

Many, varied and disputed: defining Digital Humanities



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Overview:

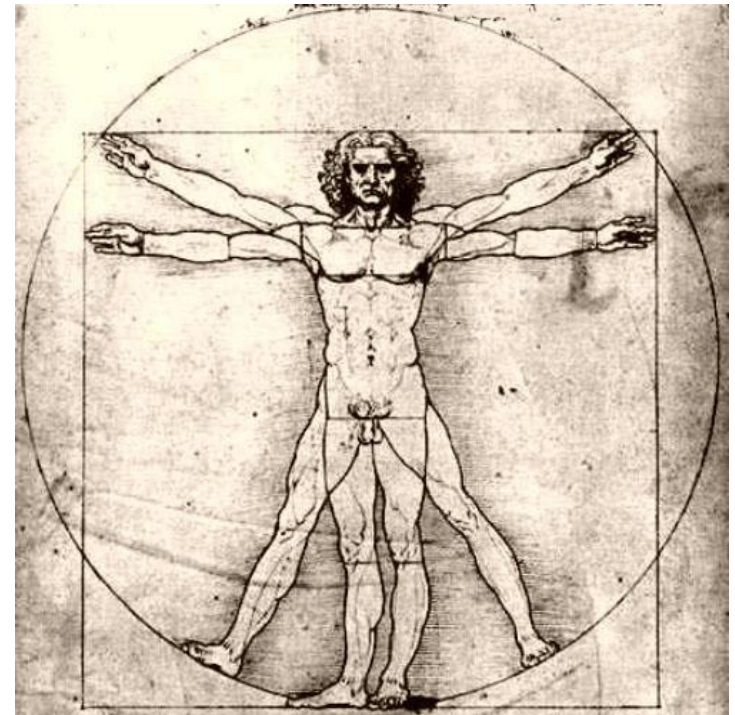
- The Humanities +
- The Digital
- = Digital Humanities (DH)?
- Glance at history of DH
- Definitions of DH
- Overview of DH and key research areas
- Conclusion



- What is meant by “Humanities”?

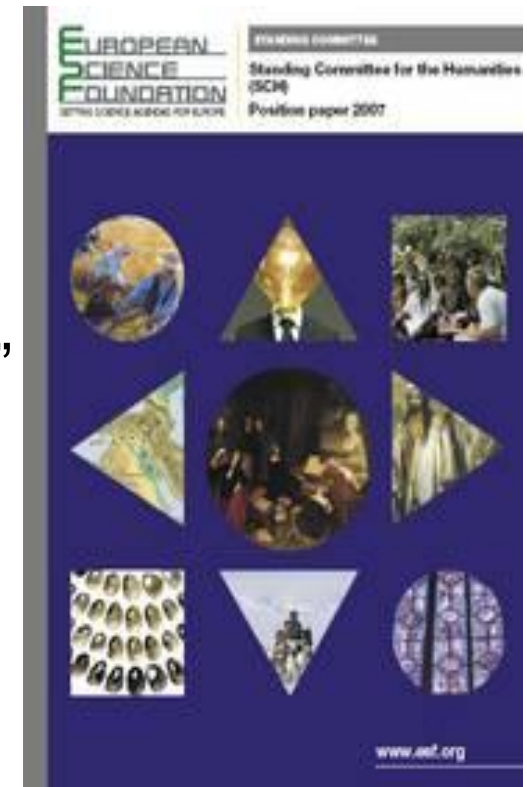
“homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto”

(I am a human being. I consider nothing human alien to me. Terence, Heauton Timorumenos, 2. Century BC)



What is Humanities?

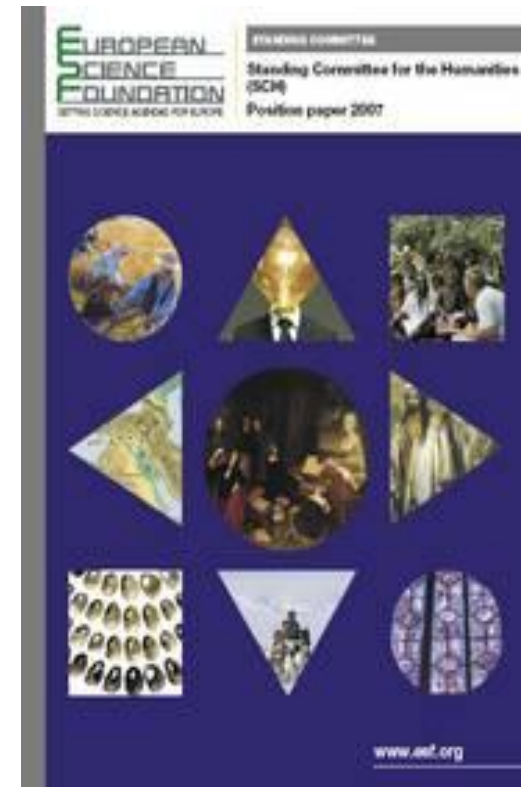
ESF SCH Position Paper (2007) emphasises the centrality of *Culture* to the Humanities, and describes the former as ‘the result of the complex of conceptual, linguistic, affective, moral and behavioural systems that allow us to **define** and **re-define ourselves** in a **changing world**. This “cultural complex” is what the humanities study.



What is Humanities?

Range of disciplines: history; archaeology; literary studies; art history; Musicology; psychology; anthropology; philosophy and logic; linguistics; pedagogical and educational research; the history and philosophy of Science ...

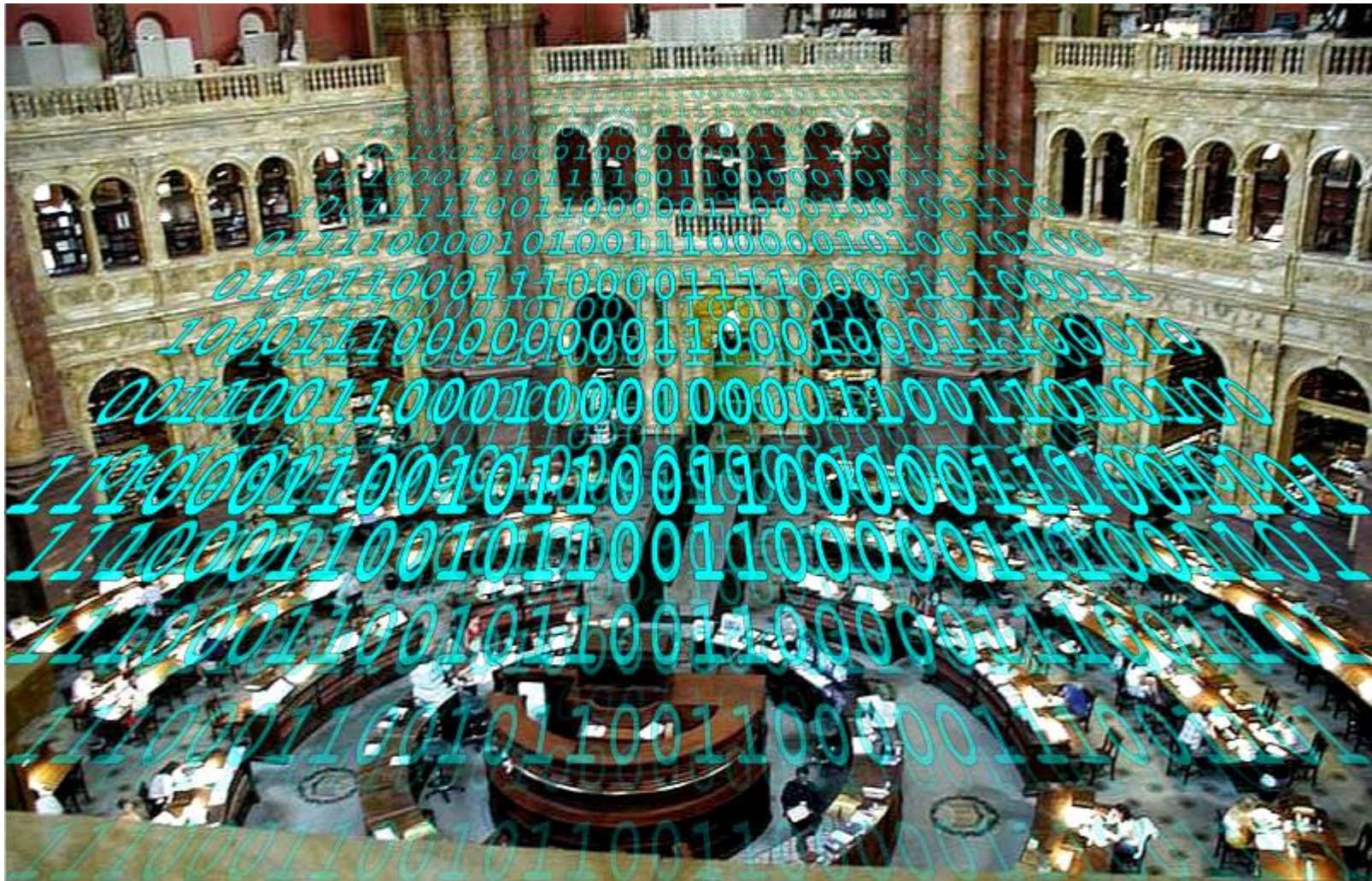
However, they also reflect that ‘In thus dealing with culture, its contents and its manifestations, its structures and its constraints, **the humanities naturally interact with other fields of science and art**’ --- Digital Humanities?



**Digital (01000100 01101001 01100111
01101001 01110100 01100001 01101100)**

1 (Of signals or data) expressed as series of the digits 0 and 1, typically represented by values of a physical quantity such as voltage or magnetic polarization. Often contrasted with analogue. (Oxford dictionaries)

So Digital Humanities is ?



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- Binder
- Non-Fiction Format
- Manuscript
 - Title Page
 - Foreword
 - The history of comp...
 - What_is_DH
 - Lit_ReviewHistory...
 - Unanswered Qs
 - Conclusion
 - Endnotes
- Notes
 - Note on What is DH
 - Why_expect_so_much
- Ideas
- Research
 - Sample MS
 - Hist_DH bibliography
- Trash
 - Sub-Section
 - Why_histories
 - Why needed?
 - But why needed?

 Calibri Regular 12 1.0x **B I U**

Conclusion

by a number of problems. Above we have reflected on the contested nature of Digital Humanities. The practical issue raised by this is the problem of where to draw boundaries, or simply put, how to decide who can be seen as a Digital Humanist and who cannot? The approach taken here is an inclusive one. Included are not only those who worked in Digital Humanities from the 1950s onwards within Universities and in a range of home disciplines but also those who worked in external areas such as funding bodies, public committees and Industry. Included also are those who were critical of developments in computing.

The next problem is how this history of Digital Humanities intersects and is framed by many of the problems of the history of computing. An undertaking such as this

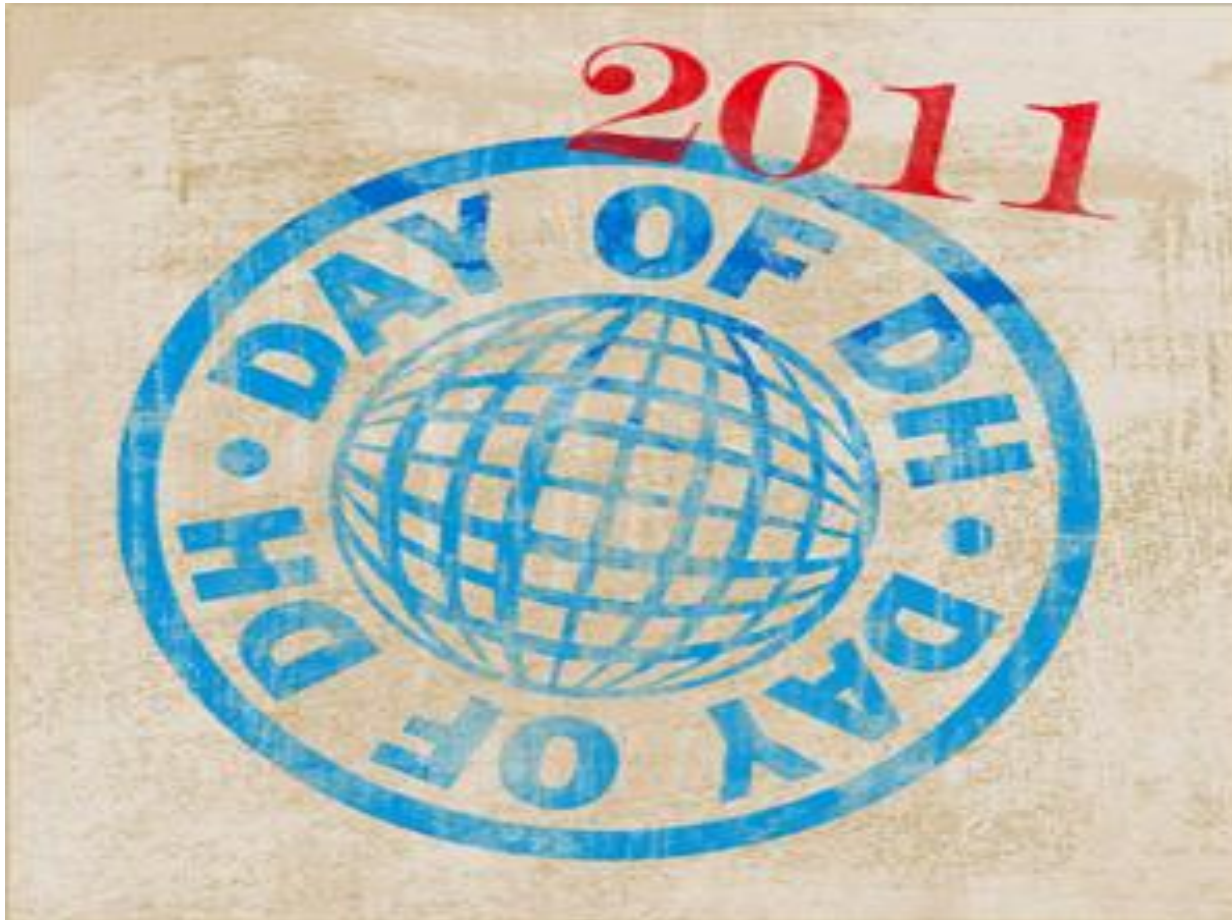
What would a history of the field look like? McCarty has taken this up when he said that "Mahoney argues that the primary difficulty in writing a history of computing is not the fragmentary record, rather its undefined scope: 'We don't yet know what the history of computing is really about We still cast about for historical precedents and comparisons, unsure of where computing fits into the society that created it and has been shaped by it.'" (8) A history of humanities computing faces these difficulties too and also must seek its precedents and comparisons. But a humanities computing, with its different context, necessarily has different precedents, and the differences are telling. Indeed, the identification of precedents is neither random nor neutral, not intellectually, politically, or professionally". We have also taken this up elsewhere. (2003 p. 1224)

 Comment





Day of Digital Humanities



Day of Digital Humanities 2009 -2012

I don't! I just do it
—*Nick Mirzoeff*

With extreme reluctance. -*Lou
Burnard, UK*

I hate this question, and I don't
have an answer for it. Neither, it
seems, does a large portion of the
people who might be called Digital
Humanists. I'll leave it at that. -
*Justin Tonra, University of Virginia,
USA*

So DH involves:

- Using technology (especially new and cutting edge) in an advanced way to do Humanities research
- Applying Humanities analysis to technology
- Using technology in ways that allow long held practices of publication and public engagement to be challenged
- ...

Day of Digital Humanities 2009 -2012

Digital Humanities is a critical investigation and practice of the methods of humanities research in the digital medium. -*Julia Flanders, Brown University, USA*

A term of tactical convenience. -*Matthew Kirschenbaum, University of Maryland, USA*

The great opportunity to burn down academic walls
—*Enrica Salvatori*

It is both a methodology and a community. -*Jason Farman, University of Maryland, College Park, USA*

So what is Digital Humanities *not*?



Is Digital Humanities 'big tent'?

- Digital Humanities conference 2011 Stanford



Is Digital Humanities ‘revolutionary’?

- *The Digital Humanities manifesto 2.0*

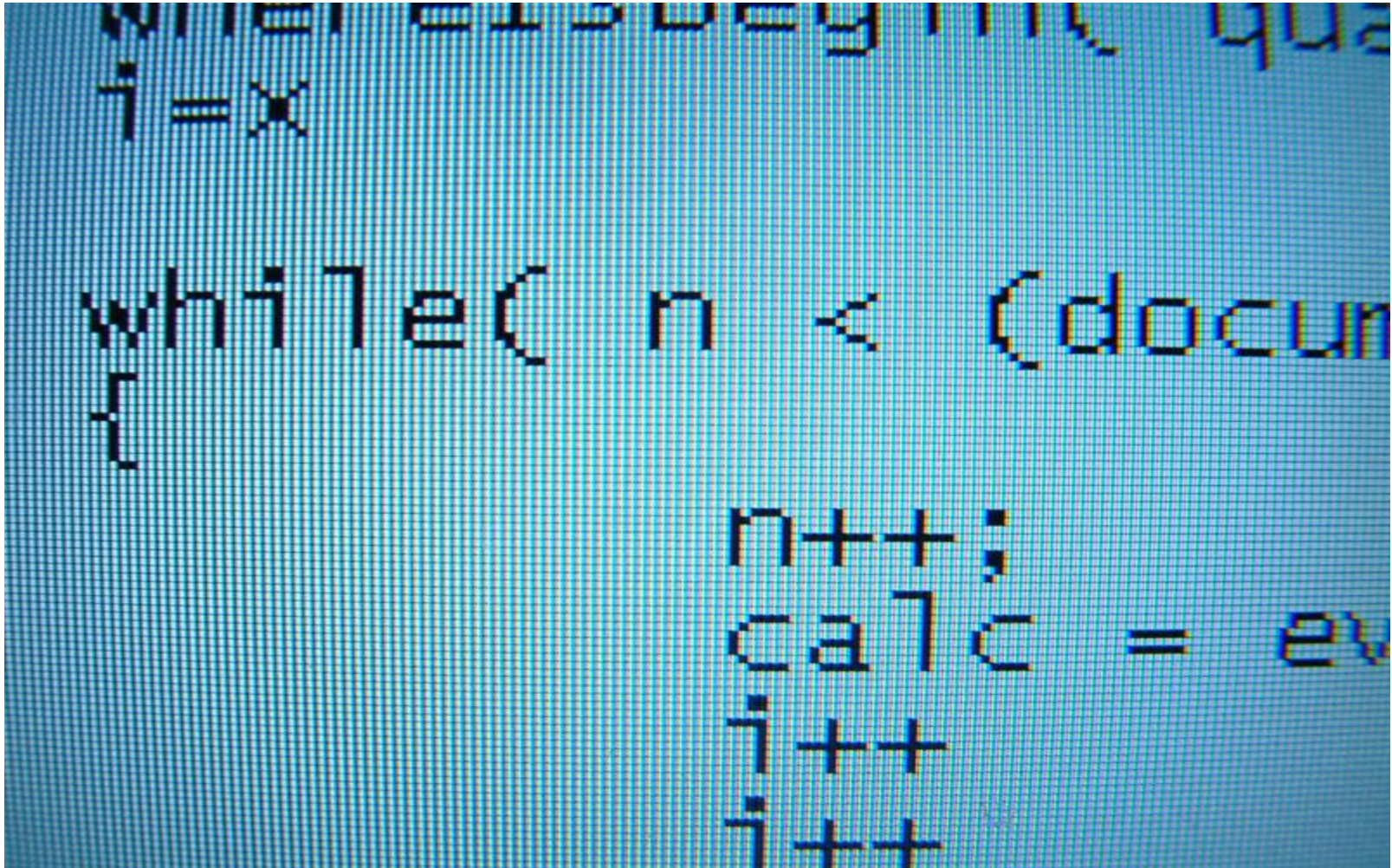
http://www.humanitiesblast.com/manifesto/Manifesto_V2.pdf



The Road to Worldwide October (revolution) - Hoover Plan (placard) - Crisis (paper on table). By Viktor Deni, 1931.

Is digital humanities about 'building'?

- See <http://www.briancroxall.net/buildingDH/>



Is digital humanities about 'infrastructure'?

- See <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/humanities/strategic-activities/research-infrastructures-in-the-humanities.html>



Is digital humanities about ‘cultural criticism’?

POSTCOLONIAL DIGITAL HUMANITIES



BLOG MISSION STATEMENT RESOURCES THE REWRITING WIKIPEDIA PROJECT #SUMMERSCHOOL COMICS ABOUT US EVENTS

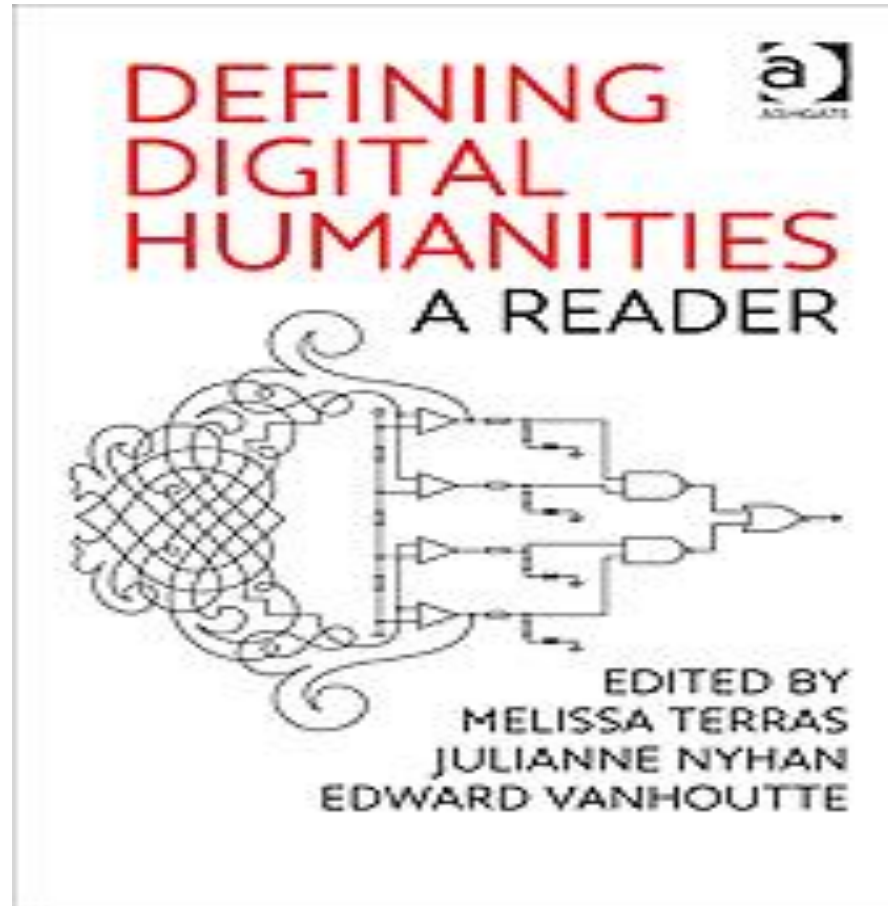
Anand published in 1935. The novel established Anand as one of India's leading English authors. The book was inspired by his aunt's experience when she had a meal with a Muslim woman and was treated as an outcast by his family. The plot of this book, Anand's first, revolves around the argument for eradicating the caste system. It depicts a day in the life of Bakha, a

UNTOUCHABLE E-BOOKS: MULK RAJ ANAND, MODERNISM, AND TECHNOLOGY

The following is a guest post by Amanda Golden, who addresses the challenges of teaching Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Untouchable* (1935) through...

Also see Alan Liu, Where is cultural criticism in the Digital Humanities <http://liu.english.ucsb.edu/where-is-cultural-criticism-in-the-digital-humanities/>
 Steven Ramsay, Why I'm in it http://stephenramsay.us/2013/09/12/why_im_in_it/

Terras, Nyhan and Vanhoutte, 2014.
Defining Digital Humanities: A Reader.
Ashgate





“**Busa padre** fr. S.J. (Italy) gives a demonstration of the mechanographic method which has been applied for the creation of the detailed word index of certain works of St.Thomas d'Aquin”

What do Humanities scholars research and teach?

John Unsworth's scholarly primitives:

Discovering

Annotating

Comparing

Referring

Sampling

Illustrating

Representing

See: <http://www3.isrl.illinois.edu/~unsworth/Kings.5-00/primitives.html>

Has he left something out?

Uses of Computing

- Capacity
- Accessibility
- Flexibility
- Manipulability
- Interactivity
- Hypertextuality (Dan J. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig. *Digital History: A guide to gathering, preserving and presenting the past on the web*)
- Imagining Digital Humanities within this framework?



Characteristics of Humanities Sources

- Artifacts of, *inter alia*, human expression, interaction and imagination form the key Humanities 'data-sets' which are highly heterogeneous in form
- Collected rather than generated and rarely by those who created them
- Complex: variants, annotation, editorial comment
- Multi-script and multi-lingual

Characteristics of Humanities Sources

- “Humanistic inquiry acknowledges the situated, partial, and constitutive character of knowledge production, the recognition that knowledge is constructed, *taken*, not simply given as a natural representation of pre-existing fact”. (Drucker, DHQ 2011:5)
- Long-lasting both as objects of study and reference
- Same object can be studied for many purposes
- Humanities research often aims to explore questions rather than definitively solve them (process not product)



Source: <http://tinyurl.com/qfb4qce>

Some important Digital Humanities activities

- Communication and collaboration e.g. UCL's Transcribe Bentham <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/transcribe-bentham/>



Some important Digital Humanities activities

- Text encoding and analysis



TEI: Text Encoding Initiative

The Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) is a consortium which collectively develops and maintains a standard for the representation of texts in digital form. Its chief deliverable is a set of Guidelines which specify encoding methods for machine-readable texts, chiefly in the humanities, social sciences and linguistics. Since 1994, the TEI Guidelines have been widely used by libraries, museums, publishers, and individual scholars to present texts for online research, teaching, and preservation. In addition to the Guidelines themselves, the Consortium provides a variety of supporting resources, including [resources for learning TEI](#), information on [projects using the TEI](#), TEI-related [publications](#), and [software](#) developed for or adapted to the TEI.

The TEI Consortium is a non-profit membership organization composed of academic institutions, research projects, and individual scholars from around the world. Members contribute financially to the Consortium and elect representatives to its Council and Board of Directors.

Want to become active in the TEI community? [Become a TEI Member](#), join a [special interest group](#), sign up for the [TEI-L mailing list](#), and come to our [annual conferences and members' meetings](#).

Some important Digital Humanities activities

- Data mining and text analysis e.g. Ian Lancashire's work on Agatha Christie <http://www.radiolab.org/people/ian-lancashire/>



The image shows a screenshot of the Radiolab Player interface. The background features a stylized landscape with clouds, gears, and satellite dishes. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Header:** The Radiolab logo (a stylized 'P' in a circle) and the text "RADIOLAB PLAYER" are prominently displayed.
- Now Playing:** A section on the left with an orange background. It features a thumbnail image of a cluster of dark, round objects. The title "Searching for Clues" is displayed in bold, followed by a short description: "Agatha Christie's clever detective novels may reveal more about the inner workings of the human mind than she intended: according to Dr. Ian Lancashire at the University of Toronto, the Queen of Crime left behind hidden clues to the real-life mysteries of h...". Below the text is a progress bar showing "00:00 / 21:28" and a "Download" button.
- Playlist:** A section on the right with a light blue background. It includes a "Clear Playlist" link and three tabs: "MY PLAYLIST" (active), "MOST PLAYED", and "EXPLORE". The "MY PLAYLIST" tab shows the same "Searching for Clues" track with a thumbnail, a description, and "Listen" and "Download" buttons.
- Other Elements:** A "CLOSE" button is visible in the top right corner, and "AUDIO HELP" is located in the bottom right corner.

Some important Digital Humanities activities

- Visualisation e.g. Mapping the Republic of Letters
<https://republicofletters.stanford.edu/>



Some important Digital Humanities activities

- Multimedia
 - New learning and understanding experiences e.g. Qrator
 - <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/projects/innovation/Warwick>



Some important Digital Humanities activities

- Virtual Reality: Architectural and archaeological models

King's Visualisation Lab

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Motion capture, chromakey & HD video recording

King's Visualisation Lab (KVL)

Based at the Department of Digital Humanities, King's College London, KVL specialises in visual representation for archaeology, historic buildings, cultural heritage organisations, and academic research.

KVL has completed projects for numerous organisations including the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, is currently creating a research-based model of the Roman Villa at Boscoreale for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

KING'S
College
LONDON

Department of Digital Humanities

- The London Charter
- 3D VisA



television



archaeology



research



installations



internet



architecture

© King's Visualisation Lab, King's College London


Some important Digital Humanities activities

- Images and Imaging: Digitization of artefacts and Image processing to interrogate image data



Some important Digital Humanities activities

- eScience, Grids, Virtual Research Environments: e.g. TextGrid
<http://www.textgrid.de/en.html>



The diagram features a central cartoon owl character. The owl is orange with a brown belly and is standing on a blue rectangular pedestal labeled 'Rep'. Behind the owl is a computer monitor with the word 'Lab' on its screen. The entire graphic is centered between two light blue rectangular boxes containing text.

TextGrid Laboratory
 single point of entry to the virtual
 research environment

tools and services in a user friendly
 software

[Download TextGridLab](#)

TextGrid Repository
 long-term archive for the humanities,
 embedded in a grid infrastructure

ensures long-term availability and
 access of research data

[Browse TextGridRep](#)

– See also

Look to [arts-humanities.net](http://www.arts-humanities.net) for an overview of methods:

<http://www.arts-humanities.net/ictguides/methods>

Some Digital Humanities activities

- Journal of Digital Humanities



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Journal of Digital Humanities. At the top left is the logo 'JDH' in a purple box. To its right is the title 'Journal of Digital Humanities' in white text on a dark background. A search bar with the text 'Search JDH' and a magnifying glass icon is located in the top right. Below the title is a purple navigation bar with links for 'About', 'Volumes', and 'Submissions'. On the right side of this bar is a 'Subscribe to the RSS' link with an RSS icon. The main content area is white and features the following text:

Welcome to the
Journal of Digital Humanities
Vol. 2, No. 1 Winter 2012

The *Journal of Digital Humanities* is a comprehensive, peer-reviewed, open access journal that features the best scholarship, tools, and conversations produced by the digital humanities community in the previous quarter.

Digital Humanities



Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AHoellischer_Proteus.jpg By Erasmus Francisi (1627-1694) was the author of the book [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Today...

- “Nowadays,” writes Stephen Ramsay in *Defining Digital Humanities*, “the term can mean anything from media studies to electronic art, from data mining to edutech, from scholarly editing to anarchic blogging, while inviting code junkies, digital artists, standards wonks, transhumanists, game theorists, free culture advocates, archivists, librarians, and edupunks under its capacious canvas.”

Technology Is Taking Over English Departments

The false promise of the digital humanities

By [Adam Kirsch](#)

The humanities are in crisis again, or still. But there is one big exception: digital humanities, which is a growth industry. In 2009, the nascent field was the talk of the Modern Language Association (MLA) convention: “among all the contending subfields,” a reporter wrote about that year’s gathering, “the digital humanities seem like the first ‘next big thing’ in a long time.” Even earlier, the National Endowment for the Humanities created its Office of Digital Humanities to help fund projects

About	Team Members	Publications	Meetings	Interviews
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Hidden Histories is a research project into the application of computational methods to the humanities during the period from 1949 to the present. The project conducts, collects and disseminates interviews with scholars and practitioners who were active during this period. Combining the interviews with archival data, new

