

Hello! Thank you all so much for coming, and thanks so much to the Research Office for organizing this. We have a lot to get through today, and I'd like to leave as much time as possible for discussion, so let's jump right in. Today,

- I'll give a very brief overview of digital humanities and digital scholarship, and maybe blur a line a little bit between the latter and "the humanities" (at least for funding purposes);
- I'll talk a bit about the grant programs and the proposal reviewing process at the National Endowment for the Humanities Office of Digital Humanities, which is the part of NEH I'm most familiar with;
- and then we'll expand a bit for an overview of NEH programs at large, and a look of how pervasive digital scholarship has become in this agency's program descriptions.

Let's start with a brief history of digital humanities

- Defining DH [slide]: a daunting task with, literally, thousands of answers. One of my favorites is: [slide] the non-trivial use of computation (so, word processing doesn't count) [slide] to ask and answer traditional and new humanities questions.
- Digital scholarship tends to have separate definitions distinct from DH; I'll be talking about both in parallel. *Also* many definitions, here are some:
  - [slide] Case Western
  - [slide] UVA's Abby Smith Rumsey
  - [slide] Open University's Martin Weller
- How DH started: [slide] 1949: Father Busa and the Corpus Thomisticum
  - since then, the field has had many names including humanities computing and humanistic informatics
- What DH research does these days:
  - [slide] large-scale text mining, which helps us answer questions of authorship, development of language, development of socio-political contexts (what *wasn't* being talked about in a particular era?), etc
  - [slide] use of maps and GIS (geographic information systems) to visualize patterns in primary source materials, these patterns spanning both space and time
  - [slide] digital processing of images to discover new things about artifacts
- Scholarly communication in digital humanities [slide] (*networked* scholarship):
  - [slide] traditional networks: annual joint US-European conference since 1989, though the constituent organizations had been meeting for up to sixteen years before that
    - these days both conference and ADHO much more globally oriented
    - much thought dedicated recently to colonialism in DH and in humanities more broadly, and to intersectionality in humanities research (meaning, working actively to create more inclusivity in scholarly discourse along multiple axes)

- ADHO constituent orgs from North America, Europe, Japan, and Australasia; closely aligned South American orgs
- networks enabled by the internet:
  - Twitter
  - [slide] DHAnswers
  - Many other venues of communication, including the [slide] ProfHacker blog absorbed a while ago by the Chronicle

[slide] NEH history of supporting digital scholarship

- 2006: NEH launches Digital Humanities Initiative, which becomes ODH in 2008.
  - DHI: “a program encouraging and supporting projects that utilize or study the impact of digital technology on research, education, preservation, and public programming in the humanities” (Jen Serventi, email, 1/30/15)
- 2007: Institute for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities. funded efforts to “broadly disseminate... newly acquired knowledge about advanced technology applications relevant to the humanities.” (Jennifer Serventi, 2007). 50-250K
- December 2007: out of 260 grants and fellowships awarded by NEH in late December, 11 had to do with digital humanities.
  - Three r&d grants, all supporting the building of tools for humanities research.
  - One Challenge Grant setting up CHNM.
  - Seven fellowships with quite diverse projects, ranging from building tools to online critical editions, the building of digital collections, and creation of infrastructure to present those collections online.
- 2008 — “Advancing Knowledge: The IMLS/NEH Digital Partnership.” Appears to have been a one-off. 50-350K awards. Aim to fund “projects that would explore new ways to share, examine, and interpret humanities collections in a digital environment and develop new uses and audiences for existing digital resources.”
- Four rounds so far of NEH/DFG (German Research Foundation) Bilateral Digital Humanities Program
  - The program encourages the creation of innovative research methods, digital tools for accessing and interacting with “digital resources relevant to humanities research,” but aims higher as well, providing support for international teams to “creat[e] new digital modes of scholarly communication and publishing” and “develop[] models for effectively managing digital data generated in humanities research projects,” including 3D objects.
  - US+German university participation required for all applications; awards \$100-350K
  - Assumptions built into the program: digitization not supported (supposed to be done already); results must be publicly available (we’ll return to this)
- Digging into Data challenge grants, co-sponsored by ten funders from across the world including, on the U.S. side, NEH, IMLS, and NSF, and seeking to address questions raised by (and answers possible through the study of) big data in the humanities and social sciences

## DH START UP GRANTS

- Started 2008
- High risk, high reward. Not fully formed projects are ok. Explore ideas, come up with a larger grant proposal. Eventual goals of ultimately funded projects on a broad spectrum, from designing tools to beginning to address complex theoretical questions, often by getting the right set of people in the same room to start talking, who would otherwise have difficulty finding themselves in the same place at the same time.
- 13 complete rounds, 14th one in progress
- used to be 5K-50K, now up to 60K
- became a once-a-year grant program in 2011, when DH Implementation Grants (up to \$325K) were started
- 263 awards over the past 8 years
- Last 5 competitions: average of 153 applications and 24 awards per competition (funding ratio 16%, in line with funding ratio across all NEH programs, which varies 6-40%)

From the NEH website, keywords for what DH SUG may involve:

- new approaches, best practices for the study of DH;
- prototypes for digital tools
- preservation, analysis, access to digital resources
- digital culture and society
- emerging technologies in humanities
- interdisciplinary collaborations
- public programming & education
- traditional & new media
- new modes of publication

Review panels (I've sat on two, small but representative sample):

- 7-8 reviewers, under 20 grant proposals each time
- Read them individually over the course of a month or two, provide detailed written reviews to the NEH
- Get together for an in-person, intense day of discussion at ODH, touching on each grant proposal, getting a chance to modify our individual evaluations if needed based on the conversation
- Ultimate funding recommendations up to ODH staff, heavily based on panel evaluations; head of NEH makes final decision

Things I personally read for, and that might come up in discussion:

- appropriateness to program, of course—the project should address at least one of the things that the CFP specifically calls for, and an innovative aspect, either in methodology or in content
- how wide an audience a project would benefit, if successful

- a clear idea of what the grant project seeks to accomplish, and what larger purpose *they think* it will serve (experimental projects are fine, but I still need a clear hypothesis or question—and it's shocking sometimes how many grant proposals do *not* articulate one)
- a list of people committed to the project whose expertise addresses all needs of the project
- awareness of current work in the field that is related to the proposed project, and a plan to integrate with or address this work
- awareness of conflicts of interest, if any, and a plan to address them

Other things that may push my (and, it seems, collective) opinion in one direction or the other:

- this work has actually already been done
- this work has particular cultural significance at this moment
- this work is particularly culturally *unsuitable* at this moment
- this work builds on previous work, by the same or different participants
- this work brings people together in ways that are difficult to manifest otherwise [DH work is so inherently interdisciplinary that this tends to get particular attention]
- this work serves the public humanities
- the participants have an established online presence, and there's readily available evidence of their suitability to the proposed project

## NEH PROGRAMS OUTSIDE OF ODH

Whose brief descriptions mention digital materials created by grantees, or information technology:

- Summer Stipends
- Fellowships
- Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan
- Collaborative Research Grants
- Awards for Faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Awards for Faculty at Hispanic-Serving Institutions
- Awards for Faculty at Tribal Colleges and Universities
- Humanities Collections and Reference Resources
- Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions
- Humanities Open Book Program
- Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations: Implementation Grants
- Digital Projects for the Public
- Challenge Grants
- Humanities Initiatives at Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Humanities Initiatives at Hispanic-Serving Institutions
- Humanities Initiatives at Tribal Colleges and Universities

Whose brief descriptions don't mention digital materials created by grantees, or information technology:

- Public Scholar Program (oriented specifically toward individual researchers writing paper books)
- Fellowship Programs at Independent Research Institutions (heterogeneous, topic-specific)
- Bridging Cultures at Community Colleges (institutional structure oriented; detailed description does mention digital materials)
- NEH Summer Programs in the Humanities for School and College Educators (Education Division: heterogeneous, topic-specific, ODH has its own institutes program)
- Scholarly Editions and Translations Grants (specifically excludes creation of digital tools, directing interested applicants to ODH)
- Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections (oriented to physical environment, which might include a server room but doesn't specifically fund digitization as a preservation strategy: they cover that in Humanities Collections and Reference Resources)
- Media Projects: Development Grants (digital stuff covered in Digital Projects for the Public)
- Media Projects: Production Grants (digital stuff covered in Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations: Implementation Grants)
- Bridging Cultures through Film: International Topics (film-medium-specific grant)

See also <http://www.neh.gov/grants/match-your-project>

## TAKE-AWAYS FOR YOU

So, what of all this? Well, in my ideal world, here are some conclusions I'd love to send you away with:

- Despite *everything I've just talked about*, digital scholarship and the field of digital humanities are mature enough that the digital isn't just something to tack onto a funding proposal because the NEH is into it.
  - If you're curious about digital scholarship and what it might do for your research, or if you're already a digital scholar and want to connect with folks locally, [slide] there's BostonDH and a DH mailing list at BU.
- There are many grant opportunities *at all levels* around the NEH. If you haven't yet applied for federal funding to do your research, I'd encourage you to look into it. Aside from being of obvious logistical help, the entire grant lifecycle including the application process is helpful in clarifying research questions and directions, to yourself and others.
- If you decide to apply for an NEH grant, I'd encourage you to seriously consider these aspects of the application:
  - what data your research will produce, and how you'll plan to manage the data going forward;
  - whether open access to your research results will be possible, and if so,

- how you will accomplish it;
- if you will be pursuing digital scholarship, which other disciplines your collaborators might come from, and who they might be.
- We're happy to talk with you about all this. [slide]