Opportunities and Challenges for Grid-based Humanities Research

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Distributed or grid computing, the touchstone of e-Science, has scarcely made an impact on the digital humanities, but perhaps no branch of knowledge will benefit more from the application of this model to its work. Humanities datasets are large, complex, extraordinarily varied in format, and widely dispersed, making them ripe for management and analysis within a distributed system. Moreover, humanities problems are increasingly defined explicitly as interdisciplinary problems, calling for methods that cut across humanities and non-humanities disciplines alike. Why then haven’t humanities scholars moved more decidedly to the grid as one way to advance scholarship? This presentation will examine the challenges faced by humanists, but more importantly, it will offer solutions and outline the opportunities available for humanities scholarship through an e-Science approach.