Doing Digital Scholarship

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Rice University
Digital Humanities 2008
Doing Traditional Scholarship: 
*Bachelors of Arts, 2002*

The research scene

The research product
First Forays into Digital Scholarship

"Smoke, Flame, and Ashes"

A "Reverie" from
Ik Marvel's (Donald Grant Mitchell)
Reveries of a Bachelor (1850)

A Critical Edition with Facsimile
Edited by Lisa Spiro, University of Virginia

http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/users/spiro/Contents2.html
(How) Are digital resources & tools changing humanities research?

- What is digital scholarship?
- What kind of digital resources & tools are available?
- To what extent do these resources & tools enable us to do research more productively or creatively? What new questions can we ask? What insights can we gain?
- What’s challenging about producing digital scholarship?
- What happens when scholars share research openly through blogs, institutional repositories, & other means?

The Dissertation Remix Project

• Pragmatic approach: The best way to explore digital scholarship is to produce it myself.
• Rather than researching an entirely new topic, I decided to remix my 2002 dissertation as a work of digital scholarship.
• Objectives:
  – Rely on digital collections, tools and presentation methods
  – Blog the process, as well as my observations about digital scholarship
  – Practice social scholarship: share, make research process visible, collaborate
Tara McPherson’s Typology of Digital Humanities

- **The Computing Humanities**: focused on building tools, infrastructure, standards and collections.
  - The Blake Archive
- **The Blogging Humanities**: networked, peer-to-peer.
  - crooked timber
- **The Multimodal Humanities**: “bring together databases, scholarly tools, networked writing, and peer-to-peer commentary while also leveraging the potential of the visual and aural media that so dominate contemporary life.”
  - Vectors

http://www.cni.org/tfms/2008a.spring/plenary.html#closing
Aspects of Digital Scholarship

- Collections
- Tools
- Theories
- Arguments/Interpretations
- Networked Scholarship
- Multimodal Scholarship
- Digital Cultural Studies
Framework for Research: John Unsworth’s Scholarly Primitives

- Discovering
- Annotating
- Comparing
- Referring
- Sampling
- Illustrating
- Representing

http://www3.isrl.uiuc.edu/~unsworth/Kings.5-00/primitives.html
An Additional Scholarly Primitive: Collaboration

Collaboration is fundamental to scholarship.

Examples:
- Jointly authoring books or editing journals
- Sharing citations
- Peer review
- Getting feedback on drafts
- Developing tools, standards, collections
- Blogging & commenting on blogs

(NB: This idea was worked out collaboratively, with colleagues at THAT Camp)

http://digitalscholarship.wordpress.com/2008/06/01/research-methods-session-at-that-camp/
Defining digital scholarship in the humanities:

Ten-fingered humanists?

Posted on November 30, 2007 by Lisa Spiro | Edit

“Digital scholarship” seems to have become a new buzzword in academia. The term is invoked by those advocating for open access to scholarly knowledge (e.g., Charles Bailey’s Digital Scholarship) as well as those promoting innovative research methodologies. Universities, libraries, and funding organizations are beginning to recognize the need to support digital scholarship. Witness:

- The opening of centers devoted to digital scholarship, such as the University of Richmond’s newly launched digital scholarship lab (supported by president Ed Ayers) and Johns Hopkins’s new Digital Research and Curation Center
- New positions devoted to digital scholarship, such as NYU’s Librarian for Literary Studies and Digital Scholarship in the Humanities
- Funding programs to support digital scholarship in the humanities, such as the NEH’s Digital Humanities Initiative and the ACLS Digital Innovation
Ten ways of looking at Reveries (and digital scholarship?)

May 29, 2008 · No Comments

I was of three minds,
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds.

—Wallace Stevens, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird”

Overwhelmed by the abundance of literature on the bachelor, I’ve decided to focus my dissertation remix project on Donald Grant Mitchell’s Reveries of a.
Project Portal: Collections, Links, RSS Feeds, Project Plan

http://www.pageflakes.com/lspiro/
Impact of Collaboration

- It fosters interdisciplinarity:
  - Comments from biologists & anthropologists as well as literary scholars & historians
- It allows scholarship to be more global
  - Comments on my work from folks in UK, Spain, etc.
- My ideas have been challenged and improved through dialogue.
- I feel more engaged in the research community and more motivated.
- Frankly, it’s good for the career--more visibility, and thus more opportunities (to review book proposals, grant applications, etc)
Discovering: How many of my 296 original research sources are digitized & in full text?

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<th>% in Digital Format</th>
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[http://digitalscholarship.wordpress.com/2008/05/05/how-many-texts-have-been-digitized/](http://digitalscholarship.wordpress.com/2008/05/05/how-many-texts-have-been-digitized/)
What is the quality of digitized works? (Subjective Evaluation)

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<th>Making of America</th>
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Comparison: Mitchell & Melville

- Can we use text analysis tools to study the relationship between texts?
- My notion: Melville’s *Pierre* is a bitter satire of *Reveries of a Bachelor* & other sentimental bachelor literature
- Used Wordle word cloud generator & TAPOR’s Comparator & collation tools to examine two works in relation to each each

http://digitalscholarship.wordpress.com/2008/06/22/using-text-analysis-tools-for-comparison-mole-chocolate-cake/
Reveries Word Cloud (Wordle)
Pierre Word Cloud (Wordle)
Comparing *Reveries* & *Pierre* with Wordle
Comparing *Reveries* & *Pierre* with TAPOR Comparator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Rev. counts</th>
<th>Rev relative</th>
<th>Pier relative</th>
<th>Pier counts</th>
<th>Rel ratio (R/P)</th>
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<td>58</td>
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<td>0.0011</td>
<td>0.0005</td>
<td>85</td>
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</table>
Some Unique Words That Occur Frequently in Reveries or Pierre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reveries</th>
<th>Pierre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>coal</td>
<td>portrait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flirt</td>
<td>ambiguous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sympathies</td>
<td>marvelous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sparkles</td>
<td>original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensibility</td>
<td>visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mused</td>
<td>seized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prettier</td>
<td>miserable</td>
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</table>
Putting Words in Context: TAPOR’s Concordance Tool

Words associated with “mother”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reveries</th>
<th>Pierre</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>heart</td>
<td>dear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiss</td>
<td>conceal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lap</td>
<td>torture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact of Experiments with Comparison

• Allows you to extract out key features of texts
• But then you can recontextualize those features by using concordancing tools
• Establish a “linguistic profile”: see how Melville appropriates language of sentimentality and mixes in many other elements as well
• Reveals the dark undercurrents in Mitchell’s language as well
• Text analysis tools open up new questions more than they reveal answers--stimulus to interpretation
Representation: Marketing Marvel, the Movie

- Remixing article on efforts to market new editions of *Reveries* as a digital story
- Condense 20+ page article into 7 minute narrative
- Incorporate images of bibliographic features of different editions, ads, illustrations
How “Movie Making” Has Challenged Me

- Condensing core argument
- Thinking visually: how to represent an argument with images rather than words
- Getting the right imagery (high quality, copyright free)
- Thinking cinematically: constructing transitions, camera movement
- How to bring scholarly practices (citation, elaboration) into digital storytelling?
- Considering how to make argument more interactive:
  - Constructing own path through argument (hypertext rather than movie)
  - Side by side comparisons
Identifying Digital Research Tools: The DiRT Wiki

- There are hundreds of tools relevant for research--e.g. tools for creating bibliographies, performing text analysis, writing collaboratively, etc.
- Many researchers have no idea where to find or how to use such tools
- We need a site where researchers can discover tools that will help them do their research more efficiently or creatively
DiRT Design Goals

- Focused on community; driven by contributions from readers & geared toward needs of researchers
- Organized clearly, based on what researchers want to do rather than techie jargon.
- Furnish clear criteria for evaluation, e.g. cost, platform, functionality
- Provide diverse content: Tool directory as well as reviews, training materials, & case studies
- Be flexible. Evolve wiki according to community needs.
Digital Research Tools (DiRT)

This wiki collects information about tools and resources that can help scholars (particularly in the humanities and social sciences) conduct research more efficiently or creatively. Whether you need software to help you manage citations, author a multimedia work, or analyze texts, Digital Research Tools will help you find what you're looking for. We provide a directory of tools organized by research activity, as well as reviews of select tools in which we not only describe the tool's features, but also explore how it might be employed most effectively by researchers.

This wiki is just being launched, so expect to see more reviews soon. Check back regularly.

Please provide feedback on DIRT and recommend tools not included here (yet).

If you're interested in contributing to this wiki, please email Lisa Spiro at lspiro@rice.edu.

If you are unfamiliar with some of the jargon, please see our Glossary page.

Types of Tools

I want to...

- Analyze texts
- Analyze statistics
- Author an interactive work
- Blog
- Brainstorm/ generate ideas
- Build and share collections
- Collaborate
- Collect data
- Communicate with colleagues
- Compare resources
- Conduct linguistic research
- Convert/ manipulate files

http://digitalresearchtools.pbwiki.com/
The Dirt on DiRT

Organizational structure:
- Team of 6 editors responsible for different sections
- 14 contributors: anthropologists, ed-tech folks, grad student in communications, etc. We welcome more.

Planning, upcoming features, user feedback via The Dirt on DiRT Blog (http://thedirtondirt.wordpress.com/)

Everything is under a Creative Commons attribution license. We would love to see spin-offs, such as:
- DiRT in languages besides English
- DiRT for developers
- Old DiRT: hall of obsolete but still compelling tools
Impact of DiRT

- I’ve learned about tools outside of my field, e.g. qualitative data analysis
- I’ve been impressed by the generosity of the community:
  - UC Santa Barbara & CHNM have wikis similar to DiRT. Both Dan Cohen & Alan Liu offered to let us grab content from their sites.
  - Busy folks have freely given their time to add tools to DiRT
Please contribute to DiRT

- Check out DiRT: http://digitalresearchtools.pbwiki.com
- Sign up to be an editor or reviewer
- Recommend tools to be added
- Provide feedback via survey
- Contact me at lspiro@rice.edu