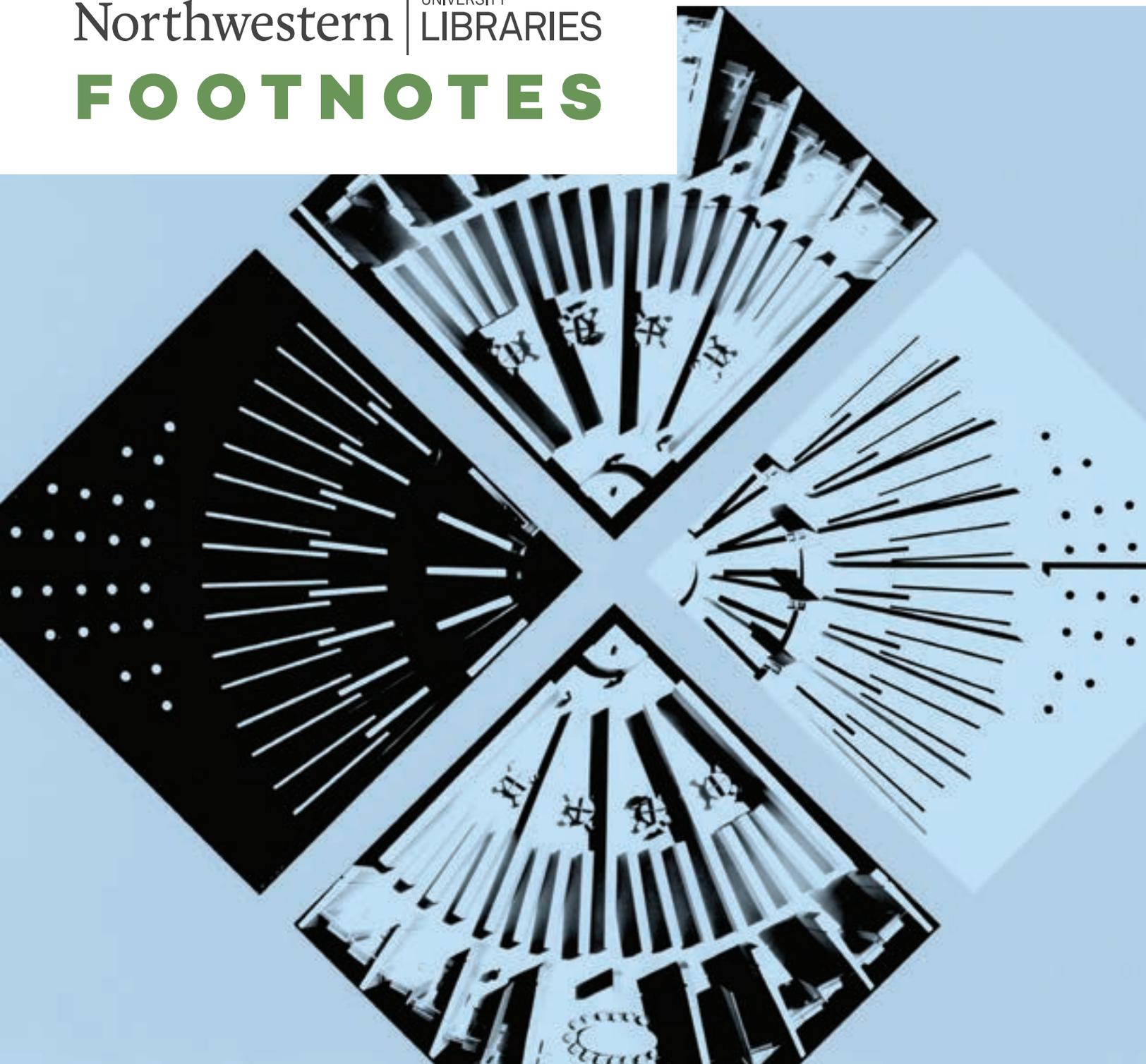


Northwestern | UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES  
**FOOTNOTES**



FALL 2020 VOLUME 45 NUMBER 1

# FOOTNOTES

FALL 2020, VOLUME 45, NUMBER 1

- 2 Helping faculty prepare for the pivot
- 4 Libraries' responses to the pandemic
- 6 Archiving in a pandemic
- 8 Exploring digital humanities
- 9 Donor spotlight: Michael Spinella and Matthew Welch
- 10 Honor roll of donors
- 13 By the numbers



## University Library Turns 50

On the cover and above: Photograph of a sun study model from architecture firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for University Library. The Walter Netsch-designed building opened in January 1970; the ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in the fall. *University Archives*.

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## Reinventing library services during a pandemic



Over the past eight months, I have been inspired by the ways our Libraries staff have come together during the COVID-19 pandemic to serve the University at large, while caring for each other and our community.

You'll read in this issue of *Footnotes* about our responses to the crisis. But I also wanted to tell you about how we're looking after our Libraries community.

In March, most of our staff began to work from home, and the majority of our services were reoriented to be delivered remotely. As juniors, seniors, graduate students, and faculty returned to campus earlier this fall, we were able to bring back enough staff to maintain University Library as an operational space and to meet the increased demand for our academic services that comes with any fall quarter. We've been observing new protocols for on-site staffing; many of our colleagues who can work from home continue to do so.

To prepare the University Library building for fall, we placed plexiglass shields at locations where our staff interact with our community most often—the welcome and circulation desks. We followed the University's mask, social distancing, and testing guidelines. We reconfigured our common spaces to reduce crowding and keep visitors appropriately distant from one another, and we staggered staff office usage. There are more than 250 reservable study spaces for those who need to access physical materials or to work outside their residences. University Library's enclosed study rooms are still available by appointment as single-person spaces ideal for attending virtual classes and video meetings.

We moved all course reserve materials online and have worked assiduously to increase the number of digital alternatives to textbooks and course packs. This way, the experience of students on campus will still be largely digital. But we understand physical materials are sometimes the only option, so students and faculty can schedule a pickup or make an appointment to work with rare primary-source materials. Faculty and grad students with carrels in the building still have access to materials via personal book carts that are brought to a study space at a reserved time.

Finally, I want to note how our strong print collections have been crucial during these days of remote learning. At the onset of the stay-at-home orders, several large digital library collaboratives like the HathiTrust temporarily waived copyright restrictions for online access to books already owned in a member library's physical collections. That meant many researchers were able to continue their work uninterrupted. I received enthusiastic notes from faculty who were grateful for this service, and it wouldn't have been possible without the support of the donors who have helped us build our world-class collection.

We're in a new situation with many unknowns, but these are not new: the strength of our commitment to Northwestern's academic mission, the expertise and creativity of our staff, and the resources we can build through our network of campus and consortial partnerships.

Sarah M. Pritchard

*Dean of Libraries and Charles Deering McCormick University Librarian*

# EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS

*Collaborative practicum readied faculty  
for pivot to online teaching*

**T**he entire world of academia seemed to tilt during spring quarter, upending students, faculty, and every assumption about how a university educates.

But the way the Libraries and their campus partners responded to these disruptions shows how learning during a pandemic continues on steady footing.

Shortly after the campus shutdown began, a group of five campus partners recognized an urgent need to prepare Northwestern instructors for the new challenge of online learning—and a need to consolidate every team’s individual efforts into one grand design. Building on years of informal collaboration, Northwestern University Information Technology, AccessibleNU, the School of Professional Studies, the Searle Center for Advancing



Learning and Teaching, and the Libraries joined forces to create a specialized practicum about teaching at a distance.

“Students learning online can feel remote in the worst sense of the word,” said Tracy Coyne, a librarian who facilitated some

of the practicum sessions. “They can just feel off. They need special attention so they can be brought into the course. Instructors need those students to buy in and engage. And they will—if the online course is mapped carefully.”

The first three-week practicum was divided into cohorts of 10 to 15 faculty and teaching assistants, all planning for summer-quarter classes. A similar session followed in the summer for those preparing for fall. Online-instruction experts from the partner groups managed most of the skill training, while more than 20 librarians facilitated sessions where participants workshopped their own course designs and discussed their ideas. In all, almost 500 instructors completed the practicum, which comprised about 20 hours of programming including workshops, discussions, and consultations with learning designers.

What could seasoned instructors possibly gain from a crash course in online instruction? Plenty, said Michelle Guittar, head of instruction and curriculum support at the Libraries.

“Seminar-style instruction can be difficult to deliver online, and students can come away feeling dissatisfied or disconnected,” she said. “But online learning can be great. It just requires planning.”

Guittar, who oversaw the librarian facilitators of the practicum, said that digital learning, when most successful, is substantially different from typical in-person classes. It has its own distinct pedagogy grounded in universal design for learning, a model for reducing barriers to learning for all students. Removing those obstacles is especially important now, as teaching online during a global pandemic is complicated by the fact that each

student is facing a unique set of circumstances that can adversely affect the ability to learn.

So while the practicum taught the mechanics of online learning (such as making the best use of online tools like Canvas for course management or Panopto for video sharing), it also addressed the best practices for fostering student engagement amid these myriad challenges.

***Instructors need students to buy in and engage. And they will—if the online course is mapped carefully.***

For example, during Coyne’s workshops, participants worked on “flipping” classes so that recorded lectures, podcasts, and videos could be consumed at the student’s convenience—asynchronously—and synchronous Zoom conference calls could be saved for class discussion and breakout groups. Even then, “in-face” sessions could be recorded and made available afterward for students who could not attend at the given time. Not only does that broaden the accessibility of class information, Coyne said, but it relieves pressure on students who may be struggling in ways the instructor can’t see.

Practicum participants also explored ways to earn that all-important student buy-in. One solution, Coyne said, is to “invite students in” to the way the class is structured.

“That may mean saying, ‘Here are our objectives. Let’s give you a voice in how this is done,’” she said.

For example, students might be allowed to suggest ways to weight class assignments differently so no single grade has an outsize impact, or they can seek options for acceptable ways of completing an assignment.

In her sessions, Coyne said faculty gave one another thoughtful, constructive criticism in the true spirit of collaboration.

“I’ve been so impressed with faculty I’ve worked with,” she said. “They’re so sincere in wanting to do the best possible job for their students.”

The practicum had an additional benefit specifically for the Libraries. Because every participant was working on a specific course, the librarian facilitators got to be present at the formative moments of course design—something of a brass ring for librarians. At that stage, librarians can guide faculty to ideal resources or inspire them to consider alternative materials that might be less expensive for students.

“This experience helped us cultivate more relationships with our faculty,” Guittar said. “We’ve always had those, but now the campus is more aware of our value than ever before.”

Though three weeks isn’t enough to turn anyone into an expert online instructor, Guittar said, the practicum allowed hundreds of faculty to get a jump start on what they needed to pivot at a fraught moment.

“Whether they just needed to figure out some Zoom capabilities or to understand the pedagogy behind digital learning, this practicum was there to help faculty get what they needed,” she said. ■

# TRANSITIONS

*How the Libraries are transforming services and spaces during the pandemic*

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic is proving that Northwestern Libraries can pivot.

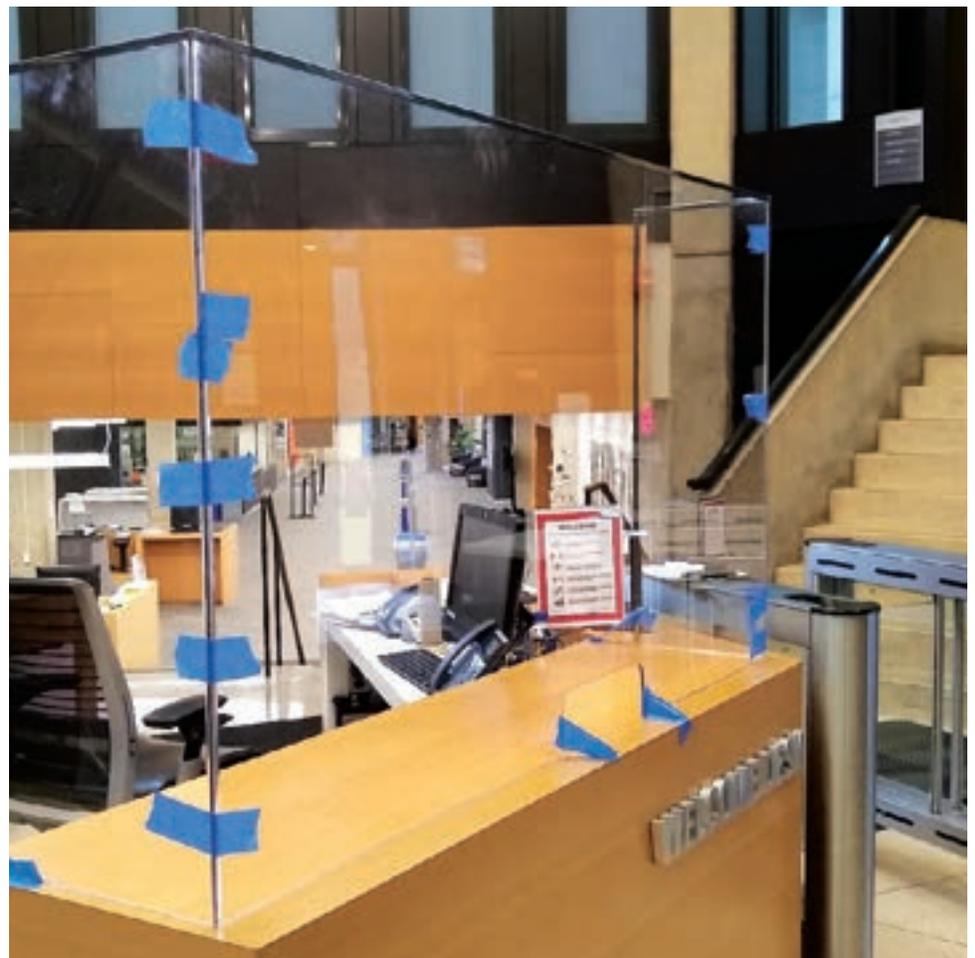
When the doors needed to close in the spring, services were transitioned entirely from in person to online. When campus partially reopened over the summer, socially distanced book pickup was added. When some students returned in the fall, library spaces were reinvented—and remote learning was supported for all students, no matter where they are living this quarter.

“We transformed not just our spaces but our services,” said Elsa Alvaro, head of academic engagement for the Libraries. “At the heart of our work is providing equitable access to collections and services as much as possible during the unique challenges of 2020.”

Here’s a sampling of the efforts under way since the spring to deliver library services as seamlessly and creatively as possible.

## **Ramping up digital access**

For the last several months, librarians have worked to find digital substitutes for physical materials:



- In preparation for fall quarter, the Libraries changed all course reserve materials to online access only. When possible, acquisitions staff purchased electronic versions of assigned textbooks, then worked with faculty to find digital alternatives for other physical resources.

- When physical materials were requested for course reserves, library staff digitized individual book chapters and journal articles already held by the Libraries—about 15 percent of any book or one article from any journal issue. Files were made available in Canvas, the online course management interface.

• The computers in University Library's Information Commons are loaded with essential software for graphics, data analysis, and GIS mapping. In the spring, library IT staff configured these computer stations to be accessible remotely. Many of these programs are prohibitively expensive for students to purchase, but now they can log in to the Libraries to use the software as if they were seated in the building.

### Physical materials in a distanced world

Despite the heavy reliance on digital delivery, the Northwestern community still requires physical materials from time to time.

Beginning in summer, faculty and students could pick up materials during a limited set of hours; Libraries staff bagged items individually and distributed them from a folding table at the front doors of University Library. Starting in the fall, these items became available at the circulation desk or, in an extraordinary offering, by mail.

"We're committed to equity between remote and on-campus populations, so the decision to ship materials was super easy to make," said Kurt Munson, head of access services. "Figuring out how to do it was the only hard part."

The first two floors of University Library reopened to the Northwestern community in the fall, with about 250 carefully spaced seats for individual study, available by appointment only. For faculty and

students who have carrels on the upper floors, librarians created "personal book carts" of in-library materials to be delivered there at scheduled times.

Rare materials from special libraries also became available in the fall by appointment, either in person or via digital conference.

### New-student orientations

Engagement librarians began planning in May for the possibility of a completely virtual Wildcat Welcome. When the undergraduate orientation program began in September, they delivered a suite of polished videos that aimed to demystify the Libraries. The videos were coupled with scheduled live sessions to answer students' questions and to coach them on getting help from the librarians assigned to their majors.

In a typical year, the engagement team would set up a tent on the University Library plaza, where team members would interact with hundreds of incoming students by giving tours of the building, answering questions, and handing out "trading cards" for major-specific librarians.

But without that live forum on the plaza or the bustling resources fair, where the Libraries usually have another orientation week outreach opportunity, the live sessions and



accompanying videos had to deliver key information with brevity and clarity. Among his many suggestions for using the Libraries remotely, engagement librarian and video host Chris Davidson advised new students, "Don't struggle alone. Just ask us."

Librarians also reimagined the annual Research Resources Forum, reinvigorating their outreach prospects as a result. In years past, this series of discipline-specific library primers targeted a few hundred incoming researchers, primarily doctoral students in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Communication. This year, the all-digital nature of the program meant librarians could invite graduate students at all levels. As a result, more than 300 new students joined the virtual sessions, putting librarian expertise front and center for more incoming students than ever. ■

Opposite page: The welcome desk in University Library receives its plexiglass shield in preparation for the building's reopening. Above right: Access services staff member Julie Calcagno poses with bagged books readied for pickup.

# ARCHIVING IN A PANDEMIC

*How do you tell the story of campus when campus shuts down?*



**W**hen students, faculty, and staff left campus in March 2020 to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the story of Northwestern didn't stop. But since then, University Archives has had to find new ways of capturing University history when much of it is happening virtually. Two projects under way at Archives aim to fill in the story of Northwestern during a time unlike any other in recent memory.

## **Student life, interrupted**

Typically, students' individual stories aren't collected until years after graduation. Scrapbooks, notes from classes, photographs, the ephemera of a college experience—most of these materials stay in students' hands after they graduate.

"The majority of our alumni material comes from people later in life," said archivist Dana Lamparello. "It's not uncommon for us to have

few contemporary materials for the current student experience."

But the uniqueness of 2020—with a pandemic and a burgeoning social justice protest movement forever linked—has meant that students might have stories that need telling, both for posterity and to help them process these unprecedented times, she said. So Archives began promoting a project that encourages students to keep a journal about



their experiences this year, whether in written essays, video monologues, or facilitated interviews with archivists.

“With so much going on, journaling could be cathartic, and we wanted to provide an outlet for that,” Lamparello said.

Over the summer, several students joined the project, with more following during fall quarter. But it isn’t simply a matter of throwing the door open for stories, Lamparello said. Students have a growing sensitivity about their privacy and the ways their stories could be used, retold, or co-opted, so how archivists address those concerns is crucial.

“Privacy is of utmost importance for something like this,” she said, stressing that Archives will anonymize student journals to the degree requested. That gives students more freedom to record unvarnished thoughts about what their lives are like during the pandemic.

“We want students to be in control of their stories,” Lamparello said. “We don’t want an ‘official’ story; we’re looking for an authentic experience.”

### **On record with student groups**

Capturing the records of student organizations might seem to be another challenge with so many

students absent from campus, but here Archives has a bit of an advantage. Most groups these days are already originating many of their records digitally, so sharing them with Archives is easier than ever, said archivist Charla Wilson.

When students use tools like Google Drive or recorded Zoom meetings to manage their organizations’ regular activities, preserving their work is as easy as forwarding links to Archives. Experts on staff specialize in processing digital records to make them accessible to future group members or historians.

Archives’ campus outreach has indicated that every student group has its own methods of record-keeping, adding a particular challenge to preserving their history.

“We have learned that student groups operate and organize their records differently,” Wilson said. “As we learn more about them, we’re identifying ways to best support them.”

So University Archives launched a project this quarter aimed at training student groups in the best practices for record-keeping. The Make Your Mark project helps organizations that want their activities recorded in history—once again with the intent of putting students in charge of how their stories are told.

Through meetings with groups and one-on-one training sessions, the project’s archivists are educating students about organizing physical and digital files, labeling documents for ease of reference, and exercising rights students have regarding their materials. That includes how to restrict sensitive materials—an important factor in convincing some students that the items they donate won’t haunt them—while still making them available for history.

Backed by a grant from the Alumnae of Northwestern University, Make Your Mark developed a campaign to help archivists raise awareness of the program. That’s important because it’s an opportunity to educate student groups that the records they are currently generating have value beyond the present, Wilson said.

“Records give context to students’ history at Northwestern,” she said. “If your club is marking an anniversary, or if new leaders want more familiarity with what came before, or if you want to know more about your club’s alumni, these records can provide answers.”

In other words, students’ legacies are at stake. And students are the ones to make sure those legacies are preserved fully. ■

# MODERN-DAY TOOLS FOR AGE-OLD STUDIES

*How the Libraries support the digital humanities*

A video essay about first-year students exploring the “sad marvels of city living.” Digital exhibits about Black political organizers of the 19th century. An archive of rock LPs and program notes from a student radio station.

All these unique projects, featuring endeavors by the Northwestern community, embody the far-ranging work of the digital humanities, where the study of human culture intersects with the technology of the digital age. Though the former is as old as the oldest university, the latter is a comparatively new territory still being explored.

For faculty and students unsure about treading this new ground, the Libraries have an eager guide to support them on their journey.

Librarian Josh Honn has been handling the Libraries’ digital humanities work since 2011, collaborating with faculty and students on a panoply of projects in fields from performance studies to anthropology. He consults with them on using the most relevant data-gathering tools, the most useful digital research methods, and the best practices for sharing their work digitally with the public.

“I know a little about a lot,” Honn said, “but I’m not deeply knowledgeable about every discipline. So first we find common language about the research.”

For example, when working with a graduate student researching death customs at a South American burial site, Honn consulted with her about unobtrusive ways to conduct her research in the local community and about the privacy concerns around using and sharing her findings. Part of supporting good scholarship, he said, is advocating for the privacy and ethics considerations of the digital age—and being critical of how such technology is applied.

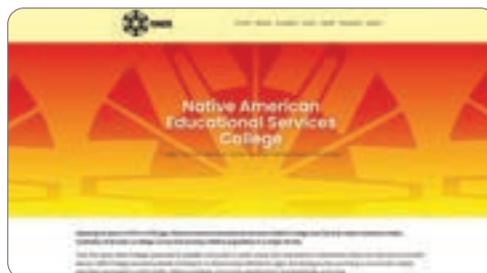
“You have to think about technology’s impact,” Honn said. “Does your text-processing tool only work in English? Who has access to your research? Do you need to create a static website that is more accessible for people without consistent wireless internet access? Who are the people potentially affected by your work, and how do you responsibly curate cultural heritage materials?”

The campus community comes to Honn not just for individual research consultations but for assistance in designing courses and conducting classroom instruction. He also helps lead an annual summer workshop on digital humanities, a two-week intensive hosted by the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities with support from the Libraries and the Weinberg College Media and Design Studio. Dozens of faculty have attended the workshop since 2013, broadening Honn’s reach to the humanities faculty by the year.

Whether it’s a digital archive of poetry journals or a computer-aided analysis of a large text, the projects that cross Honn’s path share a common theme: they are all telling stories about the human condition—they just happen to be using the newest available technologies to increase the reach and impact of the findings.

“I’m collaborating with faculty and students on how to craft their work for the digital age,” he said. “Much of the technology may be new to them, but really we’re just having a different form of a conversation about how to share scholarship and tell stories.” ■

Northwestern digital humanities projects include a history of (left) Chicago’s Native American Educational Services College and (center and right) the video *Pickpockets, Poets, and Other Sad Marvels of City Life* (Media and Design Studio).



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### Michael Spinella and Matthew Welch

If you're a liberal arts major—current or former—perhaps you've been feeling something that's also been bothering Michael Spinella '96 and his husband, Matthew Welch: the humanities don't seem to get enough respect.

These Northwestern Libraries donors, who live in the Bay Area with their four-year-old daughter, have nothing against the recent emphasis on STEM fields in higher education—they just don't want anyone to forget the value of the humanities, and they want their gifts to support the perspective-broadening power of these time-honored majors.

"The humanities teach you how to engage with different viewpoints," said Spinella. There's a lack of good, grounded, critical thinking in our society, which is why it's so important that we support studies in the humanities."

Spinella and Welch back up their convictions with their financial contributions; they recently made a gift to support the Libraries' digital humanities work with faculty and students (see opposite page). They also have donated to the construction of the new Humanities and Social Studies Center at Grinnell College, Welch's alma mater.

"It's gratifying to see Grinnell and Northwestern graduates go into technical fields after coming out of an undergraduate liberal arts background," Welch said. "They have a much more expansive view of the world. That humanistic training about the human condition and how humans interact is what teaches you how to

break down problems from different disciplines."

"Some people see humanities as a limiting course of study," Spinella said. "But Matthew



Welch, left, and Spinella hiking with their daughter in the Bay Area.

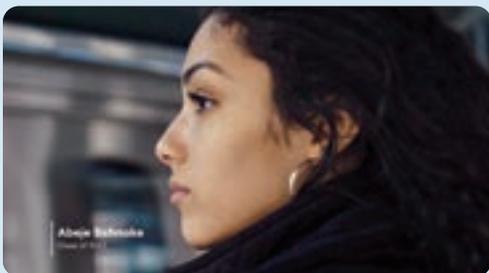
and I agree that the opposite is true. The humanities can lead to a wide number of careers."

He and Welch are living proof of that. Spinella, who majored in classics and religion at Northwestern before getting a graduate degree in history, is a content strategy manager at tech giant Facebook. Welch, who pursued Spanish and theater in his undergraduate studies, is president and chief operating officer of the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board, a financial industry nonprofit.

Northwestern Libraries' digital humanities efforts are integral to keeping these fields vibrant, they say.

"The current work in digital humanities allows these fields to speak the modern language that students want to hear," Welch said. "It keeps humanities study current and relevant while looking at the same themes as traditional methods do."

"We are drawn to the way digital humanities are student oriented at Northwestern Libraries," Spinella said. "Emphasizing the digital piece really expands the reach and gets students involved." ■



# HONOR ROLL OF DONORS 2020

Northwestern University Libraries appreciate the generosity of our donors. This report reflects giving from September 1, 2019, to August 31, 2020, the University's fiscal year.

Please send any corrections to Jennifer Mullman; Director of Development for Libraries, Press, and University Archives; Northwestern University; 1201 Davis Street; Evanston, Illinois 60208-4410; phone 847-467-7278; [jmullman@northwestern.edu](mailto:jmullman@northwestern.edu).

Thank you for your support of the University and the Libraries.

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*The Deering Society is an annual giving society for the Libraries. Recognizing gifts of \$1,000 or more to any area of the Libraries, the society takes its name from the family whose philanthropy established the Charles Deering Memorial Library at Northwestern University.*

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Above: Photograph of a perspective sketch by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill modeling concepts for University Library. *University Archives.*

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# BY THE NUMBERS



## Research consultations

One-on-one meetings between librarians and students or faculty

**437**

Summer 2019  
(In person and online)

**647**

Summer 2020  
(Online only)



## Live chat

Chat room interactions with librarians for on-the-fly queries and quick consultations

**191**

Summer 2019

**376**

Summer 2020



## Orientation forum

The all-virtual 2020 Research Resources Forum was able to accommodate more first-year graduate students than would have fit in University Library lecture spaces.

**70**

2019 attendees

**323**

2020 attendees



## E-book purchases

The Libraries this year redoubled efforts to swap physical purchases for digital ones.

**67**

New e-book purchases  
June–August 2019

**675**

New e-book purchases  
June–August 2020



## No-contact book pickups

For the first time ever, requested physical items were pulled and bagged in advance, then made available during scheduled pickup times.

**3,676**

Loans  
June–August 2020



## Remote computer use

In the spring, IT specialists configured the Information Commons computers and their often-expensive software to be available via remote desktop technology.

**132**

Unique users  
April–August 2020

**332**

Log-ins  
April–August 2020

# FOOTNOTES

FALL 2020, VOLUME 45, NUMBER 1

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## Legendary publisher's archives acquired

In January the Libraries received the massive Robert R. McCormick Archives, one of the deepest, most bountiful journalism-related collections in the nation. A gift of the Chicago Tribune Company, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, and Nexstar Media Group, the materials document the life and career of the influential publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, who died in 1955.

The collection includes McCormick's personal and *Tribune* business papers, touching on a swath of major local, national, and world events of the early 20th century.

"This isn't just a trove of journalism history. It has great value to many fields of study, and it resonates so broadly with the history of Northwestern," said dean of libraries Sarah Pritchard.

An 1858 letter from US Senate candidate Abraham Lincoln to the *Chicago Tribune*, scolding the paper for coverage he deemed unflattering to the Republican Party. *Robert R. McCormick Archives, Charles Deering McCormick Library.*

