

Global Digital Humanities

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Short presentation of the project "DIG_IN: Digital Humanities Education Initiative Finland-India" (a CIMO funded collaboration between South Asian Studies and HELDIG at HY, Aalto University and Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore/India)

Abstract:

As Digital Humanities becomes increasingly recognized as a significant discipline and embedded in university curricula internationally, it is instructive to recognize that most scholarship relevant to the discipline is still predominantly from Anglo-American countries such as the United States, United Kingdom and Australia. The event aims to demonstrate how diverse cultural, intellectual and linguistic contexts can and even necessarily must fruitfully contribute to shape the future direction of the discipline.

Digital Humanities first and foremost study and develop digital methods for researching humanities material. But, in a wider understanding of DH, the field also entails the study of digital media and their impact and influence for society. Today, in times of 'deep mediatisation' (Couldry and Hepp 2016), digital media are inseparable from all aspects of social life, and actors obtain information and ideas from many sources.

The collaborative project "DIG_IN: Digital Humanities Education Initiative Finland-India" (a CIMO funded collaboration between South Asian Studies and HELDIG at HY, Aalto University and Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore/India) brings together researchers and students in the field, from India and Finland. The disciplinary positioning of DH is informed by practices of making, creativity and finding alternative lenses through which to envision issues in Humanities scholarship. In this, all cooperating institutions share a common vision with the University of Helsinki, who is deeply committed to these values, and has massively strengthened its DH activities recently. Thus, this project will nurture growth and exchange of ideas and experiences that will be beneficial to all cooperating institutions. The project explicitly responds to an existing educational need with wider implications for cooperation between the countries.

Combining the forces in this international activity brings about synergies and benefits a number of parties. Srishti already has an established relationship with Aalto University [please see: student exchange - <http://www.srishti.ac.in/exchange>, academic exchange - <http://www.srishti.ac.in/calendar/lens-kick-meeting-politecnico-di-milano>], which can be leveraged to the advantage of all three institutions: to create a vision that draws considerably on collaboration and the centrality of design and multidisciplinary to the discipline of DH.

One particular area that will benefit considerably is that of videogames, which all three institutions have interested and experienced faculty in - especially with regards to how to use games in the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) space, or drawing on resources and artefacts from these institutions to enable outreach. In keeping with the aim of the endeavour to create alternative paradigms for DH research, the faculty on the project can draw on indigenous histories, traditions and modes of storytelling to explore what it means to create culturally specific games as well as to translate these culturally specific concepts into the digital realm.

Given the newness of the discipline in India, there is a keenness to make resources as accessible as possible to communicate the significance of DH research, especially also with reference to the role it can play in

memory and heritage institutions. This desire is shared by the partners at UH and Aalto University, especially as an e-module will be made readily available for reuse under a Creative Commons license - rather than following the model of the proprietary MOOC championed by a number of educational institutions. The reasoning for this is two- fold: firstly, it is in the spirit of DH to encourage collaboration, remixing, and remediating, and secondly, to allow for a wider audience to access these culturally and locally inflected versions of DH in a quest to enlarge the scope of the discipline beyond the hegemonic.

Both, the project's general approach of establishing a cooperation of Finnish and Indian higher education institutions on DH as to benefit the ongoing curriculum development and to enable travel mobility for students and teachers, as well as the final outcome in the form of practical teaching material, the e-learning module, are clear added value with regard to earlier initiatives.