Chapter 13
Digital Humanities in Cultural Preservation

Nadim Akhtar Khan
University of Kashmir, India

Sabiha Zehra Rizvi
Government Medical College Srinagar, India

Tazeem Zainab
University of Kashmir, India

Samah Mushtaq Khan
University of Kashmir, India

ABSTRACT

Libraries and cultural institutions have been proactive in adopting different policies for preservation of culture. This is evident by the growing number of cultural repositories and digital libraries set for managing and making accessible different forms of cultural assets ranging from folklore, custom documentaries, craft designs and patterns, architectural setups etc. These procedures not only help them to preserve valuable indigenous knowledge but explore the richness in the cultural values of different nations. The proliferation of Information communication technology (ICT) has resulted in the merging of different forms of digitalized information which combine print, voice, video, and graphics for educational and recreational purposes. The application of Digital Humanities in preservation, management and accessibility of cultural resources ranging from curating online collections to data mining large cultural data sets cannot be neglected. The chapter discusses the concept of Digital Humanities in the light of its rich background and importance in present times for preserving human culture by acquiring, managing and making available cultural assets for further research. The chapter also attempts to explore and identify the recent contributions to the concept by analyzing ongoing Digital Humanities initiatives and projects by different organizations and information centers to stimulate future Research and development trend in the field.

INTRODUCTION

The term Digital Humanities (DH) is increasingly becoming a buzzword. The field is escalating and expanding at a broader level. The fields of Humanities Computing and Digital Humanities have been evolving over several decades. As a venture, "Digital Humanities" formerly known as Humanities Computing has its roots in 1940s (possibly earlier) and most probably since 1980s.The Digital Humanities curation has been an allied area of activity, concern and research (Munoz, 2013). Kirschenbaum (2010a) states that Digital Humanities is a social enterprise. It avails network between people who work jointly, research together, argue, compete, and collaborate for long time. Digital Humanities is a game-changing, compact testimony on the status of modern knowledge assembly (Burdick, Drucker, Lunenfeld, Presner, & Schnapp, 2012). According to Svensson (2010) collaborative possibilities and epistemic traditions are imperative for better gauging and understanding Digital Humanities and also facilitate its future progress and development. Though the technology makes Digital-Humanities work feasible it also increases its risk of obsolescence, as hardware and software decay or become outdated easily. The new and changing manifestations of online cultural content have posed many challenges in the way of the preservation of the digital heritage. With the rapid growth in the amount of digital culture available via social media, blog posts, websites etc. researchers nowadays perceive multi-faceted representation of the culture. Furthermore, to chronicle and glorify the past more and more Digital Humanities projects have contributed in presenting information in insightful and innovative approaches (Nguyen, 2014). Kathleen Fitzpatrick in her study suggests that there is a dearth need of developing sustainability practices and sound preservation strategies for preserving the digital heritage assets for the future use (as cited in Spiro, n.d.).

Digital Humanities is an expansive compilation of scholarly work that employs new techniques and technologies to research activity in humanities. It is a multi-faceted effort which includes enhancement in the lifecycle of scholarly activities, illumination and preservation of the otherwise inaccessible collections, using digital media for encouraging the creation of new expression, cramming the impact of technology in the humanities, and presenting the cultural interpretation. Digital heritage is a part or subset of Digital Humanities that primarily aims to focus on preservation and exploration of cultural heritage (Microsoft Research, 2014). Digital heritage comprises of computer-based materials of long-term worth that should be reserved for future generations. Digital heritage originates from different sectors and regions, communities or industries. It does not comprise all digital materials but considers only those that entail vigorous and active preservation approaches for the maintaining long-term continuity of digital heritage (UNESCO, 2014).

Digital Humanities project involves a sequence of interlinked options around its users, its technologies and its contents. A Digital Humanities network, augmented by community committed research, would guarantee that cultural memories and histories do not vanish (Mayer & Griffith, 2013).These projects typically involve multiple circles of researchers, from faculty and staff to students and community partners. A project's complexity and scale generally implies the involvement of multiple strata of personnel from within and across institutions of learning. Projects can involve partner institutions such as museums, libraries, and archives as well as members of the community, alumni, and members of interested virtual networks such as collectors, amateur historians, and the like. Partnerships with corporations, in particular media and technology companies, are also possible, with a caveat that corporate and academic cultures may be different in their goals and values (Burdick et al., 2012). As per Scheinfeldt (2013) Digital Cultural Heritage and Digital Humanities projects function best when they adhere to "end-to-end-principle" (classic design principle of computer networking), technically, structurally, and administratively. These

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