

Chapter 17

Digital Humanities Strategy

ABSTRACT

This chapter outlines a strategy for digital humanities that can address some of the challenges that have arisen due to informing technologies. The chapter begins by giving a definition of humanism and by describing the nature of the humanistic attitude. The chapter next considers the role that mythology plays in humanism. After this, a matrix model of the humanities is presented that shows the role of the humanities in a computerized society. Then, a digital humanities research strategy is discussed with specific recommendations for implementing such research. This is followed by a discussion of the role that supercomputers play in research. Strategies for creating content in the digital humanities are then explored in disciplines such as philosophy, archeology, and history. Next, strategies for publishing and distributing information are described. The chapter concludes by considering strategies for teaching digital humanities and for developing digital social resonance.

INTRODUCTION

To develop a strategy for computerizing the humanities, one must define the fields of the humanities and the values and myths surrounding them:

- Core humanities: Philosophy, literature, arts, music, theatre, dance, cinema, and media.
- Supportive humanities: Cognitive science, archaeology, history, sociology, political science, religious studies, civil studies, cultural studies, journalism, and others.

After defining these fields, strategies for computerizing disciplines in the humanities according to a development cycle will be discussed. This cycle includes phases such as research, creation, publishing, distribution, teaching, and social resonance.

Digital strategies are similar for the research and creation phases, while the remaining phases have different strategies for the core humanities. On the other hand, the supportive humanities, which are composed of sciences, have a single digital strategy, which consists in using editorial software and digital libraries to extend the context of the issues under investigation and to employ a graphical method

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of computer science in the formulation of complex processes and systems. These systems facilitate the analysis and synthesis of critical elements and their relationships. Numerous examples of graphic modeling in the humanities will be given.

While it may seem that “the humanities are dead” (Abramson, 2020), in this chapter, it will be argued that the humanities should be a strong force that can stop IT engineering, automation, and robotics from dominating the newly evolved surveillance capitalism and the prospects of a laborless economy. These developments would almost completely destroy any prospects for humanism, and they would bring people to the brink of becoming the “living dead”. For example, in Amazon e-shops, developers working from home must install software on their computer that analyzes the keys that they press and the images in their work environment (recorded from the camera above their screen). These workers must also record all bathroom breaks.

Reflections on this subject are just as chilling as the agonizing thoughts about the threat of nuclear or biological war. Compounding the problem is the fact that these informative threats are not science fiction or remote possibilities: they are current threats, although they occur in processes not visible to ordinary people. At any rate, what is at stake is the loss of privacy and intellectual enslavement.

WHAT IS HUMANISM?

Humanism developed at the beginning of the Italian Renaissance in the 15th century, when the legacy of Greece and Rome began to be creatively explored, the classical civilizations that transformed into Western civilization around 800 CE. Studying this legacy has perpetuated in Western humanism the sense of beauty brought about by Greek culture and the sense of law brought about by Roman culture. Over the past nearly 600 years, Western humanism has been evolving, and its scope is almost unlimited, as it adheres to the notion that humans are born with talents that predispose them to independent, free, creative, and happy lives. Of course, humanism acknowledges that this is not without problems, including conflicts, wars and epidemics. According to the *American Humanist Association*, humanism can be defined as follows:

Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without theism and other supernatural beliefs, confirms our ability and responsibility to lead a personal ethical life of fulfillment striving for the greater good (American Humanist Association, 2021).

By contrast, according to *the Humanist*, the definition of humanism is the following:

Humanism is a rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. Affirming the dignity of each human being, it supports the maximization of individual liberty and opportunity consonant with social and planetary responsibility. It advocates the extension of participatory democracy and the expansion of the open society, standing for human rights and social justice. Free of supernaturalism, it recognizes human beings as a part of nature and holds that values—be they religious, ethical, social, or political—have their source in human experience and culture. Humanism thus derives the goals of life from human need and interest rather than from theological or ideological abstractions, and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny (American Humanist Association, 2021).

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