

Nirmala Menon

Editor-in-Chief

This inaugural issue of *Digital Humanities Intersections (DHI)* is a culmination of the efforts of a handful of researchers of DH in India who have tried, against multiple odds- incomprehension and sometimes skepticism of their work by colleagues around the country, a certain bewilderment from colleagues from diverse disciplines (really, is that a thing? Digital Humanities?). One of the consistent and continuing arguments of the DH group here at IIT Indore has been the need for a sustainable (preferably open) multilingual scholarly publishing ecosystem in India. This journal is the first tiny step in that direction. We have seen, over the last dozen years that interest in the Digital Humanities, both in the number of courses and programs across the country has grown exponentially. These programs were diverse in their scope and range. Simultaneously, research groups were also working on diverse digital humanities projects that, as expected, were multilingual and varied from computational linguistics projects, cultural heritage projects, digitisation, manuscript studies, archaeology and architecture, video games and so on.

Meanwhile, in 2022, we established the JPN Centre of Excellence in the Humanities at IIT Indore with a grant from the Ministry of Education (MoE) with Digital Humanities being one of the focus areas. The mission of the Centre was very clear as articulated on our website “facilitate cutting-edge research, education, and public engagement to cultivate a vibrant community of scholars, researchers, and practitioners who leverage digital tools, methodologies, and critical thinking to explore, interpret, and shape the digital landscape. Through research project partnerships and inclusive outreach, we aim to create knowledge and contribute to global scholarship in these areas.” Towards this objective, we announced a call for proposals and over three open calls in three years, we funded close to 40 research projects led by Principal Investigators (PIs) from all over the country. The number of submissions to that call and the queries we get regarding training, capacity building and project implementation all pointed to one thing- there is a keen interest but also a gap in understanding. Through various seminars, DHBootcamps, symposiums the Centre continued to facilitate these conversations and build a DH community.

Even as we facilitated and supported these very interesting projects, we started thinking more and more about Humanities research infrastructures or the lack of one in India and ways of connecting networks to collectively build one. Exciting as these projects were and many more that I encountered on my various talks at different institutions in India and internationally convinced me that we need a Digital Humanities Journal that can foster these research projects into intellectual ideas and essays and see if those conversations lead us to theoretical frameworks for DH in India. So, three years into the establishment of the Centre we launched Digital Humanities Intersections (DHI) with a wonderful Advisory and Editorial Board and the first call for papers for the inaugural issue.

Knowledge Infrastructures are not systems, in the sense of fully coherent, deliberately engineered, end-to-end processes. Rather, infrastructures are ecologies or complex adaptive systems; they consist of numerous systems, each with unique origins and goals, which are made to interoperate by means of standards, socket layers, social practices, norms, and individual behaviours that smooth out the connections among them.

Major, related social and institutional changes in knowledge infrastructure include at least the following:

- Education: the rise of for-profit and online universities; open courseware; massively open online courses; a generalised crisis of traditional pedagogies
- Libraries: changing structures, services, and physical spaces
- The publishing industry: e-books vs. paper; prohibitive pricing of scientific journals; the collapse of university presses
- Intellectual property: distortions of copyright and patent law; creative commons practices; stark and growing differences between legal frameworks and actual use practices
- Global “flows: increasingly rapid and supple transborder movement of researchers, students, professional expertise, and knowledge-based industries
- Knowledge politics: the “Filter bubble” ; counter-expertise; challenges to expert knowledge organisations

A scholarly journal in an emerging transdisciplinary area with exciting research projects and thoughts is both an intellectual and an infrastructural project. As we built this as an open access portal to be hosted with IIT

Indore, with Public Knowledge project's open journal system for manuscript management, we look to evaluating and reflecting on that infrastructure and experimenting ways in which we build upon it for an inclusive, possibly multilingual publications. This will be a platform that will constantly have discussions about infrastructure embedded in the scholarly production.

As Paul Arthur, Nirmala Menon and Lydia Hearn argue "Questions emerge around whether the benefits of open scholarship can be truly democratic, unrestricted, and fully inclusive. How can we unlock access to data, information, and knowledge to yield positive outcomes for all? How is it possible to prevent further inequality between and within communities and the global North–South divide? While open scholarship is an international movement with the potential to provide substantial benefits for universities, businesses, governments, and non-governmental organisations across the world, it also involves a complex array of power relations that may not always be consistent with the goal of inclusive, equitable development. Open scholarship policies, technologies, standards, and models have stemmed primarily from the global North and been applied to the global South, creating new categories of exclusion, with the risk of exacerbating the legacies of colonialist systems of scholarly communication. Initiatives are underway to scale up international collaboration for more transparent, equitable cooperation toward openness to address persistent tensions between those managing scholarly outputs and developing data, tools, software, publications, and workflows, and those promoting an open knowledge environment. Only through greater inclusivity can we reconfigure power relations and involve diverse peoples and populations in knowledge creation, use, and re-use processes (<https://doi.org/10.3390/publications11030041>)."

This is a new, exciting and frankly the most nerve-wracking project that we have undertaken in the Digital Humanities group and the JPN Centre at IIT Indore. As the first research lab in DH in the country, if I think about the trajectory of our work, it has a definite pattern- put your hands up and say "why don't we have this tool, this book, this infrastructure?"- then research why we don't have a particular thing- and then at some point go- oh well, let's attempt to do it ourselves! That is how the Electronic Literature of India, Vol 1 was born, that is how a Partition narrative project of Bahawalpur was born, the SINDHU audio archive of rare books came to be and that is how KSHIP (Knowledge Sharing in Publishing) with Ubiquity press, UK was conceptualised. We are now in Vol 2 of Electronic literature and KSHIP is an umbrella platform and DHI is our foray into scholarly publishing. We go where the intellectual inquiry takes us, plunge into it- often recklessly- but when you have a team of brilliant research students and colleagues across the world- something new can emerge.

Digital Humanities Intersections (DHI) uses the Public Knowledge Project's Open journal system for its submissions and peer review process. After a rigorous process of review, revise and edits, for the last eight months, we are excited to let the first issue of the journal into the world- publish the first set of articles that made it to the issue.

The contributions in this issue collectively examine the shifting methodological, pedagogical, and philosophical landscapes of contemporary Digital Humanities. Articles in this issue focus on the institutional and infrastructural conditions shaping digital scholarship and humanities education. One study investigates the absence of structured Critical AI Literacy frameworks within Indian humanities curricula, drawing attention to the widening gap between the rapid uptake of artificial intelligence tools and the limited pedagogical structures available to interrogate their epistemic and ethical implications. Complementing this pedagogical concern, another article introduces the Text Encoding Initiative as a practical framework for constructing minimal digital scholarly editions, outlining a methodological pathway for encoding and archiving textual materials within computationally accessible formats.

Alongside these infrastructural and pedagogical concerns, the issue also engages with broader theoretical and cultural questions surrounding technology, archives, and knowledge production. Articles turn to posthumanist thought to interrogate the evolving relationship between human subjectivity and technological systems, drawing on the work of theorists such as Donna Haraway and N. Katherine Hayles while examining cultural narratives ranging from the cyborg figure in technological imaginaries to cinematic explorations of embodiment. Contributions also foreground questions of memory, heritage, and epistemic power within digital environments, including a study documenting efforts to digitally archive traditional Indian board games and an analysis of community-driven digital humanities initiatives in the Global South that challenge Euro-American epistemological dominance. The issue concludes with a critical reflection on the growing authority of computational tools within humanities research, raising important questions about the epistemological consequences of data-driven methodologies and calling for renewed attention to theoretical reflexivity within digital scholarship.

We release the very first issue of the journal- with trepidation and anxiety but also excitement and eagerness looking forward to the inputs, feedback and response from the DH community in South Asia and elsewhere. Needless to say, such an endeavour cannot be achieved without a team of amazing people who were committed intellectually and invested in conversations and convergences on DH especially in our specific contexts and in the

languages in which we have been DH'ing for over a decade now. A huge shout out to our amazing Managing Editor, Justy Joseph who has really been the anchor for bringing this idea out to the world; to our editorial team comprising of Reema Chowdhary, Shanmugapriya T, Wati Longkumer and Chiranjoy Chattopadhyaya. Our sincere thanks to the Advisory Board of international experts for their support. Thank you, Julia Flanders, Arjun Ghosh, Paul Arthur, Ray Siemens, Maya Dodd, Pieter Francois, Deborah Sutton, Paul Spence and Souvik Mukherjee for the trust and encouragement. A sincere thanks to each reviewer who took the time to review the papers and send comments and feedback for the authors. And of course to the scholars who submitted their work and worked with us to make this first inaugural issue possible.

We look forward to continued conversations on these pages in the coming issues as we think about the theory, praxis and projects in Digital Humanities in India but also in the larger Asian, African and other context as we expand these conversations globally.