The digital humanities have traditionally been considered the domain of only a small number of prominent and well-funded institutions. However, through a diverse array of critical essays, this volume challenges and enlarges existing notions of how digital humanities research is being undertaken while also serving as an alternative guide for how it can thrive within a wide variety of institutional spaces. Providing a vital contribution to the realm of digital scholarly research and pedagogy, *People, Practice, Power* acknowledges the role that small liberal arts colleges, community colleges, historically black colleges and universities, and other underresourced institutions play in its advancement. This collection gathers a range of voices both established and emergent to offer practitioners a self-reflexive examination of the current conditions under which the digital humanities are evolving, while helping to open new sustainable pathways for its future.

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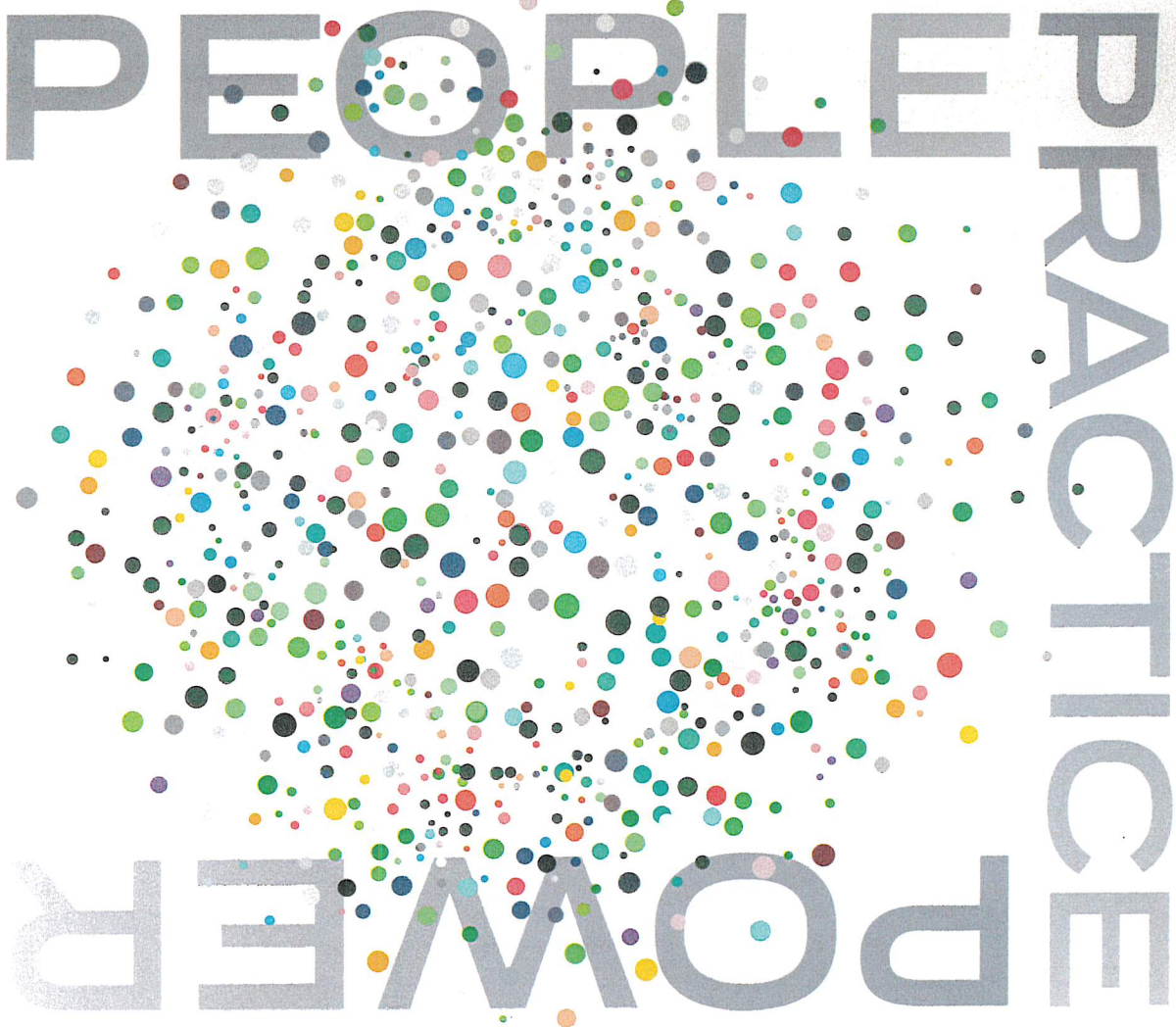
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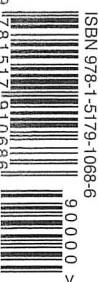
PEOPLE, PRACTICE, POWER

DIGITAL HUMANITIES OUTSIDE THE CENTER

Anne McGrail, Angel David Nieves, and Siobhan Senier

EDITORS

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Introduction

ANNE MCGRAIL, ANGEL DAVID NIEVES, AND SIOBHAN SENIER

ur volume's title, *People, Practice, Power: Digital Humanities outside the Center,* intends to foreground the *human* side of digital humanities (DH) infrastructure. For most people, *infrastructure* calls to mind things including hardware, software, storage capacity, funding, and facilities. But the writers collected in this book ask us to *humanize* infrastructure—to consider what the sociologist Susan Leigh Star called those "invisible layers of control and access" that undergird any scientific or scholarly work.[1] Data visualization tools and content management systems are, after all, designed by people, people in very specific social and economic locations, and they are used by groups of people in still other, often heterogeneous and contradictory social and economic positions. They are deployed, shared, and repaired in a tangle of institutional protocols, disciplinary conventions, and systemic inequalities. It is these everyday, deeply felt, and sometimes disenfranchising practices and relations that most concern the authors featured in this book.

Two other sociologists, Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio, once observed that "institutions are not necessarily the products of conscious design."[2] From its very first volume, the *Debates* series has taken up some of the often unconscious designs that have characterized the emerging field of digital humanities. Indeed, as DH has become institutionalized, the social and disciplinary relationships that constitute it have arguably come to govern "what has meaning and what actions are possible" within it, as Powell and DiMaggio might say.[3] Steven Brint and Jerome Karabel, who write about the history and economic promise/dispossession of community colleges—a subject near and dear to Anne McGrail's heart—put the matter this way: "organizations may make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please," because the development of institutions takes place "within larger fields of power and social structure."[4] When we drew up our initial call for papers, we wanted to zero in specifically on some of these larger fields of power and social structure. We wanted to gather, under one big tent, some of the scholars, students, and practitioners who have been thinking deeply about and indeed are living with and working around some of the power dynamics and social structures that now seem baked into DH.

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Digital Infrastructures

People, Place, and Passion—a Case Study of San Diego State University

PAMELLA R. LACH AND JESSICA PRESSMAN

NOTE: This essay was written in 2018 and typeset before the COVID-19 global pandemic.

At San Diego State University (SDSU) we are building a digital humanities initiative from the ground up, a grassroots and faculty-based movement intentionally organized around recognition of the importance of people, their labor and their passions. Digital humanities (DH) supports, examines, and is built upon infrastructures, the networked system of cables, servers, middleware, interfaces that undergird knowledge production in digital contexts, and so forth—but the human aspects of collaboration, care, and extra work are also essential. Bethany Nowviskie has described a "feminist ethic of care," a praxis that "seeks . . . to illuminate the relationships of small components, one to another, within great systems."[1] We are building our program in alignment with the idea that social networks, bureaucratic practices, and political policies are not just about technologies and budgets but also about reputations, feelings, and friendships. Pursuing a DH program based on people means taking seriously the people part of this infrastructure, often described in derogatory and sexist ways as *soft skills*, and making it not only visible but valuable. Decades of feminist and postcolonial theory have taught us to recognize the role of humans—actual humans and not just "the human" as concept—as part of technological, spatial, social, capitalistic, and ideological infrastructures and also to be attentive to the "imbrication of infrastructure and human organization."[2] Yet, putting this into practice is hard. There are inspiring models of feminist-focused social action work in DH, FemTechNet in particular, and we aspire to work in a similar vein to build a campus-based, people-focused infrastructure that promotes social justice via DH.[3]

SDSU is a large and diverse public university, a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), and DH serves a special role here. DH offers opportunities for teachers to experiment and for students, particularly humanities majors, to enter STEM fields,

but those opportunities come with costs: training for faculty and students as well as resources to support project-based and community-focused collaboration. Such implementation is harder at some schools than others, resulting in unequal access to DH. This is especially felt on our campus, a state school rebounding from years of severe budget cuts wherein overburdened faculty continue to grapple with impacted class sizes and have little time or enthusiasm for extra work even if that (DH-related) work is positive and passion-filled; our students are from divergent backgrounds working full-time and feeling the effects of increasing debt responsibilities and family pressure to focus on "practical" job skills; our administrative leaders face uncertain financial futures and cannot commit budgets for long-term planning. These real humans and their real needs, capabilities, fears, and desires shape DH@SDSU, as we call it. We believe that SDSU is not unique in its focus on people as a means of changing the way the university operates. We use DH@SDSU in this essay as a case study for sharing our theory-based practice for developing a DH initiative and for presenting a larger claim about the importance of local and situated practices and feminist perspectives as a form of DH infrastructure.

Digital + Humanities

The term *digital humanities*, with its competing definitions, can be a stumbling block or roadblock for many, and this was the case for us. Ours is not a liberal arts campus wherein the value of the humanities is evident and promoted. For us, DH is less a distinct field or discipline than a strategic maneuver. As our newly printed and brightly colored promotional bookmarks state, SDSU's digital humanities initiative is about "advocating for the humanities in a digital age." We understand and often explain the term as *digital plus humanities* or digital in the service of enhancing, expanding, and extending the humanities. We ground our initiative in the strengths of the humanities. Investigations of power structures—historical, social, and political—are the domain of the humanities, as are articulations of imaginaries and the critical examinations of them. It is incumbent upon DH practitioners to consider the ways in which we develop DH through historically informed perspectives focused not just on projects and tools but on the social structures that undergird them, which are not just physical and disciplinary but also ideological and dependent on orientation.[4] DH is an opportunity not only to encounter new orientations (tools, technologies, data, visualizations, and people from other disciplines) but also to consider why we have not had such encounters before, that is, to recognize that encounters are possible. Such consideration is important so that we avoid unintentionally replicating power structures from older models. "A real risk," Patrik Svensson warns, is "that new humanities infrastructures will be based on existing infrastructures, often filtered through the technological side of the humanities or through the predominant models from science and engineering rather than being based on the core and central needs of the humanities."[5] For this

reason, we rely on traditional humanistic thinking, particularly media studies, to help us understand digital infrastructure as we work slowly, collaboratively, and in a transdisciplinary manner.

Because media theory and history is by nature interdisciplinary and challenges ownership by a single research area, approach, or department, its study supports community-building around the discussion of ideas. That is where DH@SDSU started: as a community of colearners who meet monthly to read scholarship in media history and culture. Our ongoing faculty research group remains the cornerstone of our DH initiative. This is where we gather and learn together and from each other while situating our initiative within scholarship that dispels cultural myths about computing, particularly the idea that the digital is inherently democratizing. We have studied the work of such humanists as David Golumbia, who reminds us, "There is little more to understanding computation than comprehending this simple principle: mathematical calculation can be made to stand for propositions that are themselves not mathematical, but must conform to mathematical rules"; Alexander Galloway, who focuses on the internet to show that "protocol is how technological control exists after decentralization"; and Wendy Chun, who addresses ideologies of software to argue, "Code is executable because it embodied the power of the executive, the power of enforcement that has traditionally—even within classic neoliberal logic—been the provenance of government."[6] We are learning to become attentive to the biases built into the "algorithms of oppression" that drive the digital.[7] We also use as a guiding star the work of Lisa Parks, who "emphasizes materiality and physicality and as such challenges us to consider the specific locations, installations, hardware, and processes" of media infrastructure as well as "foreground processes of distribution that have taken a back seat in much humanities research."[8] Such scholarship teaches us that DH should not only be technologically enhanced humanities work but should pursue a humanities-informed mode of thinking reflexively. We can and should be considering what Parks calls *infrastructural imaginaries*: "ways of thinking about what infrastructures are, where they are located, who controls them, and what they do."[9] Infrastructures are, in part, imagined, so too is our ability to study them or build them from an objective stance or unbiased orientation. We (digital) humanists use our monthly reading group to examine the operations of the digital and its impacts on the daily so that we can make changes. It is the province of DH to explain and explore these situations and realities, and at SDSU we proceed from this perspective.

We claim this cause because of the larger institutional context and infrastructure in which we work. SDSU is part of the California State University (CSU) system, which spans the length of the state, from Humboldt in the northernmost region, to SDSU in the south. One of the central tenets of the CSU is to support and advance diversity and inclusion on campus and in the broader community; twenty-one of its twenty-three campuses have HSI status. SDSU is an incredibly diverse HSI with a strong tradition of social justice. We claim the first Women's Studies program in the

nation (established in 1970), enroll a racially and ethnically diverse undergraduate student population with no discernible majority group, and have been celebrated as a top LGBT friendly campus, to name a few distinctive characteristics.[10] Yet, our campus is not without its contradictions and limitations. Our architecture is modeled after the Spanish colonial Mission style, and our mascot is an (often angry-looking) Aztec, an ire-invoking fact that has stimulated many protests and spurred the formation of a task force in 2017–18 to consider the elimination of the Aztec moniker; though ultimately very little changed. The land that our campus occupies once belonged to the local Kumeyaay peoples, and these contexts and contradictions are woven into our institution's fabric in visible and invisible ways.[11] San Diego is likewise a contradictory place, a military town and diverse border city with a history of accepting refugees from around the world, even as prototypes of a new border wall have been installed in the region. SDSU is located nearly twenty miles from the border with Mexico, and many of our students and staff cross that border daily. Our work in digital humanities traverses different types of borders, between disciplines and departments, but it has the potential to unite. Although we could have followed any number of institutional models for building a DH program, we have chosen to use DH as a modality through which to work for social change—even as we must work within the confines of limited budgets, heavy instruction and service loads, and disciplinary turf wars—and to do so by centering our efforts around the unique needs of our local community.

DH @ SDSU

Our digital humanities initiative began several years ago as a home-grown, grassroots, faculty-driven project. We had no institute or center, special tools, or substantial funding. What we had was a smart, savvy professor who was looking to reignite faculty enthusiasm for research and collaboration. Dr. Joanna Brooks, then chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature, had steered her department through economic crisis and faculty furloughs. In 2013, she ventured across town to the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) to hear N. Katherine Hayles and Jessica Pressman discuss their 2013 edited collection *Comparative Textual Media: Transforming the Humanities in the Postprint Era*, a book that argues that text is media and that the recognition of this fact can help humanities departments, especially literature departments, claim an important role in training today's students for the digital media ecology. Joanna saw an opportunity and asked Jessica, who had just moved back to San Diego, to help apply this paradigm to SDSU. Together they sought to use digital humanities to stimulate faculty interest in new research questions or practices, build community around these issues, and experiment in ways of translating this new knowledge into lessons for the classroom.

We pursued a two-pronged approach to bringing people together around and through digital humanities, but both approaches focused on facilitating

human-to-human interaction and the sharing of knowledge. First, we initiated a monthly lunchtime reading group to discuss recent scholarship in media studies. We watched as a group of isolated professors who each individually expressed lack of knowledge about DH became a community of DH scholars. We also started a separate working group devoted to DH pedagogy. This group met weekly for a year and supported each other on developing and revamping lesson plans. The second part of our strategy was a more intense investment in collaborative digital humanities learning. In May 2014 and again in May 2015, we held Reboot Camp, a daylong opportunity for humanities faculty to come together at the end of the term to learn about major trends and tools in DH. We discussed recent scholarship, experimented with new tools in camp-like fashion, and brainstormed desires for a DH program at SDSU. More importantly, we forged personal relationships around the possibility of making something together. It was clear to us then, as it is now, that whatever DH@SDSU becomes is determined by whoever shows up to the table.

We began to formalize our efforts when we set our sights on a prestigious new initiative at SDSU aimed at strategically advancing research on campus, a funding measure called Area of Excellence (AoE). AoE allotted a cluster of tenure-track faculty hires in a research area, and we determined that ours would cohere around the intersectional topic Digital Humanities and Global Diversity. Our earliest faculty leaders, who always showed up to the proverbial but also very real table, included scholars interested in diversity and global DH by way of very different entry points: a professor of Italian and European Studies (Clarissa Clò) interested in global migration, a literature professor (William Nericcio) exploring stereotypes of Mexican-Americans in popular culture, a linguist (Doug Bingham) experimenting with artificial languages, to name a few. In this context, *diversity* meant many things, but it mostly allowed a way of connecting people who cared about exploring the intertwined relationship between digital, human, humanities, diversity, and global. We centered our proposal around the profound need for humanities scholarship to explain why and how digital tools for creation, distribution, and consumption are not diffused evenly across human societies.[12] We were awarded the prestigious AoE designation and funding support to produce research that, on the one hand, demonstrates how a focus on the digital informs and even transforms the humanities, and on the other hand how focusing on the human shapes our understanding of the digital. Our AoE seeks to build on the recognition that technological innovation levies profound human consequences that must be understood through the methodologies of humanities research, including historiographical study of the past, critical theorization of the present, and creative vision for the future. This perspective is, of course, built upon decades of humanities scholarship and theory: Marxist examinations of materialist contexts, Foucauldian illuminations of discursive and disciplinary power structures, the insistence of critical race theory that gaps matter and hold meaning, and historical scholarship providing archival examples upon which to draw comparisons. Winning the AoE was a coup, not only for our nascent DH

group but also for humanities in general because SDSU had never before granted AoE designation to a humanities area. In addition to the cluster hire and small start-up funds, the AoE award brought on-campus recognition that DH was legitimate.

With this foundation, we determined to hire faculty in three departments from the DH table (linguistics, journalism and media studies, and the library). Realizing that DH research transgresses departmental and disciplinary boundaries, we decided not to specify a department for the fourth faculty hire and instead make it an open call wherein the candidate could choose a departmental home from across four of our partnering departments (history, Chicana and Chicano studies, Africana studies, and European studies). The process of forming the search committee, crafting the position (Digital Humanist focused on Technology and Diversity in Historical Context), and screening the candidates embodied the sort of diversity of perspectives that we hoped the new AoE would advance. More than anything else, the job search got faculty together from different departments who never before talked about DH to hire an innovative new scholar who could continue to bring us together. Although it was quite challenging to balance the needs and wants of disparate departments, the hire that everyone agreed was of vital importance to our AoE was the position of DH librarian. This was in part because the library had been at the table and also because we needed a leader. We hired Pamella Lach as our DH librarian, specifically chosen because of her humanities training (PhD in history) and her experience in DH infrastructure development. With this hire, the library solidified its role as cornerstone in DH@SDSU, and Pam led the library in its commitment to advance DH with a dedicated space, the DH Center.

Located at the geographic center of campus, the library's new DH Center (which officially opened January 2018) is a meeting space molded to support human interaction while fostering flexibility, reconfigurability, openness, community growth, and collaboration. Unlike library spaces at other institutions that were built to support digital scholarship services (data services, scholarly communications and copyright, data visualization, etc.), our DH Center was designed on a model of partnership, having already earned the buy-in of the faculty community. The Center, in its design and function, is not a place for faculty to ask the library to do things *for* them, but rather to do things *with* them. Our focus is on fostering human connection rather than hosting specific technologies. To that end, our design process has been iterative and user-centered, creating the space bit by bit, slowly, through conversations and feedback that have allowed us to be flexible and attentive to the actual, local needs of our constituents (faculty, staff, students, and administrators). That means asking questions, finding out what people need and want, and building in time to reflect upon their responses as much as our processes. We have therefore kept the space open and clean, even somewhat unfinished, a blank canvas upon which to create. What we have in the space is purposeful—a small amount of comfortable, reconfigurable furniture with writable surfaces to support human connection and minimize the appearance of a conventional computer lab. With a small budget and

large desire to encourage human interactions, we purchased a minimal amount of technology: ten large screens on movable stands and a laptop cart (we have since purchased ten additional screens and some podcasting equipment). While we do not deny the importance of technology to doing digital work, we wanted to make the most of our financial constraints and encourage our community to contemplate the value of the nondigital—real spaces and interactions with real people in them. It came as no surprise to hear a professor who does interdisciplinary work in Education comment that it was in the DH Center that she finally "found my people."

Now that we have opened, we are observing how community members use the space, and we are asking them what they need to do what they envision. This shaped the next round of design and purchasing of more sophisticated technology. Currently, we are using the space to bring people together with scholarly talks and panel discussions and informal meetings and social gatherings. Faculty members are starting to hold their weekly office hours in the Center to encourage student engagement, and our recognized student organization, the Digital Humanities Collaborative, plans to host meetings and peer-to-peer workshops in the space. To introduce the space to campus, we invited departments and student groups to use the space in creative ways, as long as their events addressed global diversity in the digital age. Between the end of the fall 2017 semester and the conclusion of the spring 2018 semester, we hosted eighty-one events organized by twenty-two departments/schools/units/organizations, including public lectures, tool-based workshops, showcases, symposia, and class-related activities. Hundreds of faculty, staff, students, and community members came through our doors for these events, not to mention the countless individuals who used the space for individual or collaborative work. Indeed, we were quickly becoming victims of our own success, so we developed a narrower usage policy to reduce the number of activities for future semesters. We feel the need to protect what we have created. We must regularly remind library administration that this space is different from other library spaces. It is not a general study space or a traditional service point, and as such has more limited hours of operation. We are working to determine best practices for ensuring that the Center supports the strategic, cross-campus initiative and does not become just another space for events. Having a space supports our theoretical practice for DH development because we use it as infrastructure to showcase and support humanities work, making visible and public the labor that usually happens in discrete, individual classrooms and hidden practices of humanities research.[13]

Sharing our work with each other and the broader campus community is an essential element for the AoE's work, in part because it embodies the ethos of collaboration and openness that is foundational to the digital humanities. More broadly, creating opportunities to share digitally centered digital works, rigorous digital scholarship, creative digital works, and works-in-progress expands capacity for DH@SDSU. In May 2017 we hosted our first formal DH showcase in what would soon become the DH Center. The event was structured like a digital poster session

with faculty, staff, and students standing next to their projects and engaged in one-on-one conversations about their processes. Screens adorned the room, displaying student works of electronic literature submitted for an annual competition, collaboratively produced historical maps, and digital assignments carefully designed by faculty and executed by students. Participants discussed the payoffs of lesson plans; book sculptures made by students for final projects in a literature class intrigued viewers; and a graduate student demonstrated his master's thesis about visual rhetoric within virtual reality;[14] audio played from podcasts produced for journalism assignments; and more. It was a huge success. The conversations that occurred at our showcase encouraged individuals to talk about their processes, design decisions, and the lessons they learned, making digital work seem more accessible to those contemplating a digital turn. The community gathered, learned, and left inspired. The source of this inspiration was recognition that we have what we need here at SDSU—the talent and willingness to grow and share together. Equally importantly, the showcase and the Center that housed it proved to be generative. We saw an uptick in the number and variety of projects at our second showcase, held April 2018 in conjunction with the formal DH Center grand opening. We had more projects (from twenty-six to thirty-eight entries, some of which were actually clusters of student projects) and an increased number of entries in the annual electronic literature competition, more departments (from thirteen to fifteen), and more campus units (from four to six) in just one year. The 2018 showcase engendered even more cross-disciplinary conversation and has led to new, interdisciplinary grant pursuits. The showcases, which continue to grow in scale, are now a centerpiece of our DH Initiative, embodying our intention to use DH as a means of building social networks and communities.

Showcasing DH research also advances the main pedagogical thrust of our initiative: using DH to teach critical digital literacy. Many of our students are English language learners, Dreamers, housing or food insecure, or first-generation college students. Many are so-called digital natives based on birthdate but not on access or affinity to the digital. And most are wholly comfortable using technology but do not understand how that technology shapes and constrains their lives. We want our students to learn not just how to use tools but how to think reflexively about their use. We do this, and plan to do more, in classes devoted to critical digital literacy and DH while also encouraging our faculty network to incorporate such lessons into existing classes creatively and efficiently. For example, as a faculty-led DH initiative, we will help organize guest lectures by faculty willing to guest lecture for each other; we will offer tools workshops and scholarly lectures framed around critical digital literacy; and we intend to develop digital literacy modules that can be quickly deployed in courses across the disciplines (and, we hope, in local K-12 classrooms). Exemplary of the work we hope to support is the partnership between Pamella Lach and Elizabeth Pollard (associate professor of history) to scaffold and scale digital tools into an upper-level history class.[15]

SD|DH

DH has served community-building beyond the boundaries of SDSU. The SD|DH Regional Network began informally in 2014 with a few faculty members from different institutions in San Diego: SDSU; University of San Diego (USD); the University of California, San Diego (UCSD); and California State University San Marcos (CSUSM). What started as informal connections based on personal relationships gradually grew as we recognized the importance of working together for something larger than our own individual projects and institutional responsibilities. Here it is important to recognize the feminist component of our history and infrastructure. All of the individuals working on SD|DH (with one exception) were women; all were working outside of our "real" jobs, doing extra work, in order to build something collective and innovative. Moreover, all of us were aware of our collaboration as feminist practice: based on situatedness, committed to social equity, and operating through personal relationships and attachments. Throughout our collaboration, we recognized that what is good for an individual and her institution is good for the whole group. Thus, rather than compete for scarce resources, we work cooperatively to strengthen DH across the region. Some campuses have significant financial resources but lack administrative support, other campuses have administrative support but limited resources, and still others are trying to build enough grassroots interest to be able to advocate for formal support. Taken together, we form a network of growing expertise and experience. We can also be a source of comfort and care for each other in the process.

SDSU is just a few miles from UCSD and USD, but our faculty and students rarely come into contact let alone meet in organized ways. Yet, if DH is truly about interdisciplinarity and creative-critical practices, then it is incumbent upon faculty to traverse the web of California freeways in order to collaborate with colleagues at other, local institutions. As humanities scholars, we are used to sharing knowledge (in the form of books, articles, and talks), but not about the practices of knowledge production. Building DH capacity, best practices, ways of speaking to administrators, and so forth is knowledge worth sharing that is hard to come by. To address this challenge, in 2015 we met in the dean's office at CSU San Marcos (organized by Katherine Hijar, then assistant professor of history at CSU San Marcos) to discuss the possibility of a more formal local regional DH group. From this table, we organized a large-scale conference, "THATCamp: Diving into Digital Humanities" (October 24–25, 2014), held at SDSU but organized by a cross-institutional team: Jessica Pressman (SDSU), Maura Giles-Watson (USD), Sarah McCullough and Stefan Tanaka (UCSD), and Katherine Hijar (CSUSM). The collaboration between the four regional institutions drew over one hundred people from across Southern California. The event promoted and modeled working together across disciplinary, departmental, and institutional divides. It worked. We felt productive, connected, seen, and supported. So, we kept going.

We applied for and received a start-up grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities Office of Digital Humanities for Building and Strengthening Digital Humanities through a Regional Network. This year-long project (2015–16) was directed at faculty in San Diego with limited time and access to minimal technical resources who nonetheless were interested in incorporating digital pedagogy into their classrooms.[16] We drew twenty-nine participants across a range of institutions: a public research university (UCSD), a hybrid research and intensive-teaching public university (SDSU), a teaching-intensive four-year comprehensive public university (CSUSM), a private liberal arts college (USD), and several community colleges (City College, Mesa College, Palomar College). The imprimatur of the NEH helped us make the case to our respective administrations that DH matters and is worth the investment of time, resources, and support.

When the grant was complete, we continued building momentum for cross-campus collaborative learning by sharing its results. We held a public event at USD in October 2016, SD|DH—Learning Through Digital Humanities: A Showcase, which brought faculty and their students together to reflect on the impact of the digital pedagogy experiments enacted in individual classes during the year of the grant-funded experiment. Students presented with their professors in ways that expanded our DH community across learning levels as well as institutional boundaries. We were able to hold the event in USD's new Humanities Center, which, due in large part to the collaborative work of our group (and USD's DH leader, Maura Giles-Watson, then assistant professor of English), includes a DH Studio. As USD's story testifies, our SD|DH is not just a community of researchers, teachers, and organizers but also a community of advocates. The regional network supports faculty in teaching DH where such programs and resources are not available. The network advocates for each other's DH work by showing up for DH events and writing letters of support to local administrators; we share visiting speakers and expert advice and have plans to do much more to provide collaborative capabilities beyond the confines of a particular campus. We have seen a quick uptick. Local faculty job postings have begun touting digital humanities and the regional working group. USD hired a postdoctoral fellow who teaches in their DH Studio; SDSU has now completed five tenure-track faculty cluster hires, launched the DH Center, and acquired a postdoctoral fellowship in classics and digital humanities; the community colleges are developing a cross-campus internship for DH skill-acquisition; the CSUSM history department is building out their Digital History Lab and supported a SDSU MA student advocating for a born-digital thesis; and UCSD's beta implementation of a regional, cross-border, public-facing digital commons, spearheaded by then-digital scholarship librarian Erin Glass, has begun to develop a regional digital infrastructure. We take all these successes as good signs that our work is paying off and that our campuses and administrations see value in what we are doing. Our work is also garnering broader attention: we have been contacted by DH groups in Florida, Georgia, and Northern California to provide guidance in building regional collectives.

Members of our network have spoken about SD|DH at various conferences: UCLA's Digital Infrastructure conference (2016 and 2017), DH 2017 in Montreal, and more.

The SD|DH network depends upon personal relationships. It is not a paid project or service fulfillment to a department or college. It is, we agree, also the motivation to continue doing DH work. Reconfiguring the role, power, and pitfalls of a collective means grappling with which kind of labor is valued and paid, what labor goes invisible and uncompensated, and our varying underlying motivations for doing such work. Such labor is part of the digital economy, and critical examination of it is the role of the humanities.[17] As humanists, we see our actual location—at the United States–Mexico border in the age of border walls and travel bans—as an opportunity to use digital networks and infrastructures to build bridges between departmental and campus borders and, we hope, to build out from there. Just as the internet was developed to avoid attacks to centralized locations and the web conceived in a utopian spirit along the lines of Vannevar Bush's Memex or Ted Nelson's *docuverse* as making open and interconnected the best ideas of humanity, so too do we imagine using DH infrastructure, including our regional network, to build defenses that can sustain local crisis by thinking across institutional boundaries through humanities traditions.[18]

Digital Humanities for the Humanities

The last few years have been a hard time for the humanities and also for humans working within it. Threats of defunding the NEH, as well as the broader devaluation of the humanities, institutions of higher learning, and public education, coupled with resurgences of hate speech and the implementation of policy grounded in racist and xenophobic exclusion of certain peoples, have shaken the core of humanistic, let alone humane, principles. These are threats to the lives of many of our students and community members. The prevalence of neoliberalism in institutions of higher learning propels quickness, completion, upgrade, and disruption, thus challenging the slow, critical, ethical thinking that undergirds the humanities. Increasingly we hear university administrators ask departments to justify their return on investments and look to predictive analytics and algorithms to improve retention and graduation rates. These approaches reduce people to numbers and obscure the individual stories that make up our campus's unique diversity.

As humanists in the age of the digital and big data, we advocate for the opposite. We reject a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning, just as we reject a technology-driven approach to a DH program. We are trying to slow down and to identify, consider, and meet the particular needs and circumstances of our local community. This takes time, and it also engenders reflection, which can run counter to a digital culture based on habits of constant crisis.[19] We believe that DH, understood as digital *plus* humanities, can serve this effort. There has perhaps never been such an important time for humanists and certainly digital humanists to reflect, act

up, and insist on the value of the human and the humanities. We hope our efforts help support, inspire, and provide space for such work at SDSU and beyond.

Notes

1. Nowviskie, "Capacity through Care."

2. Star, "Ethnography of Infrastructure," 379.

3. On FemTechNet, see https://femtechnet.org/about/.

4. Sara Ahmed has written, "To be orientated is to be turned toward certain objects, those that help us to find our way." The humanities teach us to consider not only the recognizable objects before but also the reasons why those objects and not others are visible and near. Ahmed noted how "exclusions—the constitution of a field of unreachable objects—are the indirect consequence of following lines that are before us." Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 1, 15.

5. Svensson, "Humanistiscope," 337.

6. Golumbia, *Cultural Logic of Computation*, 14; Galloway, *Protocol*, 8; and Chun, *Programmed Visions*, 27.

7. Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression*.

8. Parks, "Stuff You Can Kick," 356.

9. Parks, "Stuff You Can Kick," 355.

10. Regarding women's studies, see https://womensstudies.sdsu.edu/history.htm. SDSU enrollment data is available at SDSU Analytic Studies & Institutional Research Dashboard, https://asir.sdsu.edu/enrollment-ethnicity-data-table/. See also Sklar, "SDSU Named Top College for LGBTQ Students."

11. SDSU Land Acknowledgment is available at https://sacd.sdsu.edu/diversity-resources /land-acknowledgment.

12. Digital Humanities and Global Diversity proposal for Area of Excellence is available at https://dh.sdsu.edu/docs/Area_of_Excellence%20.pdf.

13. For more on the DH Center, see Lach, "Launching a Library Digital Humanities Center."

14. Salvo, "Rhetorical Forms and Perceptual Realities."

15. See their website, which includes assignments, tutorials, and sample projects: https://sites.google.com/sdsu.edu/hist503/.

16. See http://regional-dh.sdsu.edu/.

17. See Scholz, *Digital Labor*.

18. Bush, "As We May Think"; and Nelson, *Literary Machines*.

19. See Chun, *Updating to Remain the Same*.

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