BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

DIGITAL HUMANITIES 2023

DH 2023

Collaboration
as Opportunity

Digital Humanities 2023: Book of Abstracts

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CENTRE FOR
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AUSTRIAN CENTRE FOR
DIGITAL HUMANITIES

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Crowdsourcing in History. New participatory and inclusive methodological challenges for research in History in Spain (CrowdHistory)

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The Project:

The main objective of CrowdHistory project [1] is to identify, analyse, test and standardise methodological practices of citizen participation in Spanish R&D projects from the perspective of Digital Humanities, both within and outside the academic field.

State of the Art

The current state of research lacks scientific investigations that reflect methodologically and conceptually on public participation in historical research in Spain. When we talk about public participation in research, we refer to Citizen Science (CS): this is scientific research coordinated by scientists in which ordinary people, amateur and non-professional researchers, participate in some aspect of the research (Eitzel 2017). This type of methodological research is practically new in the humanities; however, there are a discrete number of research projects that use CS that are currently underway or have already been carried out, which offer a suitable breeding ground with relevant data to carry out analyses in Citizen Science (Bocanegra et al. 2017).

This citizen participatory aspect is one of the main characteristics of the Digital Humanities (DH) (Bocanegra 2020); in the last decade there has been a change in the way of doing research in the human sciences as society begins to have a participatory role during the research process; beyond being the subject of analysis to even participate in part or all stages of scientific production.

This new way of doing science is strongly driven by the growing boom of web 2.0 and, within it, digital social networks stand out as a place for interaction (Bocanegra 2020); betting on collective intelligence (Surowiecki 2004) and micro-participation.

Methodological Framework:

To achieve the proposed objectives, CrowdHistory implements a four-phase methodology as follow:

- Phase 1 - Detection of research projects in history that use public participation from citizen science. Design and structuring of a relational web database (DB), implemented through the Drupal Content Management System, version 9, PHP 7 and MariaDB 5.5. The established database (DB) allows classification parameters in closed lists and with free text fields, where explanatory information about the strategies of approaching the public has been added.

- Phase 2 - Standardisation methodology on public participation in historical research. This phase will lead to first analyses and, as a result, to a first cataloguing of participatory processes (of citizen involvement) as well as engagement activities (public engagement).

- Phase 3 - Testing and improving the methodology of public participation in historical research from citizen science through pilot cases. use of hybrid (physical/digital) citizen laboratories where some of the classified participatory approaches and techniques will be put into practice.

- Phase 4 - Evaluation of the public participation and public engagement methodology and development of good practice guidelines.

We have now completed phases 1 and 2 and are implementing phase 3.

Preliminary results:

Currently, we have identified and classified 458 international projects that use CS through the project's web database: https://cohistoria.es/; of which 161 are Spanish initiatives or with Spanish participation [2]. Data collection continues as new initiatives are found.

An ad hoc classification has been made on the basis of two models: PPS – *Public Participation Strategies* and PES – *Public Engagement Strategies*, through which a series of participatory and public engagement activities have been identified, respectively.

PPS activities identified:

Data enrichment / Data entry (metadata)
Tagging/Classification (social tagging)
Geolocation
Source collection
Historical recreation
Transcription / text editing
Transfer knowledge
PES activities identified:
Social networks / Web
Living labs (living labs)
Institutional communication channels (distribution lists)
Cultural performance

The PPS model has been built by bringing together the CS approaches defined by Bonney (1999) and Simon (2010): Contributive, Collaborative, Co-created and Hosted (see Figure 1).
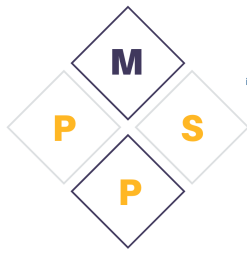
PPS MODEL

Public Participation Strategies

CONTRIBUTIVE
Project generally designed by scientists and where the public mainly contributes with data

CO-CREATED
Designed by scientists and members of the public, working together; at least some of the public participants are actively involved in most or all stages of the scientific process

COLLABORATIVE
Usually designed by scientists and for which members of the public not only contribute data, but can also help refine the project design, analyse the data or disseminate the results

HOSTED
Projects in which the institution provides part of its facilities, or resources, to present programmes developed and implemented by public groups or occasional visitors.

Citizen Science / Citizen Humanities

Figure 1: PPS Model.

Through the first analysis of the data obtained in CrowdHistory, we observe that the vast majority of the registered projects use more than one participatory approach. In general, contributive and collaborative participation are the most used. The explanation for this result is most likely due to the ease of implementation of these two approaches, as practitioners/scientists have greater control over these participatory processes, relying on small or medium-scale contributions on digital platforms. This versatility of digital, and of leaving a small or medium-sized part of the research process open to the public, at the level of contributing data or objects, is what accelerates the participatory process and also brings important benefits.

Regarding the PPS activities, the majority of the classified initiatives involve more than one main participatory activity, being Data Enrichment/Data Entry and Source Collection the predominant ones, with the use of these two activities together being very common (see Figure 2 [3] and 3 [4] for examples).

Figure 2. Examples of Spanish projects using Citizen Science.

Figure 3. Examples of Spanish projects using Citizen Science.

In the case of Spain, we have identified and catalogued a set of "mother" disciplines of the mapped initiatives. The results show that the discipline of History is in first position, followed by disciplines such as Archaeology, Museography and Heritage, as well as Digital Humanities and Arts (Figure 4). It should be noted that the initiatives that use participatory processes in their implementation are usually inter- or multidisciplinary based; and this is due to the very characteristic of citizen science as it is fed by the different knowledge of the people who collaborate. Likewise, most of these catalogued projects carry out public participation in an online way in which individuals contribute data or objects; in this mode, the technical/digital process is very important, therefore the project is developed from a specific area of study that is supported, at least methodologically, in other areas such as ICT.
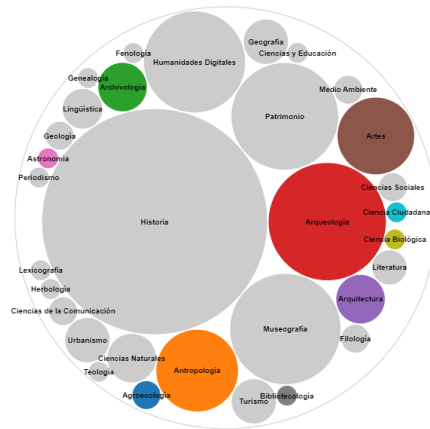
Figure 4. Disciplines identified.

Notes

2. Data obtained as of April 28, 2023. The classification and data entry procedure will continue throughout the implementation of the entire project as we come across new initiatives.
3. Archivo contra la Pared: https://cohistoria.es/proyectos/archivo-contra-la-pared (Project website: https://www.facebook.com/archivocontralapared). Patrimonio Herido: https://cohistoria.es/proyectos/patrimonio-herido(Project website: https://patrimonioherido.iarthislab.eu/en_US/home/).
4. Archivo Histórico del Partido Comunista de España: https://cohistoria.es/proyectos/archivo-historico-del-partido-comunista-de-espana(Project website: https://webs.ucm.es/BUCM/atencion//17952.php) https://patrimonioherido.iarthislab.eu/en_US/home/). Generaciones de Plata: https://cohistoria.es/proyectos/generaciones-de-plata(Project website: https://generacionesdeplata.fundaciondescubre.es/)

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Cuban digital collections: an approach for collaboration and innovation.

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The Office of the Historian of the City of Havana (OHCH) is a Cuban public cultural institution, founded in 1938. It is in charge of managing the 500-year-old cultural heritage of the Historic Center. Since its founding, the welfare of citizens and visitors has been its main focus of work, and culture among its main pillars. To achieve its goals, OHCH is developing a digital transformation plan based on smart city concepts. "The transformation of a city into a smart city should aim to improve the quality of life of the people who use it, both residents and visitors." (Chorabi et al, 2012)

The proposed poster will show one of the results of this digital transformation plan: the OHCH digital collection management system. Based on Omeka (www.omeka.org) it is available at https://coleccionesdigitales.ohc.cu.

It is a virtual space where digital objects are produced and managed from the digitization of the analog collections of Cuban memory institutions. Its main purpose is to provide universal and collaborative access to our cultural wealth, even when for various reasons it is not exhibited in our heritage institutions or is dispersed. It also allows to reproduce, in a standardized way, the relationships between all these objects and between them and the visitors.

The development of this digital tool is part of the International Cooperation project called "The Historic Center of Havana, towards a smart city model" funded by the European Union and the City Council of Barcelona. It has also received the contribution and experience derived from the Humboldt Digital Project (ProHD), developed by the OHCH and the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences. ProHD focuses on knowledge exchange in the field of Digital Humanities. It has provided the OHCH with a methodology and theoretical body that has enabled the implementation of a workflow that yields the expected results. OHCH Digital Collections responds to the need to cover the cultural dimension that involves the processes of identification of citizens with their heritage, their environment and the creation of a collective memory.

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