**Curating Exhibits of Electronic Literature**

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**Steps to Curating an Exhibit of Electronic Literature**

**Phase 1: Gaining a Vision**

1. Start with an idea. (See “Three Approaches to Developing a Curated Exhibit,” below)
2. Determine the space you have to work with. Conduct a site visit of the site.
3. Envision the audience your exhibit will reach in that space and beyond (e.g. online).

**Phase 2: Planning**

1. Begin preliminary selection of works.
2. Figure out the technical requirements for the preliminary selection of works.
3. Fine tune selections.
4. Write artists to receive permission to show works.
5. Begin creating the curatorial plan.
6. Finalize selection of works based on permission from artists.
7. Problem-solve technology needs (e.g. electrical outlets, internet connection).
8. Complete curatorial plan.

**Phase 3: Communicating and Promoting Event**

1. Begin work on your curatorial statement.
2. Develop archival website for the exhibit.
3. Produce social media sites for promotions.
4. Plan the launch party or reception and other special events associated with the exhibit.
5. Create and order announcement card and other print-based materials used for promotions.
6. Finalize the addition of information to website and social media sites.
7. Publish your curatorial statement.
8. Promote the exhibit and associated events.

**Phase 4: Evaluating Success of Event**

1. Gather data about the exhibit
2. Create and publish the Impact Report

**Three Approaches to Developing a Curated Exhibit**

**1. Exploratory**

Develop an exhibit that investigates some aspect of electronic literature and that answers an overarching question that you have regarding it.

Example: The question driving the MLA 2014 *Pathfinders* exhibit was, “What techniques for preservation will be required for works of electronic literature involving newer forms of innovative technologies (e.g. augmented reality, virtual reality, physical computing, and other innovations)?”

**2. Revisionary**

Develop an exhibit that compels one to rethink an issue or perspective.

Example: Electronic literature is not traditionally taught in mainstream literature courses for a variety of reasons, one of which may be its multimodality and interactivity––that is, its “electronic” aspect. The exhibit, *Electronic Literature & Its Emerging Forms*, aimed to show that e-lit is a natural outgrowth of experimentation with literary forms, not unlike the experimentation that took place with cut-up poetry and concrete poetry.

**3. Solutionary**

Develop an exhibit that solves a problem that needs to be addressed.

Example: So many works of early electronic literature are unable to be accessed because the technology used to produce them are now obsolete. “Early Authors of Electronic Literature,” one of the three exhibits mounted for the ELO 2008 Visionary Landscapes conference, was developed to display works by 18 different artists whose works were published by Eastgate Systems, Voyager and independent productions.

**The Curatorial Statement**

The curatorial statement provides a curator the opportunity to talk about the exhibit. It gives the rationale, reveals insights into the exhibit’s development, and allows the curator to talk about individual works that curator wishes to address. The length of this statement ranges from short to long, depending on the exhibit and method of publication. It is a necessary part of curating because it provides the overarching conceptual framework needed to ground an exhibit intellectually.

**Two Types of Curated Exhibits**

Invited: The curator selects the artists and works to be exhibited.

Juried: The curator exhibits works selected by a group of selected experts (3-5)

**Activity**

Develop an exhibit of electronic literature for Nouspace Gallery (see floor plan below) based on one of the three approaches. Imagine that you have received permission from all artists to show the work. Lay out a curatorial plan for your exhibit. Be prepared to share your plan with the class, and defend your choices.

