INDIANA UNIVERSITY

70d – Digital Arts

Action Item Template Response

General Action Item Information

Lead Division/Office: Research Technologies
Action Item Number: 70d
Action Item Short Name: IT Research – Digital Arts
Dependencies with other EP Action Items: 4, 37
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A. OVERVIEW

Indiana University has a rich tradition of its fine and performing artists being among the leaders in their fields in the innovative and transformative application of information technologies to their crafts. This tradition includes work in electronic music and composition, physically based simulations of lighting designs, immersive virtual reality experiences, globally distributed telematic performances, and rapid prototyping techniques for creating physical art pieces. Much of this work has benefited from the generous support of the university through funding initiatives like the New Frontiers and College Arts & Humanities Institute (CAHI) grants; however, these projects are often carried out without any formal technical support, or do so with local support that often ends up recreating solutions that exist elsewhere in the university or broader community, thereby leading to considerable inefficiencies and a lack of coordinated sharing of information and resources. Moreover, experience with the Institute for Digital Arts and Humanities (IDAH) shows that there is a considerable unmet need and desire among faculty for coordinated support for digital arts initiatives. Of the first eight IDAH fellows, the UITS Advanced Visualization Lab has assumed full support responsibility for four and partial support for two more, with no additional staff. There is also a growing number of requests from faculty and students at IUPUI. Finally, it should be noted that the support needs of digital artists, especially those who specialize in performances, are unique to each artist and performance and are also very cyclic, building over the course of several months of development and reaching a flurry of activity the week before the performance. Performances take place in a variety of locations, often in external (non-IU) venues or in other cities, so support staff must be flexible with times and locations, and must be able to bring in technology to integrate with existing infrastructures in these venues.

I. DESCRIBE YOUR PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS ACTION.

To address the growing need for support in the digital arts, we propose the following strategy:

1. Create a new senior-level position in the Advanced Visualization Lab (AVL) to coordinate projects and technology unique to the digital arts. This individual will function as team lead for the approximate 1.5 FTE in the AVL dedicated to creative activity support and will be the primary liaison between IDAH and AVL. This individual will also be responsible for working with faculty to pursue external funding opportunities from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and external foundations.

2. Create a modest technology fund that can be used to purchase hardware and software to support creative activities. In the first year, this fund would be used to establish a technology "loaner library" of laptops, projectors, screens, and audio equipment that artists could borrow for extended periods of time. (Note: A unique characteristic of most artistic performances is the need for large amounts of equipment for relatively short and finite periods of time [2-6 months]. Outside of this time equipment will go unutilized. Therefore, a shared central resource sized to support several concurrent projects is a more efficient and sustainable model.) In subsequent years, parts of this fund may be channeled through existing IDAH allocations processes in a way that allows faculty in the arts to submit proposals that can be evaluated and awarded in a fair and competitive manner.

3. Work with IDAH administration and OVPR to expand IDAH into a cross-campus program. While initially funded through IUB departments and administration, it is clear that the university as a whole will benefit from a digital arts and humanities support initiative that is coordinated and consistent across campuses. This would involve discussions with IDAH, OVPR, and administration at IUPUI and regional campuses.

II. WHAT ARE THE POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS OF YOUR PLANS?

The objective of expanding IDAH to a cross-campus program will require some changes to existing policies and practices, as well as breaking down of real and perceived barriers between some campuses and support units.

I. **III. IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS**.

On the Bloomington campus, we will utilize IDAH as a means to communicate goals and gather input. In future years, if IDAH has expanded, we will work within its structure at other campuses; otherwise, we will seek to create forums in partnership with the Music Technology Program, Herron School of Art, and the Media Arts and Sciences program at IUPUI.

- Performing arts communities
  - o Musical performances and composition
  - o Digital arts (including virtual reality)
  - o Dance and choreography
  - o Theater and drama
  - o Telematic collective

- Fine Arts & Telecommunications
  - o Sculpture and ceramics
  - o Installation artists (interfaces and multiple modalities)
  - o Media production (stereoscopic & 4K video)

- Administrative units
  - DAH
  - OVPR