

This is a transcript of the video clip “The Impetus and Reason for the DALN” from the interview with Dr. Cynthia Selfe in Samuel Head, “A Scholarly Legacy: Professor Cynthia Selfe and the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives” published in *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 22(1), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/22.1/interviews/head>.

Sam:

What made you think up this idea of digital archive?

Dr. Selfe:

I'm not real certain exact impetus for the idea, but I do know that when I came to Ohio State University, just about 10 years ago now, one of the things that was happening in our culture was the Story Corp project for NPR. Right? So I knew about that project, and I also knew that our profession did not have a central repository or even a public repository of narratives about literacy practices, values, understandings, experiences, activities, that everybody in the profession had access to. So we had no shared resource that we could use to examine literacy and to understand collectively what we were looking at or talking about.

So I was a very small University, Michigan Tech in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, right upper peninsula right there, and Michigan Tech is right up right up at the very top right. So and it had moderate resources available for faculty, and certainly because it was an engineering institution humanities faculty have even more moderate resources. When I came to Ohio State, I knew I was going to a large flagship institution with a lot more resources and resources available to humanists in English Studies. And also knew that I was going to a place where there were people like Louis Ullman and Scott DeWitt, Kay Halasek and Nan Johnson, Beverly Moss, Brenda Brueggerman, all of whom had an interest in what I would call literacy -- and Graff, Harvey -- and so to me it seemed a natural activity to want to study literacy. I already like stories I just like telling them and I like listening to them.

And I wanted to put the resources of the University behind a project that would benefit the entire profession, something that would give every English teacher, every student of English access to narratives about literacy, so that literacy could be studied more systematically and so that we could have like a common corpus like linguists do. Linguists often operate out of a common corpus, and we didn't have a common corpus of literacy narratives, so I wanted to build one. I wanted to make it available to the profession for the benefit of the profession.