The Cultural Work of the Digital Humanities

Anne Balsamo
Dean, School of Media Studies
The New School
What is the Digital Humanities?

What is the Role of the Humanities at this Historical Conjecture?

The relationship between culture & technology

Forms of human being
Forms of human relationship
Modes of communication
Forms of expression
Knowledge creation
Knowledge dissemination

Practices & Infrastructures of Cultural Reproduction
Interdisciplinarity as a Foundation

• To create new knowledge across the disciplines

• To identify the horizons of new research

• To engage multiple intelligences

• To create deep knowledge: to know something is to “know it” from multiple perspectives

• To be a leader among peers

• To create the institutional culture for the education of the next generation of scholars, scientists, engineers, humanists, teachers, artists, and global citizens
An Ethical Framework
For Cross-Disciplinary Collaborative Research

• Intellectual Generosity
• Intellectual Flexibility
• Intellectual Reliability
• Intellectual Humility
• Intellectual Confidence
Computational Humanities

Early Precursors (1967-74)
Author Subject Index to Computers and the Humanities

Association for Computing and Humanities (1978)
www.ach.org

Institute for Advanced Technologies in the Humanities (IATH, 1992)
www.iath.virginia.edu

Maryland Institute for Technology and Humanities (MITH, 1999)
www.mith2.umd.edu/

Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations
www.digitalhumanities.org/

Digital Humanities Quarterly
www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/
Digital Humanities

HASTAC
Humanities Arts Science Technology Advance Collabatory
(founded 2002)

Humanities Institutes through the US & Europe (1990s)
Stanford Humanities Lab
Umea Humanities Lab
Digital Studio for Public Humanities at U of Iowa

US Gov National Endowment for the Humanities (2000s)
Office of Digital Humanities
Emergent Genres of Digital Scholarship

- Animated archive
- Experiential argument
- Interactive documentary
- Spatialized essay
- Historical simulation
- Data visualizations
- Cultural analytics
Some Examples