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Digital Humanities and the Library: research partners?

This talk presents results from our recent research analysing the relationship between digital humanities and the research library. There is clear   in specific areas, such as heritage imaging and special collections, but how might this be strengthened in our wider activities to create a stronger partnership and a more equal one with the library as initiator and collaborator rather than as service provider?

This relationship has different models and a significant factor is where the DH centre (or research group) is based. UCLDH is a virtual centre with membership across all faculties, and management based in Humanities, Computer Science, and the Built Environment, all within academic departments. In the USA, DH centres are often hosted in the library (for example Stanford [1] Duke [2] Cincinnati [3]) whereas elsewhere the links are more informal (Sula 2013). Muñoz (20120), MITH is another example, argues that neither DH nor libraries should be considered a service. Posner (2013) points to administrative and institutional problems that play their part. ADHO has a Libraries and DH SIG with a pre-conference, Libraries as Research Partner in Digital Humanities, at DH2019 [4]. The model in mainland China is mixed but closer to the USA. The DH research group at Peking University (PKU) is in the library [5], hosting the DH Forum there since 2016. The Shanghai (public and academic) Library has a very active DH research group (Mahony and Gao 2019) and is hosting (Chinese) DH2020.

The authors are running a two-day workshop at UCL in collaboration with PKU library to explore and analyse how their practice leverages this relationship between library and research group with a focus on collaborative working, integrated and innovative approaches. We examine how cultural differences (institutional and societal) shape PKU work activities and their formulation of DH practice and wider engagement. This will also be informed by the published reports of Research Libraries UK, particularly their recent work on the creation, archiving, and preservation of tools for DH (Kamposiori 2019).

[1] <https://digitalhumanities.stanford.edu/about-dh-stanford>
[2] <https://digitalhumanities.duke.edu/about-digital-humanities>
[3] <http://dsc.uc.edu/>
[4] <https://adholibdh.github.io/dh2019-preconference/>
[5] <https://www.lib.pku.edu.cn/portal/en/xsjl/shuzirenwen>

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