

The Department of Anthropology

presents

On the Value of Scholarly Information Technology Designed by and for Scholars

Christopher J. Mackie, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Tuesday November 3, 12:15 150 Anthropology

Higher education institutions routinely deliver technology services to their faculty that are designed, built, owned, and governed by others, whether enterprise IT professionals, academic technologists, computational scientists, or outside vendors. Would arts and humanities scholars work differently, and perhaps better, if scholarly technology services were designed—and owned, and governed—by and for those they were intended to serve? What institutional and scholarly resources and commitments would such projects entail? Beyond faculty, which other, prospective stakeholders should also be included: librarians; computational scientists; departmental or central IT staff; others...? Over the past decade, the Program in Research in Information Technology (RIT) of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has conducted an intensive philanthropic effort to explore these and other, related questions, resulting in more than 50 funded software projects which have grown to an aggregate capitalization of approximately \$250m, achieving a current user-base of thousands of higher education institutions and tens of millions of faculty, staff, and students worldwide, supported by more than a dozen commercial vendors ranging from IBM to small, higher-education-specific firms. Mackie will provide an overview of RIT's activities and review selected, currently funded projects, focusing particularly on projects directly supporting the delivery of shared technology services in support of research, teaching, and learning in the arts, humanities, and cultural heritage domains. His analysis will focus on two primary issues—the strategic importance of shared technology services for the arts and humanities in an era of scientific “cyberinfrastructure” projects; and the institutional, departmental, and personal benefits, costs, and risks of participatory software development—with the intent of facilitating discussions among audience members about the value of engaging with such “community source software” projects.

Christopher J. Mackie is Associate Program Officer in Research in Information Technology at The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. He holds Ph.D. and Masters degrees from Princeton University, a Masters degree from the University of Michigan, and an A.B. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A computational modeler by training, he has also published in the fields of regulatory theory, social research methods, and energy, education, and health policy. His most recent academic work involved the application of advances in social and affective neuroscience and psycholinguistics in order to model the emergence of human identity; in the furtherance of that project, he spent several years teaching computers how to feel. Earlier, Mackie held management positions in corporate healthcare as well as non-profit information technology, and served as an I.T. consultant to domestic and international NGOs.

**Please RSVP to Kathleen Fowler anthropo@uwyo.edu or 6-5136 by October 30.
Lunch will be provided.**