

Research on Digital transformation and Resilience – Towards Consumption of Local Digitalities

Abstract

Purpose of this abstract is to introduce the Ruralia Institute (University of Helsinki) and locate it to the realm of digital humanities. We address currently on-going research projects touching digitalisation and local digital transformation, and shortly outline Institute's research focus that could be fruitful in the context of digital humanities.

The Ruralia Institute is an independent institute under the University of Helsinki, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry. The Institute comprises units in Mikkeli and Seinäjoki. The Institute studies sustainable development as well as the shifting relationship between the global and the local from a rural perspective. As an expert partner skilled in applying research data and research methods, the Institute supports the competencies of the University of Helsinki.

Three focus areas of the institute are *local development*, *the sustainable food chain*, and *the changing bioeconomy*. The institute conducts multidisciplinary research and participates in the provision of teaching, networking and creating open learning environments. We develop solutions to promote entrepreneurship and wellbeing by conducting research and teaching in cooperative endeavours. Researchers have taken digitalisation and local digital transformation into account in these focus areas of inquiry. Researchers have increasingly defined digitalisation as one of the drivers for research conducted in the Institute.

Our approach to digitalisation is humanistic: we are interested in how and why the people adopt digital technologies into their lives and how digitalisation shape everyday practices. Digitalities mean the various conditions of living in a digital culture. Our purpose is to approach digital themes from social, societal and cultural perspectives. We emphasise local matters and locality and examine digitalisation in the urban-rural contexts. Our emphasis is also on the consumer and end-user perspectives as the majority of digital transformation affects to the lives of the people. The research materials and methods applied are both qualitative and quantitative.

The research projects conducted in the Ruralia Institute involving digitalisation can be organised under three themes. The themes share research interests, approaches and methodical choices. The first line of research has utilised digitalised newspaper data in the case study and discourse analysis settings. The projects have examined how the local newspapers present rural-urban relations in 1860–1910 and how the Finnish newspaper discussions construct ruralities and localities from 1860 to 2010. In addition, motif Identification

of local innovations for rural enterprises and data mining methods in hyper-local news analyses have been utilised.

Social media materials and local activities characterise the second focus area. Research on this theme include the clarification of social media solutions for participation in local municipalities and how local decision makers use social media in local debates and citizen forums.

The third line of research combines the digitalisation, everyday life and practices of the people. This combination is examined from the consumers' or end users' perspective: the local implications of glocal (global-local) digitalisation. A recent research project under this theme submitted for research funding review is "Research on Digital Experiences through Animations: Creative Research Interventions in Social Media". The project aims at to produce a series of animation clips about new digital technologies in a polemic way. The clips will be shared in the social media channels, utilised as stimulus material to collect data and feedback from the consumers, to evaluate animations as a mean to collect research materials, and to analyse the consumer generated research materials linked to new trends in digitalisation.

To conclude, we seek to raise discussion about current research trends in digitalisation and to integrate the themes of digital transformation, locality, and everyday consumption. The research on digitalisation in the Institute is positioned into three strategic focus areas (local development, sustainable food networks, changing bioeconomy) and have been currently examined from three perspectives (urban-rural relations, social media and policy implications, digital transformation and consumption). Our purpose is to link these research agendas to the digital humanities research movement and to study emerging forms of digitalities distinctively from the Ruralia Institute's perspective.

Contact information:

Toni Ryyänen

Senior Researcher

toni.ryynanen@helsinki.fi

University of Helsinki, Ruralia Institute

Lönnotinkatu 7, FI-50100, Mikkeli

Torsti Hyyryläinen

Research Director

torsti.hyyrylainen@helsinki.fi

University of Helsinki, Ruralia Institute

Lönnotinkatu 7, FI-50100, Mikkeli

Webpages: (English) http://www.helsinki.fi/ruralia/index_eng.htm

(Finnish) <http://www.helsinki.fi/ruralia/>