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Review of "Debates in the Digital Humanities"

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Review of "Debates in the Digital Humanities"

Abstract

Jenni Rodda provides a review of *Debates in the Digital Humanities*

Keywords

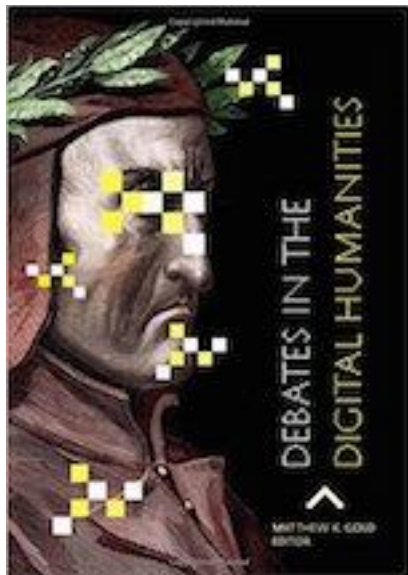
Digital Humanities

Author Bio & Acknowledgements

Jenni Rodda is the Manager of Digital Media and Computer Services at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. Her primary interests are in the applications of technology to pedagogy, from 35mm slides to digital media to 3-D modeling.

Matthew K. Gold, ed., *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. Updated and available on-line <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/> .

Reviewed by Jenni Rodda, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University



What are “digital humanities”? How do they impact pedagogy? How do they influence scholarship? What effect, if any, do they have on publishing? On the tenure process? On contingent faculty? The many facets of these questions are explored in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, a collection of essays edited by Matthew K. Gold. “Debates” is an apt description, as the discussions around digital humanities are often heated, and seldom clear-cut. This book presents a thoughtful approach to many of the issues raised by the growth and impact of the field.

An eternity has passed in academia since the book’s 2012 publication. However, the text is available both in printed and open-access on-line versions. The on-line version, hosted at the City University of New York, provides a platform to continue and record the ongoing conversation about digital humanities, and their place—or lack of place—in academia. Readers are encouraged to “mark up” the text, highlighting passages of particular interest, and to add to the discussion.

For the hard-copy version, the editor assembled twenty-nine essays, divided into six topical sections, ranging from how one defines digital humanities to what the future may hold for the field. The essays were triple-reviewed prior to publication, the book itself assembled in less than a year, reflecting as the editor notes a new process in academic publishing, with a greater emphasis on the back-and-forth of scholarly discussion facilitated through conferences and social media. This in turn reflects changes in academia, as social media becomes a vehicle for scholarly conversation and technology changes the methodology of both teaching and research.

There is a topic-specific bibliography at the end of each essay; that following the introductory comments is somewhat more general. The list of contributors reads like a “who’s who” of the field. Represented are established, new, and upcoming scholars, including graduate students whose view of the field and its future are perhaps the most important to be heard here.

If there is a weakness to this text, it is that it might be considered outdated by 2016. It is noted in the on-line version that *Debates in Digital Humanities* is to become a series of texts,

which will be anthologized annually. This will ensure the freshness and immediacy of the discussion of the issues surrounding digital humanities and their impact on academia. The printed book, envisioned as the precursor to the on-line version, still stands as a clearly-defined, well-organized, thoughtful presentation of the why's and why not's of digital humanities scholarship. It serves as an excellent introduction to the many issues of the field.