A Catalyst for Social Activism: The Digital Black Bibliography Project
DiBB’s goal of diversifying the digital canon

“We need to reinvigorate the canon that we, as digital humanists, are constructing, a canon that skews toward traditional texts and excludes crucial work by women, people of color, and GLBTQ community. We need to reinvigorate the spirit of previous scholars who believed that textual recovery was crucial to their work, who saw the digital as a way to enact changes in the canon.”

“Whereas the universal scheme is rigid, unresponsive, and impersonal, the special bibliography is flexible, sensitive, and intimate. Whereas the former lacks any specific object, the latter is clearly focused on a definite need. If the reader can be handed an appropriate subject bibliography, he will not be confused; he will be enlightened. He will be glad to acquaint himself with its particularities, since those particularities will be the essence of his problem.”

-Raynard Swank, 1944.
By transforming printed bibliographies into more granular data, we can identify, with greater precision, the boundaries and coverage of these works and better understand the thematic and spatial dynamics of black cultural production. While not primarily aimed at comparison, the tool also enables us to see where approaches overlap and diverge.
Librarian/Archivist-Bibliographer

Primarily responsible for the stature of Howard University’s Moorland-Spingarn Collection as a premiere collection on African American history (1930-1973).

Passion for sharing the legacy and history of African Americans scholarship.

Dorothy Porter Wesley (1905-1995)
Educator-Social Activist-Bibliographer

3-Principles of eBlack Studies

- Cyberdemocracy
- Collective Intelligence
- Information Freedom

Professor Abdul Alkalimat, Professor Emeritus of African American and Library and Information Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
Traditional bibliographer
Promotes scholarship by African/African Americans that is comparative and seeks a space in the Western canon.

VS

Activist bibliographer
Afro-centric perspective that centers knowledge by and about Black people that is expansive of the depth and breadth of their historical and literary production, providing a sense of intellectual agency on its own merit.
AFRO SCHOLAR SCHOLAR

[Image 1 of 4]

[Image 2 of 4]

[Image 3 of 4]

[Image 4 of 4]
Unique Features

Dorothy Porter Wesley’s
A Catalogue of The African Collection

- Traditional format for books-author, title
  publisher, and year
- Bibliography is narrow in scope
- Covers publications by and about Africa,
  separated by 6 regions, then countries
- Subject breakdown
- Materials listed include books, pamphlets,
  periodicals, and newspapers
- Only covers titles located in Moorland's
  Collection at Howard University
- Each entry also includes a consecutive number
- Unique characteristic functional/usefulness-
  includes the cataloging numbers for locating
  items within the Moorland Collection

Abdul Alkalimat’s
Afro-Scholar Newsletters

- Traditional format for books-author, title
  publisher, and year
- Bibliography wide in scope, covering books
  and articles by and about Africans/African
  Americans
- Changing topics and formats regularly
- Art work, calendars, photos, quotes
- Dissertations in progress
- Professional Activities
- Upcoming Conferences
- Fellowships/Awards/Competitions
- Study and Travel
- Job Announcements
- Local Highlights
- On the Newsletter

@pontiac10 | @sp_meta | @amyeetx | @MadBiblio
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Want to learn more about the collaboration? Come to our talk on Friday at the Texas Digital Humanities Consortium.
Works Cited
