ХРОНИКА
CHRONICLE

ИНТЕРВЬЮ С ПРОФЕССОРОМ Э. ЭЙДЕ

Накануне XV Международной конференции Ассоциации «История и компьютер» (октябрь 2016 г.) профессор Л. И. Бородкин, президент АИК, обратился с предложением дать интервью нашему журналу к профессору Эйвинду Эйде, председателю Европейской ассоциации Digital Humanities (Øyvind Eide, EADH Chair). Текст интервью приводится ниже.

LB:
Dear Øyvind, what was your way to Digital Humanities?

Øyvind Eide:
From: *Eide, Øyvind. "What Is the Digital Humanities". Innovative Infotechnologies for Science, Business and Education 1 (16) (2014): 14–21*.

I started my university studies in the late 1980s with mathematics and computer science. Getting bored with the focus on "hard" knowledge I moved over to general literature and completed a bachelor with those three subjects. I worked for a while in the library sector until I became involved in *The Documentation Project* in 1995. This was a large scale Norwegian digitisation project where I had the role of technical consultant, planning and overseeing scanning and text encoding done by people on employment schemes.

From 1998 to 2000 I was the manager of the *Henrik Ibsen Manuscript* project, before I got involved in the *Museum Project*, another large scale digitisation project which included a significant system development part. In the project, systems for research and collection management in areas such as archaeology, ethnography, and natural history were established. This included the development of general server based services for media files (image and sound) and digital maps. I was deeply involved also in lexicography, in Norway as well as in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The work included a hybrid mix of project planning and management, digitisation logistics, system analysis, implementation, and research and development.

In 2009 I enrolled in the first PhD programme in digital humanities at King's College London, using a

collection of documents I administered the digitisation of in the *Documentation Project* as my object of study. I used core digital humanities methods in my work: text modelling, model experiments, and critical mapping. After finishing the PhD I was back in Norway for a year or so before I moved to Passau to be a Vissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter with a newly established Lehrstuhl für Digital Humanities. Using a terminology which is common especially in North America: I moved from alt-ac to a "normal" academic.

From October 2015 I have been on leave from Passau to work as a deputy professor at the University of Cologne.

LB:

What are the most important changes (trends) of DH development revealed at the EADH Conference hold in Krakow this summer?

Øyvind Eide:

To me two different tendencies are clear: a continuous long term development to relatively less focus on textual studies and more focus on other media and other types of questions. One noteworthy change is the quite visible focus on questions of inclusivity. While the concept is not (yet) clearly defined, it seems to be important to many conference goers and in a significant number of presentations. Also, the growth of the conference is noteworthy: not only in the number of participants, but also in the growing geographical diversity.

LB:

What is a place (role) of philology/linguistics in the space of digital humanities?

Øyvind Eide:

Computational linguistics and natural language processing has always been close to digital humanities, but has often been divided administratively and also when it comes to conferences, journals, etc. To me, it is not that important how one organises things. At some universities it makes sense to have a strong institutional link, at others less so. What is important is to keep the channels open and cooperate and communicate at different levels, both for theory, methods, results, and also in teaching.

LB:

What is a place of history in the space of digital humanities?

It is an important part of digital humanities in my views. In general, all disciplines can use digital humanities as a specialised auxiliary discipline, but can also be seen as part of digital humanities as a discipline. How the borders function will vary between regions, countries, and institutions.

LB:

Historical computing and digital history: different names of the same field?

Øyvind Eide:

Well, if one analyses the expressions "historical computing! is a type of computing and "digital history" is a kind of history. However, in the social practice of disciplinary discussions the work "digital" has a loose meaning which tends to be quite wide and covers a lot of different types of activities and thinking. "Digital" has no inherent clear meaning in this context; it is vaguer than "computing". I think the best way to understand digital humanities and digital history is to look at the practices, how people do what they denote with these concepts. And such practice is always local.

So I would argue they are names of overlapping fields of scholarly practices, and that digital history today gives associations of being contemporary, and historical computing of being a bit dated — at least in the Anglo-American world.

LB:

Digital history: is it mostly about infrastructure or about analysis of sources as well?

Øyvind Eide:

Infrastructure is clearly part of it, also linked to digitisation of all sorts of source material, including material culture (to the degree the latter can be digitised). But it is also about a set of methodologies, connected to modelling and analysis through visualisation and simulation. Analysis and infrastructure can meet in information integration, where standards like the CIDOC–CRM family can be used to analyse various sources using simple computational reasoning on large data sets. This will never replace statistical analysis of text and distant reading, but especially for historical disciplines will be an important method in the future.

LB:

What are the most important technologies/instruments in Digital Humanities today?

Øyvind Eide:

As always, the human ability to reason based on experience (both academic, practical, emotional, and beyond) using tools in a creative way. For some this is to use large data sets, such as google books or census material. For others it is to develop their own tools to help them analyse specific sources they work on. For others again it may be experimental use of digital methods, such as agent based modelling, to see if there are any new and better understanding to be found.

The important aspect of all tool use is to be critical when it is used and (for people working within a discipline such as history) see the possibilities for new insights without over-selling the tools. It is not enough to find results, the results must be meaningful for the historical disciplines.

LB:
What are institutional changes in developing DH during the last years in European countries?

Øyvind Eide:
At the levels of universities one sees the development of new study programmes and academic positions in several countries. There are also specific funding schemes for DH here and there.

Further, EADH has a strong growth, both in the numbers of members and also in the number of associate and partner organisations. There are also a number of new venues for discussing DH, both as traditional national and international conferences and also as other types of venues.

LB:
Dear Øyvind, on behalf of the Editorial Board of the Journal "Историческая информатика" ("Historical Information Science") let me express our gratitude for your comprehensive answers. We hope to continue discussion of these exciting questions in the framework of our Association "History & Computing" to be held in October, 2016. Your plenary paper at our conference will be no doubt of a great interest.