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Library's role in UP's Digital Humanities (DH) endeavour

Department of Library Services

Feedback by Johann van Wyk, 25 May 2017



Project Plan

Objective	Outcome	Actions	Milestones	Target Date	Roles and Responsibilities
Report on Library's role in UP's Digital Humanities (DH) endeavour	Report on DH	<p>Investigate the Library's role in UP's Digital Humanities (DH) endeavour by doing a literature study on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is meant by Digital Humanities Internationally• What are academic libraries doing with regard to Digital Humanities• How does Digital Humanities Link-up with eResearch and Library Carpentry• How are UP seeing Digital Humanities• How can UP Library Services facilitate Digital Humanities	Report completed	30 Nov 2016	Johann van Wyk

Project Plan (Literature Study)

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- What is meant by Digital Humanities Internationally

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- What are academic libraries doing with regard to Digital Humanities

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- How does Digital Humanities Link-up with eResearch and Library Carpentry

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- How are UP seeing Digital Humanities

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- How can UP Library Services facilitate Digital Humanities

What is meant by Digital Humanities?

- Various definitions and viewpoints on what Digital Humanities is.
- Digital Humanities originated from the field of **Humanities Computing**.
- The field of Digital Humanities can be found at the intersection of computing and the disciplines of the humanities.
- A **distinctive characteristic** of digital humanities is its **nurturing** of a **two-way relationship** between the **humanities** and the **digital**. **Technology is used to do humanities research, but technology is also subjected to humanistic questioning and interrogation** (Wikipedia)

What is meant by Digital Humanities?

DH entails activities beyond the process of digitisation (Roux, 2016):

- creation and use of applicable software tools;
- analysis and interpretation of digital data;
- visual representation of digital data and results; and
- predictions based on results (Roux, 2016)

Historical Development of Digital Humanities

19th Century

Hypothesis that word frequency in a text might give clues about who wrote it – could not be tested

Late 1940s

1st initiatives - humanities engage with networks and computation (Burdick et al., 2012:8), e.g. concordance of the works of Thomas Aquinas – IBM – Index of every word used by Aquinas

1960s

Computer technology had progressed substantially – several digital concordance projects undertaken

Historical Development of Digital Humanities

1962

19th Century hypothesis about determining authorship by means of word frequency proven true through use of computers

Early 1970s

Models inspire archival projects – e.g. Oxford University Text Archive .
(Andrews, 2016: 2, Burdick et al., 2012: 8)

1980s

Advent of personal computer – marked increase in transcription and encoding of texts – launch of Text Encoding Initiative in 1988 – field of Humanities Computing

Historical Development of Digital Humanities

Late 1980s Development of DH starts gaining momentum, by developing, critiquing, and disseminating methods to structure humanities data that could interface effectively with computation (Burdick et al, 2012: 8).

1990s

Field dominated by electronic scholarly editions of texts (Andrews, 2016: 3)

End of 2002

The term 'Humanities Computing' found too limiting (Andrews, 2016: 3) – new name Digital Humanities

- shift from emphasis on computing as analysis, toward a focus on digital publication, digital media, and critical reflection on digital culture

Historical Development of Digital Humanities

2004: 1st
Publication on DH:
The Blackwell
Companion to the
Digital Humanities

DH related projects in South Africa

(From presentation by Justus Roux at Symposium: All about Me: digital humanities and representation of self, held on 17 June 2016 at University of Pretoria)

- ❑ Various digitisation projects across many disciplines for many years: digital speech processing etc.
- ❑ **Beyers Naude (Theology) project:** Stellenbosch University
(<http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=3145>)
- ❑ **Digital Humanities and the Future of the Archive** – WITS Institute for Social and Economic Research (2014)
(<http://wiser.wits.ac.za/page//new-research-projects-11029>)
- ❑ **Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA 1, 2)** - University of KwaZulu- Natal
(<http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za>) SA history, politics, gender, literature, economics, human rights, urban struggles
- ❑ **Digitisation, history and the making of a post-colonial archive:** University of the Western Cape
(<http://www.uwc.ac.za/searchcentre/pages/Results.aspx?k=digitisation>)

DH related projects in South Africa

- ❑ **Historical Papers - WITS** (<http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za>)
Largest non-state archive in South Africa
- ❑ **International Library of African Music (ILAM)**
 - Rhodes University, Grahamstown (<http://www.ru.ac.za>)
- ❑ **The Jonathan Edwards Centre Africa 2009** – strategic partnership of Yale University, Jonathan Edwards Center and the University of the Free State (<https://edwardseducationblog.wordpress.com/2016/04/11/missionary-archives-lesotho-online/>) - Missionary Archives from Lesotho, 1832-2006
- ❑ **Race and the Digital Humanities in South Africa** - Hector Peterson Museum (Angel Nieves), New York (<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2250565>)
- ❑ **Soweto Historical GIS Project** (<http://www.dhinitiative.org/projects>)
- ❑ **Language Resource Management Agency – NWU**
(<http://www.rma.nwu.ac.za>)

National DH activities in South Africa

Slow uptake in SA compared to international practice

2015:
1st DH Workshop SA
(23-25 February)
NWU
(Potchefstroom)

2017: Inaugural
Conference of
DHASA held 17-20
Jan 2017 at
Stellenbosch
University
(<http://dh2017.digitahumanities.org.za/>)

2014:
1st local
awareness
campaign (with
international
guest) and a
weekly discussion
by Research Unit
for Literature and
Languages in SA
context at NWU

2016:
2nd DH Workshop SA
(4-8 April)
NWU (Potchefstroom) -
Founding of Digital
Humanities Association
of Southern Africa
(DHASA) as a forum –
(<http://digitalhumanities.org.za/>)

What are academic libraries doing with regard to DH?

❑ **DH Centres or Programmes**

- A number of libraries have dedicated **DH Centres or programmes** – many of these in different developmental stages. **Staffing** of these centres are often confined to a **digital scholarship librarian** (who fulfils other roles) and a few **IT professionals** (many working on contract or grant funded projects , or have other responsibilities beyond DH programmes)

❑ **Typical DH Services**

- Digitisation – providing wide access to cultural information /materials
- Manipulation of data flowing from cultural information
- Offer a website focusing on DH

What are academic libraries doing with regard to DH?

❑ Typical DH Services (Continued)

- Develop tools for preserving and archiving of digitally-born artifacts of recent and contemporary cultural heritage
- Support curation and publication of data that contributes to improved methodologies for the organisation and stewardship of humanities research
- Create frameworks to enable the development of new methods and tools for exploration and visualisation of digital materials and data
- Text analysis and electronic text encoding, as well as image analytics for cultural heritage collections
- Provision of text-mining tools
- Provision of 3D environments
- Provision of Online Exhibitions
- Use social media technologies

What are academic libraries doing with regard to DH?

□ Typical DH Services (Continued)

- Provision of creative environment (space that encourages innovation and testing – where researchers can create, develop and test)
- Some DH Centres have makerspaces incorporated in them, e.g. ScholarsLab at University of Virginia
- Provision of a tool for adding layers of meaning to map (GIS)
- Training on various software and hardware tools (e.g. **Data, Software and Library Carpentry**)

What are academic libraries doing with regard to DH?

☐ Skills development for librarians in DH

Online sources:

- Coursera (<https://www.coursera.org/>)
- Codecademy (<https://www.codecademy.com/>)
- Programming Historian (<http://programminghistorian.org/>) – Software Carpentry for Digital Humanities

Challenges

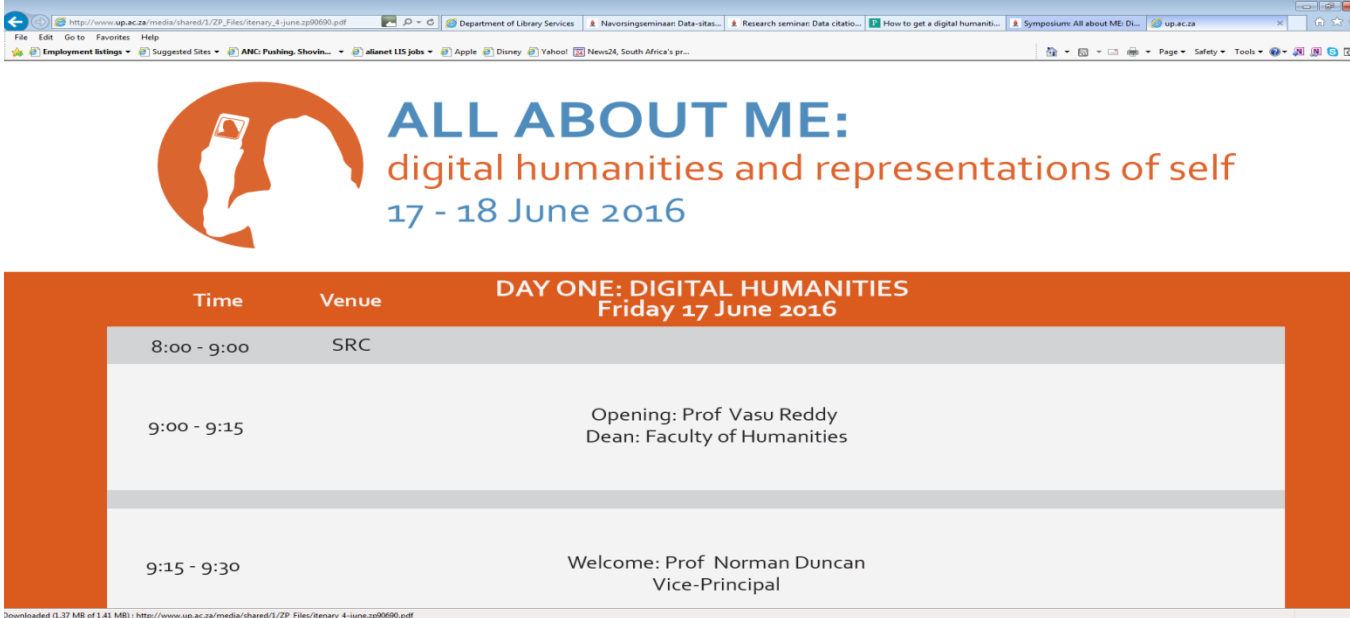


How does Digital Humanities link-up with eResearch and Library Carpentry

- ❑ There is a natural overlap between DH and Library Carpentry and eResearch. This can be seen in the number of Library/Software Carpentry workshops that are geared towards training of library staff and researchers in coding skills for DH
- ❑ Examples of Library/Software Carpentry workshops for DH:
 - Using Git, Github
 - Cleaning data with OpenRefine,
 - Getting started with Markdown
 - Editing audio with Audacity
 - Counting and mining data with Unix
 - R basics with tabular data
 - For more examples see <http://programminghistorian.org/lessons/>

DH at UP

- Seminar: All about me: Digital Humanities and Representations of Self, held 17-18 June 2016, University of Pretoria



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL http://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/1/ZP_Files/itenary_4-june.zp90690.pdf. The page features a logo of a person holding a smartphone and the title "ALL ABOUT ME: digital humanities and representations of self 17 - 18 June 2016". Below the title is a table with an orange header and a white body, detailing the schedule for Day One.

Time	Venue	DAY ONE: DIGITAL HUMANITIES Friday 17 June 2016
8:00 - 9:00	SRC	
9:00 - 9:15		Opening: Prof Vasu Reddy Dean: Faculty of Humanities
9:15 - 9:30		Welcome: Prof Norman Duncan Vice-Principal

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http://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/1/ZP_Files/itenary_4-june.zp90690.pdf

Potential projects in Faculty of Humanities that could be supported

- Capital Cities IRT
 - Sub Theme: Cities Lived: Movements, Exchanges, Memories and Histories of the Present
- Visual Technologies: Critical Encounters FRT
- Scientific e-lexicography for Africa (DAAD funded) (Department of African Languages)
 - Aim of the project is the preparation of electronic dictionaries for Southern Africa

How can UP Library Services potentially facilitate DH?

- Establish a DH Centre or programme
- Staffing:
 - Allocate a staff member(s) to fulfil the role of digital humanities librarian (Upskilling?)
 - Allocate IT professional(s) to support such a service (Upskilling?)
- Identify which of the DH services mentioned earlier are already performed by staff in the library and determine how these can be co-opted to render support for a DH service
- Determine which of the tools and technologies mentioned under DH services are already available and which should be acquired
- Identify tools and technologies and software will need to be added
- Present Library/Data Carpentry workshops to library staff and researchers
- Link this project to outcomes of Project: Digital Humanities & Special Collections and Digitisation?