

# Digital History

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<https://moodle2.units.it/course/view.php?id=11346>

# What are Digital Humanities?

- Not just accessory tools, but also instruments for new knowledge production
- Service provider resources and resources with cognitive project objectives

# Let us ask ChatGPT to define DH:

“Digital humanities is an interdisciplinary field that integrates the use of digital technologies, computational methods and tools with traditional humanities disciplines. It applies these technological approaches to the study, analysis, and interpretation of various aspects of human culture, history, language, literature, art, and other fields traditionally associated with the humanities. Digital humanities seeks to enhance our understanding of human experience through the application of digital techniques, enabling researchers to explore, visualize, and analyze vast quantities of data, as well as to create innovative forms of scholarship and communication.”

# Not enough? Want more? ChatGPT again:

“Digital humanities is an interdisciplinary field that combines the use of digital tools and technologies with traditional humanities disciplines to explore, analyze, and communicate about various aspects of human culture and society. It applies computational methods to the study of literature, history, philosophy, art, linguistics, and other fields traditionally associated with the humanities.

Key aspects of digital humanities include:

- **Text Analysis:** This involves using computational techniques to analyze large bodies of text, extracting patterns, trends, and insights that would be difficult or impossible to discern manually. This can include tasks like sentiment analysis, topic modeling, and named entity recognition.
- **Data Visualization:** Digital humanities often relies on the creation of visual representations of data. This can help in conveying complex information in a more understandable and accessible manner.
- **Archiving and Curation:** Digital humanities projects often involve creating digital archives and repositories to preserve cultural artifacts, historical documents, and other materials. These can be made accessible to a wider audience through the internet.
- **Mapping and Geospatial Analysis:** Geographical information systems (GIS) and mapping technologies are frequently used in digital humanities to explore spatial relationships and analyze how location and geography impact various aspects of human culture and history.
- **Network Analysis:** This involves studying relationships and connections between entities, such as individuals, organizations, or concepts. It's particularly useful for understanding social networks, intellectual networks, and other forms of interconnectedness.
- **Multimedia Analysis:** Beyond text, digital humanities can also involve the analysis of images, audio, and video. This can be used for tasks like image recognition, audio transcription, and visual storytelling.
- **Text Encoding and Markup:** This involves creating structured representations of texts using markup languages like XML or TEI (Text Encoding Initiative). It allows for the detailed analysis of textual elements and relationships.
- **Digital Storytelling:** This involves using digital tools to create narratives that incorporate multimedia elements, interactive features, and dynamic content to convey information and engage audiences.
- **Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity:** Digital humanities projects often involve collaboration between scholars from different disciplines, as well as with experts in computer science, data science, and other technical fields.

Digital humanities projects can cover a wide range of topics, from analyzing historical documents to studying contemporary social media trends. They aim to enhance our understanding of human culture, history, and society through the application of digital methods and technologies.

Keep in mind that the field of digital humanities is dynamic and constantly evolving, with new tools, techniques, and approaches emerging over time.”

# Sa spiegarlo (meglio?) anche in italiano

Le Digital Humanities (umanistiche digitali in italiano) sono un campo interdisciplinare che combina la ricerca umanistica con l'uso delle tecnologie digitali per analizzare, interpretare e diffondere informazioni relative alla cultura umana. Questo campo si concentra sull'applicazione delle tecnologie digitali (come la computer science, la statistica, l'informatica, la grafica e molte altre) nell'ambito delle discipline umanistiche, come la storia, la letteratura, la filosofia, l'arte e altre.

Le Digital Humanities comprendono una vasta gamma di attività, che possono includere:

- **Digitizzazione di risorse:** Questo coinvolge la conversione di materiale fisico, come libri, documenti storici, manoscritti, fotografie e altri oggetti culturali, in formato digitale. Questo consente di conservare e rendere accessibili tali risorse in modo più ampio.
- **Analisi testuale e linguistica:** L'uso di software e algoritmi per analizzare testi scritti allo scopo di identificare tendenze, schemi e significati nascosti.
- **Visualizzazione dei dati:** Utilizzo di grafici, mappe e altre rappresentazioni visive per aiutare a comprendere meglio i dati complessi e mettere in evidenza relazioni o tendenze.
- **Elaborazione di immagini e multimedia:** L'analisi di immagini, video, audio e altri media per comprendere e interpretare il loro significato culturale e storico.
- **Modellazione e simulazione:** La creazione di modelli o simulazioni che possono aiutare a comprendere eventi o fenomeni culturali in modo più approfondito.
- **Crowdsourcing e partecipazione pubblica:** Coinvolgimento del pubblico nella raccolta e nell'analisi di dati, spesso tramite piattaforme online.
- **Archiviazione e catalogazione digitale:** Creazione e gestione di archivi digitali per conservare e rendere accessibili risorse culturali.

Le Digital Humanities hanno trasformato il modo in cui gli studiosi delle discipline umanistiche conducono le loro ricerche, consentendo loro di affrontare domande complesse e di scoprire nuovi insights attraverso l'uso intelligente delle tecnologie digitali.

# Specialized journals (selection from a list)

- [\*Umanistica digitale\*](#) (Università di Bologna) **OA**
- [\*International Journal of Digital Humanities\*](#) (Springer)
- [\*Digital Scholarship in the Humanities\*](#) (Oxford University Press)
- [\*Digital humanities quarterly DHQ\*](#) (Association for Computers and the Humanities (ACH) and the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO) **OA**)
- [\*Digital Studies / Le champ numérique\*](#)
- [\*Journal of digital humanities\*](#)
- [\*Zeitschrift für digitale Geisteswissenschaften \(ZfdG\)\*](#) (Forschungsverbund Marbach Weimar Wolfenbüttel)
- [\*International Journal for Digital Art History\*](#) (Munich, Germany)

# Key-concepts

- Data/corpus/**archive** (epistemology and ethics of data collecting)
- Network, knot
- Hypertext/hypermedia/transmediality
- Quantification
- Linear to bi- or tridimensional, spatial-temporal representation
- Levels of communication/use (access)
- Re-animation



# Application areas

- Digital Humanities
  - Literary, linguistic and philological studies
  - History
  - Art history
  - Geography
  - Philosophy (data libraries and algorithms bias, critical code studies)
- Text markup and encoding
- Distant reading
- Database/geodatabase
- Digital history, digital storytelling ([ArcGIS Maps](#))
- Transdisciplinary studies

# DH: contentious aspects and opportunities

- **Collaborative**
  - Crowdsourcing
  - Wiki
  - Convergence (Jenkins, *Cultura convergente*, 2007): collective understanding, reticular construction of knowledge ([Open Street Map](#))
- **Plural authorship**, de-empowerment of authority
- **Democratization**
  - Everyman his own historian
- **Open-endedness**, revisability, temporariness
- **Public engagement**
- **Critical attitude** towards total connectivity and its systemic consequences
- **Information overload**: lack of navigation tool, differences and distinction blurring, difficult identification
- **Reliability**: objectivity, naturalness/artificiality, bias
- **From technical procedures to *apparatus*** (Foucault: *dispositif*, Agamben: *dispositivo*)
- **Decolonizing the institutional repositories** (archive, library)

# Literary and linguistic studies

- Corpora analysis, corpus linguistics, digital edition
- [English-Corpora.org](http://English-Corpora.org) (the most widely used online corpora of English texts)
- [Coris-Cordis](http://Coris-Cordis) (Design and implementation of a CORpus of Written Italian)
- [Index thomisticus](http://Index.thomisticus) (digital humanities project started in the 1940s that created a concordance with 179 texts centred on Thomas Aquinas. Led by Roberto Busa, the project indexed 10,631,980 words over 34 years, initially on punch cards)
- [Eighteenth Century Collection Online](http://Eighteenth Century Collection Online)
- [The ARTFL Project: Raynal](http://The ARTFL Project: Raynal) (single authors or works; see also [Visualising Raynal](http://Visualising Raynal))
- [Digital Variants](http://Digital Variants) (1996-, unavailable as of 18 Sept. 2023)
- *Viral Texts Project. Mapping Networks of Reprinting in 19th-Century Newspapers and Magazines: <https://viraltxts.org/>*
- *Voyant tools: <https://voyant-tools.org/>*
- [Ngram Viewer](http://Ngram Viewer)

## Spatial history

- Focus on visualization ([Visualising Raynal](http://Visualising Raynal))
- Focus on space
  - The construction of space: not natural geography, but spatial relations changing over time (*distance* is in absolute space, *literary* or *route* is relational space)
  - Spatial practices and experiences
  - Representations of space (in order to read it)
  - Representational space (symbolic associations defining kind of experiences)
  - Representation of movement
  - Space in natural context, space as explicit result of movement

# Some databases from Gale

- **Eighteenth Century Collections Online**

<https://link.gale.com/apps/ECCO?u=trieste>

- **The Making of the Modern World**

<https://link.gale.com/apps/MOME?u=trieste>

- **Gale Primary Sources**

<https://link.gale.com/apps/GDCS?u=trieste>

- **Pw for access from outside Units domain: Tr13ste!**
- **Available 15 September-15 October 2023**