Season Finale

some manifestations

het is onze laatste les samen!

Throughout our sessions, I've deliberately avoided defining DH too narrowly or seeking to pinpoint its essence. I believe that DH is a broad and diverse field, and it's particularly fascinating to observe how different scholars and practitioners interpret and fill this space.

That said, the DH Manifesto you read this week **does** attempt to articulate a sort of universal core of what DH represents. It's an interesting exercise to compare this more defined approach to the broader, more inclusive perspectives we've discussed. Today, I'd like us to reflect on this tension between the specific and the general, the defined and the expansive. How does the Manifesto's vision align or conflict with your own views? How might these differing interpretations influence the future direction of the field?

dat gezegd, het DH manifesto dat jullie deze week hebben gelezen is wel een tekst die probeert om een soort universele kern te gaan van wat DH is.

statements

instructions

Handout: Each of you will receive a handout containing several thought-provoking statements about digital humanities. Each handout has one statement circled.

Read Through All Statements: First, take a few moments to read through all the statements on your handout to get a sense of the broader discussion topics.

Focus on Your Circled Statement: Pay special attention to the statement that is circled on your handout. Think deeply about this particular statement.

Discussion with a Neighbor: Once you've had a chance to read and reflect, start a discussion with a neighbor. You are not required to keep your conversation silent; in fact, you are encouraged to talk it through openly.

Agree or Disagree?: Discuss whether you agree or disagree with your circled statement, and importantly, why or why not. Consider the implications, benefits, and potential drawbacks of the viewpoint expressed in the statement.

responsabilities in digital humanities

1. **"Openness about the algorithms used in data processing is crucial for ensuring they do not perpetuate existing societal biases."**

   - **Agree**
     - Transparency: Knowing how algorithms process and analyze data can help identify where biases may exist, making it possible to address them effectively.

- Accountability: Openness holds creators and users of algorithms accountable for the outcomes of their use, promoting ethical standards.
- Trust: Transparency builds trust among the public and researchers, as they can understand and verify the integrity of the research process.
  - **Disagree**
    - Complexity: The complexity of algorithms might make them difficult for the general public to understand, even when disclosed.
    - Proprietary Concerns: Companies and institutions may resist openness to protect intellectual property or competitive advantage.
    - Misinterpretation: Increased transparency could lead to misinterpretations of how algorithms work, especially without the proper statistical or technical background.

2. **"The inherent biases in historical data collection are too pervasive to allow for truly objective modern data applications."**

   - **Agree**
     - Historical Context: Historical data often reflect the prejudices and social norms of the time, which can distort modern analyses.
     - Influence on Present: These biases can continue to influence present-day decisions and analyses if they are not critically examined and adjusted.
     - Limitation Recognition: Acknowledging these biases is crucial for any attempt to use historical data in contemporary contexts, ensuring more informed and cautious application.
   - **Disagree**
     - Corrective Techniques: Modern statistical methods and technologies can adjust for and mitigate some of the biases present in historical data.
     - Utility: Despite biases, historical data can still provide valuable insights and patterns that are relevant today.
     - Relativism: All data are biased in some way; absolute objectivity is unattainable, so it shouldn't preclude the use of historical data.

3. **"Bias is data too! Biases aren't bugs, they're features. Data reflects our choices—change the choices, change the data."**

   - **Agree**
     - Reflective of Reality: Biases in data provide a mirror to societal norms and values at the time of collection, serving as a critical tool for analysis in humanities.
     - Instrumental in Change: Recognizing biases allows researchers to make intentional changes to data collection methods, aiming for more equitable and representative data.
     - Educational Value: Understanding that biases are part of data teaches critical thinking about how data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted.
   - **Disagree**
     - Normalization of Bias: Framing biases as features might lead to the acceptance of skewed data as normal, rather than encouraging efforts to correct or balance these biases.
     - Challenging Removal: Identifying biases as inherent features might make it difficult to justify the resources required to adjust or eliminate them.

- Ethical Implications: Accepting biases as integral parts of data may perpetuate harmful stereotypes or inequalities if not carefully managed.

4. **"Effective data science must account for intersectionality; overlooking this is not just a methodological flaw, but an ethical failure."**

    - **Agree**
        - Comprehensive Analysis: Considering intersectionality ensures that analyses account for the complexities of identities and how they interact with social structures.
        - Ethical Responsibility: It's ethically imperative to acknowledge and address the different ways in which data might impact various groups, especially marginalized ones.
        - Improved Accuracy: Incorporating intersectional perspectives can lead to more accurate, nuanced findings that reflect the real-world diversity of human experiences.
    - **Disagree**
        - Methodological Complexity: Adding intersectional analyses can significantly complicate research design and data analysis, potentially overwhelming researchers.
        - Resource Intensive: The requirement for more detailed data collection to account for multiple identity facets can require more time and resources than available.
        - Scope Limitation: Focusing too much on intersectionality might limit the scope of studies to only those areas where detailed demographic data is available, potentially biasing research agendas.

5. **"Corporations that collect and analyze vast amounts of user data are obligated to use this data to benefit society, not just their shareholders."**

    - **Agree**
        - **Social Responsibility:** Corporations, as part of society, should ensure that their actions benefit the broader community and not just their financial bottom line.
        - **Trust and Legitimacy:** Using data for societal good can enhance the public's trust in these companies, validating their roles in data handling.
        - **Long-term Sustainability:** Aligning data usage with societal benefits can lead to sustainable business practices that maintain customer loyalty and societal approval.
    - **Disagree**
        - **Primary Responsibility:** The primary obligation of corporations is to their shareholders; focusing on societal benefits may conflict with maximizing profits.
        - **Practicality:** Defining what constitutes a societal benefit can be subjective and complex, making it difficult for corporations to implement such a broad mandate effectively.
        - **Economic Impact:** Over-regulation or stringent societal expectations might stifle innovation and economic growth.

6. **"Researchers must consider not only how they use data ethically but also how their data might be used or misused by others after publication."**

    - **Agree**
        - **Ethical Duty:** Researchers have a responsibility to foresee and mitigate potential misuse of their data, ensuring it does not harm individuals or communities.
        - **Preventive Action:** By considering possible misuses, researchers can implement safeguards, such as anonymization or restricted access, to protect data integrity.

- **Reputation:** Maintaining ethical standards in data usage protects the credibility and integrity of the research community.
  - **Disagree**
    - **Control Limits:** Once data is published, controlling its use becomes practically impossible, and the responsibility should not rest solely on the original researchers.
    - **Innovation Restriction:** Excessive caution could inhibit the sharing of valuable data, potentially slowing scientific progress and innovation.
    - **Resource Intensity:** Monitoring and controlling data post-publication requires resources that could be prohibitive for some research entities.

7. **"The monetization of personal data by corporations should be more heavily regulated by governments to protect individual rights."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Privacy Protection:** Stronger regulations ensure that individuals' privacy is respected and protected against exploitation.
     - **Checks and Balances:** Government oversight can provide necessary checks to prevent abuses in data monetization practices.
     - **Consumer Trust:** Regulations can help build or restore consumer trust in digital platforms and services.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Innovation Risk:** Overregulation might stifle technological innovation and economic growth within the tech industry.
     - **Bureaucracy:** Increased government intervention could lead to cumbersome bureaucracies that make efficient business operations more difficult.
     - **Global Inconsistency:** The global nature of data makes it hard to enforce regulations uniformly, possibly leading to competitive disadvantages for more heavily regulated entities.

8. **"Digital Humanists have a responsibility to use their skills for social activism, challenging injustices and promoting equity."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Moral Imperative:** With skills that can uncover and highlight social and historical inequities, digital humanists have a moral obligation to use these insights for social good.
     - **Impact Potential:** Digital humanities can uniquely contribute to public discourse on justice and equity through informed analysis and advocacy.
     - **Engagement:** Using digital humanities for activism encourages broader societal engagement with humanities disciplines.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Role Limitation:** The primary role of scholars is to research and educate, not necessarily to engage in activism, which might be seen as politicizing academia.
     - **Methodological Purity:** Focusing on activism could risk compromising the methodological rigor and objectivity that academia strives for.
     - **Professional Risk:** Engaging in activism might pose professional risks for scholars, particularly those early in their careers or in less secure positions.

(digital) humanities

1. **"All digital humanistic work should be openly accessible, to democratize knowledge beyond the traditional academic gates."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Democratization of Knowledge:** Open access allows a broader audience to benefit from scholarly work, enhancing educational equality and knowledge dissemination.
     - **Increased Impact:** Open accessibility can increase the impact and citation rates of research by making it available to a wider audience, including those in underfunded and developing regions.
     - **Innovation and Collaboration:** Open access promotes innovation and collaboration by making research findings available to all, fostering cross-disciplinary and international research partnerships.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Financial Viability:** Open access models often shift the cost from readers to researchers or institutions, which can be financially challenging for researchers without sufficient funding.
     - **Quality Concerns:** The pressure to publish openly can lead to a proliferation of lower-quality journals and research as traditional peer-review standards may not always be maintained.
     - **Intellectual Property Issues:** Open access can complicate the protection of intellectual property, affecting the ability of researchers to patent their innovations or control how their work is used.

2. **"Digital tools should extend the capabilities of humanistic study, not merely serve as high-tech replacements for traditional methods."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Enhancement Over Replacement:** Digital tools should augment the analytical capabilities of scholars, providing new insights that were not possible with traditional methods alone.
     - **Preservation of Traditional Skills:** Maintaining the relevance and use of traditional humanistic methods is crucial, as these skills provide a unique perspective that should not be lost.
     - **Diversity of Methodology:** A hybrid approach combining both traditional and digital methods encourages a more robust and diverse methodological toolkit.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Evolution of Disciplines:** As disciplines evolve, older methods may naturally give way to new ones that are more efficient, just as typewriters were replaced by word processors.
     - **Resource Allocation:** Institutions may need to prioritize funding for digital tools to stay technologically relevant and competitive, which could mean de-emphasizing traditional methods.
     - **Scalability:** Digital tools often offer superior scalability and efficiency, which can be crucial for handling large-scale studies that traditional methods cannot manage effectively.

3. **"Digital methodologies have the potential to fundamentally reshape how we conduct humanities research."**

- **Agree**
    - **Expansion of Scope:** Digital methodologies can handle vast amounts of data, allowing humanities research to incorporate larger and more complex datasets than ever before.
    - **Interdisciplinary Opportunities:** Digital tools foster interdisciplinary research, merging techniques from computer science, statistics, and more with traditional humanities questions.
    - **New Insights and Perspectives:** The use of digital tools can uncover patterns and connections that were previously unobservable, offering new insights into historical and cultural materials.
- **Disagree**
    - **Overreliance on Tools:** There's a risk of overreliance on digital tools which might overshadow critical humanistic approaches that emphasize critical thinking and qualitative analysis.
    - **Access and Inequality:** Not all institutions or scholars have equal access to digital tools and the training to use them, which can widen the gap between rich and poor institutions.
    - **Loss of Nuance:** Digital tools may not always capture the nuance and depth of humanistic study, potentially leading to oversimplified conclusions.

4. **"Digital methodologies should fundamentally reshape how we conduct humanities research."**

- **Agree**
    - **Necessity for Modernization:** Embracing digital methodologies is essential for the evolution of the humanities, ensuring the field remains relevant and engaging in a digital age.
    - **Enhanced Analytical Tools:** Digital tools offer powerful new ways to analyze and interpret data, which can lead to breakthroughs in understanding.
    - **Global Reach:** Digital methodologies make it easier to collaborate across geographical boundaries, creating a more global approach to humanities.
- **Disagree**
    - **Preservation of Core Principles:** It's important to preserve the core principles and approaches of humanities that emphasize deep, contextual, and critical analysis over purely quantitative methods.
    - **Risk of Homogenization:** Standardizing methods across the field might lead to a homogenization of research, stifling creativity and individual approaches.
    - **Ethical and Practical Concerns:** There are ethical and practical concerns associated with the widespread adoption of digital tools, including privacy issues and the potential for misuse of data.

5. **"Humanities scholars should embrace 'maker' cultures that incorporate coding, design, and multimedia artistry into their research methodologies."**

- **Agree**
    - **Innovative Approaches:** Incorporating 'maker' elements like coding and multimedia artistry can lead to innovative research methods and outputs that are engaging and interactive.
    - **Skill Development:** Learning and utilizing these skills can make humanities scholars more versatile and their work more relevant in a digital age.

- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Embracing 'maker' cultures facilitates collaboration across disciplines, enriching humanities research with diverse perspectives and techniques.
  - **Disagree**
    - **Dilution of Focus:** Emphasizing technical skills like coding and design might dilute the focus on traditional scholarly inquiry and critical analysis inherent to humanities.
    - **Resource Allocation:** Developing these new skills requires time and resources that might otherwise be devoted to deepening expertise in traditional humanities disciplines.
    - **Accessibility Issues:** Not all scholars may have equal access to the tools and training needed to engage with 'maker' cultures, potentially creating barriers within the field.

6. **"Digital Humanists are 'so nice' because they are not really concerned with theory (more so with methodology). Because of that, there are fewer 'fights' in the field."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Collaborative Environment:** The focus on practical methodologies over contentious theoretical debates might contribute to a more collaborative and less confrontational environment.
     - **Unified Goals:** A shared focus on applying tools and solving practical problems can unify researchers, reducing ideological conflicts.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Undervaluing Theory:** This perspective undervalues the importance of theory in guiding research and interpreting results, which is critical even in methodologically focused studies.
     - **Oversimplification:** Suggesting fewer conflicts exist may oversimplify the nature of academic discourse in digital humanities, which still encompasses critical debates over methodology, ethics, and interpretation.
     - **Diminished Rigor:** The lack of theoretical engagement might lead to a diminished intellectual rigor, as robust debate and critique are essential for academic growth and development.

7. **"Design and architecture should be central to how humanities research questions are formulated and communicated."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Enhanced Communication:** Good design and thoughtful architecture can make complex ideas more accessible and engaging to broader audiences.
     - **Creative Thinking:** Integrating design principles can foster more creative and innovative approaches to research questions.
     - **Interdisciplinary Benefits:** Emphasizing design can bring humanities into closer dialogue with other fields, enhancing interdisciplinary research.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Overemphasis on Form Over Content:** There is a risk that focusing too much on design could prioritize aesthetic considerations over substantive scholarly content.
     - **Skill Barriers:** Not all humanities scholars have training in design and architectural thinking, which could marginalize those without these skills.
     - **Resource Intensive:** Shifting focus towards design and architecture requires resources that may not be available to all researchers, potentially widening gaps in research quality

and output.

8. **"Digital tools and platforms should fundamentally reshape not just how we conduct humanities research, but also how we communicate and teach these subjects."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Broadening Reach:** Digital tools can help disseminate humanities research and education to a global audience, making it more accessible.
     - **Enhanced Engagement:** Interactive tools and digital platforms can engage students and the public in ways traditional methods cannot, potentially increasing interest and participation in the humanities.
     - **Adaptability:** Digital tools offer flexibility in teaching and research methodologies, adapting to diverse learning and research needs.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Technological Dependency:** Over-reliance on digital tools may diminish the development of traditional scholarly skills and critical thinking.
     - **Equity Concerns:** There are significant disparities in access to digital technologies, which can exacerbate educational and research inequalities.
     - **Loss of Personal Interaction:** Increased use of digital platforms might reduce valuable face-to-face interactions in educational and research settings, potentially affecting the learning experience.

9. **"The integration of digital tools into humanities research is now so pervasive that the distinction may no longer be necessary."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Ubiquitous Use:** The widespread adoption of digital tools across all areas of humanities research suggests that digital methodologies have become an integral part of the discipline, rendering the distinction redundant.
     - **Evolution of Research:** As digital tools reshape how research is conducted, recorded, and disseminated, they become not just tools but foundational elements of modern humanities research.
     - **Holistic Discipline View:** Removing the distinction could encourage a more holistic view of the humanities, focusing on the research goals rather than the methods used to achieve them.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Continued Distinction Value:** The distinction emphasizes the specialized skills and methodologies that digital humanities scholars bring, which are not universally possessed by traditional humanities scholars.
     - **Technological Access and Literacy:** Not all humanities scholars have equal access to digital tools or the same level of digital literacy, which can create disparities in research opportunities and outputs.
     - **Methodological Diversity:** Maintaining the distinction can help preserve methodological diversity, ensuring that traditional techniques are valued and continue to coexist with digital approaches.

Rethinking the humanities

1. **"Curation should be valued as much as traditional scholarship in the humanities."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Expanding Definitions of Scholarship:** Recognizing curation as equally valuable as traditional scholarship expands what is considered scholarly work, reflecting a broader range of intellectual activities.
     - **Curation as Scholarship:** Curation involves significant intellectual effort, decision-making, and expertise, which are hallmarks of traditional scholarship.
     - **Public Engagement:** Curation often engages directly with the public, making humanities work more accessible and impactful.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Differences in Contribution:** Traditional scholarship typically involves the creation of new knowledge, while curation might be seen as organizing existing knowledge.
     - **Resource Allocation:** Valuing curation on the same level as traditional scholarship could shift funding and academic recognition away from research and towards curation, potentially impacting the development of new insights.

2. **"Curation should be recognized as a fundamental scholarly practice within humanities, equivalent to traditional narrative scholarship."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Scholarly Rigor:** Curation requires a deep understanding of the subject, thematic coherence, and contextualization, which are central to scholarly rigor.
     - **Interdisciplinary Benefits:** Recognizing curation supports interdisciplinary work and collaboration, enriching academic discourse.
     - **Cultural Relevance:** Curatorial projects often address and reflect contemporary cultural issues, making them highly relevant and dynamic components of scholarly practice.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Distinctive Objectives:** Curation and traditional narrative scholarship often have different objectives and outcomes, which might not always align or contribute equally to academic goals.
     - **Evaluation Challenges:** It can be challenging to assess the scholarly merit of curation using the same criteria applied to traditional scholarship, complicating academic evaluations and promotions.

3. **"The future of humanities lies in breaking down the walls between disciplines rather than in further specialization."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Interdisciplinary Innovation:** Breaking down disciplinary boundaries can lead to innovative approaches and solutions that are not possible within siloed fields.
     - **Greater Relevance:** Interdisciplinary work can make humanities more relevant to contemporary global challenges, which are often complex and multifaceted.
     - **Diverse Perspectives:** Combining insights from various fields can lead to a richer and more comprehensive understanding of human cultures and societies.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Depth vs. Breadth:** Specialization allows scholars to develop deep expertise in a specific area, which is crucial for advancing knowledge within that discipline.

- **Identity and Focus:** Disciplinary boundaries help maintain focus and identity, which can be diluted in highly interdisciplinary environments.

4. **"Text is tyranny! Prioritizing text marginalizes other narratives. Embrace multimedia as the new canon of critical scholarship."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Diversity of Expression:** Multimedia allows for the expression of ideas and narratives that cannot be captured fully in text, catering to diverse learning and cognitive styles.
     - **Technological Advancements:** Modern technology offers powerful tools for creating and analyzing multimedia content, which can enhance scholarship.
     - **Cultural Shifts:** As culture becomes more visually and interactively oriented, multimedia approaches can keep humanities scholarship relevant and engaging.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Fundamental Role of Text:** Text has been a fundamental tool of human intellectual development and communication, offering precision and depth that multimedia can sometimes lack.
     - **Accessibility and Tradition:** Text-based content is often more accessible for analysis, archiving, and scholarly discourse, and holds a traditional place in academic scholarship.

5. **"Gatekept knowledge is the enemy of progress."**

   - **Agree**
     - **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Removing barriers to knowledge ensures wider access, fostering a more inclusive and democratic intellectual landscape.
     - **Innovation through Openness:** Open access to information encourages innovation and collaboration across geographical and institutional boundaries.
     - **Social Justice:** Making knowledge freely available supports social justice by leveling the educational playing field.
   - **Disagree**
     - **Quality Control:** Gatekeeping can be necessary to ensure the quality and reliability of scholarly information.
     - **Sustainable Economics:** Certain models of gatekeeping, like subscription fees, provide necessary funding for the publication and dissemination of scholarly work.
     - **Protection of Intellectual Property:** Gatekeeping can protect the intellectual property rights of creators, ensuring that they are compensated for their work and encouraging future contributions to the field.

thanks

You can call youself digital humanists now!! 🎉

- Thank you for your time, dedication and effort throughout the course.
- I have truly enjoyed teaching all of you.
- Thank you for your patience with my English at times.
- You've always made me feel like I was sharing something interesting.
- Thank you for your reflections—I realize I may have overwhelmed you with reading assignments, some dustier than others. I plan to revise the reading list next year. To assist with this, I'll send out a short survey, which you can complete voluntarily and anonymously.

- The university will likely ask you to fill out a course evaluation. I would appreciate your participation and honesty in this feedback. It is crucial for informing future students and helping them make informed choices.
- I really enjoyed teaching you all, and I hope you enjoyed the class as well.
- This marks the end of this course—but remember, if the speculative project you're now considering is something you wish to pursue further, I am always here to help, to think along with you, and to provide advice.

Have a wonderful summer, and good luck with your finals.