

Appendix 11.3

Cultural Diversity and the Digital Humanities: Second Assignment

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The second assignment is to construct a timeline for our Omeka project, “Haudenosaunee Timeline,” using the timeline materials that Rick Hill (director of the Deyohahá:ge:ge: Indigenous Knowledge Centre at Six Nations Polytechnic on the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve in Ontario) presented to us. All of the historical events are coded to chronological dates, so the first part of the assignment will be relatively straight forward, as explained below. In the second phase of the project we will seek to make the timeline more culturally sensitive by including two of the most important events in Haudenosaunee history: “Sky Woman and the Creation Story” and “The Peacemaker Epic” (also known as the “Deganawidah Epic,” but Haudenosaunee protocols are that one should not speak the Peacemaker’s name in public).

Purpose

The purpose of the assignment is to learn about the relationship between the creation of metadata and cultural context to (1) describe digital objects within Omeka and (2) use those digital objects and other materials provided by Rick Hill to compile a timeline of Haudenosaunee history using TimelineJS.

Omeka uses the Dublin Core metadata schema, which includes a number of fields: author, title, date of publication, spatial coverage, etc. This will suffice for the chronologically coded, printed documents. In the case of “Sky Woman” and “The Peacemaker Epic, which come from the Haudenosaunee oral tradition, we will consider ways to represent these events alongside chronologically dated events and the limitations of temporal data standards.

We will also be discussing both archival and Haudenosaunee protocols. *Protocols*, here, have double meanings. In computing, protocols are sets of rules that govern the exchange and transmission of data between devices. We will augment this seemingly acultural set of rules by taking into account what, in

archival terms, are called protocols for culturally sensitive materials; see: <https://amphilsoc.org/library/protocols-for-indigenous-materials>. For example, at the American Philosophical Society, "The Peacemaker Epic" is catalogued as "Deganawidah Epic." This is accurate, but it does not take into consideration that, according to traditional Haudenosaunee teachings, one should not speak the Peacekeeper's name, which is why we are referring to it as "The Peacekeeper Epic."

We will also address the thorny issue of US federal copyright as opposed to what Floyd Westerman has called "Indian copyright." The data provided by Rick Hill includes a number of images that are not in the public domain, so the timeline will not be accessible outside of class. We will discuss how to research copyright restrictions, but we will not have time to do this for all of the images. We will also discuss why, according to US federal copyright law, the Native American oral tradition is not eligible for these protections. Moreover, the Haudenosaunee people who speak on the recordings from the American Philosophical Society (APS) do not have copyright on the stories or songs that they record. Rather, the anthropologist who donated the collection retains copyright, even if the Native person did not sign a consent form. The Native consultant or Wisdom Keeper obviously "knew" and/or "owned" the song they generously shared with the anthropologist, and, yet, their rights are unrecognized even though it is widely known by anthropologists that ethnographic audio recordings would not be possible without Native Wisdom Keepers.

Work Flow

Nick Okrent has very graciously set up the Omeka project for us in advance. Nick will come to class frequently so that he and Celeste can provide hands-on training. We are very fortunate to have three instructors for the class, an important example of the collaborative nature of digital humanities projects.

This assignment will span three weeks:

In-class session with Celeste: discussion about metadata standards and protocols; demo of Omeka interface and hands-on time to work together to describe the digital objects. NB: directions for what information to put in each metadata field is

included in the Omeka site.

In-class session with Celeste: discussion about metadata and copyright issues in relation to timelines; demo of TimelineJS and Google Sheets; hands-on time to sort events and begin filling in the information.