Research and Education in the Digital Humanities of Taiwan: Current Developments and Predicaments

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Abstract

As fields of knowledge, the humanities have been facing a tremendous challenge in the information era. On the one hand, the humanities have proven unable to attract a sufficient number of students in capitalist societies. On the other, the speed of information exchange is much faster than in previous eras. People have become so busy making contacts with other people that they have lost interest in communicating with the past, which is the main focus of the humanities. Moreover, as concerns information about the past, lots of informational nibbles are now available via internet encyclopedias, such as the famous Wikipedia, but not through forums provided by scholars in the humanities. In the west, younger scholars engage with the digital humanities to utilize computational power to make their fields more persuasive and interesting through the application of visualization tools. However, some older scholars still reject the use of digital methods in their areas of knowledge and consider digital humanities as nothing more than a whimsical phenomenon. In Taiwan, the sense of crisis among scholars in the humanities is not yet deeply perceived owing to a couple of factors: first, and most importantly, there is not enough funding for developing the digital humanities; and second, there is a lack of academic positions devoted to this field. However, despite this, there are some institutes connected with research and education in the humanities, especially prestigious ones, which have built databases or digitized searchable texts that

can serve as a solid basis for the future development of the digital humanities. Among these institutes, the Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts has established and maintained the globally known Chinese Buddhist Electronic Texts, and a web research platform has also been installed in recent years. Other institutes, like the Center of Digital Humanities at National Taiwan University and the three humanities institutes at Academia Sinica also have their own digital humanities projects. As for the future, whether the efforts of these institutes will influence research and education in the humanities is waiting to be observed and is difficult to discern from the status quo.

About the Speaker:

Prof. Ping-Tzu Chu obtained his Ph.D. from Harvard University. He is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan ROC. Prof. Chu's has numerous academic achives in Neo-Confucianism and Confucian ethic. He is also dedicating in promoting Digital Humanities studies in Taiwan.

臺灣的數位人文研究與教育：現況與困境

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摘 要

作為知識領域，人文學科在資訊時代面臨巨大的挑戰。一方面人文學科在資本主義社會並不足以吸引到足夠的學生。另一方面，資訊交換的速度比以往更加快速，致使人們忙於與彼此接觸之餘，失去了探知過去的興趣──而這是人文學科的主要焦點。此外，現今已不再透過人文學者提供的論壇獲得過去的資訊，而是藉由網路百科全書（例如著名的維基百科）取得大量的瑣碎訊息。在西方，年輕學者利用數位人文的運算能力，通過使用視覺化工具讓他們的研究更具說服力和趣味性。然而，一些年長的學者仍然拒絕在他們的知識領域應用數位方法，並將數位人文研究視為一種異想天開的現象。

在臺灣，由於以下幾個因素，人文學科的研究者們尚未深刻體會到這種危機感：首先，最重要的是沒有足夠的資金來發展數位人文研究;其次，學院裡也缺乏專門從事數位人文研究的職位。儘管如此，臺灣仍有一些研究機構從事數位人文的研究與教育，特別是有聲望的研究機構，它們建立了資料庫或數位化的可搜索文本，為數位人文的未來發展奠定堅實的基礎。如法鼓文理學院建立並維護了全球知名的《中華電子佛典》資料庫，亦於近年建置線上研究平台。其他研究機構如臺灣大學數位人文中心和中央研究院也都在進行數位人文計畫。不過這些研究機構的努力，對於數位人文研究和教育未來的影響力仍難以評估。

講者簡介：

祝平次教授為哈佛大學博士，目前為清華大學中國文學系副教授。祝教授曾發表許多探討宋明理學及儒家倫理的研究論著，並對於推廣臺灣數位人文研究不遺餘力。