

Panel Title: Digital Humanities and the Creation of the Active Archive

Description: The University of Rochester has been expanding into the realm of the Digital for more than two decades. It has long been home to digital projects and publications such as the Middle English Text Series and *The Camelot Project*, and in recent years it has become home to the Mellon Fellows, an inter-disciplinary group of graduate scholars each focusing on the possibilities of digital humanistic work. This panel offers a look into the kinds of digital archival work being done by Rochester's graduate community. Scott O'Neil is a doctoral candidate who also contributes to *The Camelot Project*. Alison Harper is a Mellon Fellow beginning work on her new digital archival project. Kyle Huskin is an editor with the TEAMS Middle English Texts Series who recently completed work on digital archive creation at the Rare Book School. The three papers coalesce around ideas about how digital archive creation, particularly in medieval and early modern texts, is expanding the ways in which literary research operates.

Presenters:

Paper 1: "Chronological Camelots and Digital Dagonets: Using Digital Archives to Uncover Literary Trends"

Scott O'Neil, University of Rochester

Dagonet, most simply, is King Arthur's court fool. Often carrying an epithetical surname such as "the Fool" or "the Coward," the character is perhaps most interesting in that he did not begin his fictional existence as a fool at all. Through most of his early appearances, Dagonet was depicted as a knight who was foolish. The character's modern interpretation, extending over a long literary afterlife, depicts Dagonet as a court fool who was knighted. This iteration of the character was first established by the Prose *Tristan* and later expanded by Malory.

This paper aims to demonstrate the unanticipated benefits of digital archive projects, such as the University of Rochester's *Camelot Project*. The mission statement of the *Camelot Project* states that it is designed to make Arthurian material "available." In my work preparing the Dagonet theme page, it soon became clear that I was not only making texts "available" but that I was also putting those texts on a chronological arc, allowing for the discovery of short and long term trends. This paper will discuss the benefits of this sort of digital domain within the context of more than 800 years worth of translation, appropriation, and adaptation of Dagonet, King Arthur's fool.

Paper 2: "Digital 'Archives': Making a Medieval Miscellany"

Alison Harper, University of Rochester

There seem to be predominantly two kinds of medieval digital archives operating at the moment, which may a) unhelpfully channel all new digital

medievalists down restrictive paths and b) obscure the actual study and use of medieval texts. One is the single author/work kind, which as the name implies is focused around collecting all the texts from one author or all the manuscript witnesses of one text. The other main type is more comprehensive, categorizing material from one genre of medieval texts.

For this panel, I would like to present my concept for a new type of medieval digital archive, that will hopefully combine the immersive experience of the first kind (tantalizing users with a sense of the medieval literary scene) and the wide-ranging, more comprehensive utility of the second kind. Focusing on a particular type of reading experience, I will create a digital project that showcases the allure of the religious miscellany manuscript. Drawing on a varied selection of such manuscripts from late 15th century England (when we find the greatest diversity in medieval readers), I will present a range of short, popular literary works including sermon exempla, religious lyrics, saint's lives, and extracts from mystical writings. By transcribing the different manuscript versions of each text alongside manuscript facsimiles, and audio files for the musical lyrics, the user can easily appreciate not just the text, but the reading practices brought to each work. I hope to eventually see this project as part of a larger movement within digital medievalist scholarship - one that creatively expands the scope of traditional archival work.

Paper 3: "The Potential of Digital Humanities in Aiding Traditional Codicology"
Kyle Huskin, University of Rochester

To think of medieval manuscripts in relation to today's "digital revolution" may seem incongruous or far-fetched. However, digital technology (DT) presents one of the best mediums for understanding and communicating the pre-print experiences of reading and writing literature. In this paper, I discuss my experience in the Rare Book School's course "M-95: The Medieval Manuscript in the Twenty-First Century" (at the University of Pennsylvania, 5-10 July 2015), focusing on the practical role DT can play in enhancing traditional codicological research. My work on UPenn's MS LJS 184: *Liber Ethimologiarum* was aided by DT in two key ways. First, multispectral imaging and photo enhancement software enabled me to decipher never-before-discernible elements of the MS, and that new information necessitated revision of the current provenance. Second, the combination of open-source data (at UPenn's digital resource center, [OPenn](#)) and free web-based programs (a collaborative transcription website, [T-PEN](#), a collation modeling program, [VisColl](#), and a digital publishing platform, [Scalar](#), among others) enabled me to take full advantage of the available data and to make my discoveries available to the widest possible audience.

I will also touch on some theoretical implications of what such increased accessibility may mean for an upcoming generation of scholars -- in particular, graduate students at institutions with fewer resources and independent scholars without institutional funding. Although DT still presents certain, undeniable challenges to traditional research, its possibilities, when it is used constructively and in conjunction with established methodologies, are too important to overlook.