

Assignment #3: Analysis of a Digital Humanities Project

Overview:

The goal of this assignment is to familiarize yourself with several “mature” digital humanities projects, then select one to analyze and critique. Your investigation of the project should include not only the finished project itself, but also any supporting materials you can find — blog posts, press releases, early drafts, software documentation, etc.

Your final analysis of the project will take the form of a short essay (about 5 pages).

Completing the Assignment:

Before you select a project, you should survey a wide range of options. Here are a few good directories of digital humanities projects that will help you see what’s out there:

- DHCommons Projects, <http://dhcommons.org/projects>
- Europeana, <http://www.europeana.eu/portal/en>
- Maria Popova’s “Digital Humanities Spotlight,”
<https://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2011/08/12/digital-humanities-7-important-digitization-projects/>
- Alan Liu’s “Examples of DH Scholarship,”
<http://dhresourcesforprojectbuilding.pbworks.com/w/page/69244444/Digital%20Humanities%20Examples>
- Virginia Tech’s Center for Applied Technologies in the Humanities,
<http://cath.vt.edu/recent-projects/>
- Quinn’s digital humanities bookmarks,
<https://pinboard.in/u:warnick/t:digitalhumanities/>

Once you find a project that piques your interest, begin bookmarking and/or downloading everything you can find related to this project. Generally speaking, you’ll be better off analyzing a large project that has been carefully documented and widely promoted. You should immerse yourself in your chosen project, doing

your best to understand the original inspiration for the project, the ways in which the project fits (or doesn't fit) into some larger field or scholarly conversation, what questions or objectives the project intended to address, the tools used to create the project, the funding sources that supported the project, and the current state of the project (*i.e.*, completed or still under development).

Your essay should provide a brief overview of the project, but it should move quickly to analysis and critique. Use the following checklist (yes, I know it's really long) to complete your essay.

Project Checklist:

- Find a “mature” digital humanities project that is of interest to you.
 - What was the original inspiration for the project?
 - Why did the author(s) pursue this project as a digital humanities project? What about this project makes it “DH”?
 - What does this project tell us about its subject that a “traditional” research project couldn't?
 - In what ways does the project fit (or does not fit) into some larger field or scholarly conversation?
 - What questions or objectives did the researchers intend to address?
 - What tools were used to create the project? Do you think the tools were chosen to match the subject matter? Or was the subject matter selected to match the tools?
 - What funding sources were used to support the project?
 - What is the current state of the project (*i.e.*, is it completed or still under development)?
- Does your essay provide a sufficient amount of background information to familiarize readers with your chosen project?
- Does the essay meet the minimum requirements for length (four to six pages)?

- Did you analyze (examine the project in detail, rather than merely describe or summarize it) and critique (discuss **positive** and **negative** aspects of the project) the project you selected?
 - What are the strengths of the project? How does it enrich our understanding of the subject?
 - What are the shortcomings of the project? What additional work could the author(s) do to overcome these problems?
- Does the essay adhere to the conventions of standard written English (i.e., spelling, punctuation, grammar) and use the Chicago style guide?
- Did you find supporting materials about the DH project you selected — blog posts, press releases, early drafts, software documentation, etc.?
- If the project has gone through multiple iterations, what did the previous versions of the site look like? How has it changed over time? ([The Wayback Machine](#) can help you find out.)
- Did you include a bibliography and cite your sources using Chicago Style Manual?
- Did you submit your essay using iLearn?