

Prompt: How can DH labs foster collaboration?

The three tenants of the Digital Humanities (DH) are collaboration, experimentation, and access. As such, DH centers should embody these core tenants not just in the work they produce but in the way their centers are organized. First, these centers should thoughtfully create a welcoming name because the traditional "laboratory" could sound cold and unwelcoming. Secondly, they should also think of ways to break the hierarchical design of staff members so that everyone feels like their voice, ideas, and contributions matter to the projects they are working on. If institutions consider these ideas when creating a DH center, it will set the precedent that collaboration is a main staple.

As we've discovered in the readings we've encountered in this class, a name can be extremely important. One way that DH labs can foster collaboration begins with what they choose to call themselves. For instance, the term "lab" has somewhat of a hierarchical connotation. When I think of a lab, I think of a stereotypical chemistry lab where people are dressed in white coats and using beakers to perform scientific experiments. With this term, there is also a preconditioned idea that everyone there is a scientist or some master in the field that they work in; it doesn't sound necessarily welcoming. However, as the article from Tuesday discussed, some DH centers around the nation are changing their names to fight against the idea that a person must be a master of the field to contribute to projects. Some DH centers are using Design Studio, institute, etc. I personally liked the name that Hamilton College created, which is *collaboratory*. They've taken the traditional idea of a lab(oratory) and added collab to make it seem more welcoming and highlight the type of work done there. This brings about a better sense of what DH is all about. If people feel more welcome to start working with or in the DH center, that will support collaboration.

Another way to foster collaboration is through the titles given to the people who work in or with the DH center, lab, or collaboratory. The traditional style of this would be to have a clear-cut hierarchy; however, as the article touches on, this mode of authority is often problematic because this model treats non-professor staff as second-hand citizens. This mode also adds extra problems regarding whose project gets priority or whose name is presented on a specific project. One way to combat this is dismantling this hierarchical mode and using universal titles like collaborator or contributor. The project *One More Voice* does an excellent job with this. Every person who has contributed to the project, past or present, is listed on the contributors' page in alphabetical order. Even the way the list of contributors is set up fights against the hierarchy because, in regular DH projects, the list would begin with the project leads and trickle down the pyramid. The idea that everyone contributes to the larger project and is treated like equal contributors is really inspiring.