

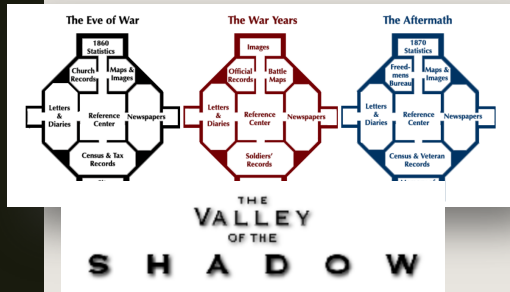
BEYOND STANDARDS: COMMUNITY-CENTERED SUSTAINABILITY FOR DIGITAL HUMANITIES SCHOLARSHIP

NISO Plus
February 24, 2021
Digital Humanities Panel

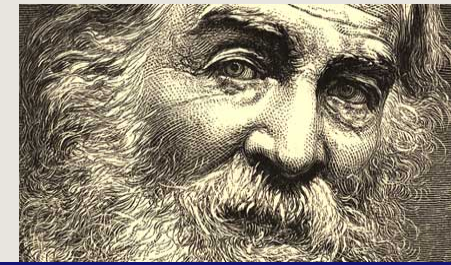
Katrina Fenlon
University of Maryland, College Park



COLLEGE OF
INFORMATION
STUDIES



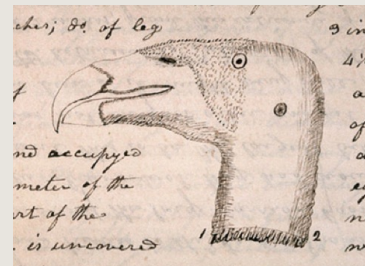
THE WILLIAM BLAKE ARCHIVE



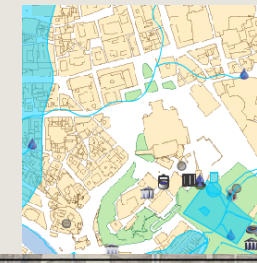
The Walt Whitman Archive



BRACERO HISTORY ARCHIVE



Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition



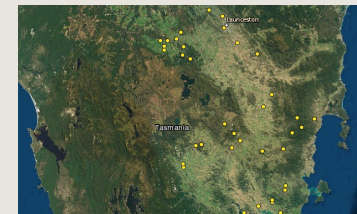
Aquae Urbis Romae
The Waters of the City of Rome



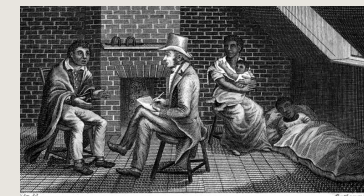
The Vault at Pfaff's



THE Shelley-Godwin ARCHIVE



Colonial Frontier Massacres in Eastern Australia 1788-1872



The author sitting down the narratives of several Anishinabe people of color who had been kidnapped.

O SAY CAN YOU SEE
EARLY WASHINGTON, D.C., LAW & FAMILY

Digital humanities scholarship

The top-left screenshot shows a map interface for 'Torn Apart / Separados'. It features a map of the United States with a green overlay indicating the territory and infrastructure of ICE's financial regime in 2018. A sidebar on the right lists 'Visualizations', 'Textures', 'Reflections', 'Allies', 'Bibliography', 'Credits', and 'Volume'. A text box on the map states: 'Volume 2 of Torn Apart is a deep and radically new look at the territory and infrastructure of ICE's financial regime in the USA. This data & visualization intervention peels back layers of culpability behind the humanitarian crisis of 2018. #Separados #TornApart'.

The top-right screenshot shows the 'Slave Voyages' database interface. It has a teal header with 'Slave Voyages' and 'Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade - Database'. Below the header are tabs for 'Results', 'Summary statistics', 'Tables', 'Data visualization', 'Timeline', 'Maps', and 'Timelapse'. A table displays voyage data:

Voyage ID	Vessel name	Place where voyage began	Principal place of purchase	Principal place of slave landing
1	Pastora de Lima	Rio de Janeiro	Mozambique	Bahia, port unspecified
2	Tibério	Bahia, port unspecified	Mozambique	Bahia, port unspecified

The bottom screenshot shows the 'Frankenstein Volume I Draft in Chapter Sequence' interface. It displays a draft of the text 'Frankenstein' by Mary Shelley. The interface includes a search bar, a 'LIMIT VIEW' dropdown, and a list of draft entries. The text is presented in a digital format that mimics the original manuscript, with a sidebar on the right showing the draft's history and a list of draft entries.

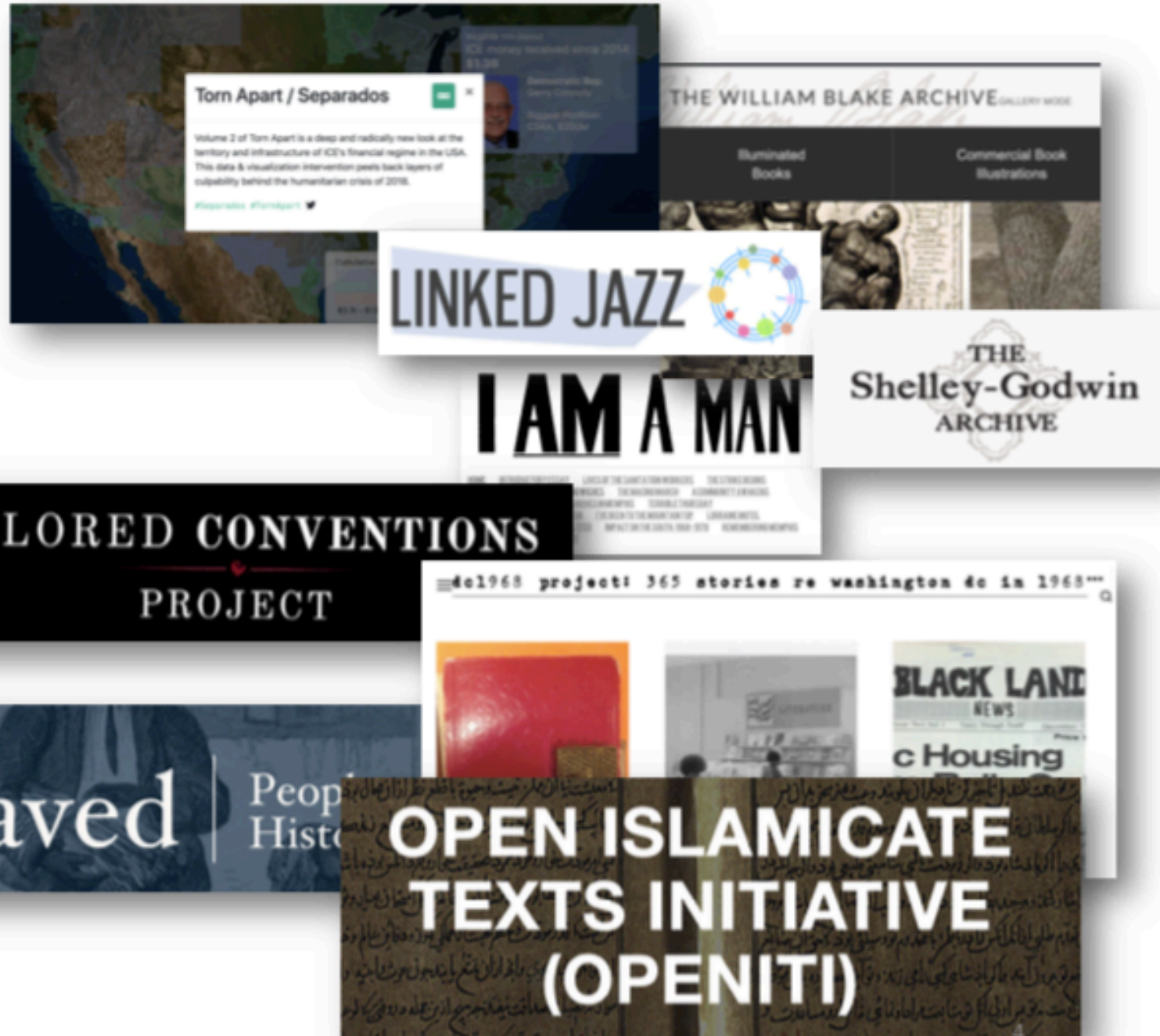
- Media-rich
- Data-centric
- Interactive
- Dynamic
- Interlinked
- Always evolving
- Highly heterogeneous

DH COLLECTIONS ON EVERY CAMPUS

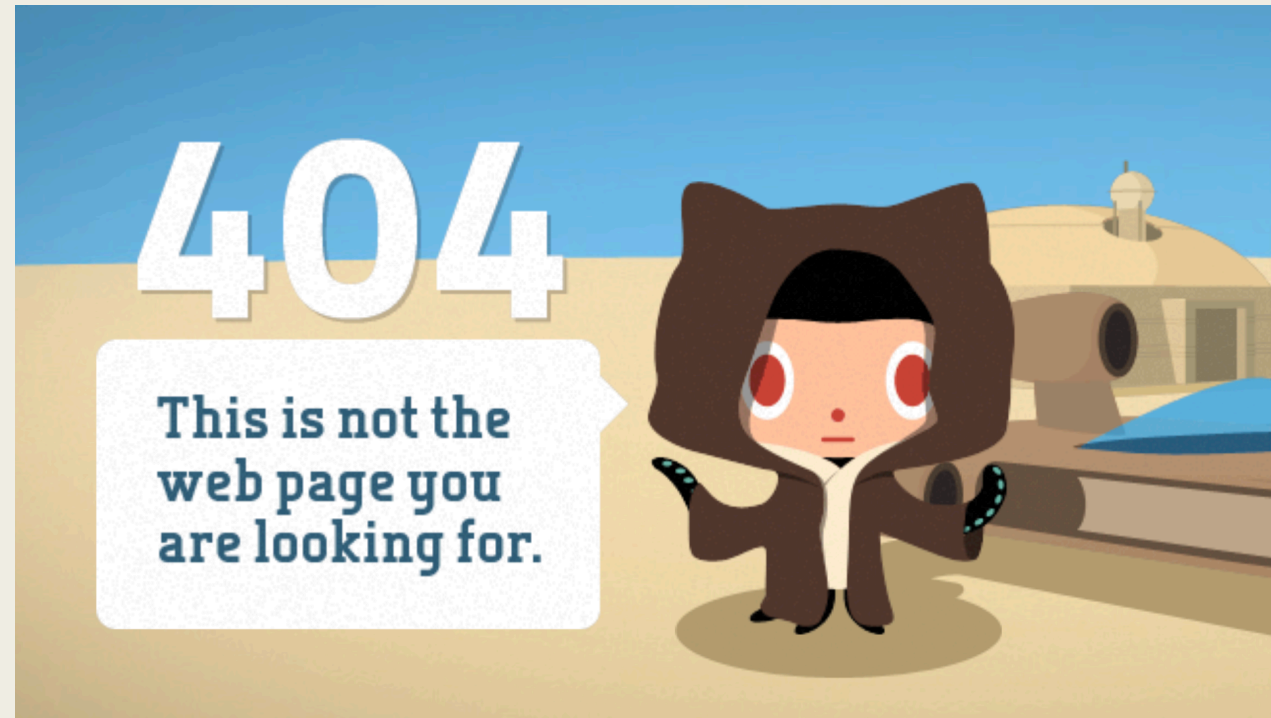
> 50% of faculty create digital tools and collections

Majority intended for **reuse** / ongoing public use
(Maron & Pickle, 2014)

Vast majority are not sustained / preserved



Sustainability as a systemic problem



“Even on campuses with DH centers, there is rarely an end-to-end solution”

-Maron & Pickle, 2014

Challenges to longevity of digital scholarship

- Technical vulnerability
- Heterogeneity of DH projects
- Context-dependencies: What do sustainability and preservation mean?
- Short-term funding, creator-dependence
- Lack of clarity about “ownership” and value to institutions (Maron & Pickle, 2014)
- Institutional capacity

When we talk about sustaining digital humanities, what are we really sustaining?

- Projects
- Organizations
- Digital artifacts or products
- Tools
- Research infrastructures

...it's usually implicit, and sometimes vague

Prior research on DH sustainability

- Sustainability as long-term viability of *artifacts*
- Sustainability as organizational resilience

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 - *Technical / sociotechnical solutions, infrastructures, standards, policies*
 - E.g., Poole, 2013; Oldman et al., 2014; Gourley & Viterbo, 2010; van Zundert, 2012; Sweeney et al., 2017; etc.
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Artifact-focused sociotechnical interventions

- Aggregation, “scaling up”
- Linked data and distributed web services
- Advances in documentation, metadata, workflows
- Repository and publishing infrastructures

Components of research infrastructures



Some components of infrastructure for research and communication in the humanities

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Some components of infrastructure for research and communication in the humanities

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- The “connective tissue” of networked digital objects and their meaning is often invisible, dynamically constructed, or implicit in design

THE
Shelley-Godwin
ARCHIVE

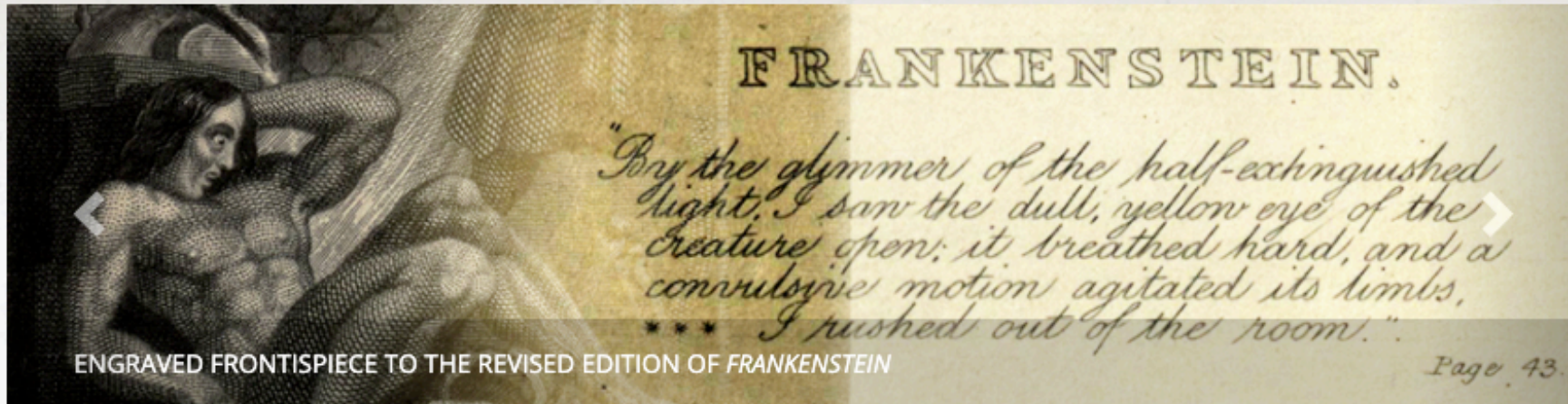
[HOME](#)

[ABOUT](#)

[EXPLORE THE ARCHIVE](#)

[SEARCH](#)

[USING THE ARCHIVE](#)

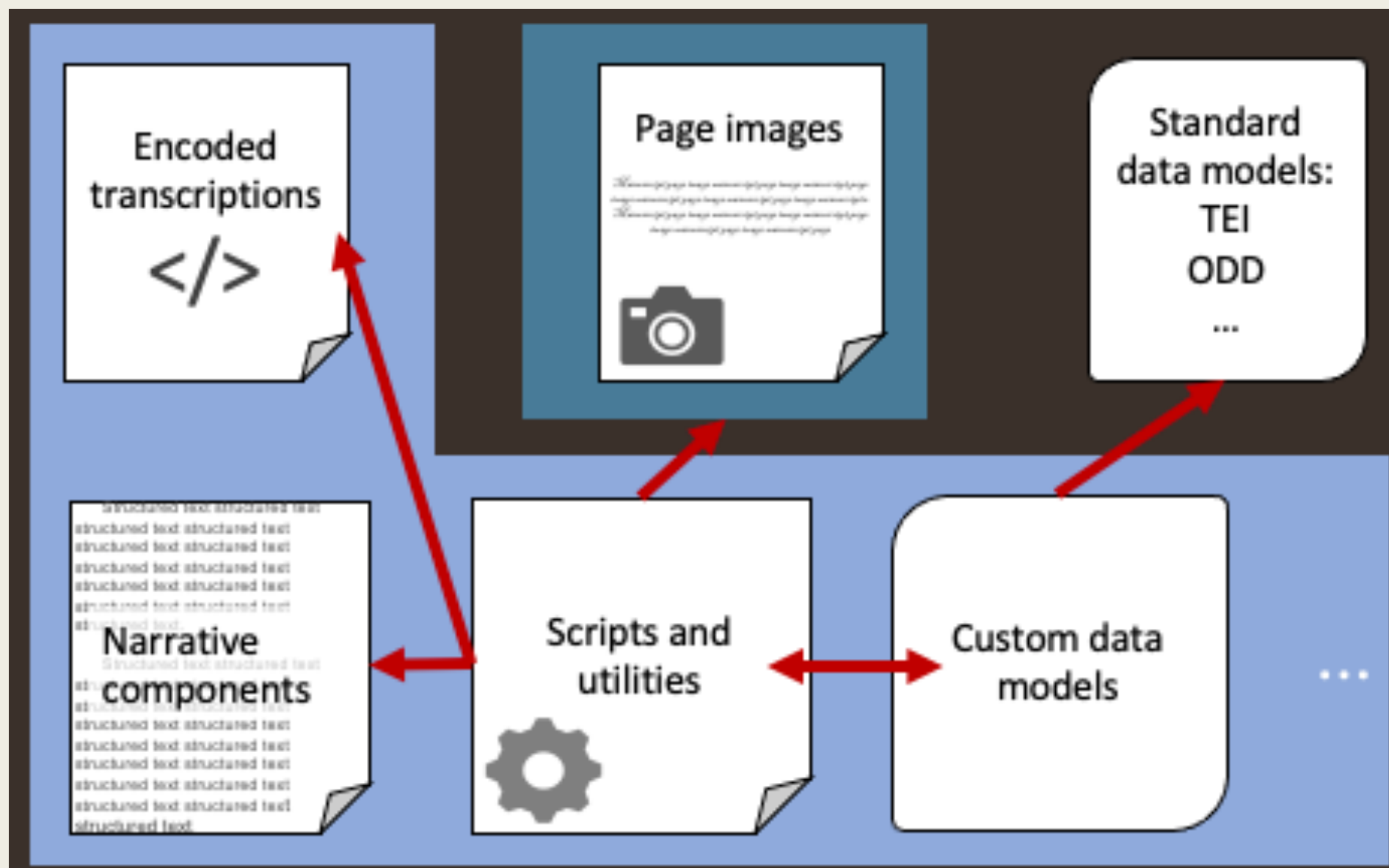


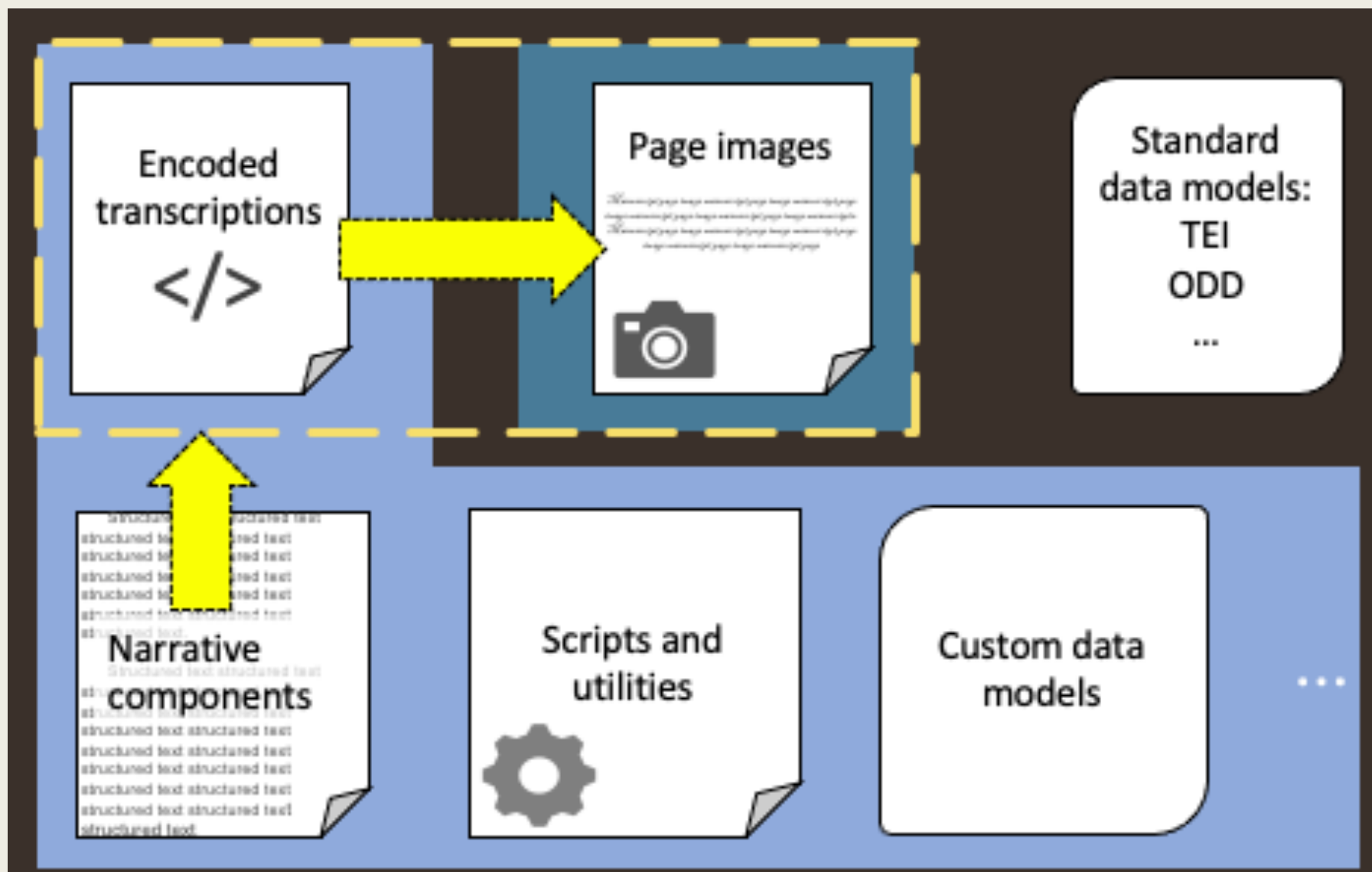
FRANKENSTEIN.

*"By the glimmer of the half-extinguished
light, I saw the dull, yellow eye of the
creature open: it breathed hard, and a
convulsive motion agitated its limbs,
*** I rushed out of the room."*

ENGRAVED FRONTISPIECE TO THE REVISED EDITION OF FRANKENSTEIN

Page 43.





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 - **Ownership matters: DH is community-centered**

Current and future work: Community-centered sustainability strategies

Case studies of digital humanities collections and their communities

How they interpret and implement sustainability

And roles for libraries and other memory institutions in supporting that work



<https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/re-246346-ols-20>



We have relevant standards. We need best practices and workflows for...

- Articulating multifaceted and granular sustainability requirements
- Representing, documenting, archiving complex, computed, *networked* digital objects
- Equitable and indefinitely ongoing collaborations between curation institutions and DH communities