UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

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Cambridge Digital Humanities

Searching Questions
Digital Humanities Symposium

Wednesday, 11 July 2018
West Road Concert Hall Building
Cambridge CB3 9DP

Cambridge Digital Humanities is a creative and collaborative space where students, researchers and international visitors can come together to engage in dialogue, experiment with technology and advance scholarship.

Programme

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All events will take place in the West Road Concert Hall Building.

9.30 am – 10.00 am   Registration and coffee – Foyer

10.00 am – 10.15 am   **Session 1** – Recital Room

Introducing CDH
John Rink (Director, Cambridge Digital Humanities)
Anne Alexander (Director, CDH Learning)
James Hargrave (Co-Director, CDH Lab)

10.15 am – 11.30 am   **Session 2** – Recital Room (chair: Anne Alexander)

Preparing for Polychromy – art, science and the digital museum
Paola Ricciardi (Fitzwilliam Museum)

The Casebooks Project: from www.magicandmedicine.hps.cam.ac.uk to https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk
Lauren Kassell (History and Philosophy of Science)

Epsilon: building a collaborative digital framework for nineteenth-century scientific correspondence
Alison Pearn (Darwin Correspondence Project) and Louisiane Ferlier (Royal Society)

11.30 am – 11.50 am   Coffee break – Foyer

11.50 am – 12.50 pm   **Session 3** – Recital Room (chair: Anne Alexander)

The Concept Lab
Peter de Bolla (Faculty of English, CRASSH)

The Text- and Data-Mining Test Kitchen
Anne Alexander (Cambridge Digital Humanities)

12.50 pm – 1.00 pm   Morning wrap-up

1.00 pm – 2.00 pm   Lunch, posters and networking – Foyer

2.00 pm – 3.00 pm   **Session 4** – Recital Room (chair: John Rink)

DH, academic generosity, and the participatory imaginary
Neil Fraistat (Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities)

Radicalised infrastructures
Patrik Svensson (Umeå University)

Working to define a digital humanities community: local, national and international challenges
Jane Winters (School of Advanced Study, University of London)

Moonshots and digital humanities
John Naughton (University of Cambridge)

3.00 pm – 4.00 pm   **Session 5** – Recital Room

Roundtable discussion, moderated by John Rink

4.00 pm – 4.15 pm   Coffee break – Foyer

4.15 pm – 5.00 pm   **Session 6** – Recital Room

Plenary discussion: Where next for (C)DH?

Session 2

Preparing for Polychromy – art, science and the digital museum
Paola Ricciardi

The 'Polychromy Revealed' research project aims to investigate, interpret, conserve and display the Fitzwilliam Museum's collection of medieval wood sculptures, transforming it from an under-used and under-studied portion of our holdings into a resource that can be used for teaching, research and public engagement. This ambitious, large-scale project will include the creation of an interactive digital research resource, which we hope will help us connect the collection with a wide range of audiences. A ten-month pilot project which ran in 2017 radically transformed our vision for the large-scale project, refocusing it on the scientific and technical aspects of the research. The project's aims have broadened significantly to include a larger outreach component and more research into the public's perception of three-dimensional museum objects and their replicas – both digital and physical ones. I will briefly discuss the challenges we encountered and the things we learned along the way. I will also describe the activities we are currently running as we prepare to submit a grant application for the large-scale project. Finally, I will mention other ongoing research projects at the Fitzwilliam Museum which have – or will have – a significant digital component.

Paola Ricciardi is the Fitzwilliam Museum's first (and only!) Research Scientist. She holds a PhD in Cultural Heritage Science from the University of Florence (2008) and a Master's Degree in Physics from the University of Rome (2003). Before joining the Fitzwilliam Museum in October 2011, she spent three years as a Post-Doc at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. Paola's research interests include the technical analysis of cultural heritage objects; the study of artists' materials and techniques; and the transfer of knowledge between artists and craftsmen working in different media. With the aim of finding new ways to communicate her research to ever-broader audiences, she has co-written and produced a short film for the 'Cambridge Shorts' initiative ('The Colourful Page', 2014) and helped create the online research resource 'ILLUMINATED: Manuscripts in the Making' (launched in July 2016).

The Casebooks Project: from www.magicandmedicine.hps.cam.ac.uk to https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk
Lauren Kassell

In the decades around 1600 a pair of English astrologers recorded 80,000 consultations. This is one of the largest surviving sets of private medical records in history. The Casebooks Project, a team of historians in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, has transformed this paper archive into a digital archive. This talk introduces the project and uses it to reflects on a decade of challenges in digital humanities and to sketch opportunities for the future.

Lauren Kassell is (from October 2018) Professor of History of Science and Medicine in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge, and Fellow of Pembroke College. Her work focuses on medicine, the occult sciences and digital humanities. Since 2008, she has directed the Casebooks Project, funded by the Wellcome Trust. She is editor, with Nick Hopwood and Rebecca Flemming, of the field-defining *Reproduction: Antiquity to the Present Day*, forthcoming with CUP in the autumn.

Epsilon: building a collaborative digital framework for nineteenth-century scientific correspondence
Alison Pearn and Louisiane Ferlier

The Darwin Correspondence Project at Cambridge University Library is a lead partner in an international consortium developing Epsilon, a flexible, technical infrastructure designed to support the digital recreation of nineteenth-century scientific correspondence networks by linking letter-texts from multiple sources for cross-searching and analysis. Designed to promote and support the digital creation, delivery and preservation of scientific correspondence, whether from traditional correspondence editions or in small-scale research datasets, it will facilitate exploitation by the next generation of scholars and exploration by the widest possible public audience.

Alison Pearn is an historian and historian of science. She is Associate Director of the Darwin Correspondence Project at Cambridge University Library (www.darwinproject.ac.uk) and has overseen its digital strategy from mainframe to cloud. She is the co-ordinator of the Epsilon project to link nineteenth-century science correspondences, the first prototype of which was demonstrated at the History of Science Society meeting in November 2017 and which will launch its first public version in September 2018.

Louisiane Ferlier is the Digital Resources Manager at the Royal Society's Centre for the History of Science. A historian of ideas by training, she has worked on various digital humanities projects. In her current role, she is responsible for making over 350 years of Royal Society collections discoverable online and therefore supports various collaborations such as the Epsilon project.

Session 3

The Concept Lab
Peter de Bolla

What, exactly, are concepts? No one really knows. The Concept Lab has been working for the last four years on an answer. We are still some way away from a conclusion, but we have some senses of how we might get there. The main focus of our enquiry is the distribution of words in massive datasets of language use. For the most part we have been using a historical dataset that comprises, effectively, the printed output of the eighteenth century in English. This comes to 36 million pages of text. We think that these distributions can give us a clue as to the composition or architecture of concepts. To this end we have developed a number of computational tools to help us understand these distributions and their relevance for parsing conceptual forms.

Peter de Bolla is the Director of the Concept Lab, based at CRASSH. He is the author of nine books, the most recent of which, *The Architecture of Concepts: The Historical Formation of Human Rights*, won the Patten award in 2015. He is currently the Chair of the Faculty Board of English.

The Text- and Data-Mining Test Kitchen
Anne Alexander

The *TDM Test Kitchen* is an experimental service supported by Cambridge Digital Humanities, Cambridge University Library and Cambridge University Press, which aims to:

- Explore the application of TDM (Text- and Data-Mining) methods to CUP and UL collections
- Provide a 'live' learning environment where researchers, CUP and library staff involved either in using TDM methods or in developing TDM support services can learn more about TDM methods, share good practice and exchange knowledge about how to overcome challenges
- Facilitate discussion between researchers, the UL and CUP about how to develop TDM methods and services in future.

Over the past six months, researchers who are interested in developing TDM projects using CUP and CUL collections have been offered a tailored package of advice covering issues such as IP rights, data access, corpus creation and visualisation methods. This presentation will explore some of the challenges that we have faced in these areas and how the project team is working to overcome them, along with examples of some of the emerging projects using TDM methods which have been facilitated by the Test Kitchen during its pilot phase.

Anne Alexander is Director of the Learning Programme at CDH and has been Coordinator of Cambridge Digital Humanities Network since its inception in 2011. Her research focuses on the use of digital media by activists in the Middle East, ethics of big data and the political economy of the internet.

Session 4

DH, academic generosity, and the participatory imaginary
Neil Fraistat

The amateur humanist or person of letters has been increasingly hard to find, and one perpetual academic refrain in current 'humanities-in-crisis' rhetoric is that 'they' just don't get 'us'. Few members of the public or undergraduates even know what humanities research is. There are some scholars, however, who are pointing to ways that digital humanities is altering the 'participatory imaginary' in which the academy is still enmeshed, involving who gets to participate in the work of the humanities, on what terms, and with what consequences for the humanities, the university as an institution, and the culture at large. As Kathleen Fitzgerald has recently asked, is there a more generous way forward for the humanities?

My paper argues for the importance of 'citizen scholarship' and addresses challenges, technological and practical, involved with DH bringing humanities research into the classroom and out to the public, to help make undergraduates and non-academics meaningful participants in the globalised transition through which our entire inherited archive is being digitised and reinterpreted.

Neil Fraistat is Professor of English and former Director of the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH) at the University of Maryland. He currently serves as President of the Keats-Shelley Association of America and Co-Founder and General Editor of the Shelley-Godwin Archive. He has chaired the international Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations and co-founded and co-chaired centerNet, an international network of digital humanities centres. Fraistat has published widely on the subjects of digital humanities, romanticism, and textual studies in various articles and in the ten books he has authored or edited, including the multivolume edition *The Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. He has been awarded both the Society for Textual Scholarship's biennial Fredson Bowers Memorial Prize and the biennial Richard J. Finneran Prize; the Keats-Shelley Association Prize; honourable mention for the Modern Language Association's biennial Distinguished Scholarly Edition Prize; the University of Maryland's Kirwan Faculty Research Prize; and the Keats-Shelley Association's Distinguished Scholar Award.

Radicalised infrastructures
Patrik Svensson

The concept of infrastructure has proven to be a powerful way to conceive complex phenomena and aggregated systems, such as utilities, transportation and scientific apparatuses. Since the mid-1990s we have seen the emergence of 'research infrastructure' as a framework, which is now an important factor in allocating resources, controlling academic work and imagining futures. In a recent roadmap, research infrastructure is described as the 'leaps that remake the world'.

A new centre for digital humanities is a tremendous opportunity to engage in critical and constructive infrastructure work. This is an opportunity not only for the (digital) humanities: the humanities can play an important role, not least through intersectional and integrative forms of humanities and areas such as gender, disability and race studies. A key task is to critique, imagine and build infrastructures to tackle scholarly and societal challenges and opportunities, but also to challenge and change infrastructural regimes to become more human.

Patrik Svensson is Professor of Humanities and Information Technology at Umeå University, Visiting Professor of Digital Humanities at UCLA, and former Director of HUMlab at Umeå University (2000–14). He is currently writing a book on a humanistic infrastructure, developing presentation technology, and planning a workshop on 'The future of the institute' (October 2018). His publications include 'Contemporary and future spaces for media studies and digital humanities' (in *The Routledge Companion to Media Studies and Digital Humanities*, 2018), *Big Digital Humanities: Imagining a Meeting Place for the Humanities and the Digital* (University of Michigan Press, 2016), 'The why and how of middleware' (with Johanna Drucker; *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 2016), and '"One damn slide after another": PowerPoint at every occasion for speech' (with Erica Robles-Anderson; *Computational Culture*, 2016).

Working to define a digital humanities community: local, national and international challenges
Jane Winters

This presentation will discuss the importance of community for building and sustaining digital humanities research and infrastructure. At the local level, within institutions, successful DH initiatives have to work across academic departments, libraries and university computing services taking account of different and sometimes conflicting priorities. Decisions also have to be made about the kinds of research, and researcher, that can be supported, and about how to engage both expert digital scholars and those who are only beginning to experiment with digital methods. This is not just a question of offering practical technical solutions to specific problems, but of thinking imaginatively about advocacy, advice, training and incubation – and of being present in those physical and virtual spaces where staff and students are most likely to be found. I will conclude by briefly considering how these local communities can go on to intersect with, learn from and complement wider national and international networks and groupings, enriching digital research in the humanities as a whole.

Jane Winters is Professor of Digital Humanities at the School of Advanced Study, University of London. Her current and past research projects include Digging into Linked Parliamentary Data, Big UK Domain Data for the Arts and Humanities, Traces through Time: Prosopography in Practice across Big Data, the Thesaurus of British and Irish History as SKOS, and Born Digital Big Data and Methods for History and the Humanities. Her research interests include digital history, born digital data for humanities research, new models for peer review, digital scholarly editing, and open access publishing.

Moonshots and digital humanities
John Naughton

Humanities scholars have traditionally been solitary scholars. But to realise the potential of digital technology, many of them will have to work in teams. What are the barriers to such a profound culture change, and how might they be addressed?

John Naughton is a Senior Research Fellow at CRASSH where he is Co-Director of the Leverhulme-funded 'Conspiracy and Democracy' Project. He is also an historian of the internet, Emeritus Professor of the Public Understanding of Technology at the Open University, and the technology columnist of the *Observer* newspaper. His most recent book – *From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg: What You Really Need to Know About the Internet* – is published by Quercus. He is currently working on *95 Theses about Technology*.

Posters

Visit the following posters in the Foyer of the West Road Concert Hall:

- Amy Webster (Faculty of Education) – River banks, railway children and rabbit holes: recovering and analysing the 'children's classics'

- Cambridge Digital Library

  Emma Spary with Justin Rivest and Laia Portet (Faculty of History) – The Simples Project: using text-mining techniques on early modern medical works

- Feynman Liang (Department of Engineering) and Mark Gotham (Faculty of Music) – BachBot: automatic stylistic composition of Bach chorales with Deep LSTM

- Julie Blake (Faculty of Education) – Reading topic models aesthetically: an experiment

- Sophie Defrance (Cambridge University Library Special Collections) – Royal Commonwealth Society and Cambridge Digital Library photographic glass plates and lantern slides

- Text- and Data-Mining Test Kitchen

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