GSLIS Inclusions and Exclusions Reading Group Activity Report 2012-2013

The Inclusions and Exclusions in Social and Community Informatics Reading Group—one of those affiliated with the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities—had the key goals to: 1) share and refine concrete tools broadly related to informatics for constructive discussions of racism and diversity; 2) ensure that policies are not substituted for action, as Sara Ahmed notes in her new book, On Being Included (Duke, 2012). Attendance averaged about ten people.

SUMMER 2012

June 1: “American Indian Ways of Leading and Knowing”
Facilitators: Sharon Irish, Tad Andracki


Facilitators: Tad Andracki, Charlotte Roh


June 29: “Silk Road Rising”
Facilitators: Sharon Irish, Tad Andracki

Description: At this meeting, we discussed the work of Jamil Khoury, Founding Artistic Director of Silk Road Rising, based on the following videos.

This video play has different parts to it, and you can click through the steps:

http://www.silkroadrising.org/video-plays/mosque-alert

This is Jamil Khoury’s video essay called “Not Quite White”:

http://www.silkroadrising.org/video-plays/not-quite-white/video-essay-on-whiteness
August 10: “Libraries for Immigrants and Minorities”  
*Facilitators:* Tad Andracki, Charlotte Roh


Our discussion raised some GSLIS history explored in a chapter by Terry Crowley in the link below. In the early 1970s, there was a cohort of 20 "minority" students recruited into LIS. The link to the full book is:  
https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/18680

FALL 2012

September 13: “Trapped in the Digital Divide”  
*Guest Facilitators:* Virginia Eubanks and Christine Nealon


Both of these activists are from upstate New York. Virginia gave a free public talk on Wednesday, September 12 at 5:30 at the Champaign Public Library, as well as a workshop on popular technology on Saturday morning. These events were sponsored by the **Center for Digital Inclusion.**

September 27: Pew Report on Asian Americans  
*Facilitator:* Charlotte Roh

*Description:* A Pew Report on Asian Americans caused a lot of controversy. See below for the original report as well as a few articles about it.

The report: http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/asianamericans/

The article where Charlotte first saw it discussed:  

A scholar from the study who responded:  
http://www.hyphenmagazine.com/blog/archive/2012/06/when-words-fail-careful-framing-needed-research-asian-americans

Summary of issues from Colorlines:  
http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/06/pew_asian_american_study.html
October 11: Mentoring underrepresented students
Guest Presenter: Susan Gershenfeld, Director of Illinois-Promise Student Services.

Description: Susan Gershenfeld and an Illinois-Promise student discussed mentoring of underrepresented students at Illinois, and shared a case study of I-Promise that Susan did and wrote up in 2012. (on the Moodle)

October 25: Digital storytelling, youth, and critical race scholarship
Joint brownbag with Center for Children’s Books (CCB)


November 8: “White Screen/White Noise: Racism on the Internet” panel
Virtual Panel organized by Nicole Cooke

Guest Facilitators: Myrna Morales, Heather McCann, Stacey Williams and Rebecca Martin

Description: Nicole Cooke invited a panel of people who presented at the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color earlier this term to share their work with us.

November 29: “On Being Included”
Facilitators: Sharon Irish, Tad Andracki, Charlotte Roh


SPRING 2013
For the spring, we aimed to have more variety in our events, with different meeting times, on different days.

January 18: Spring 2013 Kickoff
Facilitator: Sharon Irish

Description: Activities and reflection on the question: How can we work to check our privileges and undermine systems of oppression that hurt us all? Read http://everydayfeminism.com/2012/12/how-to-talk-to-someone-about-privilege/.
January 28: What does it mean to provide information to a community?

Facilitator: Sharon Irish

Description: In thinking about our question for the day--What does it mean--organizationally and individually--to provide information to a community? What would "libraries" look like then?--Sharon offered some info about libraries in Medellin, Colombia:
http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6696684.html

http://www.gatesfoundation.org/atla/Pages/2009-access-to-learning-award-fundacion-empresas-publicas-de-medellin-colombia.aspx


February 18: QLA: Queer Library Alliance
Co-sponsored lecture at Women’s Resources Center as part of “Quench” (LGBT Center) with Task Force on Inclusion

Speaker: Lucas McKeever

Description: Libraries and Queer populations have been allies since before homosexuality was taken out of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). In addition to housing the first LGBT professional organization within the United States, the American Library Association (ALA) has adamantly stood up to challenges of queer literature on behalf of the rights of their LGBT patrons. On a local level, we can see a partnership between the University of Illinois’s Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS), the Urbana Free Library (UFL), and the Uniting Pride (UP) Center of Champaign County, where all parties involved are working to preserve our community’s queer history while also fostering the continued growth of a healthy and vibrant future.

February 19: Critical Cultural Informatics: Twitter and Black Discourse
Co-sponsored lecture with GSLIS in LIS 126

Speaker: André Brock

Abstract: Critical cultural informatics (CCI) focuses on the interpellation of ideology and technoculture in interactions between people, institutions, and computers. Extending Pacey’s (1984) definition of technology as “artifact/practice/belief” by incorporating Day’s (2006) arguments for critical informatics, CSI employs humanistic methods such as close reading, rhetorical and discourse analysis, and hermeneutics to unpack the semantics and pragmatics of computational artifacts in use. For this presentation, I will present a CCI approach to the ‘Black Twitter’ phenomenon.
Social media—in this case study, Twitter—mediates and is mediated by the culture of its users. Twitter’s combination of brevity, multi-platform access, and feedback mechanisms has enabled it to gain mindshare far out of proportion to its actual user base, including an extraordinary number of Black American users. How best to understand Twitter’s reception and uptake by Black Americans, who surprisingly comprise over a quarter of all US Twitter users?

I approach these claims through an analysis of Twitter from two perspectives: an analysis of the interface and associated practices alongside critical discourse analyses of online discussions of Twitter’s utility and audience. This dual analysis employs critical race and technocultural theory to understand how mainstream online authors (out-group) and Black online authors (in-group) articulate Twitter as a racial artifact employing technocultural practices. Initial findings indicate that Twitter’s feature set and multi-platform presence play major roles in mediating cultural performances by Twitter users. These same features also, depending upon the racial affiliation of the discussant, mediate how those cultural performances are understood: for example, Twitter was seen as a venue for civic activism (or public sphere) or as an active facilitator of deficit-based Black cultural stereotypes. I conclude that recent demographic changes roughly correlating to the “browning” of America and the resultant changes in patterns of ICT usage allow us to understand Internet norms of communication as White, technocultural practices instead of solely computationally determined communication styles. Future directions for this research strand include a compilation of a critical whiteness framework to more clearly articulate how Twitter ‘norms’ of communication map onto White male geek subculture.

March 7: Precious Knowledge
Co-sponsored film screening with Inclusive Illinois/Amani Ayad
Moderator: Emily Knox

Description: At Tucson High School, ethnic studies programs have improved graduation rates among Latino students. But some state politicians think ethnic studies promote “racial solidarity” and anti-Americanism. When books are banned and programs eliminated, teachers and students fight back in a modern civil rights struggle.

March 8: Digital Literacy, Libraries and Public Policy
Guest Facilitators: Frances Jacobson Harris and Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe

Reading: Digital Literacy, Libraries, and Public Policy. This white paper was recently released as a part of the ALA Digital Literacy Task Force. The report provides an overview of digital literacy in the school, public, and academic libraries, looks at the ways support digital literacy for their users, and provides an overview of the current digital literacy policy context,
including digital inclusion, education and lifelong learning, and workforce development. The Task Force is now working to develop a set of recommendations for the library community, policy makers, and potential funders to continue and expand libraries’ engagement and leadership with digital literacy. Lisa and Frances welcome input on the recommendations.

April 5: Inclusion of International Students

*Guest Facilitator:* Barbara Ford, Director of the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs


April 19: Report Out on Diversity and Retention in the University

*Guest Facilitators:* Kathryn La Barre and Linda Smith

*Description:* Dr. Kathryn La Barre and Dr. Linda C. Smith from GSLIS reported back about the History Department’s Graduate Diversity Committee. The department sponsored "A Retention Event" that was held on March 8, 2013. Kathryn and Linda handed out "Enhancing Department Climate," information about student demographics in the department, and shared some slides from the event to support our discussion.

May 3: The Library as Community Organizer

*Facilitator:* Miriam Larson