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Feminist Freedom Warriors

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Project

Feminist Freedom Warriors

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Project URL

<http://feministfreedomwarriors.org/>

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Project Overview**Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Linda Carty**

Feminist Freedom Warriors (FFW) is a digital video archive and documentary endeavor that was born out of a deep engagement in anti-capitalist, anti-racist feminist struggles of women of color from the Global South. The archive stands as a response to dominant Eurocentric and masculinist narratives that perpetuate historical omissions and exclusions. Anchored in the principles of "history from below," the project seeks to reshape the educational landscape by showcasing narratives that challenge these prevailing paradigms. Feminist freedom warriors are filmed in conversation with co-founders Linda Carty and Chandra Talpade Mohanty — many are sisters and comrades that they have worked with in solidarity over decades. Rooted in a commitment to advancing justice and equity through scholarly practice, FFW illuminates the intersection of feminist activism, racial justice, and economic equity. It presents a dynamic collection of intimate conversations with scholar-activists who have shaped contemporary gender, racial, and economic justice movements. By juxtaposing the personal and political, FFW unveils the entwined struggles of scholar-activists across geographical borders. This approach redefines the feminist video archive, reinvigorating its relevance and accessibility in the digital age.

FFW merges humanistic inquiry with digital innovation, translating academic discourse into accessible, compelling narratives. FFW's approach is to harness the power of digital technology in the documentation and dissemination of original, substantive content that generates meaningful dialogue about complex, urgent issues

for educational purposes. As such, it focuses on producing in-depth content about contemporary histories of struggles for justice, translating a living archive of feminist activism into a digital one.

The transnational scope of the project played a pivotal role in shaping the platforms we chose for our website and influenced our vision for the project's intended audience. The website was developed using a customized system built with PHP, MySQL, CSS, and JavaScript. This system offered a high degree of flexibility in designing and implementing specific features tailored to the project's requirement of building an easily navigable archive with an intuitive indexing system. The user experience design and technology decisions were driven by the goal of engaging a diverse, global audience effectively. Dynamic loading, faceted search, and interactive visuals were chosen to enhance the navigation and content discovery process. Responsive design was implemented so users could access the archive on a wide range of devices and screen sizes, including smartphones and tablets. SoundCloud audio and PDF transcript file links were embedded into each interview webpage to enable access to the conversations through multiple formats. Multilingual support is integrated into the website design and we are seeking funding to actualize this aspect of the user experience.

Since its inception in 2015, FFW has grown to a repository of 50 conversations, complete with videos, transcripts, and audio recordings. The project is a testament to the dedication of a team of faculty and graduate students at Syracuse University. FFW's impact has transcended academic boundaries, resonating in forums that range from faculty lectures to book festivals and classrooms across continents. FFW conversations fuel cultural and political organizing efforts beyond academia, catalyzing discussions about global solidarity. The archive expands the horizons of knowledge dissemination, making historical narratives and feminist genealogies come alive, thus empowering present and future generations to shape a world characterized by gender justice and equity.

Project Review

Kayla Abner

The Feminist Freedom Warriors (FFW) project, led by Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Linda Carty, is an oral history archive that tells the stories of feminist activist-scholars from the Global South. The project successfully counters both Eurocentric and masculinist narratives and addresses archival silences that occur when we do not intentionally seek out materials about or from minoritized groups. The informal interview format puts complex topics into an accessible first-hand account, allowing viewers to understand how the issues intersect with the lived experiences of women of color.

The archive itself is straightforward, with all interviews listed and linked on the homepage. The addition of a keyword search or categories would assist researchers using the archive without its companion book, [*Feminist Freedom Warriors: Genealogies, Justice, Politics, and Hope*](#) (2018), for reference. For example, a researcher would likely visit the site to look into a topic, like “law,” in relation to feminism in the Global South and would

not necessarily know that Mayra Santos-Febres talks about her female relative who was a lawyer in the 1950s in her interview. Some links to the transcriptions are broken, so that same researcher also would not be able to search for the word “law” in that interview transcript. There is such rich history and data here, and I would encourage the project creators to invest in strengthening usability by adding search functionality, creating browsable categories, or brainstorming ways a user would interact with the site. I would also encourage the creators to prioritize maintenance of the existing archive, by ensuring the links still work, so that all the information here will remain accessible and will not be lost.

The Modern Language Association (MLA) [Guidelines for Evaluating Work in Digital Humanities and Digital Media](#) recommend that project creators “describe the process underlying creation of work in digital media (such as creation of infrastructure and content) and their particular contributions.” Creators, designers, and students are credited for their specific work on FFW. I appreciate the acknowledgement of design, creation, and technical work as intellectual work vital to digital humanities research.

The authors state on the website that “FFW's impact has transcended academic boundaries, resonating in forums ranging from faculty lectures to book festivals and classrooms across continents.” The accompanying [book](#) has been cited in related research on gender and social justice, but I could not locate any instances of scholars specifically citing the interviews or site. I would recommend documenting these events or any usages of the digital project on the site itself. Another one of MLA's guidelines states that projects should “describe how [this] work requires new collaborative relationships with clients, publics, other departments, colleagues and students.” In FFW, most of these relationships are documented, such as with the colleagues they interview and the students who work on the project, but the public aspect is missing. Public relationships may be documented in the accompanying book but without that information on the site, the digital archive serves more as a book companion than a standalone project. Transcending academic boundaries, as the project does, is a huge benefit of digital projects, and showing how this is the case inspires others to use the site or conduct similar research.