Because it’s 2018:  
Supporting Multimodal Projects in the Library  
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Abstract

It is undeniable that writing has expanded beyond text and research papers as the Internet has thrust visual literacy to the forefront. As professors move beyond papers, Library Digital Media Labs are in a unique position expand services by supporting faculty who want to expand their assignments and by helping the students to navigate them. At our university, this has included an ongoing partnership with the Rhetoric and Composition II classes, which have been required to include a multimodal assignment for two years. Our Studio helps at every stage, from instructional design with reluctant professors, to lab days where students get their hands on the software. By working together, faculty become more comfortable with non-paper writing, students get over their technophobia, and librarians get a chance to discuss visual literacy. Because, as the latest version of our textbook states, it’s 2018 and these are necessary skills.

The Pitch

English Composition is mostly taught by lecturers and adjuncts. This being what it is, many of them are working multiple jobs and can be difficult to pin down. However, there is a yearly orientation and the Studio gets a chance to pitch our services to the whole team at once. We share an hour with the Writing and Communication Center and Reference and Instruction.

We advertise our instructional design services as well as the space itself. We have also developed a series of videos to support online and hybrid courses who may not be able to dedicate a class session to a one-shot.

Are you . . .

Feeling a little unsure about this?
Thinking about “just an infographic?”
Planning on “just doing something creative?”

The Projects

There are a wide variety of projects, and professors are given leeway to decide what will best suit their teaching style. Many have opted to stick with traditional presentations with help from the Writing and Communication Center. Others simply have students insert a photo or other image into their final paper with a caption. For the professors who want to lean into multimodal, Studio helps them with instructional design and supports students in picking up new software. These assignments have included infographics, ePosters, brochures, videos (from a 1-minute introduction to a 6-10 minute research pitch), and audio mash-ups.

Prof. Sheena Monds works with her students on their SP 2019 video pitches.

Infographics by Prof. Lanie Lundgrin’s SP 2019 class.

Teaching ePoster concepts for Prof. Jill Beard (slides designed by Prof. Becky Nasadowski).