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Introduction to the Special issue: The sum of its parts, what a platform of digital humanities courses says about digital humanities

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This paper discusses a newly created platform of online courses covering a range of digital humanities methods and asks what the assortment of courses demonstrate about the nature of digital humanities (DH). The role of methods in defining the field of "digital humanities" is reviewed, followed by description of the educational platform itself – *Digital Methods Platform for Arts and Humanities* (DiMPAH) – before reflecting on what the ensemble of courses reveal about digital humanities *in practice*. Themes emerging from this reflection include: the division between research-driven and collection-driven initiative; the situatedness of methods; and the persistent role of disciplinary knowledge matters. The paper concludes by what the platform – produced by scholars from across Europe – along with the methods and use cases presented therein suggest about future stories for the continent through DH.

Keywords: Digital humanities, online education, resource development, digital methods

1. Introduction

This special issue of *Education for Information* features contributions from the collaborators behind the *Digital Methods Platform for Arts and Humanities* (DiMPAH). Driven by the principle of open education and addressing the popular interest in digital humanities methods such as text analysis or virtual reality, DiMPAH brought together teams of scholars from universities across Europe (Cyprus, Denmark, France, The Netherlands, Portugal, and Sweden) to develop seven open educational resources (OERs). Each OER is based around digital methods/practices applied in the humanities according to the expertise and experience of each team. This means that the topics covered in the platform range from data analysis to cataloguing, and from corpus linguistics to augmented reality. But it also means that the OERs are very much informed by the context in which the instructors have applied the method, which may be informed by the scholar's discipline (e.g., linguistics), the nature of the project referenced (e.g., enriching digital newspaper collections) or a combination of the two (creating a system for analysing performances in the performing arts). As self-contained courses, each module in DiMPAH offers itself as an invaluable instructional resource for teachers interested in having students work with digital methods in the humanities, or having self-motivated students learn applications of the digital on their own.

In this paper, I will present some background to this initiative and summarize

its deliverables in the form of the OERs. But beyond this, I will take a step back to reflect on this ambitious and diverse collaboration, bringing together educators from across Europe and from different quarters of the digital humanities, and ask: *what does the DiMPAH suite taken in its entirety teach us about the field of digital humanities as a field of study today*. Asking this question means approaching the suite of courses as a sample or cross-section of the digital humanities (DH), a microcosm of methods, technologies, and scenarios from a highly varied assortment of practitioners in DH. While the OERs are independently constructed courses, intended to serve as standalone learning experiences, the assortment in itself is conveying to students something about the extensive yet amorphous field they are engaging in through DiMPAH, and it therefore behoves us to articulate what statement this assortment is in fact making.

The value of such analysis is due to the nebulous nature of digital humanities as a relatively young and inchoate field unanchored to any traditional discipline and hounded by the persistent question of "what is digital humanities?" Answers have varied, but digital and computational methods have often been the common thread throughout, whether implicit or explicit. This is where the paper begins before introducing DiMPAH as the latest of a series of educational material for this poorly defined yet much sought-after area of scholarship. And it is with these questions in mind that we must appreciate the unique opportunity that DiMPAH offers: by amassing teams of Europe-based DH instructors and researchers each responsible for developing their own course introducing a method based on their own unique expertise, DiMPAH inadvertently serves us with an edifying cross-section of DH. This is what the latter half part of the paper will focus on unpacking: what does the suite reveal about DH as a field.

Lastly, as an assortment of resources emerging specifically from the context of Europe, coming from scholars from across the continent, it is worth asking what this specific suite of digital courses tells us about Europe and the new stories DH can tell us about the European experience moving forward.

2. Digital humanities

Each year digital humanities programmes and courses welcome a new cohort of students eager to learn about this innovative and variegated field. During a recent orientation meeting with an incoming cohort of DH master's students at my university, one of the new students in attendance politely asked us for a succinct definition of the field of DH which she was formally entering. Mind you, the student made clear that she was not asking for a definition of the field for *herself*, but rather for a definition that she could give to others – especially prospective employers – who would be asking her about the subject matter in which she would be earning a degree. My response to the student enjoined her and her colleagues to treat this question from others as an invitation to offer their own bespoke definition of digital humanities,

a definition reflecting their own pursuits and approaches within the field. In other words, keep the focus on one's own activities as a manifestation of DH rather than pursuing a pure, abstract definition of DH in a vacuum.

Formalizing a definition of digital humanities has been a struggle since the fields rebranding in the mid-2000s inception, with moving battle lines delineating who to include and who to exclude (Ramsay, 2013; Warwick, 2016). This made the search of a definition contentious but also aspirational, as if a definition could finally afford the field coherence and – by means of this coherence – legitimacy and recognition on par with established fields of study. Yet these debates over "what is DH?" were already turning into a genre in itself (Kirshenbaum, 201). And the failure to provide a coherent definition of the field come to be embraced. Sites like *What is Digital Humanities* (https://whatisdigitalhumanities.com/) cycles through a corpus of +800 definitions to highlight the plethora of views of DH practitioners, who variously emphasize the role of community, the types of methods employed, to epistemological basis, the sought after goals, and even exasperation at the question itself.

The idea of defining DH through the tools and methods (as opposed to a common object of study or the boundaries of formal disciplines) is not so new. Even before the field was rechristened as *digital humanities* and was still under the moniker of *humanities computing* (Vanhoutte, 2016) digital methods were placed at the heart-and-centre, as the initial emphasis on digitisation of analogue objects gave way to a focus on what could be done with the vast array of digital resources now available to scholars (Edmonds, 2016; Warwick & Bailey-Ross, 2013).

The first wave of digital humanities (or humanities computing), roughly corresponding from the post-WWII period to the mid-2000s, was largely enmeshed within traditional disciplines and emphasised building infrastructures and repositories (Berry, 2011). The creation of these initial repositories and digital libraries become the foundation for the next wave of DH, as disciplinary boundaries become more porous and collections were now seen as resources that must be more fully explored and exploited. It is this that makes the growing importance of methods as an identifying feature of DH, as the field escapes into the interstitial space between disciplines.

For instance, McCarty and Short (2002) set a *methodological commons* at the heart of their intellectual map of humanities computing. Others, such as Kirshenbaum (201), offered that DH consisted of *a community of practitioners*, though even this suggests a common repertoire of practices (i.e., methods). Even the "hack vs yack" debate in DH (Ramsay, 2013; Warwick, 2016) revolved around the proposition that methods and methodology *exclusively* conferred the status of DH, whereas engagement with theory and critique on its own failed to earn this designation.

But what about these methods, then? When Hughes et al. (2016) revisited the McCarty and Short model, they noted several core features. First, the technical methods in question – such has data mining and information visualisation – are originally developed outsides the humanities (information retrieval, statistics, human computer interaction, etc.). Second, these methods entailed broad-ranging collaborations among diverse actors. Thirdly, that same diversity was reflected in the combinations of

data types, technical methods and multiple technologies (e.g., combinations of text, database, image, and GIS). And fourthly, these methods often entailed working with large-scale data sources and, hence, aggregating materials from multiple collections or sources. Obviously, trying to conceptualize the methods that made up DH required delving more deeply into what applications were being implemented within DH instead of glossing over the particulars in the interest of fitting them in a neat model that encapsulated DH as a whole.

Attempts to systematize the approaches within DH can best be illustrated by the *Taxonomy of Digital Research Activities in the Humanities* (TaDiRAH, https://www.tadirah.info/) – a classification system for clearly and consistently labelling the practices undertaken by the DH community (Borek et al., 2016; Hughes et al., 2016). Developed by DARIAH and DiRT, the former the European digital research infrastructure for the arts and humanities and the latter a digital humanities tool directory, TaDiRAH separates DH into six classes of activities (analysing, capturing, storing, interpreting, enriching, disseminating, and creating) which are further narrowed activity (e.g., analysing: content analysis, network analysis, stylistic analysis, spatial analysis, etc.) until the lowest level of techniques are specified (e.g., topic modelling, sentiment analysis, and information retrieval). The intent behind such a system was to aid DH scholars in making their work discoverable through a systematic descriptive tool whereby technical approaches are made explicit and identifiable, allowing for the collocation of projects employing similar techniques despite dealing with any number of subject matters, operating at any size of scope, or employing any specific tools.

TaDiRAH is indisputably a vital representation of DH: one that puts methods at the centre through meaningful conceptual granularity. Yet it must also be acknowledged that it rests on the premise of abstraction: abstracting and isolating DH methods from the project themselves, thereby glossing over the differences and distinctions in how a method is in fact put into practice. Such a sacrifice is pragmatic, of course, but leads to representations of the field and its approaches that may accommodate many but fails to meaningfully represent anyone. For instance, in the four core elements mentioned by Hughes et al. (2016), we see a theme of boundary-crossing: imported methods, interdisciplinary teams, cocktails of data types, mixing of methods, assemblages of technologies, the smashing sources together. In short, *transgression* becomes the operative character of digital humanities when distilled from actual practices. Even the distinction of historical "waves" of DH reinforces this tendency for transgression: the second wave has been seen as a rise of hybridity and novelty, whether with respect to disciplinary paradigms, methodologies, artefacts, and material culture. Finally, there is the nascent third wave which Berry (2011) argues emphasises critical engagement with digital cultural and technologies themselves. Examples of this are the work in critical cultural studies (Marino, 2016, 2020) or critical infrastructure studies (Liu, 2018; Liu et al., 2021).

Projects like TaDiRAH represent a ground-up approach to understanding DH, and once again focusing on techniques and methods as the common thread. Yet the move

away from clear, universal parameters on DH has also been followed by a move away from abstraction and generalizability. There is today an increasing movement towards particularizing and contextualization (Klein & Gold, 2019). This means shifting to understanding and representing DH as method and practices that inhabit and are meaningful within specific contexts, such as DeSpain and Travis (2018), teaching DH to students though affordances of techniques and technologies in understanding American literature.

It is with this understanding that we can now turn to the DiMPAH modules. When DiMPAH partners were invited to create a course on a digital humanities method, I argue that each of these partners implicitly offered an instantiation of digital humanities: not a totalizing definition that intends to answer the question in a definitive fashion, but rather something more in line of what I suggested to the student in the introduction: defining a facet of DH around their particular practices. With this in mind, this introductory article reflects on these modules to resolve DiMPAH's statement on the nature of DH as a field of practice.

3. DiMPAH

In 2020, the *Digital Methods Platform for Arts and Humanities* (DiMPAH) project was awarded funding through an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships, with Koraljka Golub (Linnaeus University) as principal investigator. DiMPAH had the aim of developing a suite of online and open educational resources covering an array of digital methods, taught by academics with practical experiences with the methods in question. Such educational resources in DH are not new. Sites such as *dariahTeach* (https://teach.dariah.eu/) host a series of open educational resources (OERs) alongside those of DiMPAH. Many other examples abound: the public resources on DH from the indominable Miriam Posner (https://miriamposner.com/blog/tutorials-ive-written/) or William Mattingly (https://pythonhumanities.com/) come to mind. Even older material like Daniel J. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig's *Digital History* website (https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/index.php.html) still offers an invaluable contribution in this area. Yet despite such efforts, the need for educational material in DH persists.

Recognizing this, DiMPAH has offered its own measure, with seven online learning modules from a numerous teams of DH practitioners from across Europe. The main actors recruited to participate in DiMPAH were Marianne Ping Huang from Aarhus University (Denmark), Koraljka Golub, Fredrik Hanell, Romain Herault, Ludvig Papmehl-Dufay, Pernilla Severssson, and Jukka Tyrkkö from Linnaeus University (Sweden), Tobias Blanke and Giovanni Colavizza from the University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Stella Hadjistassou from the University of Cyprus (Cyprus), Antoine Doucet and Cécile Chantraine Braillon from the University of La Rochelle (France), and Olívia Pestana from the University of Porto (Portugal). As an educator starved for resources to further the education of skillsets of our students, I can only express my appreciation for their contributions.

But many of these learning resources are developed in isolation, DiMPAH had the ambition of creating a suite of OERs with thematic and pedagogical threads. For instance, the platform would teach methods while leveraging several instances of European cultural heritage and pursue the aim of learning scenarios that allow new stories of Europe to be developed (e.g., social equity, transnational and cultural diversity, gender equality, good health and well-being). The conceit behind DiMPAH is that, beyond the need to expand the freely and online learning material to meet the demand for DH training, that complex societal challenges can be addressed through international, cross-disciplinary, collaborative research into human conditions, societies and cultures, and through comprehensive studies using relevant digital methods and datasets throughout Europe and beyond.

Naturally, DiMPAH stands as an impressive suite of resources for DH pedagogy, and one that taps into the primary driver for many in digital humanities: methods and techniques. Digital humanities encompasses many varied implementations, and the same is true in how such implementations are taught. It is a constant struggle to find the best resources and pedagogical approaches with which to introduce the uninitiated into the practices and techniques within the digital humanities or supporting the advancement in DH of already skilled students. Much of this is exacerbated by the fact that many techniques and tools are presented without any specific context – methods in a vacuum, as it were – for students who themselves bring heterogenous backgrounds: some students are intimately familiar with medieval manuscripts but have very little understand of the difference between a text file and a MS Word file; while other students still might come with a strong computational background but lack the context of humanistic epistemology and knowledge production, therefore failing to see how methods can substantively yet critically inform scholarship. DiMPAH, through its highly contextualized approach to methods, rides this fine line to an admirable degree.

The courses created by the aforementioned collaborators are available as online educational resources (OERs) which are openly accessibly to anyone and support asynchronous, self-paced, and modular learning. They are intended to offer introductions to digital methods in the humanities and to be used autonomously by a learner or be adapted to a formal learning context. The seven courses make up DiMPAH are as follows:

- OER1 – "Data Analysis in Python for the Humanities" (University of Amsterdam)
- OER2 – "Text Analysis: Linguistic Meets Data Science" (Linnaeus University)
- OER3 – "Digital Historical Research on European Historical Newspapers with the NewsEye Platform" (La Rochelle University)
- OER4 – "Netnography" (Linnaeus University)
- OER5 – "E-Spect@tor Digital Tool for Analysis of Performing Arts" (La Rochelle University)
- OER6 – "Design, Development and Deployment of Augmented Reality Applications" (University of Cyprus & Linnaeus University)

– OER7 – "Introduction to Knowledge Organisation Systems for Digital Humanities" (University of Porto & Linnaeus University)

Even simply presenting the titles makes the spectrum of methods, tools, approaches, and objects-of-study immediately evident. In the following section, we provide more details on each OER to further substantiate these differences.

OER1 – Data Analysis in Python for the Humanities

OER1 covers numerous data analysis techniques using the programming language Python, from data wrangling to data visualisation. It mainly deals with structured data and walks students through a swath of data science techniques implementable through Python scripts that could be applied immediately by the learner. Moreover, each technique is covered in a relative isolation, illustrating one with a specific case study In this way, OER1 is not simply about teaching the coding but – perhaps more fundamentally – the kinds of research questions that data science is equipped to answer, and the flexibility that coding can offer in finding such answers

OER2 – Text Analysis: Linguistic Meets Data Science

OER2 covers methods, techniques, and methodologies for studying text, largely informed from a linguistics perspective. A tool is offered – KNIME – for students to practice text analysis. But a large part of OER2 explains the methodological foundations undergirding the study of language, as well as explaining the basis of various techniques in text analysis and/or corpus linguistics.

OER3 – Digital Historical Research on European Historical Newspapers with the NewsEye Platform

OER3, like the preceding one, is focused on fundamental text analysis techniques. But the *application* of these techniques stands in marked contrast to that of OER2. Here, instead of being based in the disciplinary study of languages, text analysis is presented from a computational perspective and intended for enriching a digital collection and making historic digitized newspapers more tractable for search and discovery. Furthermore, rather than relying on a tool for text analysis, OER3 presents text analysis techniques through Python codes, much as OER1 did for structured data

OER4 – Netnography

Unlike the preceding modules, OER4 does not focus on a computational technique but rather sets out to complement such approaches (e.g., social network analysis, as covered in OER1) through the methodology of netnography, which pairs digital methods with ethnographic methods for the study of online communities. As such, OER4 revisits manual investigative techniques intended to act in tandem with digital methods, pairing *thick* description with *big* description, for a fuller capture of digitally mediated social dynamics

OER5 – e-Spect@tor Digital Tool for Analysis of Performing Arts

OER5 brings another discipline-based approach this time from the performing arts

and adapting their mode of performance analysis through a digital tool. The tool in question – e-Spect@tor – is presented as a means for supporting the study of digital recordings of performances by leveraging ontologies and video-annotation software.

OER6 – Design, Development and Deployment of Augmented Reality Applications

OER6 returns to the topic of digitizing cultural heritage, previously seen in OER3, but this time the focus is on non-textual artefacts (e.g., monuments, sculptures, archaeological sites, ancient practices and customs). A large part focuses on the implications of digitization and introduces various digitization tools and techniques, including augmented reality, exemplified through another in-house developed platform.

OER7 – Introduction to Knowledge Organisation Systems for Digital Humanities

The last course in DiMPAH is OER7, which covers the application of standardised description of humanities resources, as well as both traditional and modern technologies for labelling assets. OER7, like several preceding modules, is connected with the management of cultural heritage but with an eye on making collections more usable and discoverable for scholars in the humanities, as seen in OER3, but advocating the importance of traditional and manual cataloguing practices in the era of digital resources.

These summaries only present a basic idea of what the OERs cover without going into the specifics (which are detailed by the collaborators themselves in this special issue). Instead, what I would like to do is return to the question of particularizing DH and use the DiMPAH suite to emerging themes. As such, the next section of this paper isolates some revealing trends across the OERs.

3.1. Digital humanities (reconstructed through DiMPAH)

Four themes emerge when reviewing the modules that make up DiMPAH and what they disclose about DH as a field for study:

- DH as an associative network
- Analysis versus infrastructure
- The situatedness of methods
- Disciplinary knowledge still matters

3.2. An associative network

The DiMPAH courses are all interconnected in various ways, but the modules were largely developed independently (with regular coordination) making these connections and overlaps rather natural and organic. The user may explore the courses in any order, or even dive into courses or units that interest them and ignore the rest. Despite this flexibility in *how much* and *what order* a student may engage with the OERs in platform, there is also a message that the platform conveys to students *as a whole* about the nature of DH today and the role of digital methods therein.

As a collective, DiMPAH reveals a very broad umbrella of digital practices and engagements within DH. The suite may seem almost haphazard – honestly disclosing how variegated the field of DH is – lacking formal association, shared objects of study, or common purpose and intend. There is even a semblance of "redundancy" if one fails to account for the very different circumstances around the method in question (text analysis from a linguist perspective versus computer science perspective, as in OER2 and OER3) Partners in DiMPAH vary from classical humanists, computer scientists, and information professionals. Some are interested in scholarship while others in systems and still others in cultural heritage. For some digital techniques are crucial while in others digital techniques are incidental (or in some cases, the limits of digital approaches counterpoised by manual techniques, as put forward in OER4 and OER7).

But none of these modules exist in complete isolation As stated above, DiMPAH exhibits many associations connecting all the DiMPAH modules to different degrees. And, as already mentioned, many of these links were realized after the modules were nearing completion. The earlier summary of OERs shows some of these links, but there are more. For instance, knowledge organization systems are put forward in two separate OERs, once in the application of controlled vocabulary for annotating performances for analysis (OER5) and next in the use by information professionals for making digital collections more useable (OER7); data analysis (OER1) includes an introduction to social network analysis which is then complemented by the mixed-method of netnography (OER4); as mentioned, textual analysis is simultaneously presented through the different paradigm of corpus linguistics (OER2) and information retrieval (OER3); the efforts for digitizing cultural heritage are undertaken twice, with text-based material (OER3) and three-dimensional artefacts (OER6) As such, one could say that the interconnected, rhizomatic nature of DH initiatives is one of the first characteristics to be disclosed through the DiMPAH suite.

3.3. Analysis versus infrastructure

But besides how the modules link, it is also notable in how they split. DiMPAH shows a dividing line between DH as *researchfocused*, oriented to analysis and knowledge production (OER1, OER2, and OER4) and DH as *infrastructure-focused*, oriented towards new ways of accessing and engaging with traditional objects of humanistic study, typically (though not exclusively) in the realm of cultural heritage (OER3, OER6, and OER7).

OER1, OER2, and OER 4 are focus on research techniques – data analysis, corpus/text analysis, and netnography – where the emphasis is on supporting research questions. OER5 may also be included here, given its detailed exploration of *how* analysis of performances is conducted. By contrast, OER3, OER5, OER6 and OER7, which respectively cover a digitized newspapers collection, an annotation tool of recorded performances, augmented reality of heritage, and knowledge organization,

are very much based on the digital collections. These OERs present techniques, strategies, and conceptualizations required for meaningfully enriching their collections (Though once again OER5 is somewhat of a hybrid, but nevertheless the digital emphasis arguably lies in the digital tool *e-Spect@tor* for labelling performance recordings, hence being somewhat more collection than analysis focused.)

Perhaps nowhere is this divide more apparent than in the divide between OER2 and OER3, which both feature text analysis techniques but are applied in very different contexts. OER2 approaches text analysis as a means of studying languages and the other for computationally processing the content of newspapers; the former applies digital techniques for scholarly insights on language use while the latter applies the same techniques for automated approaches to disambiguate the contents of documents.

3.4. Situated methods

One of the aspects of digital methods that the DiMPAH suite makes obvious is the situatedness of digital methods. Yes, different methods were presented for students to learn, but the context of methods were pivotal in explaining which methods were taught and *how* or *why* they were applied in the first place. Consider, for instance, text analysis. Both OER2 and OER3 feature text analysis: but both are applied under significantly different aims. This to some degree reiterates the previous point – of DH being various about scholarly analysis or digital infrastructure – but this theme runs deeper still. The fact that OER2 is focused on analysis makes the use of a tool, KNIME, meaningful, while OER3's attention to building a platform leverage text analysis makes the use of coding in Python more relevant. The background of the instructors is also crucial: one taught by linguists while the other by computer scientists. This same pattern is seen across the OERs, where the nature of the field, the background of the instructors, the origins of the techniques, the nature of the "problem" that the method is applied towards: all these reveal the inherent *situatedness* of digital methods when put into *actual practice*.

Consider how OER1 presents techniques explicitly from data sciences, while OER2 focuses on the application of techniques for the study of languages, and OER3 considers the same automated techniques from computer sciences for the purposes of information retrieval, computer vision, semantic enrichment, and other machine learning. OER4 presents a technique from market research settings informed by ethnographic research. OER5 presents a technique/tool *for* performing arts, seeking to operationalize the process of performance analysis in order to capitalize on digital affordances of a new tool. OER6 presents techniques and tools for allowing cultural heritage to be interacted with, embodied, and contextualized for whole new audiences (much in contrast to the more operational perspective taken by OER3 regarding the digitized newspapers). And OER7 is framed by information scientists who discuss techniques and tools for enriching collections using both traditional tools-of-the-trade and modern intervention (crowdsourcing and automated indexing, as mentioned in OER2 and OER3).

Abstracting from these situations, removing the context that justifies both the digital method and how it is ultimately presented, leaves the students of digital methods without the vital understanding of how method are actually put into practice. A method makes little sense outside the situation where it is applied. This may explain in part why DH has struggled for so long to define itself: seeking to expunge the particulars of how DH is put into practice ignores the reasons why DH repeatedly manifests itself on numerous occasions to serve innumerable purposes. Teaching DH without such a context could be likened to teaching medicine without any notion of healthcare to make sense or give purpose of what is being taught DH has always been at its core a community of practitioners (Vanhoutte, 2013) engaged with digital methods, but with those methods conditioned at a specific problem by specific practitioners.

3.5. Disciplinary knowledge matters

Another theme to emerge among the platform is the role of disciplinary knowledge. As mentioned earlier, there is often the need to dissociate DH projects from their subject matter or field of study in order to foreground the universal character of methods which make it distinctly "digital humanities", in the vein of TaDiRAH. This rests on the idea that digital humanities could be divorced from any particular field within the humanities. This line of reasoning suggests that while instantiations such as *digital history* and *digital literary studies* may fall within the jurisdictions of *history* and *literary studies*, respectively, there must also be a *digital humanities* which includes the subdisciplines but that also exists outside the jurisdiction of traditional disciplines (Meeks, 2013).

Yet OERs in DiMPAH belie that assumption, with the modules being quite consistently built around a solid disciplinary basis. OER5 primes students for the digital methods (video annotation) with a clear understanding of how preforming arts are normally studied and analysed, quite apart from any digital tool or technique. Similarly, OER2, OER4 and OER7 make a strong case for the traditional practices and tools in fields like linguistics, anthropology and information sciences: the understanding these disciplines bring to the world, the challenges they set out to address, and the (historic) techniques they have been responsible for implementing are all featured prominently in these OERs purportedly about digital methods alone.

One of the dangers of teaching DH as something distinct or independent from any traditional humanities discipline is to ignore the pivotal and formative role disciplines play in making engagement with DH meaningful. Disciplinary knowledge is often the basis from which worthwhile questions are asked (e.g., "do household recipes serve as a form of inter-generational collective memory in migrant families?"), through which worthwhile datasets are identified (e.g., the personal letters and memoirs from a stateman during a contentious political moment), and results are actually meaningful (e.g., "this pattern of settlements is significant because it coincides changing subsistence economy of this region"). Moreover, as some of the OERs demonstrate, the traditional disciplinary practices motivate the development or adoption of digital

methods to serve a specific purpose: whether it be understanding shifting in language patterns in contemporary discourse (OER2) or creating a platform that allows for the crowdsourcing of theatrical performances analyses (OER5).

In some ways, OER7 seems an interesting highlight of the role of disciplinary knowledge: in this course about knowledge organization, the instructors make a case that the traditional approaches to catalogue and represent cultural heritage cannot be entirely subsumed or displaced by technique from other fields (e.g., computer sciences). Instead, there is a place for combining traditional tools and techniques with contemporary ones. This makes OER7 an interesting complement to OER3, where automated techniques are being exclusively promoted for document analysis. The same could be said about how netnography (OER4) acts as a counterpoint to network analysis (in OER1). In this manner, the role of disciplinary knowledge and training also highlights the respective roles of manual and automated approaches within digital humanities: the first being necessitated by the knowledge and understanding that only a human can act upon and the latter when such knowledge is ignored or simplified to the point of being computationally operationalizable. The fact that this tension repeatedly emerges across DiMPAH therefore reinforces the point and importance of disciplinary knowledge and how it is variously integrated with digital methods.

4. Conclusion: Future stories for Europe

These themes emerging from DiMPAH are instructive both to DH practitioners and educators, as they help us better frame the methods we impart to students whose enthusiasm to learn the latest tools and techniques may overshadow the considerations that make them actionable and worthwhile. This is the only way to ensure the enthusiasm is properly rewarded. Refraining from abstracting digital methods from the specificities of knowledge, situation, and intent, while still embracing the links that connect related instantiation of digital methods, we can offer a fuller and more fulfilling (and more honest) learning experience for students.

Given my remarks on situatedness and linkages in DH, I would like to conclude this paper with a brief reflection on what DiMPAH's distinctly and eclectically European origins suggest about the future stories of Europe to be told, much in the same fashion the platform of modules was used to tell a story about the nature of digital humanities.

For one, it seems future stories of Europe are not to be confined by borders nor the particularities of storytellers telling them. DiMPAH illustrates how national and regional cultures can and will be juxtaposed and mashed-up with increasing ease, with few stories enjoying a stage to themselves or securing an exclusive audience of their own. OER6, for instance, brought together the historic experiences of Swedish and Cypriot settlements, while the resource behind OER3 (Newseye) is a multilingual collection of historic newspapers that are mutually searchable This also opens us to opportunities for new discoveries, unexpected connections, of the original narratives

to be nurtured into existence: the future stories of Europe will be told to new audiences and those audiences will bring new readings of their own.

The next observation is that digital methods and practices are increasingly the basis for a new public literacy. Present day challenges (diversity, equality, health, economic rights) are increasingly being articulated through digital mediation, and digital methods are being adapted to capture this (as exhibited in OER4). Furthermore, digital methods present their own rhetorical force through the scale of data it can handle and the myriad of ways it can represent its findings (OER1, OER2, and OER3). DiMPAH makes the case that future stories of Europe will be shaped by and through these digital methods, and this power must be both handled responsibly and critically.

DiMPAH as an educational package has much to tell, perhaps more than was expected when it was originally conceived: it has much to say about the field it introduces to students and the region from which it arose. These lessons are worth attending to no less than the more explicit instructional content on digital methods the project's collaborators have now made available for the world.

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