

## **Blog Post: Information Systems and Digital Humanities**

It might seem a paradox to link information systems (IS) and the humanities as they appear two completely separate concepts that have very few aspects in common. While humanities are defined as the study of human culture and society and include “the study of all languages, literatures, the arts, history and philosophy” (Britannica, 22 April 2021), information systems, in the layman’s eyes, relate mainly to hardware and software.

However, a close look at the definitions and explanations of “information systems”, which include social media (Kroeze, 2019), reveals that ‘people’, together with hardware, software, data and process, is one of the major components of IS. Therefore, information systems “are combinations of hardware, software, and telecommunications networks that people build and use to collect, create, and distribute useful data, typically in organizational settings” (cited in Bourgeois, 2014: 5).

In fact, in the age of big data, can we say that the humanities do not overlap with IS? IS, which “is a historically grown discipline” originates certainly from the field of management (Scheuermann & Kroeze, 2017), but it is important to note the place of “the human perspective” in a computer-based environment and the impact of ICT on individual human experience and on society at large (Scheuermann & Kroeze, 2017).

Societal issues are definitely raised in the computing environment and the impact of ICT on society and humanity and in the field of humanities cannot be underrated.

Additionally, Kroeze (2019) posits that humanities studies will gain a lot from advanced methods used in IS but it is also time for the IS to go beyond social sciences or organisational concepts and to re-invent itself by exploring other fields and drawing ideas from the humanities' or more precisely, the digital humanities' concepts.

A few research works carried out in digital humanities and information systems are, for instance, the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in the exploration of space and time in historical or literary texts; data analysis, including analysis of texts, videos and images. The question of ethics and security is also raised by both fields, and a transdisciplinary approach can be beneficial. The advent of big data has also brought forward “social computing, crowdsourcing, and networking” (Holm et al, 2015: 58).

To sum up, as mentioned by Scheuermann & Kroeze (2017), there is “a vast reservoir of resources almost unknown in the information sciences” and by merging the two fields (that is digital humanities and information system), new and interdisciplinary research can be accomplished.

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