Ten rules for humanities scholars new to project management

derived from 16 years' experience as a digital humanities
PM/design editor/lead architect/PI and department director

1. Choose wisely. Do you really want to do this, and for how long? What contribution/important intervention is this project making?

2. Don't assume you need a grant. How much can you get done without one? (You'll be in better shape to ask for targeted support later.)

3. Seek partners, not services. Seek collaborators, not staff.

4. Draft a brief vision-document, make a mock-up, or otherwise set victory conditions. Iterate and refine with your partners, then freeze it.

5. Set clear internal milestones and issue tracking procedures ("This Project Powered by OCD") and state your big-picture deliverables/goals publicly (shame as PM's motivator).

6. What does sustainability mean to you/to this work? Secure stewardship agreements, embrace ephemerality as appropriate.

7. Foster community (users, developers) through small-scale publicity in just the right venues. Foster serendipity by communicating outside your comfort zone.

8. Enable decision-making on the part of every team member. Make clear and final decisions when needed. (Keep up momentum, keep up morale.)

9. Be the buffer for administrative and financial distractions.

10. Give all the credit away. But make it clear to your team that you'll take any blame.

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