EAAS Digital Studies Network
1st Online Open Forum
December 15, 2023
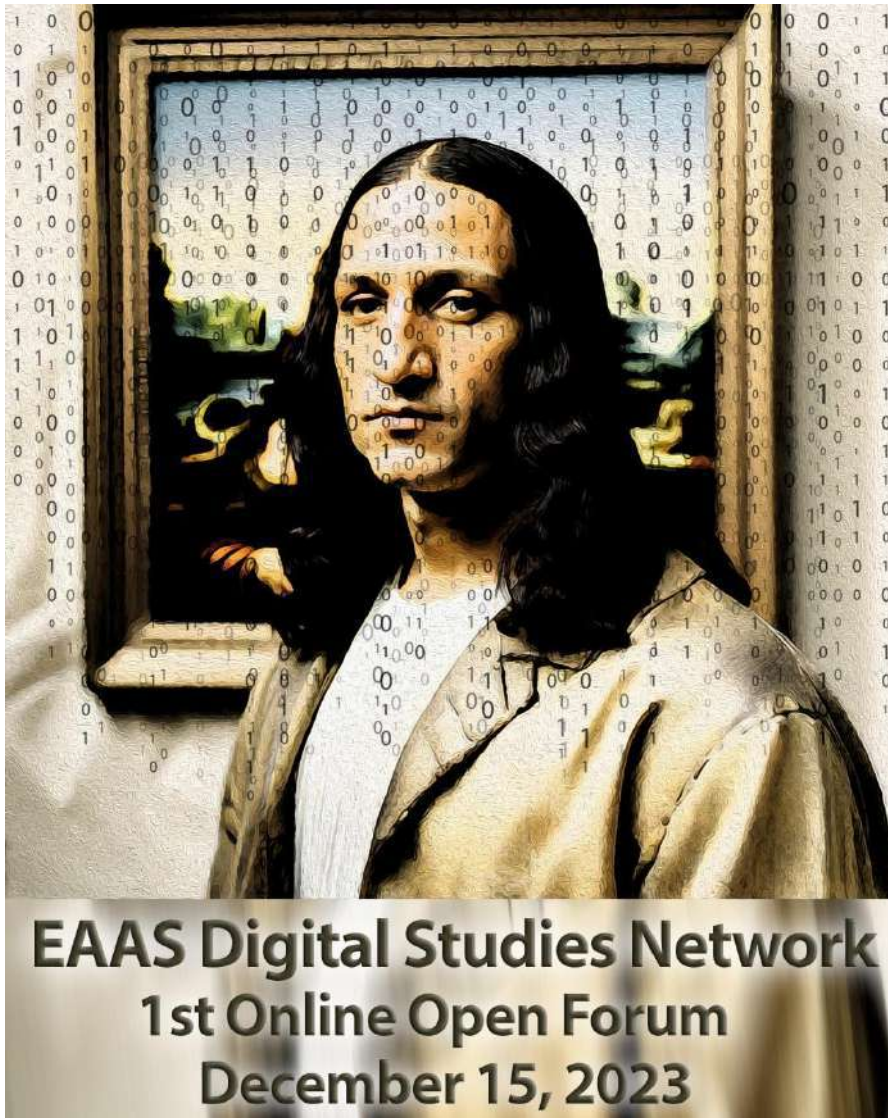
Organization:
EAAS DIGITAL STUDIES NETWORK

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Event registration form:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSebWENBK1N6TZURuq0rOgPKEc9pskJE9RkojF3UrPe50L
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EAAS Digital Studies Network Description:

The EAAS Digital Studies Network plays a pivotal role in nurturing a dynamic community of scholars, researchers, and postgraduate students in Europe. It serves as a platform for fostering effective communication and robust collaboration among individuals who share a profound interest in a diverse array of topics, including but not limited to digital literary forms, the ever-evolving landscape of digitality, the realm of popular culture, innovative experimentation with print and digital writing, dynamic typographic practices, the burgeoning field of locative media, and the intricacies of narrative construction.

Furthermore, the network emphasizes the significance of digital humanities within the broader context of American Studies, acknowledging its transformative potential and the valuable insights it offers into the complex interplay between technology, culture, and society. As an integral part of its mission, the initiative actively seeks to establish and strengthen connections with European institutions, organizations, and specialized postgraduate programs dedicated to exploring and advancing knowledge in these domains. By facilitating the exchange of information and fostering collaborative endeavors among its members, the network endeavors to create a vibrant ecosystem that promotes innovative research and scholarly engagement within the realm of digital studies.

OPEN FORUM PROGRAM
(via ZOOM)

4:00pm-4:15pm CET
WELCOME ADDRESS

Stefan Brandt
Frank Mehring
Tatiani Rapatzikou

4:15pm-5:00pm CET
SESSION ONE

Chair and Moderation: Martin Holtz (University of Graz, Austria)

Kate Simpson (University of Sheffield, UK), "The Poetic Possibilities of Digital Humanities: Narratives by Metadata"

In this talk Kate discusses the possibilities of DH methodologies and tools to create critically thick metadata about nineteenth century sources. The creation of such metadata will enable digital images, objects, and texts to be read against the hegemony of traditional approaches to European repositories. In particular, she will focus on ways to renegotiate and better critical practices to more effectively uncover the appropriation of local resources, the active processes of narrative construction, and other technical, knowledge and material-based contributions that are embedded in such sources.

With the use of case studies pertaining to the now significant digital footprint of and about the nineteenth century British traveller David Livingstone (1813-1873), Kate explores the opposing representations of socio-cultural moments in European travel history. To show that the use of DH methodologies and tools can impose narrative coherence onto disparate pieces of data, enriching and complicating such information at an individual level and in service of a critically complex whole.

Bio sketch
Kate Simpson, Ph.D., is a Lecturer in Digital Humanities in the Digital Humanities Institute at the University of Sheffield. Her research explores the use of digital tools to renegotiate the nineteenth-century archive, with a particular focus on counter-hegemonic readings of European narratives of

travel. She is currently writing a book called *The Poetics of Objects in Museum Collections* which explains the digital tools, techniques and curatorial behaviours that are specific to the gathering of stories about museum objects.

5:15pm-6:00pm CET
SESSION TWO

Chair and Moderation: Jaap Verheul (Radboud University, The Netherlands)

Georg Vogeler (University of Graz, Austria), "Reflections on Artificial Intelligence in the Digital Humanities"

Many fundamental methodologies in the humanities can be distilled into the simple triad of "reading, thinking, writing," where "reading" also encompasses the comprehension of visual cues. Traditionally, these tasks have been considered exclusive to humans. However, recent developments in artificial intelligence research have concentrated on emulating at least the "reading" and "writing" aspects. For instance, AI is now employed in image analysis tasks such as handwritten text recognition and object detection, as well as text generation tasks like summarization and question answering. These endeavors have given rise to expansive probabilistic models like GPT or Stable Diffusion, capable of generating images and texts that are "understandable" to humans. These models not only capture the essence of their respective signs, whether visual or linguistic, but also encode their semantics and pragmatics within intricate networks of relationships. As a result, they present themselves as comprehensive models of the world at large.

This contribution aims to reflect on this evolving landscape by detailing experiments conducted using publicly available AI solutions, which have been assigned tasks from humanities research. While there's a particular emphasis on historical research due to the presenter's expertise, the insights are broadly applicable. The presentation will conclude by outlining potential research avenues, addressing questions such as whether these probabilistic machines respond to the meaningful features of their input, whether the metamodels employed by these machines align with the interests of humanities research, and whether interacting with them could become an integral part of humanities methodology.

Bio sketch:
Georg Vogeler is a Professor of Digital Humanities at the Zentrum für Informationsmodellierung – Austrian Centre for Digital Humanities at the Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz. Previously, he worked as a researcher at the chair for Historical Auxiliary Sciences in Munich, where he obtained his PhD with a study on late medieval tax accounting in German territorial states. Since 2003, his research has focused on "Digital Diplomatics," charters of Emperor Frederic II, the application of Semantic Web technologies in the Digital Humanities, and digital scholarly editing of medieval and early modern accounting documents. He is a founding member of the Institut für Dokumentologie und Editorik and the technical director of the Monasterium consortium/the ICARus cooperation. Additionally, he actively participates in and leads various national and international projects.

Chair and Moderation: Vasileios Delioglanis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece)

Manuel Portela (University of Coimbra, Portugal), "Mainstreaming computational approaches in English and American Studies? A preliminary sketch"

In January 2020, the journal *PMLA* published a special topic issue on "Varieties of Digital Humanities" (Volume 135, Issue 1).[1] Edited by Alison Booth and Miriam Posner, this issue provides a telling sample of how computational approaches to literature and culture are interacting with other disciplinary practices in the broad field of English and American Studies. The number of monographs that we can subsume under the general heading of digital humanities, cultural analytics and other computer-related methodologies has also been growing during the past decade. How pervasive are literary and cultural studies based on computational methods? How are these methodologies entering established discourse fields, such as gender studies, critical race theory or environmental humanities, for instance? Drawing from selected examples, I will offer a tentative description of ongoing discursive and epistemological contaminations and transformations.

Bio-sketch:
Professor in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures (English) at the University of Coimbra. His research focuses on digital critical editing, electronic literature, and comparative media studies. Those parallel interests are reflected in *Scripting Reading Motions: The Codex and the Computer as Self-Reflexive Machines (*MIT Press, 2013) and *Literary Simulation and the Digital Humanities: Reading, Editing, Writing* (Bloomsbury, 2022), in the PhD Programme in Materialities of Literature (cofounder and director), and in the *LdoD Archive: Collaborative Digital Archive of the Book of Disquiet* (2017-2023), an experimental textual environment. He was cofounder and general editor of the journal *MATLIT: Materialities of Literature* (2013-2021). He has also worked as theatre director, cultural programmer, curator, and translator. He is currently the Director of the General Library of the University of Coimbra.

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[1] https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/pmla/issue/847B9F9004B8462A86F0323153F760B1