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Picturing Information for Money: Visual Usage in Humanities-based Grant Applications

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Picturing Information for Money: Visual Usage in Humanities-based Grant Applications

A Major Qualifying Project Report:

Submitted to the Faculty of

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

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Degree of Bachelor of Science

By:

__________________________________________

Angelia Giannone

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Approved:

__________________________________________

Professor Jennifer deWinter
Abstract

Incorporating visuals into technical documents functions as rhetorical and document design moves intended to: simplify dense text, draw attention to particular aspects, or convey emotion. Proposal writing literature, however, tends toward content and text-based analysis and production with little emphasis on visual communication. With this opportunity, this study investigates visual usage in nineteen successful National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) proposals to codify visual practices, describe current uses, and recognize opportunities to better integrate visual communication into this high-stakes genre. Results show that proposal writers in the humanities field seem to use text manipulations frequently and effectively, though there also seems to be little consistency concerning the actual form of typographical manipulations for specific purposes. Further, usage of graphical visuals appears to be an underrepresented aspect of proposal writing both in frequency of incorporating visuals and also diversity and complexity of visuals when they are incorporated in proposals.
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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study and the Proposal Writing Process

In November of 2014, I established a relationship with the American Antiquarian Society (AAS), the project sponsor, to pursue a Major Qualifying Project based on proposal writing. I worked with the AAS through the duration of the project until April of 2015 and was tasked with assisting them to write narratives for various local foundations, including the Massachusetts Cultural Coalition and the United Bank Foundation. The second component of working with the AAS involved creating template letters of inquiry for each of their current, three major educational projects and then researching foundations to solicit in order to apply for their grants.

The American Antiquarian Society is a national research library located in Worcester, Massachusetts. Patriot printer, Isaiah Thomas, founded the Society and it is now home to an enormous collection of primarily United States printed material, with some items from the West Indies and Canada, dated from first contact to 1876. As such, their mission is “to collect, preserve, and make available for study the printed record of what is now the United States of America from first European settlement through the year 1876” (AAS Mission Statement, 2004). With this, much of their work involves collecting, preserving, maintaining, and archiving these important artifacts along with maintaining their role in the great Worcester community through educational programming, special events, and so forth; yet as a not-for-profit institution, the AAS must utilize external funding in order to continue their important work.

In researching proposal writing, I worked to narrow my paper topic and ultimately came to realize that the overwhelming majority of scholars attending to proposal writing tend to focus on general factors and helpful tips in text-based communication, rather than visual communication, yet research in professional and technical communication emphasizes the power of visual communication (Moore, 1997; Jacobson, 2000; Mitchell, 2005). Thus, while the current
research highlights quintessential—and often misunderstood or overlooked—aspects of proposal writing, the opportunity to enrich information surrounding proposal writing through the lens of visual rhetoric became clear. As such, I seized this opportunity and create a study that investigates practices of visual usage.

A brief overview of the literature on how to write proposals tends to focus on text-based organizational details (New and Quick, 2003; Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman, 2013), which is evidenced simply by viewing the table of contents for these sources, which highlight the emphasis placed on text from authorities in the proposal writing process genre. Flipping through these books leave readers with little understand about visual communication in this genre or how to employ visuals—if they thought of using them. While I take up a more careful review of these proposal writing guides in chapter one, what is important in establishing my research questions is how visuals are currently portrayed in the literature, if at all.

Before addressing research questions, I define “grant,” “narrative,” and “proposal” and how composition and writing relate to grants and proposals. Boyle, who addresses proposal writing in Skills for Academic and Career Success, defines a proposal as “a document in which you outline a problem or opportunity, define a plan of action to address this, establish your credentials to undertake the task, and propose the deliverable outcomes” (169)—a proposal is the physical (or digital) document that a person or organization may submit to receive funds or other support from, typically, a foundation to solve a problem or seize an opportunity based on contracts, deliverables, plans, and so forth. Grants, on the other hand, are funds from the foundation that an organization may receive if their proposal is approved. The term “grant writing,” then, is a misnomer; people do not write grants, they write proposals for grants, though the terms have converged in discourse and are generally accepted as synonymous (which we can
see even from some of the book or article titles in this paper’s works cited). “Narrative” is the term used to define the section of the grant application that is the main body. Narratives tend to encapsulate the problem statement, institutional context, implementation methods, evaluations, sustainability, and so forth—narrative contents depend on the specific grant application. In general, however, the narrative tends to contain all of the non-form text information, and most importantly, the argument for funding a project is defined in the narrative. The process map in Figure 1 shows a simplified version of proposal writing.

![Figure 1. General Proposal Writing Process Map.](image)

With these key definitions, I will now discuss research questions. Given the opportunity to expand research on proposal writing through visuals (and with a foundation in rhetoric, specifically visual rhetoric) this gap of discourse related to visuals in proposal writing literature seems to carry exigency in the broader context of communication and rhetorical strategy. As such, research questions for this study are quite broad and tend to take a somewhat comparative approach to the duality of text and visuals in document design. From literature in visual rhetoric,
incorporating visuals into documents (when allowed and when appropriate for the context) poses advantages in general document design along with information processing. This is especially true with proposal writing since proposal reviewers often read many consecutive proposals. Visuals provide a break in dense text, they easily signal what surrounding text is dealing with, and they may simplify or even shorten unnecessary and potentially ‘wordy’ text. The research questions are listed below:

- **Classification**: What types of visuals are used?
- **Quantification**: How many visuals are used on average and individually? (Word to visual ratio.)
- **Information**: What information is conveyed through the visuals?
- **Integration**: Are the visuals internal referencing or synthesizing/representing external resources?
- **Layout**: How and where are the visuals placed and discussed?
- **Purpose**: What was the purpose of the visual?

These research questions give form to the structure of this study and, in turn, this paper.

Here, I detail the structure of this paper. In Chapter 2, I provide a literature review about current practices in proposal writing. This includes key-term definitions, gaps in the research, ways in which they relate to visual rhetoric, the visual classification system used in the study, and an overview of the grant application process and good practices. Then in Chapter 3, I detail methods used in the study, which explain selection criteria for the proposal subjects, tabulation and interpretation of results, and methods for ensuring inter-coder reliability. Coding sheets used to record results are found in Appendices A and B. Numerical results and corresponding discussion are presented in Chapter 4, which are organized first according to top-level type of visual—
textual or graphical—and then by major findings within those categories. In Chapter 5, I include a conclusion and discussion of my experience working with the American Antiquarian Society along with sample visuals that I incorporated into their proposals.

Ultimately, I hope to provide an explorative investigation of trends and practices in recent, successful humanities-based proposals written for the NEH. Findings are important across intersections of visual rhetoric, document design, and academic proposal writing—fields that recognize the value of visual communication as a persuasive rhetorical strategy and strive to incorporate best practices. The NEH is the leading foundation in the U.S. for an extensive range of humanities projects (such as digital humanities, education programs, preservation and access, public programs, and research programs), and they, therefore, set standards for communication in this very high-stakes field. This is further evidenced by their compliance with the Freedom of Information Act that requires the NEH to make available sample applications.\footnote{Freedom of Information Act, 5 U. S. C. § 552 (1970 ed. and Supp. V).}


Proposal writing is a high-stakes genre because it involves distributing generally large quantities of funds to individuals or organizations based on a promise of successful return; while this may seem risky, grant funding has enabled great advancements in research and other various educational and cultural settings. As can be expected, much research on good practices in proposal writing exists, focusing on organizational matters, mimicking call for proposals or guidelines language, and rhetorical moves that convey purpose, impact, and audience. Yet there seems to be a gap in research surrounding this field that concerns the usage of non-verbal communication in fields outside of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), which can be a powerful mode of rhetorical communication. This context affords opportunities for meaningful research concerning aspects of visual implementation in the proposal writing genre.

In this literature review chapter, I begin with discussion concerning the importance of proposal writing: who needs grant funds, why, and how does genre impact the proposal writing process? In the next subsection, I provide a general overview of standard proposal application processes. Then, narrowing focus, I attend to good practices in general proposal writing, paying specific attention to defining and conveying purpose, impact, and methodology along with foundation search practices. In the final two sections, I provide a brief literature review highlighting the importance of visuals from rhetorical and design perspectives, and I also detail the visual classification system used in Chapter 3 on methodology.
First, it is important to review definitions of key terms as discussed in the Introduction: “grant,” “proposal,” “foundation,” and writing as it relates to this genre. As previously mentioned, the ever-popular term “grant writing” is a misnomer. “Grant” refers to the award, usually monies, that are distributed from a foundation. A Foundation, then, is a source or organization that funds projects. Continuing, a proposal, often referred to simply as an application, which encapsulates the proposal typically, is the document that contains the proposed project details, such as the narrative; as such, proposal writing is the phrase that refers to the process of formulating the physical document that defines and outlines a project and its supporting argument. The phrase “grant application” is also used frequently to describe these materials—and correctly. A grant application is the application, containing the proposal, submitted to a foundation for a particular grant. “Grant program” is a phrase that is typically used by larger foundations to describe grants that may be awarded to various types of programs. The NEH, for instance, has many different grant programs, ranging from their “Digging into Data Challenge” to “Scholarly Editions and Translations Grants.” This distinction allows foundations to make clear their funding interests, which makes the reviewing process efficient for the foundation and the project inception and proposal writing process more focused for applicants when they have a distinct view of the boundaries of a grant program. Here is a good example that utilizes these definitions: An applicant engages in proposal writing to make clear their argument and purpose, which is part of their grant application to be submitted to NEH’s (the foundation) Challenge Grants program.

Rosenberg’s article in Communications and Mass Media Collection (2011) emphasizes that grant funding is a necessary source of income for science researchers, educational institutions, cultural organizations, and even a single individual’s professional ventures, to name
a few. Clients often seek funding because they want to pursue projects that will have great impact in their respective fields and for the general public but their budgets are too restrictive. Naturally, most proposals are rejected due to the corporation, government agency, or foundation’s limited supply of distributable funds. Choosing between which proposal(s) should be funded when there is such a vast need can be a difficult challenge for the funder, however, numerous proposals are easily rejected because of an author’s lack of strategy and knowledge on the art of proposal writing, partially because proposal writing does not require the writer to have any background knowledge in writing or rhetoric, let alone proposal writing (Goldblatt 1998; Nickson 2012; Rosenberg 2011; Hamper and Baugh 2011).

Experts on proposal writing often provide their analyses for specific fields, typically for education grants, science, technology, math, and engineering (STEM) grants, or they may provide generalized strategies for proposal writing applicable in all fields and for all types of grants. Differences between fields may change some aspects of proposal writing, however, as noted by Carnow in his 2011 article titled “Strategies for Writing a Grant Proposal” in Technology and Learning: “[S]cience establishes truth or finds objective facts. Art uses ideas and emotions to communicate.” Carnow, here, is not so much alluding to the distinctions in information presentation in STEM fields compared with humanities fields; instead, he is highlighting that proposal writing requires collaboration across fields for affective conveyance of information though both facts and abstract concepts, such as emotions and ideas.

Continuing, some professionals investigate the evolution of proposal writing styles and organizations, though those specific topics are beyond the scope of this paper. Tracey’s 1992 article published in IEEE’s Professional Communication, “STOP, GO, and the State of the Art in Proposal Writing,” for instance, explores STEM proposal-specific group writing strategies,
attending to the Sequential Topical Organization of Proposals (STOP, or storyboard) and the Graphics Oriented (GO) techniques. STOP is intended to act as an organizational storyboard for the proposal, while GO promotes “strong visual proofs along with convincing text arguments” (151). Ding’s 2008 paper in *Written Communication* addresses methods of teaching graduate students grant writing; however, Ding attends to National Institute of Health (NIH) grants specifically and bases much of his methodology on NIH’s systems and practices. While these are only two examples of some of the information on grant writing, it is evident that they specialize in STEM proposals as writing is typically considered less intuitive in STEM fields. With Tracey as an exception, many of these articles narrow their scope to text-based moves. In the next section of this chapter, I explore common faults in proposal writing that may lead to quick elimination of proposals during the review process, and general strategies that may be helpful for avoiding these mistakes.

**The Grant Application Process**

The grant application process differs according to foundation guidelines (larger foundations may also have distinct guidelines per grant type); that said, however, there is not great variance in application requirements. Despite these differences, in this section, I detail the application process for the NEH’s Landmarks of American History and Culture: Workshops for School Teachers grant (herein “Landmarks”) (NEH’s guidelines are grant program-specific).

NEH grant applications are submitted online via grants.gov, which is the standard process for federal U.S. grant applications. This process enables all applications to be standardized in a form document, thus eliminating potential errors that accompany online activity, such as

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incorrect file sizes, and so forth. NEH’s grants.gov guidelines webpage outlines instructions for downloading and submitting the application package that encapsulates:

1. **Application for Federal Domestic Assistance - Short Organizational**—This form asks for basic information about the project, the project director, and the institution.

2. **Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs**—This form asks for additional information about the project director, the institution, and the budget.

3. **Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form**—This form asks for information about the primary site(s) at which grant activities will take place.

4. **Attachments Form**—This form allows you to attach your narrative, budget, and the other parts of your application.

5. **Budget Narrative Attachment Form**—Attach to this form only a copy of your institution’s current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement (or an explanation why you are not attaching such an agreement). (2)

Much of this information is text box form data, such as names of the project director and institutions, budgets, and sites, all of which are, again, submitted online via the grants.gov webpage application service. The heart of proposal writing involves the “Attachments Form,” which is where applicants include their “narrative, budget, and the other parts of [their] application,” where the “other parts” generally refers to appendices, letters of support, CVs or resumes, and so forth. The remainder of NEH’s grants.gov instructions document primarily concerns technical instructions for the uploading process.

Before applicants submit their grant application, of course, they must curate their “Attachments Form” documentation. NEH provides a downloadable budget form for
applications, and so the bulk of the proposal writing is in the narrative and “other parts.” The NEH’s Landmarks guidelines webpage includes a section, “How to prepare your application” under section four, which, in part, lists the following components that the “application should consist of”:

1. Table of contents
2. Narrative
   - Intellectual rationale
   - Content and design
   - Faculty and staff
   - Audience
   - Publicity and project website
   - Professional development
   - Institutional context
3. Budget
4. Appendices
   - a day-by-day program of study,
   - detailed reading lists,
   - brief biographies or résumés, and
   - letters of commitment
5. Evaluations. (5-17)

(Budget and Evaluations information tends to be redacted in the sample applications provided by NEH.) Although NEH does not explicitly require applicants to include these sections in their

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3 http://www.neh.gov/content/sample-budget-template-3-page-pdf.
proposals, their sample applications make evident that *successful* applications almost always use this exact language in the form of headings or they, at the very least, use synonymous language or more detailed headings that essentially mimic the above outline. In doing so, applicants not only appeal to NEH readers who may be expecting this sort of structure, but they also ensure that they:

A. articulate their exigency, or urgent need to solve a problem or seize an opportunity, allowing the applicant to emphasize not only *why* they need funds, but also *that* they need funds—and now;

B. explicitly state who their audience is so that NEH can ensure the funds have an impact on a national scale; and

C. establish credibility by describing their faculty and staff, often citing their major accomplishments in the field or explaining their value for the specific project—credibility is further established in the appendix, which, in the case of the Landmarks proposals, almost always include a “reading list/bibliography” that tends to functionally serve as a literature review. (7)

Articulating exigency allows the applicant to utilize the Aristotelian rhetorical appeal of *kairos*, or appropriate timing. This is conveyed via illuminating exigency, the urgent need; in the case of NEH Preservation and Access grants, reviewers may feel an emotional response toward and in favor of an organization that needs funds to implement a preservation program for culturally rich artifacts. The rhetorical purpose of including an audience section appeals to *pathos*, or emotion, and it further appeals to *logos*, or logic. This is accomplished because there must be a logical alignment with the project purpose and audience. The question, then, pertains to the scope of the audience—local versus national level—and if the project is worth funding based on the scope.
Lastly, credibility directly appeals to ethos, or shared character between the applicant and foundation. Ethos is enacted when establishing credibility because it emphasizes common goals, achievements, and values between the foundation/proposal reader and applicant organization. Similarly, the reading list or bibliography accomplishes a similar goal by listing, often in long sets, much of the important literature in a specific field.

In this context, these appeals highlight the ways in which applicants are not only able but are required to use rhetorically savvy moves in their proposals to appeal to their audience, the proposal readers, by simply paralleling their proposal language with NEH guidelines. With this, applicants are able to manipulate proposal readers by replicating the call through verbal communication but with little guidance on how to do so visually. Exigency can be seen literally through photographs that show outdated or overused equipment or through creating a process map that shows how a new technology might be able to streamline a preservation activity. Similarly, applicants can ‘show’ audience by also including photographs or even testimonials.

**Good Practices in Generalized Proposal Writing**

**Defining Purpose**

Before beginning writing, it is important to think about and define the project. Exact details may not be determined just yet, which is okay because it will allow the writer(s) or project manager to tailor the project to the call for proposals or proposal guidelines, keeping in mind that excessive tailoring may breach ethics. Further, there must be a clear need for the funding with included documentation on how the organization has tried—and failed—to replicate at least part of the project, or the applicant needs to explain that funding for building renovations, for instance, has been evaluated and determined to exceed the organization’s scope.
This will help the funder separate applicants who simply would like to use outside funds instead of using their or their organization’s own funds from applicants that cannot execute their project without foundation support.

**Conveying Impact, Methodology, and Justification**

Defining purpose ties in with perhaps the most important factor of proposal writing, which is to convey the broad impact of the project. Proposals requesting grant funds to purchase equipment without stating why the equipment is needed and for whom will likely be denied because the purpose of the grant is to have a significant impact on the field; a primary difference between grants and awards. As Carnow (2011) notes, “grants fund ideas, not stuff,” emphasizing the importance of always answering why. Nickson, in his book *Bids, Proposals and Tenders: Succeeding with Effective Writing* provides the “so what test,” a question that all proposal writers should be asking themselves in every step of the proposal process. Shubird, in his 1997 article “How to Make a Living Asking for Money” also outlines some general questions for the writer to ask her or himself before writing as these questions attend to the general grant request application questions:

- Why is the money needed?
- What is being proposed?
- How will it be managed?

Funders also want to be sure that an applicant’s methods and objectives are justified. This is accomplished by writing a thorough literature review or background on the subject while referencing previous methods or justifying why the organization is using new ones (Goldblatt, 1998). Inclusion of some of these specific requirements, such as the literature review, may be
contingent on the proposed project or application guidelines but the idea of having an explicit methodology and justifying it remains constant across all types of grants. For example, Academy Foundation provides their methodology with justification in their NEH application titled “Academy Motion Picture Oral History Digital Archive – Planning Project”:

Successful oral history programs record interviews from different perspectives, providing a range of insights on a single subject. Multiple points of view allow scholars, students, journalists, and historians to extract material on specific subject matters or events by engaging with how a group of individuals share and interpret past occurrences over time, taking into account faulty memories, personal opinions, reinterpretation, political agendas, and the focus on some details and absence of others. (2)

Searching for Foundations

Once the project idea is established, it is a good time to begin identifying granting sources/foundations. Rosenberg provides a good rule of thumb when searching for grants, which is to start with local funding sources and then move to national grants. The advantage to local grants is that, while they may offer less money, there are probably fewer applicants and the funder may already know about an applicant’s organization. Establishing a relationship with local funders is both easier and also important because local sources tend to share similar goals and aspirations for their community. Applicants seeking to restore historical buildings in Worcester, Massachusetts appeal to funders such as the Massachusetts Cultural Coalition because both organizations’ goals center on improving sites that have cultural value in close proximity to each other; in other words, results are more tangible to local foundations. It is

important to always keep looking for more grants, whether small or large, because there is no
guarantee that a proposal will be accepted, and funds may need to be returned if an organization
is unable to follow through with a project because their overall funding was insufficient
(Shubird, 1997).

Every grant application has a deadline that must be met with little to no flexibility (of
course, this depends on the foundation—some foundations do not have deadlines but instead note
times of the year when their review committee meets; submitting an application accordingly
ultimately may define when successful applications receive funds), bringing great attention to
time management skills, which is common mistake for applicants who read over or ignore
deadlines. This crucial point almost always earns attention from professionals on the proposal
writing process, such as Carnow’s 2011 article “Strategies for Writing a Grant Proposal,”
Goldblatt’s 1998 BMJ article “How to Get a Grant Funded”; Nutt’s 2001 paper “Strategies for
Grant Writing that Turn Plans Into Dollars”; Northcut, Mariesa, and Mormile’s 2009
Professional Communication Conference proceedings “Proposal Writing from Three
Perspectives: Technical Communication, Engineering, and Science”; Shubird’s 1997 article
“How to Make a Living Asking for Money”; and, finally, Van Zant’s 2003 article published in
Leadership. Most of these authors write about grants generally, which speaks to the scope of
necessarily submitting an application on time.

When actually answering questions for the grant application itself, a common mistake is
not following form or genre directions stated by the funding agency. Whether the directions are
merely formatting requirements, they are requirements nonetheless. Not following requirements
exactly may lead to an application being rejected without a second thought. Goldblatt (1998)
places particular emphasis on this point, mentioning that “[a grant] was passed over because it
was ‘not firmly stapled’” (1647). Another common fault is obscurity. It is crucial to be clear, concise, and specific when stating goals, answering questions, outlining a budget, and so forth as possible for a number of reasons: some of grant reviewers are not experts in the field, obscurity could imply that the project is not well defined, and applicants want to be sure that the questions are being answered and without extraneous information (Carnow; Goldblatt; Rosenberg; Nutt; Shubird; Van Zant; Nickson).

The final recommendation concerns budget. Budget enables applicants to directly relate the call to action with fund appropriation. Rhetorically, the budget lists discrete needs funds for specific purposes as stated by the applicant. A poorly designed budget obscures purpose and funding appropriations, signaling to the foundation that funds could potentially be misdirected or that the project is not clearly defined or planned. Nutt recommends being exact with budget quantities and not rounding to whole numbers. This will exemplify to the grant reviewers that the applicant organization has clearly done research on the project and you are not just estimating as estimating, to the reviewer, may imply that the proposer does not actually know what they need for the project. Indicate how the budget is related to the objectives (Van Zant).

These strategies are not all-inclusive as there are other strategies for proposal writing but they tend to vary based on field and funder. In the next section of this chapter, I briefly review the importance of including visuals in all forms of writing, not proposal writing specifically, from a rhetorical perspective and a document design perspective.
Why Visuals Matter: Visual Literacy, Typography, and Ethics

Visual rhetoric applies not only to graphical images but also to text and typography. Further intersections exist in this field with document design. In this section, I discuss the role of the purpose of visual information and visual literacy, typography, and the ethics of visuals. Such factors are important to consider when creating visuals because visuals are a powerful rhetorical tool in communication. Visual literacy, typography, and the ethics of visuals carry great weight in this field because proposal writing is high-stakes and visuals, in particular, are underrepresented in this field. These factors ensure that when visuals are created and used, they are done so meaningfully and ethically.

Elkins, in his edited collection, Visual Literacy (2009), introduces the tension between rhetoric, visual culture, and its increasingly emphatic role in cultures:

Since the 1980s the rhetoric of images has become far more pervasive, so that it is now commonplace in the media to hear that we live in a visual culture, and get our information through images. It is time, I think, to take those claims seriously . . . . It is time to consider the possibility that literacy can be achieved through images as well as texts and numbers. (4-5)

Here, Elkins juxtaposes visual literacy in communication and culture, noting that it is increasingly how we “get our information,” which necessarily means that it is a rhetorical agent in communication. Furthermore, scholars recognize visual literacy’s place in pedagogy and cognition (Fleckenstein, Calendrill, and Worley, 2002; Moore and Dwyer, 1994). From a document design perspective, Hassett, in “Teaching the Rhetoric of Document Design” (1996), discusses the rhetorical role of document design in four major categories: alignment, invitation, credibility, and persuasion. These four elements refer to both the process and also the end result.
of document design as they relate to rhetoric by: presenting a document according to genre and convention, the readability of a document, the credibility achieved (or not achieved) based on document design elements, and the persuasiveness of a document based on elements such as headings. Kostelnick (1996) details supra-textual, rhetorical design, which investigates overall design layouts for the purposes of: “Engendering interest,” “Setting the tone,” “Establishing credibility,” “Creating emphasis,” and “Connoting usability” (26-27).

While this study does not attend to typeface, it is nonetheless an influential factor in cognitive processing; Brumberger (2003b) extends this notion as she cites Warde (1956), noting, “a typeface provides timbre like that of a voice” (208). This emphasizes that there are appropriate settings for certain typefaces, an inappropriate settings for other typefaces; for instance, submitting a proposal in a difficult to read typeface, such as Braggadocio, will not only convey a film noir-like “persona” as Brumberger might say, but it also makes reading a twenty-something-page-long proposal narrative unbearable, decreasing the likelihood of a successful application. Brumberger’s research presented in Technical Communication details studies to assess the persona of typeface (2003), people’s awareness of appropriate typeface (2003), and how typeface relates to reading comprehension (2004). McLuhan, in his article The Medium is the Message, further recognizes the cultural and psychological affect that typeface has on perception (112-13).

Like verbal communication, visual communication is subject to ethical investigation (Amare and Manning, 2012, 88-89). This is most apparent when considering numerical-based visuals such as charts and graphs that can easily be visually distorted; for example, incorrectly labeling a scale can make figures or comparative quantities (as in bar graphs, for instance) appear much larger or smaller, which is ethically unsound. Kienzler (1997) explores ethical issues in
business communication, noting that “[w]hether from lack of skill or intentional ambiguity, creators of visuals can mislead their audience as surely as can creators of text.” Kienzler also lists queries that can be applied to visuals when considering ethical implications:

- Does the visual actually do what it seems to promise to do?
- Is it truthful, or better does it avoid implying lies?
- Does it avoid exploiting or cheating its audience?
- Does it avoid causing pain or suffering to members of its audience?
- Is it helpful?
- Where appropriate, does it clarify text (an analog of reparation)?
- Does it avoid depriving others of a full understanding (an analog of property)?

These questions don’t attend to intention, but rather, they attend to the end result of visual implementation. As Kienzler asks in the fifth question, “Is it helpful?” is perhaps one of the more elusive ethical questions to ask when considering visuals, but it is not unfounded; Kienzler rightfully includes this question in her discussion of ethics because information can quickly become convoluted or distorted by including visuals that are irrelevant to the purpose or surrounding information, but the inclusion of such a visual may distort reader perceptions about what the visual or nearby text conveys.

**Visual Classification System**

A visual classification system is crucial to answering the research questions concerning what visuals can, should, or should not be used for, and why. Instead of using one particular classification, I turn to an amalgamation of various labeling in the forthcoming sections, as defined by Tufte and Robins (1997), Johnson (2014), Harris (1999), and others. Classifying
visuals will make way for an identification process that will, in turn, contribute to the visual assessment. Classification tells us what visuals are being used so that we might contextualize that visual’s use and replicate usage in a similar context. For instance, we might come to see that bar charts are much more effective at conveying quantitative data rather than scatter plots. Comprehensive understanding of the type of visual is useful to determine effectiveness based on characteristics of the visual because each visual functions differently than another, whether simply aesthetically or by means of information communication.

**Relational Visuals**

Relational visuals concern two or three related dimensional variables, including scatter plots, pie charts, line/Phillips curves, bar charts, graphical or pictorial evolutions, and text tables. Relational visuals describe quantitative or qualitative relationships between at least two variables. Their purpose is to show causal or correlative relationships, sometimes with respect to time. Johnson (2014) discusses the use of three types of visuals specific to proposal writing: information graphics (infographics), graphs, tables, and charts. Harris (1999) goes into much greater detail on a broad array of visuals extending beyond infographics but, for the purposes of this study, I will only discuss general visual data types. Definitions for relational graphics are listed below in Table 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition/Purpose</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scatter</td>
<td>Variable dimension plot indicating at least one relationship between two or more subjects. Data points are marked with discrete dots. The purpose is to show how two or more variables relate to each other numerically for a particular set of data points. Trend lines are often used in scatter plots because the data points are minimalist (small dots or shapes). For example, time in relation to values in the stock market.</td>
<td>(Randomly generated data and table I made for this example.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pie</td>
<td>Two-dimensional circular graphic displaying multiple parts of a whole, typically in percentages. Pie charts allow the audience to easily see disparities or similarities in proportions. For example, proportions of 10th grade students in a class who survey their favorite ice cream flavor.</td>
<td>(Plot taken from one of my academic group projects.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line/Phillips Curve</td>
<td>Variable dimension plot indicating at least one relationship between two or more subjects. Data points are marked with continuous lines. Line curves function the same as scatter plots except the data points are non-discrete, which focuses the visual on overall growth. For example, an electrocardiograph (ECG).</td>
<td>(Plot taken from one of my academic group projects.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Bar
Two-dimensional graph displaying a data category on one axis (for example, boroughs in New York) with the second dimension on the opposite axis (for example, gross domestic product [GDP]). Bar charts are similar to scatter plots, except one can show multiple components consistent to the x-axis variable. For example, one can show 4 years with of sales data for 6 companies.

![Bar Chart](Plot taken from one of my academic group projects.)

### Pictorial Evolutional
Two-dimensional or three-dimensional representation. These images can show images of a species’ evolution over time, for example, or with an additional dimension of protein intake. The purpose is to display change using non-numerical data.

![Evolutional Chart](Screenshot from Pettersson 1993, 14).

### Text Table
Two-dimensional matrix of descriptive variable relationships. Columns indicate a new dimension related to the rows. Data can be qualitative or quantitative. Text tables are useful when working with large data sets or a mixture of information, such as in the example with school names on the y-axis and a combination of some numbers and percentages for x-axis variables.

![Text Table](Screenshot from Johnson 2014, 48)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participating Schools</th>
<th>Total Enrolled</th>
<th>Performance Index</th>
<th>% of Black Students</th>
<th>% of Students Living in Parent House</th>
<th>% of Students Receiving Meals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Y</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School Y</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Y</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Client-Focused Statistics, School District X, 2001-2002*

*Note from SchoolDistrict, Inc.*

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*Table 1. Visual Classification System: Relational Graphics.*
Real-Life Images and Pictorial Data Representations

Real-life images and pictorial data representations are any of: photographs, drawings, sketches, or infographics. Photographs, when used in proposal narratives, are likely appealing to *pathos* by showing need or the joy of need being fulfilled. Infographics, on the other hand, juxtapose interdependent images with text; both text and graphic are necessary in infographics. Typically, the text is actual data or highlights implications or meaning of the data. Holsanova, Holmber, and Holmqvist’s (2009) cognitive research on infographics ascertains that using integrated images and text have a significant effect on cognitive abilities, allowing the reader to understand relationships and data easier.

Infographic as a rhetorical strategy allows applicants to utilize text to convey information that may not easily be conveyed via images, while still benefiting from the *pathos*, or emotional appeal of rhetoric, of images, especially photographs or realistic drawings (Scott, 1999, 270-71). Screenshots function most rhetorically as an agent of *logos*, or logic as they are typically used to show a layout or display of a particular computer-based implementation, such as a specific software’s capabilities.

According to this research, I might expect there to be some usage of infographics or a related text-image hybrid, though they require more work to create and are less frequently used as data representations in relation to other typical data visuals, because of their affective cognitive capabilities and flexibility (flexibility meaning components of other visuals, such as axes in charts, are required, whereas infographics have few strict requirements). I suspect that the use of infographics will be among the most interesting results in this study because, while infographics are becoming increasingly popular, they are not the most intuitive to think of using data representations when compared to a more classical chart or graph. I also expect there to be
much usage of screenshots in Digital Humanities proposals simply based on genre as Digital Humanities, by nature, are computer-oriented. Photographs apply closely to the Landmarks proposals and the Preservation and Access proposals. Landmarks would find photographs useful because they could show previous successful teacher workshops, and Preservation and Access applicants might use photographs to show archival or preservation methods that would otherwise consume much text if explained verbally. These visuals are defined below in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition/Purpose</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photograph</td>
<td>Image taken using a camera to show something as it appears in real life. Photos can represent abstract ideals, but that is unlikely in this context.</td>
<td><img src="attachment.png" alt="Screenshot from Pettersson 1993, 226" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing/Sketch</td>
<td>Image drawn by hand that represents at least one object or concept. Drawing/sketches function the same as photographs and with the same purpose.</td>
<td><img src="attachment.png" alt="Screenshot from Pettersson 1993, 226" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infographic</td>
<td>Hybrid visual combining a Real Life Image visual with statistical data and/or text. Infographics can be used for process simplification, data simplification, and so forth as long as the images and text are dependent.</td>
<td><img src="attachment.png" alt="Infographic Example" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Though screenshots are not intuitive forms of real-life visuals, they capture computer activity that is displayed anywhere on the monitor.

Table 2. Visual Classification System: Real-Life Images and Pictorial Data Representations.

**Text Manipulation**

Text manipulation involves altering standard text to become bullet lists, number lists, text boxes, or by bolding, italicizing, enlarging/shrinking text. As Brumberger (2003) notes, typography is so important because we are aware of it—fonts and sizes. Some fonts would be inappropriate for an academic setting and, as such, certain manipulations to text also have their own spectrum of appropriateness based on context. Bold section headings, for instance, indicate that something has changed in the flow of text; the bold catches our attention and signals that the message in bold is important and different than text in regular weight. From a document design perspective, Ganier (2004) refers to headings as a form of instruction prompting, where headings are used to “match intentions with representations” (16).

On the topic of data usage for charts, tables, and graphs, Johnson emphasizes that, “the data must be recent, relevant, regional, and reputable.” Platte (2008) identifies tables and graphs as commonly used visuals in proposal writing, and she also discusses the use of “font styling” in the context of heading along with photographs. As Johnston (2003) discusses, I can further include logos, text boxes, and typeset (for example, bold, underline) to the list of visual
classifications. Though Johnston extends her discussion of visuals in the context of proposal writing to include color and typeface, these factors will not be included as they are beyond the scope of this study. These text-related manipulations are likely to be the most common type of visual in humanities proposal narratives because they do not require numerical data and are very intuitive for essay-centric writers. Definitions are listed below in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition/Purpose</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Bullet       | Text listed with no particular order that usually relates to a claim made above the list. Bullets are used to break up chunks of text into lists. Listed items can have ‘or,’ ‘any of,’ or ‘and’ relationships. | Here are some of my favorite fruits:  
• Orange  
• Banana  
• Grapefruit                                                                                                                                 |
| Number       | Text listed with respect to order that usually relates to a claim made above the list. Similar to bullet lists, numbered lists also break up text into lists ordered chronologically, alphabetically, or to exemplify necessary components (that is, all of). | My to-do list:  
1. Laundry  
2. Homework  
3. Grocery Shopping                                                                                                                                 |
| Bold         | Text that is emphasized by an increase in line weight. The purpose is to highlight headings and titles in digital media.                                                                                             | **Bolded text.**                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Underline    | Text that is emphasized with an underline. Underlined text functions the same as bold text except underlined text is a written convention, though often misused.                                               | Underlined text.                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Italicized   | Slanted text for emphasis. Italicized text is used for names of books, articles, papers, and similar text. As with underlines, italicizations are sometimes misused to represent emphasis.                                       | **Italicized text.**                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Enlarged/Shrunken | Larger or smaller text. Larger size usually indicates a heading or emphasis while smaller text may be used for captions or minor details.                                                                        | “Visual Classification System”  
Table 3. This small-sized text is used to denote a caption.                                                                                                                                         |
| Hyperlink/Hypertext | Interactive text that, when the use                                                                                                                                                                                          | [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)                                                                                                           |
Process Maps and Hierarchical Organization Charts

Explaining a process or hierarchy with words, whether simple or complex, can be lengthy, easily convoluted, and disengaging. In these instances, using a flowchart/process map or hierarchical organization chart can be of particular use when proposal writing. Harris (1999) details a few different types of process charts: operations process, flow process, operator process chart, and the multiple activity process chart (305-07). For the purpose of this study, I merge these process charts into one singular visual classification: flowchart/process map. The flowchart label combines Harris’s process charts into one comprehensive type of chart, which I have further merged into a category with process maps. Process maps, like flowcharts, show a process with respect to chronological organization. The two visuals differ in that flowcharts follow a series of questions that guide the flow whereas process maps follow one set path.

The next visual type borrowed from Harris is hierarchy or simply what Harris calls the “hierarchical organization chart,” which is an organizational chart whose structure depends on “authority, responsibility, ability, status, power, etc.” (186). However, Pettersson (2013) notes
that, in relation to map creation, “[u]sing too many visual variables at the same time makes map reading more difficult” (13); that is to say, there is a point when visuals become rhetorically disengaging or overwhelming. Process and hierarchical organization chart definitions are below in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition/Purpose</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flowchart/Process Map</td>
<td>Indicates thought or action processes. Flowcharts use standardized shapes (and often standardized colors) with respect to order. Process maps don’t typically adhere to standardized shapes/colors but arrows are commonly used to convey chronological order. For example, a flowchart might show the logic flow of a computer program. A process map can show how a bill becomes law, for instance.</td>
<td><img src="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Defense#mediaviewer/File:DoD_Structure_Jan2008.png" alt="Self-made flowchart" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy Map</td>
<td>Shows relationships between data points with respect to order, usually of power. Hierarchies greatly reduce the repetitive language of organization so that it is clear to see ranking among components. For example, a genealogical tree or an institutional hierarchy of authority.</td>
<td><img src="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Defense#mediaviewer/File:DoD_Structure_Jan2008.png" alt="Office of the Secretary of Defense" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4. Visual Classification System: Process Maps and Hierarchical Organization Charts.**

**Time/Space Visuals**

Tufte (1983; 1997) provides extensive detail on visual categorization, usage, and history with examples. For the purpose of this study, I use some of Tufte’s (1983) classifications as categories for visuals, including data maps, geographical maps, time series plots, and relational
graphics some of which we have seen in previous sections. Gantt charts and timelines refer to a visual that must use time to show, in the case of the Gantt chart, various processes and their completeness at a certain date/time or, in the case of a timeline, simply events that have or will have happened at a specified date. A Gantt chart or timeline’s rhetorical purpose is to communication organization and thoroughness of planning to implement the project in a timely manner. Data maps are geographical maps with at least one other variable layer, often corresponding population density. As Muehlenhaus notes, “With developments in technology and data collection, thematic mapping has evolved dramatically from merely being a tool for presentation to also being a useful tool for data exploration and knowledge creation” (1). Further, Muehlenause has identified “four broad rhetorical styles” used to identify data maps and their purposes” “(a) Sensationalist; (b) Propagandist; (c) Understated; and (d) Authoritative” that function according to their style term definitions (4).

However, it is possible to encounter an image that fits none of these categories and, as such, I have included a write-in ‘other’ category in the coding sheet for unforeseen visual types. The lists defined in the various table corresponding to the encompassing visual type is not meant to be a complete list of all visuals; rather, it is a list of common visuals expected to see in proposal writing. Definitions and examples for time series plots, geographical maps, and time/space graphs are in Table 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gantt/Timeline</td>
<td>Two-dimensional chart organized by time/order on one axis and events on the other or, in the event of the timeline, branching off from one axis. Some timelines may be in the form of a text list but Gantt plots always have a standardized form.</td>
<td><img src="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gantt_chart#mediaviewer/" alt="Gantt chart example" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of these charts is to show how events relate to each other with respect to time. As an example, a Gantt plot showing when a series of actions will begin and end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Map</th>
<th>Data displayed on a geographical map. Instead of listing figures in a table or chart, we can easily see how location relates to at least one other variable. For example, we see shades of green indicating population densities in the U.S. by state.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 5. Visual Classification System: Time/Space Visuals.

Defining visuals is crucial for consistency and accuracy when implementing methodology for this study. It is necessary to identify and articulate trends across applications, which determine further recommendations for proposal writing and conclusions. Further, this classification system was used to create the coding sheet in Appendix B, making it easier for coders to collect data for analysis.

**Conclusion**

Through a literature review in the genres of proposal writing, visual rhetoric, and document design, it is evident that verbal proposal writing information is exhaustive and covers many crucial techniques and strategies such as organization, invention, and how to convey audience, impact, purpose, need, and so forth. Further, proposal writing tends to be discussed in
a field-specific context, typically grouping STEM proposals in the same category and humanities proposals in the other. Yet in both of these fields, visuals are rarely attended to outside of quantitative terms, such as numerical data presented in STEM proposals, even though visuals can be powerful agents in communication, especially in the high-stakes, proposal writing field.

In this chapter, I also provided the visual classification system that is used to create the coding sheets for this study with definitions and examples of each type of visual. As such, I grouped visual types into five categories: relational visuals, real life/pictorial visuals, typographical manipulations, process/hierarchy visuals, and time/space visuals.
Chapter 3: Methods

These questions address visual usage generally and are meant to establish a basis for how we can come to understand various aspects—how, where, why (or why not) —of how visuals are currently being used. When further narrowing the scope of this study, I decided to work with humanities-based proposals for a number of reasons:

- Composition is studied primarily by humanities fields (rhetoric, writing, composition), and, as such, the results of this study may weigh heavily on these fields of ownership;
- Humanities proposals may require levels of abstraction that science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) proposals may not require, based on content; and
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) posts many sample proposals for their various grant programs online, which are freely accessible to the public (with the exception of some redacted materials).

With these factors in mind, the decision to study humanities-based grants was appropriate. When seeking sample proposals online, I found that NEH posts sample applications to their website\(^5\) for each of their grant types, ranging from education and preservation to digital humanities grants. This standardized yet diverse set was attractive to select samples for this study. Before selecting which samples to use, I formed a relationship with the project sponsor, the American Antiquarian Society, which I discuss in later paragraphs of this section. Since the AAS is a research library dedicated to collection, preservation, and access of historical documents, I chose to first study grants from NEH’s “Division of Education Programs: Landmarks of American History and Culture Workshops” (nine grants), and then, based on a poor range of visuals from that category, I expanded my sample size to include applications from NEH’s “Division of

Preservation and Access: Humanities Collections and Reference Resources” and “Office of Digital Humanities: Digital Humanities Start-up Grants” and “Digital Humanities Implementation Grants.” This more inclusive sample set allows for some analysis based on humanities subfields; for example, results from digital humanities proposals may differ from the Landmark proposals, possibly signaling field-specific methods of proposal writing.

Background Review

Grant funding is a major resource for many organizations and institutions, allowing them to research, have an impact on their relevant audience, and ultimately promote social/cultural, scientific, and educational progress. However, regardless of how qualifying an applicant’s goals may be, the applicant’s communication of those goals in the narrative is a strong determining factor for whether a project will be funded. Instead of focusing on generally good strategies for proposal writing, in this paper, I attend to how and why visuals, in particular, can—and sometimes should—be used in proposal narratives for humanities.

The use of visuals in proposal writing is an under-studied topic in the field of technical communication and rhetoric, yet visuals can enhance the readability and understandability of text-heavy grant narratives. Some funders and scholars (Michigan State University 1998; “A Guide for Proposal Writing” 2013; Sandelowski and Barroso 2003) recommend the use of visuals if and when applicable, but they do not necessarily discuss actually using visuals. This is especially true for humanities-based grants where visuals such as charts and tables may seem less intuitive or irrelevant to use because the topic of the grant may not correspond to numerical data as a STEM narrative would. However, according to Johnson (2014), visuals can be very useful to help keep the reader engaged and to simplify complex information. Kostelnick and Hassett, in
their introduction to *Shaping Information: The Rhetoric of Visual Conventions* (2003), they nicely sum up the tension between visual and verbal literacy:

> We inhabit a world that relies increasingly on visual language to function, yet the structure of that language remains surprisingly opaque. Visual language speaks to us everywhere we encounter information—text, tables, illustrations, graphs, icons, screens, Web sites, public signs. Unbounded, various, and complex, visual language seems to range freely across a vast informational landscape, its disparate elements lacking any discernable structure. (1)

The purpose of this study is to obtain up to 9 successful National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grants’ Narrative Section that incorporate at least one visual in the application and then analyze them to determine how visuals are used in narratives and how effective they are. While 9 narratives is a small sample size, this study will provide basic insight into how people communicate technically, using visual aids, with the U.S.’s leading humanities foundation. This will allow writers to learn where, why, and how visuals have been used successfully, so that they can incorporate visuals into their own narratives and thus potentially receive more funding. Determining effectiveness incorporates aspects of qualification for these visuals—we may see that some images work better than others at backing the narrative. In assessing effectiveness, the following questions are asked:

- **Classification**: What types of visuals are used?
- **Quantification**: How many visuals are used on average and individually? (Word to visual ratio.)
- **Information**: What information is conveyed through the visuals?
• **Integration**: Are the visuals internal referencing or synthesizing/representing external resources?

• **Layout**: How and where are the visuals placed and discussed?

• **Purpose**: What was the purpose of the visual?

When filling out the coding sheet, the co-coder and I rate effectiveness on a Likert-type scale from 1-6, write in the purpose, and write-in other comments about the visual that may further help evaluate effectiveness or purpose (see Appendix B for the coding sheet).

**Selection Criteria for Three Different NEH Grant Types**

Grants used in the first part of this study were obtained from the NEH webpage titled “Freedom of Information Act Sample Grant Application Narratives.” Under the “Division of Education Programs” section is a subsection titled “Landmarks of American History and Culture,” which contains nine awarded applications. “Landmarks of American History and Culture” education grants were chosen because they are relevant to the American Antiquarian Society, the cultural research library whose educational grants I am tasked with assisting writing. While research libraries did not submit many of these applications, they are still relevant to American history education.

All grants are read for content and then the Cover Sheet (Appendix A) is completed. While reading, project advisor and research assistant Jennifer deWinter and I completed the coding sheets (Appendices A and B) for each application as a qualitative analysis procedure. Listed below are the applicants and their narrative titles as listed on the NEH website with a parenthetical year of when the grant was submitted or when the project is active:

---

6 NEH does not explicitly provide application submission dates. Years were determined by context from the narrative or from the applicant, if provided in the narrative.
Additionally, I used NEH applications from their Division of Preservation and Access and the Office of Digital Humanities grant programs, which are listed in the table below, that I have pre-screened to ensure a diverse array of visual types. Including these two grant types enables the visual analysis to extend beyond simply assessing the types of visuals to now include speculation on whether genre influences types of visuals used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Grant Program</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of Digital Humanities</td>
<td>Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants, Level 1</td>
<td>Creighton University</td>
<td>Mobilizing the Past for a Digital Future: The Potential of Digital Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants, Level 2</td>
<td>University of Nebraska, Lincoln</td>
<td>Image Analysis for Archival Discovery (Aida)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities</td>
<td>University of Virginia</td>
<td>Institute for Enabling Geospatial Scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digital Humanities Implementation Grants</td>
<td>Hope College</td>
<td>Scaling Digital Gaming to Humanities Pedagogy and Praxis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digital Humanities Implementation Grants</td>
<td>Stanford University</td>
<td>Networks in History: Data-driven tools for analyzing relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of Preservation</td>
<td>Humanities Collections and Reference Grants</td>
<td>The Getty Research Institute</td>
<td>The Knoedler Gallery Archive: Processing and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Access</td>
<td>Humanities Collections and Reference Grants</td>
<td>Museum of the City of New York</td>
<td>Illuminating New York City History: Processing, Cataloging, Digitizing, and Rehousing the Museum’s Ephemera Collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanities Collections and Reference Grants</td>
<td>University of Delaware</td>
<td>The Sampler Archive Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanities Collections and Reference Grants</td>
<td>Thomas Jefferson Foundation Inc.</td>
<td>Beyond the Mansion 2.0: Completing a Digital Archive for Thirty Years of Archaeological Research at The Hermitage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanities Collections and Reference Grants</td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Providing Global Access to Penn’s Indic Manuscripts, circa 1527-1930 (bulk 1700-1850)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Office of Digital Humanities and Division of Preservation and Access Sample Proposals.

Along with visual categorization, this study identifies the number of visuals used in relation to text. Since there are many more individual words than there are visuals, it is more meaningful to compare both the percentage of page that is used for each visual and also the percentage of space taken up by all visuals in the grant application. These percentages provide a comparative value for how frequently visuals are used in relation to text and whitespace along with other visuals. Simply recording the number of visuals is insufficient because this study, after all, is analyzing the use of visuals in a primarily written medium. The purpose of this value is to quantify how the frequency equality or inequality between text and visuals. After tabulating the number of visuals on the coding sheet by parenthetically writing in the number next to the visual type check-box, I measured the dimensions of each visual individually using a 12-inch ruler. With these dimensions, I calculated the visual-to-page ratio using the equation below:

\[
\left( \frac{\sum \text{area of visuals in a proposal}}{\left( \sum \text{all pages provided in a proposal} \right) \times (8.5 \text{ inches} \times 11 \text{ inches})} \right) \times 100\%
\]
Defining the number of visuals can be difficult when considering non image-based visuals such as text modification. As such, visuals will be grouped as a whole. Headings, captions, and labels for graphics will count as one single visual, rather than each component counting as a separate visual. For example, a bulleted list will count as one visual as opposed to having each word or each bullet count as a separate visual. Similarly, a single heading will count as a single visual rather than each word in a heading. This rule applies to lists, text modification (including text boxes), process charts, and hierarchical organizations. Visual components to be included—not separate from—in each count of a visual is the visual label. For example, “Table 1: Population Density Map of the U.S.” does not count as a separate visual from the table it is labeling. See the examples below for further clarification.

![Figure 2. Visual with Text Coding Example.](image)

Red boxes indicate that the contents are not considered a singular visual while contents in the green boxes are considered a single visual.

**Visual Integration into Text**

Other factors I investigate are how and where visuals are integrated into the text. Since this study is an analysis of only the narrative section of NEH grant proposals, the ‘where’ component investigates the location of a visual—narrative, general appendix, reading list, or so
forth. This number speaks to the localization or globalization of the visuals and thus contributes to the visual’s overall effectiveness. If the visual is referenced many times throughout the entire narrative, it is clear that the visual has greater global importance, whereas a visual referenced once in a near by paragraph seems to have lesser global importance, for example. However, when determining importance, content and purpose are also taken into account.

They way by which visuals are referenced further contributes to the debate of importance. If there are a couple of paragraphs worth of discussion about the visual as opposed to simply referencing the visual (such as “see Table 2,” for example), it can be assumed that the visual is more meaningful in the context; this visual warrants further discussion beyond a glance. However, extra text dedicated to one visual may be a symptom of inefficient visual usage. For example, a process map with many paragraphs of text explaining the visual is not a good sign, but, on the other hand, process map that is referenced multiple times throughout the narrative may simply be highlighting the important role of the visual for that organization. Again, the same rule applies with determining importance—context is taken into account when determining importance. There is no hard-and-fast rule to help assess importance or effectiveness; rather, a holistic account of how the visual interacts with all other components of the narrative, both textual and visual, must be considered.

**Defining Purpose of a Visual**

In defining purpose of the visuals, I use Bell’s methods in his chapter “Content Analysis of Visual Images” from Jewitt and Van Leeuwan *The Handbook of Visual Analysis* (2001) as a model. In doing so, I created categories hypothesizing potential uses of visuals with parenthetical examples:
• **Support a claim** (photograph of outdated classroom technology that is no longer useful for an institution; potential growth trends)

• **Show a process** (how funds will be distributed)

• **Emphasis** (italicizing text inside a body paragraph; or emphasizing a relationship between data such as calorie intake and obesity)

• **Differentiation** (headings; footnotes)

• **Simplification** (it is often easier and more effective to show a flowchart rather describe it in words)

• **Timeline** (description of events/appropriation of funds that will happen during the course of the project)

• **Mimic language from call** (table of a schedule)

• **Other** (anything else not described previously)

Note that visuals may fall into one or more of the above listed categories. Determining which category or categories a visual falls into is dependent on interpreting the visual in relation to its context (surrounding words and visuals).

I also investigate the surrounding context and visual integration into the text for both content and apparent frequency, as mentioned in the previous sections. Determining the purpose of a visual in useful to help future grant writers know that they can use visuals (unless specified otherwise by the foundation, of course) and they will have some insight on how, where, and why they should use meaningful visuals. When used correctly, visuals can be crucial to conveying the message, purpose, and need for grant funding. Complex processes, for example, can become clear and simple when a process chart is used, rather than writing explanatory paragraphs, especially when considering word limits. Even using bold, italicized, or underlined headings can
help break up large chunks of text, allowing both the writer and readers to hone in on the purpose of the following text and it will stick out in the reader’s mind so that important points won’t get lost in dense text.

**Inter-Coder Reliability**

Rater reliability ensures consistency among raters along with insurance that the study can be replicated. As part of maintaining inter-rater reliability, Coppola and Carliner (2011) detail their norming session process for their study on peer-reviewed technical communication literature. This process helps determine if there are any identifiable issues that need to be addressed within the classification system or the coding sheets. As such, I have followed their similar norming methods. Data norming occurred when coding the first two narratives together using protocol analysis. Prior to this, however, I employ Madill and Shirley’s (2000) method of inter-rater reliability, in party, by training myself and deWinter to recognize types of visuals and ways in which purpose can be deduced (4). This was accomplished through familiarization with the coding sheet, visual classification system, and proposals as general rhetorical documents. The section of the coding sheet (below) shows its alignment with the visual classification system.
Figure 3. Coding Sheet Alignment with Visual Classification System.

We planned for a norming session after three more narratives were coded independently until we noticed that none of the sample narratives used any sort of non-text manipulation visuals, aside from one logo included in an appendix. Instead of continuing with the norming session and then coding the remaining narratives, we decided to code each of the narratives together and discuss the patterns we saw as the narratives employed very similar manipulations with text.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I described the methods I employ during this study so that the sample subjects are within the scope of this project and are also somewhat representative of humanities-based proposals, and results are meaningfully assessed. Sample grant categories are chosen based on their parallels with the AAS and diversity within humanities broadly; as such, NEH sample proposals from Division of Education, Office of Digital Humanities, and Division of Preservation and Access are considered. Obtaining samples from the NEH specifically is due to ease of access (freely available online) and because the NEH is the leading humanities granting
agency in the U.S. and are thus representative of highly polished proposals in this field.
Assessing visual usage in proposals is important because grant funding is very high-stakes and is often the means that allows innovative research and projects to be conducted. Research questions broadly attend to classification, quantification, information, integration, layout, and purpose.

In this context, purpose is defined as supporting a claim, showing a process, emphasis, differentiation, simplification, timeline, or other unforeseen attributes. Prior to obtaining results, deWinter and I ensure inter-rater reliability through training sessions; following, we conduct norming sessions and engage in protocol analysis-like dialogue during coding. When tabulating results, I attend to both quantity of visuals in a proposal along with the size of the visual relative to the number of pages provided in the sample application.
Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

In this chapter, I present quantitative results alongside discussion of the rhetorical implications for the results. First, I present major findings in typographical visual results and discussion before moving to major findings in graphical visuals. In doing so, I consider the following questions:

- Where are visuals located?
- What types of visuals are used?
- How are visuals used?
- What is the purpose of these visuals?
- Does genre (grant category) influence any of these factors?

These questions provide a general understanding of how visuals are being used in humanities-based proposals and why, and the answers ultimately establish a basis for the direction of future research in this field.

Results from each of the three studied NEH grant application types—Landmarks of American History and Culture (Landmarks), Office of Digital Humanities (Digital Humanities), and Division of Preservation and Access (Preservation and Access)—are listed in text tables on the following pages, separated by type of visual: textual or non-textual; from there, results are further divided by major findings in those categories. Prior to the results, however, is a key table that lists abbreviated names for the institutions (below). Background colors in the results code table are indicative of the grant program to which they belong: Blue for Preservation and Access; Orange for the Digital Humanities; and green for the Landmarks grant program. This color code
is also used in the results table since all institutions are consecutively listed on the y-axis for the visuals. Discussion is included alongside results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results Code for Institution Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Getty Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum of the City of New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Delaware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Jefferson Foundation Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creighton University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nebraska, Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7. Results Code for Institution Names.*

**Text Manipulation Results**

The table below contains tabulations of all of the text manipulation results for each proposal along with totals and means for each grant category. Cell values tell the number of times that the visual appeared in the narrative. These counts only consider the narratives, not appendices, with the exception of the Mass’s text boxes as Mass is the only applicant in this sample set that uses text boxes, which are found in their schedule appendix. Boxes with a zero
count are shaded in light grey while boxes with at least one instance of the specified visual are shaded in light green. The standard NEH budget form is not included in table counts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Typographical</th>
<th>Lists</th>
<th>Tables and Boxes</th>
<th>Citation Convention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>(\square)</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>B+I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getty</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penn</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creighton</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amherst</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Category Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;A Totals: 70 34 56 89 0 21 0 0 0 5 0 21 89 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH Totals: 79 0 55 5 0 0 0 9 0 4 4 0 2 43 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landmark Totals: 214 28 72 46 14 14 3 13 2 6 0 6 2 15 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Category Averages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;A Averages: 14 7 11 18 0 4 0 0 0 0 1 0 4 18 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH Averages: 16 0 11 1 0 0 0 2 0 1 1 0 0 9 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landmark Averages: 24 3 8 5 2 2 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 2 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8. Text Manipulation Results.

The following bulleted lists detail the medium value for the total number of text manipulations per grant category. This value is important to help avoid data skewing from outliers, such as Delaware’s heaping seventy-three bold and italicized text manipulations.

- Median for total number of text manipulations:
  - Landmarks: 13
  - Preservation & Access: 5
  - Digital Humanities: 2.

- Average based on grant category totals:
  - Landmarks: 30
  - Preservation & Access: 26
  - Digital Humanities: 13.

As is evidenced from this table, certain text manipulations seem to be more popular than others; for instance, bolded or italicized text is used by almost every application, whereas text boxes and block quotations are used by almost none of the applicants. This signals that applicants tend to find manipulating text format as a more rhetorically savvy method to focus readers’ attention rather than using spacing restrictions that manipulate position rather than typography.

**Overview: Landmarks Grant Category Comparatively Uses the Greatest Quantity of Text Manipulation Results**

The “Landmark” grant category tends toward the highest total number of text-based visuals with a few exceptions; however, when considering averages—more representative
numbers as there are approximately twice as many Landmarks grants considered than the other two grant types—the Preservation and Access averages a total of seventy-seven visuals while Digital Humanities only averages forty visuals and Landmarks averages forty-nine. Medians for each category are much lower though, which take outliers into consideration. These data are relevant to consider when addressing whether genre influences visuals. While genre may yield certain visual results, it is important to consider the extent to which applicants mimic grant application guidelines and other sample applications, especially for text visuals, such as headings, schedules, and so forth. Genre as an influence on patterns in text manipulation is indicative of standards and conventions within that field. For instance, Landmarks is the only grant category whose applicants use bold and underlined text primarily as headings.

Proposal Structure: Visuals Mimic Language & Structure of Grant, Highlighted by Heading Text Manipulation

The value of a well-organized document enables ease of skimming information and clarity of major objectives and points; this is especially true for proposal writing in which readers for most foundations are charged with reviewing hundreds if not thousands of proposals in relatively short amounts of time. Williams and Spyridakis (cited in Beer, 2003) emphasize the significance of well-organized documents and passages, which is often achieved using descriptive headings that typographically manipulated such that the document is able to be skimmed efficiently and is representative of the main arguments and points, noting:

[R]eaders of well-organized passages generally agree on the relative importance of different pieces of information contained in them and prefer passages that are highly
organized to those that are not, perhaps because the structure of such passages is easier for readers to discern. (110)

As I discuss in the following sections below, each narrative emphasizes heading titles in different typographical formats, from altering the text appearance to numbering or lettering sections, which becomes confusing and difficult to synthesize results. Despite differences, the table below outlines formatting convention for each narrative with examples for clarification.

While some narratives employ manipulations that are unique to this set, we can see some trends in text manipulation across headings, in general, and fewer trends across specific headings (main, sub, or appendix). Every narrative uses bold either as a standalone manipulation or in conjunction with another manipulation: capitalization, lettering, numbering, italicizing, underlining, or even italicizing and lettering. This trend indicates that bold seems to be visually effective at catching the reader’s attention to highlight that, following the bolded text is a new section or topic.

The ways by which applicants formatted their faculty lists are diverse. Even though faculty names aren’t necessarily headings, many of the applicants design them as headings and it is a noteworthy convention. Every applicant incorporates some combination of bolded font, with the exception of the Kentucky. This is peculiar because they use bolded font for their other headings, as we see in the table above. While it may seem as though Kentucky may be inappropriately under-bolding, many of the other applicants are tending to over-bold by bolding every name, heading, and sub-heading. As a result, applicants are obscuring organizational hierarchy and presenting information in such a way that may be hindering to the reader and objective of using text manipulations, which is to organize and highlight information in a meaningful, consistent manner.
There are similar trends of bolding, underlining, or italicizing staff/faculty names. Again, bolding faculty names seem to be counterproductive when main heading names and often faculty/staff title sub-headings are also bolded (see the figure below for examples of faculty/staff typographical manipulation methods). As we can see as well, one-third of applicants use underlining as a manipulation, despite its role as a typewriter convention. However, its usage might speak to improper or a lack of training in document design hierarchies, or perhaps a cultural shift instigating an expansion of our database of text manipulation techniques (Manovich 2001, 242).

Figure 4. Example of Text Manipulation Results (Typographical) for Faculty/Staff.

Two-thirds of the applicants discuss their faculty and staff in line with text so as to continue the flow of a cohesive sentence, as opposed to including a name with an appended colon followed by text that then describes the person. While this technique is stylistic and was likely implemented without conscious doing, it creates both the literal visual appearance of and meta sense of unity and almost informality between the faculty/staff. When a name is presented as a heading, that person becomes separate from their description, and therefore separate from the group to which they belong, as a whole.
Text Manipulations in Digital Humanities

Consistent among all of the narratives is typographical text manipulation, though the narratives sometimes tend to implement these manipulations inconsistently, and Ford (2004) recognizes inconsistencies in headings, if included at all, as trend in composition across a range of fields. That is, there is no one set convention that the narratives followed in terms of marking a section heading by simply bolding, for instance; instead, writers for each narrative chose how to mark text by underlining, italicizing, capitalizing, bolding, or any combination of these methods. Some applications also chose to incorporate different fonts in various locations of their narrative.

Interesting to note, some of the narratives deviate from titling their sections with the NEH’s language to include more or less descriptive headings, or simply synonymous headings. NEH “Landmarks” program guidelines, for example, provides an outline of sections that should be included in the narrative:

- Intellectual rationale
- Content and design
- Faculty and staff
- Audience
- Publicity and project website
- Professional development
- Institutional context. (5-7)

Each application also employs variations in subheadings, both in terms of typographical manipulations and also content and description. It is also important to note that there is no
mention of visuals, images, photos, videos, or any type of media in the program guidelines page or elsewhere on the NEH website.

Headings, however, are not the exception to the wide range of differences in text across the Landmarks applications. Applicants utilize different fonts, font points, and manipulation techniques to call-out text in line with paragraphs. This is especially evident in the ways by which Landmarks applicants detail their faculty and staff as displayed in the examples below that take the first two paragraphs of faculty and staff sections for Ford, Amherst, and Chicago, respectively. Blue boxes highlight the heading format; red boxes highlight the faculty or staff’s position; and green boxes highlight the faculty or staff’s name.

Simply by looking at the box positions on the page without even reading the text, it is clear that each applicant arranges sections differently—some paragraphs are formatted as bulleted list deviations, whereas other applicants take an inline, discussion-based approach where faculty and staff are discussed in continuous prose rather than modular blocks akin to bullets.
In short, the main consistencies across the Landmarks proposals are general heading names, some aspects of appendices (as discussed in later sections), and that nothing else is consistent, whether considering other subheadings, textual manipulations, and so forth.

**Text Manipulations in Preservation and Access**

Similar to Landmarks, NEH stipulates required topics that applicants must address in their proposal narrative. As such, headings in all of the Preservation and Access applications reflect these guidelines by including the following main headings with little if any deviation:

- Significance
- History, Scope, and Duration
- Methodology and Standards
- Sustainability
- Work Plan
- Dissemination
- Staffing

Though each application includes these headings, some applicants changed the language slightly by tailoring to their specific project, and every application includes various subheadings that are also project specific. Both the main NEH-based headings and the subheadings are formatted differently and may be bolded, underlined, italicized, larger point font, capitalized, and so forth, which is consistent with trends from the Landmarks category.

As mentioned in the previous section on Landmarks, applications vary and are inconsistent with text manipulations with respect to every aspect of document design. The figure below shows the first two paragraphs of staff sections from Delaware, Getty, and Penn. Analysis
and box coloring indicate the same parameters as in the Landmarks example (blue for heading, red for position, and green for name).

Figure 6. Example of Text Manipulation Results (Organizational) for Faculty/Staff.

Again, judging from the location of boxes in each of three examples, each applicant uses their own design style even in a relatively non-specific topic such as faculty and staff. That applicants do in fact employ some form of text manipulation seems to be the only consistency across all proposals; however, the various types of manipulations employed differ across applications, regardless of genre. Further similarities are drawn between Preservation and Access and Landmarks in that some of these sections are formatted similar to how a bulleted list might be, while others opt to use longer, prose-like paragraphs to list faculty and staff; while this example is confined to faculty and staff sections, this pattern of difference among text manipulations firmly remains across all sections of each proposal. One of the most obvious differences in this example is the discrepancy in text length, which, in this context, signals the extent that applicants feel they need to justify their choices of faculty and staff.

Much unlike Landmarks proposals where every proposal included an appendix section, only some Preservation and Access proposals include appendices. This is likely attributed to the genre of proposal, as there are many different subcategories applicable to Preservation and Access grants, whereas Landmarks is specific tailored to educator workshops; with this in mind, some Preservation and Access proposals that do have appendices tend to use them to show
digitization software features or processes while other applicants simply do not need that level of specificity for their projects.

Text Manipulations in Digital Humanities

Digital Humanities houses many different grant types, and selections for this study were taken from four different categories, listed below with the number of proposals I sampled from each section:

1. Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities (1 proposal)
2. Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants, Level 1 (1 proposal)
3. Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants, Level 2 (1 proposal)

NEH Guidelines stipulate different requirements for each grant type that are too exhaustive to detail for the purposes of this paper; however, it is worth noting that these proposals follow the same trend regarding headings and design that were apparent in Landmarks and Preservation and Access proposals—typographical manipulations remain inconsistent with the exception of paralleling sections and included information with NEH guidelines; however, since I have sampled two Implementation Grants proposals, I will compare them to illustrate this claim by comparing their list of participants in the figure below, which is a required component for this application. The same color scheme is applied in this figure as in the previous sections where blue boxes surround headings, green surround names, and red surround positions.
The figure above shows only a snippet of two lists of participants, but this list is nonetheless predictive and representative of patterns in the remainder of the sample proposals. The colored boxes highlight differences in organizational methods and document design; the first is organized with subheadings indicative of title, whereas the right-hand image uses a number list for each person, though names in both proposals are listed according to highest position.

Lost Lists: Bulleted and Alphanumeric Lists Are Underemployed or Inconsistently Employed

Bullets are a visual form; according to Kostelnick and Hassett (2003), they are rhetorical, “structural cues” that allow readers “quick access to specific information” (100). Regardless of their benefits, there are only ten instances of bulleted lists in all nineteen reviewed proposals, many of which are used for different purposes. This is evident when accounting for Landmarks proposals alone:

- Amherst uses bullets to outline activities in their narrative schedule, and they use bullets in their appendix to list primary source document links;

- Mass uses bullets to list out comments from previous workshops, and to list thematically-related questions along with primary source documents in their appendices;
• Davis uses bullets in their appendix to list components of scheduled activities; and
• Montana uses bullets to outline workshop goals in their narrative.

The one common denominator amongst these narratives is listing primary source documents in appendices, which could be to lessen the typographical manipulation overload—bolding, italicizing, and underlining are not necessarily appropriate manipulations for these purposes, and much of the narratives and appendices already heavily use headings, so bulleted lists are a good way to present these items. Again turning to NEH Guidelines, it can be inferred that this lack of bulleted lists is due to page limitations. For example, the figure below is a screenshot from SUNY’s proposal where, in the first paragraph of the introduction, there is already an opportunity to employ a bulleted list to make the list of landmarks (in lines five through eight) easily accessible to proposal readers so that they do not get lost in these long blocks of paragraph-style text.

**Introduction:** This NEH Landmarks workshop will bring together schoolteachers, public historians, and scholarly experts for two weeklong programs focusing on Rochester’s iconic 19th century technological, economic and reform landmarks. Through field trips, scholarly presentations, and seminar-style discussions, participants will examine the complex nature of historical change as expressed in landmarks such as the Erie Canal, the Broad Street Aqueduct, the Susan B. Anthony House, the nearby Seneca Falls Women’s Rights National Historical Park, and others. Teachers will visit these

![Figure 8. Example of Text Manipulation Results Showing Text that Could be Modified Visually.](image)

Few applicants use in-text lists, meaning that they occur in whole sentences without being blocked into a list separate from the paragraph to which they belong. Similar to the bullet lists, these numbered lists are used for a variety of purposes: listing field sites; readings and primary source documents; workshop goals; assessment periods; essay questions; instructions; and audience criteria. Contextually, none of these lists indicate order as a component, and the
applicants are therefore using lists incorrectly, whether they be numbered or lettered lists. So, what is the purpose of using ordered lists? Some of these narratives use bullet lists, which is the more appropriate option in all of these cases, but why then switch to a list type intended to imply order? The answer is unclear, but a possible hypothesis is that the applicants used this technique as an attempt to save page space (twenty-page narrative limit), whereas bulleted lists necessarily cannot be used inline with text appropriately or affectively. Certainly, the applicants could have simply omitted the numbering or lettering, leaving only semicolon distinction between list parts, though that could be convolution for lists with long strings of text.

This is also why we see greater freedom in appendices—NEH does not limit the appendices by length, only content, which allows the narratives to exceed thirty and even forty pages in total length. Total narrative length is actually much longer than what NEH provides on their website because a good portion of the material is redacted, including financial material. This is demonstrated clearly in the Kentucky’s narrative, for example, which, using numbers to list their main section headings, it begins with number 2 for the grant narrative.

**Unlimited Space: Appendixes Support Multiple Visual Forms**

Many—but not all—of the sample proposals include an appendix section, which tend to both be lengthy and also include many non-text manipulations, such as images, screenshots, graphics, and so forth. It is likely that applicants choose to put such visually rich information in their appendix section because they are allotted more pages in the appendix (DH Implementation Guidelines stipulate a ten page maximum, for example), and because NEH guidelines explicitly say “If applicable, include wireframes, screen shots, or other project schematics” in the appendices for DH Implementation grants, for examples. As such, appendices house some of the
more diverse visuals across all of the proposals, including process maps, flowcharts, pictures, screenshots, data maps, and so on.

**Schedules**

Landmarks proposals are required to include schedules while the other two grant categories are not necessarily required to, and as such, this section focuses discussion on Landmarks proposals. With respect to schedules in appendices, Amherst is the only applicant from the Landmarks section that uses a traditional text table, which is defined by the usage of lines/boxes around related elements. Given the twenty-page limitation, this table is located in their Appendix A, (partially reproduced below via screenshot) because it is exemplary of a cohesive, well-designed schedule. The image shows the days of the week, names, and titles are italicized, and general activities as bolded and sometimes capitalized, which is a mostly affective design for this application. The schedule is somewhat overwhelming, but days, times, activities, and locations are clear.

![Figure 9. Example of a Well–Done Schedule Table.](Image)
Even though the CT does not use block lines in their workshop schedule, also located in their Appendix A, spacing and organization makes clear days, times, “landmark site,” “theme,” “guiding question,” and “reading.” Part of the schedule is copied below (via screenshot). Days are bolded, capitalized, and centered; landmark sites, themes, guiding questions, and readings are bolded and underlined, and the times and remainder of text corresponding to the four components of each day appear in plain text.

| SUNDAY | 3:00-5:00 PM | Registration |
|        | 6:00 PM     | Welcome & Performance by Gullah Gullah Singers |
|        | 7:00 PM     | Reception hosted by the University of Connecticut |

| MONDAY | Landmark Site | African American Tour of Savannah and First African Baptist Church |
|        | Theme:        | Sounds and Traditions: The Sacred World of Black Slaves |
|        | Guiding Question | How is religion reflected in music, art, storytelling, and literature? |
|        | Reading       | They Shall Be Called Names: Exports on Religion from the Georgia Lowcountry and West Africa, 1733-1850, Enikene Clarke |
|        | 9:00 AM       | Opening session, Dr. Robert Stephens |
|        | 10:00 AM      | Discussion |
|        | 10:30 AM      | Break |
|        | 10:45 AM      | Conflicting Theologies, Dr. Enikene Clarke |
|        | 11:45 AM      | Discussion |
|        | 12:15 PM      | Lunch |
|        | 2:00 PM       | African American Tour of Savannah |
|        | 4:00 PM       | Pin Point Museum |
|        | 5:30 PM       | Dinner (on your own) |

| TUESDAY | Landmark Site | The Pinckney Center, St. Helen’s Island, SC |
|         | Theme:        | Sounds in Time and Place: The Plantation and the Prarie House |
|         | Guiding Question | How did black-white interaction affect cultural creation and production during the antebellum and post-bellum periods? |
|         | Reading       | A Sense of Self and Place: Unwinding My Koinos Cultural Heritage, Dr. Enikene Campbell |
|         |              | "Koinos in the Wilderness: The History of Shell in America," Art Rasmussen |
|         | 7:15 AM       | Bus Departure from Ellis Square for Pinckney Center |
|         | 8:30 AM       | Tour: York W. Bailey Museum and Pinckney Center grounds |
|         | 10:30 AM      | Break |
|         | 10:45 AM      | A Sense of Self and Place, Dr. Enikene Campbell |
|         | 12:00 PM      | Gullah Lunch |
|         | 1:30 PM       | "Down by the River", and Other Spatially, Ron Davis |
|         | 3:00 PM       | Bus Departure from Pinckney House |
|         | 4:00 PM       | Bus Departure for Savannah |
|         | 6:30 - 8:30 PM | Group Project Work (Magnolia Room) |

**Figure 10. Example of a Schedule that Would Benefit from Revisions.**

Unlike Amherst’s schedule, it is somewhat difficult to correspond times and components of each day in the left-hand column with the respective information in the right-hand column. The inclusion of textbox lines can make reading a schedule easier because grouping lines are explicit and there is no obscurity between left-hand and right-hand columns.

Each Landmarks application, for example, is required to include a narrative, mandated by the NEH application guidelines. However, only some of the applications present their schedules (always found in the appendix) in a table-like form where there are distinctive columns and rows.

65
Others who did not use this form instead present their schedules with actual bullets, in bullet-like form, or in continuous paragraph form. Montana’s schedule is most like a text table because it uses bold and italicized features for days, times, and topics, along with tabbed information cascading, but it lacks the discrete quality of table schedules and instead uses continuous sentence structure—as do the other two applicants.

Differences between table and non-table schedules are a stylistic choice. Davis presents their “required readings” in the schedule whereas many of the other applicants include reading lists as a separate appendix. Further, Davis did not included times in their schedule, making the general content structure less rigid than we would see in a table. However, they do use language indicative of relative time, with terms such as “Late Afternoon,” “Evening,” and “Lunch,” but they are not consistent with this language each day. It is likely that Davis (and Ford, who has an even less time-descriptive schedule) had not yet worked out timing details when constructing their narrative application.

All Landmarks narratives include a section titled “Content and Design” that functions in the main narrative as a detailed schedule that is meant to be supplemented by the schedule in the appendix. I have divided narrative content and design sections into three categories: those that explicitly reference days of the week in a heading-like manner (always with a variation of text manipulation on the day of the week) (6 narratives); those that discuss days of the week in flowing paragraphs (without manipulating days of the week formatting) (2 narratives); and those that do not mention days of the week at all (1 narrative).

Page limits are, of course, to be considered when assessing applicants’ motives behind schedule design; almost every narrative, sans appendices, meets the page limitations regardless of schedule style. Montana, the one Landmarks applicant that did not describe their schedule in
terms of days of the week, alternatively used bullets to outline workshop objectives, and
described the “workshop structure,” “curriculum projects,” “required and optional reading,” and
the “benefits” in paragraphs. As such, the schedule in their Appendix A is very detailed with
times, days, locations, and descriptions of activities. NEH guidelines for the Landmarks grant do
not specify design for this section or a necessity to include a detail of each day in the narrative
itself. Further, Montana uses bullets and other headings so as to not simply write up dense
chunks of text—each subsection of their content and design is no more than a one-half page in
length, and they also use line breaks to create white space between paragraphs, providing some
relief to the reader.

While Montana’s section on content and design is not great, it is much more effective
than the two narratives that do not use text manipulations for headings. As we can see in
SUNY’s narrative, there are over eight pages of paragraph text without hardly any white space
(no line breaks except to start a new paragraph) and no headings. It is easy for readers to feel
overwhelmed and lost in the mass of text that definitely should have been broken up with
visuals. Similarly, Kentucky has over five pages of the same dense paragraphs, although, after
the five pages of pure paragraphs, they do include two headings over the span of about three
pages, one of which contains information about readings that could have easily been bulleted out
to create a more rhetorically effective section both visually and textually.

Of the remaining six Landmarks narratives, half employ text manipulations—headings or
simply bolding, underlining, or italicizing days of the week and including titles for that day (for
example, “Welcome and Orientation”)—to break up the text. Ford only underlines days of the
week that are included not as headings but as sentence subjects, which is improper use of
underlining, and it is not effective visually or rhetorically as the underlining is hardly noticeable.
The other two of these three applicants, Amherst and Davis, use bolded days of the week headings with titles for the days, as mentioned above. In particular, Amherst also employs bullets in most of their day sections with a couple of italicized words explaining that bullet, such as “Object Workshop” or “Poetry Workshop,” which is both visually elegant and effective. Sadly, Davis only highlights days of the week headings with bold and italicized text that is less useful.

Remaining are the three Landmarks narratives that textually manipulate days of the week and either use other nested headings to simplify reading, or they use white space to help separate components. Notably, Chicago bold and underlines their days of their week headings, and then bolds the components of those days, such as topics, questions, and activities. This formatting is shown in the figure below (screenshot).

![Figure 11. Example of Text Manipulations that Represent Hierarchical Organization.](image)

Chicago certainly has the most efficient narrative schedule of all nine applications, but it could have been improved by using tables, bullets, or text boxes because they rely heavily on bold text, and they also underline text.

CT uses white space via line breaks to separate out each day’s theme and guiding question, but these elements become somewhat lost in the text because they do not manipulate
the subheadings; instead, they italicize the actual guiding question and place quotations around the theme title. Mass creates an italicized heading inline with the text for assigned readings, but rather than listing the readings with bullets, they list them in sentences, which is still quite convoluted.

Textbox

The only instance of text boxes is in the Mass’s Appendix A schedule, which are used to group the “Activities/Schedule” as shown in the figure below. (Note: their schedule also included bulleted questions under the heading “Framing Questions from Crossroads Theme” for each day except in Sunday’s example below). Further, this schedule also uses colored text, which we do not see in any other narratives. I commend the Mass for using textboxes, even though I would typically recommend they use a text table for schedule; however, given the lengthy program descriptions, textboxes are appropriate in this application. From a design perspective, it would have been all the more pleasing had the Mass grouped all components of each day in its own heavy-weighted line box, though, because the text box separates the “Activates/Schedule” from the framing questions and from their corresponding days.

![Figure 12. Example of a Text Box (Schedule).](image-url)
Establishing Expertise: Citation Conventions, Block Text, Hyperlinks, and Hypertext

Landmarks is the only grant category whose applicants use block quotations. In some of the narratives (not including appendices), applicants include evidence of citation convention, and, while citation convention is not a rhetorical move so much as formal guideline, some narratives purposefully use citation conventions incorrectly—namely, ignoring line length requirements for block quotes (for example, Chicago style calls for quotes at least five lines in length to constitute a block quote). Such a move is directly visually rhetorical, especially when we see instances in the same narrative where some very short quotes are blocked while others aren’t. Hyperlink underlining, footnotes, and italicizing Latin words and certain titles, which are at least in part used across all three grant categories, are used but they are strictly conventional and therefore not subject to rhetorical analysis.

Interestingly, almost all of the Landmarks proposals that use block quotes—and only Landmarks proposals use block quotes—do so exclusively in their “Intellectual Rationale” section—except for CT, who has a block quotation in their “Faculty and Staff” section. Rhetorically, placement of these quotes seems to be a move in the three narratives that directly highlights and addresses the question of importance for the specific workshop that attends to its respective specific historical context. It’s as if the narrative writers are telling the reviewers to look at this very important thing that some extremely historically significant person said—it’s the “Explain the significance of the selected landmark(s)” NEH guidelines for the Intellectual Rationale section. CT, on the other hand, places a praising staff quotation at the very beginning of the “Faculty and Staff” section, which is powerful because it speaks to the previous success of
the workshop. Further, the content of the quotation supports the program’s credibility, and acting as the block quotes discussed in the other narratives’ “Intellectual Rationale” sections.

Kentucky uses block quotations correctly—all of their blocks are at least five lines in length, and they place shorter quotations inline with the text. Davis and CT, on the other hand, only uses one block quotation each. Davis’s is actually only four italicized lines of Bret Harte’s “What the Engines Said.” This poem does not meet the requirements for MLA or Chicago style block quotation length because it does not exceed four or five lines in length when typed. Similarly, CT’s quotation is only two lines in length. Therefore, Davis and the CT are using citation convention as a rhetorical move. In the case of Davis, it is to emphasize the impact that the formation of the transcontinental railroad had on American culture, and thus providing historical credit to this workshop. Ford replicates this same technique: They pull quotations that do not meet block quotation length, even though they leave some quotations in paragraphs, because it enhances their credibility and the historical credibility of the President Lincoln’s assassination through rhetorical information design.

The College at Brockport/SUNY italicizes two words in their Intellectual Rationale section (“logic” and “ideology of progress” [3]), and the Mass bolds landmark site names in Intellectual Rationale, and they italicize and underline a word in both “Institutional Context” (“only” [19]) and “Project Website” sections (“connected” [20]). These are emphasis moves, where the author is placing particular value on the weight of these words. It is interesting to note, however, that the Mass is inconsistent with their manipulations, which can be confusing to the reader particularly when viewing underlined words as underlining might signal hypertext as it does in the Davis’s narrative. Similarly, Delaware tends to bold and italicize many words in text for emphasis, which is shown in a sample paragraph screen shot from their narrative below.
These examples, however, are not unique to their grant categories; this type of typographical manipulation appears in many different places in most of the applications, regardless of genre.

Given that Davis’s narrative actually exceeds the NEH mandate by one page, it is no surprise that they have chosen to overlay hyperlinks in text in their narrative section (11). Regardless of intent, Manovich (2001) would argue that Davis was attempting to make their narrative interactive by allowing it to travel through multiple “trajectories” (227). Further, as Boy (cited in Barrett 2003) notes that hypertext “allows the user to easily branch to pieces of text that are not directly related in a hierarchy” (511). Rhetorically, we can see that new media is intersecting with professional proposal writing—but at what cost? We should contemplate, at the least, the benefits of integrating hypertext in the applications of linking to Davis’s primary source database website and a database of photographs (although the link from the NEH narrative is broken so I can only deduce from context).

**Landmarks of American History and Culture: Reading List and Reference Appendices**

All of the nine narratives include a schedule in the appendix, but there is great variation concerning the inclusion of a separate (not listed in the narrative or in the schedule) reading lists (consisting of primary and/or secondary source documents) and a bibliography/references/works.
Appendices such as these carry their weight in visually rhetorical value because of their visual length. Results are listed in the table below, where “X” indicates the existence of the appendix.

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<th>References?</th>
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<td>Ford</td>
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<td>Kentucky</td>
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<td>Mass</td>
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<td>Montana</td>
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<td>SUNY</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>X (1 page of primary source documents)</td>
<td>X (2 pages)</td>
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<td>CT</td>
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<td>X (4 pages)</td>
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<tr>
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Table 9. Text Manipulation Results for Reading Lists and References (Landmarks).

Overall, the overwhelming majority of applications (eight in total) include a reading list, while only one-third of applications have a works cited page. Others do not have these materials or they are integrated in other parts of the application—often in the schedule or narrative.

Generally, these appendices tend to be relatively extensive in length, with an average of 4.4 page-long reading lists and 3.3 page-long references. While both of these appendices vary in length, they serve the same rhetorical purpose: to prove credibility through numbers. Each of these institutions must prove to the NEH that there is a high standard of education in their rigorous courses, which they achieve by requiring dense, historical readings; the institution
proves that they are qualified and credible in the fields of American history and culture, and that their teacher workshops are serious and valuable.

**Graphics (Not) Galore: Images, Charts, and Maps Possibly Limited by Page**

**Requirements & Guidelines**

Results for the graphical, non-textual visual manipulations are in the table below. As with the text manipulation visuals, the cell values indicate the number of times that the visual appears, including appendices; however, in this table, only totals and averages are included per grant category as so few applicants used ranges of visuals, if any at all. Appendix counts were included because most the visuals tend to appear in appendices, likely because NEH institutes page limit requirements for their narratives. Without including appendices in the counts, far fewer visuals would be listed, which would hinder the study further.

As we saw in the text manipulation visuals section, institution cells highlights represent the respective grant programs, while numerical cell highlights easily differentiate whether an applicant included a particular visual (grey indicates no instances of the visual, and green indicates at least one of the visual).
From this table, it is evident that few graphical visuals are employed across all grant categories. Additionally, some visuals, such as the Gantt chart/timeline and geographical map, are category-specific. Again, it is essential to keep in mind that these results may result from proposal writers following guidelines or other sample grants. Preservation and Access and Digital Humanities both have the same numerical totals and averages: fifty-three total visuals and eleven average visuals per application. As discussed in an earlier section, many of these visuals appear in appendices, likely because of NEH’s instituted page limitations.

**Visual-to-Page Ratio**

As an alternative to counting the number of visuals, the table below calculates approximations for the area of each visual per proposal in inches, based on a standard 9 ½ X 11
sheet of paper. Page numbers for each proposal were individually added, omitting pages that were not designed or written by the applicant; for example, NEH standard budget form, curriculum vitae/resumes, and letters of support.

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<th>Jefferson</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Hope and Stanford partition the largest percentage of their pages to visuals comparatively, both reaching over ten percent. These two applicants belong to the Office of Digital Humanities grant programs, and, as noted in the previous table, their applications include ten and eleven screenshots along with a few other graphical visuals. NEH dictates on their Digital Humanities Implementation Grants Guidelines webpage (2015) that appendices may “include wireframes, screenshots, or other project schematics,” which is why these visuals tend to appear in appendices without worry of exceeding page limitations (10). (Similar to the Landmarks of American History and Culture Grants Guidelines, Digital Humanities Implementation Grant narratives may not exceed ten pages in length, hence the visual concentration in appendices [7]).

Chicago has the lowest visual-to-page percentage but this is because they only have one visual, which is a logo. Discounting Stanford, Hope, and Chicago, the outliers of this data set, the average percentage of visuals is approximately four percent, while the average of the whole set is a little over five percent, which is a very low considering it only accounts for applications that have graphical visuals—about half of the original data set. These values indicate that current

Table 11. Results of Area Per Graphical Visual.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual Number</th>
<th>Getty</th>
<th>NY</th>
<th>Delaware</th>
<th>Jefferson</th>
<th>Penn</th>
<th>Creighton</th>
<th>Nebraska</th>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Stanford</th>
<th>Chicago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS:</td>
<td>55.75</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>47.25</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>179.5</td>
<td>379.5</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Pages:</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Areas:</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>2244</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>2898.5</td>
<td>2992</td>
<td>2711.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual-to-Page %:</td>
<td>2.98%</td>
<td>4.73%</td>
<td>2.53%</td>
<td>2.67%</td>
<td>4.49%</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
<td>13.09%</td>
<td>11.13%</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

practices in this field tend to exhaust text-based communication and give only slight attention to graphically visual communication, meaning that some information, notably emotional (such as through photographs) or physical (for example, maps and documents), is lost because of the limitations of written words. Further, such dense text is possibly taxing on NEH proposal reviewers as the overwhelming majority of these sample proposals meet, if not exceed, narrative page limitations without considering appendices, letters of support, budget information, and the like. As an alternative, foundations that have word limitations rather than page limitations may see more visuals, and as such, these foundations may receive more affective proposals (assuming an increase in visuals).

Of the all the sampled proposals, there are only two instances logos, one of which is located in the Chicago Architecture Foundation’s appendix (shown below).

![Chicago Architecture Foundation Logo](image)

**Figure 14. Example of a Logo Used as a Graphical Manipulation.**

Logos in NEH forms (such as the budget form) are not considered for the purpose of this study as NEH employees, not the applicants, design them. While this images carries all of the logo representation for all nineteen proposals, it is composed primarily of text, with only one red, non-text dot, making it a very weak visual that contributes little to the value of the application.

*Data Map, Icon, Screenshots, and Process Maps . . But Only to Illustrate Software Affordances*

Getty is the only applicant that incorporated one instance of a data map in their proposal. The purpose of this visual is to illustrate the value of digitized data, processed by a software, in making connections between archived artifacts. Bowers (2011) writes of the value of interactive data maps, stating that they “can convey a more contextual and integrated understanding” (3).
Figure 15. Example of a Data Map.

Additionally, that this image was included in the narrative, not an appendix, however, is evident of its broad value to the proposal as a whole (though Getty’s proposal doesn’t have an appendix).

The icon is another instance of a one-time visual, used in Creighton’s proposal (shown below), and it is displayed in an appendix section.

Figure 16. Example of an Icon.

The purpose of Creighton’s proposal is to gain funds for digital archaeology; with this goal in mind, this visual likely would have been better suited in the narrative rather than appendix. Yet this graphic ultimately shows that tablets can be used for archaeology. Honeywill (2010), an expert on icon design, might agree that the actual design of the icon (an excavating tool) seems to clearly state the objective and purpose of this graphic. But again, this graphic is used simply to illustrate an affordance of technology, which is less meaningful in the context of this proposal compared with other visuals found in Creighton’s proposal that show, for instance,
archaeologists using tablets while researching, or if Creighton had included visuals, likely screenshots, of software that showed how this technology helps archaeological processes.

Nebraska and Hope both incorporate process maps into their proposals; Nebraska uses many process maps (and very appropriate; see Figure 17) while Hope only uses one, and it is in the form of a table (Figure 18).

**Figure 17. Example of a Well–Designed Process Map.**

**Figure 18. Example of a Process Map in the Form of a Table.**

Nebraska’s process map is concise and includes three graphical images inside of each process map as opposed to Hope’s process map, which is a table with lots of text that doesn’t include any graphics. Although Barrett, Levinson, and Lisanti (2001) write on process maps for web design, they note that process maps illustrate “the process of clearly mapping out the [project’s] ‘big picture’” (23). Further, Heinrich, Henneberger, Leist, and Zellner (2009) argue, “the analysis and the reorganization of processes are essential prerequisites to improve the efficiency of
Both sources illustrate important factors about process maps—that they illustrate the “big picture” of a process, and that they are used to make procedures efficient—yet, considering a table as bulky as in Figure 18 as an efficient process map would require a redesign so that multiple processes are first broken up into separate visuals as Nebraska does in their proposal, and it also would require much simplification of text and perhaps some graphical visuals to further improve efficiency.

Applicants also use screenshots with relative frequency generally to show webpage or software affordances (see Figure 19, Stanford; and Figure 20, Jefferson, below for examples).

Figure 19. Example of a Screenshot (Software Affordance)
These screenshots, while still visuals, tend to focus not on higher-level thinking, as is the case with process maps for instance, but instead tend to concern end results. As such, they function as material evidence that, in the case of Digital Humanities, often shows how their newly designed tool can be used to make a process efficient or expand on a process; in the case of Preservation and Access, the screenshots show either process simplification or preservation tools along with the value of access in digital media, such as the Internet (see Portewig, 2008; and Brown and Chao, 2010; for screenshots as evidence).

**Photographs Establish Credibility, Importance, and Materiality**

Photographs, most commonly found in Preservation and Access proposals (and sometimes in Digital Humanities proposals, also typically for access purposes), act as a means to establish credibility and importance for organizations. By showing these images, applicants are conveying to the proposal readers that *their* artifacts are important, beautiful, and that everyone should have access to them because of their cultural significance.
Figure 21. Example of Photographs as Established Credibility

![Image of photographs]

Figure 22. Example of Photographs as Established Credibility

The images above are beautiful, representing historical and cultural expressions within the humanistic tradition. Yet as can be seen, these images appear fragile. In their introduction to *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, Edwards and Hart (2004) reflect this idea, noting:

> It is [an artifact] that carries on it the marks of its own history, of its chemical deterioration (‘the sepia print had faded’), and the fact that it once belonged to a broader visual narrative. . . the pages of which were. . . repeatedly handled as they were turned, re-enacting its narrative in many different contexts. (1)

This quotation signifies the inherent value in the images found in these proposals that the applicants are attempting to convey; a particular sense of materiality exists in these cultural artifacts that suspend moments history. The images themselves “belonged to a broader visual
narrative,” which is also part of their significance. Further, by preserving and making available these artifacts, applicants are showing that these moments in history can and should be accessible by all audiences, even though people viewing the artifacts digitally can’t actually touch or feel the original version—but it access may tempt visitors to learn more about history or even travel to libraries and other institutions that house these artifacts.

The overwhelming majority of photographs (for example, Figure 21, Delaware; and Figure 22), then, are images of important cultural artifacts whose applicants would like to preserve or make available digitally. This purpose is different than what we might otherwise expect photographs to be used as (see Mitchell, 2005; Scott 1994). This is because these images don’t reflect emotion or convey a message outside of the artifact having general cultural capital and that they are meaningful and should be shared with the world as a close second to the physical materiality that these artifacts possess in their true form.

**Absence (Doesn’t) Make the Reader Grow Fonder**

One of the most apparent findings in this study is the lack of visuals generally and the lack of diversity among included visuals specifically. As Table 10 shows, applicants only logos, icons, photographs, geographical maps, screenshots, process maps, Gantt chart/timelines, and data maps. While this list may seem sizeable, there are almost no instance of relational visuals—scatter plots, pie charts, line/Phillips curves, bar charts, pictorial evolution graphics—with the exception of text tables, and for real-life images, there are only photographs and screenshots, omitting drawings/sketches and infographics. Hierarchical maps also aren’t used, though hierarchies were occasionally represented through other visuals, usually text manipulations such as headings, that imply hierarchy, and there also aren’t flowcharts. However, applicants do use
every form of text manipulation visual. Even when graphical visuals are used, in many instances, the visuals are heavily dependent on text or they don’t reflect high-level though processes, such as including many photographs in a proposal only to establish credibility and show importance of that institution’s cultural artifacts. Surely, including visuals for that purpose is meaningful when done a couple of times, but applicants that used those visuals (photographs) tended to only use those types of visuals many times throughout their proposals.

The absence of visuals, especially the absence of almost any type of relational visual, illuminates that graphical visuals are broadly underused in this field. Further, Figure 8 exemplifies only one instance (among countless) in which visual usage in replacement of text would have provided a stronger and more powerful means of communication.

Conclusion

As the previous section explains, visuals, in general, are underused or are used for very low-level purposes, such as photographs that establish credibility or screenshots that show affordances of technology. Further, many visuals included in the visual classification system were not used at all, which signals that proposal writers may not know that they can use visuals or they don’t know how to create/use visuals in this field. Nebraska’s proposal, however, does include a relatively diverse range of visual types, and Nebraska uses visuals somewhat frequently; as such Nebraska’s proposal should serve as a model for good practices in this field.
Chapter 5: Integrating Visuals Into American Antiquarian Society

Proposals and Conclusion

American Antiquarian Society’s Interactive Performance Proposal

Working with this project sponsor, the American Antiquarian Society (AAS), afforded the opportunity for me to apply knowledge I gained from research on proposal writing and visual integration in this field. I began by formulating written short response answers for a proposal to the Massachusetts Cultural Coalition (MCC). This proposal sought funds to create Worcester, Massachusetts’ first cultural district that would unite many organizations in Worcester, such as the AAS, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester Center for Crafts, and others. Upon completion of this project, I began working on a proposal related to their K-12 programming, namely AAS’s *Isaiah Thomas—Patriot Printer* online curriculum that may be accompanied by a live, interactive performance.

Each year, the AAS brings a professional actor to each fifth grade classroom in Worcester along with many other surrounding K-12 institutions to perform as Isaiah Thomas, the patriot printer, in an interactive play: *Isaiah Thomas—Patriot Printer*. Each year, student and teacher feedback highly praises this event as many of these students’ families live below the poverty line or are not native English speakers, restricting their resources to cultural events and performances akin to *Isaiah Thomas—Patriot Printer*. As a research library, however, a significant sum of their funding for projects such as this—a yearly special event for students at no cost to the educational institutions—comes from grant funding.

In order to continue providing this opportunity in the classroom, the AAS seeks grant funding from primarily local foundations with which they have established relationships, in this
case, the United Bank Foundation. One opportunity I saw to incorporate visuals into the proposal for *Isaiah Thomas – Patriot Printer* was a process map to detail this unit’s progression (see the figure below).

![Figure 23. AAS: Visual of Isaiah Thomas Proposal Unit Process Map.](image)

With this process map, proposal readers are easily able to see both the ways in which the online curriculum supports the performance and also the purpose and importance of these two sources. Another challenge involved conveying this unit’s alignment with the Common Core Standard. Explaining this parallel in the text was unnecessarily lengthy and thus warranted a concise visual as shown below. This visual, however, concisely summarizes what teachers are encouraged to do in order to prepare students for the performance so that they are able to get the most educational and cultural value out of the performance.

![Figure 24. AAS: Visual of Isaiah Thomas Proposal Alignment with the Common Core Standard.](image)
Rhetorically, this visual calls out and makes clear an important factor for foundations when considering funding educational programs—alignment with the Common Core Standard. This is important because it highlights the program as one that has firm educational value and structure.

The final graphical visual that I implemented in this proposal was the five photographs shown below. The first is of the professional actor in character with American History artifacts house at the AAS; the second is an image of a primary source document available at AAS’s online curriculum for this unit; the next two photos are action shots of the actor performing in a classroom; and the final photo is of the audience, fifth-grade students, who are enjoying the performance.

The rhetorical purpose of including these images is to establish credibility for the actor and the AAS by showing the level of professionalism involved in this performance. The primary source document highlights the educational value of this unit as teachers are strongly encouraged to
work with students in the classroom so that they have experience with primary source documents and are primed for the performance. It also reflects the AAS’s mission of preserving and making available these important artifacts from American history. Further, images of the interactivity between the actor and audience along with the joy on the students’ faces illustrate that this event is fun for the children, and it is an environment where they can learn and laugh.

**Conclusion**

The Landmarks sample narratives exclusively used text manipulation visuals, with the exception of one logo used in Appendix A of Chicago’s project narrative, which is a graphic that still relies almost exclusively on text. Mass incorporates text boxes in their appendix, which is a visual that none of the other applicants use, though it is essentially a text manipulation. The narratives, when including the appendices, are over twenty pages in length of primarily dense text, which undoubtedly could—and should—be reduced by including visuals. Surely this data is relevant nonetheless, but it also raises some important questions in rhetoric, narrative composition, and the broad field of humanities on the usage of specifically graphical visuals (that is, visuals excluding text manipulations):

- Are grant writers formally trained in their institutions?
  - If so, what are writers taught?
- Do grant writers know that they are allowed to use visuals in narratives?
  - If so, why are there consistently few, if any, visuals used?
  - If so, what rules of visual rhetoric or document/information design are they taught or do they focus on?
These questions, generally pedagogical in nature, are fundamental to interpreting the data and determining where the apparent problem lies in proposal writing. I use the word ‘problem’ because neglecting to use visuals, especially in the encapsulating field in which visuals are studied, implies that rhetorical discourse is limited in design and content, and that visuals are ultimately not useful or appropriate in this context. Additionally, there is a trend of inconsistency in the textual visuals, such as in textual modifications to section headings (for example, bolding, italicizing, underlining).

Graphical visuals, when used, are found primarily in appendices. This is, in part, due to adherence to NEH guidelines, which call for visuals to be placed in appendices when appropriate. Screenshots and photographs account for the majority of visuals found in all proposals, perhaps due to their ease of implementation compared with visuals that require higher-level thinking and organization such as process maps. Interestingly, many graphical visuals found in Preservation and Access proposals were generally images of significant artifacts relevant to the applicant’s archival goals. Preservation and Access was also the only grant category whose applicants employed data maps and geographical maps, which is peculiar in the case of the data maps as such a visual might be expected in Digital Humanities proposals. Digital Humanities was the only grant category whose applicants used process maps and Gantt charts. This result is logical for process maps because the Digital Humanities proposals involved computer-based actions. However, these visuals are, again, located in appendix sections and therefore have limited rhetorical value due to disconnection between the primary narrative and appendices, which, by default, historically house somewhat detached or extraneous information.

Results from this study strongly suggest that visuals are widely underused in humanities-based proposals, which can be attributed to a number of factors: applicants attempt to mimic
language or guidelines instated by the NEH or applicants may be under-trained in implementing visuals rhetorically. As a result, many of the proposals were comprised of highly text-based information that sometimes lacked clarity and were overwhelming. Future researchers may be interested in investigating causes of visual under-usage with the hope of informing proposal writers on potentially useful strategies of visual implementation to earn grant funding.
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Appendix A: Cover Sheet for Each Application

Applicant:

Date of application submission (if applicable):

Total number of non-text visuals:

Total number of textual visuals:

Purpose of the application (1-2 sentences):

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Name of the grant program:

______________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B: Visual Coding Sheet

Each application receives an individual coding sheet to accompany the Cover Sheet

Proposal Title: _____________________________ Coding Date: ________________

Coded By: ________________________________

Visual Classification (check all that apply to describe the image):

Relational Graphics: □ Scatter □ Pie □ Line/Phillips Curve □ Bar
□ Pictorial Evolution □ Text Table

Real-Life Images: □ Photograph □ Drawing/Sketch □ Infographics
□ Screenshot

Text Manipulations: □ Bullet □ Number/Letter List □ Bold
□ Underline □ Italicized □ Enlarged/Shrunken
□ Hyperlink □ Hypertext

Process Charts: □ Flowchart/Map □ Hierarchy

Time Series Plots: □ Gant/Timeline □ Data Map □ Time/Space Graphic

Other (write): ________________________________

Purpose (write 1-2 sentences):
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Is there internal or external referencing: □ Internal □ External

Where is it referenced (write in the section headings):
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Number of times it is referenced throughout the grant: _____

Summary (1 source) or synthesis (multiple sources): □ Summary □ Synthesis
Explain the effectiveness rating (1-3 sentences):

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Additional comments (not required):
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________