Preface to Rethinking the Future of Digital Humanities through Ethics and Artificial Consciousness Workshop*

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Abstract

The ReDH workshop brings together Artificial Intelligence researchers and digital humanities scholars to exchange ideas, explore shared questions an discuss interdisciplinary approaches. By connecting AI methods with humanistic inquiry, the workshop seeks to address challenges that neither field can fully resolve alone. Advances in processing text, audio and images offer new opportunities for studying cultural materials, while generative AI expands the possibilities for both analysis and creative exploration. Application range from interpreting ancient texts, analysing music and paintings to create new works inspired by historical styles and traditions. Cultural memory and artistic heritage provide a rich setting for this collaboration. The workshop encourages approaches that broaden access to cultural resources, respect diverse perspectives, and place ethical responsibility and human dignity at the center of technological development. ReDH promotes a dialogue in which AI supports humanistic research and creativity, while humanities scholarship informs the purposes, limits, and responsible use of AI.

1. Background and Motivations

The intersection of artificial intelligence and the humanities is creating a thriving field where AI can show its potential, enriching traditional humanistic sectors.

Digital Humanities, long conceived as the application of computational methods to cultural heritage, is expanding beyond archives and artefacts and is evolving comprising questions of consciousness, identity, and moral responsibility. This expansion is more vivid than ever in the visual and performing arts: AI systems now generate images, compose music, choreograph movement, and co-author theatrical scripts, raising urgent questions about authorship, aesthetic experience, and the nature of creativity itself.

This expansion is scientifically urgent: as AI systems become increasingly capable of reading, writing, seeing, and performing, the question of whether these abilities entail anything resembling understanding or subjectivity becomes central to both AI research and humanistic inquiry. ReDH responds to this urgency by creating a space where engineering rigor meets philosophical depth. The workshop addresses questions that neither AI research nor Digital Humanities can answer alone: What does it mean for a machine to interpret a historical text, or to generate a painting in the style of a Renaissance master? Can an AI system experience, even in a minimal sense, the aesthetic quality of a performance? Can artificial systems be ethically responsible custodians of cultural memory and artistic heritage? How do we design inclusive AI tools that protect human dignity - not only cultural heritage, but the persons and communities behind it? These questions are directly relevant to the researcher and scholars, which increasingly operates at the boundary between technical AI research and its social, cultural, and humanistic implications.

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The workshop gathers contributions that originate from engineering, informatics and humanities creating an ideal moment to propose and discuss insight for the definition of new or improved approaches for digital humanities.

2. Invited Contribution

Davide Dainese is Associate Professor of History of Christianity at Università di Bologna. Marco Zanella is Research Assistant at Università di Padova. Their contribution is entitled "Ancient Words, New Demands: Lessons from Recent Work on Greek, Latin, and Biblical Reception".

The contribution focuses on identifying biblical quotations and allusions in early Christian literature. Although computational methods offer powerful tools for this task, they face several challenges. The Bible was never a single fixed text and ancient authors adapted the passages they reused. Furthermore Ancient Greek and Latin are low-resource languages. The authors argue that the decisive factor is knowledge enhancement: making philological knowledge operational within the pipeline. An ontology-based parser turns the critical apparatus of the Septuagint into a knowledge graph and into virtual versions of each verse, indexed as historically attested data augmentation. Parallel Latin versions of the Bible supervise contrastive fine-tuning with self-mined hard negatives. Signals grounded in the textual tradition improve retrieval, while generic ones, such as paraphrases generated by large language models or unconstrained synonym expansion, degrade it. The contribution shows through a map which are the most difficult cases and require explicit historical knowledge.

3. Accepted Papers

- Giovanni Adorni, Emanuele Bellini, Ilaria Torre and Gualtiero Volpe
  From Digital Humanities to Cyber Humanities: A Professional-Mission Framework for Capability and Curriculum Design
- Filippo Vella, Ignazio Infantino, Giovanni Pilato, Gianpaolo Vitale and Helga Molbaek-Steensig
  Emotion Recognition Systems and the EU AI ACT: a compliance oriented framework
- Gianmarco Pastore, Cinzia Di Dio and Angelo Cangelosi
  Psychological brakes: directions for managing anthropomorphism in LLM design
- Anna Capodieci, Luca Quaratino and Alessandro Bruno
  Scaffolding or substitution? Generative and Agentic AI in humanities learning under a Human-in-the-Loop lens
- Stefano Monfalcone, Gabriele Ragusa, Giovanna Runfola, Irene Maria Genovese, Agnese Augello, Silvia Franchini and Luca Sabatucci
  From Perception to Social Behaviour: An Adaptive Engagement Pipeline for 3D Avatars
- Andrea Pietro Arena, Sofia Marilina Glorioso and Salvatore Sorce
  From Synthetic Speech to Synthetic Testimony: An Exploratory Documentary Audit of Disclosure and Provenance in Historical-Figure Chatbots
- Selena Magno and Arianna Pipitone
  The Color of Emotions: a Culturally-Aware Visual Emotional Regulation Architecture for Social Robotics
- Sofia Marilina Glorioso, Andrea Pietro Arena and Salvatore Sorce
  LENS: Learning from Narratives of Systems Failure
- Alfredo Gioacchino Mariapio Vecchio, Andrea Pietro Arena, Sofia Marilina Glorioso, Nicole Dalia Cilia and Salvatore Sorce
  Who Gets Linked? Protocol-Conditioned Linkability and Trace-Level Warnings in Entity Linking of ItalianCultural-Heritage Records

4. Program Committee

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Declaration on Generative AI

The author(s) have not employed any Generative AI tools.