# What are the Digital Humanities?

*Introduction to the Digital Humanities* (E01)
https://dh-trier.github.io/vorlesung

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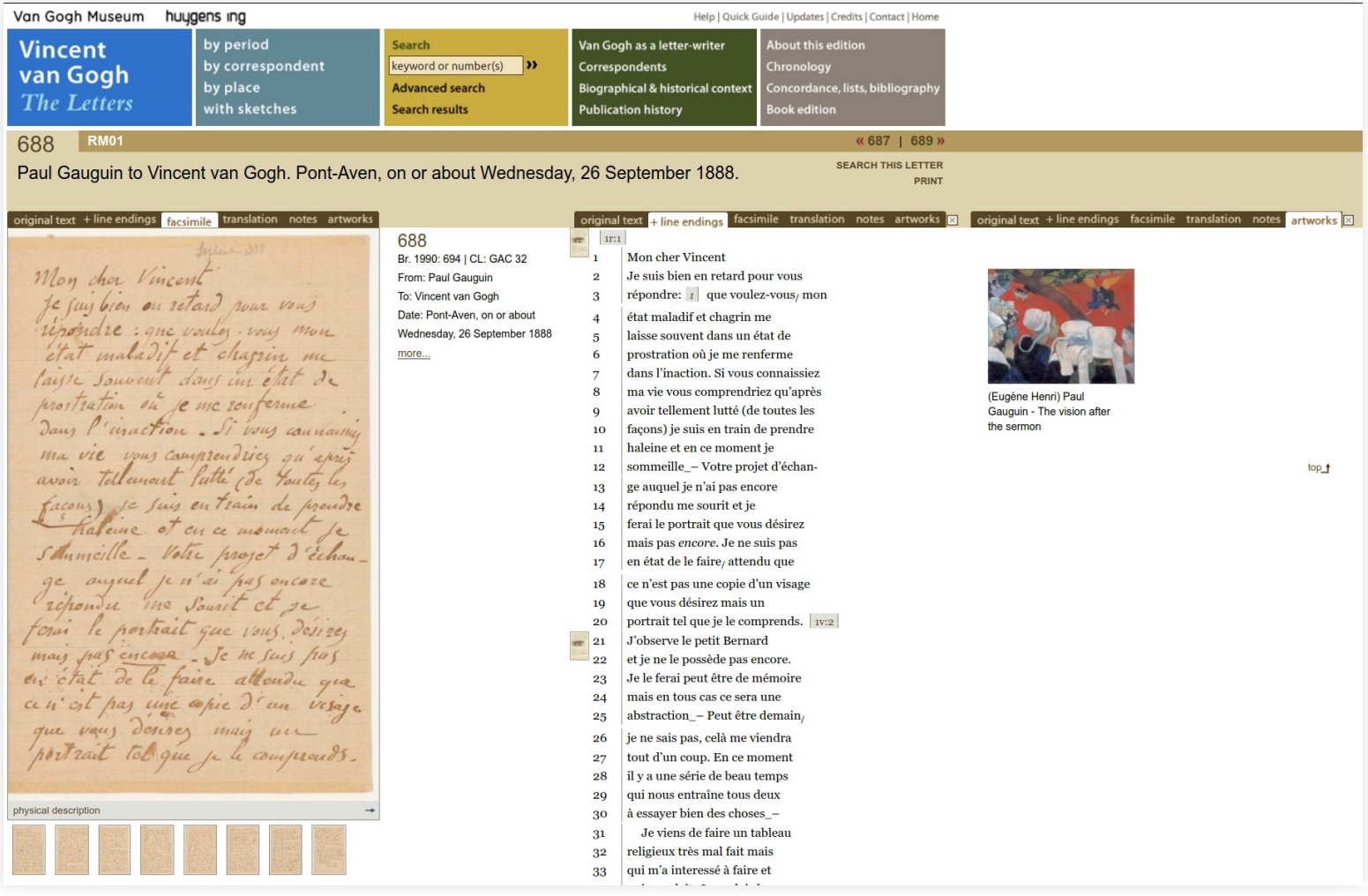
# Overview

1. DH by Example
2. What is meant by "DH"?
3. Internal structure of DH
4. Is DH a discipline?

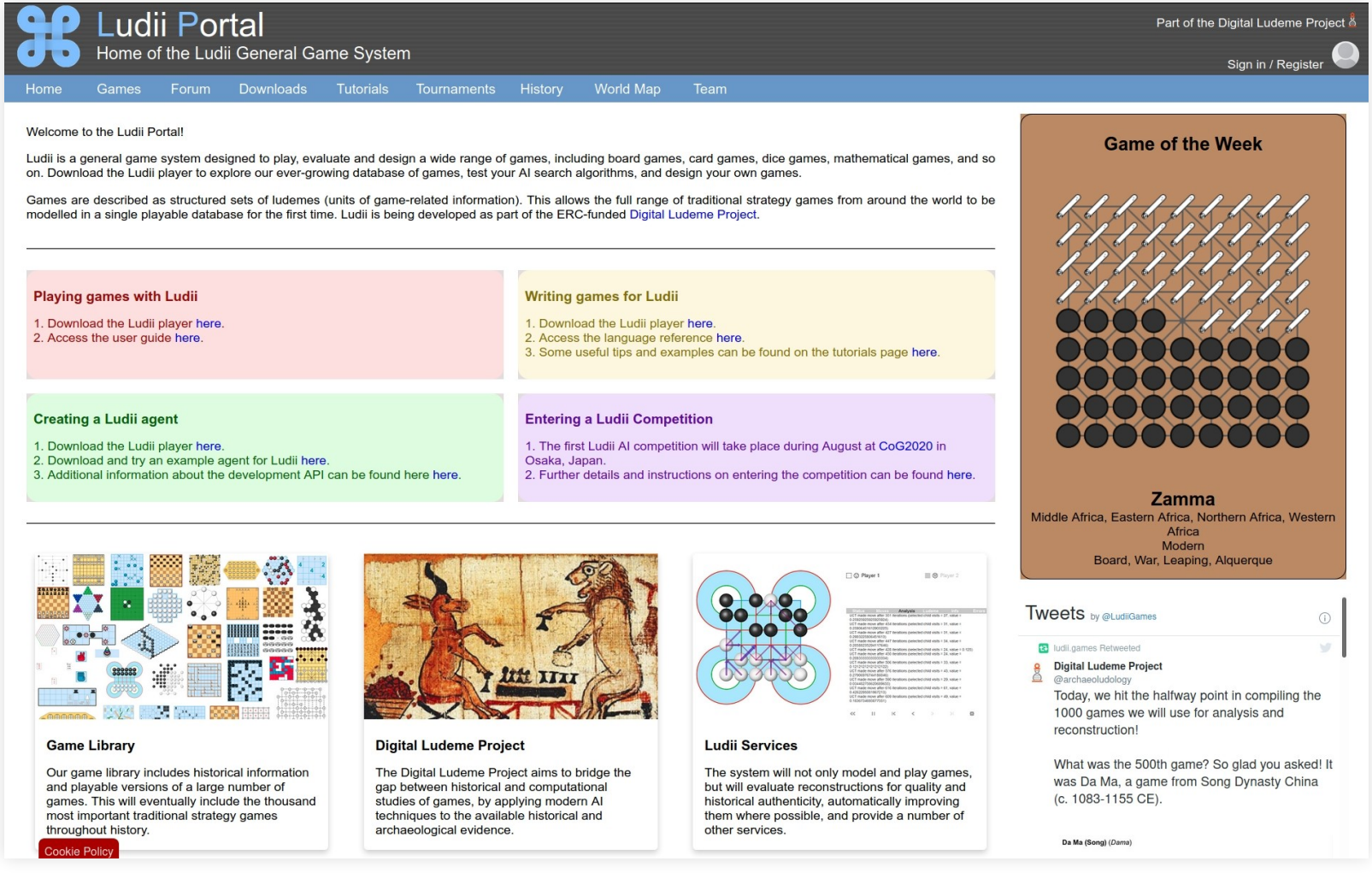
# (1) DH by Example

# Vincent Van Gogh: The Letters




http://vangoghletters.org/

# The Ludeme Project




https://ludii.games/

# (2) What is meant by DH?

# Did you say ”Digital Humanities”?

- Humanities Computing
- Literary and Linguistic Computing
- Digital Scholarship in the Humanities
- Computers and the Humanities
- Computing in the Humanities
- Computer application in the Humanities
- Humanités numériques / humanités digitales
- Informatica umanistica e cultura digitale
- ...

817 Definitions

whatisdigitalhumanities.com

# Wikipedia Definition

*Digital humanities (DH) is an area of scholarly activity at the intersection of computing or digital technologies and the disciplines of the humanities. It includes the systematic use of digital resources in the humanities, as well as the analysis of their application. DH can be defined as new ways of doing scholarship that involve collaborative, transdisciplinary, and computationally engaged research, teaching, and publishing. It brings digital tools and methods to the study of the humanities with the recognition that the printed word is no longer the main medium for knowledge production and distribution.*

Source: "Digital Humanities", Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_humanities

# (3) Internal structure of DH

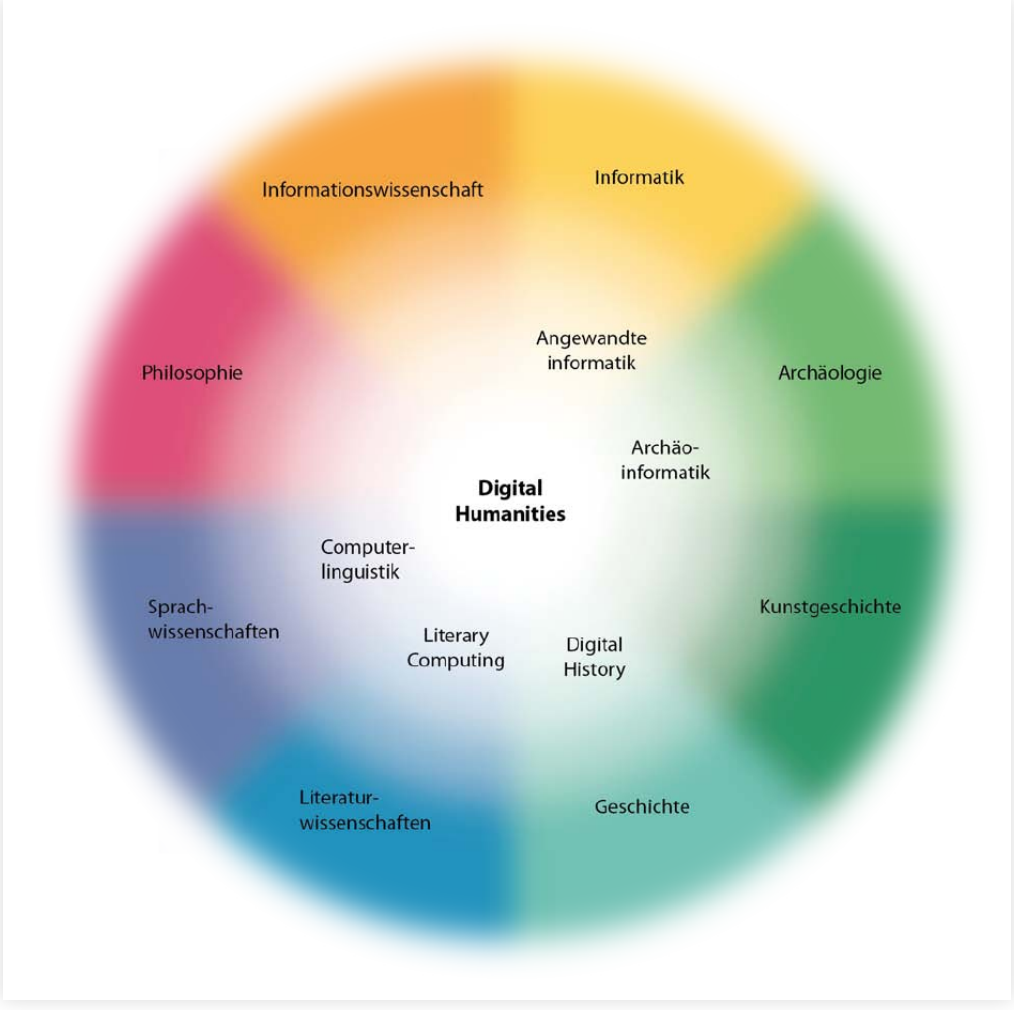
# DH by research object

- text (manuscripts, prints, blogs)
- image (paintings, maps, etc.)
- music/sound (sheet music vs. audio)
- film/video (documentaries, feature films, YouTube, etc.)
- games (physical vs. video)
- artefacts (objects, scultpures, architecture, etc.)

# DH by established disciplines

- Digital Scholarly Editing
- Digital History
- Computational Literary Studies
- Digital Art History
- Digital Musicology
- Digital Cultural Heritage
- (Digital) Archaeology
- Computational Linguistics
- Applied Informatics
- ...

# Spheres of DH




(Sahle 2013)

# (4) Is DH a Discipline?

# What defines a discipline?

- Internal criterion: Disciplines have their own theory and agenda (rather than supporting the theory, agenda, and practice other disciplines)
- External criterion: Disciplines are institutionalized (rather than using instutional structures of other disciplines)

# Institutionalization of DH

- Scholarly Associations: ADHO, TEI, EADH, ESTS, DHd, AIUCD, TADH, AADH, DHN, RedHD, etc.
- Annual conferences: DH, EADH, TEI, DHd, DHBenelux, AIUCD, DHN, HDH, CAA, etc.
- Journals: DSH, DHQ, Digital Studies / Le champ numérique, Cultural Analytics, Umanistica digitale, Humanités numériques, ZfdG, uvm.
- DH Centers: many of them all over the world; see http://centernet.adho.org/centers
- Study Programmes: see the DH Course Registry (and LIT)
- Textbooks and introductions: *Companion to DH* (2004); now several more in different languages

# Core DH vs. Digital X

- Ongoing consolidation of the "Digital Xs" as sub-disciplines
  - Separate conferences, journals, associations, books
  - Separate research theories and research agendas
- Developing canon of "Core DH" issues
  - Historiography of DH
  - What is Data?
  - Modeling and operationalization
  - Domain adaptation
  - Ways of knowing

# Focus: Ways of knowing

- Reconfiguration of the materials (decontextualized, recontextualized)
- Modeling: Decomposition of concepts and methods
- Shift away from the individual phenomenon to the system-level

# Conclusion

# Main take-aways

- DH is really hard to define
- Institutionally, DH is a discipline (+ differentiating tendencies)
- Intrinsically, "core DH" is progressing towards being a discipline

Time for questions!

# Recommended Readings

**Basic Discussion**

- Matthew G. Kirschenbaum, "What Is Digital Humanities and What's It Doing in English Departments?", *ADE Bulletin* 150, 2010. http://mkirschenbaum.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/kirschenbaum_ade150.pdf

**Advanced Reading**

- Patrik Svensson, "The Landscape of Digital Humanities", *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 4.1, 2010, http://digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/4/1/000080/000080.html.
- John Unswort, "What Is Humanities Computing and What Is Not?", *Forum Computerphilologie* 4, 2002, http://computerphilologie.digital-humanities.de/jg02/unsworth.html

**Further information**

- Siemens, Ray, John Unsworth, and Susan Schreibman, eds. *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004. http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/
- *Doing Digital Humanities Bibliography*, DARIAH-DE, 2014-2020. Zotero.org ("Introductions to DH")
- *European Association for Digital Humanities*, Project Registry: http://eadh.org/projects
- *The Programming Historian*, https://programminghistorian.org/

# Thank you

Christof Schöch, 2020

http://www.christof-schoech.de

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