Why and How: Exploring the Significance of Digital Humanities for Philosophy

Lisa Spiro
American Philosophical Assn. (Central Division)
February 23, 2013
Peter Bradley: “Where are the philosophers?”
How many sessions on digital humanities are featured at academic conferences?

- 2013 MLA: **66** (8% of total sessions)
- 2013 AHA: **43**
- 2013 APA Central: **2 (?)**
How Many **NEH-Funded DH** Projects Are There in Philosophy?

5 (of 293):

- **Croy & Beavers**, Computer Simulations in the Humanities
- **Allen**, Linking and Populating the Digital Humanities
- **Allen**, InPhO: the Indiana Philosophy Ontology project
- **Allen & Boerner**, Digging by Debating, Linking massive datasets to specific arguments
- **Allen**, InPhO @ Work: Providing Integrated Access to Philosophy
Origins of DH in Philosophy?

Fr. Roberto Busa

George Boole
What Does “Digital Humanities” Mean?

“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 Digital Humanities?

- Provides wide **access** to cultural information
- Enables us to **analyze** information: manage, mash up, mine, map, model
- Enhances **teaching and learning**
- Transforms **scholarly communication**
- Makes a **public impact**
PROVIDING WIDE ACCESS TO CULTURAL INFORMATION

http://www.flickr.com/photos/quinnanya/3605597056/
Scholars on the Impact of Electronic Resources on Humanities Research

• Makes research faster & more convenient:
• Provides access to more resources, including unique archival materials
• Promotes interdisciplinary research
• Facilitates online community and discussion
• Democratizes knowledge
• Increases pressure to produce & possibility of missing something
• Concerns about equity and sustainability of access

Spiro & Segal, Scholars’ Usage of Digital Archives in American Literature
Digital Humanities Helps Make Cultural Information Available

- Devised new editorial methods
- Involves **knowledge representation**
- Developed standards (e.g. TEI)
- Created authoritative digital collections
- Experimenting with innovative methods of providing access
  - Participatory projects to transcribe texts
  - Interfaces for search and exploration
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*
Updates for the Last Three Months Listed in Reverse Chronological Order

[Subscribe to our RSS feed at http://plato.stanford.edu/rss/sep.xml

Users with RSS-enabled browsers can click here.]

[Note: All dates are given in UTC]

- Adam Smith's Moral and Political Philosophy (Samuel Fleischacker) [NEW: February 15, 2013]
- Feminist Social Epistemology (Heidi Grasswick) [REVISED: February 15, 2013]
  Changes to: Main text, Bibliography, Internet resources, notes.html
- Kant's Account of Reason [Garrath Williams] [REVISED: February 14, 2013]
  Changes to: Main text, Bibliography, Internet resources, notes.html
- Empathy (Karsten Stueber) [REVISED: February 14, 2013]
  Changes to: Main text, Bibliography
- Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (Brandon C. Look) [REVISED: February 14, 2013]
  Changes to: Main text, Bibliography, Internet resources
- Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology (Hannah Ginsborg) [REVISED: February 13, 2013]
  Changes to: Main text, Bibliography
- Instrumental Rationality (Niko Kolodny and John Brunero) [NEW: February 13, 2013]
“Linking & Populating the Digital Humanities”: SEP, PhilPapers, InPho
ENABLING US TO ANALYZE INFORMATION & ASK NEW RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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, images, dynamic editions, trial transcripts
Mapping the Republic of Letters

Using Topic Models to Understand the History of Criticism

Goldstone & Underwood,
“What can topic models of PMLA teach us about the history of literary scholarship?”
“The big-data discoveries that have most excited me, as a scholar, haven't been expressions of large-scale trends or conclusions drawn from human experience in the aggregate. They've been the chances we've had to drill down, through large collections, to individual objects and stories.”

--Bethany Nowviskie
### Some Other Approaches to DH Research

- Spatial humanities/mapping
- Scholarly editing
- Text analysis
- Text mining
- Digital curation
- (3D) modeling
- Software/platform studies
- Cultural analytics
- Network analysis
- Database documentaries
- Data visualization
- Virtual & augmented reality
- Participatory platforms
- Humanities gaming
- Etc.
ENHANCING TEACHING & LEARNING

http://services.pepperdine.edu/techlearn/tools/ipadresearch.htm
Syllabus Study: Common Features of DH Classes

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

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

“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.”

Undergraduate Research and the Homer Multi-Text

http://www.homermultitext.org/
Networked Classes: Looking for Whitman

“experiment in multi-campus digital pedagogy”
(Jim Groom)
http://lookingforwhitman.org/
TRANSFORM SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

http://www.flickr.com/photos/nichollsphotos/2906834393/
Peer-to-Peer Review: Planned Obsolescence

Planned Obsolescence

"It's not the nineteenth century anymore, and it may be too late for the world to be changed with a book.

~ Maria Bustillos

There's a delicious ambiguity in that sentence: is it too late for a book — the literal, physical object — to change the world, or is it too late for any textual form? This text isn't yet a book, though it's headed in that direction. And possible or not, it's determined to change the world, or at least the small segment of it where our colleges and universities reside.

And it's attempting to begin creating that change here, with this site. One of the points that this text argues hardest about is the need to reform peer review for the digital age, insisting that peer review will be a more productive, more helpful, more transparent, and more effective process if conducted in the open. And so here's the text, practicing what it preaches, available online for open review.

I'll be relying on these reviews in revising the manuscript before its final submission. If all goes according to plan, the book will be forthcoming from NYU Press, which is sending the

http://mediacommmons.futureofthebook.org/mcpress/plannedobsolescence/
“scholarly communication as a process that begins with open publication on the web and that leads to successive layers of review.” (Dan Cohen)
Open, Collaborative, Public: 

*Public Philosophy Journal*

**Public Philosophy Journal**

Collaborative and Open
“we need to acknowledge how much the massive computational abilities that have transformed the sciences have also changed our field in ways large and small and hold possibilities for far greater **transformation** in the three areas—research, writing, and teaching—that matter most. We are not exempt from the technological changes of our era, and we need to **take greater responsibility** for them.” --Cathy Davidson, “Humanities 2.0: Promise, Perils, Predictions”
Engaging the Public in Scholarship:

Transcribe Bentham

Editing JB/072/067/001

...[Edit] Click Here To Edit

--- ENTER TRANSCRIPTION BELOW THIS LINE ---

C

Luxury

with regard to the following way in which a man shall spend his money, every man knows best what please him: without some particular reason it is idle for the Legislators to interfere.

If there be any use in the Legislature in this way in any case or any occasion it is in the case where an article of luxury is given into not so much for the enjoyment it affords, or for itself, or in the very forbidden...
Making a Public Impact: Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History

Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project

Special Section

Segregated Seattle

For most of its history Seattle was a segregated city, as committed to white supremacy as any location in America. People of color were excluded from most jobs, most neighborhoods and schools, and many stores, restaurants, hotels, and other commercial establishments, even hospitals. As in other western states, the system of severe racial discrimination in Seattle targeted not just African Americans but also Native Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, people of Mexican ancestry, and also, at times, Jews.

This special section presents research that will surprise many Pacific Northwesterners. Included are maps, photos, documents, and newspaper articles that follow the history of segregation in Seattle up through the 1960s. We also have the most extensive database of racially restrictive neighborhood covenants and deed clauses available for any city in the country.

- Seattle’s Segregation Story Start with this

Beacon of Bigotry

Until 1950, Coon Chicken Inn stood as a landmark of segregation on Lake City Way at 20th Ave NE. Patrons entered the restaurant through the mouth. Here are photos...
CRITIQUES (AND DEFENSES) OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES
“Literature Is Not Data”

(Stephen Marche)

Literature is not Data: Against Digital Humanities

by Stephen Marche

October 24th, 2012

Data banks are the Encyclopedia of tomorrow. They transcend the capacity of each of their users. They are "nature" for postmodern man.

- Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge

BIG DATA IS COMING for your books. It’s already come for everything else. All human endeavor has by now generated its own monadic mass of data, and through these vast accumulations of ciphers the robots now endlessly scour for significance much the way cockroaches scour for nutrition in the enormous bat dung piles hiding in Bornean caves. The recent Automate This, a smart book with a stupid title, offers a fascinatingly general look at the new algorithmic culture: 60 percent of trades on the stock market today take place with virtually no human oversight. Artificial intelligence has already changed health care and pop music, baseball, electoral politics, and several aspects of the law. And now, as an afterthought to an afterthought, the algorithms have arrived at literature, like an army which, having conquered Italy, turns its attention to San Marino.
The “Dark Side” of DH (MLA 2013)

• Susceptible to techno-euphoria/technocracy (Chun)
• Neoliberal instrumentalism: favors making things over critique (Grusin)
• Needs to engage cultural critique/be transformed (Cecire)
• Distant reading → Distance education? (Raley)

Who is being excluded? Digital Humanities as “the New Elite”?

“Whose Revolution? Towards a More Equitable Digital Humanities”

The digital humanities – be it a field, a set of methodologies, a movement, a community, a singular or plural descriptor, a state of mind, or just a convenient label for a set of digital tools and practices that have helped us shift the way we perform research, teaching, and service – have arrived on the academic scene amidst immense amounts of hype. I’m sure you’re sick of hearing that hype, so I won’t rehearse it now except to say that the coverage of DH in the popular academic press sometimes seems to imply that the field has both the power and the responsibility to save the academy. Indeed, to many observers, the most notable thing about DH is the hype that has attended its arrival — and I believe that one of my fellow panelists, Jeff Rice, will be proposing a more pointed synonym for “hype” during his presentation.
Challenges to Doing Digital Humanities Work

- Getting or creating data
- Data’s *incompleteness*, 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/
Find tools with Bamboo DiRT

Welcome //

Bamboo DiRT is a tool, service, and collection registry of digital research tools for scholarly use. Developed by Project Bamboo, Bamboo DiRT makes it easy for digital humanists and others conducting digital research to find and compare resources ranging from content management systems to music OCR, statistical analysis packages to mindmapping software.

I need a digital research tool to . . .

- Analyze data
- Analyze texts
- Author an interactive work
- Blog
- Manage bibliographic information
- Manage tasks
- Network with other researchers
- Organize research materials
Discover projects & collaborators via DH Commons

Welcome

DHCommons is a hub for people and organizations to find projects to work with, and for projects to find collaborators. Log in or sign up to get started.

Tweet us! @DHCommons or #dhcom.

MLA 2013

Registration is now open for the DHCommons workshop at MLA 2013!
Just Ask: Digital Humanities Questions & Answers
“Learn and Build Together”: THATCamp

THATCamp, The Humanities and Technology Camp, is an open, inexpensive meeting where humanists and technologists of all skill levels learn and build together in sessions proposed on the spot. Learn More

Upcoming THATCamps

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<td>March 1, 2013</td>
<td>THATCamp Lehigh Valley 2013</td>
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Why Do Digital Humanities?

- Explore knowledge representation in the digital age
- Provide access to tools and materials for scholarly research
- Enable new kinds of analysis, new scholarly questions
- Foster engaged, “authentic” teaching and learning
- Promote more dynamic scholarly communities
- Engage with the public
- Participate in multidisciplinary conversations