

CFP: Handbook of Methods in the Digital Humanities

Digital Humanities is a contested field. With little agreement on exactly what Digital Humanities means it has been deemed both the savior of the humanities and, as recently claimed in the London Review of Books, a “neoliberal tool” (Allington, et al, 2016) bent on destroying traditional humanities departments. Yet, despite the disagreements and debates, we believe that students need a guide to introduce them to the methods digital humanitarians employ. This guide is designed to give students the capacity to study, interpret and present a range of cultural material and practices; develop practical and reflexive understandings of software and digital devices; and explore ways to collaborate and contribute to scholarly communities and public discourse.

Digital Humanities extends and rethinks aspects of Literature, History, Philosophy and the languages and takes on critical aspects of fields such as Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, African-American Studies and Global Studies. It includes the development and application of archives, databases, digital environments, software and hardware. It also investigates and circulates cultural practices in new ways by applying theories and methods from the humanities to understand technology. We contend the best work in Digital Humanities takes on these critical approaches to politics, society, culture and technology to ask the important questions of our day.

The Handbook of Methods in the Digital Humanities intends to introduce students to a range of digital research methods, locating each method within critical humanities approaches, and providing guides and examples. It is primarily intended for advanced undergraduate students in interdisciplinary and humanities programs. There is potential utility for Honors and Masters’ students or elective classes for majors in Computer Science. In each chapter, experts will introduce a method with examples from their own work and guides to help students formulate and produce their own research. Researchers explain the key terms associated with their method, discuss where the method came from, the ethical issues involved, and why a researcher would or would not use the method. This is followed by a step-by-step guide to the procedures involved in the method illustrated by examples from their case study. Finally, contributors’ conclusions and discussion questions are designed to help the reader consider their own projects, think deeply about the research method and provide a guide for further discussion. Potential submissions may choose to focus on:

1. Content analysis / textual data mining
2. Critical code studies
3. Visual analysis
4. Physical digital structures
5. Online interviews and ethnography
6. Network analysis
7. Political economy
8. Communications / media studies

9. Archives
10. Big data
11. Dark web / the illicit
12. Collaborative research
13. Presenting research
14. Information aesthetics
15. Procedural literacy

Submissions:

Please submit a 400 word abstract and a brief bio by September 1, 2016 to David Rheams (drheams@masonlive.gmu.edu), Tai Neilson (tneilson@masonlive.gmu.edu) or Lewis Levenberg (llevenbe@masonlive.gmu.edu). Proposals should identify your method, describe your case study, and position your work within critical approaches to Digital Humanities. Chapter drafts will be due February 1, 2017. We are working with a representative from the publisher Rowman and Littlefield International.

Informal inquiries are welcome!