

Poster Abstract

Identifying communities, or: How the DARIAH Community Engagement Working Group Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Fuzziness

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Research communities can come in many forms, and our understanding of what comprises a research community can, and indeed should, be fluid. Communities can be constructed through a shared knowledge or use of a particular service, a shared field of research, or a shared experience relating to career level. Furthermore, research communities are not discrete entities. They are merged, and fuzzy, and often benefit from being so. The combined nature of these groups can make for great opportunities for collaboration, but can also mean that niche research communities can get overlooked if Research Infrastructures (RIs) try to apply a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to communicating with them.

The DARIAH Community Engagement Working Group is tasked with identifying new research communities within the Humanities that have not previously engaged with research infrastructures, such as DARIAH, and identifying the barriers that have previously prevented them from doing so, as well as their current research needs. The Working Group was initially set up in 2013 as a means of disseminating activities within the DARIAH VCC2 (Research and Education), and since that time has adapted to meet the needs of the DARIAH community, transferring from a purely internal dissemination group to one that feeds information on the state of the art of research communities back into the RI.

Through a one-year funded project, which commenced in November 2017, the Community Engagement Working Group has set out a roadmap which includes a blog, a Digital Humanities internship, social media polls, and a series of events, such as a webinar, and workshops at prominent humanities conferences across Europe. With each activity we aim to bring our understanding of the multi-faceted nature of research communities to a deeper level and broaden the network of Digital Humanities and DARIAH with a more targeted approach.

This poster will take a critical overview of the work carried out by the Community Engagement Working Group to date, and will showcase and evaluate the results and the success of the planned activities in terms of our objectives and community engagement, considering lessons learned along the way. Additionally, the poster aims to showcase the reflective input from the recipient of the internship on how digital engagement affects dissemination within the research communities in the humanities. It will then show what steps we have yet to take, and demonstrate how the findings of this Working Group will have impact not only for DARIAH, but potentially for other RIs in the DH sector.