

# Overview of the NEH's Digital Humanities Initiative

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[www.neh.gov/grants/digitalhumanities.html](http://www.neh.gov/grants/digitalhumanities.html)

## NEH's Digital Humanities Initiative



Digital technologies offer humanists new methods of conducting research, conceptualizing relationships, and presenting scholarship. NEH is interested in fostering the growth of digital humanities and lending support to a wide variety of projects including:

- those that deploy digital technologies and methods to enhance our understanding of a topic or issue.
- those that study the impact of digital technology on the humanities--exploring the ways in which it changes how we read, write, think, and learn.

## Inspiration from ACLS Cyberinfrastructure Report:



*The emergence of the Internet has transformed the practice of the humanities and social sciences—more slowly than some may have hoped, but more profoundly than others may have expected. Digital cultural heritage resources are a fundamental dataset for the humanities: these resources, combined with computer networks and software tools, now shape the way that scholars discover and make sense of the human record, while also shaping the way their findings are communicated to students, colleagues, and the general public.*

-- from *Our Cultural Commonwealth*, the ACLS Report on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences

<http://www.acls.org/cyberinfrastructure/>

## Recommendations from ACLS Cyberinfrastructure Report:

- Federal funding agencies and private foundations should establish programs that develop and support expertise in digital humanities... (*Our Cultural Commonwealth*, p. 6.)
- Universities and university consortia should develop new and support existing humanities and social sciences computing centers. (p. 6)
- NSF, NEH, IMLS, the Mellon Foundation, and other funding agencies should support the development of tools for the analysis of digital content. (p. 7)
- The NEA, NEH, and IMLS should work together to promote collaboration.... (p. 7)





# New DHI Grant Programs

- Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants
- Advancing Knowledge
- Digital Humanities Fellowships
- Digital Humanities Challenge Grants
- Digital Humanities Workshops
- JISC/NEH Transatlantic Digitization Grants

## Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants

- Innovation is the key.
- They are “cross-divisional.” Unlike most NEH grants, they aren’t in a particular category like Preservation, Education, or Research. We want good projects and it is perfectly OK for them to cross our traditional NEH boundaries.
- They should be used to start-up new projects. Can be thought of as a planning grant.
- Co-funded by the IMLS.
- There are two deadlines per year (Oct. 16 and April 2).
- Level I Grant: Up to \$25K, Level II Grant, Up to \$50K.



## Advancing Knowledge



- This new DHI program is a partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).
- It is aimed at fostering large-scale digital humanities collaborations among libraries, museums, archives, and universities.
- We want projects that explore new ways to share, examine, or interpret humanities collections in a digital environment.
- Projects might develop new uses and audiences for existing digital resources.
- We will expect grantees to create a “lessons learned” white paper about their project so that others can benefit from their experience.
- Maximum grant of \$350,000.

## Advancing Knowledge (Recent Grant)

- **\$347,520 to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania** for its project: *PhilaPlace: A Neighborhood History and Culture Project*. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, in collaboration with the Philadelphia Department of Records and the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design, will develop PhilaPlace, an interactive Web resource chronicling the history, culture, and architecture of Philadelphia's neighborhoods. Complete with maps, historical records, photographs, and digital models of select neighborhoods, PhilaPlace will serve as a prototype Web site for communities wishing to digitize their cultural heritage.



## Advancing Knowledge (Recent Grant)

- \$349,939 to Tufts University, Medford, for its project: Scalable Named Entity Identification in Classical Studies. The Perseus Project and the Collections and Archives of Tufts University will construct a testing database of scholarly and cultural documents on the ancient world. In the second part of the project, Tufts will develop a digital reference tool allowing researchers and librarians to conduct context-based "smart searches" of un-indexed words from existing databases in the Tufts Digital Library. By developing this database and allowing for much shorter and complete context-based searches, Tufts hopes to lead scholars and students to the next generation of digital tools.



# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

## Digital Humanities Challenge Grants



- These are all about infrastructure.
- Challenge Grants are matching grants – NEH gives you \$1 for each \$3 you raise.
- Challenge grants can augment or establish endowments, the income from which can be used to support faculty and staff positions; fellowships; lecture or exhibition series; visiting scholars or consultants; materials that enhance library or museum collections; ongoing maintenance of archives or databases.
- For DHI applicants, the waiting period and 4:1 matching ratio required of recipients of prior challenge grants are suspended.
- Two deadlines per year (Nov. & May)

## Digital Humanities Challenge Grants (Examples)



- The University of Virginia received a challenge grant to endow its Electronic Text Center at Alderman Library.
- George Mason University received funds for an endowment for post-doctoral, graduate, and faculty fellowships, and software acquisitions in the university's Center for History and New Media.
- The University of Maryland used a challenge grant for an endowment and to establish its Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH).

## JISC/NEH Transatlantic Digitization Collaboration Grants



- Joint program of NEH and JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) of the UK.
- Collaboration between U.S. and English institutions is a key requirement for this grant category.
- Can be used to digitize collections of importance both U.S. and the U.K.
- Can be used to build middleware for joining existing collections.
- Max award is \$240K.
- Deadline is November 29, 2007.

# Super Top-Secret Future Plans for DHI



## New Grant Program: Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities

- supports national or regional (multi-state) training programs on applications and approaches in humanities computing.
- brings together humanities scholars and digital technology specialists from different disciplines, to share ideas and methods that advance humanities research through the use of digital technologies;
- programs that reflect on, interpret, and analyze new digital media, multimedia, and text-based computing technologies and integrate these into humanities and social sciences research;
- prepares current and future generations of humanities scholars to design, develop, and use cyber-based tools and environments for research;
- devises new and creative uses for technology that offer valuable models that can be applied specifically to research in the humanities.



## New Initiative: HHPC – Humanities High Performance Computing

- The term "high performance computing" (HPC) is often used interchangeably with "supercomputing." It refers to very fast computers, capable of performing calculations many times faster than standard desktop machines.

- Humanities High-Performance Computing (HHPC) refers to the use of high-performance machines for humanities and social science projects.

- In the coming months, the NEH and the Department of Energy expect to announce an exciting new program to make available to humanities scholars up to one million CPU hours on DOE supercomputers at its National Energy Research Scientific Computing Center (NERSC) at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory.

- NEH will also promote opportunities for humanities scholars to use supercomputers from the NSF's TeraGrid and from IBM's World Community Grid.



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