Project Endings Meeting Notes

28 February 2017

**Communications, internal and external to Project Endings**

Jen reported on her progress with the WordPress site. Housed on the UVic server, it will be open access, but a section requiring a password has been created to store selected content we don’t wish to make public such as meeting minutes. This hidden part of the site will have a unique URL. She will send us the link within the next day or so.

Some of us had discussed asking visitors to the site to become subscribers who would identify themselves via their email address, thereby creating a potentially important segment of the target audience for our results. At present, UVic network security discourages (forbids?) this kind of solicitation, but the question is being examined and new policy is expected in a few months. (Later in the hour, Greg noted the positive and negative aspects of using WordPress; beware of dangerous plug-ins.)

All of us should contribute to the site’s content, first by responding to Elizabeth’s email of February 24 by providing

* our CV or a link to it,
* previous news stories relevant to our case studies or Project Endings in general,
* announcements of forthcoming papers and other contributions,
* high-resolution images from each of the case study projects, along with a one-page summary.

Jen has arranged with CFUV to use their studio to record podcasts to be put on the site.

**Upcoming conferences and other announcements**

A paper by Stewart and Martin has been accepted for the conference on Digital Preservation for Social Sciences and Humanities (DPASSH 2017) at the University of Sussex. Stewart will deliver the paper at the June conference. (Funded from our budget.)

Several team members have had papers accepted for DH this year at McGill:

Martin and Joey (Martin funded from our budget; Joey funded by MoEML and perhaps UBC);

Lisa (no funding necessary);

Janelle and Joey (both funded by MoEML).

Claire and Lisa are submitting a proposal to the New Directions in Libraries, Scholars and Partnerships international symposium, taking place during the Frankfurt Book Fair in mid-October.

(From Janelle, on Skype)

Janelle may take over the Coordinating Editorship of ISE (Internet Shakespeare Editions) in April.

Lisa, Martin, and Janelle are applying for Internal Research Grant ($10,000). Title of the grant: Digital Project History, Transition, and Documentation. It’s mainly about "ending" the ISE in its current incarnation and preparing the data for LEMDO. All funds are earmarked for programmers and RAs. Should the fund be awarded, Janelle would like to hire a Professional Communication student to interview Michael. If Jen is interested, she would be the obvious candidate, but any student hired will develop interview questions in consultation with Janelle and Martin.

**Preservation progress report**

Martin announced that a new version of eXist (the basis of all of our web aps) will be released March 7. MoEML is already working well in beta; the other projects can be published within the next month or two[[1]](#footnote-1), meaning that:

* the static builds are fully functional;
* there are stable URLs;
* all the original sites will be replaced;
* version #s will identify each new version.

Diagnostics will continue as we continue to work on the projects, with the goal of the eventual release of stable, definitive editions. Elizabeth brought up the parallel with a book launch—with the possibility of a re-launch in the case of new “definitive” editions, which brings up the question of how to end projects, integral to our work. Previous editions should in any case remain available, e.g. with a URL from archive.org.

Martin has been working harvesting with Corey. Graves has been tested; *Mariage* will be next.

**Archiving: the role of the Library**

The Library has a budget for archiving. Their role in our and other DH projects that request archiving is first to provide advice on what is worth keeping in websites. How are such decisions made? Who reviews content? Should grant funding be the hallmark of quality (this is the default position of the Library). There are no clear standards.

Other possibilities for evaluation could rely on different selection processes, possibly more local. Corey noted the necessity and advantage of letting in new voices by modifying evaluation criteria. Corey also noted that there is relatively little known about how “communities of (digital) practice” are functioning currently: who is collecting what outside of traditional publishing channels? Work on the selection process for archiving will be essential to the future of DH.

One goal of the checklists in our planned toolkits is to help ensure quality content by bringing to consciousness the necessity of choice and a well-planned structure from the beginning of any project, avoiding ad hoc decision-making. Researchers should also have a “negative” checklist: what should be left out of your DH project? This brings us back to the fundamentals of Project Endings: best practices for ending and archiving, which must include partnerships with libraries.

Corey noted that libraries can help create a “preservation-friendly” environment, for example creating distributed preservation networks (such as Erudit) that go beyond platform-based preservation.

1. Moses still needs permission from the Colville tribes before a public release. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)