



STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Documentation

Current standards in the digital humanities and social sciences, as well as recent reviews of our own projects, place strong emphasis on the importance of documentation in digital work. Recording the processes of development, the technologies employed in that process, the technical and system requirements on the user's end, and the reader's experience of interacting with the project ensures that the type of information needed for proper use and archiving remains available for all stages of the project's development, publication, and preservation. Some of the documentation will naturally be embedded within the project itself, but we also ask that you compile a documentation file that we may use in the project's archive once the project eventually becomes inaccessible in its original live-web form.

Within the Project

At the very least, every project should contain an About page describing its features, functionality, and technical specifications for optimal performance, as well as any recommendations on navigation and interface. It might be helpful to consider this section part of the meta- or para-text of the project. Additionally, but not alternatively, you may also employ javascript to provide instructions for the reader when they first enter the project.

External Documentation File

A document with the following contents should be submitted to SUP upon migration of the project. This file will be included in the Stanford Digital Repository archive collection to facilitate future researchers who are unable to access the project in its native form and environment.

1. Overview:

Provide a brief (2-3 paragraphs) description of the project. It should be similar to an abstract or catalog description and include full title, author, date of publication, argument, scope, features, etc.

2. Technical Requirements:

Provide a list of required technologies a reader would need to experience this project (e.g. Chrome browser, version 63; JavaScript/ECMAScript 7; etc.). What server software would have been needed to host the project at the time of publication (Linux, Apache, MySQL, PHP, etc.)? You may simply provide a statement like this, for example: At the time of publication [project title] required a server running Ruby on Rails and performed best in [browser] [version] on a screen with a minimum resolution or size of [widthXheight], audio output, and an internet connection capable of streaming remote video.

3. Technical Specifications:

Provide a list or paragraph describing the technical makeup of the project. For example, list any pre-packaged platforms or frameworks the project uses and their versions (e.g. Scalar 2, Ruby on Rails, etc.). Identify any programming or markup languages and their versions used in the code base (e.g. HTML5,

CSS3, etc.). List all Javascript libraries or webkits. List media filetypes embedded in the project (e.g. png, mp4, etc.). Also, list any APIs or external dependencies and their locations (e.g. OpenStreetMaps data, Vimeo player API, etc).

4. User Experience/Screencast

This section should comprise the bulk of the document. Elaborate on the introductory description to give a reader without direct access to your project a better idea of what it would have been like to experience it in its best original form. Provide screenshots to show a sampling of project's features and layout as you describe them. If you do not provide a screencast (see below), this section should be as thoroughly descriptive as possible, and include at least 5 and up to 25 screenshots.

In addition to the written description, you should provide a narrated screencast demo of the project. Such a demo should explain the features, functionality, and purpose of the project and may contain additional information regarding its backgrounds or contexts. It should offer a walk-through of the material so that someone without access to the original project would have a very clear idea what it looked like and how it would have been navigated. Such a demo should be at least 5 but no longer than 15 minutes in length. If the screencast is short, the written description should compensate accordingly so that a thorough description of the user experience is available to future researchers who might not have full access to the project's interactive features.

5. Structure:

In this section describe the logic behind the structure or organization of the project. For example, explain any linear or hierarchical organizational structures. Provide a description or explanation of the logic behind naming patterns. For example, if someone were to encounter your project as simply a set of files or list of urls, how do the names of those objects or locations relate to their contents and to each other. Feel free to use tables or visuals to create a kind of map or blueprint of the arrangement and relationships among the content.

6. Credit:

Provide a credit list or list of collaborators. (Your project should already contain this information, and it's fine to simply reproduce that here as unformatted text.)

7. Bibliography/References:

Provide one comprehensive bibliography. If your project has multiple bibliographies, combine these into one list. (Your project should already contain this information, and it's fine to simply reproduce that here as unformatted text.)