



Building Community through Archives Unleashed Datathons

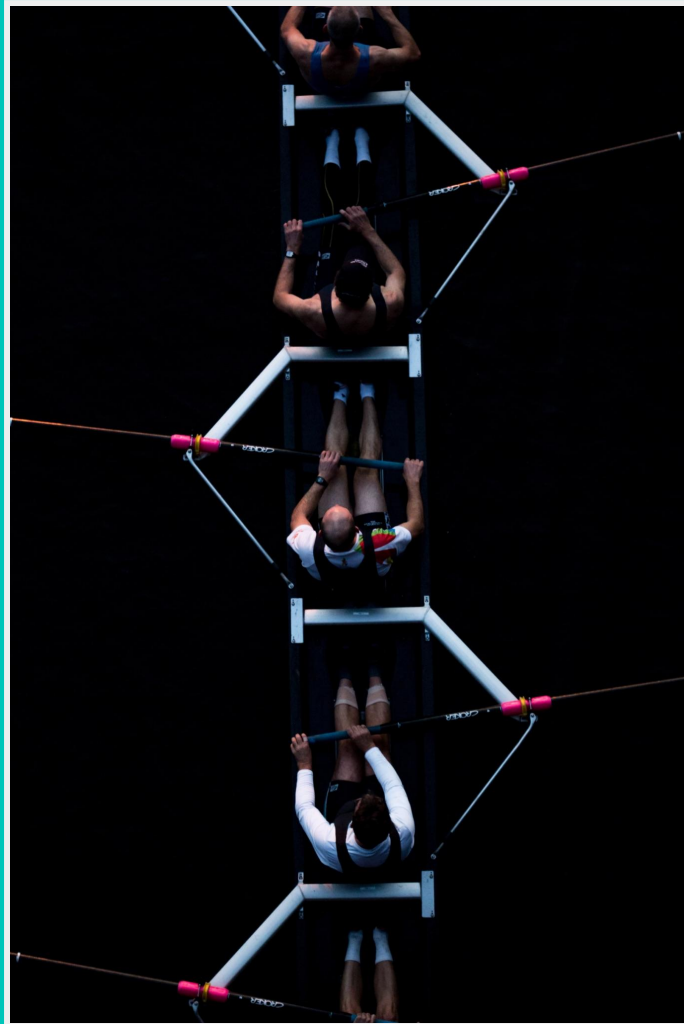
Samantha Fritz, MLIS

in collaboration with Ian Milligan, Nick Ruest, and Jimmy Lin

Web Archiving Conference, 15-16 June 2021

Community Building and Engagement

Extensive field that reaches many domains



**We all belong to
communities**

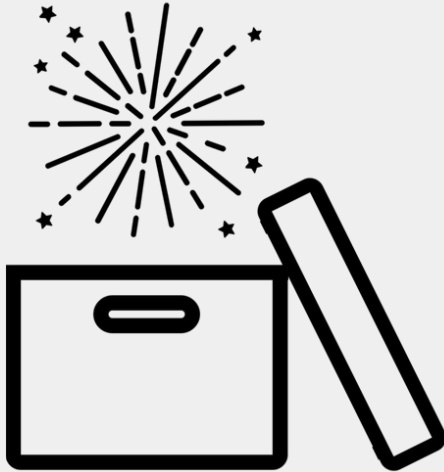
**Community building
and engagement is
critical for all projects**





**Sometimes we have the
opportunity to help
build community from
the ground up**

What we will cover



Study Results

Share results from investigating the **impacts of datathon events on community building and engagement** within the web archiving field.

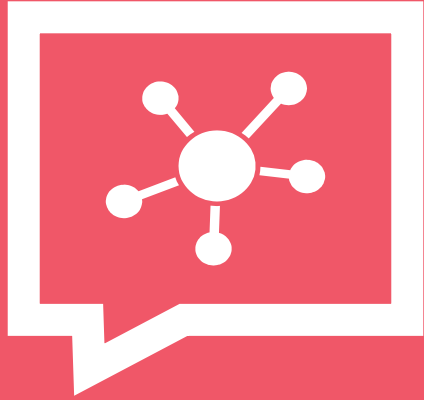
Adaptive CE Model

Present a **Community Engagement Model** that can be broadly applied to other digital humanities projects.

What we will cover

We hope to **encourage, inspire** and **provide guidance** to digital humanities projects as they consider approaches to community engagement.

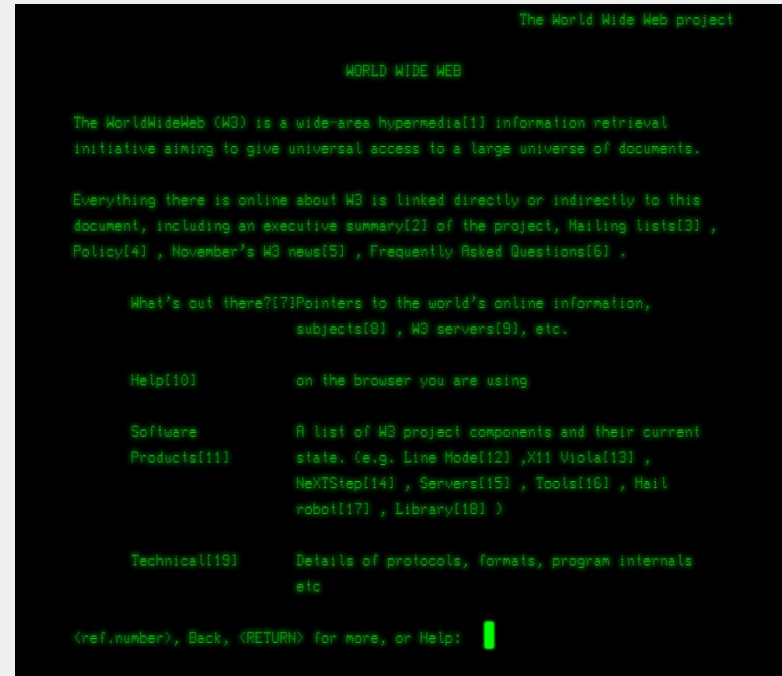




The Web Archiving Context

Web Archiving

- Since 1996 institutions around the world have been collecting web archives.
- Web archiving has increasingly a part of research agendas
- Vast amounts of data has been preserved, but access has lagged



Screenshot of the recreated page of the first website (Image: CERN)

Access remains a significant barrier

- ★ Understanding of high-performance computing
- ★ Familiarity with command line
- ★ Time, resource, and support limitations

Archives Unleashed: Lowering Barriers

- Need for user-friendly tools to work with born-digital artifacts
- Developed transparent, open-source, and easy-to-use tools
- Toolkit & Cloud
- Community Building & Engagement

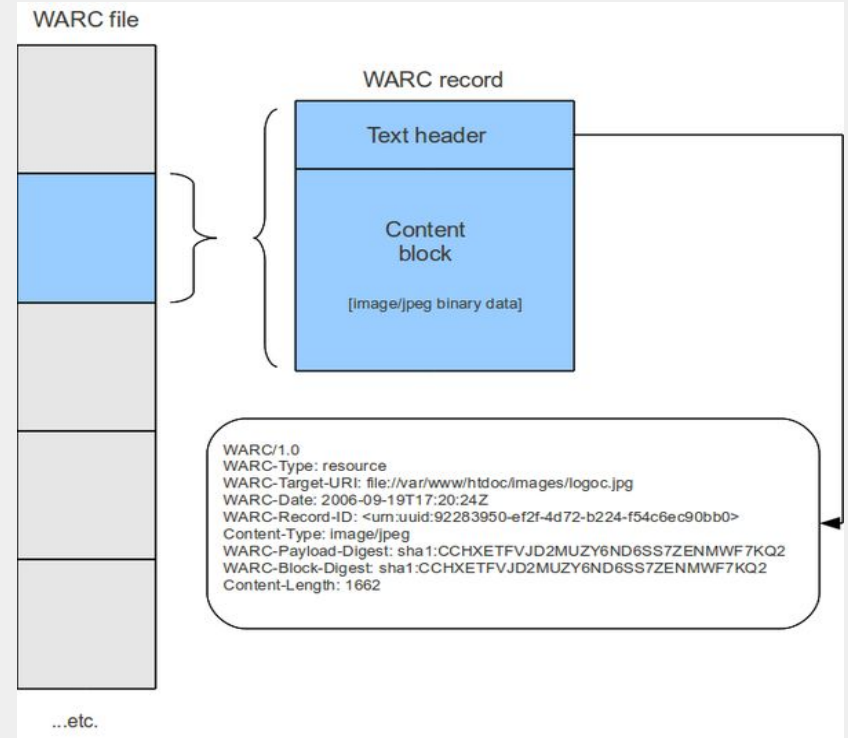


Image credit: WARCdiagram

https://wiki.archivematica.org/Significant_characteristics_of_websites



Community Engagement

Community is Essential

- Projects can't live in silos
- Creating open-source tools requires fostering a user community around it
- Dedicated efforts in community engagement and outreach.





“

People working collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realize bold visions for their common future

- Whaley, 2010

Importance of Community Engagement

- Builds a relationship that actively seeks to understand the goals, needs, and values held by a community [Moore et al. 2016].
- Without engagement projects can be vulnerable to missed opportunities and wasted efforts



Community Building & Engagement Activities

- Robust open-source code documentation
- Slack group for sharing and discussion
- Communications via blogging and newsletters
- Relationships with like-minded projects and institutions
- Scholarly activities that support and foster information sharing



1.

Archives Unleashed Datathons

Centerpiece for our community engagement strategy

Archives Unleashed Datathons

- Based off hackathon genre of events, used within the tech industry to develop new computer software.

[Briscoe and Mulligan 2014]

- “hacking” + “marathon”
- Events were a result of an “intense, uninterrupted period of programming”

[Komssi et al. 2015].



Archives Unleashed Datathons

Datathons brought an interdisciplinary group of people together over two days to work collaboratively on projects and gain hands-on experience with web archive data.



2.

Study Results

Impact of datathons on community building and engagement

Study on the Impact of Archives Unleashed Datathons

Explored impact of datathons on professional practices of attendees and community engagement within the field of web archiving

Methods

- 8 semi-structured interviews, coded and themes
- Datathon alumni; three broad professional categories
- library/archives practitioners, tool developers, and researchers



1. Contributes to skill-building

KNOWLEDGE

Datathon events contributed to an **increased knowledge** of web archiving at a high level (theoretical aims, systems) and granular level (technical skills).

EXPERIENCE

The events provided a unique opportunity to **work directly with web archival data** and specific analysis tools.

ADVOCACY

Helped participants make a **stronger case for web archiving** within their institutions and communities.

2. Exposed attendees to diverse interdisciplinary perspectives

COLLABORATE

Small group collaboration allowed participants the opportunity to work with a **diverse range of perspectives.**

COMMUNICATE

Participants had to adapt and communicate **across disciplinary lines.**

3. Fostered community formation

CONNECT

Created a **space in for individuals to connect**, who would not have purpose to otherwise meet,

AMBASSADOR

Participants are **equipped with skills to be ambassadors** within the broader web archiving community.

MENTORSHIP

The datathon also influenced participants who attended multiple datathons to **grow into a mentorship role**.

4. Fostered a sense of belonging

ENGAGE

Event activities and elements were designed to foster an **open and welcoming atmosphere**.

ASSEMBLE

An exercise, adapted from participatory design, helped individuals **find colleagues and topics they most identify with**.

RELATE

Individuals felt their frustrations, limitations, and struggles could be empathised by others due to a **shared experience**.

3.

Community Engagement Model

A flexible and adaptable framework for Digital Humanities projects

Community Engagement Model

- Interviews helped shape and generate our model
- Identify and draw inspiration from two models in the fields of Agile and Open Source Software development and Civic Engagement.
- Adapted and reimagined to capture Archives Unleashed approach

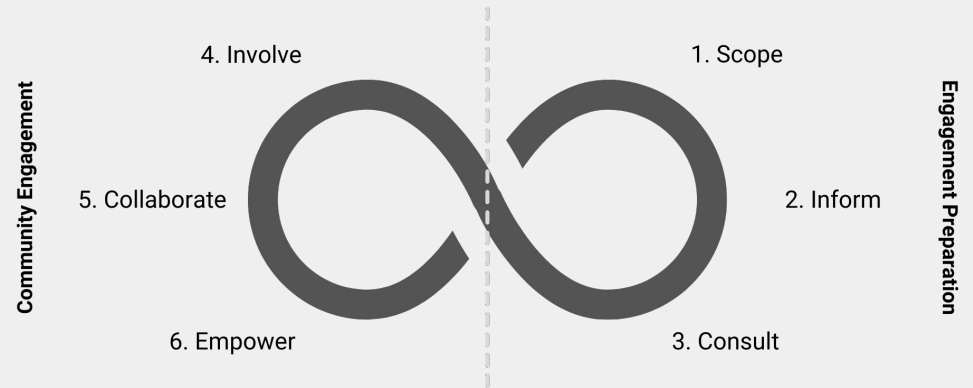
Samantha Fritz, Ian Milligan, Nick Ruest, and Jimmy Lin. “Fostering Community Engagement through Datathon Events: The Archives Unleashed Experience”. *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 20201.



Community Engagement Model

- Six-Stage Model
- Infinity symbol indicates stages do not necessarily happen independently or one at a time.

Archives Unleashed Community Engagement Model

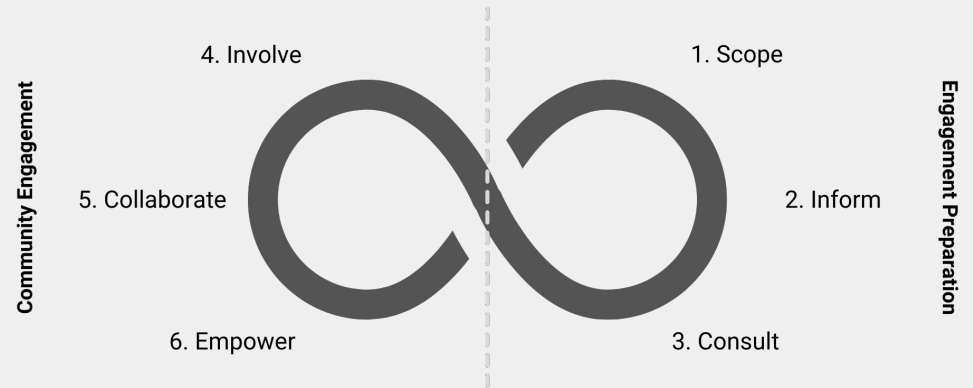


Community Engagement Model

SCOPE

Identify the problem or question as well as stakeholders that will make up the community.

Archives Unleashed Community Engagement Model



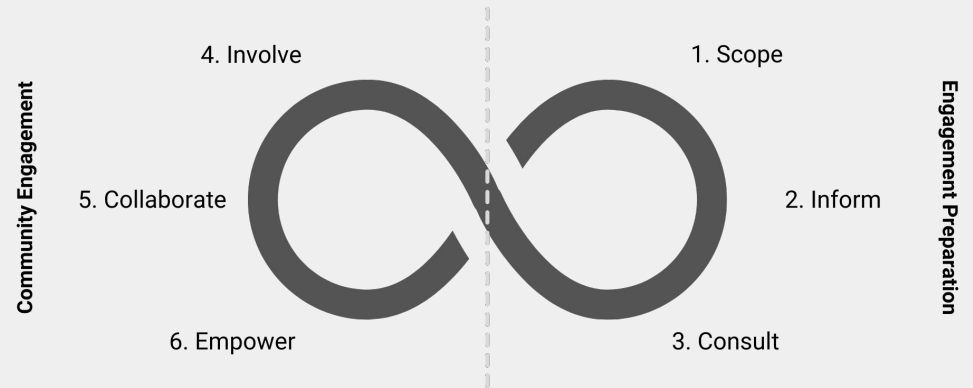
Community Engagement Model

INFORM

Provides information so that the community can understand present problems and potential solutions.

- Monitor and engage on information sharing platforms

Archives Unleashed Community Engagement Model



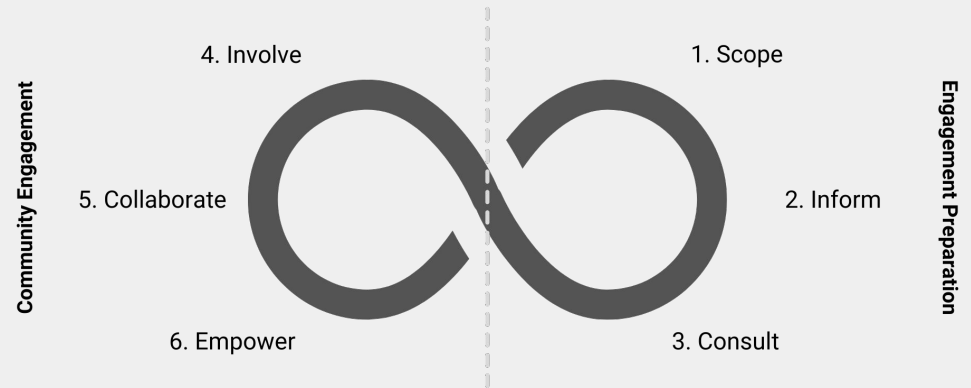
Community Engagement Model

CONSULT

Conducting an open dialogue with the purpose of actively gathering feedback from the community.

- Assembling Advisory Board
- Conducting surveys with users

Archives Unleashed Community Engagement Model



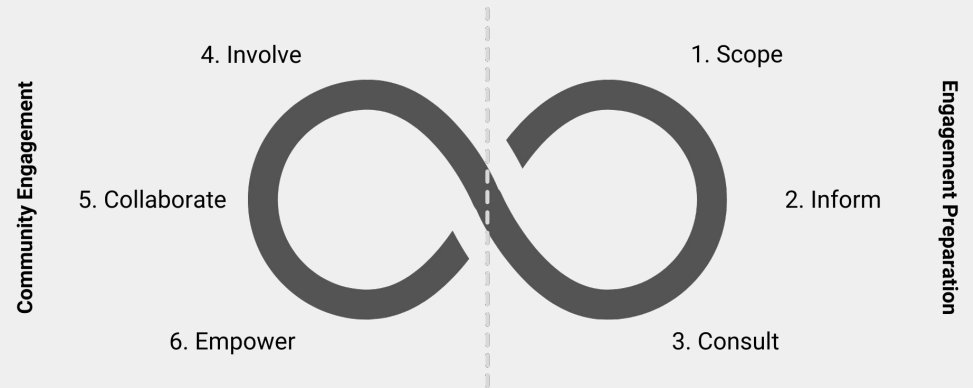
Community Engagement Model

INVOLVE

Work with the community to ensure community concerns and wishes are considered.

- Collaborative tool development
- Datathon events

Archives Unleashed Community Engagement Model



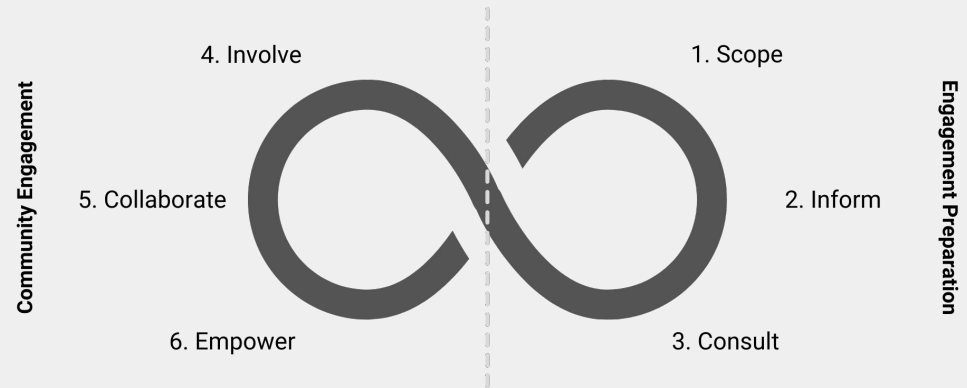
Community Engagement Model

COLLABORATE

Establishing partnerships and fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, both peer-to-peer and peer-to-institution.

- Resource sharing
- Exposure of web archives

Archives Unleashed Community Engagement Model



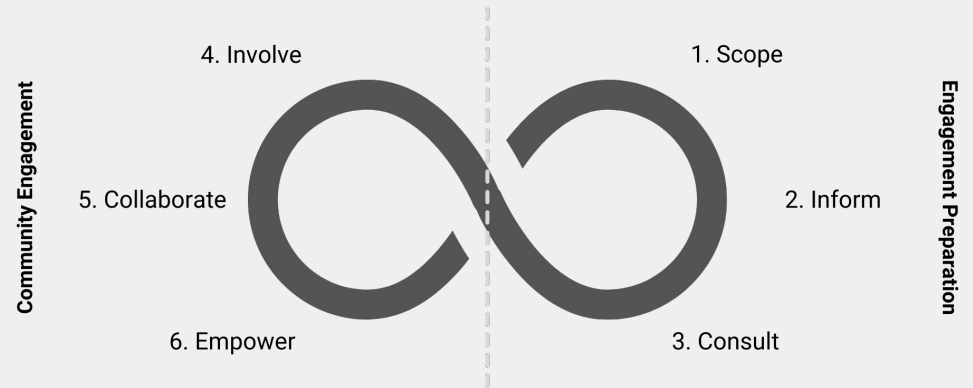
Community Engagement Model

EMPOWER

Encouraging and supporting scholars in building confidence and the skills needed to work with web archives.

- Datathons as learning opportunities
- Learning-based resources

Archives Unleashed Community Engagement Model

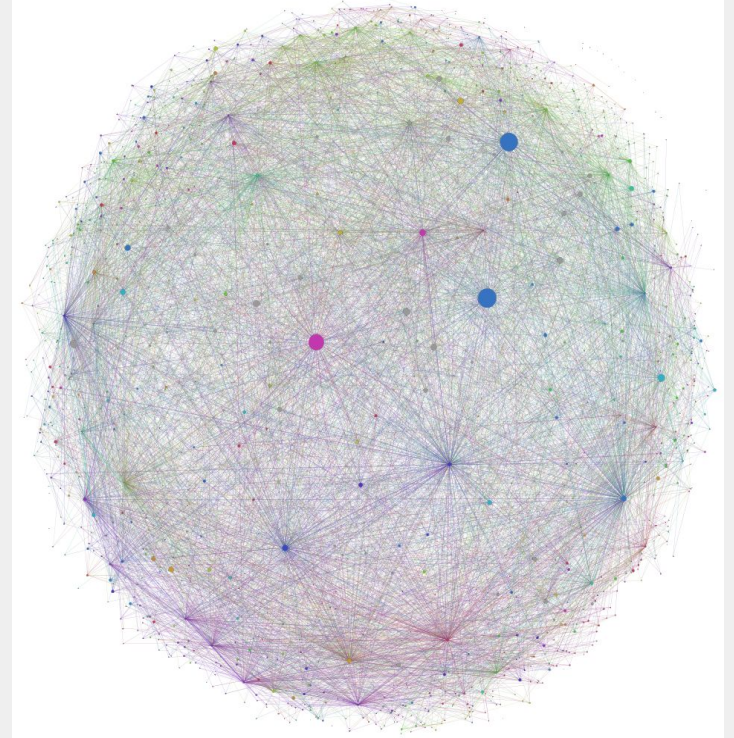




Takeaways

Takeaways

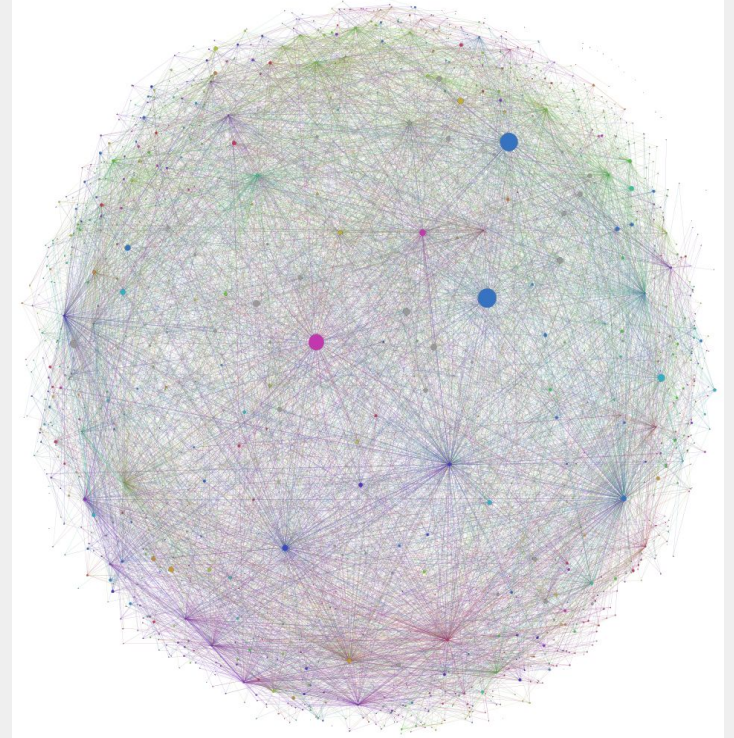
- ★ Archives Unleashed developed transparent, open-source and easy-to-use tools that allow scholars to work with web archives more freely
- ★ Dedicated efforts in community engagement and outreach acknowledging that community is essential for projects to survive and thrive
- ★ Building relationships among users, as well as developing partnerships and connecting to established communities (web archiving, digital humanities, libraries, etc.)
- ★ Datathon events are at the center of community engagement; which have had a positive impact on the professional practices of attendees and community engagement within the field of web archiving



Takeaways

Interviews with datathon alumni identified four themes:

- ★ Events contributed to skill-building, increased knowledge and hands-on experience with web archival data;
- ★ Collaborative work exposed attendees to diverse interdisciplinary perspectives, requiring cooperation and communication across disciplinary lines;
- ★ Datathons fostered community formation, equipping attendees with the skills to be ambassadors and mentors; and
- ★ Events fostered a sense of belonging; individuals were able to relate based on shared experiences;
- ★ Archives Unleashed presents a flexible and adaptable 6-stage community engagement model, which can be adopted by digital humanities projects as they plan their own community engagement strategies





Acknowledgments & Resources

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Sources

Images

(in order of appearance)

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