Digital Humanities in Spain: evolution and current scenario

Abstract:

Digital Humanities (DH) has become a field of interest in Spain, especially in the last decade, despite having arrived later than in most other European countries. In fact, it has become a leading trend in research, either as a field of study and as a preferential financing topic. At the same time, because of its novelty, it is now under scrutiny by the research community and government institutions because neither the return of investment is clear nor the role that Spanish researchers can play within European-wide research infrastructures, such as DARIAH. In order to provide the global community of scholars working in this field with a greater understanding of the current Spanish scenario, LINHD (*Laboratorio de Innovación de Humanidades Digitales - UNED*) promoted a research on the evolution of DH in Spain in the last 25 years, using a quantitative approach. The objective of the study was to identify researchers in the field of DH and to explore their financing, institutional affiliations, research topics and developed resources. Similar initiatives have been promoted in the past, producing internationally or regionally focused maps[1], some of them still available online, with differences ranging from the geographical coverage to the types of data mapped. Others overviews on the subject have chosen a more qualitative approach, focused on identifying the most relevant steps in the evolution and consolidation of this research topic in the Iberian country[2], still largely in place.

The research has been very much data oriented, in order to assess primarily the quantitative dimension of DH in Spain. This contribution describes the results of the findings after mapping and analyzing five main entities, specifically: researchers, projects, resources, bibliography and educational courses. The total volume of collected records was 1,347, distributed as follow: 576 researchers, 367 projects, 309 bibliographical records, 80 resources, 8 post-graduate courses and 7 journals.

Interesting results come from the analyses of research fields evolution over time, the correlation among topics and research centers or topics and financial resources, as well as from visualizing the weighted contribution that different disciplines and fields of study make to the multidisciplinary character of DH. We are now able to identify and locate on a map the largest centers in DH as well as those institutions to which only few researchers belong; clustered aggregations as well as dispersed research groups and labs, the latter who can finally benefits the most from an initiative like this. Half of researchers are affiliated to just nine major centers, while the other half belongs to a constellation of 84 institutions. Financing also uncovered meaningful information, with a very wide array,

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[1] CenterNet, MapaHD, GrinUGR and, more recently, Red Knowmetrics, among others.

[2] Paul Spence and Elena Gonzalez-Blanco, *A historical perspective on the digital humanities in Spain*, in: H-Soz-Kult, 2014, <www.hsozkult.de/debate/id/diskussionen-2449>; Antonio Rojas Castro, *El mapa y el territorio. Una aproximación histórico-bibliográfica a la emergencia de las Humanidades Digitales en España*, in: Caracteres, 2013, <http://revistacaracteres.net/revista/vol2n2noviembre2013/el-mapa-y-el-territorio/>.

ranging from less than 5,000€ (a significant 5% of total) to isolated multimillion projects, resulting into an average of 59,862€, and a much more significant median value of 42,350€ per project. Over 90% stay under 100,000€. Additionally, plotting projects over time allowed also to propose a first temporization of DH evolution in Spain into three different stages.