Geohumanities Data: Managing, Using, Opening, Sharing

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Abstract

As the geohumanities or spatial humanities continue to grow and diversify, the tools of data ingestion, curation, management, visualisation and dissemination develop with them. The spatial turn is reaching a new maturity for humanists, and requires an increasing range of essential resources to undertake its core tasks. The study of space and place, and indeed the field of human and physical geography as a whole, is based on primitives of spatial knowledge: identity, location, magnitude, time as well as spatial entities such as the point, the line or the polygon. Through these spatial primitives, the languages of space and place emerge. These in turn inform a set of scholarly primitives: georeferencing, disambiguating, tabulating, managing, linking, archiving and so on. These interact with the corresponding primitives of data management: sustainability, interoperability, planning, legal compliance, standardisation, data sharing and so on. A new pipeline of spatial processes has emerged, with tools fitted to new primitives and accessible to an ever-widening range of humanists. The researcher can move through the processes of discovery and/or disambiguation (e.g. Wikidata or Pleiades), annotation (e.g. Recogito) and network analysis (e.g. Gephi or Palladio) or focus on one particular task, moving in and out of more traditional spatial systems such as GIS, itself now adapted to specific humanistic disciplines.
As Bodenhamer et al. (2010: vii) pointed out a decade ago, "humanists are fully conversant with space as concept or metaphor", but have been reviving "a dormant interest in the influence of physical or geographical space on human behaviour and cultural development". This trend, dormant no longer, has become the focal point of many digital humanities projects. Terms such as gazetteer, georeference, geoparser, shape file and GIS have become central to the vocabulary of many scholars. The goal of this synergy session between the Geohumanities and Research Data Management working groups is to consider the scholarly primitives of a new geohumanist norm: what are the data, how do humanists engage with them, how should they be managed, and what tools, practices and collaborations - existing or incipient - best enable them to tell their story?

In a world of open scholarship, the FAIR principles, a plethora of data in a variety of formats and an increase in openly licensed and digitised content, getting back to basics - or primitives - is key. A certain level of disciplinary and infrastructural maturity calls for new norms and new workflows, as well as collaborations between the diverse working groups of DARIAH with a stake in the future of spatial research in the humanities.

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[*]Speaker

Proposed format

Introduction (10 mins)

World cafe format thematic table discussions (20 mins)

Discussion based on summaries from rapporteurs (10 mins)

Audit of 'scholarly' primitives within Geohumanities and Research Data Management (10 mins)

Towards a data pipeline of Geohumanities tools and processes (10 mins)

Data sustainability in the Geohumanities (10 mins)

Discussion of synergies between WGs and proposals for future activities (20 mins)
NB this session has been endorsed by the Geohumanities and Research Data Management working groups.