# Exercises for ‘Designing successful digital humanities crowdsourcing projects’, Digital Humanities 2013, 16 July 2013, Lincoln, Nebraska.

## Exercise 1: review a crowdsourcing project

Choose one of the sites below. (Or ask for something closer to your interests - I’ll do my best to think of something relevant.) Have a look around the site and try the crowdsourcing task for yourself (where possible). Note any positive or negative moments during your experience and think specifically about:

* How easily can you find your way from the front page to starting the task?
* What is the core goal of the project? How well is it communicated by the site?
* What input content or information is provided on the site?
* What tasks does it ask participants to do?
* What outputs are produced?
* How are contributed validated?
* Who are their probable audiences?
* Is the site graphic ‘look and feel’ and micro-copy suitable for those audiences?
* Is the 'call to action' clear?
* How closely does the task match the organisational mission?
* What motivations for starting and/or continuing to participate are supported by the site’s design?
* How are participants rewarded?
* Does the site communicate the value it places on contributions?

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| Whats on the menu? Geotagger http://menusgeo.herokuapp.com/ | Geolocating items |
| What’s the Score at the Bodleian http://www.whats-the-score.org/ | Music and text transcription, description |
| Ancient Lives http://ancientlives.org/ | Humanities, language, text transcription |
| Planet Hunters http://planethunters.org/ | Citizen science; review data visualisations |
| Worm Watch http://www.wormwatchlab.org | Citizen science; video |
| Children of the Lodz Ghetto http://online.ushmm.org/lodzchildren/ | Citizen history(sign up required) |
| Trove https://trove.nla.gov.au/ | Correct OCR errors, transcribe text, tag or describe documents |
| Transcribe Bentham http://transcribe-bentham.da.ulcc.ac.uk/ (or if you’re brave, the beta interface is http://w02.benpro.wf.ulcc.ac.uk/td/Main\_Page - give them feedback at https://opinio.ucl.ac.uk/s?s=24510)  | History; text transcription |
| Herbaria@home http://herbariaunited.org/atHome/(for bonus points, compare it with https://www.zooniverse.org/project/notes\_from\_nature) | Transcribing specimen sheets (or biographical research) |
| Powerhouse Museum Collection Search http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/database/menu.php  | Tagging objects |
| Smithsonian ‘Digital Volunteers’ https://transcription.si.edu/ | Transcribing text |
| Reading Experience Database http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/RED/ | Text selection, transcription, description. |
| Family History Transcription Project http://www.flickr.com/photos/statelibrarync/collections/ | Document transcription(Flickr/Yahoo login required) |
| Papers of the War Department http://wardepartmentpapers.org/ | Document transcription(sign up required) |
| Describe Me http://describeme.museumvictoria.com.au/  | Describe objects |
| Brooklyn Museum’s Tag! You’re It http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/tag\_game/start.php | Artworks; tagging (sign up required) |
| Your Paintings Tagger http://tagger.thepcf.org.uk/ | Paintings; free-text or structured tagging |
| If you’re interested in crowdfunding, you can try a slightly different exercise: go to http://kickstarter.com/ and try a search for any one of: library, museum, exhibition, archive, catalogue, catalog. Look for ‘successful’ (fully funded) projects. What characteristics do they have, compared to less successful projects? |

## Exercise 2: design a crowdsourcing project

This is a two-part process. In the first phase, work in small groups to come up with as many ideas as you can, and think through the core of a crowdsourcing project. Draw, sketch, write notes to help share ideas. Be prepared to explain your project to someone from another group.

* What jobs do you need help with?
* What do people like doing with your content?
* How can you bring them together?

When you’re happy you have a range of intial ideas, pick one to take forward in the second phase.

* Come up with the ‘strapline’ for your project
* Describe the task that participants will do with your input content.
	+ Can you make the task even smaller?
	+ Can you provide different tasks or levels of responsibility for different audiences?
* What data is produced in your project?
	+ What's the input? Does it need processing or cleaning first?
	+ What kinds of tasks create that data?
	+ How is it validated?
* Who's the audience?
	+ Which motivations for starting and/or continuing can you appeal to?
	+ How are participants rewarded?
	+ How will you find potential participants?

If you get stuck, look at other sites for inspiration or try re-phrasing your problem. Exercise 3: reviewing your ideas

Each group should swap one person with another group, so that you can explain your project to the new person, and then review it together.

* Does your task feel like a Pringle? (Once you pop, you can’t stop)
* Is the 'call to action' clear?
	+ Will it convert sight-seers into participants?
	+ Where might unnecessary ‘friction’ in your design or processes be removed?
	+ How would you market the project to potential participants?
* Which motivations does it relate to?
	+ What might demotivate participants, and how can you avoid it?
	+ Does it support motivations for starting and for continuing?
	+ Does it offer opportunities for moving up levels?
* How would participants get feedback?
	+ Is the value of their contribution clear?
	+ How will they know they're getting their tasks right?
	+ How are contributions validated?

## References and finding out more

Links and further reading are collected at http://bit.ly/UijNZA

Thank you!

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http://openobjects.org.uk/

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