Debates in the Digital Humanities

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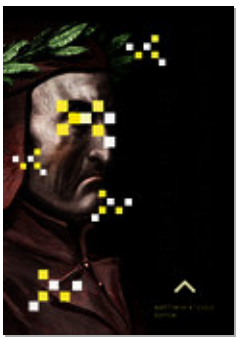

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Graduate Education and the Ethics of the Digital Humanities

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Among the many challenges and opportunities that are emerging from the rapid expansion of, and growing interest in, the digital humanities is the question of how to prepare graduate students for academic careers in the humanities (to say nothing of potential nonacademic or para-academic professional opportunities that might arise in the context of digital humanities). According to a Modern Language Association (MLA) study of 2007 through 2008 doctoral recipients in English and foreign languages, the median time from a Bachelor's degree to a PhD is ten to eleven years (2). As such, graduate students entering doctoral programs in 2011 will likely not be receiving their degrees until the end of the decade. Assuming even the most fortunate of degree paths, they will likely not be coming up for tenure until 2025. Given the volatility of digital culture and the digital humanities, it is difficult to know how to prepare entering graduate students for that job market or their careers beyond. To what extent do we imagine that all humanities doctoral students should have fluency with digital scholarly and pedagogical methods? Today, the typical literary studies graduate student might be expected to have a baseline fluency in a range of critical, theoretical methods as well as the ability to teach at least one literary survey course. In the future, will there be—and should there be—some digital component to this shared baseline knowledge? Will all humanities doctoral students need to have fluency with digital scholarly and pedagogical methods? And for those graduate students who specialize in the digital humanities, how will that field be defined? Is it a distinct field or a series of methodologies attached to existing disciplines (e.g., one might be a Victorianist who uses digital humanities research methods)? These questions become even more complicated as one intersects digital humanities with other fields of study. As a rhetorician who studies digital rhetoric, I know that the requirements for digital work in my field are different from those in literary studies or comparative literature and that those differences only proliferate as one includes other humanistic

disciplines. Digital humanities clearly means different things depending on one's disciplinary perspective, and yet, to some degree, there is also an emerging entity that is digital humanities itself that confronts traditional humanities disciplines and demands attention.

To a large extent, the answers to these questions depend on how one defines the digital humanities, and that definition is currently in flux. The history of the term, as explained by Matthew Kirschenbaum, begins in 2002 with John Unsworth in the field previously known as humanities computing (2). Kirschenbaum recounts Unsworth's participation in the decision that led to the title of Blackwell's *Companion to the Digital Humanities* (published in 2004) as well as to the creation of the Alliance for the Digital Humanities Organizations in 2005 and finally the National Endowment for the Humanities' (NEH) creation of a Digital Humanities Initiative in 2006. Each of these namings essentially equated digital humanities with the prior field of humanities computing. While humanities computing has a long history, dating back to the earliest days of computers, there are other humanities research practices involving the study of computers and related technologies with well-established practices. Research in computers and composition dates to the beginning of the 1980s, with the first issue of the journal *Computers and Composition* appearing in 1983. New media studies emerges, along with the "new" media itself, from the field of media studies, which itself has been active since at least the middle of the last century. Certainly new media studies as the study of Internet culture develops in the 1990s along with that technology. In a similar vein, the cultural study of technology dates back to the earliest days of cultural studies and Raymond Williams's investigation of television. As with new media studies, the study of digital culture emerges alongside the increasing prevalence of digital technologies. One might also point to video game studies as a particular specialized field of digital research emerging in the 1990s, though clearly with a longer history in the study of games.

When humanities computing was known as such, it existed in relative comfort alongside these other modes of investigation. Indeed, on local levels, there were likely common points of interest between, for example, someone in humanities computing and someone in computers and composition regarding department expenditures on technology or university computing policies. However, there was little crossover between humanities computing and these other fields in terms of scholarship or pedagogy. That is, the issues that might arise in scholarly work or in a course on humanities computing are quite different from those that one would typically find in any of these other fields. As I view it, there is a significant shift in emphasis that separates humanities computing from these other fields. Humanities computing is primarily focused on the digital and or computational study of the humanities, while these other areas, though each unique in its own right, share a common focus in the humanities' study of digital technology and culture. That is not to say that scholars in humanities computing are *not* interested in studying digital technologies from a humanities perspective; nor do I mean to suggest that scholars in these other fields

are *not* interested in establishing computational methods or building digital tools for conducting their research. It would seem that each of these areas has its own mix of technical facility and critical methods. The cultural study of technology is largely undertaken using traditional methods of scholarship. In computers and composition, my own field, it is not uncommon for specialists to have skills in digital media production and less commonly programming and to employ these in the study of digital technologies. In humanities computing, technical ability is a necessity; and, while there is certainly an awareness of a critical engagement with technology, most of the scholarship undertaken is directed as traditional humanistic areas of study—for example, Jerome McGann's archive project, "The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti." Such a project clearly requires a critical engagement with technology. However, the project is not itself a scholarly study of digital technology; it is research into Rossetti's works. In reviewing the content, or even the titles, of journal articles and conference presentations in the fields of humanities computing, computers and composition, new media studies, the cultural study of technology, games studies, and so on, there is a clear difference in emphasis between humanities computing and the others, where humanities computing is primarily interested in computing as a research method and these other fields primarily focus on computing as an object of study. This observation is not meant as a critique of any field but simply as a recognition that a scholar who identified with humanities computing would not likely be mistaken for being in one of these others.

Scholars in these research areas have coexisted with little conflict, but the creation of the term "digital humanities," and the NEH's subsequent adoption of that term to organize its funding of technology-related humanities research, brought them into a new relationship with one another, creating an umbrella term with which they must contend. I have seen this in my own professional experience, though there are many scholars who could tell similar stories. I first taught in a computer lab in 1992 and have been teaching using a variety of technologies since. I was the editor of an online literary magazine in 1996. My dissertation, completed in 1997, included a study of the role of technology in composition. Since then, my scholarship and teaching has operated in the areas of computers and composition, new media studies, and the cultural study of technology. In short, I have been engaged in the humanistic study of technology for nearly twenty years, but I have never once thought of myself as being in the field of humanities computing. On the other hand, how could I not think of myself as a digital humanist? That said, I do not mean to put too much emphasis on the particular genesis of the term "digital humanities." Given the global, information revolution over the past two decades, it is not surprising that significant changes have taken place in the humanities use and study of digital technology.

While such differences can be viewed as another rehearsal of familiar territorial battles among academics, there are larger issues at stake. Growing concerns over the general defunding of the humanities have led some to look to the digital humanities

as a means to revitalize the humanities as a whole. In November 2010, a group of digital humanities scholars, led by Alan Liu, Geoffrey Rockwell, and Melissa Terras, formed a group called 4Humanities with a primary mission of using the digital humanities to advocate for the humanities. As the 4Humanities mission statement observes, the digital humanities "catch the eye of administrators and funding agencies who otherwise dismiss the humanities as yesterday's news. They connect across disciplines with science and engineering fields. They have the potential to use new technologies to help the humanities communicate with, and adapt to, contemporary society" ("Mission"). However, one might wonder if this growing interest from administrators, funding agencies, and others is in humanities computing, now renamed, or in the larger umbrella of digital humanities. In part the answer to this question might be framed in terms of the *Horizon Report*, an annual document produced collaboratively by EDUCAUSE and the New Media Consortium, which identifies technologies "on the horizon" for adoption in higher education. The 2011 report observes, "Digital media literacy continues its rise in importance as a key skill in every discipline and profession" and identifies this as the number one critical challenge facing higher education in terms of technology (Johnson et al., 3). In a similar vein, HASTAC, the Humanities, Arts, Sciences and Technology Advanced Collaboratory, asks in its mission statement, "What would our research, technology design, and thinking look like if we took seriously the momentous opportunities and challenges for learning posed by our digital era? What happens when we stop privileging traditional ways of organizing knowledge (by fields, disciplines, and majors or minors) and turn attention instead to alternative modes of creating, innovating, and critiquing that better address the interconnected, interactive global nature of knowledge today, both in the classroom and beyond?" Such questions, along with the concerns regarding new media literacy, would certainly seem to fall within the purview of the humanities and thus would seem to be central questions of a digital humanities for the future, and yet these would not be the kinds of research questions that have traditionally defined humanities computing. They would, however, be precisely the kinds of questions asked by computers and composition, new media studies, the cultural studies of technology, and even games studies as they enter into concerns of serious or educational gaming.

In short, we find ourselves at a difficult crossroads in the digital humanities. If we define digital humanities in its narrowest sense as the use of computational means to study traditional humanistic content, then it is likely fair to say that it can and will remain a kind of methodological specialization, akin to being a Marxist or feminist critic. Humanities computing appears poised to grow in numbers of scholars, and it is likely that all humanities graduate students will be expected to have some knowledge of the field, just as they are expected to know something of Marx or feminism today. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine a near future where every humanities department feels it is necessary to have a humanities computing specialist. However, if we expand our notion of digital humanities, then a very different

picture emerges. The humanities at large faces an uncertain future. Digital technologies are raising increasingly pressing questions for humanists and higher education. If we think of the humanities educational mission as one that is founded on literacy, not just in the sense of a basic reading and writing literacy, but in the sense of a broader cultural literacy, then the growing need to teach digital literacy impacts all humanities faculty. As relatively uncommon as an insistence on humanities computing in job ads for literary scholars is today (growing but still uncommon), it is quite typical for faculty teaching rhetoric and composition to be expected to use technology for teaching and be able to teach digital or "multimodal" composition. When one adds searches for humanities computing faculty to searches for digital culture, new media studies, game studies, technical/professional writing, and digitally proficient rhetoric and composition faculty, then one begins to see a faster expanding demand for digital humanities, broadly conceived. And those numbers would just be within English studies. From this view, it is not unreasonable to expect that all incoming humanities graduate students will require a yet undefined digital literacy just as they acquire a shared humanistic (print?) literacy today.

Furthermore, just as digital media are transforming every aspect of the way we communicate, they will inevitably shift the way humanities scholars conduct their research. This shift in humanities research practices will not be determined by new technologies any more than the development of typewriters, industrial printing, and other late industrial technologies "determined" the shape of twentieth-century humanities scholarship. However, just as one might recognize that twentieth-century scholarship relied upon, and emerged in connection with, the communication technologies of the period, one might equally recognize that the scholarly practices of this century will develop in relation to emerging digital technologies. As such, today's graduate students will not only face a professional career where they will need to help students develop a digital literacy; they will also be employing an as-yet-undeveloped, specialized digital literacy of their own as teachers and scholars. As a result, while undefined and perhaps always in flux with the ongoing churn of digital innovation, graduate students in the humanities face multiple, related but also dissimilar, challenges. They will require a critical understanding and technical facility with a broadly conceived digital literacy that would be roughly analogous to contemporary humanities faculty understanding and facility with print literacy. They will require some level of technical facility with digital production and programming, though the particulars of that will certainly vary among fields and disciplines. Finally, as teachers they will require a technical facility and critical, *pedagogical* understanding of the use of emerging technologies in the classroom.

Legacy Research

When we look at our legacy scholarly and teaching practices, it is possible to historicize them in several ways. One might look back to the classical Greek philosophical

dialogue or identify any number of other historical starting points for various humanities disciplines. No doubt, the contemporary humanities share rhetorical and scholarly practices that extend deep into history. At the same time, disciplines have specific rhetorical and scholarly practices that identify them as disciplinary. That is, for example, a journal article in literary studies has specific discursive features that make it not simply an "essay" or an "argument." These features, I would argue, are largely the product of the late industrial period. That is, the general shape and scope of published research reflects access to information; the speed of communication; and the difficulties of composing, editing, and publishing scholarship. Before the second industrial revolution in the United States, scholarly practices were quite different. Indeed the entire project of higher education was revolutionized during the late nineteenth century. Specifically, for language and literary study, the first MLA convention, and subsequently the first issue of MLA's flagship publication *PMLA*, came about in the 1880s. Professional organizations and related journals in history and philosophy date from the same period. Not coincidentally, as many scholars have noted (see Berlin, Connors, Graff, Russell, and Scholes, for example), this professionalization of humanities scholarship occurs during a time of rapid expansion for higher education. As James Berlin notes, in 1870 in the United States, 5,553 faculty taught at 563 institutions; by 1900, there were 23,868 faculty-held positions at 977 institutions (22–23). This increase mirrored the demand for a new educated class of the American workforce during the second industrial revolution. Undoubtedly industrialization not only provided technological means for travel, communication, and publication but also ushered in a new era of professionalism and approaches to management that was reflected in both the administration of universities and the organization of disciplines.

Industrialization not only prodded the growth of higher education; it directly supported the development of scholarly practices in the humanities. While the earliest MLA conventions were likely facilitated by rail travel, contemporary national conferences were built on air travel, a national highway system, and the general process of urbanization that led to conference centers and such: MLA is just one of many national conferences in many industries. Similarly *PMLA* becomes one of many periodicals in an age of industrial printing, and scholarly monographs fit into a larger publishing industry. An investigation of the various assemblages[1] or networks that have participated in the formation of humanities discourses could extend interminably. However, I think it is fair to say that the typical length of a journal article (around seven thousand words) or conference presentation (twenty minutes) is not a reflection of some tangible, epistemological structure in humanities research: under different technological constraints, these would likely be different. The economic limits that constrain the number of articles in a journal or how often a journal publishes no longer apply to digital publication. The traditional rationale for national conferences as the best if not only way for scholars to meet and communicate no longer applies. Similarly, many limits on the length of monographs and

the number of monographs a press might publish shift in the movement to digital production and distribution.

Of course, such this shift from industrial to digital assemblages accounts for more than the length or frequency of publication. These assemblages play a central role in the establishment of pedagogical and scholarly practices and consequently on the professional, ethical relations we have established with one another. For instance, unlike a laboratory, which requires a team of people to operate, the default mode for humanities academic labor has been for a professor to work independently. Of course, independence is a relative term. All scholars draw upon other scholars in a variety of ways. However, typically, humanities scholars work alone while searching databases, archives, and library shelves; reading monographs, essays, and articles; and composing their scholarship. It is unusual for humanities scholarship to appear with more than two authors, let alone the long lists of authors that will accompany work in the sciences, for example. While late industrial technologies did not determine these practices, they became part of the assemblage of scholarly production. And just as it would be difficult for a single person to produce scientific scholarship without collaborators, it is challenging to collaborate in the humanities. Given that the assemblage operates effectively with a single author, one essentially has to invent new roles for additional participants. While there are certainly examples of notable, long-standing collaborations in the humanities, they are the exceptions to the rule.

As the humanities shift into a digital assemblage, however, these practices are changing, and this is already apparent in digital humanities fields, where research indicates a growing amount of collaboration (Meyer et al.). As with the sciences, digital humanities projects can require a broad range of expertise and a significant amount of labor, more than one person could expect to undertake. As Alan Liu notes, "It requires a full team of researchers with diverse skills in programming, database design, visualization, text analysis and encoding, statistics, discourse analysis, website design, ethics (including complex 'human subjects' research rules), and so on, to pursue ambitious digital projects at a grant-competitive level premised on making a difference in today's world" (27). In other words, there is a growing body of digital humanities work that requires collaboration. More broadly, however, the development of networked communication has facilitated collaboration for humanities scholars undertaking more traditional scholarship as well. I could publish this chapter on my blog as soon as it is finished and alert my colleagues via Twitter, Facebook, e-mail listservs, and so on. I would likely receive more, and more immediate, feedback from my colleagues that way then I will ever receive from publishing this chapter in a printed book. In fact, I wouldn't even need to wait until I was finished. I could publish this part today and the rest later. However, I could go beyond a publish, feedback, and conversation model to engage in more substantive collaboration of a scholarly work. That is, while the traditional scholarly model asks authors to respond to the requests and feedback of reviewers and editors, the author remains the sole person to make meaningful changes to the text (aside from

editorial corrections). This practice is extended to the web when, for example, one authors a blog and invites comments. Though blog comments are public, where editorial and reviewer comments often are not, the blogger retains sole control of the texts he or she posts. However, social media obviously also allows for both real-time and asynchronous collaboration, resulting in a composition with multiple authors.

In short, from a technological perspective, it would be fairly easy to collaborate with a number of scholarly colleagues. From every other perspective, though, it could be quite difficult. Put simply, while we have all been carefully and extensively trained to research and write articles and monographs, we have little or no preparation for working as a networked community. In our defense, for most contemporary academics, such networks did not exist when they were in graduate school. Our scholarly discourses and practices were built in a century when information was relatively scarce and communication was comparatively difficult. Today, the conditions are so different that it is only the weight of institutional inertia that keeps us grinding forward, even as academic publishers fail, journal subscriptions dwindle, and humanities funding disappears. Though humanists are skilled at recognizing the historical contexts of the objects they study, they have largely overlooked the historically contingent nature of their own scholarly practices. As unlikely as a near future (i.e., the next fifteen to twenty years) without journal articles might be, it is equally unlikely that scholarly practices will move forward without being significantly transformed by emerging technologies. Currently, we have little understanding about what practices will develop in the next decade, even though we face the task of preparing graduate students for that decade today.

In this context, one encounters a *third* digital humanities. It is not simply the digital/computational study of the humanities or the humanistic study of the digital; it is the way in which the humanities as a whole shifts from a print paradigm to a digital one. It is in this sense that all the humanities becomes subsumed within the digital, and it is at this level that the concern for a digital education in graduate programs affects everyone in the humanities.

Teaching and Digital Literacy

Because humanities graduate students tend to come directly from humanities undergraduate majors and most of those majors provide little education regarding digital technologies, the typical student enters his or her graduate education as a novice in regards to the digital. Certainly there are exceptions to this rule. Students who developed an undergraduate interest in the digital could certainly have found an education in it. However, an education in the digital humanities or more generally in digital technology is hardly a common feature of an undergraduate career in the humanities, though in humanistic fields that verge into the social sciences or the arts, such as communications, fine arts, or media study, one is at least more likely to find departments where traditional humanities courses intermingle with

courses in digital production or the study of digital media. Undoubtedly, for graduate students who are interested in specializing in humanities computing, specific programs at specific institutions will continue to develop. As is the case with most humanistic fields, certain institutions offer better training in this particular area of specialization than others. It will be interesting to see how graduate programs across the country decide to address the need for digital humanities specialists (in the narrowest sense of the term) in their own departments and hence the need to offer digital humanities courses to their own graduate students. Perhaps digital humanities specialists will function similarly to computers and writing specialists in rhetoric and composition. There are certain institutions that are notably strong in the field of computers and composition, but it is also the case that virtually any doctoral program in rhetoric and composition would include at least one professor who could provide graduate students with curriculum in technology. To give a counterexample, it would not be the case that the typical doctoral program in literary studies would offer courses in digital humanities, though some certainly do. Perhaps it is the case that humanistic disciplines that are focused, at least on the undergraduate level, in teaching production of some kind—for example, writers (rhetoric), journalists (communication), artists (fine arts)—are also more likely to offer graduate curriculum that prepares students in these areas and, not surprisingly, to hire faculty with discipline-specific digital knowledge and skill. Returning to my example of the field of rhetoric and composition, given that many openings now explicitly look for candidates with some digital expertise, it would seem unwise to enter a rhetoric and composition graduate program in 2011 without some plan to develop that expertise. Notably, this is a shift that has occurred in the last decade. As quickly as technological specializations in rhetoric and composition have grown, the general expectation of digital literacy for all writing faculty has expanded even faster. It is possible that the demand for digital humanities specialists in other disciplines will grow just as quickly. However, the real question for digital humanities is not how many specialists of different stripes will be sought on the job market but how quickly expectations for digital literacy among all humanists will rise. As such, the more pressing question for graduate education is not how graduate students who are interested in the digital humanities will gain that education but rather how graduate students as a whole will be educated to meet the humanities' digital future.

At my institution, the State University of New York at Buffalo (UB), we are neither particularly ahead nor particularly behind in terms of the digital humanities. We have a modestly funded "initiative" that supports digital humanities research done by faculty and graduate students. In our English department of approximately fifty faculty and one hundred and eighty master's and doctoral students, around 10 percent have received funding from our digital humanities initiative. Mostly that represents some curiosity or tangential interest in digital practices rather than any sustained digital humanistic inquiry, but UB remains at the stage of piquing nascent faculty interest in the digital. On different fronts, however, there are more pressing

demands. The never-ending search for more revenue has led UB to expand its summer course offerings, and the primary way the English department has responded to this call is by developing online composition courses, which are taught by our graduate teaching assistants. This has required a substantial push in professional development to prepare TAs for this new digital task. Where two years ago only a handful of our sixty-five TAs would have had experience in teaching online, by the end of the 2011 summer, nearly half of our TAs will have done so. Teaching an online composition course requires relatively modest technical skills. Essentially, one needs to be able to make fairly full use of a course management system. However, the pedagogical demands for online teaching are quite challenging. Typically, face-to-face composition courses are taught through class discussion, small group work, and short lectures. None of these activities translates simply to an online environment. As such, teaching online requires the development of a new digitally mediated literacy through which the instructor can communicate with students and foster discussion and interaction in the class. In addition, our composition program has instituted a requirement whereby every composition course includes at least one formal "digital composition" assignment. While the requirement remains vague, the graduate TAs and adjunct instructors have developed a variety of assignments that require students to produce slidecasts, web pages, or video. The TAs have needed to develop a facility with some consumer-level digital production tools, ranging from slideware and image editors to audio and video editing, as well as knowledge of various social media platforms they might employ (blogs, wikis, etc.). Again, while the technical learning curves of such tools are not especially steep, there remain more challenging goals, such as developing a rhetorical skill with the technology (i.e., it's one thing to make a slideshow, but making an interesting one is a different challenge) and then figuring out how to teach these lessons to their students. Thus, even though most of our doctoral students are pursuing dissertation projects that are not in the digital humanities, the other demands of the department have begun to require them to develop a digital literacy.

The interesting result is that the graduate students encounter humanistic, rhetorical, and ethical questions regarding digital technologies as teachers first rather than as students or scholars. They wonder how to create and sustain online discussion forums or motivate their students to write longer blog posts. They struggle with creating and evaluating digital composition assignments. They ask questions about copyright and make decisions about public and closed online spaces and open source versus proprietary applications. Unfortunately they do so with only the cursory support of a few professional development workshops and with little or no experience doing digital work in their own coursework. While generations of novice teachers have largely had to discover for themselves their own teaching styles, at least they could draw on their experiences with faculty as a model for their own pedagogies. While all faculty discover that some essay assignments work better than others, at least they all knew what an essay was. For graduate teaching

assistants facing the demands of teaching digital literacy through digital media, there is a very different challenge. Of course, it may still be possible for humanities graduate students to avoid using digital technologies in their teaching and not address the challenges of helping their students communicate in digital media. It is certainly possible for graduate students to write dissertations with a minimal use of digital technologies (e.g., word processors, library databases). However, it is now certainly a *choice* they must make.

Similarly, graduate faculty must also make a choice or, more accurately, a wager. If we believe that the demands and expectations for teaching and using digital technology in the next decade will not increase appreciably, then we are likely free to continue organizing our departments and curricula as we currently do. We can continue to hire according to existing models of what our departments should look like, models that have not changed much in the last twenty or thirty years. If, however, we find reason in the arguments put forth by groups like HASTAC, 4Humanities, or EDUCAUSE, then we have reason to believe that there will be a growing expectation that humanists will be able to address the educational and intellectual challenges of our digital culture. And if we believe that, then we face the difficult tasks of hiring faculty, reworking curriculum, and perhaps even developing professionally ourselves to meet those challenges.

Aside from hiring, which is almost always a contentious matter, the greatest difficulty for both graduate students and faculty will be discovering ways to infuse digital media into their teaching and scholarship. While developing a real facility with programming and design may remain a specialization, learning to use mainstream social media and digital production tools on a basic how-to level is not hard. Though we tend to speak of steep learning curves for faculty facing technology, the widespread participation in social media from YouTube to Wikipedia should be evidence in itself that learning the basics is not the challenge. Put differently, it's easy to set up a blog, and one can learn how to post in a few minutes. Maintaining a blog over an extended period of time is an entirely different matter. One not only faces rhetorical and compositional challenges in determining appropriate subject matter and developing a regular blogging practice but also must address the changing technological contexts in which the blog operates. Contemporary bloggers employ a variety of media, intersect with Twitter, Facebook, and other social media, and drive their content to a variety of devices in a way that bloggers five years ago would not have. In a similar vein, one could learn the basics for using a half-dozen of the most popular digital tools in a few days, but keeping up with the continual churn of new devices, applications, and practices would demand ongoing attention. The short duration of the specific kinds of expertise one might receive in technological training (e.g., learning how to use a particular application) is a phenomenon that is unusual in the humanities. Humanities faculty and students expect their education to have some real durability. That is, if one reads a novel in a course, one expects that the reading of that novel and much of the scholarly conversation

surrounding it will be durable knowledge, probably for the rest of one's career. In contrast, lessons in Dreamweaver are durable for maybe one or two versions. Perhaps the surrounding discussion of principles of web design and HTML lasts a little longer, but as it turns out, they, too, are quickly supplanted by a different, social media version of the web.

However, durability is only part of the problem. The real difficulty lies in creating opportunities for the technologies to be put to work. Developing facility with digital media must be tied fairly closely to pedagogical or research objectives. Otherwise, any training one receives will lie fallow and potentially become outmoded before one returns to it. In teaching, this is a little easier than it is with scholarship. At the University at Buffalo, the need to offer online courses and the institution of a digital composition requirement for our first-year writing courses created both a need for graduate students to develop some digital literacy and an opportunity for them to put that literacy to work in their teaching. Of course such practices are not without their resistances. If one viewed an existing course, like a first-year composition course, as complete already, then adding digital components would understandably be viewed as extra work. Instead, successfully infusing digital media into any curriculum requires rethinking the entire work of a course, not its goals necessarily but its *work*. That is, for example, a literary survey course would have the same fundamental goals as always in introducing students to the primary features of literature from a given historical moment, and clearly the primary activity of that course would remain the students reading those works. However, the conversations among the students and faculty, the major assignments students undertake, the research they do, the larger communities with whom they might interact, and ultimately, as a result, the activities within the classroom might all be transformed. Why undertake such changes? Hopefully not to meet some top-down bureaucratic pressure or to pursue some trend but rather because such infusion might be the best and most likely way for the humanities to investigate how their traditional objects and methods of study shift from the print cultures in which they were born into the emerging digital culture where they must learn to thrive. Certainly this is the approach we have taken with our composition program, where traditional activities like journal writing, in-class workshop groups, and class discussion are now mixed with blogging, web-based peer review, and online forums. In terms of graduate education, the hope is that following several semesters of infusing digital technology because it is required programmatically that TAs will gain enough expertise and confidence to explore the use of technology in other, noncomposition courses. It is important to note again, though, that composition is a somewhat unique example in the humanities. Like general education courses in the arts, which might ask students to engage in digital photography or graphic design, composition courses have always focused on production. On the other hand, those humanities disciplines that have always focused on interpretation, like literary studies, have aligned themselves quite differently in relation to technology. In those fields, the tradition has not been

to introduce students to new technological methods, as it has been with composition or the arts, which have been putting undergraduates in front of computers for thirty years. Perhaps for this reason, the broad introduction of digital work across these fields has come more quickly and seamlessly (though certainly not without challenges) than in other areas of the humanities.

Digital Spaces and the Ethics of Scholarship

Unfortunately, making an analogous transition toward digital scholarly practices in other humanities disciplines is more difficult. While some graduate students may relish the opportunity to break new ground, and really all dissertation writers have in their mind at least some pressure to make an "original" contribution, it is unfair to ask graduate students to bear the burden of inventing new digital scholarly practices. For graduate students who would specialize in digital humanities, computers and writing, new media studies, and another existing areas, there are already established paradigms to work from. That is, one knows not only generally what a computers and writing dissertation looks like but also the kind of work that one does to produce one. The questions for graduate students and assistant professors in these fields instead tend to whether or not other humanists and departments will recognize and value their research. My interest in this chapter, however, has been with the larger question of how the humanities as a whole will rise to the general shift of digital media. In my view, this shift is analogous to the late nineteenth-century shift that brought us the journal article and later the monograph, as well as the national professional conference. This shift is also analogous to the one we face with our teaching. However, in the case of teaching, we face expectations to teach students digital literacy as a primary goal of humanities curriculum, in addition to using digital media as a means to achieve other goals. In scholarship, while we might face external economic pressures to publish digitally, for the most part we are answerable only to ourselves in determining how we will use digital media as researchers.

Conversations about the impact of digital technologies on humanities research practices have focused on two areas: the creation and use of digital tools for analyzing humanities texts and publishing born-digital scholarship. I would not be surprised if there came a time in this century when digital research tools and born-digital scholarly composition were as common as close reading and essay writing are today, but that time may not come for several decades. In the shorter term, it is the larger ecology of social media that is relevant. Just as digital pedagogy explores the use of social media to expand conversations beyond the classroom and connect students with larger communities, humanities scholars need to explore the possibility of establishing networked communities and employing social media to connect with a larger audience. As with teaching, learning the basic how-tos is relatively simple; the challenge is adapting one's scholarly practices to incorporate social media. Certainly some humanists, particularly digital humanists, have been

blogging, tweeting, uploading videos, and sharing links, among other activities, for several years; and, even though this is a small fraction of humanist scholars, overall it is evident that social media, in comparison to traditional scholarly practices, offer means to practice and share scholarship that make it easier to communicate and collaborate with one's colleagues, while also sharing one's work with a larger audience. When one thinks of this "larger audience," one might think of the general public, and to some extent that is the case. However, most academics may continue to write for more specialized, professional audiences than a general public and for them, social media will also enable access to a larger audience in their own fields and across the humanities.

However, incorporating a social media practice into humanities scholarship is not easy. There are several obstacles. One can find celebrations, critiques, attacks, and defenses of the academic use of social media across the Internet. It's not my intention to rehearse those arguments here. Instead, as I suggested earlier, as academics we simply have a wager to make. Either we believe that the humanities can survive as an essentially print-based intellectual practice or we believe the humanities will need to adapt to contemporary communication and information technologies. If one believes the former, then I suppose one has little concern for the issues I have raised here. If, however, one believes the latter, then the question is not whether academics, and graduate students in particular, need to adapt to digital media, but how.

The challenges, in the end, are ethical, and by this I mean that the challenges stem from the values we place on particular activities and the specific relations we establish among ourselves. While digital media will not, in any straightforward, deterministic way, alter the underlying goals of humanities research (e.g., literary scholars will continue to study literature for largely the same reasons as they do today), they will alter our everyday practices. That is, quite simply, the technologies and applications we will use to conduct research, communicate with one another, collaborate (potentially) on projects, compose our scholarship, review and edit our work, and publish our findings will change. Alongside these technological changes, we will need to rethink how we value emerging scholarly practices, new forms of professional service, and the professional development they will require. In terms of graduate school, then, the objective must be to introduce students to new practices and encourage the students' development of these practices. In suggesting this, I do not mean putting graduate students in situations where they must argue that blogging, for example, should "count" as a scholarly activity along the continuum of other scholarly publishing. If such arguments are to be made, the task should not fall upon our most vulnerable members. Instead, the value of a digital social media practice should be reflected in the better articles, essay collections, and monographs that scholars produce through its practice. In time, such publishing genres will probably transform, but that transformation, while likely to be informed by the larger ecology of digital practices, should not be confused for that ecology.

When one looks at the operation of social media in humanities graduate programs, if one sees anything, one typically sees individual course blogs and wikis, the blogs and tweets of individual faculty and students, and perhaps department-level representation in Facebook. These presences represent a kind of remediation of the traditional and ongoing organization of curriculum and scholarship. A course blog or wiki typically has a one-semester duration; and, even if it persists from one iteration of a course to the next, its primary audience remains those in the course. Individual faculty and students in social media likely have audiences that stretch beyond departments; but generally those presences, to the extent that they are scholarly, remain vertical within one's specialization and are not likely to gain the attention of one's department colleagues. Projects such as the CUNY Academic Commons; the Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Advanced Collaboratory (HASTAC); and MediaCommons each serve as a platform for academic collaboration across institutions and across disciplines. Graduate students and faculty might participate in these communities as a way of reaching beyond local departments. However this still leaves open the question of how a department-level community will work. Where projects on both the small, individual scale (like a blog) and on a large scale (like HASTAC) operate on the basis of shared academic interests, departments are imagined as microcosms of the disparate interests of a discipline or, as in the case of many English departments, multiple disciplines. Department structures such as bylaws, committees, and curriculum serve to manage those disparate interests if not combine them in some felicitous way for students. As I have been discussing, the digital humanities can and does enter humanities departments as a specialization, as one of many interests (i.e., one can hire a digital humanities specialist). However, digital media and technologies also impact the humanities across specializations, altering the relations among faculty and students. To give a single example: fifteen years ago it would have been largely impractical on a technological basis for the conversations and work undertaken in one graduate course to be taken up in relation to the conversations and work undertaken in another course being offered in the same term. Today, from a technological perspective, it would be easy for a department community to conduct academic conversations in a public forum. Perhaps it would be risky. Perhaps it would not be pedagogically effective, though in making that claim we would have to be certain we still knew what the aims of graduate education ought to be. However, these are ultimately ethical concerns, concerns regarding what we *should* do. They are not concerns regarding what we *can* do.

What might a department-level public forum of this type be like? Undoubtedly, the first fear would be that the kinds of departmental political in-fighting seen on faculty listservs and in department meetings would be made public in some embarrassing way. Exposure, as always, is a prime inhibitor for faculty in social media. To what extent would a department administrator find it necessary to moderate online conversation? Would faculty and students ultimately be able to differentiate between an intellectually productive discussion of differences and some all-out war of words?

And would the shift into a public space help to bring about such a discourse where previous forums did not? One thing is certain: a civil discourse about scholarly and intellectual issues across specializations and philosophical-political positions in the humanities would need to be invented. If the digital humanities could usher in such a discourse, then it would truly be a boon.

Some intermediary gestures would include a nonpublic, department-level content management system (e.g., Drupal). Clearly not all conversations need to be fully public anyway. This would allow graduate students to develop some facility with a social media presence and to explore some of the potential collaborations networks make possible while mitigating some of the fears of exposure. Another possibility would be a public space that was focused on a particular area of specialization, for example, rhetoric and composition. A blog of this kind would not be limited to a particular course but would be composed by students and faculty across a program in this area and addressed publicly to others in the field. There are many examples of successful academic group blogs in various fields that might be employed as models. A community site of this kind would provide a way for graduate students to develop a professional-digital identity, collaborate with their departmental colleagues, and establish connections with others in the field. Ideally, such sites, if initiated at multiple institutions, would ultimately aggregate into a larger conversation that graduate students could take with them as the moved into other academic positions. This arrangement would be of mutual benefit and would draw links between local community conversations and the larger initiatives we see with HASTAC, MediaCommons, and CUNY's Academic Commons. One of the big challenges recent graduates face when moving into new academic positions, often at smaller schools, is the loss of their academic community. Sites of this type would mitigate that feeling. In turn, current graduate students could certainly benefit from the experiences of a program's recent graduates.

Though I have written here about specific social media technologies, in the end, the reformation of graduate education in the face of digital humanities is not a matter of using blogs or wikis or creating Twitter or YouTube accounts. The challenge is not to figure out how to use an iPad in a classroom or a video camera or GPS data for one's research. It is not about learning to use specific technologies or programming languages. Or rather, it is about all these things and a hundred others yet to come. Fundamentally the challenge lies in recognizing our humanities disciplines as they have been shaped by twentieth-century technologies and realizing that they must be shaped anew. In doing so, we need to examine the ways in which our ethics have developed in the context of past technological networks so that we may engage directly in establishing new ethical practices that meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that digital media present us. Graduate education is one of many sites where this work must be done as we meet our commitment to prepare those entering our field to work in a digital future that

is admittedly difficult to foresee. In my view, this is the central task of the digital humanities, broadly conceived.

NOTE

1. The concept of assemblage is developed in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and then later in Manuel DeLanda. As DeLanda explains, assemblage theory "was meant to apply to a wide variety of wholes constructed from heterogeneous parts. Entities ranging from atoms and molecules to biological organisms, species and ecosystems may be usefully treated as assemblages and therefore as entities that are products of historical processes. This implies, of course, that one uses the term 'historical' to include cosmological and evolutionary history, not only human history. Assemblage theory may also be applied to social entities, but the very fact that it cuts across the nature-culture divide is evidence of its realist credentials" (3). Assemblage theory provides a method for investigating the "heterogeneous parts" involved in the development of disciplinary paradigms. In the case of humanities, scholarly assemblages cannot be solely cultural or discursive but intersect a variety of objects, including, most notably, the communications technologies of the early twentieth century.

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