Downstream from the Digital Humanities II
High-level Expert Workshop for Digital Humanities Researchers

5-6 March 2015
Maynooth, Ireland

1.   Abstract

2.   Scientific Summary

The Working Group on Scholarly Publications of the NeDiMAH Network has been gradually refining its perspective over the course of the network's activities. In July 2012, the Working group met for the first time as a small open forum, with the task of producing an initial report on what challenges in the macro environment were potentially slowing the uptake of digital methods by scholars.

That first meeting revealed that both confusion about open access and the green/gold debate and the threat that the changing economics of academic publishing poses to our traditional partners, the academic presses, were not the only aspect of the publications landscape to illustrate the stresses introduced by these of the systemic shifts. As presses lose their hegemony over publications, new forms of scholarly communication are emerging, and new 'gatekeepers' for the release of scholarly knowledge are being created. These new gatekeepers don't always cover all of the activities of the traditional ones, however, and gaps in the landscape have emerged directly alongside the many opportunities.

A further issue we identified was that of non-traditional publications. Not everything produced by a scholar is a work of scholarship, and not everything produced within the digital humanities is of equal quality.   Funding agencies and university departments alike are struggling to reimagine their evaluation processes, becoming less reliant on their own ability to see and judge the merit of the work of their colleagues on a comparative basis with their own, and investigating opportunities instead to accept and evaluate the quality and impact of work on its own terms. Even citation norms, which generally see researchers citing an 'original' print edition, even if the work was based largely on digital surrogates, represent an ineffectual transfer of analogue habits to a digital context. While it may be see by the individual scholar as irrelevant exactly how they reference their work, this ineffectual transfer hides the potential contribution of the digital edition, and the possible impact of its construction and organisation on the trajectory of further investigations based upon them.

These issues, and a number of others identified already in that first report, become identified within the group as representing the "Downstream" space of the digital humanities, where the impact of the application of digital methods flowed out of the "private" space of scholarly production and into the "public" space of scholarly communications. One of the crucial aspects of this space that we recognised in the

wake of the first meeting was how many actors and how many sectors were playing a role there: digital humanities scholars, yes, but also funding agencies, publishers, tenure committees, librarians, and scholars from other disciplines, such as computer science. The downstream space was a large one, we realised, and a broad dialogue would be required to plumb its depths.

In response to this realisation, we organised a second larger meeting, this time a working papers event, bringing together precisely this broad range of actors. The event was very successful, and resulted in both a taxonomy of digital outputs (including their dissemination and validation methods) and a longer position paper, building on the report of the first working group but adding substantially to it in terms of the issues and perspectives it covered. Unfortunately, however, while it was a strong very scientific meeting, the inputs and final outputs were in many cases based on lived experience of the participants. This was highly appropriate for a meeting that was intended to draw out opinions from non-researchers, but the outputs still require a final layer of analysis and to be situated within the kind of theoretical debates that will enable the findings of the Working Group to find an eventual resonance with the scholarly community.

The "Downstream II" built upon the WGs previous activities, contributing to the final impact of the Working Group. Participants were recruited from some of the most active digital humanities centres and projects, and were asked to prepare position papers on far more theoretically (rather than experientially) grounded topics related to the issues the first report and the position paper have identified. They will begin from the position paper, allowing the issues contained therein to inform and shape their reflections, but their work will reach out along a different plain, into the scientific literature on information management, collaborative practice, the publishing industry, the history and changing role of digital humanities centres, and others.

The meeting began with an open, public event on Thursday 5 March with many of the participants on the topic of the meeting. Some 40 individuals attended the roundtable which allowed for wide ranging discussion, and served to inform the proceedings of the following day. The roundtable was followed by a wine reception which allowed further discussion between those in attendance.

The following day, the entire day was devoted to an intense workshop teaching out the themes of individual contributions to a published collection of essays. The format allowed for more space for discussion and reflection into the individual contributions and refinement of their arguments, with the goal of publishing a volume containing the papers after the event. A publisher has already been approached and is interested in principle, we need only ensure a strong and scholarly set of papers to ensure we deliver on this goal.

3. Friday Meeting Programme

	Morning
9.00	Welcome and Introductions
9.30	Presentation – Activities to date of the Working Group on Scholarly Publishing and Current Working Definitions of the Downstream Space (followed by initial questions)
10.00-10.30	Session 1: Evaluation (Review of Presentations and Discussion)
10.30-11.00	Coffee
11.00-12.30	Session 2: Publication and its Institutions (Review of Presentations and Discussion)
12.30	lunch
	Afternoon
1.30-2.30	Session 3: Publication as Communication (Review of Presentations and Discussion)
2.30-2.45	Coffee
2.45-3.30	Session 4: Shaping the Environment (Review of Presentations and Discussion)
3.30-4.00	Next Steps and Close of Meeting

4. List of Attendees

Tara Andrews, University of Bern
Jennifer Edmond – Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
Susan Schreibman, Maynooth University
Clare Warwick, University of Durham
Enrico Natale, University of Bern
Lorna Hughes, University of Aberystwyth
Fleur Praal University of Leiden
Laura Mandell, University of Texas
Daniel O'Donnell, University of Leithbridge