HUMANITIES DATA LITERACY

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE ON DIGITAL CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS

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HELSINKI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

• Librarians working as project managers gathering resources for researchers’ DH projects
• Relying heavily on individual librarians effort
• Often without sufficient infrastructure or administrative power in the library

DH IN UNI HELSINKI

Uni Helsinki Digital Humanities #HelsinkiDH

Emerging field
- A handful of research projects
- Teaching piloted Academic year 2015-16
- HELDIG centre planning stage

Multidisciplinary group effort
- Humanities scholars working with developers from computer science departments
- Methods developed simultaneously with research, coding not outsourced or bought

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HELSINKI DH TEACHING MODULE

Digital Humanities 25sp

DH1 Theory and Practice (5-15sp)

DH1a Introduction to digital humanities (5sp)

Cultural heritage and the digital

DH2 Methods (5-15sp)

DH2a Introduction to methods in digital humanities (5sp)

Data visualization

DH3 Multidisciplinary Project (5sp)
PARTNERS IN DH CURRICULUM DESIGN

Helsinki DH

- Limited resources for curriculum planning - volunteers and ideas welcome!
- Simple idea about heritage collections as humanities research data

Librarians need

- Courage to think the idea through and put together a course
- Support and partnership from teaching faculty
- Allocated time from library management
• Very gentle, humanities oriented introduction to digital humanities themes
• Materials in focus: The range and landscape of (Finnish) digital cultural heritage collections
• Does going through the collections invoke research questions?
• What should be taken into account when evaluating the collections from a research perspective?

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COURSE OUTLINE

• 5 ECT credits
• 15 students, 5 small groups
• 14 classroom sessions, 10+ visiting speakers
• Speakers from heritage organisations as Finnish National Library, Finnish National Broadcasting YLE, National Gallery, Society for Finnish Literature, Helsinki City Museum.. + open culture specialist, linked data specialist, museum curator for user services
• 2 sessions reserved for groupwork in the library
• 2 sessions for presenting groupwork
• Learning diary and required readings
COURSE GOALS: LEARNING ABOUT

Central Heritage Collections

Open Culture Movement

Developing research thinking with available materials

Possibilities of the digital: from browsing to working with collections as data

Heritage collection documentation: quality and systematicity of metadata

Copyright and Research Ethical Issues

Library goal: bringing RDM thinking into undergraduate curriculum

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
• Is the collection available for download openly? Through an API? Is the metadata available for download? (vs. only through a user interface)
• How is the quality of the collection throughout? Is it uneven and partly lacking or is it systematic, informative and rich?
• How is the data documented? Is the metadata correct?
• Are there copyright or privacy issues that restrict the use of the collection as data or could those issues be negotiated?

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• Students responding positively and with a surprise to the range of digital heritage sector
• Heritage organizations pleased to meet students at Uni

Room for more collaboration and knowledge sharing UNI / GLAM

• Students ready to think about availability and copyright issues
• More difficult to bring forward the data aspects of heritage materials or the development of research questions
EXPERIENCES AND FEEDBACK

STUDENTS

• Positive feedback on
  • Course content
  • Working methods
  • Timeliness of the issues

• Visiting speakers in a row: difficult to grasp a whole?

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EXPERIENCES AND FEEDBACK

TEACHERS

• Goals too ambitious?
  • 1-3 year students didn’t grow into thinking like a researcher overnight!

• Data viewpoint difficult to grasp
• Extensive reading list didn’t show up in learning diaries

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Info Literacy / Data Literacy

Information literacy: from standards of finding and recognizing relevant information (ACRL, 2000)

..to frameworks for taking part in academic discussion and creating information, becoming a subject of knowledge (ACRL, 2015)

Data Literacy (Koltay, 2015) involves knowledge of quantitative (statistical) methods, metadata standards and the data curation lifecycle.

But also the understanding of data quality: accessibility, usability and understandability on the basis of context, provenience and metadata, data structure of different digital objects and even developing hypotheses and identifying problems that a dataset can answer

DATA LITERACY/ HERITAGE DATA FEATURES

ACCESSIBILITY
- Is the collection to be downloaded openly as data or can it only be used through a user interface?
- What are the relevant copyright issues?

USEFULNESS of Data
- What is the provenience of the collection?
- Is it systematically representative or lacking in some way?

UNDERSTANDABILITY of DATA
- How is the data documented?
- Is the metadata correct?
- Is there enough metadata to bring out the context?
Recognizing research potential of an existing heritage collection
• Identifying problems that the dataset could answer
• Develop hypothesis based on the data

Becoming aware of the data features that enable new quantitative methods
• Access, format, systematicity, metadata

Understanding the context and provenience of the collection
• Extension, representativeness
• Openness, relevant copyright and privacy issues
THANK YOU!

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Helsinki University Library
http://www.helsinki.fi/kirjasto/fi/etusivu/

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