TwinTalks at DHN 2019 –
Understanding Collaboration in Digital Humanities

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Abstract. In this preface to the workshop proceedings we describe briefly the rationale and the format of the workshop.

Keywords: Digital humanities. Collaboration. Training.

Rationale and format.

Humanities research can only take full advantage of new technological developments if content and digital expertise work hand in hand, very similar to the hard sciences where research is done in teams, where all the members work on a specific problem by bringing in his/her expertise and skills, be it content-related or technical. It is becoming clear that co-design, co-development and co-creation should be the norm rather than the exception in the humanities as well, but very little is known about how this collaboration works in practice and how better training and education of both humanities scholars and digital experts could facilitate such collaboration. This is what this workshop addresses, based on real life collaboration examples. In particular, we invited researchers, professionals, educators, and RI operators with a special interest in creating the conditions where humanities scholars and technical experts can fruitfully collaborate in answering humanities research questions.

The main objective of the workshop was to get a better understanding of the dynamics on the digital humanities work floor where humanities scholars and digital experts meet and work in tandem to solve humanities research questions. The best way to do this seems to be to give both parties the opportunity to present their achievements and share their collaboration experiences with the audience. The insights gained should help those involved in the education of humanities scholars, professionals and technical experts alike to develop better training programmes.

This workshop is special in that all papers in this workshop were submitted and (as far as possible) presented in tandems of a humanities researcher and a digital expert. They

reported on the research carried out together, both from their individual perspective (either humanities research or technical), as well as on their collaboration experience.

The programme started with an invited talk by Mikko Tolonen, which was then followed by two long and six short presentations. The talks had to contain the following three components: presentation of the humanities research problem and its solution, presentation of the technical aspects of the research done, and a report on the collaboration experience itself, including the obstacles encountered and recommendations on how better training and education could help to make the collaboration more fruitful. The programme ended with a round table discussion with all the participants in order to summarize the lessons learned from the presentations.

In order to reach a broad audience all humanities research topics in a very broad sense were welcome, where we explicitly included social sciences as well as cultural heritage studies. The research could be completed or ongoing, as long as the presentation explicitly addressed the way the humanities researcher and the digital expert have collaborated or still collaborate. For this latter point we asked authors to address issues such as (but not limited to):
- What was easy and what was difficult – and why?
- How did the researcher and technician change each other's way of looking at things?
- Did they, for instance, make each other aware of blind spots they had?
- Did the combination of thinking from a DH research question and thinking from a technical solution lead to new insights?
- How could better training or education of scholars and digital experts make collaboration easier, more effective and more efficient?

As the programme shows, a wide variety of topics was covered in the workshop, ranging from using computer vision for classification of historical newspaper images to making cultural content in non-standard language available for cross-disciplinary research. In total, 28 authors from 7different countries contributed to the workshop, extending well beyond the central focus of the DH Nordic conference, which only confirms that this discussion is both much needed and appreciated in our community.

Steven Krauwer and Darja Fišer
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Workshop programme

Workshop TwinTalks: Understanding collaboration in DH

Programme

Steven Krauwer and Darja Fišer: *Welcome and introduction*

Mikko Tolonen (invited talk):

Why humanities research questions should come first? Reflections on different kinds of collaboration in digital history

Martijn Kleppe, Thomas Smits and Willem Jan Faber:

Three perspectives on a collaborative attempt to use computer vision techniques to automatically classify historical newspaper images

Konstantin Freybe, Florian Rämisch and Tracy Hoffmann:

With small steps to the big picture - A method and tool negotiation workflow

Alptug Güney, Cristina Vertan and Walther von Hahn:

Combining hermeneutic and computer based methods for investigating reliability of historical texts

Börge Kiss, Daniel Kölligan, Francisco Mondaca, Claes Neuefeind, Uta Reinöhl and Patrick Sahle:

It Takes a Village: Co-developing VedaWeb, a Digital Research Platform for Old Indo-Aryan Texts

Vanessa Hannesschläger and Peter Andorfer:

I want it all, I want it now: Literature researcher meets programmer

Eetu Mäkelä, Mikko Tolonen, Jani Marjanen, Antti Kanner, Ville Vaara and Leo Lahti:

Exploring the Material Development of Newspapers

Maria Papadopoulou and Christophe Roche:

Twinning Classics and A.I.: Building the new generation of ontology-based lexico-graphical tools and resources for Humanists on the Semantic Web

Amelie Dorn, Yalemisew Abgaz and Eveline Wandl-Vogt:

Opening up cultural content in non-standard language data through cross-disciplinary collaboration: insights on methods, processes and learnings on the example of exploreAT!

Discussion (All)

Steven Krauwer and Darja Fišer: *Wrapping up and closing*

Programme committee

This workshop was a joint initiative by CLARIN ERIC (www.clarin.eu), DARIAH-EU (www.dariah.eu) and the PARTHENOS project (www.parthenos-project.eu).

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