



August 2022

Innovation in Digital Scholarship:

Robarts Library 5th Floor

Introduction



As part of the University of Toronto (U of T) Libraries' vision, Robarts Library's fifth floor is slated for renovation into an upgraded digital consultation and study space. The upgrade will involve the current Map and Data Library (MDL) and the Government Documentation collection while presenting potential new opportunities. Accordingly, U of T Libraries approached the Innovation Hub in early 2022 to discover stakeholder needs and collect feedback that will be critical to developing a destination for innovative data research and digital scholarship. This is the Innovation Hub's second project with U of T Libraries, following the redesign of Robarts' fourth floor study space.

Since 2016, the Innovation Hub has established in-depth understanding of student experiences and expertise in designing feedback sessions across a variety of settings at the University of Toronto. We take a design thinking approach that focuses on collecting qualitative data through conversations as well as storytelling and translating the themes and insights from the data into design criteria. Our attention is focused on ensuring that all stakeholders can participate in the consultation process for the project. This process of designing *with* rather than *for* people leads to increased positive sentiment from the community in the final design because people see themselves and their needs reflected. This report is intended to highlight the needs and aspirations of current and future users of the space as the architectural design process commences.

Methods



At the Innovation Hub, we strive to understand the experiences of students, staff, and faculty as told to us through their stories, and allow that understanding to inspire design. We explore the 'problem space' in all its textures, moving beyond the what questions to the underlying whys and hows, rather than jumping to solutions. To achieve this, we use activities such as interviews, discussion groups, and interactive exercises to encourage individuals to describe their experiences to us in their own words. The richer these descriptions, the better we understand how it feels to be in their unique positions.

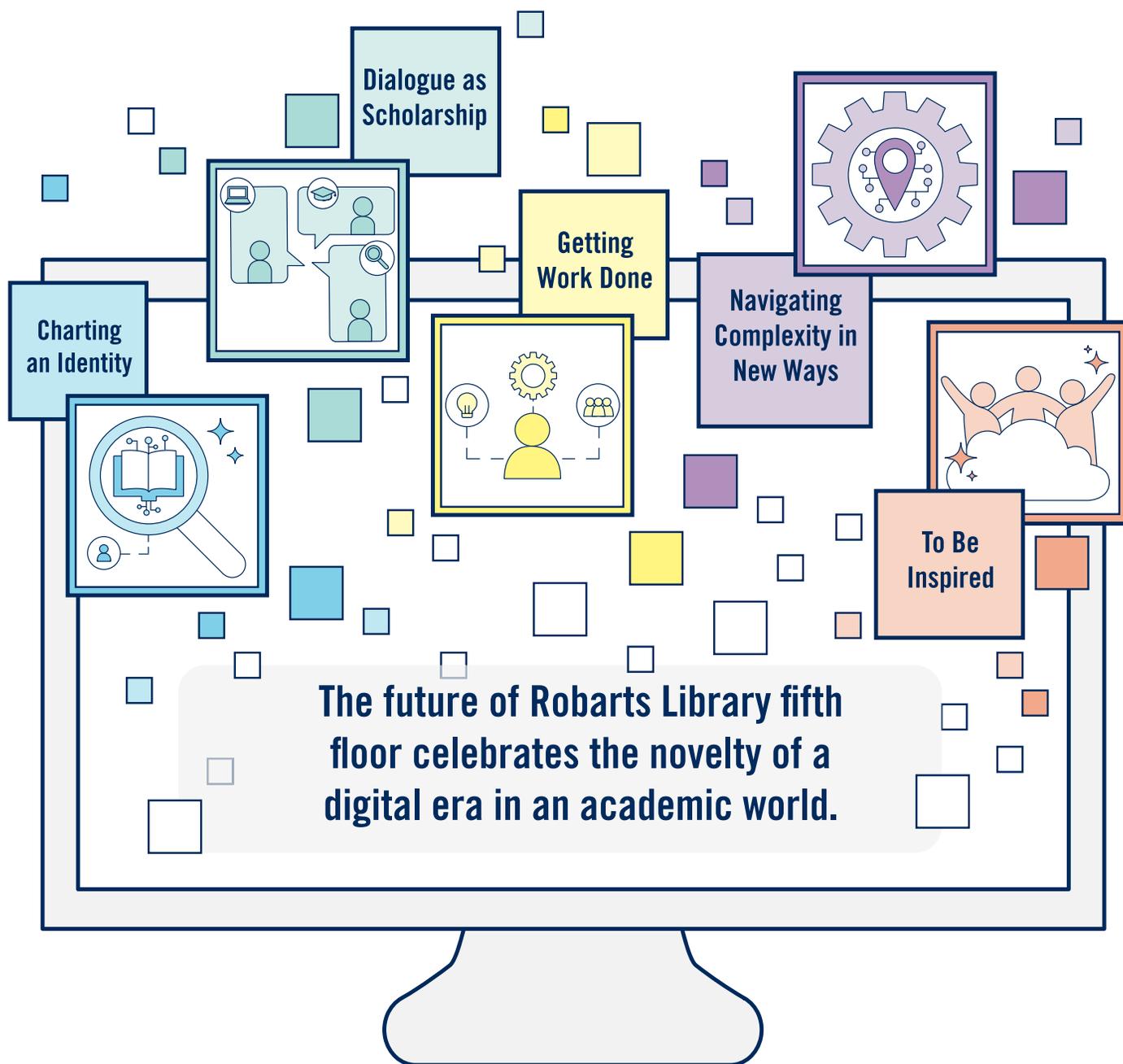
For this project, we **interviewed eight librarians and analysts from the Map and Data Library (MDL)** as well as **nine members from research support staff and faculty associated with the Critical Digital Humanities Initiative (CDHI)**, who collaborate closely with UTL and MDL on critical research. These conversations explored their day-to-day activities as 'digital scholars,' with a focus on their current unmet needs. We then arranged **feedback sessions with student users** of Robarts Library, successfully speaking with 12 and receiving written feedback from an additional eight. We asked students about their current usage of U of T Libraries' resources, and further probed about any challenges they faced in accessing digital resources at the libraries.

In our examination of the data, we used grounded analytic techniques to gain a deeper understanding of the core needs students, staff, and faculty communicated, and developed a vision based on our insights. We synthesized stories participants shared into personas to bring their needs to life. We also developed design principles that guide how to foster an accessible, open, and community-oriented atmosphere for the new fifth floor.

Our Findings

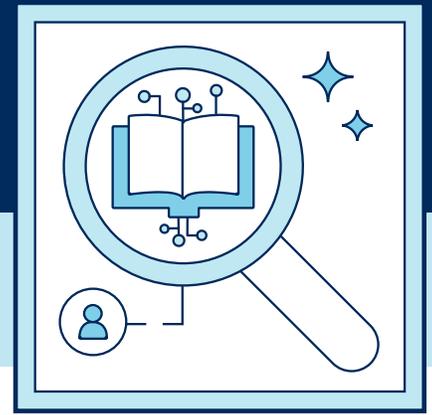
Vision: The future of the Robarts Library fifth floor celebrates the novelty of a digital era in an academic world.

We found that students, faculty and staff are doing groundbreaking research and work in their respective fields of study using digital tools. This growing community wants to come together to share ideas and redefine how the digital world can be recognized in an academic context. The Robarts fifth floor is well positioned to be a place that unites and empowers digital scholars in a vibrant community and offers the most current digital tools to its users.



THEME 1

Charting an Identity



What are Digital Scholarship and Digital Humanities?

Throughout the data **we observed variations in how the terms digital humanities and digital scholarship were understood.** Participants shared questions about who these terms apply to, where these fields have a home at the university, and how the work of 'digital humanists' and 'digital scholars' fit into the tradition of academia. The data showed a lack of a clear identity and understanding of the field of 'digital humanities' and 'digital scholarship.'

- Multiple students, staff, and faculty described distinct definitions of 'digital humanities' and 'digital scholarship.' These definitions ranged from implementations of specific technological methods to associations with specific programs. Most participants agreed that it would be challenging to agree to a single definition.
- Staff noted that they do not frequently use the terms 'digital humanities' or 'digital scholarship' in their work. The staff we spoke to shared that the terms do not necessarily apply to the work that they are doing, and that they do not completely understand if the term applies to them. Many interviewees explained that they see their work supporting a wide range of fields, of which 'digital humanities' is only one.

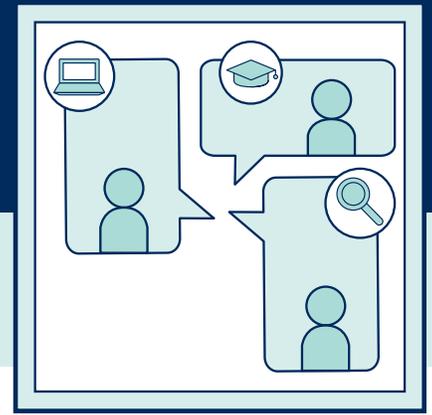
Recognition within Academia

Many students and faculty who **identify as researching the digital humanities felt that their research is insufficiently acknowledged as academic work because it often does not look like traditional academic work.** These participants perceived the university to not be properly recognizing or providing the resources necessary for their work. Many researchers stated that they feel a sense of disconnect from the broader or more mainstream academic world because of these perceptions.

- Faculty and students within the digital humanities reported difficulty translating their unique research onto their academic CVs. Many sought guidance from mentors in the field or shied away from identifying with the digital humanities. Participating faculty and students explained that they fear encountering confusion within academia due to their unconventional research interests.
- Some faculty and students within the digital humanities described feeling overlooked when it comes to receiving material resources. For example, one faculty member felt as though they were working overtime to justify their resources, while they perceive academics in other fields to be receiving similar allocations of resources with less effort.

THEME 2

Dialogue as Scholarship



Collaboration

Students, staff, and faculty expressed **a need to feel part of a community of others with digital academic interests.**

Interviewees emphasized the importance of collaboration when engaging in digital scholarship, explaining that collaboration opens opportunities for shared perspectives and innovative research.

- For example, a staff member described how in-person work provided opportunities for in-depth collaboration, which was impossible to replicate with remote work. The staff member shared an instance where they worked on a problem for weeks and could not resolve it, only to overcome it quickly when a coworker passed by and suggested a new tool to use.
- Research support staff explained that they always try their best to address the needs of faculty and students conducting digital humanities projects. At the same time, the staff members shared that some of the faculty's needs go beyond what they can provide in their limited job scope, especially digital tools. In these instances, the research support staff explained that they heavily rely on the expertise of the digital librarians.

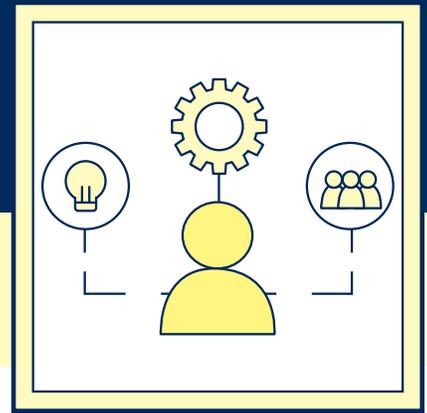
Balance of Power

Throughout the interviews, participants **emphasized that when colleagues, researchers, students, and digital experts come together on a level playing field, they can foster environments to promote innovative research.** Faculty members shared their feelings that students need opportunities to work directly with staff and faculty. Faculty members shared the importance of creating support systems and networks for their students, to facilitate connections and support their academic research.

- For example, a faculty member shared that, even with their expertise in applying digital tools, they still prefer to team up with other experts, such as their post-doctoral students. When asked about their needs for advanced digital scholarship, the faculty members emphasized that they did not want to take project ownership away from their students, whom they considered the experts in their projects.
- In another example, a staff member described that one of the best parts of their job as learning from the students that they work with and who visit the library for help. Despite being considered an expert in the field, they felt that working with students is a humbling experience, and they were excited for the library to fully re-open in-person services to better collaborate with and help students again.

THEME 3

Getting Work Done



Resources

Support staff in digital scholarship and digital humanities **stressed the importance of having open access to resources such as digital tools and software that aid their work.** Interviewees shared that researchers in these fields need guarantees that the resources are present for access, and assurances that the resources will not be overly difficult to access.

- Students told us that they see the intersection between technology and humanities as one that supports the accessibility of resources to support research work. A student shared how while they were conducting research in the field, they were granted access to digital copies of publications not regularly available through the library to support their field research. This allowed them to utilize Roberts Library resources to further their research work even as they were away from campus conducting fieldwork.
- A staff member highlighted the frustration they felt trying to connect the tools they have with the people who need them. They knew that they had digital resources useful to faculty in specific fields but were unsure how to connect the faculty to the resources. On the other hand, many faculty we consulted were aware that the research support staff has resources they should be able to use but were unsure how to best approach them.

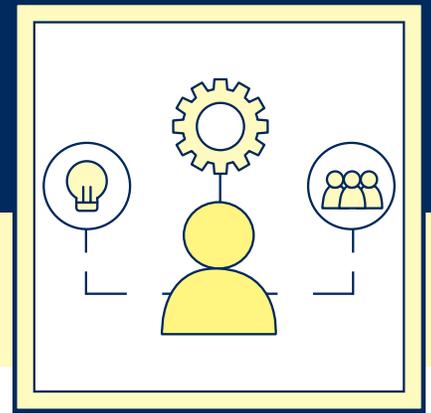
Support

The research methods and applications used in digital scholarship and the digital humanities are innovative and constantly changing. Students shared that they **need more intensive support from experts that can guide them with their projects that differs from traditional methods of research.** Staff and faculty with both recognize the innovation and opportunities digital tools can provide for early-career researchers and voiced their willingness to help foster and facilitate these opportunities

- A student in a humanities program shared how they were conducting research that involved collecting and analyzing historical documents and encountered challenges due to the large volume of data they were collecting and analyzing. They told us that their instructor was not familiar with the tools that could support them with collecting this data and conducting quantitative analyses in humanities research. They believe that sharing expertise in this area can help further research in the humanities.
- Students expressed their appreciation for the abundance of resources available to them through Roberts Library but shared a need for more support learning about these resources to make full use of what is available to them. A student shared how they feel the large collection of resources available is not as helpful to students if they are not accessible.
- A student in a STEM program shared how they have been introduced to a variety of technologies and software, including tools with uses in the humanities, and recognize the values those tools can have across different areas of research. They told us that despite being introduced to certain tools in their program, they have not heard about them from U of T services and feel that they are geared towards other STEM programs. Students value the tools available to them but need guidance to make full use of the tools at their disposal.

THEME 3

Getting Work Done



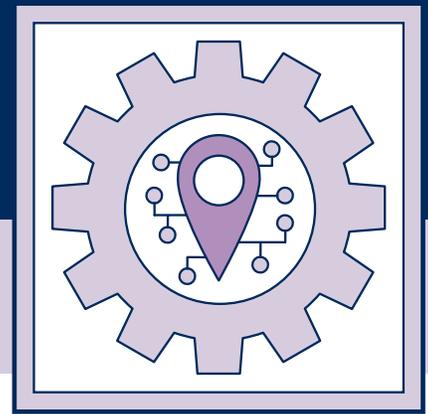
Productivity

Students expressed a **desire to have more awareness on how they can access virtual resources like digital tools and digitized information, to maintain a consistent flow to their work.** Students value knowing what is available to them and guidance on how they can access resources in the library virtually to maintain continuity with their work.

- One student shared how they always accessed a computer software program they needed for their course work and research in-person through the computers at Robarts because it was difficult for them to figure out how to access this tool virtually from home. They were forced to figure out how to access the software virtually when a weather storm prevented them from coming to campus. They were anxious about figuring out how to do this but felt grateful once they figured it out and were able to continue their work.
- Another student shared how the transition to virtual learning and work during the pandemic did not hinder the flow of their research because they had digital access to the academic databases and publications they needed from home.
- Students shared how they have been exposed to a variety of digital tools and software through course work in their academic program. They also told us that without this, they may not have otherwise learned about the various resources U of T Libraries has to offer and wished for more awareness so more students can learn about what is available to them.

THEME 4

Navigating Complexity in New Ways



Wayfinding

Students and faculty voiced a **need for clearer guidance when it comes to physically navigating library space**. Our participants reported finding the current layout confusing to navigate, hindering their ability to find the resources that they need.

- For example, a student expressed their feeling that, as a person with special accessibility needs, navigating to the resources and settings to do their work is challenging because of inadequate signposting.
- Many students expressed interest in using the tools, resources, or services offered by U of T Libraries, but reported being unable or unwilling to spend time and effort seeking them out. In some cases, students reported seeking out services that they had heard about at U of T Libraries but being unable to locate them due to a lack of effective wayfinding support.

Expert Tools

With technology constantly evolving, staff and faculty **expressed their need to have access to the newest tools and resources**. The interviewees also spoke about needing the time to adapt to the tools through practice. Staff and faculty explained that they need to familiarize themselves with new tools and resources before they can assist students.

- For example, a librarian shared that, both during and after the pandemic, the software required to teach students introductory coding was not adapting to an increasing volume of students interested in learning to code.
- In another example, one staff member expressed gratitude for keeping a particular software license up – to date. Where the staff member previously was only able to support users of the software if the user’s department had paid for it, more modern licensing allowed for anyone within the university to use the software, thereby expanding the staff member’s ability to help.

People as Experts

With the variety of knowledge represented in digital scholarship and digital humanities, participants emphasized **the value of opportunities to engage with and learn from experts in the field**. The students, staff, and faculty we spoke to want to come together and share knowledge and learn from experts to allow expertise in digital scholarship and digital humanities to flourish at the university.

- Many staff members were excited to see faculty members from traditionally non-digital departments approach them for digital support. The staff members found satisfaction in sharing their expertise with a new audience and hoped that there would be further opportunities to share their knowledge going forward.
- Support staff explained that they have expanded their teams of experts in recent years, with both units hiring new members to support newly emerging needs in their respective fields.

THEME 5

To Be Inspired



Feeling Alive

Students, staff, and faculty shared that **the way physical spaces make them feel is important to them. Interviewees expressed the need to work in an atmosphere where they can feel comfortable, alive, and human while they complete their research and academic work.**

- Staff reported feeling cooped-up and isolated by the layout of their working spaces because they are divided and do not have windows. Despite the spaces being well-designed for their work, they voiced a pressing need for a different atmosphere to be fully productive.
- A student told us that Robarts feels like a very imposing place to them and they struggle to feel a relaxing environment. They did however talk excitedly about the new Robarts Commons and used words like “swanky” to describe the space as they appreciated the furniture and additional amenities that made them excited to explore this new space.
- A student told us that Robarts Library feels stressful and depressing to them due to the competitive student culture they perceive and the uncomfortable lighting in the building. They shared that constantly seeing students studying and sitting for a whole day — while themselves being cooped up inside a building during a gloomy day — combined with the uncomfortable lighting to exacerbates these feelings. They questioned how they can be alive in this environment they described.
- A student told us that going to the stacks feels like an entire new world to them. They told us that they feel different while working in this particular area because they can work in the space unbothered and uninterrupted.

Inspired to Create

Interviewees **voiced desires of having an environment that inspires and motivates them to complete their academic work.** Students, staff, and faculty explained that their needs around spaces to work in can vary depending on what they require to support them as they do their work. Accordingly, participants prefer and seek to work in spaces that can adapt to their varying needs.

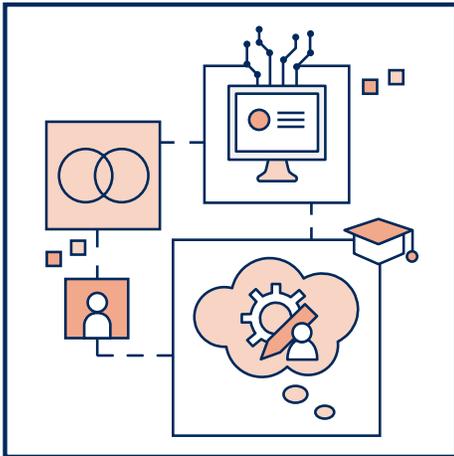
- Students told us that they like to work in the facilities based out of their home units, even if Robarts has more tools for their learning, because they have access to personalized support, like personal librarians, IT support, or facility coordinators. Students appreciated knowing who to go to when they needed support because it allowed them to feel confident that they would receive the support that they needed to think creatively and get their work done.
- A student told us that they tend to not use digital tools or software on computers in Robarts Library because they cannot save their work to the desktop and access it once they log off or easily share it with themselves virtually. Students shared that they find this inconvenient which creates challenges for making progress in their work and feeling motivated to work in these environments.
- Many faculty explained that they only venture into libraries when they couldn't access needed research materials from their offices. The professors we spoke to perceived the library to be a secondary space supplementing their personal workspace, as opposed to a workspace in its own right.

PERSONAS

Personas are data-driven aggregates of experiences that students have shared with us. While they describe fictional characters, they are based on real stories that students, staff, and faculty shared in interviews. Personas are useful in understanding and contextualizing the needs and reflections of people.

Siobhan

Student



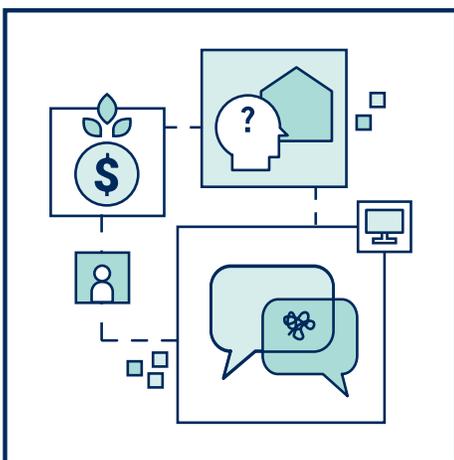
I am currently finishing my thesis on Renaissance literature, where I've been using text analysis software to study several volumes of books. After all these years of hard work, I'm excited to be wrapping up my research, and I love the idea of creating a digital exhibit to present my findings. Few people in my field appreciate how technology and our research can intersect, and it would be amazing to show them what's possible.

Unfortunately, I don't really know where to start with creating this exhibit. Beyond my text analysis, I'm not at all familiar with software, nor do I know the best practices to approach this kind of work. I did go to my supervisor to seek advice on this matter, but while they were also enthusiastic, they only had a few vague and disjointed ideas on who could help me. I reached out to all the contacts they recommended across the tri-campus and now I'm just playing the waiting game for responses. I am getting quite frustrated and don't feel

confident I will get things done in time. I'm considering abandoning the idea because of the hassle, and I wish there were clearer resources available on campus.

Alex

Faculty Member



It's been twenty years since I joined the university's faculty, and in all that time I'm still not sure where my academic home is. This comes from being cross-appointed between departments at both St. George and UTM, but it also comes from how much my research departs from the usual work in my field. I've been working on a long-term project, using large datasets to track trends in my specific area of research in literature. This requires significant data storage space and unique digital tools to scan and save renderings of different mediums of literature.

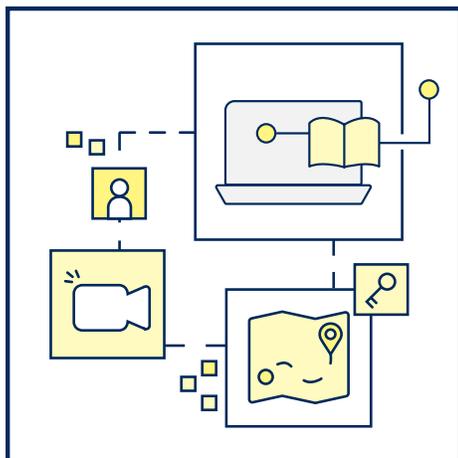
I think my work is crucial to the field, but I get the sense that the university feels differently. No one has said that explicitly, but the feeling is strong when I see my colleagues in STEM subjects and more orthodox humanities fields receive noticeably more tools and funding.

I suppose I should raise my concerns more directly, but I have no idea where to turn. I've raised concerns with both of my departments' leadership, but they each in turn refer me to the other. As such, I'm largely making do with my office space, but this really isn't ideal given that my office is on one campus, while I work and seek resources across both campuses.

Personas

Sahar

Staff Member



I love my work, and I love sharing my passion with others, which makes my role as a public liaison for the library's digital tools perfect. My day-to-day used to be presenting workshops and micro-courses to students, staff, and faculty before the pandemic, but the last few years have seen this relegated to Zoom consultations because of COVID. I'll admit that this transition has been hard since there's so much that can't be properly taught online — and I also just miss the 'human element.'

I think of the library as the university's main intersection point between tech and the humanities, but we're frustratingly obscure. Not enough people know about us, and I don't think it's anyone's fault — it is down to how generally confusing Roberts' fifth-floor layout is. Don't get me wrong, I love how central we are to the floor — it makes access to things straightforward — but the 'cooped-up' nature of our offices makes me feel isolated and scares off people seeking help.

I'll admit my complaints could be paradoxical, given that I was already teaching workshops at peak capacity before COVID. But I think about my passion projects — recording and preserving traditional oral histories is my favourite — and I know that there's still so much more we could share with the university if we had the resources.

Mei

Student



When I tell people I'm studying a STEM field, they usually think of machines and computers, but most of my coursework has been in human behaviour.

When finishing my undergrad, I decided to lean into that and am now working on my thesis using social science and humanities resources. I guess I would call myself a digital scholar since I do use technology in all aspects of my studies. However, I'm unfamiliar with the term digital humanities and I don't really identify with it.

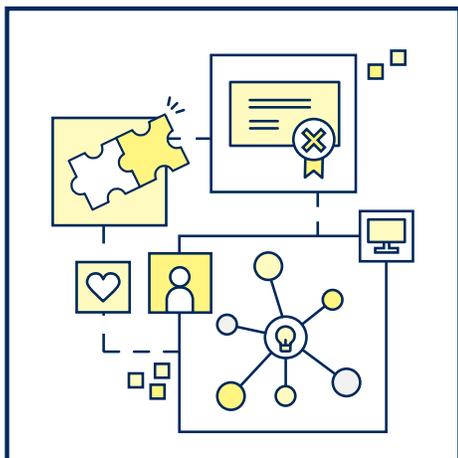
I've restricted myself just to my department's digital resources and I'm unaware of the ones being offered by other U of T Libraries. I feel more at home in the STEM libraries, and I don't see the need to go to others. I would be interested in learning more about Roberts' 'digital scholarship hub' though, if it could give me better access to the information I need.

I'll admit that the resources I've been using so far are specific to my discipline, and I would appreciate an environment that is more open and flexible given the interdisciplinary nature of my thesis. Looking for these sorts of places can be hard though since I don't know if I'd be welcome as a traditional science student. This makes me a little hesitant to explore alternative spaces further without confirmation.

Personas

Shimun

Faculty Member



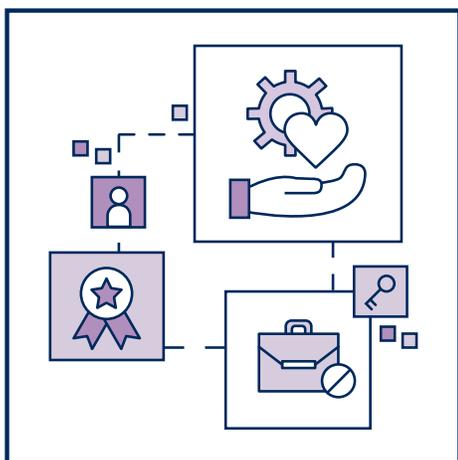
I'm a new Assistant Professor of Sociology, and it's been an exciting experience integrating into this cross-disciplinary research team dedicated to exploring digital platforms. I was nervous about joining a famous institution like U of T and was disappointed at first since a few of my new peers in my home department didn't seem to be taking my scholarship seriously. Besides that, I've felt so supported in my work by the team's students who contributed amazing ideas and research points. Their input has been invaluable, especially since my project is nontraditional, and I don't have many existing references to fall back on.

During the pandemic, our collaboration consisted mainly of Zoom calls to communicate our ideas, but now that we're back on campus we meet physically around our computers as we work with GIS or NVivo. It's great to be in-person, but I would also like the opportunity for me and my students to collectively work

with these tools online without feeling isolated and drowned with data. Keeping both the online and offline worlds in mind is important — taking a break from the screens to engage in-person, while still having access to university resources when we need technology or data archive support.

Carey

Staff Member



I've been with the university's faculty for a few years now, so I've been here before as well as after the pandemic. **Throughout this time, it's been my responsibility to support scholars with their research through one-on-one advising and networking them to the resources they need.** I really love what I do and passionately care about the quality of support I give to my peers.

However, I fear we do not have adequate resources for our scholars. Our technology in the digital humanities is lagging far behind other institutions, and we need to seriously evolve this tech if we want to support and retain current students and faculty to build up the field of digital humanities. I really see the potential for remarkable things to happen here. Students and faculty are constantly innovating technologically and conducting research unimaginable just years ago. I just want them to be properly recognized and appreciated by the institution. They really deserve it and work hard to achieve their goals.

Design Principles

The principles presented here are guidelines for designing services. They suggest issues to keep in mind while prototyping solutions and offer criteria for refining and prioritizing design ideas.



A Unified Identity

The methods and practices of digital scholarship have applications in many different academic disciplines and are not restricted solely to researching the digital humanities. Acknowledging the wide applicability of digital scholarship practices and supporting initiatives to foster a community identity within the U of T digital scholarship community would welcome all scholars who use digital tools.

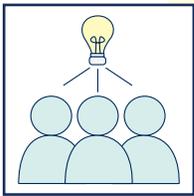
For example, be fluid with definitions of 'digital scholarship' and 'digital humanities.' Promote an identity based on engaging in digital scholarship for research, whether it be within the humanities or another discipline.



Digital is Academic

Acknowledge and recognize the practices of digital scholarship as valid academic research approaches. Digital applications for humanities research have become more prevalent within academia over the years and new innovative applications are continuously being developed in the field.

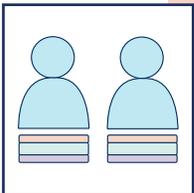
For example, spread awareness of the possibilities that applying digital scholarship can offer by highlighting its applications in fields it is not traditionally associated with.



Digital Community

Promote collaboration to empower students, staff, and faculty to benefit from varied skillsets and viewpoints in a community. Within the multifaceted fields of digital humanities, collaboration is an essential component of the practice of digital scholarship.

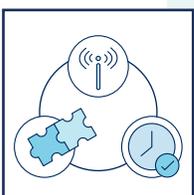
For example, facilitate networking in the digital scholarship community to facilitate researchers working on multidisciplinary projects with individuals in a different field.



A Level Playing Field

Prioritize input from students and researchers of all experience levels when making decisions. Students drive innovations in the practice of digital scholarship just as much as experienced academics.

For example, provide opportunities for students in the digital scholarship and digital humanities fields to fill leadership roles in the community and have meaningful input on how their fields develop.

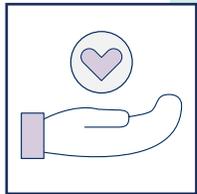


Infrastructure for Innovation

Ensure access to technology that is compatible, connected, and current to enable researchers to seamlessly continue their work whenever and wherever they leave off. Students, staff, and faculty who engage in digital scholarship require an array of constantly evolving, networked tools and technologies to perform their research.

For example, continuously consult with students and faculty in digital scholarship to be able to meaningfully forecast the needs of tomorrow's researchers.

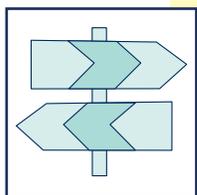
Design Principles



Consistent Support

Facilitate mentorship and guidance opportunities for students who study digital humanities. This allows students to be more productive, complete academic tasks far more effectively, and alleviate some of the career uncertainty that can be found in unusual fields of research.

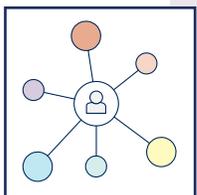
For example, provide tailored resources and infrastructure to students completing research in the digital humanities.



Intuitive Wayfinding

Clear directions will ensure that students, staff, and faculty will not have to exert themselves searching for the tools, access, and physical spaces they need. Present information simply and straightforwardly, with instructions signposted, literally and figuratively.

For example, clearly and publicly indicate what tools are available for use, as well as how and where to access them in the physical space.



A Unifying Hub

Digital scholarship is diverse, yet scholars want to come together for a common purpose to bring the novelty of the digital era into their academic work. Recognize the range of backgrounds and experiences of students and faculty and create opportunities to celebrate diversity while creating unity.

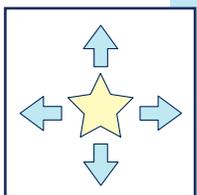
For example, design spaces that foster inclusivity and encourage dialogue across disciplines. Find opportunities to allow the novelty that digital opportunities bring to be what unites people.



Inspiration to Innovate

Being inspired is a fundamental motivator in digital scholarship and students, staff, and faculty appreciate seeing the fruits of their and their peers' labour. Publicly highlight past, upcoming, and ground-breaking projects to inspire other users of the space in pursuing new methods whilst working on their own passion projects.

For example, display the results of past digital scholarship projects in common work areas to highlight the collaborative culture of digital scholarship exploring unconventional research methods.



Fostering Flexibility

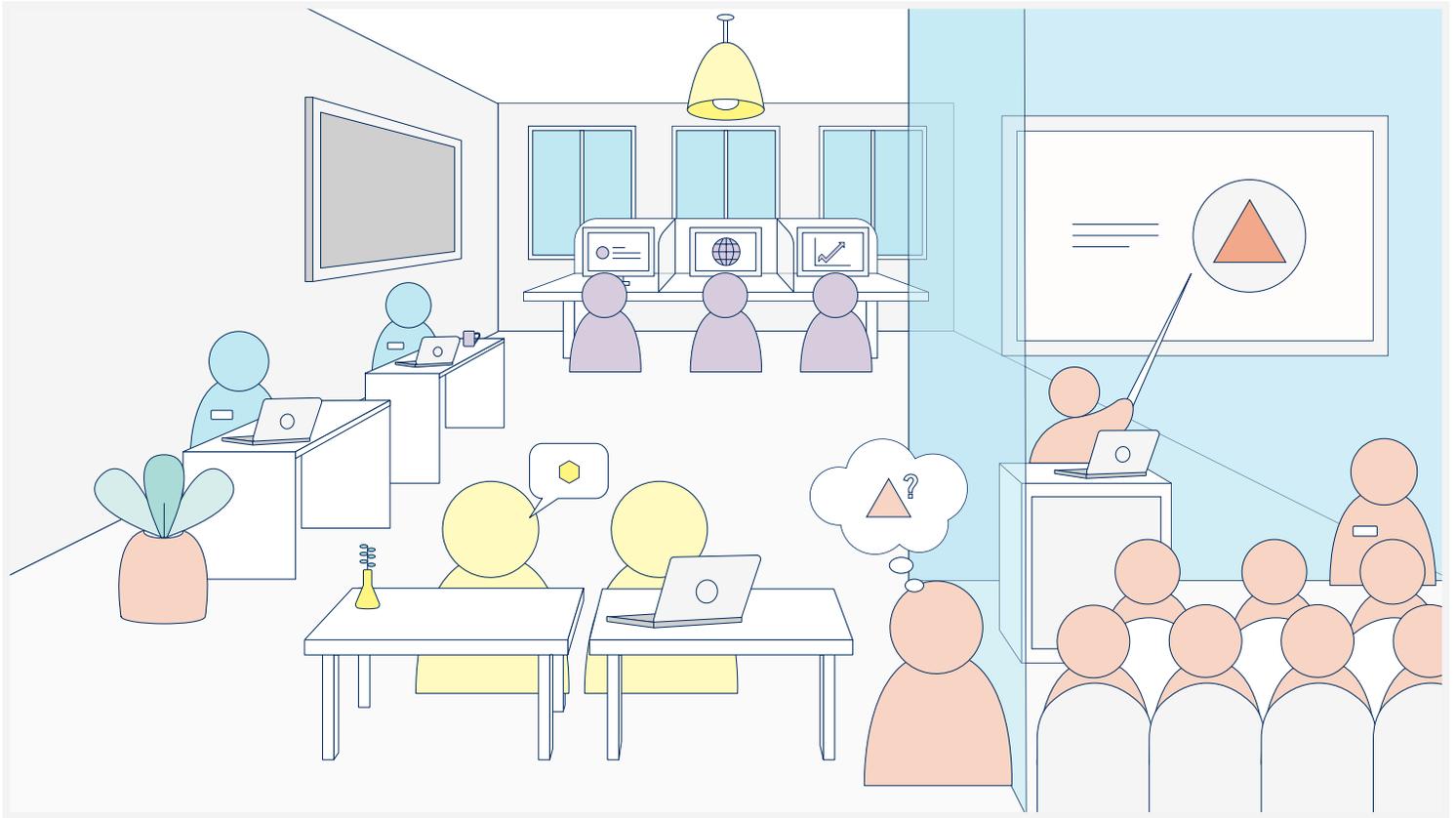
Physical spaces do not need narrowly defined purposes — a space which is used for quiet study could also be used as a space to teach and host events. With the variety of physical space needs represented in digital scholarship, it is important to keep physical resources as flexible as possible, to best meet the needs of the widest variety of users.

For example, use lightweight modular furniture to allow a single room to be easily adapted to several different users and purposes.

Journey Map

A journey map is representative of student, staff, and faculty stories by mapping out their journey.

The following story scene depicts a snapshot of life on the Roberts fifth floor in the present. Each of the four moments details a fictionalized event before our design principles are applied to the space.



Upon entering the fifth floor of the Roberts Library, an onlooker sees:

Librarians seem isolated from the rest of the fifth floor. The layout of their offices keeps them distant from each other, and from the students they support.

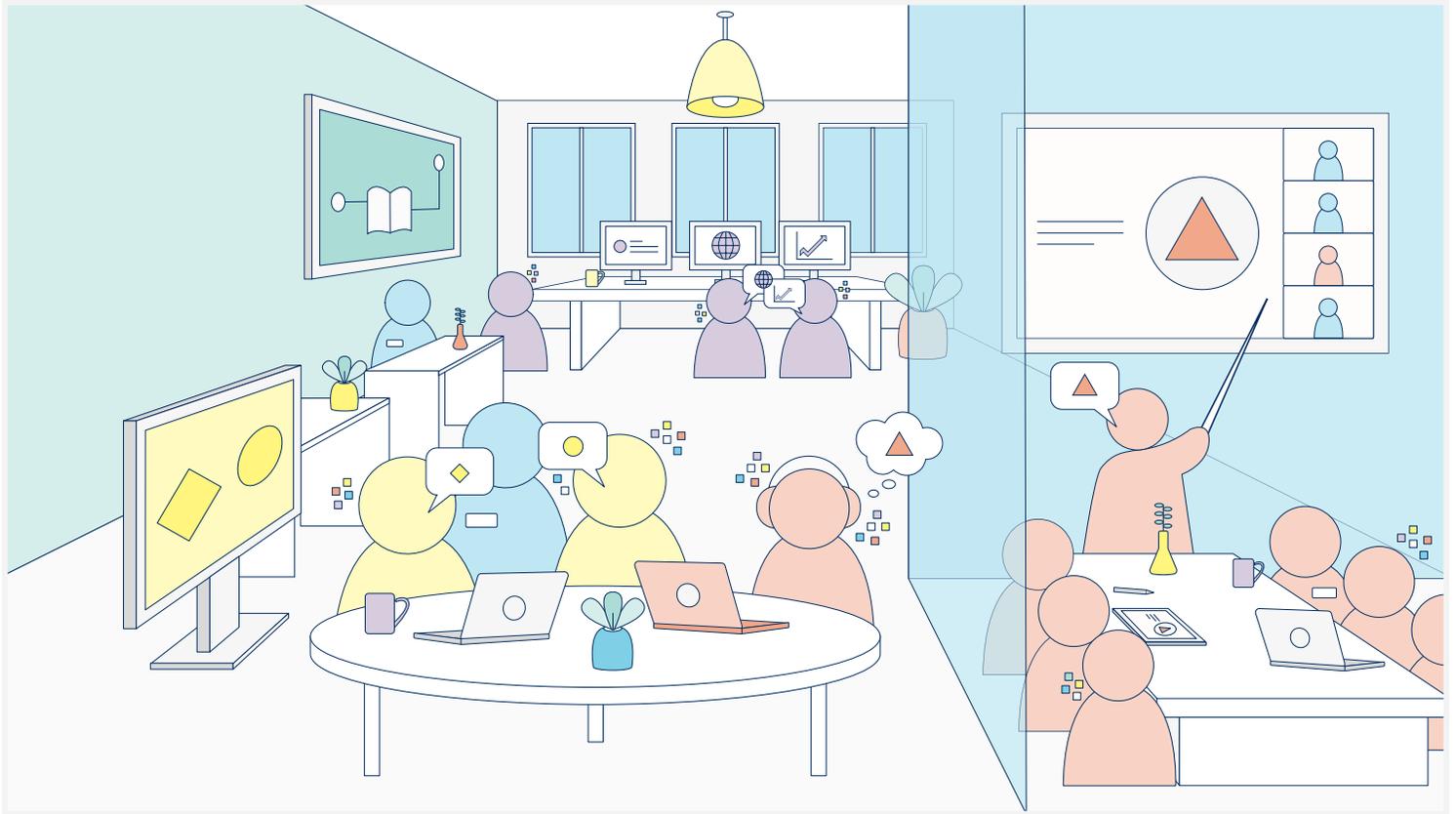
Researchers try to find a location to collaborate using their digital tools but are unable to find a communal space. They are forced to sit at individual desks while passing around their laptops to see each other's work.

A librarian hosts a well-known digital scholar to give a workshop. Interested onlookers peer through the windows from outside but are unable to join physically due to limitations in space.

Digital scholars come and go from the fifth floor, each using one or two digital tools before leaving. The scholars focus on their own research projects, and do not interact much with others.

Journey Map

The following story scene depicts an aspirational snapshot of life on the Robarts fifth floor after the redesign. Each of the four moments details a fictionalized event after our design principles are applied to the space.



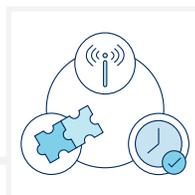
Upon entering the fifth floor of the Robarts Library, an onlooker sees:

Students, staff, and faculty interact easily without barriers. Conversations are animated, and people walk easily from group to group, sharing information freely as they require.



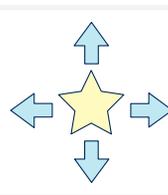
A Unifying Hub

Researchers are gathered around a large table discussing their digital work that is displayed on a large screen. Lively debate and dialogue takes place among them.



Infrastructure to Innovate

A librarian hosts a well-known digital scholar to give a workshop and all seats are full. Participants can clearly see the large screen presentation which simultaneously streams to online participants.



Fostering Flexibility

Digital scholars come and go from the fifth floor, each using many digital tools. They appear comfortable in the space, chatting and sharing ideas with peers. The atmosphere feels alive.



Inspired to Create

Conclusion & Next Steps

In conclusion, the Robarts fifth floor redesign will need to accommodate the transdisciplinary and rapidly evolving nature of digital scholarship to meet the needs of its users. Building a space cognizant of unique needs will allow students, staff, and faculty within the field to feel welcome at the university and foster a community for innovation within the digital humanities. The redesign will empower users of the fifth floor to pursue the nontraditional areas of research they work in and inspire both early-career researchers and those with more experience to innovate. **The future of the Robarts Library fifth floor celebrates the novelty of a digital era in an academic world.**

The data and insights contained in this report will support U of T Libraries' vision in redesigning the Robarts Library fifth floor. Our findings will strengthen U of T Libraries' understanding of the needs of current fifth floor users, such as the Map and Data Library, as well as their clientele and research partners in pursuance of adapting to the needs of future users.

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