Tech-ing to Transgress: Putting Values into Library Practice

Jennifer Vinopal / @jvinopal
Oberlin Digital Scholarship Conference, 6/11/2016

Slides: bit.ly/jv-oberlin16

Credits

#critlib

Baharak Yousefi

bell hooks

Feminist praxis research subjects

April Hathcock

nina de jesus

Jill Conte

Chris Bourg

Cecily Walker

Monica McCormick

b.binaohan/mxbees

Emily Drabinski

Bethany Nowviskie

@blackgirlinmain

Jaena Alabi

my daughter

Barbara Rockenbach

Sarah Shreeves

Jessica Schomberg

Tressie McMillan Cottom

brown bag women's discussion group

"to discuss our digital scholarship initiatives, our daily engagement with these projects, and the **impact** of digital scholarship on the **communities we serve**

—Catherine Newton, Personal communication. 2/24/2016

LA ESCALERA

Teaching to
Transgress

Education as the
Practice of Freedom

bell hooks

" the difference between education as the **practice of freedom** and education that merely strives to **reinforce domination**

—bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*. 1994

Practice of freedom vs. reinforcing domination

Disruptive behavior

Building community

" Oppressive normativity: the norms of identity that dictate who is **privileged** in our society and who is **marginalized**.
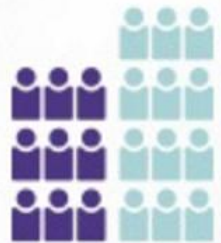
—April Hathcock, "Whiteness and 'Oppressive Normativity.'" 4/21/2016

Practice of freedom vs. reinforcing domination

Disruptive behavior

Building community

Data is political

How data does political things: The processes of encoding and decoding data are never neutral.

It is difficult to see the political structure of data, because data maintains a veneer of scientistic objectivity. But data is inherently a form of politics, argues **Jeffrey Alan Johnson**. *Data does not just allocate material things of value, it allocates moral values as well. Data producers encode a state of the world at a given time, which is then decoded by data users to shape social practice. As such, a political theory of data, grounded in distributive and relational information justice, is necessary.*

— Jeffrey Alan Johnson, "How Data Does Political Things." 2015

Data influences political practice

Data collection:

- Who mandates it be collected?
- Who determines data fields & validation tables?

— Jeffrey Alan Johnson, "How Data Does Political Things." 2015

Sarah Stevens
@microStevens

Title required for conf registration
Choices are Mrs, Miss, Dr, Prof, or Mr, I chose Mr.
Shouldn't need to reveal my marital status to go

RETWEETS
17

LIKES
21

1:11 PM - 3 Jun 2016

Amazon Prime Same-Day Delivery

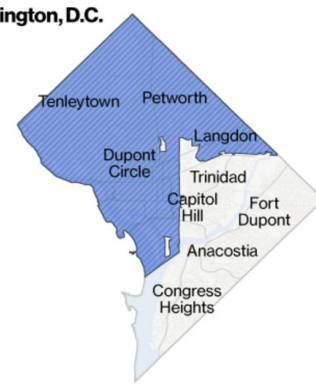—Ingold & Soper. "Amazon Doesn't Consider the Race of Its Customers." 4/21/2016

Google Equates Black Girls With Sex; Why?

The search engine's profit motive doesn't always work in the best interests of women of color.

BY: SAFIYA UMOJA NOBLE
Posted: March 13, 2013

—Safiya Umoja Noble. "Google Equates Black Girls with Sex." March 13, 2013

"[Google] could do little to affect search results. It claimed that its algorithm technology was **neutral**, and search results were a matter of how people use Google, rather than the technology itself

—Safiya Umoja Noble. "Google Equates Black Girls with Sex." March 13, 2013

"Three black teenagers" vs. "Three white teenagers"

(Google Images)

—Ben Guarino. "Google faulted for racial bias in image search results for black teenagers" **June 10, 2016**

"its search algorithm mirrors the availability and frequency of online content. "This means that sometimes unpleasant portrayals of sensitive subject matter online can affect what image search results appear for a given query..."

—Ben Guarino. "Google faulted for racial bias..." June 10, 2016

"...These results don't reflect Google's own opinions or beliefs — as a company, we strongly value a diversity of perspectives, ideas and cultures."

—Ben Guarino. "Google faulted for racial bias..." June 10, 2016

Independent Voices
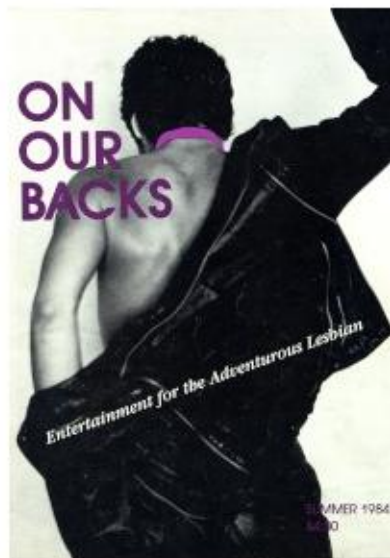
An Open Access Collection of an Alternative Press

Title: On our backs

Series: Feminist

Source: Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture, Duke University, Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University

Publisher Name: On Our Backs, Blush Productions

ISSN: 0890–2224

OCLC: 14191920

Place of Publication: San Francisco, CA

Frequency: Quarterly

Available online: 1 July 1984 – 1 December 2004 (68 issues)

Show publication calendar

- Summer, 1984, Volume 1, Issue 1
- Fall, 1984, Volume 1, Issue 2
- Winter, 1985, Volume 1, Issue 3
- Spring, 1985, Volume 1, Issue 4

"Our unique **library crowd-funding** model uses **library acquisition dollars** to fund the development of digital collections. **Working closely with content holders**, we help define and scope the collection...

digitization: just because you can, doesn't mean you should

I learned this week that Reveal Digital has digitized On Our Backs (OOB), a lesbian porn magazine that ran from 1984-2004. This is a part of the Independent Voices collection that "chronicles the transformative decades of the 60s, 70s and 80s through the lens of an independent alternative press." For a split second I was really excited — porn that was nostalgic for me was online! Then I quickly thought about friends who appeared in this magazine before the internet existed. I am deeply concerned that this kind of exposure could be personally or professionally harmful for them.

—Tara Robertson. March 20, 2016

> "Consenting to a porn shoot that would be in a queer print magazine is a different thing to consenting to have your porn shoot be available online. I'm disappointed in my profession. **Librarians have let down the queer community** by digitizing On Our Backs.
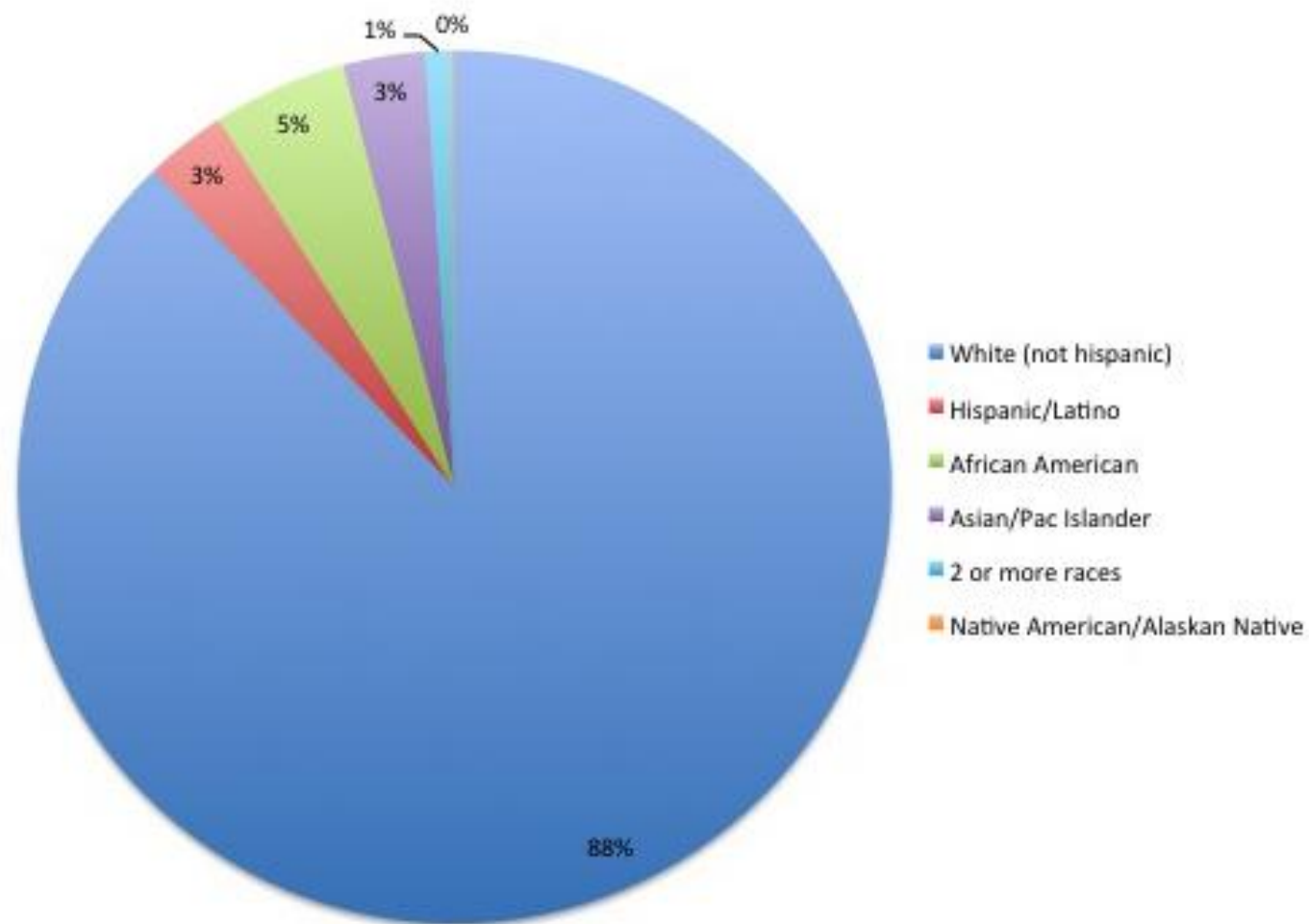
—Tara Robertson. March 20, 2016

"ClimateQUAL® is an assessment of library staff **perceptions** concerning (a) their library's commitment to the principles of diversity, (b) organizational policies and procedures, and (c) staff attitudes.

— "About ClimateQual." Accessed 6/6/2016

Librarians 2010

Legend:
- White (not hispanic)
- Hispanic/Latino
- African American
- Asian/Pac Islander
- 2 or more races
- Native American/Alaskan Native

Data labels: 88%, 1%, 0%, 3%, 5%, 3%

" whites are willing to live with only a handful of African American neighbors [some say ~20%]...

[For African Americans] a "50-50" neighborhood is routinely identified as the most attractive

— Maria Krysa, et. al, "Does Race Matter in Neighborhood Preferences?" 2009

"

Climatequal sample question:

The race/sexual orientation of **a** team/division member does NOT affect how **they** are valued on this team/division.

— "ClimateQUAL Sample Questions." Accessed 6/6/2016

"non-minority librarians are unlikely to report observing racial microaggressions"

[even though "minority" librarians are, in fact, experiencing them.]

—Jaena Alabi, "Racial Microaggressions in Academic Libraries." 2015

? What data do you collect, how, and why?

What biases are embedded into your data collection and interpretation?

How will **you** disrupt harmful data collection practices?

"Fight the power," exhorts @meta_caro: don't use headings you see as racist, sexist, homophobic #beyondTEI #dhsi2016

Chelcie Rowell @ararebit

Controlled vocabularies reflect political stance, eg the LCSH subject headings 'Aliens' & 'Illegal Aliens' #beyondTEI #dhsi2016
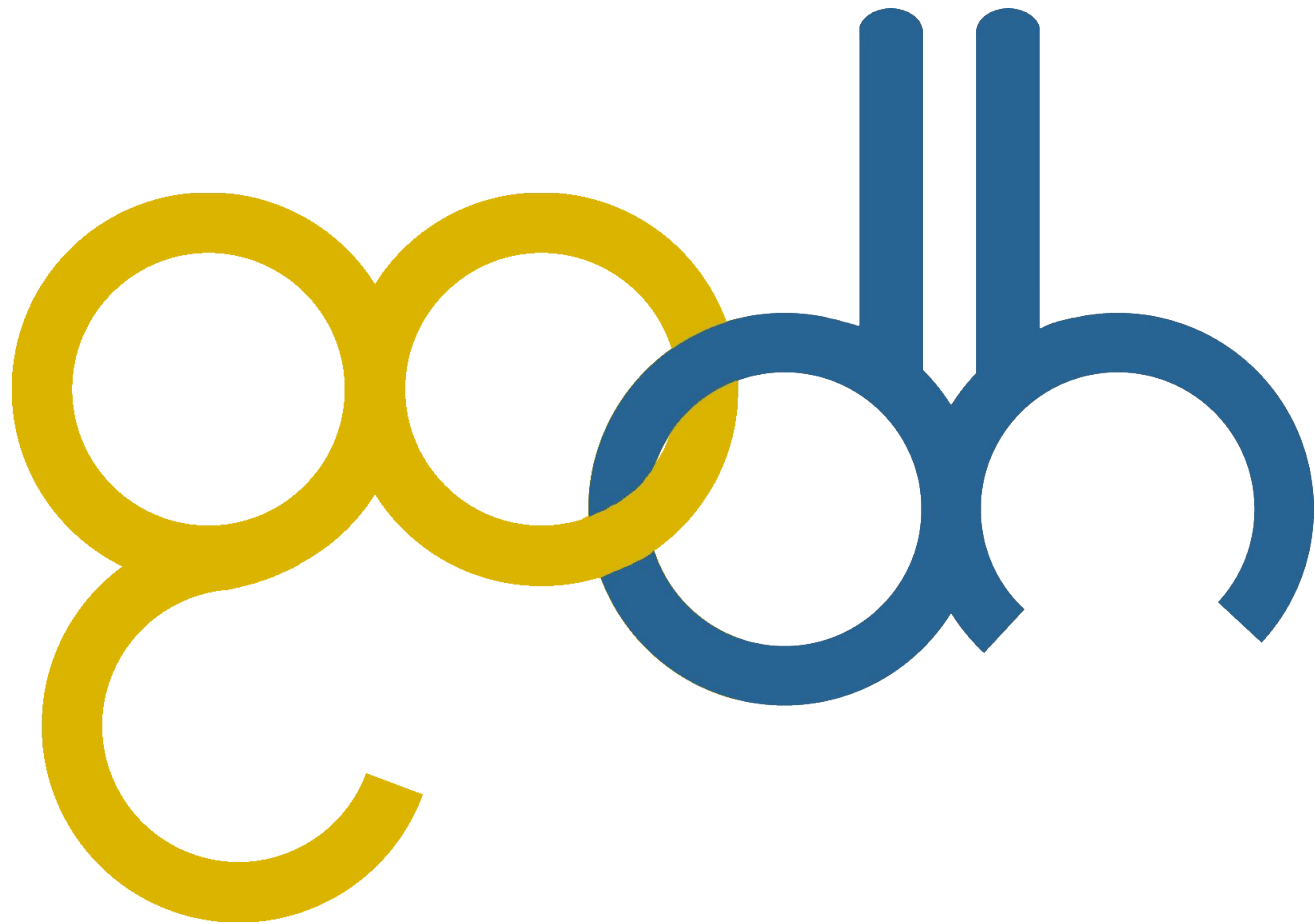
RETWEETS
3

LIKES
9

5:35 PM - 5 Jun 2016

Community

"break down barriers that hinder communication and collaboration among researchers and students of the Digital Arts, Humanities, and Cultural Heritage sectors in high, mid, and low income economies.

—Global Outlook::Digital Humanities website. Accessed 6/6/2015

Micro-insult: Second-class citizen

I am an elected university senator at my university and one of two senators elected
from the library. I have been attending monthly senate meetings since the beginning

contact

@LISmicroaggress

http://lismicroaggressions.tumblr.com

lismicroaggressions@gmail.com

cover art by Annie Pho

LIS
Microaggressions

volume 1. issue 2.

Your words hit the side of my face

a space for those working in libraries, archives and
information fields to share their experiences with
microaggressions

APALA 35 · ALA Annual
San Francisco · June 2015

Our Mission

Mukurtu (MOOK-oo-too) is a grassroots project aiming to empower communities to manage, share, preserve, and exchange their digital heritage in culturally relevant and ethically-minded ways. We are committed to maintaining an open, community-driven approach to Mukurtu's continued development. Our first priority is to help build a platform that fosters relationships of respect and trust.

Feminist Praxis in Library Leadership

"

Simply put, feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.

— bell hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. 2000

"

[Avoiding leadership positions] might mean that you are leaving the leadership of our profession in the hands of those who aren't concerned about those things…

— Chris Bourg, "Mentors, Gender, Reluctance." 2014

"

using **traditional** organizational power to push an agenda maybe isn't very feminist.

— Chris Bourg, "The radicalism is coming from inside the library." 2015

Feminist leadership is: politically engaged

Feminist leadership is:

praxis

Feminist leadership is: sharing

"

Be absolutely committed
to transparency. Do not
assume that you know
what others need/don't
need to know.

— Baharak Yousefi, How to be a Good (Library) Boss. 2016

M is for Rachel
@RachelMFleming

"Painfully Transparent" is the level of transparency that I'm going for.
"OMG Never Stops" is the level of communicating I'm going for.

RETWEETS
8

LIKES
13

12:36 PM - 25 May 2016

influence ⊲))

[**in**-floo-*uh* ns]

Spell   Syllables

Synonyms   Examples   Word Origin

See more synonyms on Thesaurus.com

noun

1.   the capacity or power of persons or things to be a compelling force on
     or produce effects on the actions, behavior, opinions, etc., of others:
     He used family influence to get the contract.

Exercise

? Whom does this work benefit, disadvantage, or exclude?

Whose values, perspective, or voice is represented, marginalized, or erased?

Whom do/can I influence and how?

Who are my allies?

Questions?

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