

Paul Arthur: Going digital: Humanities and the eResearch revolution

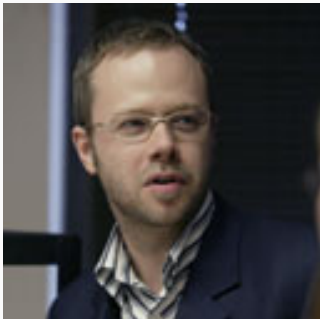
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Abstract

This paper gives an overview of the ways that humanities research is embracing new digital resources and formats and suggests that the e-Research revolution that is well advanced in the sciences is at an early stage in the humanities. Many of its potential benefits, and challenges, are different from those in the sciences and are just beginning to be understood. While researchers in the sciences have been accustomed to working collaboratively, this is less common in the humanities. Further, digital technologies seem to more naturally enhance and support existing methodologies and patterns of work in the sciences, whereas in the humanities they require more of a shift, a change in the traditional research culture.

How then are the collaborative tools of e-research challenging humanities researchers to work differently? What are the new formats for publication and communication bringing to the most traditional disciplines such as history and literary studies? At which stages in the research process do e-research capabilities have the greatest impact for the humanities? What are the implications for the traditional materials, methodologies and products of humanities research? This paper will address these questions with reference to examples of leading projects. Topics discussed include the newly flexible role of the archive, the changing responsibilities of collecting institutions as keepers and communicators of cultural knowledge, the increased interaction of university researchers with the community, the emerging status of creative production as a form of research, the engagement of non-specialists in the research process, and the challenges of collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches.

About the speaker



Dr Paul Arthur is a Research Fellow at the Australia Research Institute (Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia) and an adjunct fellow of the 'Research School of Humanities' (Australian National University). His research focuses on the innovative use of networked digital media and new media formats in the humanities, with a special interest in digital history and biography. He has held various visiting positions, through the Humanities Research Centre (Australian National University), Australian Academy of the Humanities, American Geographical Society Library (USA), Center for 21st Century Studies (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee), the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research (Australian National University), and the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (Australian

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