

The Impact of Digital Analysis and Large Language Models in Digital Humanity

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Abstract

The advent of digital analysis tools and Large Language Models (LLMs) has significantly altered the landscape of digital humanities, introducing new methodologies for processing and interpreting vast amounts of data. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of these technologies, examining their implications for research within digital humanities. We focus on the transformative effects of digital analysis tools and LLMs, assessing their potential to enhance understanding and accessibility of complex humanistic data, while also discussing the inherent challenges and ethical considerations these technologies introduce. By analyzing case studies and reviewing recent developments in the field, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how digital analysis and LLMs is reshaping scholarly practices in humanities disciplines.

Keywords

LLM: Large Language Model, NLP: Natural Language Model, GenI: Generative Artificial Intelligence, DH: Digital Humanity, AI: Artificial Intelligence

1. Introduction

Digital humanities integrate computational tools into traditional humanities disciplines to explore new research methodologies. The incorporation of advanced digital analysis and LLMs promises substantial enhancements in text analysis, data visualization, and cultural data analytics. This paper aims to systematically evaluate these impacts, offering insights into both the advancements and complications posed by these technologies. Digital humanities encompass a multidisciplinary field where digital technology intersects with arts, humanities, and social sciences research. The advent of advanced AI technologies, especially LLMs like OpenAI's GPT series, has introduced new tools for textual analysis, data interpretation, and even the generation of human-like text, offering both unprecedented opportunities and significant challenges. This paper explores these dynamics, offering insights into the integration of LLMs in DH and discussing the broader implications for researchers.

2. Landscape

Landscape represents the interconnected technologies, methodologies, and considerations that shape the field of DH [1]. Each of these areas contributes to how humanities scholars engage with digital tools and data to conduct research, preserve cultural heritage, and disseminate knowledge. We can distinguish the following components of a landscape relating to the DH:

- Core Technologies: Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning [2, 3], Neural networks and transformers [4, 5], Natural Language Processing [6], Big Data Analytics [7, 8], Cloud Computing [9, 10], Blockchain.
- Research Tools: Text Analysis Software, Data Visualization Tools, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Digital Asset Management Systems, Collaborative Platforms.

- Digital Archives and Preservation: Digital Libraries, Online Repositories, Digitization Technologies, Long-term Digital Preservation Strategies.
- Virtual and Augmented Reality: 3D Modeling and Reconstruction, Virtual Museums and Exhibitions, Immersive Historical Experiences.
- Digital Publishing and Communication: Open Access Platforms, Interactive E-books, Academic Blogging, Social Media for Scholarly Communication.
- Computational Methods: Distant Reading, Network Analysis, Topic Modeling, Sentiment Analysis.
- Digital Pedagogy: Online Learning Platforms, Digital Literacy Programs, Interactive Educational Resources.
- Ethical and Legal Considerations: Data Privacy and Security, Intellectual Property Rights, Ethical AI Development.
- Interdisciplinary Collaborations: Partnerships with Computer Science, Collaborations with Social Sciences, Integration with STEM Fields.
- Emerging Technologies: Internet of Things (IoT) in Cultural Heritage, Quantum Computing Applications, Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTNs) for monitoring applications [11], Advanced Natural Language Generation (LLMs).

2.1. Digital Analysis

Digital analysis involves the use of software and algorithms to analyze cultural and historical data. It includes techniques like data mining, visualization, and statistical analysis, which allow scholars to uncover patterns and trends that are not apparent through traditional methods.

2.2. Large Language Models (LLMs)

LLMs like OpenAI's GPT-3 represent a breakthrough in natural language processing technology from November 2022. These models, trained on extensive datasets, are capable of generating coherent text, completing linguistic tasks, and providing new tools for textual interpretation and generation in the humanities. Generative AI refers to algorithms capable of creating content, from text to images, by learning

ICYRIME 2024: 9th International Conference of Yearly Reports on Informatics, Mathematics, and Engineering. Catania, July 29-August 1, 2024

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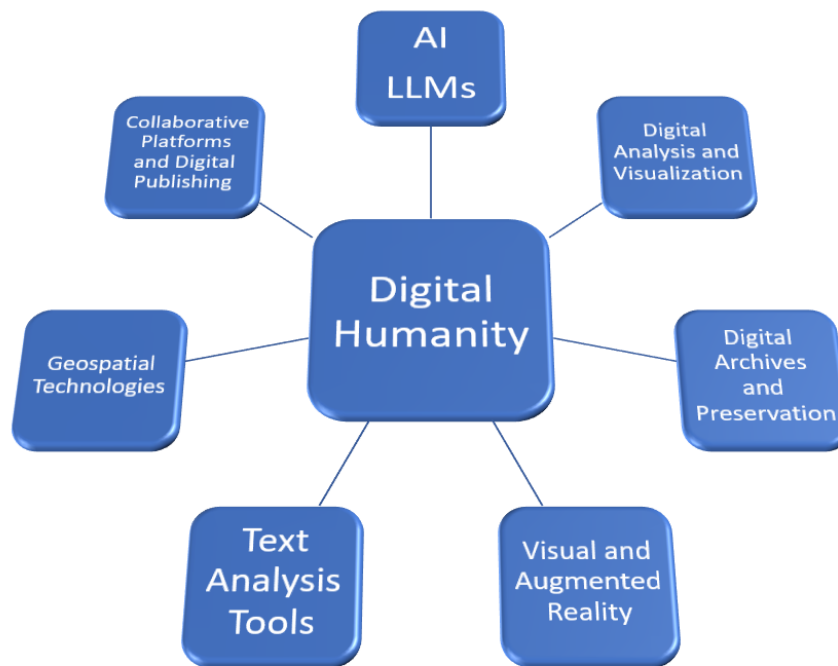


Figure 1: DH Landscape synthesis

from large datasets. LLMs, a subset of generative AI, are trained on diverse internet corpora [12] and can generate coherent, contextually relevant text based on input prompts. Models such as GPT-3 have demonstrated capabilities that include answering questions, writing essays, summarizing texts, and more. Generative AI and Large Language Models (LLMs) have gained significant attention within the digital humanities due to their ability to process and generate large volumes of text-based data. Their classification within this context can be broadly organized into different categories based on their applications, methodologies, and impacts. Here’s an overview of how Generative AI and LLMs are classified in the digital humanities.

3. Methodology

This study synthesizes data from various case studies, peer-reviewed articles, and firsthand experiments with LLMs in digital humanities projects. Through qualitative and quantitative analysis [13], we assess how these technologies are currently applied and theorize their future trajectories within the field.

4. Applications of Digital Analysis and LLMs

The applications of digital analysis tools and Large Language Models (LLMs) in digital humanities are vast and diverse. These technologies have revolutionized how researchers, educators, and practitioners approach the humanities, offering new insights and methodologies that were previously unattainable. Below is an exploration of several key applications and how they impact the field of digital humanities.

4.0.1. Textual Analysis and Interpretation

This is particularly useful in experimental literature, automated storytelling, and the creation of dialogue or narrative for digital artifacts [14]. These models are adept at interpreting and providing context to vast archives of text, helping scholars identify themes, trends, and patterns across large datasets that would be unmanageable for manual review. In this context we can distinguish the following sub-applications:

- **Semantic Analysis:** LLMs can analyze large bodies of text to understand contextual meanings, identify themes, and detect nuances in language that are often missed by traditional analysis methods. This capability is crucial for Literary analysis, historical documentation, and cultural studies.
- **Sentiment Analysis:** Digital tools can assess the sentiment of historical texts, literary works, and even large collections of social media posts to gauge public sentiments over time or reactions to specific events or figures in history.
- **Stylistic Analysis:** LLMs are used to study stylistic elements of writing across different time periods or authors. This application helps in authorship attribution and understanding the evolution of language and writing styles in literature.

4.0.2. Data Mining and Big Data Analysis

We can distinguish two macro components: Pattern Recognition, in this case Digital analysis tools can sift through vast amounts of data to identify patterns and trends [15]. In historical studies, for example, this can reveal migration patterns, economic changes, or social dynamics of a particular era. Network Analysis, where in digital humanities, network analysis tools can map relationships among various

entities within literature, such as characters in novels, historical figures, or even concepts and ideas that are prevalent within a specific cultural or intellectual community.

4.0.3. Language Translation and Transcription

Machine Translation in LLMs models, provide tools for translating rare or endangered languages, making ancient manuscripts or texts accessible to a global audience. This application is particularly significant in preserving linguistic heritage and making non-English academic resources available to a broader audience. Another case is Automatic Transcription, where LLMs and digital tools automate the transcription of audio recordings into text, such as oral histories and lectures, which can then be analyzed or archived digitally for future research. In general LLMs and GenAI aids in transcribing handwritten or archaic documents into digital formats, which are then more accessible for analysis and interpretation(Historical Text Transcription). AI models facilitate the translation of texts across languages, making non-native and ancient literature accessible to a global audience without the immediate need for human translators(Translation).

4.0.4. Digital Archiving and Preservation

We can distinguish Document Digitization and Categorization, in this case Digital tools automate the scanning and categorization of physical documents into digital archives. LLMs can enhance this process by automatically tagging and organizing the documents based on their content. Preservation of Digital Artifacts: Digital humanities also involve the preservation of digital art and online culture, where digital analysis tools help in archiving web-based art and social media content.

4.0.5. Semantic and Sentiment Analysis

Understanding the deeper meanings, connotations, and contexts of words in historical and contemporary texts(Semantic Analysis). Analyzing the emotions or sentiments expressed in texts, which can be particularly useful in studies of literature, social media, and historical documents to gauge public opinion and cultural trends over time(Sentiment Analysis).

4.0.6. Data Visualization and Mapping

AI can generate dynamic visual representations of textual data, making it easier for researchers to explore complex datasets and uncover relationships (Interactive Data Displays). Linking textual data with geographical information systems (GIS) to map the occurrence of certain themes or discussions across different locations(Geospatial Mapping).

4.0.7. Ethical and Responsible AI Use

In digital humanities, the classification of AI tools also involves identifying potential biases in AI-generated content and developing methodologies to mitigate these biases (Bias Mitigation) [16]. Using AI to verify the authenticity of digital artifacts and trace their historical and cultural origins(Authenticity and Provenance Verification).

4.0.8. Cultural Analytics and Critique

LLMs identify and analyze patterns in art, music, literature, and other cultural artifacts over large temporal and spatial scales (Cultural Pattern Recognition). This includes using AI to critique and analyze its own impact on digital humanities, assessing how technology shapes cultural and societal understanding(Critical AI Studies).

4.0.9. Archival and Curation Tools

Digital Archiving: AI facilitates the organization, categorization, and searchability of digital archives, enhancing the accessibility of vast digital collections. Curatorial Assistance: AI tools assist in curating digital exhibitions and virtual museum tours by selecting themes and artifacts based on scholarly input and visitor interactions. These categories reflect the multifaceted roles that generative AI and LLMs play in the digital humanities [17, 18]. They not only enhance traditional research methodologies but also introduce new modes of scholarly inquiry and interaction with digital texts and datasets. As these technologies evolve, their classification may expand to include more specialized functions and applications tailored to the nuanced needs of humanities research.

4.0.10. Creation of Digital Exhibits and Virtual Spaces

Interactive Exhibits: Museums and educational institutions utilize digital tools to create virtual tours and interactive exhibits that allow users to explore artifacts, artworks, and historical documents from their devices, enhancing accessibility and engagement. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR): These technologies are employed to create immersive educational experiences, such as virtual reality environments that simulate historical sites or events [19].

4.0.11. Educational Tools and E-Learning

Adaptive Learning Systems: Digital analysis tools can help develop educational platforms that adapt to the learning pace and style of individual students, particularly in humanities education, by analyzing student interactions and providing customized feedback. Online Courses and Workshops: LLMs can assist in the creation of educational content, generating reading materials, quizzes, and interactive discussions that facilitate online learning in the humanities.

4.0.12. Public Engagement and Outreach

Social Media Analysis: Digital tools analyze social media data to study contemporary cultural trends and public opinions, providing humanities researchers with real-time data on human behavior and societal changes. Crowdsourcing and Collaborative Research: Platforms designed with the help of digital tools enable collaborative projects where scholars and the public can contribute to and engage with humanities research globally.

4.1. Digital Humanities: Scope and Tools

Digital humanities involve applying digital tools to humanities subjects, enabling new research methodologies like text mining, machine learning, and data visualization. These

tools facilitate the exploration of cultural patterns, historical data, and literary analysis at scales previously unmanageable. DH is an interdisciplinary field that merges the techniques and methodologies of the digital world with the study of the humanities. This field includes, but is not limited to, disciplines like literature, history, art, music, philosophy, cultural studies, and linguistics. The scope of DH is vast, integrating computational methods into the traditional humanities to enhance research, teaching, and the dissemination of knowledge.

4.1.1. Enhanced Research Methods

- Textual Analysis: Digital tools allow for the analysis of large volumes of text, enabling scholars to uncover patterns, trends, and insights at a scale not feasible manually;
- Historical GIS (Geographic Information Systems): Integrates geographical data into humanities research, allowing for the spatial analysis of historical events and cultural developments.
- Cultural Analytics: Uses data analysis to study patterns in visual culture, music, and other art forms, identifying trends and influences over time.

4.1.2. Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- Promotes collaboration across disciplines, combining methods from social sciences, computer sciences, and humanities to tackle complex research questions.
- Encourages partnerships between academicians, technologists, and sometimes the public, fostering a richer, more diverse research environment, including emulation platforms [20].

4.1.3. Public Engagement and Education

- Digital exhibitions and virtual reality experiences make humanities more accessible to the public.
- Open-source projects and tools democratize access to knowledge, allowing broader participation in humanities scholarship.

4.1.4. Preservation and Archiving

Digital archiving ensures the preservation of important historical and cultural materials, making them accessible worldwide and safeguarding them against physical degradation.

4.1.5. Scholarly Communication

Digital platforms facilitate the sharing of research outputs and scholarly discourse more dynamically and widely than traditional publishing methods.

4.2. Tools in Digital Humanities

The tools used in digital humanities are diverse, ranging from data analysis software to digital storytelling platforms, each serving different aspects of humanities research:

1. Text Analysis Tools: - Natural Language Processing (NLP) Software: Tools like NLTK, spaCy, and GPT-3 help analyze text for syntax, sentiment, and semantic content. - Concordance Software: Allows scholars to locate every occurrence of a word or phrase, facilitating analysis of texts.

2. Data Visualization Tools: - Tableau, Gephi: Useful for creating visual representations of data, helping to illustrate complex relationships and patterns. - Timeline Tools: Tools like TimelineJS help researchers create interactive timelines that highlight historical events and trends.

3. Mapping Tools: - GIS Software: ArcGIS and QGIS are used to analyze and display spatial data, providing insights into geographical aspects of historical and cultural studies. - StoryMap JS: Allows for the creation of maps that combine narrative text with images and multimedia content.

4. Digital Archiving Systems: - Omeka: Provides a web platform for publishing collections and exhibitions, widely used by libraries, museums, and archives. - Digital Asset Management Systems (DAMS): Helps institutions manage their digital content effectively.

5. Programming and Development Environments: - Python and R: Popular programming languages for handling data-intensive projects in DH. - Jupyter Notebooks: Offers an interactive environment for coding, visualizing, and publishing data analysis projects.

6. Collaborative Tools: - Wiki Software: Facilitates collaborative writing and knowledge sharing. - Slack, GitHub: Used for project management and collaboration in larger digital projects.

7. Content Management Systems (CMS): - WordPress, Drupal: Often used to create and manage digital content, facilitating dynamic web presence for DH projects.

The integration of these tools into humanities research has not only transformed traditional methodologies but also expanded the boundaries of what can be explored and understood in the humanities. As digital technologies continue to evolve, the scope and tools of digital humanities will likely expand further, continuing to redefine the engagement with humanistic studies in the digital age.

4.3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach, synthesizing information from various case studies, scholarly articles, and empirical research findings to evaluate the impact of LLMs in digital humanities. The research includes a meta-analysis of published digital humanities projects utilizing generative AI and a review of literature discussing theoretical and methodological implications.

5. Applications of LLMs in Digital Humanities

5.1. Text Analysis and Interpretation

LLMs are particularly potent in their ability to process and analyze large volumes of text, providing insights into linguistic patterns, stylistic features, and historical language evolution. Examples include the use of AI for analyzing vast archives of unstructured text in libraries and museums. Text analysis and interpretation form a core component of the intersection between Large Language Models (LLMs) and digital humanities. LLMs, due to their deep learning foundations and substantial training datasets, offer sophisticated tools for automating and enhancing the examination of textual data. This synergy is particularly influential in the field of digital humanities, where traditional hermeneutic methods meet modern computational analytics. Text analysis involves using algorithms to understand, interpret, and

derive meaningful information from textual data. In the context of digital humanities, LLMs apply several techniques:

- **Tokenization and Parsing:** Breaking down text into manageable pieces or tokens to analyze structural and grammatical relationships.
- **Named Entity Recognition (NER):** Automatically identifying and classifying key elements in text into predefined categories such as names of people, organizations, locations, etc.
- **Sentiment Analysis:** Determining the affective state of the text, whether positive, negative, or neutral, which can be particularly useful in analyzing literary works or historical documents to gauge the sentiments expressed.

5.2. Enhancing Accessibility of Historical Documents

Generative AI assists in the transcription and translation of historical manuscripts, making them more accessible to researchers worldwide. This not only democratizes access but also enriches global understanding of historical contexts.

5.3. Creative Writing and Artistic Endeavors

In creative domains, LLMs have been used to generate literary texts and assist in experimental poetry and narrative projects, often blurring the lines between human and machine creativity.

6. Challenges and Limitations

Regarding the challenges and limitations we can identify the following strands: **Technological Dependence**, the reliance on sophisticated computational tools requires ongoing technical support and significant resources, which can be a barrier for institutions with limited funding. **Data Privacy and Ethical Concerns**, as with all digital data, there are concerns regarding privacy, particularly when dealing with sensitive or personal historical records. Ethical considerations also arise in how data is interpreted and presented [21]. **The Impact on research and scholarship** is relevant, in particular scale and Scope: Digital tools allow researchers to handle datasets of unprecedented size and complexity, often referred to as "big data" in humanities [22]. This capacity has led to the emergence of "distant reading" techniques, where scholars analyze patterns across thousands of texts, rather than studying a single piece in depth ("close reading"). And another field is **Interdisciplinary Research**: Digital analysis fosters interdisciplinary research approaches that blend techniques from computer science, statistics, and the arts and humanities. This crossover has enriched academic research, leading to new insights and methodologies. **Enhanced Accuracy and New Insights**: Automated analysis can process information with a level of accuracy and speed unattainable by manual methods. Moreover, it can reveal insights that were previously obscured by the sheer volume of data or the limitations of human analysis. **Educational Transformations** in this scope are the following impact in teaching and Learning: Digital humanities have transformed pedagogical approaches within humanities disciplines. Interactive tools and online archives provide students with direct access to primary materials and analytical tools, supporting more active learning environments. **Open Access**

and **Collaboration**: Digital humanities promote open access to information and collaborative research projects. Platforms like digital archives, open-source tools, and collaborative research networks democratize access to knowledge and facilitate global research partnerships.

6.1. Data Privacy and Security

Concerns about data privacy and the ethical use of digital archives are paramount, particularly when dealing with sensitive or personal historical data.

6.2. Dependence on Technology Providers

The reliance on proprietary AI technologies, often developed by major corporations, poses risks related to accessibility, transparency, and continuity of research.

7. Future Directions and discussion

DH continue to evolve, driven by advancements in AI, Machine Learning and Data Visualization technologies. Future research may focus on improving the interpretability of machine-assisted analyses and enhancing the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods. Ethical considerations and bias are crucial aspects to address when discussing the integration of AI and Large Language Models (LLMs) in digital humanities. **Inherent Biases in Training Data**, LLMs are trained on vast amounts of text data, which can perpetuate existing biases in historical and cultural narratives. These biases may disproportionately represent certain perspectives, cultures, or time periods, potentially skewing research outcomes. Another type of risk is the **underrepresenting minority voices, non-Western perspectives, and marginalized groups** in AI-assisted research. This could lead to reinforcing existing power structures and narratives in humanities scholarship [23]. The "black box" nature of many AI systems makes it challenging to understand how they arrive at certain conclusions or interpretations [24, 25]. This lack of transparency can be problematic in humanities research, where understanding the reasoning behind interpretations is crucial. Using AI to analyze historical or cultural data raises questions about consent, especially when dealing with sensitive or personal information from the past [26]. There's a need to balance research benefits with respect for privacy and cultural sensitivities. As AI becomes more capable of generating human-like text, there are concerns about maintaining the authenticity of historical documents and distinguishing between AI-generated and human-created content. **Over-reliance on AI tools** could potentially lead to a reduction in critical thinking skills or traditional research methods in humanities [27]. There's a need to find a balance between leveraging AI capabilities and maintaining core humanities research skills. Researchers must consider the ethical implications of using AI-generated insights, especially when these insights could impact cultural understanding or policy decisions. The adoption of AI tools in digital humanities could create or exacerbate existing inequalities between well-funded institutions and those with fewer resources [28]. This raises questions about equitable access to advanced research tools and methodologies. AI systems may not always understand or respect cultural nuances, leading to misinterpretations or insensitive handling of cultural data. Determining responsibility

for errors or biased outcomes in AI-assisted research can be challenging [29]. There's a need for clear guidelines on accountability in collaborative human-AI research projects. To address these concerns, researchers and institutions can:

- **Implement** rigorous bias detection and mitigation strategies in AI systems used for humanities research;
- **Develop** ethical guidelines specific to the use of AI in digital humanities;
- **Promote** diverse and inclusive datasets for training AI models used in humanities research;
- **Encourage** interdisciplinary collaboration to ensure AI tools are developed with input from humanities scholars;
- **Prioritize** transparency in AI methodologies used in research;
- **Invest** in education and training on ethical AI use for humanities researchers.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, digital analysis within digital humanities is not just about incorporating new tools but fundamentally transforming the ways that humanistic research can be conducted, presented, and taught. This evolution continues to offer both exciting opportunities and significant challenges that will shape the future of humanities scholarship. Generative AI and LLMs offer transformative potential for digital humanities, enabling sophisticated textual analysis and broadening the scope of what is technologically possible in humanities research. However, their integration must be handled with care, considering ethical, methodological, and practical challenges. Future research should focus on developing equitable and transparent use of these technologies to enhance the digital humanities field.

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