IMPACT REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Many visitors to the "Avenues of Access" exhibit at the Hynes Convention Center actively sought it because the 2012 e-literature exhibit positively affected their scholarship.
- Visitors lingered for upwards of an hour, even two, immersing themselves in the various generic stations and talking with curators and other scholars about connections between their own research and the exhibited e-lit.
• The natural affinity between e-litterature and digital humanities manifested itself in conversations that are sparking scholarly collaboration on projects, speaking invitations and publications
• Young scholars tell us they are revising their courses of study and dissertation plans to account for electronic works they encounter at MLA e-lit exhibits
• Because e-lit is emergent and dynamic, scholars discovered new paradigms within primary source materials
• E-lit's platform and thematic diversity made it amenable to many traditional scholarly fields and encourages transdisciplinary collaboration
• A number of visitors remarked that they now expect to encounter an e-lit exhibit at MLA. E-lit at MLA is another demonstration of how MLA leadership embraces new technologies and scholarly developments in the field

EXHIBIT OVERVIEW
The Modern Language Association's 2013 Convention in Boston, MA featured MLA's second annual exhibit of electronic literature. "Avenues of Access" presented 31 new works by 32 internationally recognized artists. These works, exhibited January 3-5, were classed in five categories:

• Multimodal Poetry
• Multimodal Narrative
• E-Essay
• Literary Games
• Mobile and Locative Works

An evening reading on Friday, January 4th at Emerson College's Bordy Theater featured fourteen artists reading from works featured at "Avenues of Access."

An on-site "Antecedant" Station allowed exhibit guests to modify a BASIC program that outputs mazes on a Commodore 64 (circa 1982) and to play Ian Bogost's literary game "A Slow Year" (2010) designed to be played on an Atari Video Computing System (circa 1977). At the "Creation" Station, guests could add their own words to fields in a JavaScript poetry generator and watch their poems instantly render on-screen.

INTRODUCTION: THE ON-SITE EXPERIENCE
If the object of 2012's "Electronic Literature Exhibit" was to introduce MLA scholars to a broad historical and international cross-section of born-digital literary writing, in 2013 we curators intended our "Avenues of Access" guests to go deep into the 30 works to forge their own associations between the featured electronic literature and the texts, scholarly practices and pedagogies of their own fields.

Toward that end, we designed a physical space that was hospitable to lingering,
reading and talking. Works were housed elegantly on screens with identical custom "Avenues of Access" wallpaper; the Mac-minis that housed the works were hidden from view beneath gray table skirts.

Tables were rounds such as one encounters at events or dinner parties; tables were designed in an X-pattern across the large, quiet room lit by large windows looking out into Boylston and Newbery Streets.

Large posters announcing the works hung on the walls near their respective table stations, as did smaller posters created by locative artist Laura Zaylea (Asst. Prof., Temple U.) whose work "Speak2MeInCode" was commissioned by the curators for "Avenues of Access.

Six undergraduate docents from Grigar's Creative Media and Digital Culture program and specially trained in curation were available to greet guests and answer basic questions about the works; curators spoke to the works' the literary, historical and theoretical elements and introduced guests to each other when common interests arose.

Artists visited the exhibit and were available to answer questions, talk about the composition process and inquire after guests' own literary fields.

EXHIBIT MISSION AND GOALS
Our mission was to introduce scholars of language and literature to electronic literature being produced right now around the world in multiple languages and for scholars to apprehend the historical and material antecedents of this emergent work.

These goals helped us achieve our mission:

- Create a physical setting in which scholars new to electronic literature could "learn" how to engage it and share their experiences with expert readers, scholars, artists and enthusiasts
- Provide scholarship and online resources to scholars for the purpose of further study of electronic literature
- Encourage those interested in the creative arts to produce electronic literature
- Demonstrate in the hands-on Antecedent and Creation Stations how one "makes" electronic literature
- Raise awareness of electronic literature as a field with defined parameters so that scholars can assimilate it into the broader scholarly discourse about canonicity & periodization
ASSESSMENT METRICS
Assessment of success in attaining these goals is derived from information in six areas:

1. References to the exhibit by humanities scholars and artists
2. Reviews by humanities scholars and artists of works featured in the exhibit
3. Reviews by humanities scholars and artists of the exhibit
4. Inclusion of the web archive in scholarly databases
5. New scholarship and creative output generating from it
6. Physical and virtual engagement of visitors with the Exhibit and its online archive

Print-based data is not yet available for inclusion. As it becomes available, we will edit online versions of this report to reflect that information. This initial phase of our report includes data stemming from electronic publications and media; they serve as the first step in the process of analysis and evaluation of the success of the Exhibit. The data mostly covers mid-December 2012 when the web archive was launched to mid-February 2013.

ASSESSMENT-1. REFERENCES TO EXHIBIT


“Electronic Literature / ENG 355.” Instructors: Aurelea Mahood & Brian Ganter, English Department, Capilano University (BC province, Canada). Spring


ASSESSMENT-2: REVIEWS OF WORKS Featured in Exhibit


ASSESSMENT-3: REVIEWS OF EXHIBIT


Reviews of the exhibit began to come in from around the world. This from Portugal’s Materialidades da Literatura.

And the Poetry Foundation in the United States....

ASSESSMENT-4: INCLUSION OF EXHIBIT IN SCHOLARLY DATABASES

ASSESSMENT-5: NEW SCHOLARSHIP


--- "Rare Books, Aura and Electronic Literature." Talk to be delivered at "Electronic Literature and Its Emergent Forms" at the Library of Congress. 5 April 2013.


--- "Digital Writing: Performances and Readings of Electronic Literature." Forthcoming at the Association of Writers & Writing Programs 2013 Conference and Book Fair. April 2013; Boston, MA.

--- "Exhibiting and Curating Electronic Literature." Featured Presenter at The University of Bergen (Norway). Tuesday, October 30th, 2012, funded by ELMCIP (“Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice”).

--- "Fallow Field." Republished in Authoring Software. July 2012, with
“Reflecting on Fallow Field: An Artist’s Paper.”
http://www.narrabase.net/dene_grigar_ff.html. Reviewed by Leonardo Flores,

---. “Medium Translation Theory for TOC and Its name was Penelope.” Forthcoming
at the Electronic Literature Organization Paris. September 2013; Paris,
France.

---. “Literary Artists of the United Kingdom.” Forthcoming at Illuminations, the gallery
for the School of English, Media, and Theatre Studies at the National
University of Ireland. Maynooth, Ireland; March 2014.

---. “New Literary Experiences for the Digital Humanities.” Forthcoming at the 2013
Digital Humanities Summer Institute. Victoria, Canada; June 6, 2013. The
show moves for a month-long showing at G++ gallery following this event,
also located in Victoria, Canada.

on Desktop.” Rhizomes (24) 2012.
http://www.rhizomes.net/issue24/grigar.html.

ASSESSMENT-6: ENGAGEMENT WITH EXHIBIT
A. Physical Visitors at Hynes Convention Center
"Avenues of Access" Exhibit at the MLA 2013
Visitors: 150; average duration of visit: 60 minutes.
Guests at Readings and Performances event held offsite Friday evening, January 4,
2013: 80.

B. Virtual Visitors to "Avenues of Access" Main Archival Site
2013.
Visitors to the site came from 30 countries including Albania, Algeria, Argentina,
Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, the Czech Republic,
Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Ireland, Luxemburg, New Zealand,
Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Viet
Nam, the UK, and the US.

C. “Avenues of Access” Facebook Page
The site reached 50,033 Friends of Fans and had a total of 193 Likes, with the
largest age group being 25-34 year olds, with close to an equal amount of women
and men.

D. Blog Site: Berens, Kathi Inman. "Curation is Convergence." Curatorial

E. Electronic Literature Readings and Performances” Poster.
http://twitpic.com/81ek4y.
440 total visits.


TESTIMONIALS: EXHIBIT GUESTS ON E-LIT AS A SCHOLARLY RESOURCE

BEN RAILTON, Asst. Prof. of American Studies at Fitchburg State Univ
My encounter with “The Knotted Line” was not only made possible, but greatly amplified, by the “Avenues of Access” exhibit at the MLA Convention. It’s true, and significant, that I would not have known about the project at all without the exhibit and its guides. But the chance to experiment with the project at the exhibit, to chat with the guides and my peers there about such projects and our possible work with them, and to return to the project in that setting on multiple occasions have all been vital to my developing perspective on the project’s relevance, usefulness, and meanings in my teaching and scholarship.

See also Prof. Railton’s blog post on why “Avenues of Access” was “the most interesting digital aspect” of MLA13 and “The Knotted Line” as a pedagogical resource.

Robin Wharton
@rswharton
Headed home from #mla13. Great time! One of the highlights, the #elit ex. Went for a quick look, stayed for two hours.

Roger Whitson
@rogerwhitson
E-Lit: I came for @dgrigar and @kathiiberens, I stayed for the awesome augmented-reality, random-generated, and QR poems. #mla13 #elit