The Digital Humanities and Democracy

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ABSTRACT *There has been much debate in recent years as to what constitutes the digital humanities. This article argues that one way to articulate the digital humanities is through a focus on the democratization of the humanities, by increasing access to and participation in the humanities, rather than through an emphasis on technology use. Using a case study approach, and the theory of structuration, this article examines how digital humanists are attempting to expand the reach and diversity of the humanities through the digitization of data and the building of digital tools.*

KEYWORDS *Digital humanities; Democracy; Structuration*

RÉSUMÉ *Dans les dernières années, il y a eu beaucoup de débats sur les propriétés des sciences humaines numériques. Cet article soutient qu'une manière de définir celles-ci consisterait à mettre l'accent sur leur démocratisation, avec l'idée d'un accès et d'une participation accrus, plutôt que sur leur technologie. Cet article a recours à des études de cas et à la théorie de la structuration pour examiner comment on essaie d'accroître l'étendue et la diversité des sciences humaines au moyen de la numérisation des données et du développement d'outils numériques.*

MOTS CLÉS *Sciences humaines numériques; Démocratie; Structuration*

Introduction

Digital humanists are attempting to use computing and digital technology to expand and diversify the humanities, changing what we know about human culture and how we communicate that knowledge. In recent years, however, there has been much debate as to what constitutes the digital humanities (Alvarado, 2012; Cecire, 2011; Fitzpatrick, 2012; Gouglas, Rockwell, Smith, Hoosein & Quamen, 2012; Hayles, 2012; Kirschenbaum, 2012; Rieger, 2010; Schmidt, 2011; Spiro, 2012; Svensson, 2010, 2012a, 2012b). It has been referred to as an "umbrella term" that encompasses many different fields and practices (Bobley, 2008; Gavin & Smith, 2012). For instance, Fitzpatrick (2012) describes the digital humanities as "broadly humanities based" (p. 13), which includes disciplines traditionally thought of as the humanities, such as history, literature and the classics, but also includes areas such as performance studies and media studies. In addition to disciplines, the field of digital humanities also embraces a wide array of practices, including the digitization of text, textual analysis, data mining, visualization techniques, immersive environments and gaming (Schreibman, Siemens &

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Unsworth, 2004; Svensson, 2010). Others have suggested that while the digital humanities embraces a wide range of subject matter, it "is unified by its emphasis on making, connecting, interpreting, and collaborating" (Burdick, Drucker, Lunenfeld, Presner & Schnapp, 2012, p. 24); it is thus, in a sense, a process rather than a discipline. Taking a different approach, Spiro (2012) argues that instead of attempting to define the digital humanities through discipline or methods, it is perhaps best to identify a core a set of values, such as openness and collaboration that unites the digital humanities. This article will add to this debate, arguing that one way to articulate what constitutes the digital humanities is not through the use of technology per se, but rather through humanists' attempts to democratize the humanities through collaboration with computer scientists and the use of digital technologies. Further to this, it argues that democratization—particularly hinging on ideas of access and participation—should be central to the digital humanities.

There has been much promise attached to the digital humanities, principally that it will bring about change and reconfigure the traditional humanities by enabling scholars to ask and answer questions that were not possible in a pre-digital world. Much attention has been paid to this potential (Svensson, 2012a; 2012b). Another vein that runs through the discourse on the digital humanities is the field's commitment, to varying degrees, to making the humanities generally more accessible and open through digitizing material and inviting people from outside academia to help build the human record, essentially democratizing the humanities (Cohen & Rosenzweig, 2005; Crane, Seales & Terras, 2009; Presner & Johanson, 2009). This article takes a case study approach to examine how digital humanists are attempting to democratize the humanities through efforts to increase access to, and participation in, the humanities. This way of framing democracy is also pervasive in much new media and communication theory that centres on increasing participation in the media landscape through Web 2.0 technology and, subsequently, increasing the range and flow of information (Flew, 2008; Gillmor, 2004; Hassan, 2008).

Two case studies, that are exemplars of different ways of approaching issues of access and participation, will be examined. Orlando: Women's Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present (Orlando) is an online digital archive that contains entries on nearly 1300, mostly women, writers, as well as other contextual material. It is a joint venture between the University of Alberta and the University of Guelph. The aim of this project is to create "history with a difference" (Orlando Project, n.d.). The project does so by providing scholars researching women writers with a vast digital archive and search engine that will also direct them to related material from the fields of law, economics, science, education, medicine, politics, and writing by men. The project has been designed to allow users to make connections between writers and themes that might not be apparent if one was studying these writers in print. The Centre for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, deals with a multitude of digital humanities projects, but one of its cornerstones—on which this article will focus on—is Omeka, a digital platform that makes it easy for people to create online historical sites. This centre is very clear in its aim to "democratize history" (Centre for History and New Media, n.d.). Key to this framing of democratization is in-

creasing the number of voices that are represented in the historical record and focusing on those who have often been left out of the history books—people who were neither famous nor infamous, in particular the poor and the working class.

Democracy and agency

As Deneen (2008) notes democracy is "one of those words affording infinite plasticity and applications" (p. 301). Its definition varies depending on context and values. It often conjures up notions of elections, direct and indirect representation, and participation in the political process more generally, but it can also refer more broadly to notions of freedom, fairness, and the equitable distribution of power in society (MacPherson, 1977; Mosco & McKercher, 2008; Saward, 2003; Weale, 2007). While recognizing this complexity, this analysis draws on themes that are common to most definitions of democracy—participation and access. From the time of the Ancient Greeks, where each citizen (admittedly, a problematic term that excluded women and slaves) had a vote in matters of public interest, to post-World War II Schumpeterian thinking on representative democracy, to more recent theorizing that has placed an emphasis on extending participation to other realms of society, including social, economic, and political life, the common thread in democracy has been these two pillars. As mentioned, participation and access have also been central to much media and communications theory. Techno-optimists have described Web 2.0 technology and information communication technology more generally as creating a more open, diverse and, by extension, democratic media ecosystem (Flew, 2008; Gillmor, 2004; Hassan, 2008). Others tell a more cautionary tale, arguing that access to technology does not necessarily translate into more active and diverse social or political participation (Mosco & McKercher, 2008). This article will examine how these two notions of access and participation are invoked and negotiated in the digital humanities.

Further, the democratization of the humanities will be examined in the context of structuration, a concept used both in communications studies and sociology. Mosco (2009) describes structuration as essentially a contemporary rendering of Marx's belief that "we do make history, but not under conditions of our own making" (p. 186). It refers to the give and take between the individual and social structures; we are constrained by social structures (be they social norms, traditions or moral codes) at the same time that we have agency and can influence them. This is a complex, recursive relationship whereby individual social actors are constrained at the same time that they are enabled by social structures (Giddens, 1984). Essential to this article will be the concept of agency and how digital humanists are attempting to change how knowledge is constructed and communicated in the humanities.

The digital humanities

The first use of computers in the humanities can be traced back to the 1940s when Roberto Busa approached IBM for help in creating a computer-generated word concordance of the works of Thomas Aquinus (Burdick et al., 2004). The early use of computers in the humanities followed in Busa's footsteps, as computers were primarily enlisted to help with textual analysis, the creation of word indexes and concordances. Essentially, "humanities computing" scholars, as they were called, were using comput-

ers to do the same work they had always done—counting and sorting—but more quickly and on a larger scale. Some have characterized the use of computers in the humanities in terms of two fairly distinct yet overlapping waves. In the first wave, computing technology use in the humanities mirrored what happens every time a new media appears, imitating the old and looking backward as it moves forward.

> Just as early codices mirrored oratorical practices, print initially mirrored the practices of high medieval manuscript culture, and film mirrored the techniques of theater, the digital first wave replicated the world of scholarly communications that print gradually codified over the course of five centuries: a world where textuality was primary. (UCLA Center for Digital Humanities, 2009, para 10)

The second wave, by contrast, emphasizes visuals and sound. It is described as more "qualitative, interpretive, experiential, emotive, generative in character" (UCLA Center for Digital Humanities, 2009, para 3). The focus is much more on the user, as digital humanists concentrate on creating immersive environments, inventing games and visualizing data (Hayles, 2012). In this second wave, textual analysis is still alive and well, but the focus of digital humanists has broadened (Svennson, 2009). Similarly, Hayles (2012), rather than describing two separate waves of the digital humanities, sees the digital humanities as evolving by way of "assimilation," moving the scholarship humanists have always done into the digital realm, or "distinction," creating new kinds of scholarship, methodologies and research. Hayles traces the first use of the term digital humanities to the late 1990s when a group of scholars at the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at the University of Virginia was searching for a term to replace "humanities computing," which was felt to be "too closely associated with computer support services" (p. 24). They were looking for something that would "signal that the field had emerged … into a genuinely intellectual endeavor with its own professional practices, rigorous standards, and exciting theoretical explorations" (p. 24). Kirschenbaum (2012), by contrast, traces the first use of the term "digital humanities" to the creation of a seminal text, *A Companion to Digital Humanities* (Schreibman et al., 2004), where, similarly, researchers were looking for a way to describe a field that included computers and the digital in a more holistic manner, rather than simply in a service role.

Given this history, the digital humanities as a field is fairly young while also drawing on long-standing traditions. Part of the identity crisis that has fueled such rich debate in recent years comes from this history, reconciling the old with the new, and defining what the second wave is and how it fits into the trajectory of the digital humanities.

Despite the debates about what constitutes the digital humanities, there is a distinctive line of thinking that this is a field that is doing something different than traditional humanities. The narrative found in the writing about the digital humanities is about great change, transformation, and reinvigorating the humanities. For instance, as Svennson (2012b) describes, "the digital humanities is intimately associated with a fairly pronounced and far-reaching visionary discourse and transformative sentiment" (p.11). Brett Bobley, the Director of the Office of Digital Humanities in the United States, has gone so far as to call the impact of the digital humanities "game changing"

(Bobley, 2008). This narrative is reminiscent of what Mosco (2004) has characterized as the digital sublime, in that the digital humanities will lift the humanities out of the quotidian and transform what we know about human culture in a profound way. What is most often cited as "game-changing" is the creation of digital archives and the ability to search them in novel ways. Just as technology has revolutionized science, in astronomy or neuroscience for example, by allowing scientists to see objects and analyze patterns previously invisible, the hope is that digitization will allow humanities scholars to ask new questions and find new answers about human culture (Burdick et al., 2012; Cole, 2008). For example, a scholar of nineteenth century literature cannot read every book written in that era, but a computer can digest and analyze this material, perhaps finding patterns that were formerly invisible. While pre-digitization humanities scholars could only be expected to consult a finite number of books or artifacts, the digital humanities opens up more possibilities. Hayles (2012) identifies scale as "[p]erhaps the single most important issue in effecting transformation" (p. 27).

Although the idea that the digital humanities will significantly change what is known in the humanities is often cited as the "game-changing" effect, I argue that the more significant aspect of the "transformative sentiment" that Svensson (2012b) identifies, at this point in time, has to do with broad notions of openness, inclusiveness and collaboration. The digital humanities is often painted as something very different than the traditional humanities because it opens up access to the materials humanists study, invites participation from "expert amateurs" or the public more generally, and collaborates with this public. For instance, Burdick et al. (2012) describe the digital humanities as something that will "open up the prospect of a conversation extending far beyond the walls of the ivory tower that connects universities to cultural institutions, libraries, museums, and community organizations" (p. 82). By focusing on inclusivity and collaboration, the digital humanities will "revitalize the cultural record in ways that involve citizens in the academic enterprise and bringing the academy into the expanded public sphere" (p. 93). In many ways, the argument can be made that this push has significant pre-digital antecedents. For instance, cultural studies going back to the 1960s in Britain, sought to erase the distinction between high and low culture, to bring attention to the culture of the "everyday," including working class culture and youth culture (Kellner & Durham, 2012). As another example, workers' education associations, going back to the early 1900s in Britain also held similar ideals (Goldman, 1995). Digital humanists, however, are hoping that digital technology will be a further step in opening up the humanities to a wider public.

Essentially, much of the focus of the digital humanities appears to be, in different ways, centred on how to increase access to, and participation in, the humanities. The CHNM specifically uses the term democratization to describe their focus on access and participation. Other historians have also described increasing access to primary source material and encouraging the public to engage in historical thinking as the "democratization of history" (Ayers, 1999; VandeCreek, 2007). However, even when the word democratization is not explicitly used by other digital humanists, it is implied through the focus on sharing information, collaborating, and creating digital archives and tools that are freely accessible and user-friendly. For instance, there is considerable focus on

digitizing the material humanists study and the research humanists produce in order to increase access to this material and allow more people to engage with it, whether scholars or the public (Katz, 2005; Nelson, 2009; Presner & Johanson, 2009). As Cohen and Rosenzweig (2005) describe, digitizing material and making it available online solves the problem of distance for those who do not have the means or ability to travel to see something in person, and opens up spaces that were previously closed. For instance, the doors of the United States Library of Congress have always been closed to high school students, but they can now have access through the library's American Memory website. In terms of participation, some digital humanists are concentrating on creating digital tools that will allow people to publish their own history or other personal cultural interests on the Internet. As Burdick et al. (2012) describe, in this way the digital humanities "promotes platforms for informed amateur scholarship (p. 26). Others are enlisting the help of non-professionals, or "expert amateurs," and collaborating on scholarly projects. For instance, scholars at University College London, are recruiting online volunteers to help transcribe and encode the work of the philosopher Jeremy Bentham (Causer, Tonra, & Wallace, 2012). Other digital humanists are interested in creating work that will reach out to people beyond academia, and create a more active role in the learning process, from interactive websites (Katz, 2005) to gaming.

Considerable research in the digital humanities to date, usefully so, describes the challenges involved in implementing digital humanities initiatives, both within and outside traditional humanities departments. In addition, much has been written about the particular technical challenges that go into creating digital humanities repositories and tools of analysis, as well as the challenges involved in collaboration. This is important work that showcases experiments, trials and best practices (see for example Cunningham, Duke, Eustace, Galway, & Patterson, 2008; Schreibman et al., 2004; Siemens 2009; 2010; Siemens, Cunningham, Duff & Warwick, 2011; VandeCreek, 2007). This study aims to add to this body of work by examining, through two case studies, how digital humanists are negotiating increasing access and participation in the humanities.

Methodology

Research took place from October 2009 to March 2010, during which time I visited the sites of both case studies. In-person semi-structured interviews were done on site with key informants, including professors, researchers, graduate students, and programmers. Nineteen people were interviewed at the CHNM. Ten people were interviewed on Orlando.

The digital humanities requires skills in both the humanities and computing technology. These two skills sets have been described in different ways: "subject expertise" versus "knowledge of digital techniques" or "technical skills" (Warwick, Galina, Terras, Huntington, & Pappa, 2008); "technical-oriented" versus "academics" (Siemens, 2009). In these case studies, I make the distinction between programmers and content producers. Programmers work primarily with technology, and the majority of their work encompasses varying levels of programming skills. The people who deal primarily with the content that goes into the websites, digital tools, or archives will be referred

to as content producers. This distinction at the CHNM is apt in that every interviewee acknowledged that there are two aspects to the work at the centre, and placed themselves primarily in one of these categories. The distinction, however, is in some ways artificial and porous in that there is overlap. As one programmer said, "that kind of division is really more for figuring out who's responsible for what, than actually the interactions that go on" (CHNM programmer 1). Similarly, on Orlando, there is overlap in that everyone possesses some technical skills, which they use in their day-to-day work. There is a distinction, however, between those who work on high-end, complicated programming and those who use technology to do simpler tasks, such as marking up text. As such, the terms "programmer" and "content producer" will also be used. Some of the people on Orlando will also be identified as bridge people, in that they work on both the technical side and the content side, and are both formally recognized in this role. Further, the CHNM has six directors; most of them work on content, or oversee operations at the centre, and are not involved in the day-to-day programming. They will be identified as directors, with the exception of one director who works mainly in programming. In the interests of confidentiality, this person will be referred to as a programmer.

Case studies

The majority of people who call themselves digital humanists, and are recognized as such, work within universities. Given this, the two case studies chosen are both based in academia. They were chosen because they are exemplars of two types of major undertakings in the digital humanities to date—digital archives and tool building. They differ in that they have different ways of conceiving of participation and access in the digital humanities. They also differ in that the CHNM focuses on developing free tools and sites, while Orlando is available through subscription.

The CHNM began its life in an airstream trailer outside the History Department at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. It was founded by Roy Rosenzweig, a social historian who dedicated his career to fostering a broader sense of history that included representations of the poor and the working class. He was part of the movement in the 1970s toward social and micro histories, and his research concentrated on the history of working class cultural and social life. When Rosenzweig built the centre in the 1990s, he was working with the "new" technology of the day, CD-ROMS. Although the centre has now traded its CDs for digital technology and Web 2.0 applications, the mission statement remains the same: to "incorporate multiple voices, reach diverse audiences and encourage popular presentation in presenting and preserving the past" (Center for History and New Media, n.d.). The aim is to "democratize" history by reaching beyond the boundaries of traditional history books and opening up the historical record to more people. They focus on both increasing participation in creating the historical record and increasing access to the historical record.

The centre began with a staff of two—Rosenzweig and his technical assistant. Today it is home to over 50 employees and affiliated faculty, including directors, senior staff, programmers, developers, designers, and Web masters, as well as professors and graduate students. It has moved out of the trailer and now occupies a large amount of space on the third floor of one of the university's research buildings. It relies largely

on grant funding from two sources to maintain its annual operating budget of three million dollars: government (National Endowment for the Humanities, National Science Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Education Association) and private foundations (Ford, Carnegie, Mellon, Sloan, Hewlett, Crest, Kellogg, etc.).

Today the centre is involved in many digital history projects that belong primarily in the "second wave" of digital humanities. One of the centre's main projects has been the digital tool Omeka. Designed using PHP and Javascript, it is a Web platform that facilitates the uploading and sharing of historical information. The platform can be installed and maintained by the user, or for those with more limited technical knowledge, the CHNM has recently created a version that it hosts itself—Omeka.net. With only a username and a password, people can very quickly create digital history projects, in the same way that WordPress.com is designed to help people with limited technical knowledge start a blog very easily. One director described the building of such tools as the "cornerstone" of what they do, and something that furthers the democratic mission of the centre to broaden the number of voices in the historical record.

> Omeka is designed to enable individual scholars, enthusiasts, amateur historians, small historical societies, local history museums, those kinds of institutions to present their own history online. That is a tool with a clear democratic mission. (CHNM director 1)

The centre also builds websites, and archives to capture the voices of a wide range of people involved in historical events. This was the goal of the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank, which was created to preserve the stories of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. One programmer described the gathering of this sort of data as creating a richer historical picture.

> As an historian you can spend a lot of time searching through the archives and looking for things that aren't there and you think about [how] it would be so great if I had [the stories of everyday people]. I mean, this is what would be so great to have—to have archives full of hundreds of thousands of direct responses from average citizens. (CHNM programmer 2)

In addition to soliciting more voices from fairly recent history, the centre also focuses on historical events and figures from the past that have not garnered a lot of attention. On these types of websites they will often provide a narrative to help visitors navigate through the material, but they also provide access to the primary source material. One programmer describes the digitization of primary source material in this way as the "democratization of data" (CHNM programmer 4).

Although Orlando is a digital project, its roots are offline. The Feminist Companion to Literature in English was published in 1990. The decision was then made to work on a follow-up and create a digital text base. In 1995, the project was awarded a grant of CAD$1.6 million from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to do so. Orlando operates with fewer personnel than the CHNM. At the time this research was conducted, there were three directors, a systems analyst, a senior research associate, a textbase manager, as well as several graduate research assistants. In the past, there

have been textbase managers, co-investigators on grants, volunteer research assistants, and many collaborators that helped out in early years as part of an advisory board. The operating budget was not disclosed to me, but the project exists on a mix of research grants, as well as donations from individuals, and has also been supported by an in-kind grant of software from Inso Corporation.

Orlando centres on two ideas, the first of which is exploring the role of women in creating literary culture. To that end, it is the first project of its kind to take on an overall history of women's writing from the British Isles. The second idea is to create a digital archive with a search engine that will generate sophisticated responses to the questions asked in the study of culture and literature. The digital text has been "marked up" and "tagged" with an underlying code that allows the sorting and searching of material. The hope is that this searching capability will lead to new scholarship that would simply not be possible offline. Orlando has been encoded using an adaptation of Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML). The SGML Document Type Definitions are now in the process of being converted to XML RelaxNG schemas. One of the founders of this project, Patricia Clements (2008), calls it "a dynamic text" and a "dancing literary history," in that it is history that is capable of moving differently, each time a researcher asks it a question. The project straddles the line between the first and second wave of the digital humanities in that it digitizes material that humanists study, but it also creates original material housed in a dynamic archive.

Orlando was published—in that it was made publicly available by subscription through Cambridge—in 2006. Orlando is a "living project," in that it is regularly updated with new author entries. As well, they are still experimenting with the technology and different ways to sort and display information.

Unlike the CHNM, Orlando does not state that its goal is the democratization of information. Orlando is, however, democratizing in the sense that it is trying to increase access to information about women writers. First, the goal is to bring wider attention to these writers; by digitizing reference material, the hope is that it will be easier for people to access, which in turn will expand its reach. Further to this, the project also focuses on the work of more obscure writers, whose work is not readily accessible in most libraries. One content producer described Orlando as exploring "aspects of female experience that had been excluded from traditional accounts [of English literature]" (Orlando content producer 1). As one bridge person put it, the database contains "big names," like Woolf and Austen, but "really what they wanted to do was to bring out those women writers who had been lost to time, who had been little known or little studied" (Orlando bridge 2). The Orlando search engine is designed to bring lesser-known writers to a user's attention. Many search engines, such as Google, return searches based on popularity and what one has searched before. In this type of system, the most well known rise to the top and the more obscure remain out of sight. Orlando's system has been designed to always bring up more obscure writers, along with the more famous (Brown, Clements, Grundy, Balazs, & Antoniuk, 2007).

Orlando also aims to make obscure texts more accessible by providing historical context, which, it is hoped, will help create a deeper understanding of the material, es-

pecially for users who are not experts in women's literary history. As one content producer said, in principle anyone could go out and read the texts of early writers, but it is hard to fully understand them because "these are texts separated from us by hundreds of years and a whole lot of different assumptions" (Orlando content producer 2).

Orlando and the CHNM have similar goals in terms of increasing agency—giving people, both scholars and non-scholars, increased ability to access information and, in the case of the CHNM, increased ability to participate in building the historical record. Orlando is striving to increase access to, and understanding of, women writers, which it is hoped will lead to a more complex, complete, and deeper understanding of literary history. The goal of the CHMN is to work towards increasing the number and diversity of voices contributing to historical knowledge, which in turn will lead to a more complete historical record. There are several issues, however, that temper any democratizing leanings in both cases.

Access and participation

Central to the democratic vision of the CHNM is increasing participation in creating history. However, increased participation does not necessarily mean that hierarchies will be dispersed and all historical voices will be treated as equally authentic, reliable, and important. As one content producer said, the structural hierarchies of the field of history will not necessarily change because of what they are doing at the centre; professional historians will still be called upon to decide what is important historical material. Simply presenting historical information on the Internet does not make one a historian. "I mean it's one thing for everybody's voice to be heard as historical actors. I don't know if everybody's voice can be heard as historians" (CHNM content producer 2).

Although a central part of the centre's mission is building tools that will enable more users to participate in building the historical record, several people made the point that building tools does not necessarily correlate to new users. Tools might encourage and enable those who were already inclined to publish their archives online, but would not necessarily encourage new amateur historians (CHNM content producer 2).

The one outright critique of the CHNM's use of the term democratization came from a programmer who disagreed that simply making information and primary sources available, or enabling more people to create historical records is democratizing. Instead, this person argued that what is necessary for democracy is a group of people rallying around information, using it for political or social means. Democracy is active, rather than passive, and requires the formation of community.

Although not dismissive of the use of the term "democratization" to describe what the centre does, another content producer also questioned whether the CHNM focuses on projects that do not challenge the status quo. This person explained that Rosenzweig often discussed the difference between agency and faux agency; faux agency being the illusion of agency, the ability to act, as long as it does not jeopardize existing power. For instance, throughout time people have gathered together in bars to talk politics. Even in repressive regimes where public political dissent is forbidden, officials often turn a blind eye to barstool politics since they do not usually go beyond the bar and upset existing power structures. While those engaged in political discussions in the bar might feel like they have power and voice, it is in fact "faux" agency.

This person said that they grapple with this issue at the centre, in that any agency they afford is done within a safe, uncontested medium that does not challenge power structures in a substantive way (CHNM content producer 4).

It is also unclear what reach and impact Omeka has had. It is estimated that it has been downloaded about ten thousand times, but it is difficult to track precisely who is using it. There is a footer installed in the program that reads "Proudly Powered by Omeka" that can be tracked, but it is also easy to remove from websites, making accurate tracking of the tool impossible. According to the data they have been able to collect, Omeka is currently being used by university libraries, small historical societies, museums, and individual scholars; however, there are very few individual scholars or amateur enthusiasts using it.

By contrast, Orlando does not currently solicit input from people outside the core of its project. Several interviewees said that ideally they would like to open it up to a broader community, but to do so would require a major technical readjustment. In addition, doing so would bring up issues of how to negotiate questions of authority, expertise, and accuracy.

Increasing access to the material they are digitizing, however, is a cornerstone of Orlando. Access is tempered though by the fact that Orlando is available through subscription. If one does not have access through a library, the subscription rate is US$226 dollars per year. Most subscriptions have been with university libraries, but many interviewees expressed hope that Orlando will become of interest more generally. For instance, one content producer said she envisions it as a "first stop source of information for a lot of people," such as high-end travel agents who are organizing tours based around literary figures, book clubs, or anyone with a general interest in history (Orlando content producer 2). This person also acknowledged, however, that they have had some issues publicizing and marketing Orlando, which is something digital projects by subscription have been dealing with more generally since "there's an expectation of knowledge and information being free on the web" (Orlando content producer 2).

Credibility, authority, and expertise

Although the CHNM is attempting to democratize history by encouraging multiple voices, this type of digital history also brings with it questions to do with quality and authenticity, which, in terms of structuration, pits agency against norms of academia. Although most people at the centre believe there is value in creating history that includes lay historians and professional historians, given that it leads to a more rich historical record, they wrestle with issues of how to determine quality and what weight should be given to expertise.

> I don't think that any projects that I know of have figured out or demonstrated a good answer to how to maintain authority and expertise by historians without making the website or the project seem closed to other people. (CHNM director 4).

This is also an issue with the Orlando Project; even if they were to design a system that could include input from outside sources, they would still have to wrestle with how to integrate amateur and expert knowledge, as well as deal with issues of credibility (Orlando content producer 2).

The issue of credibility is one reason Orlando decided to publish with Cambridge. As a highly regarded publisher, having the Cambridge name attached to their work lends the project academic legitimacy. As one content producer described, "[t]hey are the name. They have standards" (Orlando content producer 2). The association with Cambridge also helped ensure more funding from the university. As one content producer said, universities do not have a great deal of money for research, and in order to get universities to invest in your project you need to make your project credible. Publishing with Cambridge also gives Orlando a secure source of ongoing funding. Although the royalties are nominal and do not cover the cost of running the project, many see them as important to the project's continued operation.

Nonetheless, the decision to publish with Cambridge was, and continues to be, somewhat controversial. All interviewees who spoke about the publishing decision said if they had the choice, they would like Orlando to be free. At the same time, they acknowledged that the academic credibility that comes with Cambridge has been important. There was one person who dissented, saying that Orlando would be the go-to place on the Web for this kind of information if it were freely available, and this would "outweigh any kind of cachet of publishing with Cambridge" (Orlando bridge 1).

Technical barriers and democracy

Any digital project that incorporates the Internet faces the issue that what is produced will not be universally accessible. While Orlando may be democratizing, in that the digital information it contains is more accessible than if it were housed solely in print editions, this access is certainly not universal. As one content producer said, just because something is on the Internet does not mean everyone will be able to use it. "It's out there … but what if my granny can't run a computer? What if she can't afford to buy a computer?" (Orlando content producer 1) To say Orlando is accessible assumes one is technologically savvy and also has the means to afford a computer and Internet access.

One programmer with the CHNM made the argument that most libraries have access to the Internet, and therefore the collections that the centre creates are really available to everyone (CHNM programmer 2). However, as Golding and Murdock (2004) note in their discussion of "hierarchies of access," access to the Internet through a library is a very different, less privileged form of access than a connection at home or at work. In recognition that not everyone may have fast, easy access to the Internet, the centre tries, when possible, to include people who are not connected or have slower connections speeds. They are careful to make accommodations for users who have low bandwidth or dial-up connections; when they design sites they make smaller versions of video, sound, and photograph files, to make downloading easier. The centre has also made efforts in other ways to reach out to people who do not have easy access to the Internet. When they created the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank, they did not rely solely on online submissions; postcards were printed, left in coffee shops, and distributed in neighbourhoods along the Gulf Coast. The cards asked people to write their experiences or thoughts and mail them back at no cost. A free phone line was also set up with the goal of collecting stories and experiences. As one content producer said, the centre's work may not ever reach an ideal point of democratization (in that everyone has equal opportunity to access and participate in the historical process), but the

new media tools they create have "opened up history" for some (CHNM content producer 3), providing new avenues for people to make their voices heard and have these voices saved as part of the historical record. "History's based on your sources and if you don't have sources and it's difficult to find them, then those stories are going to be left out" (CHNM content producer 3).

Democracy and structuration: The issue of agency

The CHNM evolved out of the democratic ideals held by its founder, Roy Rosenzweig, to include the voices of the poor and the working class in the historical record. Although democracy is a complex and contested term, most people at the centre are clear that by democratization they mean including more voices as part of the historical record through the creation of tools that allow people to tell their own histories, increasing access to historical material, and creating digital resources that showcase recent and past history from a wide array of sources.

The centre's commitment to this version of democratization can be seen in terms of structuration (Giddens, 1984; Mosco, 2009). Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration unites structure and agency in the study of how social systems are produced and reproduced through social interactions. Individuals have agency but act within certain social structures (norms, traditions, moral codes); these social structures are reproduced by individuals, but can also be changed by individuals. Through its digital work, the centre is attempting to broaden the structure of traditional historical work by fostering and encouraging the agency of individuals who have been traditionally left out of the historical record. It is attempting to challenge the norms and traditions of the discipline of history by eliminating or reducing barriers to participation, and encouraging the rise of "citizen historians" (Davidson, 2008).

It is clear that the centre is making concerted efforts towards this goal, and while this is admirable, it has only been able to take partial steps in this direction. The term "democratizing" can be used to describe what they are attempting, but only with the caveat that there are limitations to what the centre is able to accomplish. Accessibility does not equal democracy, but it is a step toward a more democratic environment. There are technical barriers to the centre's vision, but again, the centre is taking steps to create a more open digital historical record. There are issues around authority and expertise and whether adding more voices to the public record is indeed democratizing if people are unable to make sense of the material and judge its relevance and quality. I do think there is still a role for the professional historian to help curate and navigate through online historical information, but there needs to be agency afforded to amateur historians and room to question the authority of accepted history. What is needed, is an open approach to history, a willingness on the part of professional historians to question their assumptions, to constantly be ready to reassess, in the face of new information. Finally, there is the concern that the centre is simply fostering, on the one hand, an apolitical sense of democracy that is not steeped in real political change, and on the other, a sense of faux agency. I would argue, however, that projects are politically challenging; in the case of the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank, for example, the aim was to collect the voices of marginalized people who many felt had been unfairly treated by government rescue operations. It created an archive, a piece of history, that

otherwise would have been overlooked. This archive now stands as a record of these people's experience, which can be used as primary source material.

Although the people who work on Orlando do not use the word "democratization" to describe what they do in the same way as the CHNM, democracy is implied through their goals to: 1) increase access to this material; 2) create material that will be useful and accessible to a wide group of people; and 3) increase participation in English literary history. It is their hope that this material will reach a wide scope of users, including branching out beyond the boundaries of the academy.

In terms of structuration, Orlando is challenging the norms of English literary history by attempting to democratize information. Orlando is making an effort to expand the reach of women's literary history, both by increasing access to this material through digitization and by fostering a deeper understanding of this material through providing contextual guidance. Orlando is also challenging the accepted structures of literary history by attempting to bring wider attention to writing by lesser-known women authors. In a larger sense, Orlando is also attempting to change literary history by bringing women's writing in English, more generally, to a larger audience. This goal was avant-garde when the project began in the 1990s. As one content producer remarked, reclaiming the texts of women writers may not seem like a radical transformation in the twenty-first century. In fact, it may look rather "tame" these days "because women's writing is now fully involved in the systems of our teaching and criticism" (Orlando content producer 1). What Orlando is attempting, however, needs to be put into historical perspective; when the project began in the 1990s, it was a radical move and filled a large gap in the academic work. It is also attempting to increase participation in the historical record, although not in the same way as the CHNM. While the centre is trying to increase participation from non-professional historians, Orlando is trying to bring lesser-known women writers into the spotlight and expand the breadth of women's literary history this way. For these reasons, Orlando is democratizing. However, as with the previous case, there are several caveats. Orlando's reach is restricted because it is only available through subscription. As well, although it is attempting to increase participation in literary history by engaging lesser-known writers, it stops short of engaging the public (be they academics or non-academics). While the CHNM is actively trying to get more people to write their own history, Orlando does not let amateurs or other scholars submit content to the site. There are legitimate reasons for this: their technical system would need a major overhaul, and there is the issue of how to assure the quality of content in an environment that merges the professional and the layperson. As with any digital project, there is also the issue that what Orlando is creating will never be truly democratic unless it is universally accessible. By digitizing this material, however, they are taking steps towards making it more accessible for some.

Conclusion

Using structuration as a framework for analysis of both case studies we can see how digital humanists are trying to change traditional structures of humanities practice and tradition by increasing access and participation in the humanities, which I argue is essentially taking steps to democratizing the humanities. The optimism in the nar-

rative around increasing access and participation in the digital humanities is similar to the optimism in some communications and sociological theorizing around ICTs and Web 2.0 technology; however, just as some have cautioned that technology and democracy should not be conflated (Mosco & McKerhcher, 2008), the analysis of both the CHNM and Orlando found democracy to be compromised in each case study at different times and to different degrees. Despite this, they have both had some significant success in changing how the humanities are approached. Both case studies point to ways that digital humanities projects, and digital humanists more generally, can conceive of their work. A focus on democratization incorporates digital technology, but does not put the digital at the forefront of how these projects are doing things "differently." Rather, by putting ideals of democratization at the forefront when conceiving of projects—primarily by increasing access to humanities materials, and seeking opportunities to involve people outside of academia as well as voices not normally represented in the humanities—the digital humanities situates itself as part of a community of scholars dedicated to changing what we know about human culture and how it is communicated, as scholars that deal with both the digital and non-digital. By focusing on access and participation as central tenets of their work, it frees digital humanists from any critiques of technological determinism, and positions digital humanists within a larger community of social scientists, scientists, journalists and public intellectuals who are seeking to make their professions more inclusive. While democratization is an ideal that may never fully be reached, the two pillars of increasing access and participation are worthwhile goals that could serve to guide digital humanities projects. While not a definitive answer to what the digital humanities is—something that is perhaps impossible given the breadth of the field—it is a core value that should be at the heart of digital humanities endeavours.

Acknowledgment

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