e-Infrastructures and the Humanities in Ireland

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The Digital Humanities Observatory: Background
Digital Humanities Observatory

• Part of the Humanities Serving Irish Society (HSIS) consortium to develop an all-island inter-institutional research infrastructure for the humanities

• Defining, promoting and implementing best practices for...
  – Digitisation
  – Archival
  – Curation
  – Discovery
  – Presentation

• HSIS funded under cycle four of the Programme of Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLI)
Humanities Serving Irish Society

• developing an all-island inter-institutional research infrastructure for the humanities
• building a platform for the coordination and dissemination of humanities research, teaching, and training at an all-island level
• coordinated by the Royal Irish Academy
Humanities Serving Irish Society Consortium

- **An Foras Feasa**
  - National University of Ireland, Maynooth
  - Dublin City University
  - Dundalk Institute of Technology
  - St. Patrick's College

- **The Global Ireland Institute**
  - University College Dublin
  - Institute of Technology, Tallaght
  - Queen’s University Belfast

- **Texts, Contexts, Cultures**
  - National University of Ireland, Galway
  - Trinity College Dublin
  - University College Cork

- **Unaffiliated HSIS Partners**
  - National College of Art and Design
  - Royal Irish Academy
  - University of Ulster
  - University of Limerick
DHO Staff

- Susan Schreibman, Director
- Paolo Battino, Web Developer
- Regina de Búrca
- Don Gourley, IT Manager
- Shawn Day, DH Specialist
- K Faith Lawrence, DH Specialist
- Dot Porter, Metadata Manager
- Bruno Voisin, Programmer (e-INIS)
Mission Statement

The DHO is an all-island digital humanities collaboratory working with Humanities Serving Irish Society (HSIS), national, European, and international partners to further e-scholarship.

The DHO is a knowledge resource providing outreach and education on a broad range of digital humanities topics. It provides data management, curation, and discovery services supporting the long-term access to, and greater exploitation of, digital resources in the creation of new models, methodologies, and paradigms for 21st century scholarship.
document-centric digital scholarship
new ways of looking at old data

TextArc

Lazily halving each root that falls apart
Your visualization will look like this:

91 hits

because

and

he


yes

that

it was

found out on the news with the dumbfounded couple as we did the 8 765 number. that of course soon went on to be a day long story.

I left off my glove and starting picking up cheese. this was very strange, to be touching all of this food.

the man on the bed said that he was responsible for my continued survival. it was impossible really to tell much from his face.

I heard the ticking of the clock but it was impossible to tell how long it would go on for. the man had a young stranger with him.

held a gun in my face, and his arm was steady. i could not see his face but i could feel his breath on my neck.

"i wish you had gone to the doctor only it would be fine before i started. i wish that with all of that."

they were all at a good time of the day before the usual performance. they were all so much better.

we sat down in a restaurant, but we did not move very far. we did not move at all.

an office was set up on the table and we sat there. i could not hear the usual performance.
Fermanagh from 1641 Depositions Project
Sept 11 Digital Archive

This is a beta version of a new design for the September 11 Digital Archive. **We welcome your comments on the new look.**

**Click here** to view the previous version of the website.

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**The September 11 Digital Archive** uses electronic media to collect, preserve, and present the history of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath. The Archive contains more than 150,000 digital items, a tally that includes more than 40,000 emails and other electronic communications, more than 40,000 first-hand stories, and more than 15,000 digital images. In September 2003, the Library of Congress accepted the Archive into its collections, an event that both ensured the Archive's long-term preservation and marked the library's first major digital acquisition.

**Browse**: Explore the collection for stories, images, emails, documents, sounds, and videos of September 11

**Research**: Search, sort, and examine the entire collection

**Contribute**: Tell your story, add your email, and upload images, documents, and other digital files to the Archive.
THE SEPTEMBER 11 DIGITAL ARCHIVE
SAVING THE HISTORIES OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Views of Ground Zero at approximately 9:00 AM on September 11, 2001
E-INIS
• Technical support and infrastructure

• HPC
• Grid
• Networking
• Support
• Data storage & Management
• Towards Curation
Services: content functionality...
implies standard formats & encoding schemas; different services provide
behaviours for different content models

Repository: content management...
e.g.: ingestion, description, indexing, auditing, contextualizing, migration,
dissemination

Storage: content persistence...
via distributed, redundant data; locally
managed on grid or externally referenced
Architecture

- Fedora Commons Front-end
- Federated Data Storage
- High Performance Computing
- Support Staff & Services
- 10 Gbps Lambda Switched Network Backbone
- e-INIS Irish National e-Infrastructure
The DHO / e-INIS Collaboration
Precursors

- Report of Blue-Ribbon Advisory Panel on Cyberinfrastructure (2003) commission and published by the National Science Foundation (USA)
- Our Cultural Commonwealth (2006) -- Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences commissioned by the American Council of Learned Societies
DHO/e-INIS Partnership

- DHO as a demonstrator project – building an infrastructure around user needs;
- Active role in development of infrastructure
  - At present mostly storage
- Allows infrastructure experts to concentrate on infrastructure
- Allows communities to focus on front end
- The DHO can take advantage of an existing distributed infrastructure – one that the DHO does not have to reinvent
The DHO Contributes to a wider e-infrastructure in Ireland

• Metadata
• Standards
• Data Curation
• Repository development
Supporting and promoting standards across the e-infrastructure

- Application profiles
  - DC Education
- Object structures
  - METS
  - RDF
  - TEI
  - Dublin Core
- Metadata schemas
  - TIFF
  - XML
- Data formats
  - WAV
  - JPEG
- Encoding formats
  - PCM
  - ISO-8859-1

Community-specific

Generic
Lessons Learned

• Demonstrator projects benefit from a defined support structure

• Knowledge Transfer
  – Scientific communities can learn from humanities expertise in metadata and digital curation
  – E-infrastructure provider a conduit
  – between humanities and scientific communities
Lessons Learned

• political issues
  – cultural heritage an exciting area to make more widely available
  – Provides a way for the infrastructure to be used by the public

• Funding opportunities
  – Both communities value cross-disciplinary opportunities
Potential Pitfalls

– Dependency
– Communications
The Future of the Collaboration

• Digital Curation
  – Persistent digital object identifier
  – Representation documentation
  – Provenance information
  – Context
  – Fixity
  – Content datastreams
Questions?

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