

# Preparing for the Future: Creating a CUNY-Wide approach towards Digital Media Programs

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# About Me

- Program Coordinator and curriculum developer for the LaGuardia New Media Technology program
- The first Technical Director of LaGuardia Community College's ePortfolio Initiative
- M.P.S. in Interactive Telecommunications from the NYU Tisch School of the Arts
  - Concentrations in:
    - web design and development
    - information architecture
    - video and audio production
    - project management
    - e-commerce strategies
    - gaming theory and design
- 15 years private industry experience working in the fields of Digital Media and Technology
- 10 years of experience as an educator
- Managed the deployment of multimedia and telecommunication initiatives for companies such as MetLife, Century 21, ADP, Bankers Trust, Citibank, Suze Orman Inc, and the City University of New York.



# Understanding the Digital Landscape

# What is Digital Media?

“The convergence of traditional forms of communication, finance, education and entertainment with new methods of delivery”

# “Digital Disruption”



# The Impact of Digital Disruption

- **Adapt or Die**
  - Technology has created an environment of innovation that has fundamentally changed established businesses, attitudes, and cultures.
  - The rapid evolution of new media technology has in many cases progressed faster than society can process.



# Digital Disruption : The Shifting Landscape

## Old Media

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Television
- Movies
- Radio
- Business
- Social Clubs

## New Media

- Online newspapers
- Blogs & Emagazines
- Streaming Video (Hulu)
- Streaming Video (NetFlix)
- Podcasts and Streaming
- eCommerce (Amazon & eBay)
- Social Networking sites

# Digital Disruption: Academic Impact



- The constantly shifting technical landscape makes curriculum and program development difficult for faculty. This is especially true for digital media instructors.
- Convergence is forcing nearly every faculty member to expand their technical knowledge.
- Many traditional disciplines are now being forced in to adopt a greater technology based focus.
- The traditional university system is in danger of being overshadowed by the online and for-profit schools.



# Academic disciplines “digitally disrupted”

- A few of the disciplines that are being altered by digital media:
  - Visual Arts
  - Photography
  - Music
  - Film & Media Studies
  - Business and commerce
  - Journalism & Publishing
  - Computer and Information Systems
  - Criminal Justice and Law
  - Health and Sciences



# The need for a CUNY digital Media Strategy

# The challenges for CUNY colleges

- It can be difficult for many to evaluate a disciplines that did not exist until very recently.
  - Colleagues outside of the discipline may lack the of experience and understanding necessary to assess digital media programs and faculty.
- Limited guidelines on how digital scholarship is evaluated within academic institutions.
  - Who will review digital projects?
  - What criteria should be used to evaluate multimodal scholarship?
  - What skills and qualifications should the reviewers of digital research possess?
- Cross disciplinary nature of digital media programs creates a dilemma in instituting standards that could be universally applied in accessing faculty performance and scholarship.

# The challenges for CUNY Digital Faculty

- Digital scholarship in the form of multimedia projects are viewed as supplemental achievements in the tenure and promotion process and not as a substitute for the published article.
- The rapid pace of technical changes makes it imperative that digital media faculty members continue to develop new skills and study industry shifts in order to stay current.
- Institutional biases against digital media in the tenure and promotion system. The academy is an institution of tradition and responds with skepticism towards emerging disciplines.
  - Scholarly acceptance of digital media educators mirrors the challenges faced by academic pioneers of ethnic and women's studies during the 1960s and 1970s.
- The cross-disciplinary nature digital media forces these educators to serve as their own advocates frame the context of their creative work in a manner palatable to tenure and promotion committees.

# The challenges for CUNY Digital Students

- In many cases it is easier for students from two year schools to transfer to senior college outside of CUNY than to other four year CUNY institutions.
  - Seamless transfer between CUNY institutions is far too rare. Students may have to take extra credits within their major in order to graduate. These extra credits may impact their financial aid.
- The cost of majoring in digital media can be extremely high.
  - Students require up to date hardware and software in order to effectively create and develop digital content.
    - Computers and laptops
    - Software suites
    - Cameras
    - Web Hosting and Domains

The problems are real....

But no one is talking about them!!





Defining a Strategy:  
Establishing the CUNY Digital Council

# Digital Media programs within CUNY

## Graduate Center

- Interactive Technology and Pedagogy Certificate Program  
<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/Degrees/DAH/Art/Pages/default.aspx>

## Queens College

- Art Department  
<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/Degrees/DAH/Art/Pages/default.aspx>

## York College

- Communications Technology Program  
<http://york.cuny.edu/commtech/articulation.shtml>

## Hunter College

- Film and Media Studies Program  
[http://filmmedia.hunter.cuny.edu/undergrad\\_home.shtml](http://filmmedia.hunter.cuny.edu/undergrad_home.shtml)

## City College

- Electronic Design & Multimedia  
[http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/electronic\\_design/index.html](http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/electronic_design/index.html)
- Sonic Art Center - Department of Music  
<http://sonic.arts.ccny.cuny.edu>

## Baruch College

- Department of Statistics and Computer Information Systems  
<http://zicklin.baruch.cuny.edu/faculty/cis/programs>
- Department of Communications Studies  
<http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/wsas/departments/communication/index.html>
- Department of Management  
<http://zicklin.baruch.cuny.edu/faculty/management/programs/undergraduate/>

## New York City College of Technology

- School of Technology and Design  
<http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/academics/deptsites/techdesign/>

## Brooklyn College

- Digital Arts Department  
<http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/art/frames/academic.html>
- Department of TV and Radio  
<http://www.bctvr.org/>
- Computer Information Systems  
<http://www.sci.brooklyn.cuny.edu/cis/>

## Lehman College

- Department of Art  
<http://www.lehman.edu/academics/arts-humanities/arts/>

## College of Staten Island

- Media and Culture  
<http://scholar.library.csi.cuny.edu/mediaculture/>

## Borough of Manhattan Community College

- Multimedia Programming and Design  
<http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/multimedia>

## LaGuardia Community College

- Media and Technology Programs  
<http://www.laguardia.edu/mediatech>

## Bronx Community College

- Media and Technology Programs  
<http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/artmusic>



# Why should a CUNY-Wide digital media council be created?

- In many cases, Digital Media programs are housed in radically different departments at different CUNY institutions.
  - Despite the best efforts of the Pathways project, articulating effective transfer from two-year colleges to the senior institutions may be more difficult for digital media programs than for liberal arts and science programs
- Digital Media programs can be drawn together faculty from multiple disciplines, both traditional and non-traditional. Instructors with backgrounds in fine arts, film, theater, graphic design, information technology, photography, computer science, English literature, business, and law can comprise the core teaching staff.
  - Older methods of assessing scholarship become impractical with the convergence of multiple educational perspectives. The method of appraisal for an english professor must differ than for a professor of information technology. This because the very nature of their professional tasks are immensely different.

# Why should a CUNY-Wide digital media council be created?

- A discipline consisting of faculty from diverse fields can pose a problem in developing effective standards for....
  - Digital scholarship as well as Tenure and Promotion decisions.
  - Assessment of programmatic, departmental, and institutional effectiveness.
- Housing Digital Media programs within traditional academic departments places our students and faculty at a disadvantage when compared to counterparts in other digital media programs that offer a more multi-disciplined approach.
- Keeping equipment and software up to date is critical to support the continued expansion and growth of the programs.
- Faculty opportunities for digital media training must be enhanced so that curriculum and program development stay relevant.

# The Benefits from establishing a CUNY-Wide Digital Media Council

Standards could be put in place for:

- Curriculum Development
  - Developing course material in a rapidly evolving technical field is time consuming and requires constant research to stay relevant. Textbooks, lectures, and assignments need to be updated every 6 - 12 months.
- Professional Development for faculty
  - Faculty must engage in regular technical retraining (classes, seminars, professional associations) to stay up to date on emerging changes within the digital fields
- Digital scholarship for Faculty
  - Publishing
  - Speeches and presentations
  - Writing and securing external grants
  - Teaching and Student Advising
  - Designing multimedia art and applications
  - University service
- Addressing new and emerging fields that heavily utilize digital media.
- Responding to transfer and articulation issues between Digital Media Programs

# The Benefits from establishing a CUNY-Wide Digital Media Council

## Help clarify the distinctions within Digital Media

### New Media Technology

- Faculty within this subdivision of digital arts and technology teach and instruct others in how to build the next set of multimedia tools and applications.
  - Teaches the practical implementation of new technology
    - Usually from the visual arts or technology disciplines

### Digital Humanities

- Faculty within this subdivision of digital arts and technology investigate and research how these new multimedia tools are impacting our society and culture.
  - Studies the theoretical effects of the technology from a cultural or pedagogical focus
    - Usually from the liberal arts disciplines (English, History, etc.)

# Goals for the CUNY Digital Council

## Over the next 12 to 24 months

- Establish greater communication and collaboration between CUNY digital media programs to enable greater economies of scale (i.e. sharing of resources, knowledge exchange, cross training, etc)
  - The outcome would produce a higher caliber digital media graduate, better trained and more knowledgeable faculty, and stronger institutional digital media programs.
- Redesign and market CUNY Digital Media programs via the web and social media in order to raise our profiles as a leader in digital media education.
- Establish a yearly Digital Media conference to showcase top CUNY students, faculty, and programs as “the best and brightest” in digital media.
- Greater outreach to “feeder” high schools to inform students about the affordable and exciting digital programs within CUNY.
- Coordination with private industry to identify and grow employment opportunities for our students.
- Leverage university purchasing power to offer software and hardware discounts for students, full time faculty and adjuncts.

# In conclusion

- If we fail to change
  - There is a growing risk that CUNY will begin to be seen as behind the times if we disregard the cultural and technological shifts taking place all around us.
  - Just as other industries outside of the academy have been altered by economic and technical factors, higher education may see similar transformation unless it adapts.
  - It will be difficult to attract and retain the next generation of digital professionals, students and faculty, unless we can effectively demonstrate our value and commitment to this emerging discipline.

Thanks for listening

Feel free to contact me at:

<http://www.jamesrichardson.net>

LaGuardia's New Media Technology Program:

<http://laguardia.edu/mediatech>



# Panel Discussion



# Panel

- Christopher Stein, Associate Professor of Media Arts and Technology, Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Michael Smith, Assistant Professor / Communications Technology Program Director, York College
- Richard Dragan, Assistant Professor of English and Digital Journalism, LaGuardia Community College
- Stephen Brier, Senior Academic Technology Officer / ITP Certificate Program Coordinator, CUNY Graduate Center
- James Richardson, Assistant Professor of Humanities / New Media Technology Program Coordinator, LaGuardia Community College



# Questions and answers