



Session Overview

Session

6.3: BOF: Digital Humanities Afield

Time: Thursday, 20/Mar/2014: 3:20pm - 4:50pm

Location: Sem Room 2

Presentations

Digital humanities afield

Suzana Sukovic¹, Peter Read², Diana Hodge³

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Digital humanities are normally associated with organisations such as universities, museums, galleries and historical associations where we think of categories such as creators, students and users. In reality, the use and creation of digital humanities work happens in a continuum across sectors. Knowledge and skills required in digital humanities are being developed in a variety of contexts well before one becomes a digital humanist. Multipurposeful electronic editions, which provide exploratory environments for a variety of users and their needs, are a holy grail of digital humanities. Ideally, skilled users from all walks of life would create their understanding of the topic and use the material to create other works. However, a required skill set to participate in knowledge-building cycle online is becoming increasingly difficult to define as technology and digital practices blur traditional boundaries.

In this session, we wish to discuss users and creators of digital humanities outside the confines of academia and major cultural institutions. Who are these users/creators? What skills do they need? How is their work relevant to the mainstream digital humanities? We will use examples from secondary and tertiary education and from the community engagement with research data to discuss these questions.

The starting point for Suzana Sukovic is multimedia work by high school students which ticks all major boxes of concern to digital humanities – interpretation of text through digital media, blurring boundaries between creative and analytical, and ever expanding skill set. She proposes transliteracy as a framework for considering a range of related skills. Her model for integrating transliteracy in the curriculum, training and professional development programs, targets users and producers of digital humanities. It also provides a framework for embedding transliteracy skills relevant to digital humanities in a variety of learning contexts.

Diana Hodge considers issues of transliteracy in the tertiary environment. Librarians are familiar with the concept of information literacy and how these skills can be taught and how students can apply them across a range of platforms and formats. The term 'transliteracy' is still relatively new to academic librarians; librarians are however familiar with the idea that 21st century students need to be literate across an ever widening range of mediums. This ranges from archival documents, data, traditional text, audio, social media and art in physical and virtual formats. Can academic librarians help students from first year through to research degree level become transliterate? What specific skills, beyond the well-known standards for information literacy, should be included in a students' repertoire for transliteracy?

Peter Read discusses uses of a historical community website. Who uses it? And How? historyofaboriginalsydney.edu.au is designed particularly for Aboriginal people as a way of returning individual and community histories back to the people who made them. It is also meant to be used by schools and colleges, and by Sydney people generally. In this discussion he will share some of the feedback the project team has received, and from whom, and how. The results are surprising.

In this session, we wish to start discussions about digital humanities as a continuum. We believe that looking afield brings some relevant insights home.