Digital Humanities in the Nordic and Baltic Countries - A Living Bibliography

Annika Rockenberger[1]

[1]*University of Oslo Library, Moltke Moes vei 39, Oslo, 0851, Norway*

Abstract

This poster describes the creation and publication of a curated, cumulative, open – living – bibliography of the organisation Digital Humanities in the Nordic and Baltic Countries (DHNB). It recounts how the bibliographic material - conference abstracts, posters, peer-reviewed papers, journal articles, but also news items about the conferences, blog posts, forum posts - has been collected in a Zotero library. It discusses ways of documenting and archiving the bibliography both as a set of research data in a Dataverse repository and as an open Zotero group library. The poster concludes with the prospect of opening up the bibliography to become a community driven project that will be expanded and maintained by the DHNB community and made explorable for research both as a live bibliography and as a data set for further analyses.

Keywords

Bibliography, Research Data, Community, DHNB

1. Origins

1.1. From Idea to Action

In late 2019 and in the advent of the 5-year anniversary of the Association of Digital Humanities in the Nordic and Baltic Countries (DHNB) in April 2020, I started collecting material on DHNB as an organisation, a community of researchers and practitioners, and a central facilitator of digital humanities knowledge in the Nordic and Baltic Countries and beyond. Even though DHNB was at that time only a couple of years old, I already met many obstacles collecting its conference outputs: The main medium of DHNB community building and publication. Gathering information about how the Nordic-Baltic, the international Digital Humanities community, and the wider Humanities and Social Sciences communities received the organisation and its conferences proved even more difficult. Web pages for previous conferences had died,[1] books of abstracts - both digital or in print - were hard to come by, and blog posts, tweets, newsletters, and

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[1]'Link rot' is an unfortunate, but rather common phenomenon. See the collection of studies on link rot and the half-life of URLs in the Wikipedia article [1]

other forms of web-based publications and social media posts[2] about DHNB and its conferences were disappearing quickly.

1.2. A Race Against Time

I felt that time was running out and if I wanted to record the history of DHNB, I had to take action. So I decided to initiate a living archive of sorts for DHNB and its community. I began collecting all DHNB related materials on the Web,[3] starting with the central area of its activity: the DHNB conferences and their abstracts in books of abstracts (BoA), papers and posters in conference proceedings (CP), special issues of journals, and other publication outlets. I chose[4] to use Zotero (https://www.zotero.org/) and manually as well as semi-automatically added publications wherever I could find them. For the abstracts and papers, I have retrieved the full-texts for almost all items. For other web content, I have saved URLs and pruned metadata to be meaningful and citable. Where technically possible, I archived a time-stamped version of all web pages using the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine https://archive.org/web/.

1.3. Opening Up the Archive

After manually adding the outputs of DHN2020 pre-and post-conference proceedings, I made the decision to prepare the bibliography to become an open community resource and transferred my private Zotero collection into a public Zotero group (https://www.zotero.org/groups/2503578/dhnb-bibliography).

2. The DHNB conferences and main publications

2.1. Conferences

When DHN was founded in April 2015 the annual conferences were conceptualised as its main activity and served both as an outlet for *Nordic* Digital Humanities publications[5] and digital humanities research which didn't yet have a 'home', and as a forum for the widespread and scattered community to meet, to socialise, to exchange ideas, and to initiate collaborations, cross-institutionally and internationally.

In Table 1, I have created an overview of the DHNB conferences: *When* they were held, *where* in the Nordic and Baltic countries they were held, and *how many* presentations we have had. The columns "Link", "BoA", and "CP" show whether the conference website is still active,

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[2]Most Social Media communication about and by DHNB and the conferences is done via Twitter. In previous years, Facebook has been used for conferences, too, however, to a much lesser degree and by significantly less community members.

[3]I have been using the Google search service and a selection of ad-hoc search terms and keywords like 'DHN2016', 'DHN2020 + conference', or 'Digital Humanities in the Nordic Countries' etc.

[4]For two reasons mainly: Firstly, I am a routined Zotero user for larger bibliographic projects and secondly because Zotero can be used as cloud service, enabling me to work on the project remotely and making collaboration easier.

[5]At the first conference in Oslo, apart from English, a large number of presentations were held in Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish, though there were none in Finnish or Icelandic.

Table 1
Overview of DHNB Conferences, 2016-2022

Name	Date	Location	Country	Link	BoA	CP	Presentations
DHN2016	2016-03-15/17	Oslo	Norway	Y	Y	N	94
DHN2017	2017-03-14/16	Gothenburg	Sweden	N	Y	N	78
DHN2018	2018-03-07/09	Helsinki	Finland	Y	Y	Y	149
DHN2019	2019-03-06/08	Copenhagen	Denmark	Y	Y	Y	87
DHN2020	2020-10-20/23	Riga	Latvia	Y	Y	Y	94
DHNB2022	2022-03-16/18	Uppsala	Sweden	Y	N/A	Y	108

Table 2
Overview of DHNB Conference Proceedings with CEUR, 2018-2020

Name	Year	Location	Country	Link	Papers
DHN2018	2018	Helsinki	Finland	http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-2084/	51
DHN2019	2019	Copenhagen	Denmark	http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-2364/	45
DHN2020pre	2020	Riga	Latvia	http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-2612/	38
DHNB2020post	2022	Riga	Latvia	http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-2865/	28

whether there was a book of abstracts accompanying the conference, and whether there were conference proceedings published.

2.2. Publication of Conference Proceedings

When the first conference in Oslo in 2015/2016 was prepared, there was no plan to publish full papers in conjunction with the conference. The organisers collected, published, and printed the abstracts in a book of abstracts [2]. It was up to the individual presenters to convert their talks and presentations into full articles and submit them to journals of their choice. I am, however, not aware of any presentation in Oslo 2016 having been made into an article.

One year later at the Gothenburg conference, the local organisation team and the program committee suggested the publication of a selection of conference presentations for a special issue[6] of the Swedish open access journal Human IT.

From DHN2018 in Helsinki onward, CPs became an integral part of the conferences and the official conference proceedings [4, 5] were published with CEUR Workshop Proceedings[7]. For the postponed and moved-to-online DHN2020 conference in Riga, the program committee suggested the publication of pre- and post conference proceedings,[6, 7] making it possible for researchers to get their papers out as soon as possible and allowing for late coming research to find a publication outlet, too.

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[6]Nordic Digital Resources and Practices. Ed. by Jenny Bergenmar. Special Issue of Human IT, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2019. The Special Issue contains five DHN2017 presentations that have been reworked into articles and underwent peer-review as well as a guest editorial by Bergenmar [3]. Consult the entire volume: https://humanit.hb.se/issue/view/91.

[7]The peer-reviewed proceedings appear as individual numbers in the overall CEUR series and are edited by the conference organisers or the chairs of the organising committee, respectively. See http://ceur-ws.org/.

3. Publications about DHNB and its conferences

I have taken particular care about gathering and archiving digital publications *about* the DHNB conferences and about DHNB as an association. These publications are mainly conference announcements and conference reports in the form of blog posts, newsletters, and forum posts. In addition, I have gathered information from institutional and personal websites, including texts and audiovisual media.

Why are such publications and media of interest in a DHNB bibliography? Because they, too, demarcate the DHNB community: those who attend our conferences, but perhaps don't present; those that communicate their participation at a DHNB conference to others who have not been there; those who connect DHNB to other venues and communities by drawing connections and highlighting shared topics and special traits of Nordic-Baltic Digital Humanities.

4. Future plans

For the future, I think the following goals will be achievable for the DHNB living bibliography:

- Incrementally update the bibliography with all DHNB abstracts from BoAs, all articles published in CPs, and special issues of journals (annually or as often as the conferences are held).
- Incrementally update with news items, newsletters, blog posts, and other smaller pieces of text and media reporting about DHNB, including conference reports, workshop reports, reviews, opinion pieces (annually, 1x after the conference, 1x in the fall).
- Categorising the DHNB publications using TaDiRAH – Taxonomy of Digital Research Activities in the Humanities (https://tadirah.info/) by creating and assigning *tags* for the Zotero group library.
- Supplying the bibliography with full-text versions of all abstracts, papers, and posters (as long as this is doable with regards to copyright and other licenses).
- Preserving all links to websites containing DHNB-related material to the Internet Archive or similar services.
- Systematically harvesting Twitter for DHNB-related hashtags and archiving tweets as a version-controlled data package, e.g. on Dataverse.no (https://dataverse.no/)
- Systematically harvesting Facebook and Instagram for DHNB-related hashtags and posts.
- Establishing a workflow for feeding DHNB conference data into the Index of Digital Humanities Conferences (https://dh-abstracts.library.cmu.edu/).

I want to ensure that this resource becomes a trustworthy and sustainable community resource: created by a community member, opened up and documented, and maintained by the ever evolving DHNB community. I call the DHNB community to help collect relevant material in the Zotero group library and an open repository. Together, let's make the collection of DHNB publications and accompanying data openly available for the community to use, re-use, share, and build on!

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5. Online Resources

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- https://www.zotero.org/
- https://archive.org/web/
- https://www.zotero.org/groups/2503578/dhnb-bibliography
- https://humanit.hb.se/issue/view/91
- http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-2084/
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All URLs were active and accessible on June 1, 2022.