



First let me acknowledge and thank Dra. Elsa Ramírez Leyva, and the Organizing Committee for inviting me to speak with you today. I am honored to be here and to present ideas and projects my colleagues and I have undertaken at the UCLA Library.

The university where I work, the University of California Los Angeles, is a large, public research institution. The UCLA Library is one of 100 libraries within the University of California system, a system that collectively serves 330,000 students and faculty. I want to acknowledge the privileges that my background--earning a Ph.D. at UC Berkeley, and working at UCLA--has provided, and how that has shaped my perspective and led to this opportunity to speak with you today. I invite you to share your experiences and ideas during the question and answer period in order to broaden my own awareness and foster an open exchange of other perspectives.



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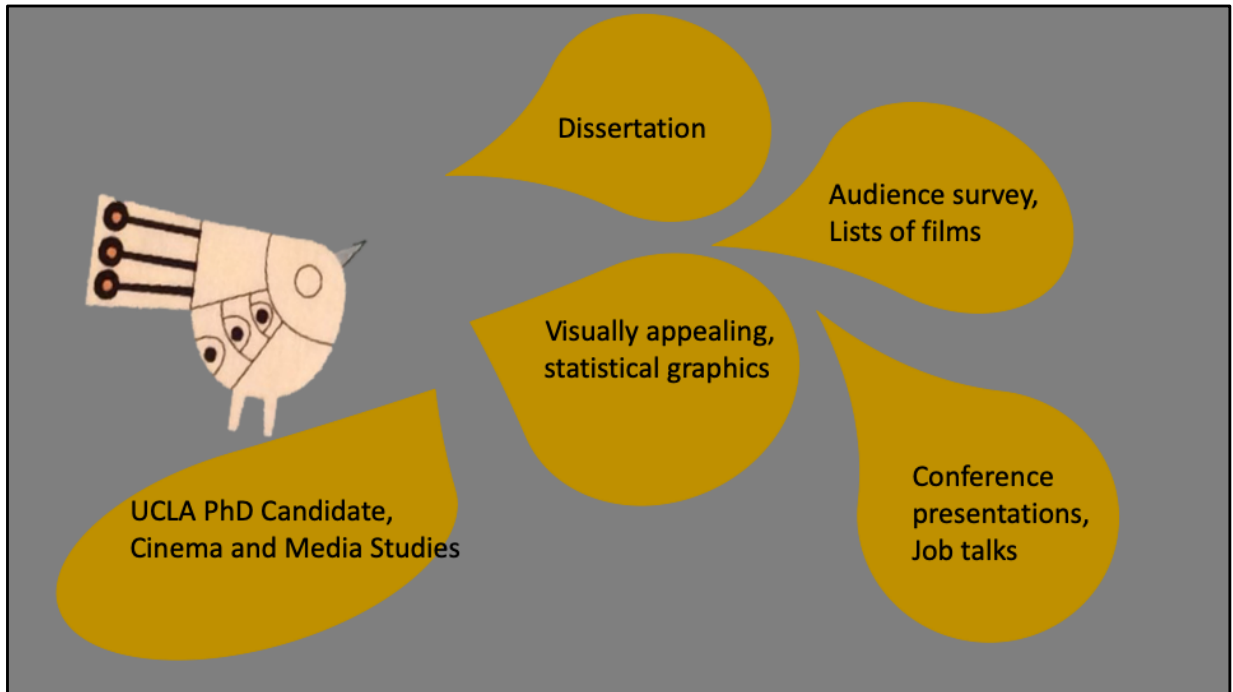


Charles E. Young Research Library

My position within this large organization is as front-line librarian in a Public Service unit. I lead a small team of 4 librarians who dedicate 20% of their time to very small programs we develop to deepen connections with researchers at UCLA.

I have worked in the Charles E. Young Research Library since 2011, when I accepted my position as Librarian for Digital Research and Scholarship managing a renovated area known as the Research Commons. I am the liaison librarian to the Anthropology department and the Digital Humanities program; UCLA has a Digital Humanities minor and a graduate certificate program.

Because of my background in Digital Humanities and my transition from a position at UCLA's Center for Digital Humanities to working in the library, I co-founded a Special Interest Group on Libraries and Digital Humanities in the Association for Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO). (I will talk more about this SIG towards the end of my talk.)

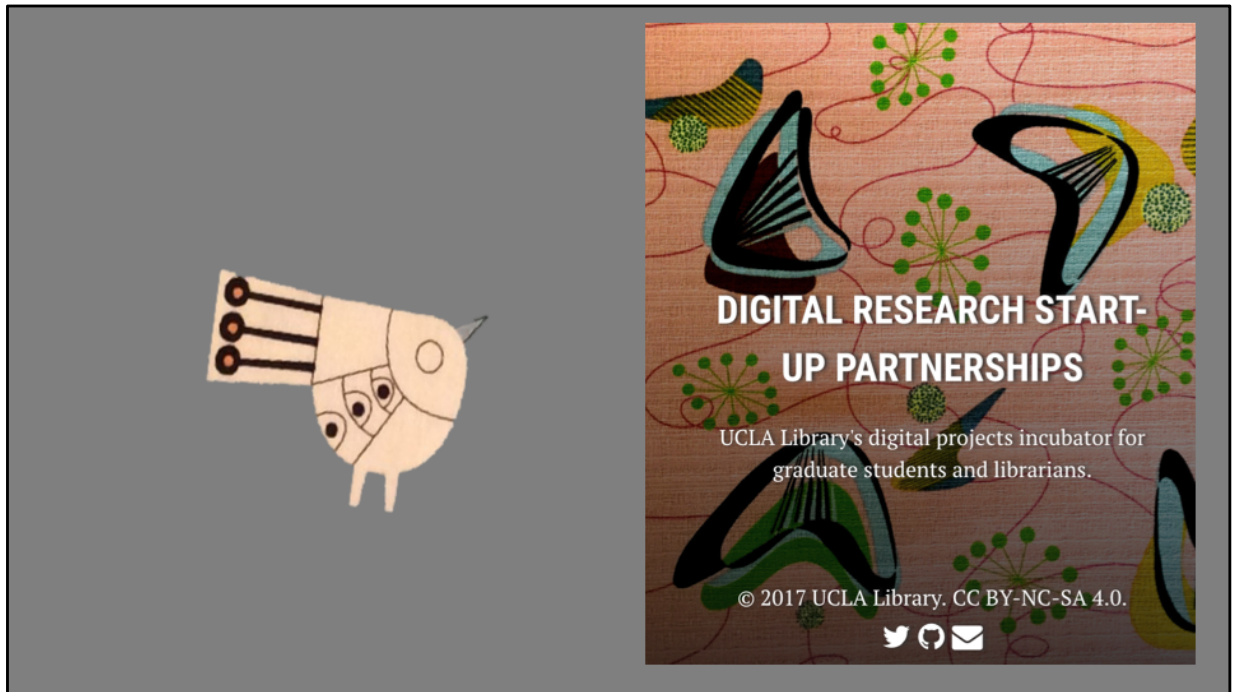


With that background in mind, allow me to jump right in with an example of how the Research Partnerships Functional Team works to build communities of practice that support the research of faculty and students at UCLA. As you'll see, I am very much a ground-up builder, and a visual thinker: so bear with me as I start with an everyday, familiar anecdote and then, hopefully, draw connections to the larger picture.

Yesterday, Prof. Todd Presner, the Chair of the Digital Humanities program, forwarded an email he received from a UCLA graduate student in Film and Media Studies sent asking for Presner's advice.

Brief synopsis: Student is working on his dissertation on silent and early sound cinema. His dissertation advisor, a professor in Cinema & Media studies, recommended the student reach out to Presner for advice on how to analyze an informal survey that a cinema journal of the period conducted – asking readers to list their favorite films. The student was hoping to create: “visually appealing statistical graphics” that he might use for conference presentations and job talks!

These types of requests have, in the past, been very problematic – but let me tell you the happy ending, so you’ll appreciate the problems we’ve been working to solve. Presner forwarded the message with a note to the student saying: “I am taking the liberty of cc-ing a colleague at the UCLA Digital Library, who is particularly informed about digital methods and presentations of statistical data, Dr. Zoe Borovsky. I would try to set up a meeting with her to discuss your data and possibilities for analysis. She oversees a summer accelerator program, which may also offer future opportunities for support.” Presner included a link to our website:
<http://dressup.library.ucla.edu/team/>



Here's our website: our students use it to practice their GitHub skills – so it's always a bit chaotic. I am going to describe our DResSUP program fully a bit later: DResSUP stands for Digital Research Start-Up Partnerships and it is part of this community of practice, an ecosystem of support that I've developed at UCLA.

This student's request has, before DResSUP been a growing concern of the Digital Humanities faculty and research staff at UCLA. Demand for research support **outside of** the program has grown at a faster pace than we can support. Faculty teach capstones, required for graduation, as overloads.

DH faculty who rely upon expert staff such as myself to teach hands-on workshops for their courses – workshops such as text-mining, network analysis, GIS and mapping – are often competing with students such as the one making this request – for resources.

While there are well-funded units for instructional support, and, students enrolled in DH courses get some support, it's the graduate students at UCLA in departments such as Film and Television, or even those in the Social Sciences Division – who have the least support for digital research.

Professor of Cinema & Media

Professor of Digital Humanities

Digital Humanities **projects**
were highly visible to students and faculty

Library as showcase of projects/products to be presented
Library's role in the research **process** was less visible

So here's my problem statement:

The Cinema & Media studies professor & student on one side:

Have seen these amazing projects that Presner and Digital Humanities students do.

But, they don't even think to look for that type of expertise in the library.

Presner knows how to direct them to the program that we've built,

but the challenge for the library is:

how to make the library's role in the research process more apparent, more visible.

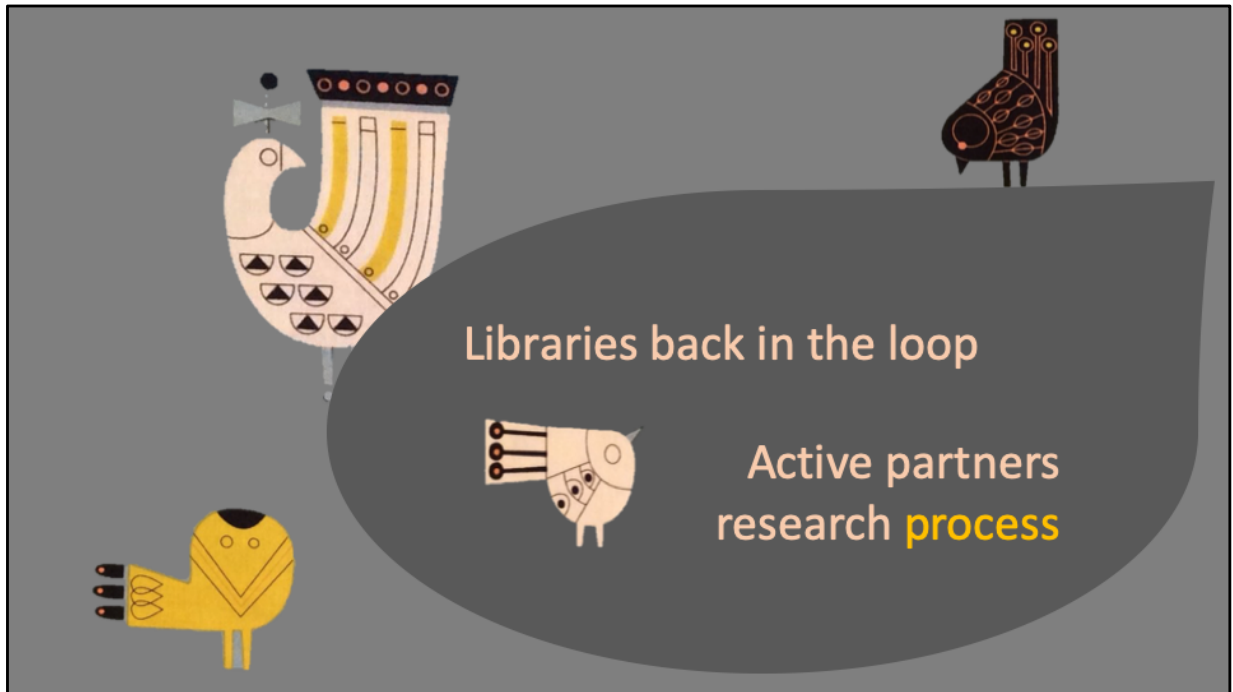
Obviously, it's not only a problem that our users don't come to us directly

But, in order to argue for more resources from campus administrators

to get the support of our development officers, and donors,

we need to amplify our impact.

While the library renovation in 2011 provided spaces to showcase and demo projects, the library's role (other than furniture and large monitors) was largely hidden. That was the motivation, back in 2014, to launch DResSUP.



DResSUP stands for Digital Research StartUp Partnerships -- it was designed to put the library, librarians, and library staff, back in the loop, a way of showcasing them as Active partners throughout the research process.

I believe that, especially with digital research projects, when researchers create and curate their own collections, that library expertise:

- scanning,
- OCRing,
- meta-data,
- data-cleaning and curation,
- text-mining,
- Archiving

is especially relevant.



Workshops
(2017, 2018)

Train-the-trainer
(2016, 2017)

Incubator: DResSUP
(2015, 2016, 2017, 2018)



The “ecosystem” that Research Partnerships built has 3 main components.

1. DResSUP: the incubator was built first, in 2015. It’s a six-week, summer-intensive program for 11 graduate student researchers.
2. In 2016, we began adding in some train-the-trainer components – with a small grant from Librarians Association of Universities of California (LAUC).
3. In 2017 we launched a series of workshops and events based on workshops we developed in DResSUP, to meet the needs of researchers. The workshops are offered during the academic year, and are intended for a broader audience.

Next, I’ll describe all three parts of our ecosystem! I’ll start with DResSUP – and spend the most time describing that – because workshops are an established and familiar way that libraries have provided research support. DResSUP, because it is high-touch, labor-intensive is the more controversial part of our program.



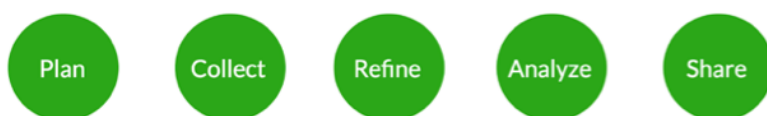
Workshops

Train-the-trainer

Incubator: DResSUP



DResSUP **connects** scholars to the library at all stages of the research life-cycle



Digital Research Start-Up Partnerships (DResSUP) is a framework for engaging researchers with the library during the inception through the active stages of the digital research life-cycle

planning, collecting & curating, cleaning & refining, analyzing & visualizing, and sharing

We (5 library staff) have, over the last two years, operated on a shoestring budget. Our University Librarian provides about \$5k so we can hire a graduate student assistant.

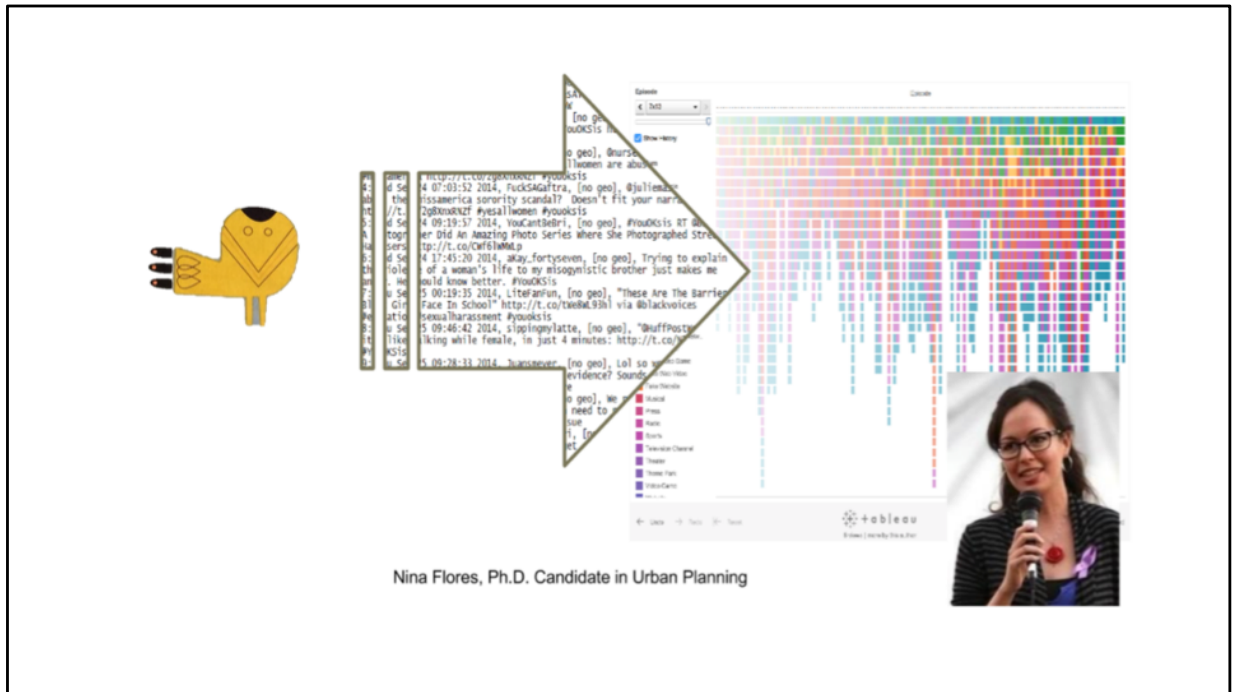
We put out an annual call for proposals to graduate students in the humanities and social sciences; students apply and we accept up to 11 proposals.

Over a 6-week period, we work with these students to “incubate” their projects. During the first 3 weeks, we tailor workshops to their interests, following the framework.

After 4 weeks, the students should have a defined workflow that describes and documents their process through those stages.

Their mid-term is a report on areas where they want help to address: scaling up from the sample to the whole.

During the final 3 weeks, we meet with them in groups and individually to focus on specific aspects of their research projects.



Here's an example of the type of projects we undertake:

Nina was Urban Planning grad student, working on her dissertation, she had collected 3 months of Twitter data related to sexual harassment; she was using Atlas.ti. During her coding process, had lost sight of the big picture;

We showed her how to export the data out of Atlas TI and provided her with alternative ways of visualizing and analyzing her data. She was able to finish her dissertation much more quickly than her advisors had expected. Nina is now a lecturer at CalState Long Beach and she comes back to lecture at UCLA and talk with students in the DResSUP program.

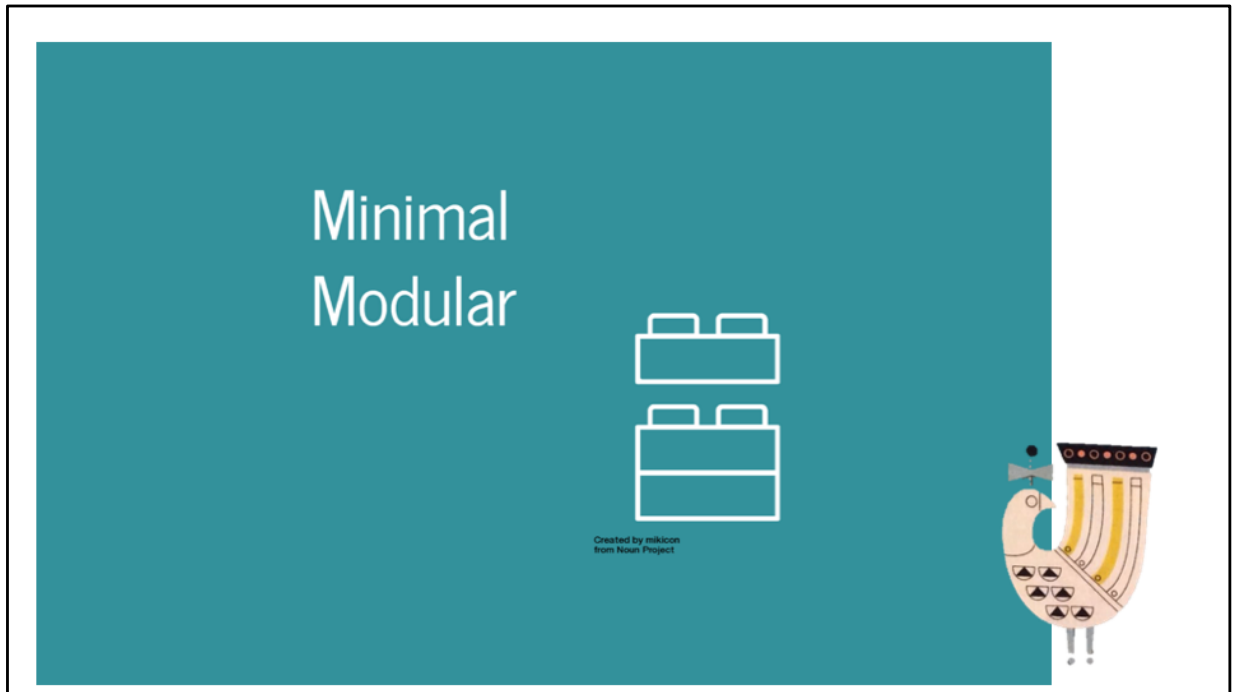
Of course, students love DResSUP: it's project-based learning, they learn research data management as it applies to their project. They meet librarians with expertise they did not know existed!

We are able to demonstrate impact with success stories:

- Grad students at the beginning of their programs have received grants NSF, Ford

Fellowships, etc., that provide fellowship support during grad school.

- Teaching: they use their projects or skills to teach undergraduate courses, guest lectures for DH101, or work in Undergraduate Research Center. Some teach workshops as part of our Workshop series – that I will talk about later.



With the principles of minimal computing and minimal design in mind, we embrace a philosophy of “minimalism” - especially where it helps to keep us nimble and sustainable. We aim to keep the program small in scale, but portable, modular, extensible, and reproducible.

We are often asked, “But how do you plan to scale up so that you can teach all the things to all the people?!”
The answer is, “We don’t!”

Our intention is keep the summer incubator program small and self-selecting, with a focus on reproducibility, not on scaling up.

Our lessons are modular; we repurpose them during the academic year as part of our workshop series—that I’ll describe later.

Following this “minimal” & “modular” approach allows us, as instructors move away from the generic, one size fits all workshop, avoid burnout, and, during the summer, offer a more tailored experience that embraces the “boutique.”

We are creating a growing curriculum that is ready to cover all manner of digital scholarship needs (from project planning and management to collecting, cleaning, and analyzing data), then we flex to fit each DResSUP cohort's needs.

For example, we might focus more or less on web scraping over getting data out of licensed databases during the collection phase if needed. This year, several researchers have projects involving oral histories, so we invited the Director of our Center for Oral History Research to offer a session dedicated to conducting and working with oral histories in research.

Teaching & learning partnerships



At this point, you may be asking: What's different about DResSUP? Why not offer fellowships as many other research centers do?

DResSUP takes a partnership approach to incubating digital research projects, rather than a fellowship model. We do not do projects for the participants, we provide an environment and infrastructure for them to learn to do their own projects.

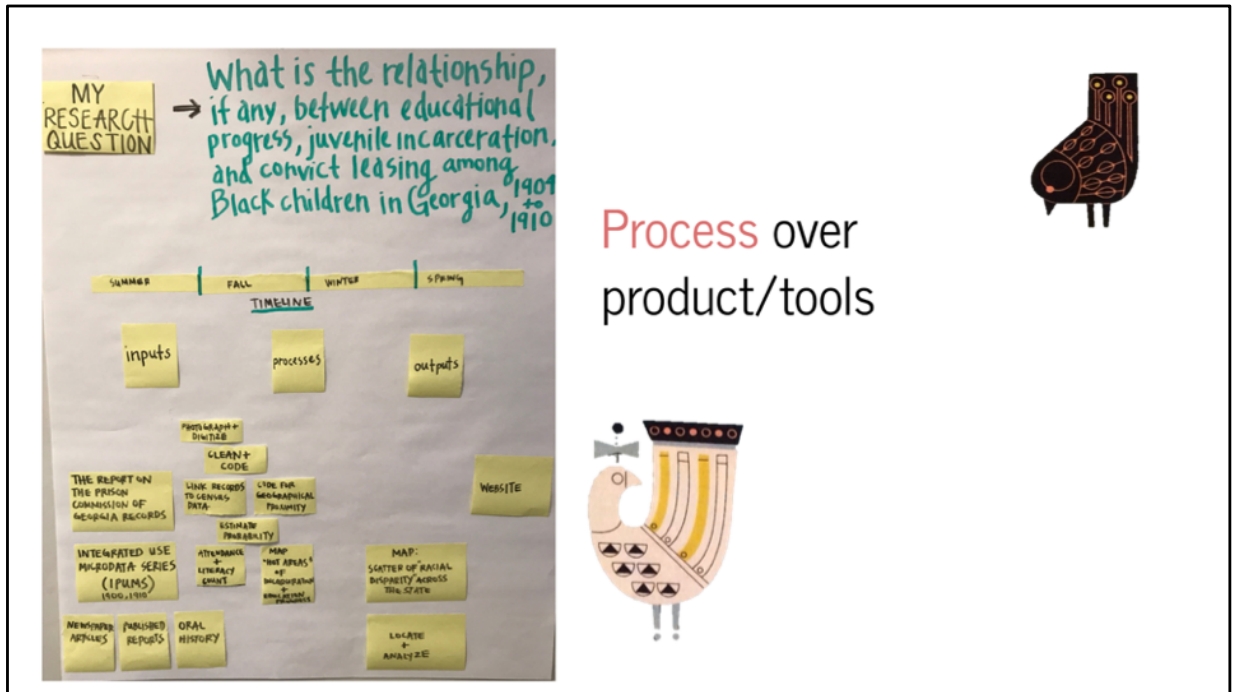
Participating graduate students are not paid and they bring their own projects to the program.

In this model, there is the expectation that participants put in the work they need to define and complete a portion of their own research project.

When we say “partnerships”, we don't mean that we are acting as partners on their research projects - rather it is a learning and teaching partnership.

Graduate students and librarians set the agenda together and the participants have the opportunity to share their own knowledge and **skills with the group**. This strategy is targeted to and works well with graduate students.

Within the UCLA community, there is a noticeable gap in these types of services so the grad students are eager and motivated participants.



DResSUP emphasizes process over product or tools.

We encourage participants to focus on generating prototypes using data sets curated to the participants' research question. In this way, we are **teaching research as process** – a framework that can be generalized and adapted to other research areas including grant writing, non-digital research methods, and professional activities.

Pictured is an example of the brainstorming/planning process that we use at the beginning of DResSUP.

Participants further define their research questions, then outline the project inputs, processes, and outputs.

As they learn new methods and tools, and work with their sample data set, they revise this plan and document their workflow.



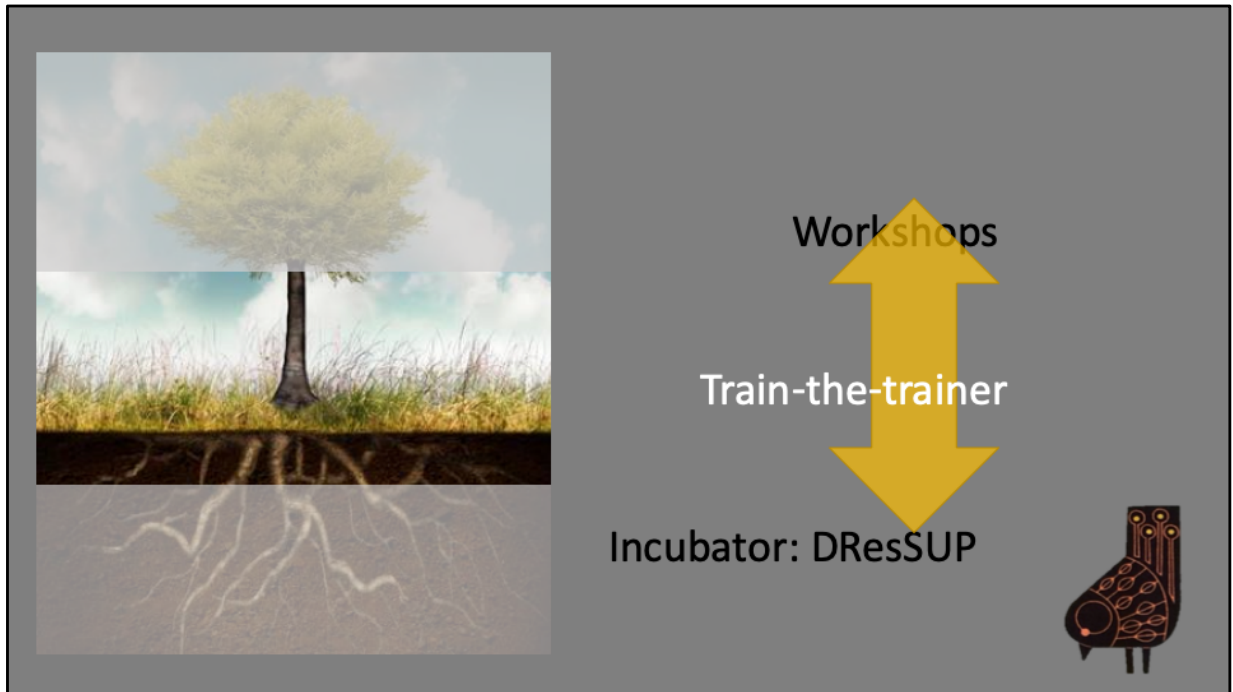
One of the primary goals of the program is to **build community** and communities of practice around digital research at UCLA.

To this end, DResSUP provides graduate students with a cohort with which they can share and discuss their work with each other.

The graduate students that participate also give back and contribute to the community by returning to teach or guest lecture for the next cohort of graduate students.

They also take what they know into their departments and academic communities, thereby serving as vectors who spread knowledge about digital research practices and library expertise to faculty, fellow students, and other peers.

Likewise, librarians who join the DResSUP team will they take what they've learned and give back to the community by offering workshops, consultations, and bring their new expertise into the units they serve. In this way, **we are growing the library's capacity** while also growing the community itself. That brings me to the next section: Train-the-trainer.



The middle-ground of the ecosystem, has changed quite a bit – but I envision this as the trunk of the tree, the most important aspect of the program. It’s also the most difficult to sustain in an environment such as UCLA where research support is decentralized: where we rely on partners outside of the library for support.

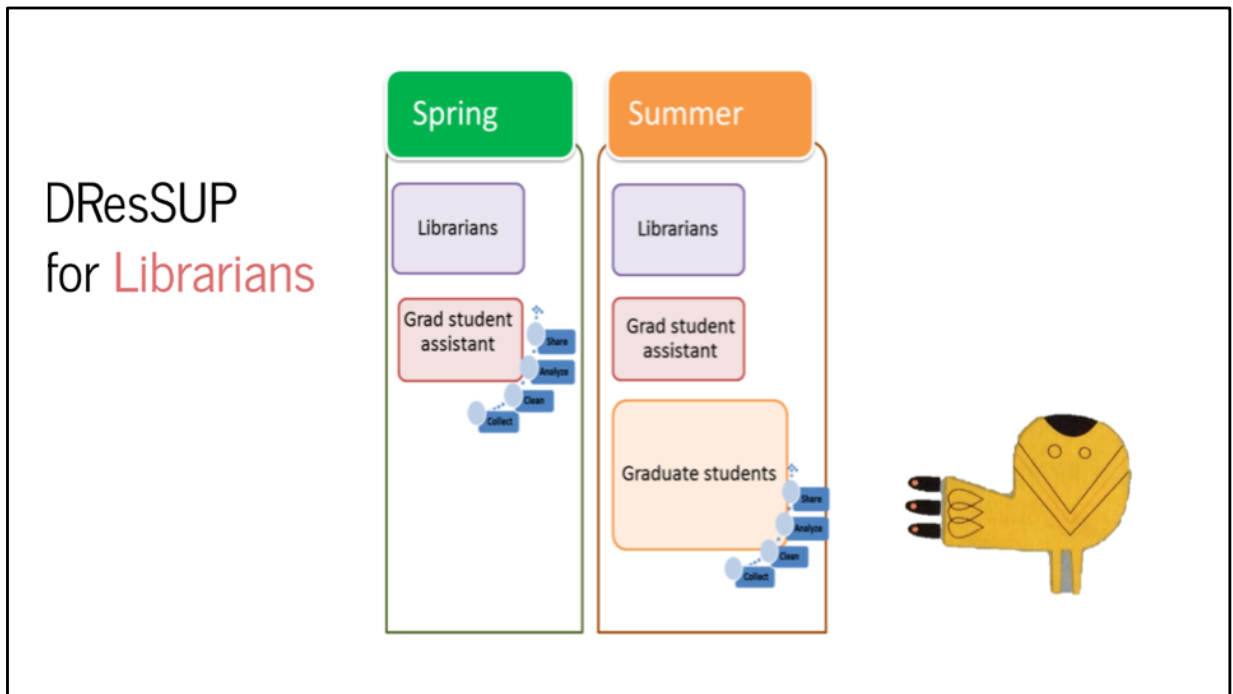
Sharing the incubator



We called this train-the-trainer effort: “sharing the incubator” because initially, we developed DResSUP as a local, sustainable model for UCLA library staff to engage with researchers at an early stage of their careers.

In addition to incubating graduate student projects, we are incubating an infrastructure that demonstrates to our colleagues how, (although we all work in separate departments) we can work together as a team across library departments. During a restructuring of Public Services, we institutionalized that infrastructure – and created Research Partnerships Functional Team, as one of 5 functional teams across User Engagement. (The other teams are Teaching & Learning, Research Assistance, etc.)

The Research Partnerships Functional Team has 3 librarians inside User Engagement, but also, members from other library units – and members from Partner organizations at UCLA: from centralized UCLA IT organizations, the Center for Digital Humanities, etc.



DResSUp is a high-touch/quality over quantity project - relatively equal number of librarians to grad students benefits of this approach: Each partnership is a detailed case-study of researcher needs that a subject librarian, on their own, would not tackle.

Even better, it helps us see the edges of our own capacity too; it's a self-assessing process.

As we spoke with our colleagues about DResSUp, they expressed interest in participating.

This led us to develop a separate training program (DResSUp for Librarians)

Librarians requested release time from their supervisors, they spent Spring Quarter learning about digital research tools and methodologies, then worked with us during the summer.

The release time for librarians was difficult – but ultimately the train-the-trainer effort has evolved into

Research Partnerships Functional Team.

The librarians who participated in the train-the-trainer program, are now members of

the Research Partnerships Functional Team.

We're framing this as a success – we now have a formalized team, and the official support of an AUL.

We also obtained a seed grant for \$30k from the Vice Chancellor of Research – and began planning our next steps: the workshop series.



Enriching the profession by encouraging librarians to **engage** beyond service and discovery

Oftentimes, the ethos of librarianship presents it as a service model, and we want to challenge that, or at least add to that.

We're looking to enrich the profession, and give librarians good reasons to participate.

Within the library, we have had to argue for quality experience over quantity (for example, of student consultations, etc.):

DResSUP is professional development for us core team and our partner librarians.

The ecosystem helps Library by building capacity to meet researcher needs: As I mentioned earlier, researchers are our partners rather than fellows; they're learning alongside us –

The eco-system—with the incubator in-house--provides a valuable, visible learning environment for library staff who want to skill up by building their own capacity and expertise, and hone new skills in a team-based environment.

This way, librarians are active throughout the research cycle, not just in resource discovery and publishing.

Although we still send librarians to external training programs, the train-the-trainer component provides an immediate, practical application by immersing librarians wishing to learn skills in our team – helping them to forge ongoing, supportive relationships inside and outside the library. And, as we planned our next stage: the workshops, we realized we had lots of opportunities for librarians to co-lead workshops, develop materials, etc. They could build capacity at their own pace.

I want to mention that the capacity building among our colleagues has been our biggest challenge: and the goals I'll mention here are aspirational.

- Move beyond one-shot instruction sessions and workshops, engaging, actively, as a team, in all phases of the research process.
- Rethink divisions of library staff into units that are either designated as public service (User Engagement) or are not (Digital Library)
 - Do this by providing ways for a broader range of library staff to engage with researchers
- Build community gradually (and organically) while assessing capacity/demands amongst our colleagues and constituencies
- View the library as a collection of expert consultants who guide the research process as users and user communities assemble and analyze research collections or build upon/utilize the library collections.



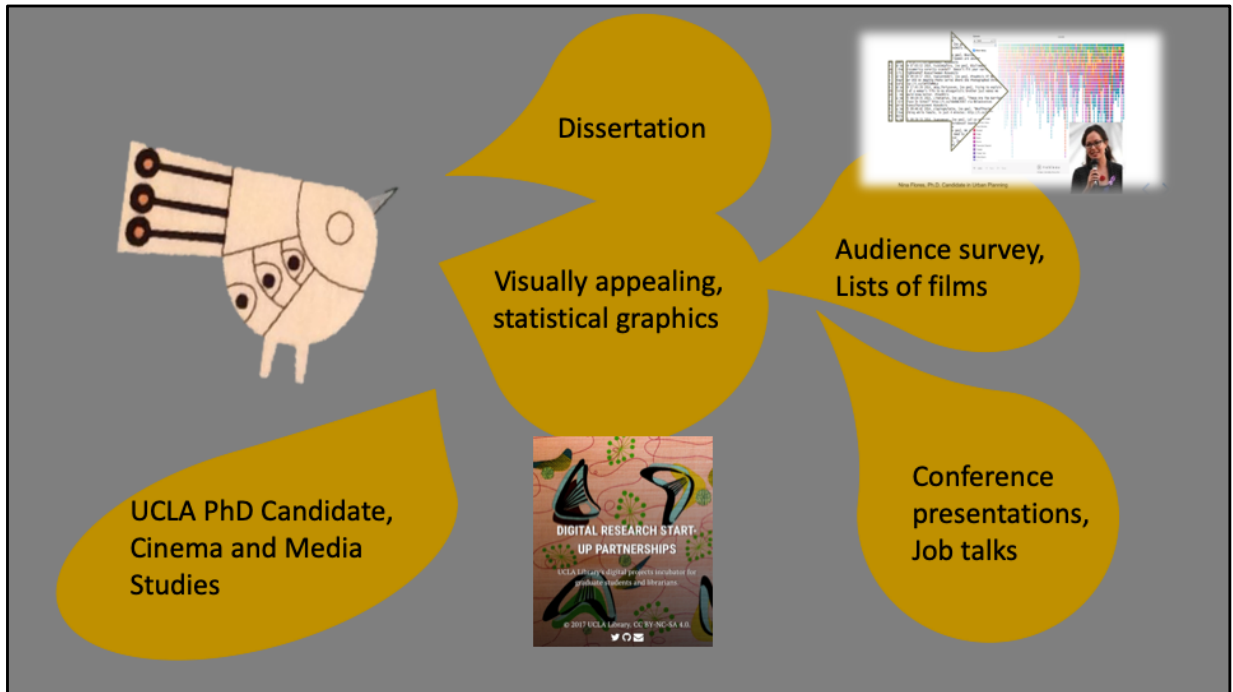
Workshops

Train-the-trainer

Incubator



Let's talk about workshops – this has been the focus of the Research Partnerships Functional Team during the academic year.



Let me return to the request from the student – the Cinema & Media Studies grad student who wrote to Todd Presner.

Did he have to wait for the Summer to get started?

No, because Research Partnerships offers workshops – I was able to send him the schedule and he’s signed up for Tableau Public workshop.



The value of the workshops to staff (and faculty such as Presner) is that we're not offering as many one-off consultations.

Those can be informative – but what we've seen, as staff, is that if we offer core skills in workshops, we save each other's time, as well as the time of faculty members.

We've held workshops in the library – and, brought a whole new set of users into the library.

We had 525 users sign up for 25 Winter Workshops. The users came from all over campus – so we know that it's not just DH students, but students from Epidemiology, the Anderson Business School, Urban Planning, Spanish and Portuguese, etc.



To wrap this up presentation, I want to talk about sustainability. What makes this model sustainable – within UCLA, and externally: beyond UCLA.

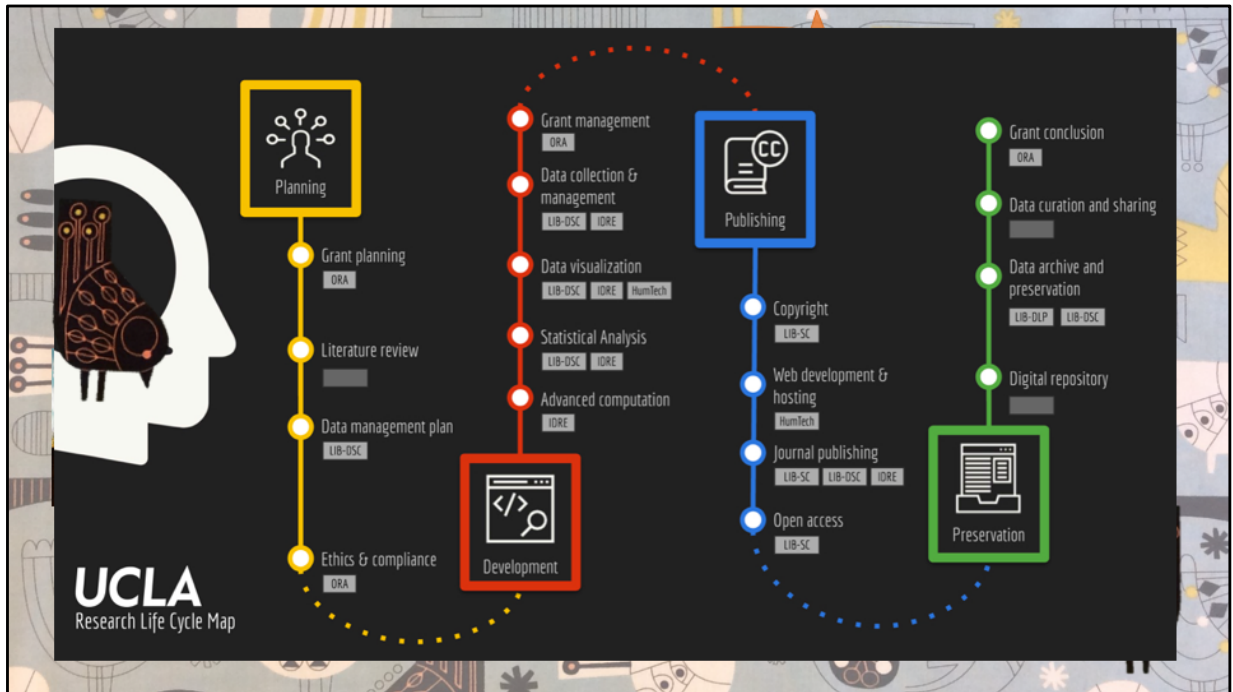
Internally, we took a hard look at why we, the staff supporting research (DH program, as well as researchers outside of DH) were so exhausted. And, specifically, we looked for ways to address our collective lacks. A centralized calendar for workshops, and promotion in general, was one of those lacks.

Rather than forming a new task force, and asking for a budget, we draw upon existing partnerships to distribute the work. Our partners at IDRE, used my team in the library, the Research Partnership Functional Team, as a large stakeholder, to argue for internal resources at IDRE to drive their endeavors.

In many ways, the Research Partnerships Functional Team within the Library acts as a broker for a larger co-op or matrix: one that runs on trust and partnerships between silos and divisions. We work together on grant proposals, coordinate events, and work to align resources with needs.

This is a little microcosm or model of working (building those communities of

practice!!) that we then extend outward. In the same way that grad student act as our vectors, we've vectorized library staff! Many of you are probably familiar with the external organizations that sustain library efforts such as ours.



This slide is supposed to look like chaos!

The problem at UCLA has been that because research support is decentralized, coordinating external partnerships (in addition to internal ones), was contributing to exhaustion.

But since I mentioned ADHO, and the Special Interest Group: Libraries and DH, I'll use that as an example.



ADHO, and specifically, the Special Interest Group on Libraries and DH, has been important way of sustaining our efforts at UCLA, as DResSUP evolved.

We needed a light-weight, easy-to-maintain connection with colleagues, but

- no heavy administrative responsibilities
- no big barriers for participation
- visibility for librarians' research and initiatives

ADHO was great because it was designed to be a lightweight ALLIANCE of regional DH organizations and there's less need for a lot of committee work. ADHO sponsors Special Interest Groups but allows us to be very flexible. SIGs work mainly to sponsor workshops and organize pre-conference events.

The Libraries and DH SIG is designed as the "connective tissue" between

- 1) professional library organizations, (IFLA: Int'l Federation of Library Associations and Institutions)
- 2) professional DH organizations (ACH: Association for Computers and the Humanities)

There are many others I could mention here, I've listed a few above.

The goal, though, is, to provide enough of an exchange that we can identify initiatives that push librarians beyond the service model of supporting individual projects – to larger initiatives that allow us to build cross-institutional infrastructure.

I'll end with just a few of examples:

- Initiatives that span institutions: such as IIF.

Our SIG has sponsored pre-conference workshops at ADHO on

- Collections as Data

And UCLA librarians have, ourselves, presented a paper on DResSUP at DH2017

<http://dressup.library.ucla.edu/posts/2017/08/10/dh2017.html>

Next year, at ADHO's conference at Utrecht, our SIG is planning to sponsor a pre-conference on Libraries and DH: and the plans for that are just beginning.

I promised to start at the ground up – and build from the tree to the broader view, from the anecdotal to the larger picture. So I'll end with this image.



Thank you!
Zoe Borovsky
@zoepster
zoe@library.ucla.edu



From Flickr,
Juan Antonio Segal,
<https://flickr/p/LbZyra>

And hope that this presentation will provide an invitation to walk with me a bit– on a pathway to talk about the bigger picture, or the root system, or other types of trees or forests that grow near you.
Thank you!