

## Round Table abstract

### Holding the Ladder : how can Research Infrastructures assist in Continual Professional Development?

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#### Introduction

With the interdisciplinary realm of the digital humanities rapidly evolving, scholars are constantly exploring new research methods and technologies. At the same time, they also find themselves working in and through different kinds of institutions: universities, research centres, cultural heritage institutions, and other organisations that have a research mission. While these two intersecting planes of variation potentially allow for innovative research, it also means that more kinds of institutions, not just universities, need to play at least a supportive - and ideally an enabling - role for this new research and these new researchers.

One of these new players in the field of researcher development is the research infrastructure. In Europe in particular, initiatives like CLARIN ERIC<sup>1</sup>, DARIAH<sup>2</sup>, E-RIHS<sup>3</sup> and others have developed not only new paradigms for the fostering of research, but also new career paths, and new research approaches. What is interesting about Research Infrastructures is not only the different approach from traditional training sites (like universities or summer schools) that they adopt toward what Rockwell and Sinclair call ‘acculturation’<sup>4</sup>, but also the more open array of possible interventions they can offer: from online modules to summer schools to expert seminars to longer research fellowships through Transnational Access programmes.

This round table discussion will look into practical experiences, and focus on the question of how academic institutions and Research Infrastructures can optimally complement each other in the education and continuous professional development of scholars in the humanities. To make sure that ideas will relate to real-life experience, making them practically applicable, we focus on two means of knowledge exchange; training and informing curricula for education, and Transnational Access fellowships provided by Research Infrastructures. The

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<sup>1</sup> Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure <https://www.clarin.eu/>

<sup>2</sup> Digital Research Infrastructure for Arts and Humanities, <https://www.dariah.eu/>

<sup>3</sup> European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science <http://www.e-rihs.eu/>

<sup>4</sup> Rockwell, G. & Sinclair, S (2012) *Acculturation and the Digital Humanities Community* In Brett D. Hirsch et al. “Digital Humanities Pedagogy: Practices, Principles and Politics” p177-211., Open Book Publishers, London.

round table session will take a combined presentation / discussion session approach, in which four panelists with different perspectives on how skills and opportunities can be built will share their own experiences, allowing ample opportunity for discussion between panelists and the audience around each case.

### **Aims**

The aims of this round table will be to identify issues and opportunities for universities, Research Infrastructures and other players in the changing humanities research ecosystem to support researchers throughout their career. What barriers lie in a researcher's path, and how can Research Infrastructures adjust to meet their needs that we might not yet be aware of? Through interactive discussion with round table attendees, the outcomes will inform the ongoing work within the Horizon 2020 project PARTHENOS. As the aim of this project is to find answers to common challenges in humanities research, participants' observations and suggestions are of great value in better understanding and finding ways to solve issues around training, Transnational Access and Continual Professional Development that researchers are struggling with.

### **Two Complementary Perspectives**

Europe has a growing number of Masters and PhD programmes in the Digital Humanities. These are not the only places to build Digital Humanities skills and competencies, however, as Research Infrastructures and other kinds of organisations are also providing a plethora of opportunities for short courses, webinars, online work, etc. Through its desk research, the PARTHENOS project found that training around Research Infrastructures is somewhat varied on both an intra- and international level, however. Many Research Infrastructures provide training on the tools or services that they produce, and this is useful for researchers who wish to upskill, but few provide training on the less tangible benefits Research Infrastructures can offer, such as networking, data management, or collaborative opportunities.

Through Transnational Access, researchers also develop skills, but in project-centred way that allows them to integrate their own research questions into the methods they are assimilating. These periods of designated research time, are often considered a great source of inspiration by Transnational Access users. However, some researchers might not (yet) find their way to RIs for reasons we are not always aware of, or might not realise what the terminology of Transnational Access implies.

Across these two complementary perspectives, this round table session will discuss to what extent RIs currently have a role in Continual Professional Development, and identify new ways in which that role can be expanded, as well as offering participants an opportunity to learn about ways in which Transnational Access could help their research and how to access it.

### **The Roundtable Panel**

The panel will be co-chaired by Frank Uiterwaal (NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies), and Vicky Garnett (Centre for Digital Humanities at Trinity College

Dublin). Our speakers for this roundtable will be Anna Ullrich (Transnational Access coordinator for EHRI<sup>5</sup>, Institut für Zeitgeschichte München); Dr. Karolina Badzmierowska (a graduate from the Trinity College Dublin ‘Digital Arts and Humanities’ PhD programme, now working with CLARIN ERIC); Dr. Kristen Schuster (a course-provider at King’s College London); and Dr. Simon Hengchen (former CENDARI<sup>6</sup> Transnational Access fellow, now working at the Helsinki Centre for Digital Humanities). Each has experience of either course provision, training, or Transnational Access programmes from a Research Infrastructure perspective. Each of their brief presentations will provide a launching point for discussion within the room, allowing participants in the roundtable audience to bring their own stories and experiences to the group. Finally, Steven Krauwer from CLARIN ERIC will provide a summary of the discussion and conclusion to the event.

This roundtable will welcome any level of researcher, at any stage in their career, working within digital humanities or affiliated fields who may want to build their own skills, or be able to advise others looking to build their own. Participants who have either already held a Transnational Access Fellowship in a European Research Infrastructure, who provide courses in Digital Humanities, or who work in Cultural Heritage Institutions are warmly welcome to come and share their experiences. However, we particularly encourage those who have not yet engaged with Research Infrastructures in order to gain as wide a perspective as possible on the issues we want to investigate, and to introduce them to the ways in which Research Infrastructures can benefit them. Equally, we are eager to learn how Transnational Access and Higher Education can best accommodate additional research needs that RIs might not be aware of.

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<sup>5</sup> European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI), <https://www.ehri-project.eu/>

<sup>6</sup> Collaborative European Digital Archive Infrastructure (CENDARI) <http://www.cendari.eu/>