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# smarter online communities through the digital humanities

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**I envision, prototype, & analyze digital interfaces & their user communities,**  
building on a strong research background (assistant professor, Ph.D., M.S.)  
to innovate social experiences of collaborative learning & knowing.

**I realize the humanities *at scale*,** with digital making grounded in cultural heritage  
to create real-world, innovative impact & radically open collaborations  
toward more thoughtful, generative, caring, & productive online communities.

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## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: *Infinite Ulysses* ([InfiniteUlysses.com](http://InfiniteUlysses.com))

*Turning scholarly conversations around complex texts into online discussions welcoming public participation & teaching interpretative thinking, tested with James Joyce's notoriously difficult novel Ulysses.*

**Challenges:** Can I rejuvenate a platform traditionally aimed only at scholars via social mechanics like *Reddit's* and *StackExchange's*? Can my UI encourage public skill at understanding difficult narratives?

**Approach:** Support social textual annotation, then engineer personalization of the display of the result huge quantity of public-authored annotations to fit each reader's needs and background.

**Success!** In its first month of open beta, **13,000+ readers** visited *Infinite Ulysses*, and the site cracked the daily top 20 on *Hacker News*—not too shabby for a literature dissertation! My code is now being used by a consortium of digital editions across the literary eras, building an unprecedented annotation dataset that will change how we understand digital commentary and reading behavior.

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## RESEARCH METHODS

- Participatory interaction design
- Iterative wireframing
- Crowdsourcing-community design
- Rapid prototyping of web development
- Usability & user studies
- User & web analytics analysis & dataviz
- Blogging & tweeting
- Collaboration across disciplines & jobs
- Teaching & mentorship as research

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## DIGITAL HUMANITIES RESEARCH EXAMPLES

**Completed:** **BitCurator** ([BitCurator.net](http://BitCurator.net)): Team member on software suite helping museums/archives deal with the increasing number of laptops, hard drives, & other digital ephemera donated by authors & politicians. By curating & extending existing “CSI-style” digital forensics software, scanning hard drives for personally identifiable information, recovering hidden/partially deleted files, & other forensic activities are now understandable & accessible to librarians (my focus: testing, usability, documentation, user community).

**Mature:** **The first truly digital humanities dissertation** ([Dr.AmandaVisconti.com](http://Dr.AmandaVisconti.com)): Successfully argued for, designed, & defended a literature dissertation with zero written chapters, with design, code, usertesting, & blogging accepted as the scholarship they are. Showcasing strong project design and management skills: getting buy-in across my university, completing a unique project in the minimum possible time, parlaying an extremely non-traditional project into a tenure-track professorship. Now authoring a hybrid print/digital/code handbook for others pursuing digital dissertations!

**Developing:** **Better online communities: the “filter problem”.** Making “internet comments” & web annotation not suck means balancing our inability to read everything (all the comments on a topic) with a desire to defeat the echo-chamber effect of Facebook-style algorithmic personalization. My code & design work address the need for filtering that still presents us with challenging ideas by balancing digital fixes (e.g. mechanics for crowdsourcing curation & moderation) with community design solutions (interfaces, conduct best practices that encourage good digital citizenship).

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## Prominence in the field of digital humanities

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- **Elected executive council officer** for the international digital humanities scholarly organization (2016-2020, Association for Computers & the Humanities)
- **Research blogging** at [LiteratureGeek.com](http://LiteratureGeek.com)—12 posts highlighted as Editor's Choice by *Digital Humanities Now*, the main aggregator for quality blogged digital work in my field ([LiteratureGeek.com/tag/dh-now](http://LiteratureGeek.com/tag/dh-now))—and **DH tweeting** [@Literature\\_Geek](https://twitter.com/Literature_Geek) (2,300+ followers)
- Created the **Digital Humanities Slack** ([TinyUrl.com/DHSlack](https://TinyUrl.com/DHSlack)): 300+ members in 3 months
- Co-organizer of the **inaugural 4-day, 100-person THATCamp Games unconference** on digital humanities and gaming (1/2012); since reconvened by others 3 times (once a year).
- Invited “Speaking in Code” symposium participant (11/13): invitation-only NEH summit of **30 expert digital humanities software developers**.
- **Invited member of ten-person team**, NEH-sponsored “One Week | One Tool” Digital Humanities weeklong hackathon (Center for History & New Media, 8/13).

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## Funding (makes research go!)

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- \$55k by co-PI'ing 3 successful grant proposals **in my first 2 months as assistant professor**
- Currently designing proposals for larger 2016 grants from the NEH, NSF, IMLS, Mozilla, Hypothesis, and Knight Foundation (**digital humanities projects are diverse!**).
- **Previously** won research funding as a grad student including **2 years of financial support** to focus **full-time** on my research (Winnemore Digital Dissertation Fellow, Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities; Editing Modernism in Canada Ph.D. Fellow) and **thousands of dollars total** from PEPSI, the Humanities/Arts/Sciences/Technology Collaboratory (HASTAC), University of Virginia Scholars' Lab, Mellon/Center for History and New Media, NEH, University of Maryland, UMBC, University of Michigan School of Information and Rackham Graduate School, and the Association for Computers and the Humanities (ACH).

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## Impact via authorship & publication

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*Measuring impact through social media analytics, grants awarded, invited collaborations, and the website analytics and user feedback that prove real members of the public are being radically, positively impacted by my work.*

- **Interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed co-authorship:** [6 research papers and conference presentations](#) on designing educational alternate reality games, with venues including the SIGCHI and Games+Learning+Society proceedings; 1 *Journal of Digital Humanities* [poster](#)
- **Authored 2 peer-reviewed chapters** for the field's major platform for argumentative discussion, *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (under pre-publication review, 1/16), and [Archbook “architecture of the book” digital encyclopedia](#)
- **Research blogging** at [LiteratureGeek.com](http://LiteratureGeek.com)—11 posts highlighted as Editor's Choice by *Digital Humanities Now*, the main aggregator for quality blogged digital work in my field ([LiteratureGeek.com/tag/dh-now](http://LiteratureGeek.com/tag/dh-now))—and **tweeting** [@Literature\\_Geek](https://twitter.com/Literature_Geek) (2,300+ followers)
- *Infinite Ulysses* drew **over 13,000 visitors in its first month** of open beta, made the daily Top 20 on Hacker News, and attracts readers and tweets from the Americas, Europe, and Asia.
- Collaborating with Purdue University Press toward a new **Digital Acquisitions Editor** role, **designing innovative digital humanities formats for research publication**.
- **Leader in reshaping graduate humanities education:** frequently cited open-source digital dissertation project, meta-dissertation blogging & advice, and **currently authoring** a hybrid print-digital handbook on digital dissertations.
- **Invited advisory board member for an Internet Archive spinoff initiative** ([Webrecorder.io](http://Webrecorder.io)) and faculty mentor for NEH Office of Digital Humanities Advanced Institute on **spatial analysis for Africana/Black Studies**
- [View DHQ](#). ACH-funded visualization and topic modeling of the journal *Digital Humanities Quarterly*'s citation networks towards identifying key digital humanities texts.

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## RECENT INVITED SPEAKING

1. NYU/Mellon Digital Publishing (TBD/2016)
2. UCLA Institute for Pure & Applied Math (4/16)
3. Columbia University (TBD/16)
4. Brown University (11/15)
5. Northeastern U. Center for Digital Humanities & Computational Social Science (10/15)
6. University of Maryland (10/15)
7. MIT Media Lab (5/15)
8. CUNY Graduate Center (4/15)
9. Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (4/15)

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## RECENT CONFERENCING

- Paper: *Coalition for Networked Information* (12/2015)
- 2 poster presentations: *Digital Humanities 2013 and 2014*
- 2 papers, 1 panel chair, 1 panel participant, 1 workshop leader: *Society for Textual Scholarship 2011 and 2012*
- Panelist: *RSA 2016's Folger Shakespeare Institute-sponsored "Digital Agendas" panel*
- Participation: *4 digital humanities "THATCamp" unconferences* (2011-2014)

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### **Tenure-track assistant professor & digital humanities specialist**

*Purdue University, Libraries and Information Science Department; 8/2015-current*

### **Research fellowship at one of the world's top digital humanities research centers**

*Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH); 8/2014-5/2015*

### **UX design & web development consulting: cultural archive & layered reading interfaces**

*Digital Humanities Initiative, Hamilton College; 2/2014-5/2014*

*TAPAS Project: TEI Archiving, Publishing, & Access Service; 10/2013-11/2013*

### **User research, web design, & software documentation for digital forensics in the archive**

*MITH; 8/2013-5/2014*

### **Digital reading technology research and development**

*Editing Modernism in Canada (EMiC); 4/2013-3/2014*

### **Digital humanities web development and design**

*MITH; 6/2011-1/2013*

### **College instructor for honors digital studies courses**

*MITH; University of Maryland English Department; 8/2012-12/2012; 8/2011-2/2012*

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## GRADUATE EDUCATION

### **Ph.D. (Literature, Digital Humanities)**

University of Maryland

*September 2010-May 2015*

The *first fully digital* humanities dissertation: design, coding, blogging, user testing, statistical analysis for the social reading platform [InfiniteUlysses.com](http://InfiniteUlysses.com)—recognized as the project's real scholarship, not just allowed in addition to a traditional proto-monograph.

The dissertation research around *Infinite Ulysses* exists as [Dr.AmandaVisconti.com](http://Dr.AmandaVisconti.com).

### **M.S. (Information, Digital Humanities, HCI)**

University of Michigan

*September 2008-April 2010*

[Margaret Mann Award](#) recipient.

[My master's thesis](#) (user & usability research design changes to scholarly digital editions allowing use by a public audience) had 1,900+ downloads from the public repository since April 2010.