

An Analysis of Interviews and their Possible Influences
for the Digital Scholarship Lab

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Executive Summary

This document is a report of our findings from directing a series of interviews as part of a process to aid in the future design and presence of the Michigan State Digital Scholarship Lab (DSLAb). The first step in this process involved an initial Q/A session with the stakeholders. This session solved many of our initial questions about user base and who would be the best candidates to represent said user base. We also learned from this session who we could talk to represent the stakeholders well. Q/A notes can be found in **Appendix A**.

We were able to find several things from our process:

- None of those interviewed found out about the space through the website, meaning any website use was post-discovery
- Most shareholders were unsure as to how to define the space
- The key target of the lab is to make the features of the space as easily accessible for everyone

Introduction

The Digital Scholarship Lab is a new state-of-the-art learning and resource space in the MSU Main Library. In order to aid the stakeholders of the Digital Scholarship Lab (DSLAb), our team worked to use interviews with both stakeholders, users, and potential users in order to aid the design process for the future of the web presence of the DSLAb.

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Summary of Methods Used

Target Population

- **Current MSU Students:** Primary consumers
 - **MSU Faculty:** Primary consumers
 - **Stakeholders:** Primary consumers
 - **East Lansing residents:** Secondary consumers
- a. **Primary Consumers:** People looking to use the lab for a variety of different purposes. Primarily looking to the website for guidance about various space services/offerings, and their logistical information.
- b. **Secondary Consumers:** People looking for information

All users fall under one of four categories:

- **Stakeholders:** (Faculty and professors with direct association with the lab)
- **Lab Users:** (People who actively use the space)
- **Lab Acquaintances:** (People who may have used the lab in the past, but only briefly or people who know of the lab, but have yet to use it)
- **People Unfamiliar With The Lab:** (People who, when questioned about the lab, were not familiar with it.)

Recruiting Methods

Post Stakeholder Q/A session, we were able to gather information about who we felt would best represent the users of the lab most accurately. Those recruited were as follows:

1. **Josh:** As a stakeholder it was important to get a perspective on what was the vision for the lab.
2. **Users in the lab:** People who actually use the lab should be a target of research and questionnaires.
3. **People who have used the lab before:** People who have used the lab in the past should also be a target of questions in order to figure out their experiences.
4. **People unfamiliar with the lab/non-MSU students:** People unfamiliar with the space should be interviewed a bit in order to figure out what is preventing them from coming

Summary of Participants

Our primary participants were MSU students and one stakeholder. The MSU students majors were Social Work, Computer Science and Computer Engineering and their class levels were freshman, sophomore and junior. Two of three of the students reported that

they sometimes used the lab, one has never used the lab. All said they were not very experienced with the lab, and all said they've never used the the DS Lab website.

Our interview process had three parts, with each part consisting of a different method. The first method being the in class stakeholder interview panel. The second method was a stakeholder interview during class in order to get a better view of the vision for the DS Lab. The final method being a Google form that was given to people in the DS Lab.

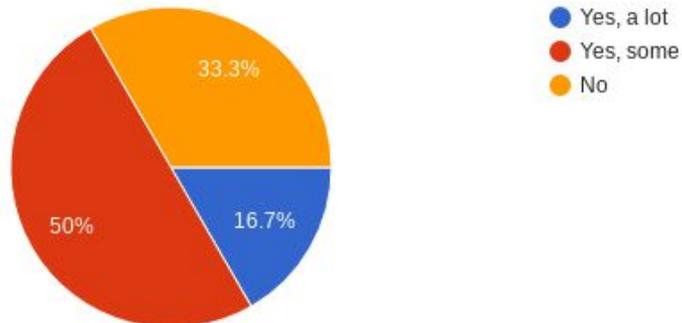
Interview Questions

Our three part interview process allowed us to take a funneled approach by starting with the broad questions to eliminate logistics and move in closer towards the specific questions we wished to ask the users. By taking this approach we not only more efficient, but we were also able to get the most out of our time spent with the users.

Findings and Next Steps

Have you ever used the Digital Scholarship Lab before?

6 responses



There are a couple general goals that we noticed for people who use the DS Lab. For many users, the software and computers are a big draw. The VR space is also important as well as the ability to rent rooms.

There are also a lot of people who think that the space is nice looking and cool that it exists. The design language of the place speaks to people and having a lot of tech is also interesting to people.

When people hear about the DS Lab, it is usually from a friend. This seems to be a common scenario and something that we can explore in terms of marketing.

We also found that the website appears not to be used very much, at least by the average people that were interviewed. Power users are more likely to know more information and are more likely to have used the website.

Making the web presence of the lab and library more available would be a good way in gaining mindshare amongst students. Getting the library back involved with social media would be helpful in spreading the word. The MSU Email list could also be helpful in informing students. Handing out flyers at Wells Hall or high traffic areas could be a good suggestion as well.

Discussions of Missed Opportunities and Shortcomings

With more time at our disposal, we could have done individual interviews with each of the shareholders to get a better idea of their personal vision for the Digital Scholarship Lab. This would have allowed us to create a Venn Diagram of their visions to see where they all overlap and use our time with this project to assist with fulfilling that vision with our research.

With more time and a larger team, we could have expanded the sample size to include more people from different majors, and different colleges to achieve more accurate data.

Appendix A: Notes from Initial Stakeholder Interview

1. Background

- a. “In one sentence, what do you guys do?”
 - i. “I don’t know yet, we are still finding our way on how to talk about the space”
 - ii. “We are still inventing the space, to a certain extent that will always be true”
 1. Shrinking to a more comfortable level
 2. Primarily, (funded on a teaching/learning grant) an educational space more than a research space. More of an undergraduate space for learning with computationally intensive technology.
 - iii. “Foster creativity and collaboration”
 1. With faculty
 2. With grad students, undergrads
 3. With community partners
 - iv. “Access to, support for, and fostering the community around the use of technology in education throughout the university.”
 1. Not doing our job if we are not providing access
 2. Creating a community around these transformative technologies

3. Impact learning with technology.

- b. "Is it free to use the space/services you offer, or does it cost money?" ✓
- c. "What is your budget for this project, in terms of timing and resources?" ✓

2. Motivations

a. "What are your motivations behind the redesign?"

i. "What do you want to add to the website?"

1. User stories and test cases

- a. Testimonials and Examples
- b. Give reasons why
- c. Show how this is different from other computer labs
- d. Benefits of communication
- e. Tell what it is for

b. "What is your reasoning for wanting a redesign?"

3. Desired outcomes

a. "What experience are you wanting for your users?"

i. "Make it easier for people to book the things that are bookable."

ii. "4 different room booking systems"

1. Systems are not owned.

iii. "Form some connections"

1. MSU Digital Humanities Group

- a. Lot of buy in

- b. More crossover between MakerSpace and MSU DH
and the DSL
- iv. “What can I do here?” and “How can I do that here?”
- v. Define Digital Scholarship in different ways
 - 1. Use cases
 - 2. Personal implementations
- vi. Contact Us important, using the lab was important, room bookings,
and hours
 - 1. Top row is important and thought about
 - 2. The rest of the rows are not as important
 - 3. The bottom row is for hardcore users.
- vii. Maximum Sustainability!!!!
 - 1. Less work for other developers
 - 2. Maximum turnaround
 - 3. Should be able to run by a lot of people
 - 4. Drag and drop design isn't as important
 - 5. Time to write code
 - a. Prefer to write code
- viii. Reflect the aesthetic of the space with the website
 - 1. Modern, Bright, Desirable
- ix. Menu was made in order for fast and painless use.
 - 1. There was no content available

2. Can't have an empty homepage
3. Hitchcock Theme

4. Users

- a. "Who do you think your users are currently?"
 - i. Space vs Website
 1. CAL and SPD faculty
 2. Other community members
 - a. May need to use the sight to figure out what it is
 - b. Off-campus
 3. Undergraduates
 - a. Through Google
 - b. Few places on campus to link to this space
 4. Information is targeted to faculty stakeholders.
 - a. Bought in
 - b. Interested
 5. "Power User"
 - a. Graduate students.
 - b. 20+ hours a week for months on end.
 6. Partners for co-creation
 7. Campus administration
 - ii. As a space for work, just like the rest of the library.
 - iii. Collaboration with other colleges

1. Not currently, have begun the process of communication
2. Inspiration from the Hub
 - a. Direction from there
 - b. “Who do you want to be your users in the future?”
 - c. “Are you planning the website around your users?”
 - d. “How have you designed with accessibility in mind? And what further improvements could be made?”
 - i. Accessibility standards need to be kept.
 - e. Analytics
 - i. Not started yet.
 - ii. Done through the library but not through CAL servers.
 1. Unknown server.
 - iii. Intention of having that.

5. Communication plan

- a. “What is the primary or ideal method of contacting the project managers for us to reachout to?”
 - i. Through Josh
- b. “Are you open to meeting in person at a later date to get more information and feedback on the work that we have been doing?”
 - i. Yes
- c. No Social Media for the DSL
 - i. Social Media for the library has left

- ii. #MSUDSLab
- iii. Email list might be a good start
 - 1. Formal list, unused
 - 2. Not a lot of people who have signed up for it
 - 3. Part of the problem is the speed of implementation
- iv. Put out our own marketing
 - 1. Too much time doing the thing
 - 2. Not enough time to talk about it

6. Constraints

- a. “What branding constraints do you have for the redesign?”
 - i. “What standards are mandated by the University or other overseers?”
 - 1. Yes, University Branding
 - ii. “Do you have a logo or other branding that you would like us to use?”
 - 1. “If not, are these assets something that you would like to be created?”

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Background questions:

What is your class status?

What is your major?

Have you ever used the Digital Scholarship Lab before?

Occasional User Questions:

What are your goals when you use the Digital Scholarship Lab?

What do you think about the space?

How did you learn about the Digital Scholarship Lab?

How experienced with the Digital Scholarship Lab are you?

Frequent User Questions:

What do you use the Digital Scholarship Lab for?

Do you reserve space? If so, how?

Do you use the DS Lab for school, work or other?

Which resources have you used in the DS Lab?

Website Questions:

Have you used the DS Lab website?

How have you used the website?

If so, what are your thoughts on the website?

Appendix C: Interview Raw Notes

1. What is the Digital Scholarship Lab to you?

- a. *A collaborative space that is open to all, from all levels of experience, all majors, to work on digital projects, with/without the software provided. For some it is for to use the technologies, for others it is a space to work.*

2. What is your motivation behind redesigning this website?

- a. It is a 2 folded motivation. Functionality issues: amount of information architecture issues, messy design things, content is now more clear than before. The first was a shot in the dark. We now have data and another chance to create the site. We've been open now for 8 months, so we can now more accurately represent the space and our services/what we offer with our site.

3. What do you like/dislike about the current site?

- a. Terminology could be complicated, but our voice is good - I'd like to keep that, we don't want an academic paper - digestible for basic users. Need to be able to understand.

- b. Some spaces need to be built out more to balance conciseness and expansion. Not in love with color layout, while it does represent the space well, the contrast with the gray is not great. Header image is messy, it doesn't expand well. Header/footer issues, some of it is a problem with things playing nicely.

4. Is there anything missing currently that you would like to add to the site?

- a. Pictures of the space! We need to engage people. More portfolio examples of things to be done in the space to better explain the space's purpose. 2-3 projects of use case examples of the specific portion of the space. Easier to showcase this rather than non real examples. Case studies would be great. That area is another step. Content needs to be well rounded and written well so it may require extra content effort. May be a separate project.

5. What is the experience you are targeting for your users of the site?

- a. Most advanced users of the physical space won't visit the site. The first interaction is the most important part. The site is the entrance to the lab. More informational. Website is more for the intro users. Deeper content sure, but the main thing is the surface level get people in the door. Not a lot of content for people already using the space. Far too specific details needed for those people.

6. Who do you think your users are currently?

- a. Space, but not scholarship: Visitors: what time do you close, can I consume stuff, am I allowed to use computers, times for space. Internal use- librarians, staff members - may need to check in to see specific lab details - closing time, etc. reference base, not necessarily actual use.
Consultation
- b. Tourists: 1 off interaction, someone coming from another university, person coming to check out the space, dipping toes in the water, what's actually happening from a digital scholarship perspective, im interested in the different parts of the lab and want to check it out. Interested in vr, etc. Interested, but not necessarily wanting to talk about collaboration or getting specific things done.
- c. Project Collaborators: people on campus or in area, not exclusively, most likely faculty or graduate students. Want to partner with lab to work on projects. Whether we are consulting or actually working on part of the project
- d. Advanced users: started in group project collaborators, but now are well beyond website use. Their project is far beyond that, but now have personal contacts in the lab. They are beyond base level website communication. Know email details, etc. Not poking around the website.

- e. Any of these users can move about the rungs in different times. Because of use they may change their user type. A single person could exist anywhere, but morph anywhere.