Why the Digital Humanities?

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How Has Society Changed Since the Emergence of the Web?
What Are the Digital Humanities?

http://tapor.ualberta.ca/taporwiki/index.php/How_do_you_define_Humanities_Computing_/Digital_Humanities%3F
Digital Humanities Defined

“Digital humanities is a diverse and still emerging field that encompasses the practice of humanities research in and through information technology, and the exploration of how the humanities may evolve through their engagement with technology, media, and computational methods.”

(Digital Humanities Quarterly)
Why the Digital Humanities?

- Provide wide **access** to cultural information
- Enable us to **manipulate** that data: manage, mash up, mine, map, model
- Transform **scholarly communication**
- Enhance **teaching and learning**
- Make a **public impact**
ACCESS TO INFORMATION
Accessing Information, Old School

http://www.flickr.com/photos/oldtasty/11137571/
A Sampler of Scholarly Digital Collections

- Text: Perseus, Blake, Rossetti, Whitman, ECHO, etc.
- Images: Quilt Index, Ad Access
- Maps: NY Public Library, Rumsey Collection
- Data: Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, Open Context (archaeology)
- Video: Shoah Visual History
- Audio: Historical Voices
DH’s Impact on Access to Information

- Created authoritative digital collections
- Devised new editorial methods
- Developed standards (e.g. TEI)
- Experimenting with innovative methods of providing access
  - Crowdsourcing, e.g. Transcribing Bentham
  - Incorporating tools into archives, e.g. Cather Archive
  - Offering multiple views, e.g. Chymistry of Isaac Newton
Impact of Whitman Archive

• Whitman scholars call it “indispensable”
• Greater attention to manuscript & textual study (editions other than 1855 & deathbed)
• Attention to contexts
• Broadens access
• Significant web hits: 30,000+ visits, 143 countries (Sept 2011)

http://www.whitmanarchive.org/

Spiro & Segal, Scholars’ Usage of Digital Archives in American Literature
MANIPULATING DATA: TOOLS AND METHODS

http://www.flickr.com/photos/bw/2516698553/
Asks “Now that we have massive databases of materials used by scholars in the humanities and social sciences... what new, computationally-based research methods might we apply?”

1st round sponsored by NEH, NSF, JISC (UK), SSHRC (Canada)

Collaborative, international teams from 2 or more countries

8 out of about 90 won grants: railroads, speech, letters, images, text, dynamic editoins
http://criminalintent.org/

http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/obapi/
“make it possible for the ‘ordinary working historian’... to integrate text mining and visualization into his or her day-to-day work” (Data Mining with Criminal Intent)
Understanding the Story

http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?ref=t17440510-42
Why Mine Data?

“The Old Bailey, like the Naked City, has eight million stories. Accessing those stories involves understanding trial length, numbers of instances of poisoning, and rates of bigamy. But being stories, they find their more salient expression in the weightier motifs of the human condition: justice, revenge, dishonor, loss, trial. This is what the humanities are about. This is the only reason for an historian to fire up Mathematica or for a student trained in French literature to get into Java.”

--Steve Ramsay, “Prison Art”
Mapping Time & Space: The Emancipation Project

http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/emancipation/BlkPop/migration.html
Mapping the Slave Market in Rio

http://www.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/viz.php?id=143&project_id=0
“Cultural Analytics: Mark Rothko Paintings on the 287-Megapixel HIPerSpace Wall at Calit2”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YlT1qFhJhk
Try It Yourself: ImagePlot Software

http://lab.softwarestudies.com/p/imageplot.html
Modeling the Abbey Theatre, 1904

Digital model by Hugh Denard (research) and Niall Ó hOisín / Noho (modelling), 2011. http://blog.oldabbeytheatre.net/
TRANSFORMING SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

http://www.flickr.com/photos/nichollsphotos/2906834393/
The Limitations of Print

Can’t...

• Search
• Hyperlink
• Include multimedia
• Foster conversation & community

Challenging to...

• Distribute
• Duplicate
• Access

http://www.flickr.com/photos/bezanson/2643658623/
Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence*

http://mediacommmons.futureofthebook.org/mcpress/plannedobsolescence/
Open Access Publishing

- Expand access to knowledge
- Make scholarly work more visible
- Enable information to be re-used and built upon
Participate in Open Peer Review: Writing History in the Digital Age

http://writinghistory.trincoll.edu/
“multimedia digital publication”: 

Southern Spaces

In one photograph, a farmer plows a field with a mule while a train passes behind. Although the railroad arrived in Perry County more than forty years earlier, the juxtaposition of train and horse signifies the intrusion of the industrial capitalist age upon the region’s agricultural heritage. The train transports the coal cut out of local mountains to U.S. industrial centers, leaving behind exploited people and land. In another image, children stand inside the doorway of their home, blocked from the porch by three battered planks while a broom rests against the door. The photograph conveys entrapment in poverty, passed to a new generation. Another photo shows that the movie *Hard Man* is being screened at the theatre in the town of Neon, Kentucky folklorist, D. K. Wilgus, who claimed the state "couldn't have asked for a more sympathetic interpreter than Cohen," praised the liner notes for "insight, sympathy, and analysis" and the photographs that "dramatically pointed out depressed conditions." Cohen, wrote Wilgus, "presents the core without the peeling." 

Cohen, Perry County, Kentucky, 1959.

The core of the record is not only Halcomb's music but his image. He does not appear in any of Cohen's small photographs contained in the booklet, but a photograph of him graces the record's cover, the same photograph that the *New York Times* printed with its review of *Mountain Music of Kentucky*. Halcomb became the new face of Kentucky mountain music as well as the face of the region's poverty, a force that Cohen believed gave the music its power. The former politician "Banjo" Bill Cornett, the housewife Martha Hall, the miner Lee Sexton, the farmer Granville Bowlin, the horse trainer Willie Chapman, the disc jockey George Davis – none of them possessed Halcomb's combination of intense, emotional singing with the hard-worn physical expression of poverty.


[http://southernspaces.org/](http://southernspaces.org/)
ENHANCING TEACHING & LEARNING

http://services.pepperdine.edu/techlearn/tools/ipadresearch.htm
High Impact Practices (Kuh)

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experience
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects

Slide courtesy Rebecca Frost Davis
Syllabus Study: Common Features of DH Classes

- Student projects
- Collaboration
- Blogs & other social engagement
- Bringing together theory and practice

See “Undergrad DH Projects” for a growing list of examples

Networked Classes: Looking for Whitman

“experiment in multi-campus digital pedagogy”

(Jim Groom)

http://lookingforforwhitman.org/
Web 2.0 Tools Used in Looking for Whitman

- **Blogging** (WordPress)
- **YouTube**
- **Flickr**
- **delicious**
- **Twitter**
- **Collaborative annotation**
“Student-Writers” to “Student-Authors”

“It is our experience that the closer we can bring our students to the real sources of knowledge — the ancient texts, the archaeological remains, the papyri and parchment — and the real reward of scholarship — the joy of producing a piece of work that one knows will be discovered and read with interest and pleasure by people we may never meet — the closer we can bring students to the experience of being true scholars, working beside other scholars, the more enthusiasm we find.”

Furman & College of the Holy Cross, [Homer Multitext](http://digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/003/1/000024/000024.html)
Early Novels Database

- Extensive cataloging for UPenn collection of ~ 3000 early novels
- Research by Swarthmore & Bryn Mawr undergrads
- Elements:
  - 1 week training
  - Students produce own blog posts & papers
- Benefits for students:
  - Work collaboratively
  - “Think like researchers”

“The Early Novels Database: a Case Study” [NITLE Community Contribution Award]
History Engine: Tools for Collaborative Teaching & Research

- Student-written “episodes” about American history
- Research using primary sources
- Vetted
- Part of larger database

http://historyengine.richmond.edu/
Scaffolding Projects: Wheaton Digital History Project

Collaborative Research Assignment

- Stage 1: Background Reading in Secondary Sources
- Stage 2: Transcription and Coding of Daybook Page Spreads
- Stage 3: Writing and Editing Episodes for the History Engine
- Stage 4: Writing a Paper Based on Primary Sources

http://wheatoncollege.edu/digital-history-project/teaching/collaborative-research-research-assignment/
Impact of Student Projects

• “How do we make what we do in the classroom valuable to those outside it?” (student at Re:humanities)
• “We’re really participating in something that’s happening right now...” (Anna Levine, Swarthmore)
• “This must be what it feels like to be doing real scholarship” (Jen Rajchel, Bryn Mawr)
REVITALIZING THE HUMANITIES
How DH Can Help Revitalize the Humanities

• Help make humanities information widely available
• Introduce innovative methods
• Help students develop skills, knowledge and disposition
• Cultivate an informed, critical perspective on technology & culture
• Engage with the public
• Demonstrate the importance of the humanities: 4Humanities
Making a Public Impact: Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History

- Students contributed oral histories, digital images & documents to site about history of civil rights in Seattle
- Used in public education & in education of police & other city employees
- Cited in brief for Supreme Court case on segregation & public schools
- Helped to lead WA governor to sign a new law that facilitates neighborhoods eliminating restrictive racial covenants
Participatory Scholarship: HyperCities

http://hypercities.com/
WHY (OR WHY NOT) THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES?

THATCamp Paris
http://www.flickr.com/photos/revuesorg/4626510454/
NITLE : Why Do Digital Humanities at Liberal Arts Colleges?

• Foster undergraduate research
• Use effective pedagogy, especially active and collaborative learning, project based & applied learning
• Spark understanding of the digital environment & how to exercise liberal arts abilities (critical thinking, writing, etc.) in that context
• Support interdisciplinary work & other types of collaboration
• Revitalize the humanities
Challenges of Doing Digital Humanities

• Getting or creating data
• Data’s in\textit{completeness}, variability
• Copyright
• Funding
• Academic culture
• Tenure & promotion policies
• Gaining the skills
• Finding collaborators
• Finding or developing tools
• Preservation & sustainability

http://www.flickr.com/photos/jonlucas/204213403/
How to “Do” Digital Humanities

• Determine what goals or questions motivate you
• Participate in the DH community
  – Attend a THATCamp & other DH conferences
  – Follow & interact with DH folks on Twitter
  – Read and respond to blogs, e.g. HASTAC
• Study examples and find out how they work: projects, standards, tools, best practices
  – Ask a question on DH Questions & Answers
• Play and experiment
  – Find tools via Digital Research Tools (DiRT) wiki
  – Discover new tools & approaches via ProfHacker
More on How to Do Digital Humanities

• Pursue training
  – Digital Humanities Summer Institute; NEH Seminars
  – Online tutorials, e.g. Tooling Up for DH, Spatial Humanities, TEI by Example

• Find collaborators
  – Librarians, IT staff, students; other institutions

• Where possible, adopt/adapt existing tools
  – Omeka, WordPress, Google Maps, TaPOR, etc.

• Plan a pilot project
  – Start small
NITLE (National Institute for Technology & Liberal Education) Can Help

- Founded in 2001 by Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- Digital Humanities is one of NITLE’s key strategic areas
  - Co-sponsors Digital Humanities Commons to facilitate collaborations: web site, MLA workshop
  - Offers workshop on integrating DH into undergrad curriculum
  - Supports information sharing & community building: blog posts, seminar series, Twitter
  - Monitors DH developments, e.g. DH education
- Network members connected to larger conversations
Download This Presentation

Visit Digital Scholarship in the Humanities

http://digitalscholarship.wordpress.com/