

# **The Humanities Grid: Opportunities and Challenges**

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Over recent years electronic data sources of potential interest to arts and humanities scholars have proliferated at a dramatic pace. Both the sheer volume of cultural heritage content has increased, as has the multimedia nature of these materials. In the past e-resources were generally restricted to electronic texts whether qualitative or quantitative. Now a plethora of material in a wide variety of formats is available, including, for example, high-quality photographs of paintings, 3-D views of museum objects, sound files of regional accents, and video footage of arts performances. Unfortunately, researchers in the arts and humanities are currently not able to make full use of the current range of electronic research materials. All too frequently cultural heritage resources reside in bespoke dissemination systems, use different metadata standards, are computerised using different technologies, and are made available in varying and inconsistent formats. This circumstance represents an opportunity for a Humanities Grid to bring resources together, but to reach this result, we first must solve vexing problems relating to the nature of humanities data and its use by humanists. This paper will explore both the opportunities and challenges in creating a Humanities Grid.