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Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities

By Bruce Sterling [✉](#) March 8, 2010 | 8:49 pm | Categories: [Uncategorized](#)

<http://www.dariah.eu/>

What is DARIAH?

DARIAH (Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities) is a project to support the digitisation of arts and humanities data across Europe. (((Strictly speaking, that should be “DRIAH.” Maybe history was dry enough already.)))

DARIAH brings together researchers, information managers and information providers. It gives them a technical framework that enables enhanced data-sharing among research communities. (((One quails at the awesome power of state-supported European digital culture.)))

Who is taking part in DARIAH?

There are fourteen partners in ten European countries participating in the Preparing DARIAH phase. The DARIAH project itself will start end of 2010 and will include more partners from across Europe.

(((And man, what a crowd those DARIAH people are:)))

ADS - Archaeology Data Service, United Kingdom
AA - Academy of Athens, Greece
CeRch - Centre for e-Research, United Kingdom
CNRS - Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France
DANS - Data Archiving and Networked Services, Netherlands
DCU - Digital Curation Unit, Athena Research Centre, Greece
EUC - European University Cyprus, Cyprus
ICH - Institute for Contemporary History, Slovenia
IRCHSS - Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Ireland
MPG - Max-Planck-Gesellschaft - Max Planck Digital Library, Germany
NFI - University of Copenhagen - Department of Scandinavian Research, Denmark
OUCS - Oxford University Computing Services - Oxford Text Archive, United Kingdom
RBI - Ruđer Bošković Institute, Croatia
UGOE - University of Goettingen (Goettingen State and University Library), Germany

What will DARIAH do?

DARIAH will provide a coordinated technical infrastructure for supporting the preservation of cultural heritage in Europe, and will enable dramatically improved access to research material for the humanities. (((While, in the USA, we attempt the simpler, more pragmatic method of letting Google scan everything not nailed down, and then we all sue each other.)))

How will DARIAH do this?

Through key processes such as:

Bringing together the best efforts at national, organisational and individual level in order to launch enhanced Europe-wide actions, initiatives and services. (((I’ve seen Europeans do this, too. Man, is that ever a bonanza for translators.)))

Developing national services and digitisation programs, particularly in countries where these are non-existent at present. (((I’m increasingly pondering fleeing to one of those countries and begging them to rip up the fiber-optics right away. In twenty years, these miserable places free of Internet will be the only places recognizable.)))

Bringing together research, education, cultural heritage and “memory” institutions and organisations in the commercial sector.

Enhancing digital scholarship in the humanities and arts across Europe.

What are some of the benefits of DARIAH?

Promotion of the preservation, exchange and reuse of research data.

Facilitation of collaboration between researchers on a pan-European level.

Ensuring a consistently high level of source data quality.

Bringing within reach new and novel approaches to research.

Providing an environment for the development and exchange of new research tools and methods.

What are some key dates in the DARIAH project?

DARIAH officially began on September 01, 2008, with the formative ‘Preparing DARIAH’ stage. Preparing DARIAH will run for two years and will provide the preparatory work for the construction of DARIAH, set to begin by the end of 2010.

(((But that’s not all! Heck no, that’s not even half of it! If DARIAH is a chain of 14 loose-linked members, DARIAH itself is a small link in a yet-bigger network called CHAIN. “CHAIN,” the “Coalition of Humanities and Arts Infrastructures and Networks!” There is something so 21st-century about that acronym that it just makes the blood sing!)))

(((If you ran into some Eurocrat arts-geek and he announced that he was the sysadmin for the Coalition of Humanities and Arts Infrastructures and Networks — really, an antiterror squad from the SAS would be less impressive. He’d be from astral realms of Euro-digital soft-power that most of us have never imagined.)))

CHAIN: DARIAH participates in an international coalition of arts and humanities infrastructure initiatives

Wednesday, 11 November 2009

A meeting was held at King’s College, London, on 26th and 27th October 2009, between representatives of the following networks, infrastructure projects, and planning initiatives working with digital technologies in the Arts and Humanities:

arts-humanities.net (<http://www.arts-humanities.net/>)

ADHO - Association of Digital Humanities Organisations (<http://www.digitalhumanities.org/>)

CLARIN (<http://www.clarin.eu/>)

centerNet (<http://www.digitalhumanities.org/centernet/>)

DARIAH (<http://www.dariah.eu/>)

NoC - Network of Expert Centres in Great Britain and Ireland (<http://www.arts-humanities.net/noc/>)

Project Bamboo (<http://projectbamboo.org/>)

TextGrid (<http://www.textgrid.de/>)

We identified the current fragmented environment where researchers operate in separate areas with often mutually incompatible technologies as a barrier to fully exploiting the transformative role that these technologies can potentially play. (((Well, yeah. That’s called “vendor lock-in,” and capitalism built it that way on purpose.)))

We resolved that our present, proposed, and future activities are interdependent and complementary and should be oriented towards working together to overcome barriers, and to create a shared environment where technology services can interoperate and be sustained, thus enabling new forms of research in the Humanities.

In order to achieve these goals we agreed to form the Coalition of Humanities and Arts Infrastructures and Networks – CHAIN. CHAIN will act as a forum for areas of shared interest to its participants, including:

advocacy for an improved digital research infrastructure for the Humanities;

development of sustainable business models;

promotion of technical interoperability of resources, tools and services;

promotion of good practice and relevant technical standards;

development of a shared service infrastructure;

coordinating approaches to legal and ethical issues;

interactions with other relevant computing infrastructure initiatives;

widening the geographical scope of our coalition. (((“Perhaps someday Americans will have heard of us.”)))

CHAIN will promote an open culture where experiences, including successes and failures, can be shared and discussed, in order to support and promote the use of digital technologies in research in the Humanities.



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