Dressing the Past
Julianna Pakstis
Student of Archives and Preservation in the Master of Information program, Rutgers University

Abstract
Dressing the Past is an activity protocol that uses the commonly available Snapchat app to integrate the New York Public Library’s The History of the Feminine Costume, From the Year 5318 B.C. to Our Century Collection into historical fact finding or storytelling sessions at libraries across the country. The project aims to introduce technology and creative/critical thinking to both the traditional paper doll model and story time. The is focused primarily but not exclusively on children ages 6-12.

Discussion
The strength of this activity lies in its interdisciplinary applicability. Librarians can use the protocol to give concrete representation to even the most fanciful (if historically inaccurate) mash-ups of costumes. The activity turns a normally passive story time into an act of creation or narrative and digital drawing. This inversion is accomplished all while exposing users to one of the NYPL Digital Collections.

Teachers can use the protocol to demonstrate lived historicity by restricting the geographical and chronological scope of the time period about which they are teaching. In this iteration of the activity, fanciful retellings of history would be fact checked and guided by the teacher to ensure accuracy while encouraging creativity.

This poster summarizes the protocol and can be handed out to facilitators as a teaching document and quick reference.

A video demonstration also aids implementation. It can be found here: https://goo.gl/Ha8UkI.

References