MANIFESTE DES DIGITAL HUMANITIES

Manifesto for the Digital Humanities

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Context

We, professionals or observers of the digital humanities (humanités numériques) *came together in Paris for THATCamp on May 18th and 19th, 2010.*

Over the course of these two days, we discussed, exchanged, and collectively reflected upon what the digital humanities are, and tried to imagine and invent what they could become.

At the close of the camp – which represents but a first step – we propose to the research communities, and to all those involved in the creation, publication, valorization or preservation of knowledge, a manifesto for the digital humanities.

I. Definition

1. Society's digital turn changes and calls into question the conditions of knowledge production and distribution.

2. For us, the digital humanities concern the totality of the social sciences and humanities. The digital humanities are not *tabula rasa*. On the contrary, they rely on all the paradigms, *savoir-faire* and knowledge specific to these disciplines, while mobilizing the tools and unique perspectives enabled by digital technology.

3. The digital humanities designate a "transdiscipline", embodying all the methods, systems and heuristic perspectives linked to the digital within the fields of humanities and the social sciences.

II. Situation

4. We observe:

– that experiments in the digital domain of the social sciences and humanities have multiplied in the last half century. What have emerged most recently are centers for digital humanities – which at the moment are themselves only protoypes or areas of application specific to the approach of digital humanities;

– that computational and digital approaches have greater technical, and therefore economic, research constraints; that these constraints provide an opportunity to foster collaborative work;

– that while a certain number of proven methods exist, they are not equally known or shared;

– that there are many communities deriving from shared interests in practices, tools, and various interdisciplinary goals – encoding textual sources, geographic information systems, lexicometry, digitization of cultural, scientific and technical heritage, web cartography, datamining, 3D, oral archives, digital arts and hypermedia literatures, etc. – and that these communities are converging to form the field of digital humanities.

III. Declaration

5. We, professionals of the digital humanities, are building a community of practice that is solidary, open, welcoming and freely accessible.

6. We are a community without borders. We are a multilingual and multidisciplinary community.

7. Our objectives are the advancement of knowledge, the improvement of research quality in our disciplines, the enrichment of knowledge and of collective patrimony, in the academic sphere and beyond it.

8. We call for the integration of digital culture in the definition of the general culture of the twenty-first century.

IV. Guidelines

9. We call for open access to data and metadata, which must be documented and interoperable, both technically and conceptually.

10. We support the dissemination, exchange and free modification of methods, code, formats and research findings.

11. We call for the integration of digital humanities education within social science and humanities curricula. We also wish to see the creation of diplomas specific to the digital humanities, and the development of dedicated professional education. Finally, we want such expertise to be considered in recruitment and career development.

12. We commit to building a collective expertise based upon a common vocabulary, a collective expertise proceeding from the work of all the actors involved. This collective expertise is to become a common good. It is a scientific opportunity, but also an opportunity for professional insertion in all sectors.

13. We want to help define and propagate best practices, corresponding to needs identified within or across disciplines, which should derive and evolve from debate and consensus within the communities concerned. The fundamental openness of the digital humanities nevertheless assures a pragmatic approach to protocols and visions, which maintains the right to coexistence of different and competing methods, to the benefit of both thought and practice.

14. We call for the creation of scalable digital infrastructures responding to real needs. These digital infrastructures will be built iteratively, based upon methods and approaches that prove successful in research communities.

Join us!

You can sign the Manifesto