

Jennifer L. Adams and Kevin B. Gunn

# Digital Humanities

## Where to start

Sixty years ago, the field called “humanities computing” made its debut with the appearance of Father Roberto Busa’s *Index Thomisticus*, a computer-compiled concordance to the works of Thomas Aquinas. This application of technology to a task which would have taken researchers years to complete manually opened the door for a new approach to humanities research. Other disciplines would follow in the *Index*’s footsteps, producing similarly innovative projects such as the *Perseus Digital Library*. As the possibilities offered by the new technologies, and researchers’ ability to use them, expanded, humanities computing grew far beyond its humble origins. Today, “humanities computing” is often referred to as “digital humanities” (DH). DH evolved from, and expanded, this early scholarship.

As an emerging field, DH has, thus far, had a broad characterization. As technology and our understanding of it change, so do the limits of DH. There has been some debate as to whether DH constitutes a discipline of its own or is simply an application of new technologies to existing disciplines. In either case, DH can be understood as the place where traditional humanities research methodologies and media/digital technologies intersect. DH is more than the digitization of existing processes, documents, and artifacts. It is often data-driven, answering humanities research problems with multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and cross-disciplinary approaches within the digital/IT realm. The current challenge for DH lies in establishing

itself in traditional academic environments.

Research in the field of digital humanities will necessarily rely on knowledge of data management and on collaboration across a range of disciplines. Library professionals are ideally qualified to step in as supporters and participants in DH research. In an October 2010 *C&RL News* article, Hitoshi Kamada listed a variety of roles in which librarians might contribute to DH research. In November 2011, ARL published a SPEC kit devoted to the implementation of DH in academic libraries. The 2012 ALA Annual Conference saw not only an ACRL-sponsored preconference devoted to DH (“Digital Humanities in Theory and Practice: Tools and Methods for Librarians”), but also the first meeting of the new ACRL Digital Humanities discussion group. As librarians show a greater recognition of and interest in the connection between DH and libraries, the list of possible DH roles for librarians will expand.

There are many useful resources available online, including general sites as well as e-publications, tools, tutorials, and organizations. We have tried to include a representative sample of those we feel are most important or could be most useful for librarians getting started in the digital humanities.<sup>1</sup>

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## General information

- **Day of DH 2012.** Each year on Day of DH, now in its fourth year, self-identified digital humanists blog their day through photographs and commentary as a way to share their own sense of DH with the world. As part of the project, participants are also asked to contribute their own definitions of DH. To get a sense for just how broad DH is, check out the list of definitions, or read some of the blogs for an in-depth view of just a few of the things that digital humanists do. Archives for 2009–11 are also available. *Access:* <http://dayofdh2012.artsrn.ualberta.ca/dh/>.

- **dh+lib.** A new blog created in 2012 by ACRL's Digital Humanities Discussion Group. The blog will be a space where librarians, archivists, students, and others can discuss issues relating to DH and libraries. *Access:* <http://aclr.ala.org/dh/>.

- **Digital Humanities Glossary.** Digital Humanities has adopted an extremely varied vocabulary, using terms from the humanities, computing, and the information sciences, as well as those unique to DH. This glossary provides brief definitions for some essential terms. The site is still a work-in-progress, and visitors are encouraged to submit additions and expansions for review. *Access:* <http://dhglossary.org/>.

## Associations

- **Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO).** ADHO is an umbrella organization for DH societies. Among its activities, it publishes DH resources; sponsors the annual Digital Humanities Conference; oversees awards for excellence in DH; and collaborates on a variety of projects. Its Web site is a useful resource for recent news and opportunities. Also included are links to ADHO-supported publications, activities, blogs, wikis, organizations, etc., and a database of conference abstracts. *Access:* <http://digitalhumanities.org/>.

- **centerNet.** centerNet is a network of DH centers in ten countries, with steering committees in Asia, Europe, North America, and the United Kingdom. Its directory and

interactive map of centers, searchable by name or region, is helpful for finding nearby organizations with which to collaborate. Its site also includes a resources page with links to job listings, tools, and projects. *Access:* <http://digitalhumanities.org/centernet/>.

- **Consortium of Humanities Centers & Institutes (CHCI).** Established in 1988, CHCI has more than 170 affiliates in 23 countries. Newcomers to DH may be especially interested in their consulting, mentoring, and evaluating services, which pair newer centers with experienced member organizations. The CHCI Web site is largely member-focused, with a searchable database of member organizations; links to affiliates; and a list of groups and projects. It also offers a small library of e-documents, as well as job listings, calls for papers, fellowships and funding opportunities, and conferences and programs. *Access:* <http://chcinenetwork.org/>.

## Collaboratories

- **DHCommons.** Librarians interested in contributing to a DH project can peruse over 78 projects and more than 180 collaborators to find the right fit. Types of collaboration include beta testing, data entry, design, consulting, peer review, programming, and proofreading. Types of collaborators include scholars, students, and librarians. DHCommons is an initiative of centerNet. *Access:* <http://dhcommons.org/>.

- **HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Advanced Collaboratory).** HASTAC is a network of humanists, artists, social scientists, scientists, gamers, software designers, curators, librarians, and others interested in collaborating on projects. More than 9,000 members and 522 scholars are involved. Specializations cover the whole range of humanities, arts, social sciences, sciences, music, media arts, information science, and engineering. The Web site is visited more than 28,000 times per month. *Access:* <http://hastac.org/>.

## Funding

- **Digging into Data Challenge.** Administered by the Office of Digital Humanities

and funded by seven other global research organizations, the Digging into Data Challenge focuses on the computational analysis of large-scale corporations. What makes the Challenge especially valuable is that many data repositories have volunteered their data for analysis. To date, 38 digital libraries, data archives, and data repositories have signed up. *Access:* <http://www.diggingintodata.org/>.

• **NEH Office of Digital Humanities (ODH).** A division of the National Endowment for the Humanities, ODH was founded in 2008 in response to the increasing popularity, importance, and impact of DH on scholarship. ODH is the main funding source for scholars, institutes, and graduate students seeking grants for new projects, implementation projects, digitization grants, and establishing institutes of short duration. The grants are awarded throughout the year; projects are selected based on the goals of increasing the understanding of the interplay between digital technologies and the humanities fields, and increasing the number of DH scholars. *Access:* <http://www.neh.gov/divisions/odh>.



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## Web design and programming tutorials

• **Codecademy.** Created by Zach Sims and Ryan Bubinski, two programmers who wanted to make learning coding more interactive, Codecademy walks the coder through a series of interactive and increasingly involved exercises. The beginning coder can study JavaScript, HTML, CSS, JQuery, Ruby, and Python for creating dynamic Web sites, apps, animation, games, and more. You can also sign up for a course on the Code Year Web site<sup>1</sup> and receive a new lesson once a week. You can track your progress online, follow your friends, and create and post your

# Codecademy

own course. More than 60 courses have been created so far. *Access:* <http://www.codecademy.com/>.

• **Google Code University.** Google Code University provides tutorials, introductions, and videos; courses on advanced topics; recorded videos, lectures, and talks; and courses with problem sets and exercises. Computer programming languages covered include C++, Python, JavaScript, Java, and Go. Web programming courses include CSS, HTML, JavaScript, and AJAX. Other content focuses on Web security, Android development, algorithms, distributed systems, and Google APIs and tools. *Access:* <http://code.google.com/edu/>.

• **Thenewboston.** Thenewboston has several hundred video tutorials on topics such as Adobe, computer programming, computer science, and general education. The site is created and managed by Bucky Roberts, whose goal is to make programming instruction more exciting. Some programming languages covered include C, C++, Java, JavaScript, PHP, and Python. Of special note are the 200 videos on Android development. Forums are included. *Access:* <http://thenewboston.org/>.

## Methods and tools

### • **Arts-humanities.net: Tools.**

Arts-humanities.net offers lists of projects, methods, and centers; a library of documentation; interviews; and a community area, in addition to a catalog of software tools useful for the arts and humanities. Developed and managed by the Centre for e-Research (CeRch) at King's College London, the catalog of more than 90 software tools is especially useful for librarians seeking the appropriate tool. Searchable by license, research lifecycle stage, platform, subject, and supported specifications. *Access:* <http://www.arts-humanities.net/tools/>.

• **Bamboo DiRT (Digital Research Tools Wiki).** Bamboo DiRT is a registry for identifying and locating tools, services, and collections for working in DH. DiRT is a collaborative effort: scholars are encouraged



to expand the repertoire of tools and to comment on existing applications. DiRT includes tools for data and textual analysis, data collection, data visualization, bibliographical management, mashups, and screencasting. *Access:* <http://dirt.projectbamboo.org/>.

- **TAPoR (Text Analysis Portal for Research).** Located at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, TAPoR is a directory focusing exclusively on text analysis and retrieval tools. Use it to identify the appropriate tool for research and, in some cases, to experiment with the tool onsite. The 77 tools listed serve a variety of purposes, including concordance building, statistical analysis, text gathering, search retrieval, and data visualization. An especially valuable feature is the evaluations by the scholars who have used the tool. Developers can even contribute their own tools. *Access:* <http://www.tapor.ca/>.

## Data management tools and protocols

- **DH Curation Guide.** Understanding data curation is essential in the digital humanities. This guide offers overviews of topics, standards, articles, projects, and other resources. Hosted by the Center for Informatics Research in Science and Scholarship in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. *Access:* <http://guide.dhcuration.org/>.

- **FEDORA & Fedora Commons.** FEDORA (Flexible Extensible Digital Object Repository Architecture) was developed as open-source software for storing, preserving, managing, and accessing digital content specifically designed as digital objects. Fedora Commons is a repository service providing APIs, search applications, OAI-PMH (Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting), messaging, administrative clients, and other services. It serves as a user community of nonprofit, business, and government organizations that create and share tools and applications consistent with the repository software. *Access:* <http://fedora-commons.org/>.

- **TEI (Text Encoding Initiative).** The Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) is a consor-

tium of academic institutions, research projects, and individual scholars from around the world who have created, and now maintain, the TEI Guidelines.

The guidelines are a standard for the representation of texts in digital form. The TEI site includes tools and stylesheets for converting TEI documents to other formats. *Access:* <http://www.tei-c.org/>

- **Women Writers Project: Seminars on Scholarly Text Encoding.** The Women Writers Project at Brown University offer seminars on encoding scholarly texts using the TEI Guidelines. Seminars are offered several times a year either on campus or at various digital humanities conferences and institutes in the United States and Canada. Each seminar focuses on a topic, such as TEI, XSLT, contextual information encoding, documentary editing, or manuscript encoding. *Access:* <http://www.wwp.brown.edu/outreach/seminars/index.html>.

## Conferences and institutes

- **Digital Humanities Conference.** The major annual event for digital humanists since 1989, this conference has an international flavor as the location alternates between Europe and North America. In 2012, the conference was held in Hamburg, Germany; this coming July, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will play host. *Access:* <http://dh2013.unl.edu/>.

- **Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI) and Winter Institutes (DHWI).** These institutes offer the opportunity to take a week-long course on a particular topic. The University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada has hosted the DH Summer Institute since 2004. This institute has proven so successful that the first DH Winter Institute will be held in January 2013 at the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH) located at the University

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college librarian at Wheaton College in Massachusetts for 17 years before joining Bow-



**Sherrie Bergman**

doin. In recognition of her dedication to the college, the Bowdoin College Alumni Council presented Bergman with the 2012 Alumni Service Award for Faculty and Staff. Under Bergman's leadership, Bowdoin's Hawthorne-

Longfellow Library underwent a \$6.4 million renovation (completed in 2005); collections grew to more than 1 million volumes; the George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections and Archives, and the Bowdoin Digital Commons were established; and the scope of the library's offerings was expanded through shared library catalogs with Colby and Bates colleges, and the Maine InfoNet and NExpress consortia. Active professionally, Bergman's ALA involvement included service as chairperson of ACRL's College Libraries Section; president of ACRL-New England; ALA Councilor; cofounder of the LLAMA Women Administrators Discussion Group;

membership on the Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship; planning committees for several ACRL conferences; and active participation in the College Library Directors Mentoring Program and the Dr. E. J. Josey Spectrum Scholar Mentor Program.

**Cathy Miesse**, assistant dean for technical services and outreach, has retired after 27 years of service to the Loyola University-Chicago Libraries. Miesse went to Loyola from Governors State University in July 1985, where she had been reference coordinator. At Loyola she was head of circulation and head of access services before assuming the position of assistant dean in 2006. Miesse is very active in ALA, especially with LLAMA, where she has held prominent positions on several committees. At Loyola she was responsible for the Friends of the Libraries Speaker Series, a mentoring program for new library faculty and staff, and the libraries' annual celebration of faculty scholarship.

**Joe L. Storey**, associate director and head of Collections Support Services at the St. Mary's College of Maryland Library, has retired after 33 years of service. *~*

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of Maryland-College Park. *Access:* <http://dhsi.org/> and <http://mith.umd.edu/dhwi/>.

• **THATCamp.** The Humanities and Technology Camps, described as "unconferences" with no formal agenda or presentations, have exploded across the country and worldwide in the last couple of years. All participants contribute, in a collegial setting, to creating tools, problem-solving, discussing issues, etc.

Camps are usually small, with an average of 75 participants. *Access:* <http://thatcamp.org/>.

### Notes

1. For further resources, see our research guide "Digital Humanities" at <http://guides.lib.cua.edu/digitalhumanities>.
2. Visit <http://codeyear.com> for more information about the Code Year Web site. *~*

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*("BLASTing the zombies," cont. from page 546)*

### Notes

1. Special thanks to the BLAST Committee: Marc Bess, Edna Dash, Betty Ladner, Donna Lanclos, Stephanie Otis, Beth Scarborough, and Shoko Tokoro.

2. The Paws for Exam Therapy video is located at <http://youtu.be/xOPoNF7ZMnc> *~*