Overview
Call Number: SC1061
Creator: Lowood, Henry
Creator: Schnapp, Jeffrey T. (Jeffrey Thompson), 1954-
Creator: Shanks, Michael.
Creator: Stanford Humanities Lab.
Title: Stanford Humanities Lab records
Dates: circa 1999-2009
Physical Description: 11161.6 megabyte(s)
Summary: The materials consist of administrative records, subject files, conference materials, and email documenting the functions and projects of the Stanford Humanities Lab.
Language(s): The materials are in English.
Physical Location: Special Collections and University Archives materials are stored offsite and must be paged 36-48 hours in advance. For more information on paging collections, see the department's website: http://library.stanford.edu/depts/spc/spc.html.
Repository: Department of Special Collections and University Archives
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Stanford, CA 94305-6064
Email: specialcollections@stanford.edu
Phone: (650) 725-1022
URL: http://library.stanford.edu/spc
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Cite As
[identification of item], Stanford Humanities Lab Records (SC0161). Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif.
Biographical/Historical note
Founded by Jeffrey Schnapp (Comparative Literature) in 1999, the Stanford Humanities Lab (SHL) enabled scholars in the humanities to undertake mid- to large-scale team-based research projects. By supporting innovative research, SHL sought to expand the scope and scale of humanitas, supplementing traditional humanities training with "hands-on" experiences in a true laboratory setting. In 2003, Henry Lowood (Curator for History of Science & Technology Collections; Film & Media Collections) became co-director of the lab. Schnapp and Lowood were later joined by Michael Shanks (Archaeology), who directed lab as a team until 2009 when it evolved into separate projects. The Stanford Humanities Lab was a Center for Transdisciplinary/Post-Disciplinary Study. With new developments in areas such as biotech, digital culture, global society, SHL believed that some crucial questions — about what it is to be human, about experience in a connected world, about the boundaries of culture and nature — transcend the old divisions between the arts, sciences and humanities, between the academy, industry and the cultural sphere.
SHL engaged in experimental projects with a "laboratory" ethos — collaborative, co-creative, team-based — involving a triangulation of arts practice, commentary/critique, and outreach, merging research, pedagogy, publication and practice. They didn't just comment and discuss, they built: new media, interactive archives, predictive models of social change, new courses, collaborative research workshops, art exhibitions.
The SHL agenda encompassed:

- animating archives - regenerating, bringing to life, and fostering new modes of interaction with the storehouses of human, cultural, artistic, scientific achievement - our focus is on the question of the relationship of the human past to efforts at conservation and preservation
- building bigger pictures - putting specialized in-depth research into the context of big human questions; questions, for example, of rapid social change and innovation, the ethical implications of information technology, the character of distributed digital communities, the politics of digital citizenship, the past, present, and future of intellectual property
- enabling co-creative collaboration - developing successful models of teamwork, learner-centered models of training (thinking through doing), and collaborative authoring tools and processes
- building bridges - establishing innovative partnerships between industry, museums, foundations, and high-level university-based research

Projects The Lab offered the opportunity for scholars in the humanities to undertake the sort of mid- to large-scale team-based research projects that have traditionally been the domain of the natural and social sciences. Humanities disciplines have generally received far more modest research funding than the sciences, thus discouraging resource-intensive scholarship as well as collaborative or team-based work. These limitations have resulted in research findings—usually in print form—that are produced and consumed by individual scholars working in isolation, and shared with students exclusively in the classroom setting.

SHL sought to change that. Whereas institutional pressures have fostered a narrowing of research agendas, SHL promoted a model of the humanities that is flexible and cross-disciplinary at its core and at the same time rooted in the disciplinary traditions of the humanities. By providing financial support for innovative humanities research with results that assume technologically inflected forms, SHL attempted:

- to expand the scope and scale of humanitas
- to supplement traditional humanities training with "hands-on" experiences in a true laboratory setting
- to add an outreach dimension to traditional disciplinary endeavors

After an initial pilot year, projects were typically funded for five to seven years, during which SHL administrative and technical staff were involved in helping to shepherd the work to successful completion. Administrative staff helped with working methodology, such pragmatic details as helping to build partnerships with museums and other public institutions, fundraising, and presenting work to the campus and wider community.

Technical staff helped researchers imagine outputs and results beyond the limits of their technology skills. They assisted in locating digital artist collaborators, programmers, video producers, animators, and others to help realize researchers’ ideas. And they instructed research teams not only on how to supervise the creation of technology-driven outputs but also on how to do hands-on programming, film production, animation, etc. of their own.

Teaching SHL projects were rooted in the disciplinary traditions of the Humanities, but they involve students from a wide array of Humanities and non-Humanities disciplines. Many SHL projects involved a recurring course or seminar component that allows team members to introduce, develop, and test their research results within the classroom. SHL was a research center, but teaching is central to its mission. The SHL aim was to lead a revolution in the way knowledge is produced and presented in the Humanities and, in so doing, to provide a compelling new model for Humanities education that:

- enhances and deepens traditional classroom teaching
- integrates the latest technologies and tools into Humanities research and vice versa
- breeds a new kind of Humanities-savvy "techie" and a new kind of tech-savvy "fuzzy"

To this end, SHL projects involved a new hands-on, laboratory-based model of undergraduate and graduate training, informed by the media and information revolutions of the present. Students learned not only by studying knowledge in the traditional manner, but also by producing knowledge: by being assigned responsibility for the realization of a piece of research within a larger research mosaic, overseen by an experienced senior researcher.

Scope and Contents
The materials consist of administrative records, subject files, conference materials, and email documenting the functions and projects of the Stanford Humanities Lab.

Arrangement note
The materials are arranged in two series: Series 1. Computer Files; Series 2. Paper files.

Access Terms
Digital humanities centers.
Humanities
Humanities--Data processing.
Humanities--Study and teaching (Higher).
Series 1 Computer Files
Physical Description: 11 gigabyte(s) (17,780 files in 1058 directories)

How They Got Game - SHL project
Physical Description: 6.41 gigabyte(s)

HPS - SHL project
Physical Description: 690 megabyte(s)

Eudora email 2003
Creator/Collector: Lowood, Henry
Physical Description: 385 megabyte(s)

attach
Game Project.fol
archive.mbx
archive.toc

Thunderbird email 2011
Creator/Collector: Lowood, Henry
Physical Description: 42.4 megabyte(s)

htgg_20110818-1347
messages
index.html
shl_20110818-1341
messages
index.html
shl_20110818-1344
messages
index.html

Shl
Physical Description: 3.49 gigabyte(s)

Series 2 Paper Files
Box 1, Folder 1 SHL
Box 1, Folder 2 AWSM
Box 1, Folder 3 Digital humanities
Box 1, Folder 4 How they got game (SHL)
Box 1, Folder 5 HPS simulations--AFOSR grant
Box 1, Folder 6 Electronic Arts
Box 1, Folder 7 Why game studies now?
Box 1, Folder 8 Digital person reader
Box 1, Folder 9 Game collection--National Vanguard, Resistance games
Box 1, Folder 10 Springer book
Box 1, Folder 11 Machinima
Box 1, Folder 12 Wargame book
Box 1, Folder 13 HASTAC
Box 1, Folder 14 HASTAC 2007
Box 1, Folder 15 Exhibit
Box 1, Folder 16 Exhibit planning--How they got game
Box 1, Folder 17 Storytelling--Virtual World Conference, Stanford 2004 Feb
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>YBCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Bits of culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>History of computer game characters 2003 Apr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Henrik Bennetsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Digital humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Preserving Creative America (Library of Congress)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Game archive project, Kyoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Hastac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Xfive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Center for digital imaging and sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Gamespot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>How they got game book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Military simulation archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Panel on cultural legacy of video games 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>E3 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Game Developers Conference--IGDA 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Future of content 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Future of content 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Online gaming 2004 Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Wizards of OS3, Berlin 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Arizona 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Digital vision 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Gaming to learn workshop 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>DIGRA 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Serious Games, DC 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>030303--Collective play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>HSS 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>History of computer game design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>STS 145: History of Computer Game Design 2001-2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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