

american social history online

Quest for Improved Discovery and Access for Shared Collections

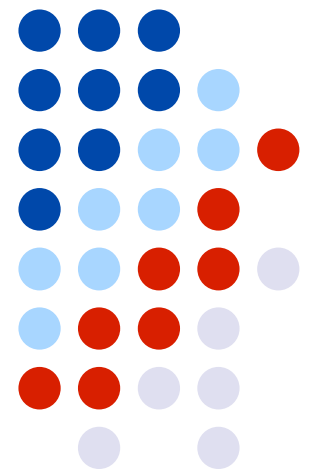
DLF Fall Forum 2008

Deborah Holmes-Wong

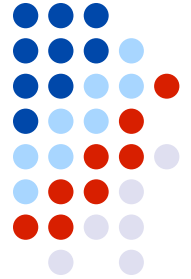
Librarian/Project Manager

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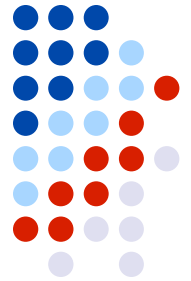
Background



- Funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
 - Aggregated content
 - Built a portal site
 - Assessment activities



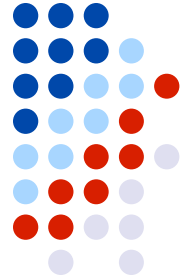
Institutions Contributing Collections



- California Digital Library
- Columbia University
- Cornell
- Emory University
- Harvard University
- University of Illinois
- University of Indiana
- Library of Congress
- University of Michigan
- New York University
- Northwestern University
- Stanford
- University of Southern California
- University of Tennessee
- Yale



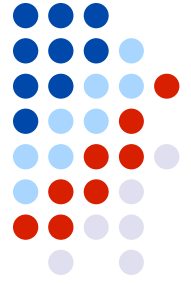
american social history online



The screenshot shows the American Social History Online website in a Mozilla Firefox browser window. The address bar displays <http://www.dlfaquifer.org/home>. The website features a navigation bar with links for home, about, collections, tools, and login. A search bar is prominently displayed. Below the navigation bar, there are four featured images: a book cover titled 'WIDE AWAKE', a book cover titled 'CHINESE AUTUMN', a portrait of a man, and a photograph of a teepee. The main content area includes a 'WELCOME!' message, a brief description of the website's purpose, and a list of search capabilities. A 'Featured Collection' section highlights the 'Lehman Special Correspondence Files'. A 'What's New' section introduces the 'Visualize Your Search Using Map View' feature. On the right side, there is a 'Browsing Shortcuts' section with a table of records by time period.

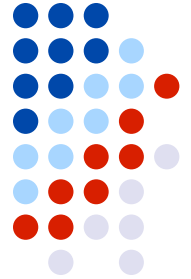
Browsing Shortcuts	
Subjects	
Places	
Times	
1600's	(279 records)
1700's	(13571 records)
1800's	(115300 records)
1900's	(361078 records)
2000's	(1307 records)

<http://www.dlfaquifer.org>



Access Scenarios

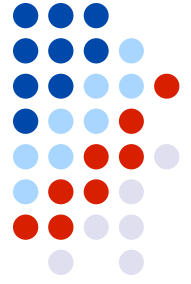
- American Social History Online Portal
- Commercial search service (Google)
- Federated search (Embedded in Portal)
- Citation management (Zotero)
- Course management (Sakai)



Overarching Questions

- Does aggregating content improve access for scholars?
- Does it stimulate new research questions?
- Does it foster interdisciplinary research?
- Does it enable cross-regional research of questions that have been explored only at a local level?
- Does it increase the usage of digital resources?
- Does the MODS-Level of Adoption of a record have an impact on its selection?

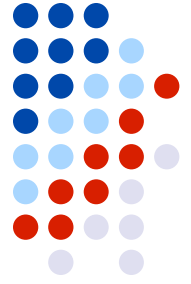




Difficulties

- Not enough time to use citation analysis
 - Two years to create portal and do assessment
 - Site recently “finished”
- Defining user community
- Publicizing site
 - Topic maps
 - Term search



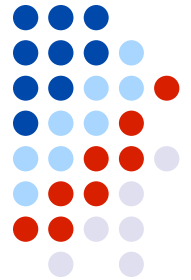


Methodologies Discussed

- Data analysis (logs, *Google Analytics*)
- User interaction
 - Interviews
 - Participant observation
 - Focus groups
 - Surveys



Decisions



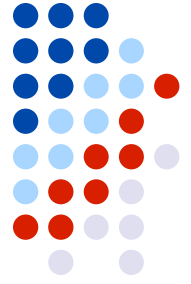
Methodology that interacts with users

- Does aggregating content improve access for scholars?
- Does it stimulate new research questions?
- Does it foster interdisciplinary research?
- Does it enable cross-regional research of questions that have been explored only at a local level?

Usage statistics analysis

- Does it increase the usage of digital resources?
- Does the MODS-Level of Adoption of a record have an impact on its selection?

Methods Interacting With Users



Interviews

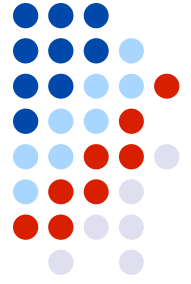
- **Best for:** Learning about an array of possible behaviors, opinions, needs, problems not the frequency of any one behavior.
- **Doesn't do well:** The sample sizes are so small and the margin of error so great that you can't determine how prevalent a behavior, opinion or problem is.



Participant Observation

- **Best for:** Surfacing problems with services. Learning about coping strategies used when services are inadequate.
- **Doesn't do well:** The sample sizes are so small and the margin of error so great that you can't determine how prevalent a behavior, opinion or problem is.

Methods Interacting With Users



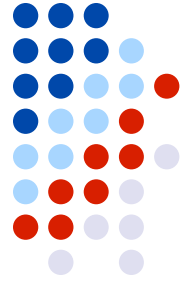
Focus Groups

- **Best for:** Open ended questions to find out about user needs and opinions.
- **Doesn't do well:** The sample sizes are so small and the margin of error so great that you can't determine how prevalent a behavior, opinion or problem is.

Surveys

- **Best for:** Finding out the prevalence of specific behaviors, opinions, needs, problems..
- **Doesn't do well:** Solicit new information.

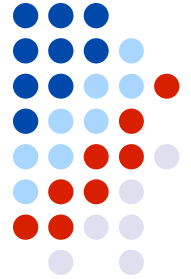




Status – In Process

- Faculty interviews to discuss Portal – Emory & Stanford
- Faculty focus groups to discuss Portal and Commercial Search – University of Southern California
- Semester long student use of Portal and Zotero – New York University
- Sakai usability – Indiana University
- MODS Level of Adoption -- DLF



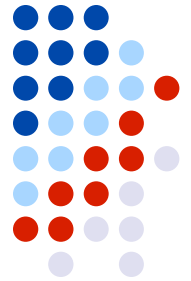


Results

- Usage analysis – Log data and Google Analytics
- Preliminary results from Emory
- Preliminary results from Illinois



Managing the Collaboration



Challenges

- Work schedules
- Internal priorities of participating institutions
- Time zones
- Funding for travel
- Changes in leadership
- Experience with assessment

Communications Tools

- Bi-weekly conference calls
- Face to face three times/year
- Email
- Wiki for documentation
- Templates for use/reuse

