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Digital Humanists and Big (platform) Shoes to Fill

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On Friday the 27th, I attended a Penn Digital Humanities Forum event, "Crowdsourcing and the Rise of the Digital Humanist." Featuring Ben Vershbow from New York Public Library Labs, Jen Wolfe from University of Iowa Libraries’ DIY History, and Tim Causer from University College London’s Transcribe Bentham, this event provided a space for leaders in digital humanities crowdsourcing to share the products of their labor and the lessons they learned in the process.

After months of thinking about a platform—considering costs, talking about web space, wondering where the money for a server will come from—we have begun to work with staff from the library to incorporate the work of the Manuscript Collective onto Penn’s own library website. To this end, we now have a page: though blank now, we will begin to upload work to this site. Penn will use Omeka, along with a suite of plug-ins, to meet our needs in this online space. In addition,
along with a suite of plug-ins, to meet our needs in this online space. In addition to hosting content and exhibits, we plan to use this website for crowdsourcing: after seeing some incredible work being done by the University of Iowa’s DIY History project to [crowdsource transcriptions](https://www.crowdsource.edu), we plan to use a similar model at Penn. Iowa’s platform and DIY History project are the sum of years of hard work, and while we at the Manuscript Collective do not expect to have a polished project like theirs immediately, we will implement their successful strategies—as Jen Wolfe put it, “Crowdsourcing tip #1: Don’t reinvent the wheel.”