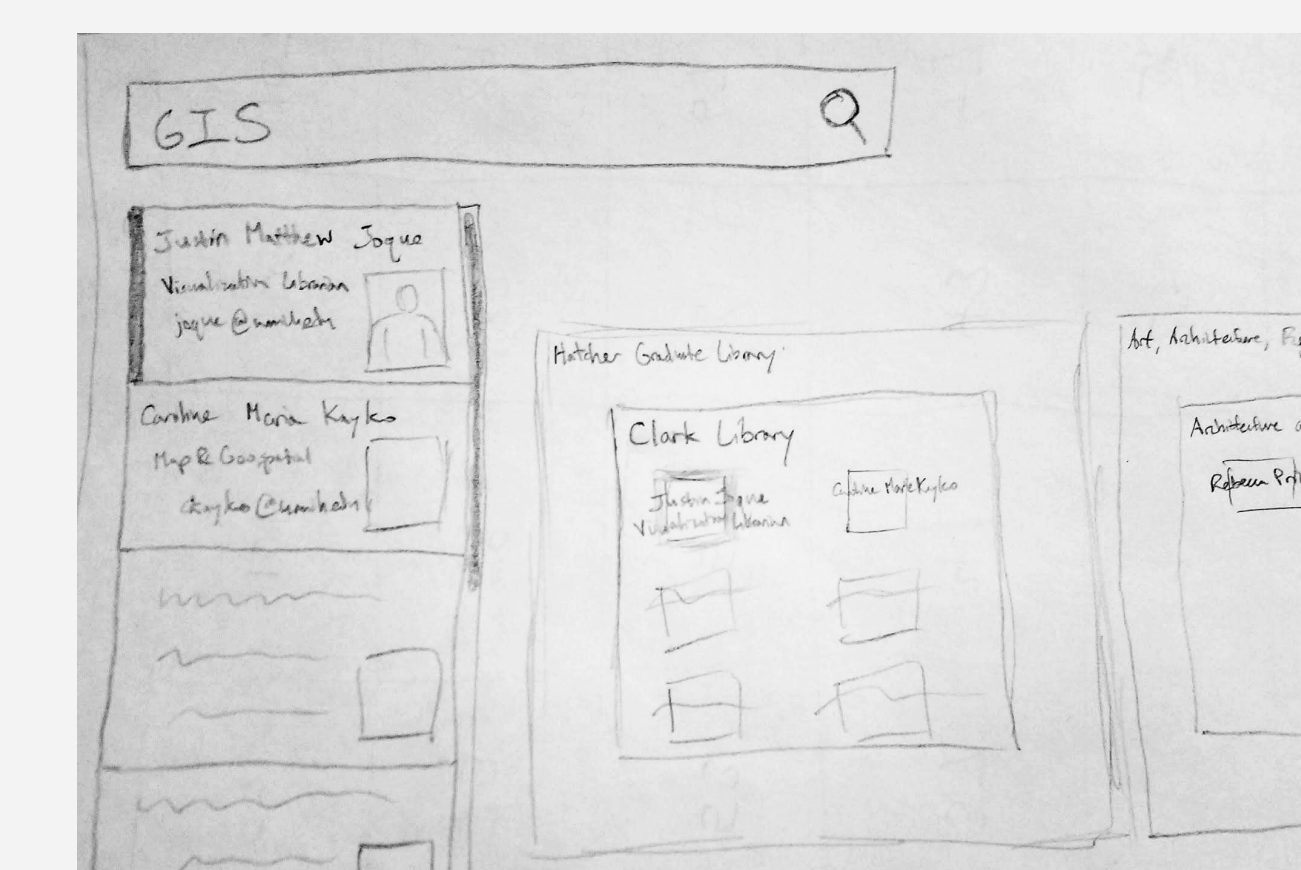
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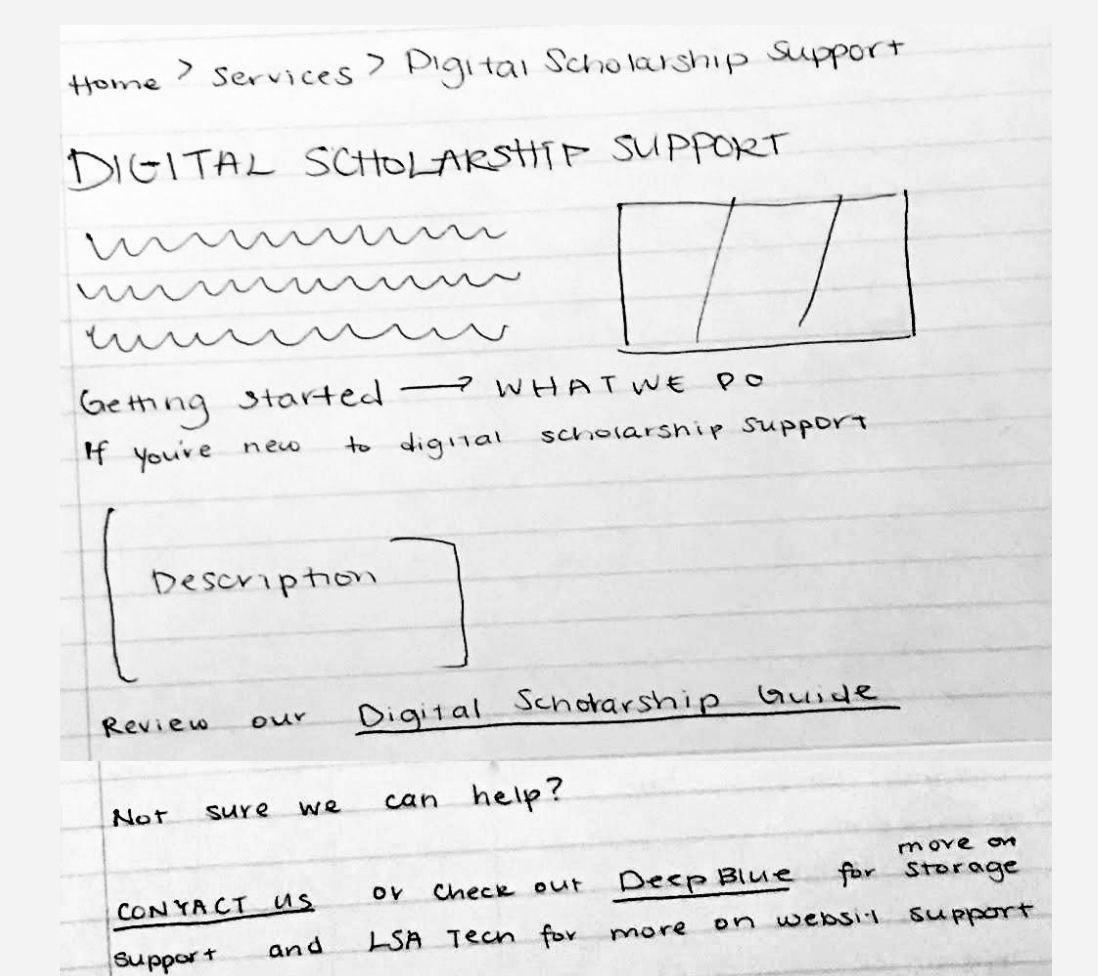
LIBRARY AS RESEARCH LAB

Ideating Potential Directions for Future

Visualizing conceptual proximity of digital scholarship topics and where those topics are supported in the university.
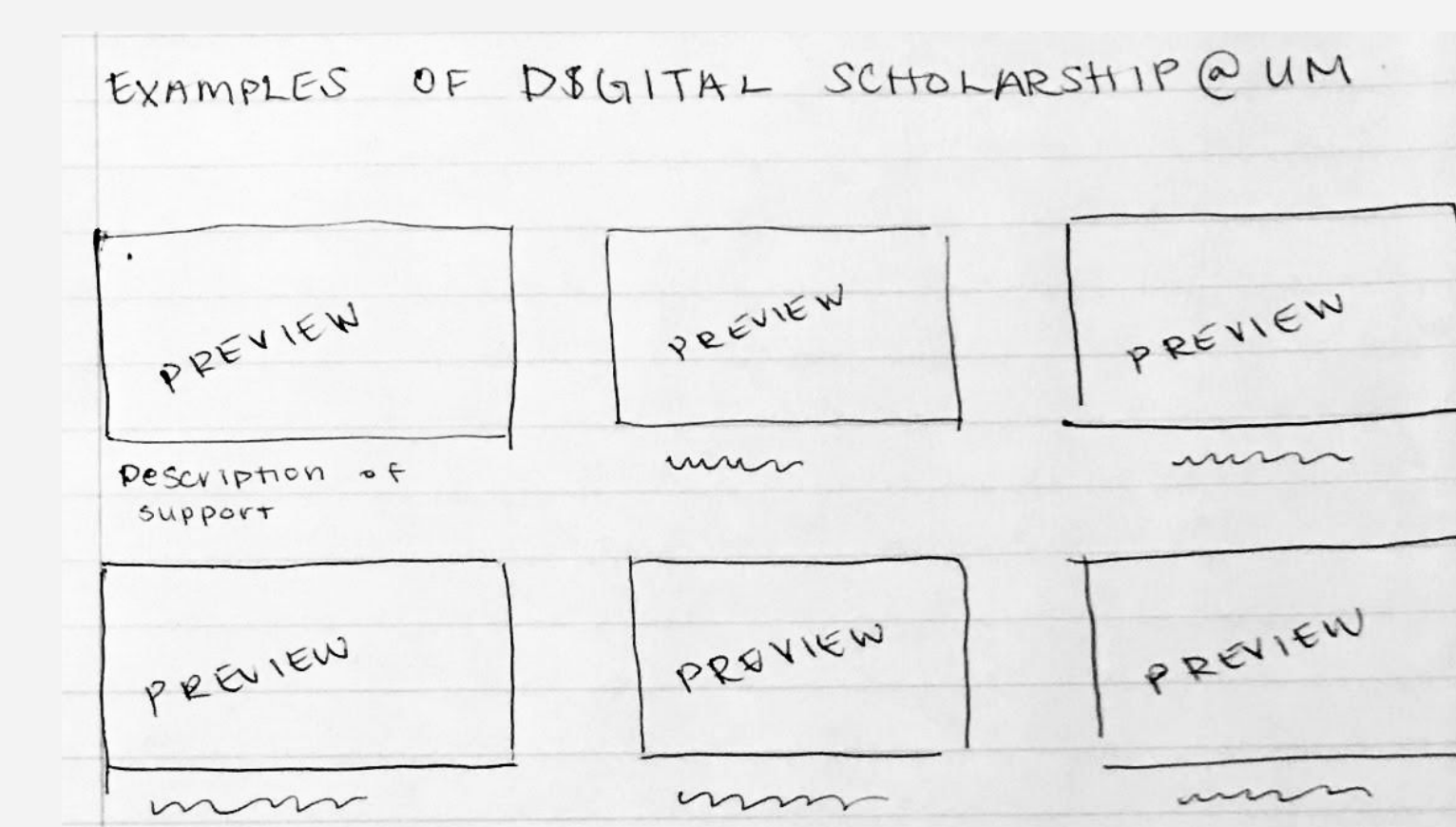
Displaying examples of digital scholarship projects directly on the U-M Library Digital Scholarship webpage.

Describing available Digital Scholarship support and soliciting requests for information.