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ICT in Arts and Humanities Research

Irish Universities Association

New Prospects in ICT for Arts and Humanities Research

Challenges and Opportunities



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AHRC ICT in Arts and Humanities Research Programme

- <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/ict>
- £3.8m for 5 years from October 2003
 - develop, promote and monitor the AHRC's ICT strategy
 - build capacity nation-wide in the use of ICT for arts and humanities research
- Based at University of Reading School of Languages and European Studies



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Challenges and opportunities

- Data
- Tools and methods
- Rather different in each case



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Challenges and opportunities

- Data
 - Tools and methods
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- UK and elsewhere



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UK and elsewhere

Humanities vs Social Sciences

- Different types of data resource
 - Multi-media database in humanities
 - Flat dataset in social sciences



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Data resources

- Commercial
 - Google digitization programmes
 - English Poetry database



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Data resources

- Commercial
 - Google digitization programmes
 - English Poetry database
- Publicly funded
 - About 50% of AHRC-funded research projects
 - Typically specialized multi-media on-line system



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Tools and methods resources

- Text, sound and image analysis
- Multi-media scholarly editions
- Geographical information systems
- Virtual reality
- Data mining



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Data challenges

- Access and metadata



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Data challenges

- Access and metadata
- Use



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Data challenges

- Access and metadata
- Use
- Sustainability
 - Technical updating
 - Content updating
 - Re-use
 - Quality assurance



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Data challenges

- Access and metadata
- Use
- Sustainability
 - Technical updating
 - Content updating
 - Re-use
 - Quality assurance
- Interoperability and harmonization



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Tools and methods challenges

- Dispersion of expertise



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Tools and methods challenges

- Dispersion of expertise
- Lack of local support



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Tools and methods challenges

- Dispersion of expertise
- Lack of local support
- Contact between scholars and technologists



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Support structures in place

- Unique system of public support
- But precarious



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Data support

- Resource Discovery Network / Intute
 - Structured access
 - <http://www.intute.ac.uk>



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Data support

- Resource Discovery Network / Intute
 - Structured access
 - <http://www.intute.ac.uk>
- Arts and Humanities Data Service
 - Data curation and preservation
 - <http://www.ahds.ac.uk>
 - Proposed network of expert centres
 - New systems of quality assurance



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Data support problems

- Lack of public profile and use
 - shortage of funding
 - lack of local support
 - essential anarchism of academic web users



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Tools and methods support

- ICTGuides
 - at AHDS
 - <http://www.ahds.ac.uk/ICTguides>
 - Projects and Methods Database



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Tools and methods support

- ICTGuides
 - at AHDS
 - <http://www.ahds.ac.uk/ICTguides>
 - Projects and Methods Database
- AHRC ICT Methods Network
 - at King's College London
 - <http://www.methodsnetwork.ac.uk>



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Tools and methods support problems

- getting contributions
- short-term funding only



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Tools and methods support problems

- getting contributions
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Unique system of public support

- Cost £2m+ p.a.
- But continuing funding under responsive-mode system



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Agenda for evidence of value

- specific rather than generic
- qualitative rather than quantitative
- for funders and for research community



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AHRC-EP SRC-JISC Arts and Humanities e-Science Initiative

- e-Science vs e-Research
 - Oxymoron?
- Agenda rather than a methodology or subject
- As developed in the natural sciences and technology
 - Infrastructure of advanced technologies for collaboration and resource-sharing across the Internet



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AHRC-JISC Arts and Humanities e-Science Initiative

- **Grid** technologies
 - Computational grid
 - Data grid
 - Communications (Access) grid
- Associated technologies (service grid)
 - Visualization
 - Data mining
 - Security



e-Science: Why is it important for the arts and humanities?

- Money
 - tools and generic resource development
- Injection of new technologies
 - collaborations between computer scientists and arts and humanities researchers
- Data grid: dispersed and heterogenous nature of typical humanities data resource
- Not an instant solution
 - Combination of top-down and bottom-up developments to integrate resources
- But not just the data grid



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e-Science Demonstrators (EPSRC)

- Peter Ainsworth Virtual Vellum: Online Viewing Environment for the Grid and Live Audiences



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Workshops in e-Science for the Arts and Humanities

- Angela Piccini Performativity/Place/Space:
Locating Grid Technologies



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A&H e-Science Research Grants and Studentships scheme

- six 4-year AHRC e-Science postgraduate studentships.
- AHRC-EPSRC-JISC e-Science research projects up to £2m