Digital Humanities

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Abstract: The digital humanities (DH) sit at the crossroads of digital technologies and traditional humanities. It focuses on the value and practice of the humanities in a world that is increasingly digital. DH brings together interdisciplinary researchers to collaborate on projects with the necessary software and hardware tools. This paper provides a brief introduction to the emergent field of digital humanities.

Keywords: digital humanities, humanities computing, digital scholarship

I. INTRODUCTION

The humanities cover what we commonly call the liberal arts: art, literature, history, anthropology, philosophy, music, and language studies. Our society will be poorer without the humanities helping us to understand what it means to be human and humane in today’s complex world. Technology is making humanities to be more engaging and more accessible.

The suffix “digital” is increasingly used to delineate the new areas of humanities research such as digital literature, digital pedagogy, digital libraries, digital democracy, digital history, etc. [1]. Digital humanities (DH) is an area of scholarly activity that simultaneously combines digital technologies and conventional humanities disciplines (such as history, philosophy, linguistics, literature, art, archaeology, music, anthropology, geography, and social sciences). It involves collaborative research that employs digital tools (such as Hypertext, Hypermedia, data visualization, data mining, statistics, text mining, gaming, 3-D mapping, and digital publishing) to study humanities [2]. Digital tools are used to speed up traditional research methodologies and help humanities practitioners feel more comfortable with new ways of visualizing, analyzing, and thinking about data.

Digital humanities plays a crucial role today in helping the humanities scholars and educators communicate in contemporary media networks. It focuses on what it means to be a human being in digital information age. DH work embraces not only humanists but also disciplinary experts such as computer scientists, digital technologies, library and information studies specialists. The digital humanities are poised to affect research and teaching throughout the traditional humanities [3].

Libraries and archives have contributed largely to digital humanities in various ways such as digitization and preservation. As the digital age has created an abundance of material, librarians use appropriate, computer-based tools to manage the material.

II. COURSES ON DIGITAL HUMANITIES

Institutions in America, Europe, and Asia have started to regard digital humanities as an academic discipline. They offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in DH. Some of the typical courses offered by two Russian universities are [4]:

- Data Processing and Analysis in Humanities
- Social Networks Simulation and Analysis
- Web Data Mining
- Interactive Visualization and Virtual Reality
- Linguistic Ontologies
- Human-Computer Interface in Intelligent Systems

III. STRENGTH AND LIMITATIONS

Collaborative efforts using email, conference calls, instant messaging, and text-based communication such as blogs and wikis offer benefits and drawbacks.

One of our major strengths of DH lies in combining already existing expertise and resources. These include social sciences, metadata, tagging, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), multimedia, interactive games, big data, visualization, and social media [5]. Such interdisciplinary scholarship can promote new use of digital tools, provoke new research questions, and cultivate new audiences.

One criticism against DH is lack of attention to issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability. There is lack of racial diversity. As a new a field, it is difficult to get funding and grants to carry out long-term research in DH.
Digital humanities work involves experimentation and risk-taking [6]. Although the data deluge involved in DH offers immense possibilities, it presents unprecedented challenges with regard to preserving digital assets.

IV. CONCLUSION
The interdisciplinary field of digital humanities is the intersection of computer science, knowledge management, and traditional humanities. It allows massive cultural heritage collections to be digitized and combined with other digital libraries [7]. The field is constantly evolving and changing. There are specialized journals on digital humanities. These include Computers and the Humanities, Journal of Digital Humanities, and Digital Humanities Quarterly (funded by Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations).

REFERENCES

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