



# DARIAH Newsletter

Digital Research Infrastructure  
for the Arts and Humanities

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This free newsletter is published quarterly. If you find it useful, please tell your colleagues and friends about it.

## Growing prospects for DARIAH

In at least three participating countries – the Netherlands, Ireland and Denmark – it is likely that DARIAH will be incorporated in the national Roadmaps for Research Infrastructures, the priority listings as established by the Ministries of Science.

This became apparent at the DARIAH kick-off meeting in late October, 2008, in The Hague. The good news clearly contributed to the general confidence in the outcome of the 'Preparing DARIAH' process, a confidence which was already considerable at the start.

Representatives of data institutes from Ireland, the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, the Netherlands and Cyprus, among others, discussed possibilities to make circumstances as favorable as possible for the 'Building DARIAH' phase of the project, which is supposed to start in 2010. On behalf of the European Commission, representatives were addressed by Mrs. Maria Carvalho Dias, speaking on behalf of the Research Infrastructures Unit within the Directorate-General Research of the European Commission. Carvalho Dias stipulated that the Commission attaches a great deal of importance to the data infrastructure that DARIAH aims to realize.

Carvalho Dias had several recommendations toward enhancement of opportunities for success in the final submission of the 'Building DARIAH' proposal. The current project, 'Preparing DARIAH,' was put in motion to lay the ground work for this next phase. Ultimately, the

size of the 'Building DARIAH' project is estimated at some 6 million euros annually.

In the field of research methods and tools, a considerable yield is expected from DARIAH. The project will not only enable the development of new methods and tools, but will also work towards their exchange and dissemination among researches in all participating countries. In this way, researchers can take advantage of progress that is realized in one country.

### Learn more about DARIAH!

Visit the DARIAH website: <http://www.dariah.eu>

Send us an e-mail: [info@dariah.eu](mailto:info@dariah.eu)

## The Digital Humanities Observatory: Building a National E-Collaboratory in Ireland



Launched on October 24, 2008, the Digital Humanities Observatory (DHO) has begun the process of managing and co-ordinating the increasingly complex e-resources created in the arts and humanities at the national level. Ultimately, this project will enable research and researchers in Ireland to keep abreast of

international developments in the creation, use, and preservation of digital resources.

Dr. Susan Schreibman, Director of the DHO, sees as the core remit the building of a platform for the coordination and dissemination of humanities research, teaching, and training at an all-island level. The project hopes to fulfil its goals by serving as a knowledge resource in Ireland via consultations with project partners; developing, delivering, and coordinating educational activities; and setting national standards to ensure the interoperability, preservation, and long-term accessibility of digital resources.

The DHO has recently announced an exciting series of Spring Semester Seminars and Workshops. To learn more about the activities of the DHO and digital humanities activities in Ireland, please visit the DHO web site<sup>1</sup> and subscribe to the DHO-Announce mailing list.

### Project Bamboo



January 12-14 saw the organization of the third Bamboo Workshop in Tucson, Arizona. Bamboo<sup>2</sup> is a largely but not exclusively United States-focused project aiming to address research needs of people working in Arts and Humanities, Computer Science, Information Science, Library and Scholarly Communications, and Central Information Technology organisations.

Currently, Bamboo is working on defining its parameters and planning its progress while it expects to begin implementation of its plans in the Fall of 2009. Its main goal at this stage is to submit a proposal to the Mellon Foundation by the summer of 2009 and at the same time invest time and effort into building a supportive community and founding a consortium. The work is mostly carried out by five working groups specializing in the following areas: education, institutional support, scholarly

networking, shared services, scholarly narratives/ stories, tools and content.

A number of important projects, such as MONK (Metadata Offer New Knowledge), SEASR (Software Environment for the Advancement of Scholarly Research), THOUGHTARK, and SAKAI promise a contribution that will assist Bamboo and its progress. Furthermore, Bamboo aligns its activity and aspirations to DARIAH and might look into the integration of technologies emerging from DARIAH developments. It appears that Bamboo's development relies to some extent on its flexible approach, its intention to network correctly and usefully, and to listen attentively to the scholarly and research community. In fact, its apparent community character, that may constitute a limitation on the international level, is one of its attractions and strengths.

### ESFRI Roadmap – Preparatory Phase



34 of the 35 projects on the ESFRI 2006 Roadmap have signed Preparatory Phase contracts with the European Commission. Following a review from ESFRI, about 45% of the 2006 projects (15) are making good progress towards their construction. The rest of the 34 projects are showing clear signals for future positive development within the next months.

For the projects currently under their Preparatory Phase, a lot of efforts are being made to integrate different funding sources, at European level (FP, SFs, EIB-RSFF) as well as at national and regional level. One of the critical issues is linked with the decision making process about the national financial support. The fact that a project is mentioned on a national roadmap is already a promising sign, but not entirely sufficient. More than 50% of the Member States have not yet elaborated their national roadmap.

Another possibly critical (and related) issue is linked with the decision making process that governs the site for the seat and/or operation.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dho.ie>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.projectbamboo.org>

28 out of the 44 projects on the updated ESFRI 2008 Roadmap are of distributed nature, while 16 are single-sited (but most of these with an already identified site). For only few, it seems that such a decision-making process will take place at high political level.

## TextGrid Summit



TextGrid<sup>1</sup>, which is part of the D-Grid initiative<sup>2</sup>, is the first project in the humanities in Germany to create a community grid for the collaborative editing, annotation, analysis, and publication of primary and secondary texts. The architecture of TextGrid enhances a Globus-based grid infrastructure with a robust and secure middleware layer and an open, WebService-based layer of specialised tools for working with texts. The user interface (TextGridLab) is based on the Eclipse RichClient Platform.

About 130 academics from several European countries attended the TextGrid Summit held on 21-22 January in Göttingen, Germany. Academic researchers from the humanities as well as information scientists discussed the virtual research environment developed by the project partners<sup>3</sup> and TextGrid's future prospects.

The keynote speakers, Tobias Blanke (King's College London) and Susan Schreibman (Digital Humanities Observatory, Dublin), shared their

experiences in building infrastructures for the e-Humanities in the UK and Ireland and discussed possible connections with the TextGrid initiative.

The demonstration of the TextGridLab – a comprehensive research environment with various tools for text researchers – was highly appreciated by the audience. The discussion which followed addressed the integration of functionalities for specific research topics, for which TextGrid is well-suited since it is based on open standards.

Use cases in the fields of musicology and psycholinguistics were presented by Daniel Röwenstrunk (Edirom) and Peter Wittenburg (MPI for Psycholinguistics).

At the developer workshop on 22 January 2009, participants learned about TextGrid concepts and architecture and developed their own plug-in in a hands-on session.

Both the presentations from the summit and the beta release of the TextGridLab are available for download at the TextGrid website.

## Conference on European Research Infrastructures

The Fifth Conference on European Research Infrastructures (ECRI 2008) was organized by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the European Commission, in cooperation with ESFRI. The conference took place in Paris during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of December, 2008. The importance of Research Infrastructures (RIs) was emphasized strongly, given their great potential for facilitating basic and applied research, and for making valuable contributions to technological development and knowledge advancement. In addition, the significance of RIs was further highlighted in view of the current economic crisis.

The conference also underlined the contribution of ESFRI and stressed the importance of setting up pan-European networks for further cooperation among RIs, industry and society. Underpinning the Fifth Conference on European Research was mainly the concern over the key role played by RIs, the poor economic state of a number of European countries, societal problems, the Lisbon goals and the need to attract young researchers to science.

<sup>1</sup> TextGrid (<http://www.textgrid.de>) is partially funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) under the D-Grid initiative by agreement 07TG01A-H.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.d-grid.de>

<sup>3</sup> Göttingen State and University Library (project leader); Technical University Darmstadt; University of Trier; University of Würzburg; University of Applied Sciences Worms; Institute for the German Language, Mannheim; and two commercial partners, DAASI international GmbH and Saphor GmbH (both Tübingen).

## e-Humanities Workshop

After the first workshop in June 2008, which addressed an international audience, on 22 January, German scholars, experts and representatives of funding organizations met in Göttingen to discuss problems and perspectives of the e-Humanities in Germany. This workshop was the summit event of the joint e-Humanities project of the Göttingen State and University Library, the Max Planck Digital Library and the Technical University of Darmstadt, funded by the German Research Foundation. The main objective was the creation of a strategy for the development of research infrastructures for the humanities in Germany.

The discussions focussed on three topics: community building, structural issues and funding.

Several issues related to community building were addressed. First of all, the general problem of acceptance of



digital infrastructures in the humanities in Germany, which is slowly being resolved, was discussed. One of the most important strategies is to introduce the usage of digital infrastructures and information technology as part of the academic curriculum, which is already being done at some universities. A second issue discussed was that many scholars still have not recognized the value of agreeing upon and using common standards, especially for their metadata, nor of making their raw/primary data available to other researchers in digital form. Also raised was the need to create sustainable structures to support the permanent availability of digital resources, tools and infrastructures.

The most popular proposal was to set up a network of competence centres – somewhat like the Competence Centre for Electronic Text Processing and Publication in the Humanities, located in Trier, or the Competence Centre for Computational Philology in Würzburg. For example, the Göttingen Center for Digital Humanities, a joint project of the Göttingen University (5 faculties), the State and University Library, the Academy of Sciences, the Herzog-August Library of Wolfenbüttel and the Max Planck Digital Library, initially funded by the

German Research Foundation, will start this year.

The representatives of the funding institutions<sup>1</sup> underlined their willingness to support the emerging e-Humanities in Germany. One of the most important problems is that funding usually is only granted for a limited period of time. Thus, in order to maintain sustainable structures, new structures of funding must be developed. The funders agreed that as the communities organize and develop, funding models will surely develop in parallel.

## DARIAH Exhibits at the VSMM Conference, 2008, Cyprus

The International Conference on “Virtual Systems and Multimedia dedicated to Cultural Heritage” (VSMM’08) took place in Limassol, Cyprus from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2008. The main goal of the event was to illustrate the programs underway that promote a common approach to the tasks of recording, documenting, protecting and managing World Cultural Heritage. The Conference was a forum for sharing views and experiences, discussing proposals for the optimum attitude as well as the best practice and the ideal technical tools from a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to preserve, document, manage, present/visualise and disseminate the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the world.



DARIAH participated in the event with an exhibition stand with Dr. Stavros Karayanni, Lina Tsoumpanou, Dr. Georgios Stylianou, Celia Hadjichristodoulou from EUC, Dr. Peter Doorn from DANS and Dr. Demetris Gavriliis from the Digital Curation Unit of R. C. Athena. Also Dr.

<sup>1</sup> German Research Foundation (DFG), Volkswagenstiftung, Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Ministry for Science and Culture of Lower Saxony (MWK).



Dimitris Gavrilis, Dr. Georgios Stylianou and Dr. Peter Doorn presented a number of papers related to the DARIAH project. During the 5 days of the conference the DARIAH team provided information to all people interested to know more about the project. The DARIAH leaflet was distributed to a large number of conference participants.

Information related to the Conference can be found at the VSMM'08 website<sup>1</sup>.

## Greece Opens Call for Research Networks

At the beginning of January 2009, the Greek General Secretariat for Research and Technology invited the submission of proposals for



creating networks, which are expected to be connected with the infrastructures on the ESFRI road-map. The Greek Government has declared its interest in supporting 16 out of the 34 European infrastructures, as Greek organizations are participating as partners in these infrastructures.

The call invites applicants to prepare studies with the following aims:

- To identify and analyze the current situation in the country, to demonstrate the necessity for use of these 16 ESFRI research infrastructures, for which interest has been shown and to substantiate the feasibility for undertaking a commitment to the EU for the utilization of the infrastructures in question by the Greek research community;
- To inform the members of the research network of international scientific and technological developments in the thematic areas of these sixteen research infrastructures;
- To prevent isolation and fragmentation of the Greek research teams attempting to address duplication of research activities in their respective areas;
- To disseminate research and technological knowledge in specific subject areas through

workshops and events for both the general and specialized public;

- To encourage an interdisciplinary approach to research activities on specific thematic areas.

It is thus expected that sufficient arguments will be provided in favour of forming a national policy for the selection of some of the sixteen (16) research infrastructures for which Greece has shown interest in participating.

The two Greek partners of DARIAH, the Academy of Athens and the Digital Curation Unit of R. C. Athena, are putting together a consortium between 10 and 12 partners, among the higher education institutions, research centres, technological institutions and funding bodies that are involved in research in the field of humanities.

The project involves a six-month feasibility study, dissemination and awareness raising activities, in order to build a critical mass of stakeholders among the Greek research community, whom the infrastructure is intended to serve.

## Focus on DARIAH partners

### Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS)

#### *Data Archiving and Networked Services*



DANS (Data Archiving and Networked Services) is the national Dutch institute for the preservation of research data in the arts, humanities and social sciences. It was established in 2005, initiated by the two Dutch organizations for Arts and Sciences, KNAW and NWO. In order to reach and promote its goals, DANS itself develops permanent archiving services, stimulates others to follow suit, and works closely with data managers to ensure as much data as possible is made freely available for use in scholarly research.

DANS is a partner in European and other international data organizations, so that data from foreign countries are readily available for Dutch researchers. From this perspective, the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cs.ucy.ac.cy/conferences/vsmm2008>

role of DANS as one of the four founders of the DARIAH project and coordinating the preparatory phase, while hosting the DARIAH management, is self-evident.

DANS offers guarantees for data, transparent conditions for data use and objective criteria for digital data storage. The basic principle is that data is always findable, accessible and useful to researchers.

An important DANS activity is the setting up, managing and continued improvement of the user friendly archiving system EASY (<http://easy.dans.knaw.nl/dms>). In addition, DANS provides other services such as offering access to the files of large data managers and producers, both national and international. DANS also takes part in numerous projects to conserve data and make it available for scientific research. Retro-archiving projects are carried out on assignment. This involves ordering and making available older data and data that are difficult to access. DANS has a specialized department for research and development that can also carry out activities for research groups.

To ensure that archived data can still be accessed, recognized and used in the future, DANS developed the Data Seal of Approval<sup>1</sup>. This Seal can be requested and granted to research that meets a number of clear criteria in the field of quality, permanence and accessibility of the data and provides the research financiers with the guarantee that research results remain accessible for reuse. The Seal of Approval is presently in the process of being lifted to an international level, with an international Board. In the spring of 2009, it will be transferred to this new Board, in which partners from the United States, the United Kingdom and several European countries participate.

DANS is also working on a trustworthy way of referring to scientific output on the Internet, called 'persistent identifiers'. URLs turn out to lack trustworthiness as they are meant to identify a location instead of the resource at that location. Persistent identifiers allow unique naming of a resource on the Internet, independent from its location, and thus they allow researchers to refer to the resource itself instead of its location.

## Centre for e-Research (CeRch), at King's College London



### University of London

The Centre for e-Research (CeRch), at King's College London, works at the intersection between research methods, digital informatics, and e-infrastructure development, building on the legacy of the Arts and Humanities Data Service and the AHRC ICT Methods Network. Within King's College London, CeRch contributes to the University's teaching agenda, Creativity Research theme, and is collaborating with Information Services and Systems to develop a state of the art VRE. The Centre also plays an important role in the advancement of national, European and international agendas for e-research and infrastructure in the arts and humanities.

The research strategy of CeRch is configured around key areas of the digital life cycle with a focus on e-Research practice and methods, the impact of ICT on research practice and procedures, and infrastructure to support research practices and processes in a global environment. The Centre takes a leading role in a number of national and international projects that reflect these interests. CeRch also hosts several national services including the Arts and Humanities e-Science Support Centre, arts-humanities.net and ICT Guides.

CeRch is one of the initiators of DARIAH and the lead partner on the strategic and technical work packages, so it will undertake the design of the technical reference architecture and develop a strategic plan for the development of DARIAH.

#### Learn more about DARIAH!

Visit the DARIAH website: <http://www.dariah.eu>

Send us an e-mail: [info@dariah.eu](mailto:info@dariah.eu)

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.datasealofapproval.org>