Home Office Staff Development

We are developing our undergraduate staff to better assist the organization in a number of ways. Wherever possible, we try to give the staff ownership of particular roles for both temporary and ongoing projects. This provides staff members with both nameable deliverables that can support c.v.’s or resumes and a personal stake in the success of the organization.

• Social Networking Coordinators - Promotional Assistants
  (Twitter/Facebook/Book Channel launch)

So far we have had two undergraduate staffers take on the role of social networking coordinator. Their responsibilities include posting to our social media sites as well as researching for more effective ways to utilize those outlets to draw attention to the organization and its networks. Our current coordinator is also working with the associate director of reviews to strategize about the release of the H-Net Book Channel.

• Content Development
  (H-Diplo migration / syllabus collection)

One of the most significant development achievements by the staff this summer has been the migration of H-Diplo’s extensive PDF publication archive. We are also very excited about how the new H-Diplo syllabus archive turned out and hope to showcase it with other new teaching resources soon.

• Network Technical Support
  (10 Networks; H-Democracy, H-New-Jersey blogs)

Our home office clerks are each monitoring ten networks (40 total) on a weekly basis and give updates at the weekly staff meetings. New blogs soon to be published on H-Democracy and H-New-Jersey are a direct result of those efforts.

• Announcement training
  (Formatting, editing, subject fields, profiles)

The recent migration of Academic Announcements to the Commons has changed the workflow and responsibilities of home office staff. We are developing new standard procedures and training staff to edit for formatting, add subject fields and to make sure advertisers have full profiles.
• **H-Net Book Channel Support**
  (Publisher databases, correspondence)

Members of the home office staff support the associate director of reviews by corresponding with publishers to ensure up-to-date contact information and maintaining publisher databases that will be used in the development of the Book Channel.

**Content Development / Delivery Research and Projects**

There are a number of projects the home office staff has been working on to improve the Commons user experience. Some projects are still ideas scattered on notepads or batted around in meetings. Others have been or are about to be realized on the Commons. Here is a list of what has been keeping us busy since the last quarter business meeting with a brief bullet-point explanation of each project or initiative.

• **What we learned at HASTAC 2015**
  *(We shared some project ideas and links with the EAC)*
  - Student-led research/pedagogy
  - Visual presentation possibilities (need to research new modules)
  - Collaborative projects between institutions or content collections

• **Race and Ethnicity Hub**
  - Developed with feedback from Editor Resources
  - Began including a "taxonomy page" to more clearly define content
  - Another hub is in development (potentially a teaching hub)
  - It should go be developed with the teaching committee

• **New Editor Training Module**
  - We now have a largely automated training module.
  - There are only 3 points of interaction with the trainer.
  - Cleaner on plan networks (dynamic views)
  - Policy will be quizzed rather than posted.
  - New training on categories/keywords, copyright, content development and more.

• **Teaching Resources**
  - We presented some teaching resource content management options to the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education’s faculty development workgroup with Randolph Hollingsworth. Though we are still thin on resources to manage and display at the time, the presentation was well received.
  - Working with Teaching Committee to develop broader strategy/goal
We continue to work on technical development as the committee works out the intellectual / pedagogical / and applicable goals, etc.

- Developed a number of views, collected existing resources
- Researching other resources on the web

**H-Announce migration and testing**
- Noticed two initial bugs - Password loops; digest problems
- Staff workflow adjustments, which led to...
- Staff moderation training

**Universal Menu Design Changes**
- New social media icons, H-Net Services menu and print button
- Moved All Networks up to the top menu.
- We have been discussing removing the media and link tabs
  - We could make them side menu links instead

**Developing new multi-media front page / about page**
- We currently have two home pages
- It’s easy to get lost, hard to find things
- Who is the audience? Subscribers or first-time visitors?
- We want it more visually appealing and inviting (welcome video)
- We want an intuitive presentation of entry points / services
- networks.h-net.org becomes the home page
- networks.h-net.org/h-net becomes a more effective "about" network

**Looking Forward**

In the next quarter we are planning to:

- Fully implement the new editor-training module
- Develop an additional two content hubs
- Begin creating a more welcoming, intuitive user experience, starting with the Commons home page and image manipulation and publication
- Look into other ways to support PDF publishing like Reviews or H-Diplo
- Move from strategizing to implementing new robust teaching resources across the organization
- Continue to expand and professionalize our social media presence
- Continue to monitor networks and search for ways to support latent project ideas
- Consolidate and establish new editorial teams for stagnant networks
- Work towards completing the migration to the Commons