**CHRISTIAN-LAMB — Collaborative**

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**Collaborative, Speculative, Possible Technologically Enhanced Mobile Libraries, or How Davidson College Students Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Library**

Caitlin Christian-Lamb

This poster will discuss a collaborative assignment given to Dr. Mark Sample’s DIG 350–History and Future of the Book class, in its first iteration of being taught. The course was offered through the Digital Studies Department in fall 2014 at Davidson College, a small, private liberal arts college in North Carolina in the United States.

As part of their coursework, the 10 enrolled undergraduate students were asked to come up with speculative designs of a ‘technologically enhanced mobile library’, with assistance from the college’s associate archivist, Caitlin Christian-Lamb. This project was born out of collaboration between Sample and Christian-Lamb, after discussing a shared interest in experimental literature, mobile libraries, literacy, and community-building. The assignment was worth 10% of each student’s grade, and when planned by Sample and Christian-Lamb, included a series of discussions on libraries, archives, and mobile capabilities to set the table for students’ free-form exploration of possible designs. The concept of the technologically enhanced mobile library as described to the class was a combination community bookshelf, literacy outreach module, and experimental book-based playground of sorts, with many of the core elements and purposes left to students to define and expand upon. The example mobile library design given was of a bicycle with bookshelves attached, tracked by GPS and with its changing collections monitored by weekly photographs uploaded to a website or Twitter account. A possible research use would be to gather statistics on literacy and reading rates of local schools, and then place the mobile library near school buildings, advertise its services, and reevaluate whether this had an effect on the amount that students read, or increased levels of literacy.

However, prior to the first discussion, out of curiosity Christian-Lamb asked the students to take the Pew Research Internet Project’s Library User Quiz, and was surprised that find that, although the majority of the students fell into the Pew-defined ‘Library Lovers’ and ‘Information Omnivores’ groups, the group data indicated that a smaller percentage than the general public felt that libraries promoted literacy or that a local public library closure would have a major impact on the community as a whole. Based on these results, the first project discussion instead veered in the direction of libraries as public intellectual commons, the role of librarians and archivists, and what values library services are designed to fill. Subsequent class discussions elaborated ideas of libraries and archives as social justice centers; idealized possible libraries; libraries as playful, creative spaces (and the relationship of libraries to makerspaces); and Little Free Libraries and other DIY collections.

Possible outputs for the assignment included designs of a technologically enhanced mobile library; opinion papers or blogs on whether these mobile libraries should exist and what their functions should be, or on the place of mobile community-aimed technologies at an academic, nonpublic library setting; models or interactive websites; games based on the topic of mobile libraries; or any other free-form product approved by the instructors. In addition to illustrating the student outputs and future research possibilities, this poster will share the resources curated for class discussion on libraries, archives, makerspaces, and their community values, as well as demonstrating one example of an experimental pedagogy and the ways in which open, synergistic exploration of preconceived notions on behalf of the students and instructors resulted in a better product than the original assignment.