INTRODUCTION

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Between Humanities and the Digital seeks to offer a comprehensive vision of a quickly evolving, contested and exciting field, as well as of its future directions. The volume describes the breadth and depth of how the humanities engage with the digital and information technology, including discipline-specific studies and perspectives, research infrastructure, innovative tools, and creative expression. We are committed in and through the volume to articulate an expansive and large-scale vision of the field, of the humanities at large, and so also of their constitutive relations to each other. This vision is anchored in several traditions: those invested in the humanities and their constituent disciplines, in the digital, in the digital's key contributions to the humanities, and in the humanistic considerations regarding the digital. Respect for these is vital to the book project as well as to a strong engagement with the future of the humanities. This volume aspires to be field-defining in an opening and open-ended sorts of ways, to be inspirational and bridge building through suggesting and manifesting a "large" and capacious sense of the digital, of the humanities, of their relation, and, in the final analysis, of what is marked by the name "digital humanities." It is all this that we intend by the "between" in the title.

The humanities have been undergoing profound changes regarding research and pedagogical practices, funding structures, the role of creative expression, infrastructural bases, reward systems, and interdisciplinary sentiment and structures. At the deepest level, these considerations have been bound up with the transforming and contested roles of the humanities within the changing structure of the university and the place and structure of higher education in contemporary political economy, and so also with a crisis in self-confidence. These shifts have been mediated at the same time by the emergence of a deeply networked humanities both in relation to the processes of knowledge production and its products. Humanities scholars, as scholars more generally, have turned increasingly to using and exploring information technology as both scholarly tool and cultural object in need of analysis.

Currently, there is a cumulative set of experiences, practices, and models flourishing in what digital humanities is invoked to reference. In historical terms, the humanities first engaged with computing technologies in the early 1950s as a tool to make concordances and carry out textual analysis. Despite several other early examples of humanities engagement with computation, for instance, in language learning, in rhetoric and composition, and in the speculative analysis about the future of intelligence and analytic systems and categories, it is the former tradition that mainly came to be identified with humanities engagement with technology, under the auspices of "humanities computing." This latter umbrella was principally associated with the development of such first-generation tools as text mining and searching, concordances, encoding, and early humanities archives. In the past decade the discursive shift from humanities computing to what is now being termed the digital humanities has concerned shifts in institutional, disciplinary, and social organization. This renaming, attendant as it has been to new modes of technological production and practice in the humanities, has brought with it a set of new conceptions concerning information technology, knowledge production and institutional arrangements and practices, predicated as they have been on a range of epistemic traditions.

There are multiple possible futures for what is today marked as digital humanities. One possibility would be to create a technologically and methodologically focused platform, somewhat similar to what humanities computing used to be. This would be a perfectly valuable part of the humanities, but it would be a much smaller project than the current scope and footprint of the digital humanities. However valuable such a trajectory, it would seem to be counterproductive not to build on the current situation with a field that is engaging with the humanities as never before. The established platform of the field, the influx of new scholars and technology experts to the field, and the larger intellectual and institutional agenda make the digital humanities a place where some of the most interesting emerging humanities scholarship and building can be done. Some of this work will be produced in what would be called the core digital humanities community, but much of it will be carried out across the humanities more broadly but still be part of the field. A main argument of this volume is that the digital humanities need to engage with the humanities multifariously and deeply. But equally, that which lies between the humanities and the digital will help shape the future of the field of digital humanities.

Digital humanities has also come to serve as a touchstone and laboratory for thinking about the current state and future of the humanities at large. In the view of some traditionalists, the digital has come to represent an abandonment of what the humanities are supposed to stand for, and by extension, the representative expression of the supposed crisis of the humanities; moreover, in the call of some digitalists, the technological has been taken presumptuously to save the humanities from the insularities of its traditionalisms. Contributors to this volume reveal the poverty of both positions, exemplifying the most probing thinking precisely at the

interface. It is in this spirit of rethinking, now made self-reflexive to include the digital humanities itself, that we are concerned in this volume to offer a comprehensive framework for exploring the spaces of engagement, intellectually, materially, and institutionally, between humanities and the digital both generally and generously conceived.

At the risk of caricature, existing work around questions of humanities and informational technology can be divided at the outer edges roughly between the technological and methodological imperatives represented by work under the rubric of humanities computing, on one hand, and critical studies of the role, structures and infrastructures, interventions, and impacts of the range of work falling under new media, on the other. *Between Humanities and the Digital* is concerned to address the entangled interfaces of new media technology with the humanities in all their complexity. The volume maps the range of interactive engagements between humanities and digital technologies and the transformative impacts as a consequence on both.

Between Humanities and the Digital brings together a multifaceted view of digital humanities and its intellectual culture, of the entangled interfaces between humanities and the digital, as well as the interactive engagements between their practicing scholars. It speaks accordingly also to the future of the humanities, to their institutional-level and strategic perspectives. *Between Humanities and the Digital* thus sets out to:

- articulate digital humanities both as a large-scale and multiplicitous, heterogeneous humanities project, or really a set of projects;
- build bridges between different traditions invested in the intersection, at the interface;
- engage critically and productively with high-quality current humanities research and current research challenges within and outside the disciplines;
- extend the engagement with the digital in the humanities, between the humanistic and informational technology;
- consider digital humanities as one way among others of reconfiguring the humanities and the academy;
- consider critical work and "making" as intertwined practices;
- operate on three levels (coinciding more or less with the volume's three parts): institutional, scholarly, and infrastructural;
- complement other work on digital humanities, and on the interface between humanities and the digital.

Structure and Composition

The volume is divided into three complementary parts each with their own introduction. The first part addresses the current state and future of the field of digital humanities through

bringing together scholars and leaders from different traditions and perspectives. As a whole, an expansive and intersectional vision of digital humanities is forwarded. The second part includes digitally inflected and enabled work in the humanities from a range of fields and disciplines. The range of work presented demonstrates the rich quality of work at this interface as well as how the digital intersects with significant humanities-based research challenges and emerging areas of inquiry. The final part explores how the digital pressures models for knowledge production and infrastructure inside and outside the humanities, suggests alternative modalities for academic expression, and challenges traditional models of learning.

The thirty-five contributions reflect the ethos in the volume in the sense of drawing on different traditions and modalities. For instance, a few of the chapters originated as blog entries and were chosen because they add importantly to the narrative. Three chapters are based on previous publications and selected for the same reason. All the other chapters were solicited from the authors for the direct purpose of this volume. The book includes contributions set across a span of disciplines and areas including cinema studies, humanities computing, English, archeology, media studies, science and technology studies, history, art theory, library science, religious studies, media history, gender studies, computer science, ethnic studies, and comparative literature.

Katherine Hayles closes the volume with a productive provocation. While she notes the reach and importance of the work presented, she also finds much of this work set in a revisionist rather than revolutionary framework. From the point of view of the central aspiration of this volume—exploring, building, and interrogating what is between humanities and the digital—Hayles's observation may indeed be seen as a confirmation of engagement with that liminal space. This does not preclude truly transformational work, of course, but it is likely that much of the most important work will be placed within or in relation to existing structures and lead to long-term renewal (to use that term) rather than immediate revolution and transformation.

In all, then, *Between Humanities and the Digital* reveals that a new turn—perhaps a new temporal chapter—has emerged in the relational engagement between humanities and the digital. The most interesting and innovative work today in what has come to be referenced by digital humanities is less in its discrete self-formation as a self-encapsulating, self-informed, and self-referencing discipline so much as in the ways the digital has been taken up to push the boundaries of the sorts of questions and challenges the humanities have long addressed within, across, and beyond their own disciplinary formations. It is in the "between" that the most interesting, creative, and provocative work of the digital and the humanistic is today being done. In this, the digital has not only prompted the humanities to open up to their own beyond, their own horizons of possibility; the humanities have likewise pushed the digital to become more than techne, more than a narrowly technological application. This liminal position is

simultaneously precious, productive, and precarious. In taking seriously the interactive, relational, and interfacing challenges of the ampersand (and)—the *between* of the digital and humanities—lies the possibilities of their mutually engaged and creative transposition, their re-vision and re-formation.

A Visioning Statement

What today falls under the designation of "digital humanities" both builds on and challenges what has been characterized by contrast as "traditional humanities," in conception and application. On one hand, while digital humanities has sought discrete status, it accordingly is not a distinct and separate discipline, although it may seek institutional integrity to be productive. It looks to engage with, build on, and connect with pretty much any and all humanities disciplines, while looking at once to push the traditional and conventional to new insights and newly productive ways of making knowledge. It seeks persistently to touch the heart of humanities disciplines and interdisciplines, to advance them individually and interconnectedly, but also to look outside the humanities proper for relational possibilities of opening up new insights, new ways of thinking about subject matters, indeed new subject matters. It looks to provide productive resources to address traditional research questions but equally to pose old questions anew and new questions for long established or more recent fields. Digital humanities should be sufficiently open to incorporate data heavy projects, encoding methodologies, the textual with the visual and the sonic as well as critically and theoretically based analyses. And indeed to have its principal and driving premises challenged by the latter. One of the major challenges at the intersection of humanities and the digital is the interweaving of intellectual, exploratory and technological modalities. Johanna Drucker describes this challenge in terms of creating "intellectual middleware."

"Big" digital humanities—laboratory-like initiatives that incorporate numerous projects— draws on multiple epistemic traditions, seeking to find common and sometimes contesting ground and language while being open to productive tensions, critical interventions, and new directions. Digital humanities puts into play computational and interpretive analytics, textual and visual rhetorics, logical systematicity, and metaphoricity. It seeks to combine the technics of enhanced searchability, archiving, and mapping capacity with provocative new (counter-) possibilities in composability, curation, and curatability, and analytic as well as representational experimentation.

Digital humanities thus offers to the humanities a capacity to reach beyond itself in four key and sometimes unique senses. First, it puts the humanities into serious play with technical disciplines such as engineering and computing sciences in terms both of engaging with the

latter's conceptual and instrumental capabilities and of engaging its epistemological assumptions as objects of (critical) analysis and comprehension. As such, it opens up challenges to engineering and computational thinking to engage more humanistically, whether by way of addressing more conventionally humanistic subject matters or by finding more humanistically disposed processes in their own applications and practices. Second, it provides the humanities with productive possibilities to reach new publics and well-disposed intellectuals in new ways. The reach of digital media provides the potential to engage a far broader range of publics, while in turn challenging humanists to become more self-reflective about how to represent their own work in more publicly accessible ways without necessarily compromising the quality or criticality of their work. Third, it challenges conventional modes of knowledge production and encourages exploration of multimodal expressions. Humanistic engagement has long predicated itself dominantly on more or less narrowly construed textual media, and digital technology has made multimodal production far more readily available. This, in turn, pressures humanists to think both more creatively and provocatively about the possibilities of multimediating composition, curation, and argumentation. And fourth, digital humanities enables the humanities to question in far more robust ways the practices, place, and role of the humanities in the twenty-first century. Digital technology has come to magnify the range and applications of meaning, value, and significance, the possibilities and actual expressions of interactive and relational cultural expression across broad divides hitherto less interactive. It has made possible new modes of translatability, with all the attendant challenges regarding power divides, interpretive presumption and failures, and translational hubris and misdirection thus posed. These concerns with meaning, value, significance, and textual, representational, and broadly cultural translation are issues long central to humanistic concern and focus.

At the same time, new media technology, as with any initiative depending on more expensive infrastructure and equipment, is prone to re-inscribing existing resource differentials and inequalities of power. As so far elaborated, digital humanities is little different. But digital technologies and social media have proven to offer up some unexpected opportunities to the resourceful. First, the technologies and media have been taken up in unpredictable and innovative ways to open up analytic, political, and social possibilities otherwise less readily or altogether unavailable. And second, the relative lack of resources has led to creative workarounds using available technologies in boundary breaking ways. We think here of the creative use of mobile technologies in societies with less reliable digital infrastructure, often outstripping better-resourced societies. Digital humanities is challenged both to attend to these developments at once as a check on its own sense of self-declared "progress" and as experiences from which valuable lessons are to be learned as much about the humanistic as about productive uses of the digital.

Commitment to such an expansive digital humanities accordingly comes with responsibilities and cannot be exclusively mapped onto individual traditions in a convincing way. In enabling the humanities to reach beyond itself both disciplinarily and in terms of long established and reproduced cultural and national boundaries, the digital challenges the humanities to be concerned with more than self-reproducing professionalization, to be fully mindful to whom the humanities speak and how. But it also entails that digital humanities be more than a self-reproducing technicist discipline, that it live up to its promise to marry productive rigor, instrumental usability, rhetorical openness and clarity, along with cultural humility and sensitivity. The work of the digital humanities must be intellectually driven in such a way that it challenges, stimulates, and provokes humanist scholars from the traditional disciplines. Through engaging with technology, including infrastructure shaped by humanistic questions, digital humanities can offer innovative platforms for exploring materials, expressions and research questions.

Yet digital humanities must resist a consuming romance with the newest technology without questioning its productive value while allowing appreciation of and experimentation with new (and old) technologies. The concern that digital humanities will eat up scarce resources in the humanities would best be offset by engaging the technological capacities to advance multimodal composition, to facilitate searchability and translatability, linguistic and cultural, to push new modes of expression and cartographic possibility while posing novel questions, to challenge fixed ways of knowledge-making, and to encourage collaborative engagements as the most effective means to advance knowledge about human being, sociality, and culture in and across heterogeneous environments. Importantly, we need to move beyond a zero-sum mentality and seek an expanded and reinvigorated place for the humanities within and across both the academy and public sphere(s).

Digital humanities accordingly has the power to stimulate visionary and transformative thinking, to be a site for innovation, reconfiguration, and exploration. This capacity derives from its broad and intersectional reach, from being situated at the periphery and challenging established structures at both the humanistic and digital boundaries, and so too from its abiding nondisciplinary status even in the face of drives to disciplinization. The digital serves as a potent point of shaping for this transformative sentiment. As a consequence digital humanities can become a proxy site where the digital, analog, and hybrid humanities can be discussed, contested, negotiated, and projected. Digital humanities requires material and technological grounding in order to facilitate the often intertwined practical, expressive, and critical work associated with it.

Today, even those traditional humanists who might openly deplore "digital humanities" as too much technology and too little humanities very likely use digital technology on a daily basis, for searching and archival consultation, for reading and composition. How this use

transforms what each of us does as and in the name of humanistic endeavor too is a critical self-reflective question. Digital media and technology thus must be engaged deeply, sensitively, indeed critically in order to shape our own means of knowledge production. A properly humanities-based notion of research infrastructure requires humanists to think carefully through the intellectual challenges and ideational underpinnings of the humanities generally as well as of their individual fields. But it challenges us also critically to explore the technologies and methodologies the now established but also constantly morphing endeavors at the interface of the digital and the humanistic enable and produce.