

Editorial

The past few months have been busy for the Methods Network. We are especially pleased with the number and scope of activities that we have been able to fund, ranging from service-oriented computing to CGI animation. Read more about the outcomes of these activities and plans for future events inside. If you would like to apply for funding to support an activity, see our latest call for proposals for activities on page 9. The deadline is 30 June.

Two concerns of vital interest to the Methods Network community are the sustainability of digital resources and the need to demonstrate evidence of value of such resources. On page 2 David Robey, Director of the AHRC ICT Programme, reports on two Methods Network Expert Seminars that focused on these important areas.

In January, Torsten Reimer joined the Methods Network team as Senior Research Project Co-ordinator. Torsten was previously web co-ordinator for the University of Munich and project co-ordinator for the history department there. Torsten is working to expand the Methods Network outreach programme and building links within and between arts and humanities communities. He writes about progress so far and developing plans on page 9.

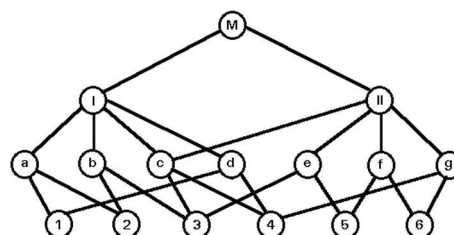
Lorna Hughes, the Methods Network Manager, is currently on maternity leave and I have been delighted to work with and supervise the Methods Network team during her absence. We look forward to welcoming Lorna back in May.

Sheila Anderson
Director, AHDS
Co-Director AHeSSC

Newsletter

Summer 2007 - Issue 4

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Outreach and community: Read about the Methods Network's new approaches to community building on page 9



Recent activities: Simulation software demonstrated by Red Legion at the Talking CGI panel at the Art of British CGI conference. A report on the panel is on page 5

<http://www.methodsnetwork.ac.uk>

Activities

Sustainability and evidence of value for ICT in the arts and humanities

David Robey, Director, AHRC ICT Programme, writes about two Expert Seminars: *Sustainability of Digital Resources in the Arts and Humanities* (29 November 2006) and *Evidence of Value: ICT in the Arts and Humanities*. (11-12 January 2007)

With the current uncertainty about the future funding of Arts and Humanities ICT support in the UK, the topics of these two Methods Network Expert Seminars have become particularly urgent. Until now the UK has had a model system for ensuring the sustainability, through the Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS), of the substantial body of arts and humanities digital data funded by public bodies. At the time of writing, however, there is considerable doubt that this system will be maintained. The need to collect evidence of the value of ICT in the arts and humanities is all the more pressing if funders are to be persuaded of the need for the kind of support system that the AHDS has provided.

"Evidence of value for ICT in the arts and humanities is vital to persuade funders to ensure the sustainability of this digital data."

Sustainability of Digital Resources in the Arts and Humanities was held at King's College London on 29 November 2006. The experts gathered together included data creators, funders, and strategic agencies. The key issues addressed were the need for

a set of high-level principles to govern the production and preservation of data resources (Michael Jubb of the Research Information Network), the range of issues to be taken into account at a more practical level in the arts and humanities (David Robey of the AHRC ICT Programme), a model system of quality assurance for data resources (David Bates and Jane Winters of the Institute of Historical Research), and the need to sustain not just the data produced but the centres of expertise that produce it (David Shepherd of the Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield). Participants were especially impressed by the detailed and systematic attention that the Andrew Mellon Foundation gives to the entire life-cycle of the data resources that it funds (Suzanne Lodato) - far more than public funders in the UK are able to afford.

The Expert Seminar report and papers given on the day are available from

<http://www.methodsnetwork.ac.uk/activities/es7mainpage.html>.

Evidence of Value: ICT in the Arts and Humanities was held in Cambridge on 11 and 12 January 2007, jointly with the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH). This gathered together a good number of mostly local participants representing an unusually wide variety of disciplines and types of expertise in the arts and humanities. The seminar was particularly helpful and stimulating for teasing out the range of issues that arguing the value of ICT involves and the different kinds of value that we need to think about. There is value for the producer and for the consumer, quantitative and qualitative value, value in the short and in the longer term, direct value and mediated value. The value of ICT can consist in: the convenience that it affords researchers; opening up new questions and creating new knowledge; confirming existing knowledge; creating new forms of output and dissemination; enabling collaboration, interaction, networking, community building; facilitating access and the aggregation and integration of resources; guaranteeing preservation.

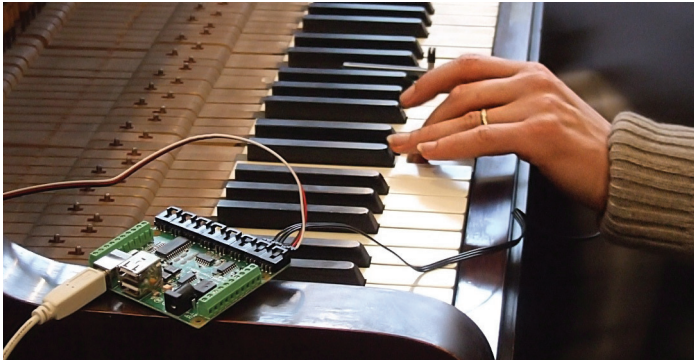
John Knell of the Intelligence Agency made a suggestive distinction, in his paper 'Whose Art is it Anyway?', between 'hard' and 'soft' personalization in the use of ICT for art communication: the latter involves its role in facilitating and enhancing the consumption of art objects, the former involves the consumer as producer, actively contributing to the artistic process. There are interesting and potentially radical implications here for scholarly research as well, though the academic world may not be ready for all of them. More cautiously, the point was also made that value is often multivalent and unforeseen, a point that shouldn't need too much arguing in an arts and humanities context but, as was observed by Mary Jacobus, the CRASSH Director, 'We don't use the tools we ourselves develop to show the value of what we do.'

More information about the seminar and copies of speakers' papers are available from:

<http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/2006-7/evidencevalue.html>

Advanced Technologies for Collaborative Performance

Alan Blackwell, CRASSH, University of Cambridge, reports on this workshop organized by Alan Blackwell and Ian Cross, CRASSH, University of Cambridge, and Julio d'Escrivan and Richard Hoadley, Anglia Ruskin University. (20 - 21 December 2006).



Participants at the workshop used sensors and performance software for collaborative performances

The aim of this workshop was to train practice-based researchers in the performing arts to make better use of ICT technologies that support live collaboration in performance situations. The workshop leaders were Julio D'Escrivan and Richard Hoadley of Anglia Ruskin University; Ian Cross of the Cambridge University Centre for Music and Science; and Alan Blackwell of the Crucible network for research in interdisciplinary design.

The workshop was based in the recently upgraded music technology teaching facility at Anglia Ruskin University, which contained two group studios each equipped with nine G5 dual-processor Macintoshes. Collaborative facilities included networked sound processing with studio monitors, local MIDI keyboards and audio processors on each workstation, shared headphones for pair work, and central video projection facilities.

Workshop delegates represented cultures and music across the globe. Everyone brought a fresh perspective on musical collaboration and technology and a wealth of experience in many composition and performance techniques and technologies. Delegates included technical specialists in the use of SuperCollider and Max/MSP; professional exponents of mixed genre performance and a small selection of practitioners from other performance genres such as poetry, live video art and others. The workshop was divided into mixed discipline teams for hands-on development and instruction, ensuring that programmers did not race ahead of performing collaborators. Participants were provided with a broad range of inexpensive sensors and a short hands-on introduction to the process of

interfacing these to performance software such as SuperCollider.

The whole group shared experiences during unstructured breaks with a structured sharing of experiences in the final session. Work in progress was captured and shared by facilitators moving from team to team. The overall ambition was to emulate a 'collaboration masterclass' as the most appropriate model for practice-based research workshops applying technology in the performing arts.

"The overall ambition was to find the most appropriate model for practice-based research workshops applying technology in the performing arts."

At the end of the day, all of the participants met over coffee to talk about the workshop: what they had achieved, whether it met their expectations and whether it was a good model for future events. The response was overwhelmingly positive - everyone had found the event both educational and enjoyable. Many had made contacts that they looked forward to exploring in the future; others had a taste of technologies that could take their work and art in new directions.

This is an extract from the full report of the workshop which is available at:

<http://www.methodsnetwork.ac.uk/activities/act13.html>

The Potential of High Speed Networks as a New Space for Cultural Research, Innovation and Production

Graziano Milano, Freelance Artist on the seminar he developed in partnership with King's College London and the MARCEL Network, supported by University of London Computer Centre, held at Centre for Computing in the Humanities, King's College, London. (19 March 2007).

This one-day seminar incorporated researchers from computing, arts and humanities disciplines, arts and media practitioners, cultural producers and representatives from UK independent media arts organizations. The scope of the event was to explore the potential of the high speed UK educational internet network 'SuperJanet' as a space for creative productions and to identify the opportunities for new types of research that innovative networked ICT tools may facilitate

between different sectors of the creative industries and the research base.

"It was an opportunity for researchers and representatives from the cultural industries to meet and discuss future challenges, strategies and collaborations."

This seminar was an important opportunity for the two communities to meet and discuss future challenges, strategies and collaborations in exploring the advanced use of grid and network technologies for new forms of research, innovation and production in the area of arts and humanities.

The morning session examined the innovative ways in which UK small media arts organizations and creative producers have been using network technologies. Artists Kelli Dipple, Ruth Catlow, Paul Sermon and Thor Magnusson each presented papers about a range of projects that have made use of high-speed networks and associated technologies based on their own experience as artists, curators and researchers.

Kelli Dipple considered remote and collaborative working methods, research and development processes, narrative, archiving and access. Her paper looked at her personal artistic practice alongside curatorial and institutional perspectives.

<http://www.macster.plus.com/gravelrash>

Ruth Catlow, co-director of Furtherfield.org, talked about her interest in developing 'artware' (software platforms for generating art) that relies on the creative and collaborative engagement of its users as co-producers in a network, rather than 'audience'. She described the development of Furtherfield's FurtherStudio with real-time, online residencies and VisitorsStudio, a platform for online, multi-user, audiovisual-jamming.

<http://www.furtherfield.org>

Paul Sermon's presentation focused on his work in the field of telematic arts. His work explores the emergence of a user-determined narrative by bringing remote participants together in a shared telepresent environment through the use of live chroma-keying and videoconferencing technology.

<http://www.paulsermon.org>



A still from Paul Sermon's telematic site-specific installation 'Headroom' produced at Taipei Artist's Village in April 2006

Lastly, Thor Magnusson, co-founder of the ixi software collective, spoke about his experience of musical collaboration over high-speed network and of software development. He highlighted the strong culture of using open source software to create unique musical instruments for the computer and demonstrated some examples from his own work.

<http://www.ixi-software.net>

The afternoon session revolved around an open discussion that addressed current working methods and research and access to high-speed networks in the UK. Delegates discussed problems and questions related to the creative process and creative practice that they had encountered in the pursuit of new forms of creative activities and productions. The session identified many mutual benefits that a closer working relationship between the UK Universities and the independent media arts organizations could facilitate. It was agreed that high-speed internet technology allows a more "seamless" connection between the artist/researcher/curator/archivist and the student and provides a crucial link to a wider audience for their work. Access to 'SuperJanet' brings structural and financial issues for small and medium arts organizations and delegates considered what strategies need to be pursued in order to achieve that. A possible initiative suggested during the day was the creation of a MARCEL working group to facilitate access to 'SuperJanet' for the UK independent Media Arts organizations. The forthcoming seminar report will summarize these discussions and make recommendations for ways in which this issue can be taken forward.

Service-Oriented Computing in the Humanities

Tobias Blanke, Research Associate, AHeSSC, considers this workshop jointly organized by the EPSRC Service-Oriented Software Research Network (SOSoRNet) and the Methods Network, held at Kings College London. (18 - 19 December 2006).



Speakers and participants at the workshop included application designers, researchers and service providers.

SOSoRNet (Service-Oriented Software Research Network) is an EPSRC-funded network to share best practice and research in service-oriented software systems and to bring together academic researchers and industrial

"A service-oriented approach in the arts and humanities would help link-up a fragmented community."

practitioners. SOSoRNet joined up with the Methods Network to organize a workshop at King's College London in December 2006 to examine the use of a service-oriented approach in humanities computing.

Service-orientation allows

the underlying platform implementation to be hidden making resources on the Internet available as independent services. The workshop brought together application designers, researchers, and service providers from the arts and humanities community. The presentations offered case studies demonstrating how computing based on loosely-coupled services already benefits the arts and humanities research communities, from archaeology to musicology. What follows is a selection from the case studies presented at the workshop.

Stuart Dunn, Research Associate for the Methods Network and AHeSSC, demonstrated how the workflow in archaeology might be enhanced by a networked and service-based approach. Workflow in archaeology is well-defined: an artefact is discovered and then connected to a corpus of previous work in the form of excavated artefacts, published interpretations and theories as well as survey data and research methodologies. Most of this information is available online. A service-oriented architecture that maps the archaeological research lifecycle can help make this information more accessible. This can be achieved by creating self-refreshing metadata repositories capturing information provided by linking past queries and answers. This approach would make standard archaeological collections more readily available and at the same time integrate searching functionality beyond simple keywords.

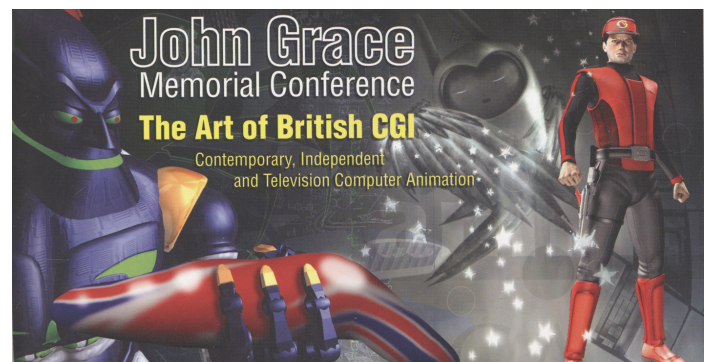
The Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) has been successful in preserving digital data from the UK's arts and humanities disciplines for more than 10 years. It is responsible for collecting, preserving, cataloguing, and distributing the most relevant digital resources in each subject area. Andreas Mavrides presented a project that aimed to embed the AHDS preservation process into a set of services that may be distributed and loosely coupled to serve an organization like the AHDS. Furthermore, the AHDS is looking at ways of automating the ingestion of materials and of generating associated metadata. They are reviewing the complete workflow from the moment of deposit by the creators to the final absorption into the repository held at the AHDS Executive. The challenges are to minimise human intervention while at the same time upholding the quality of preservation.

J. Stephen Downie, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), gave a presentation on the Music Information Retrieval Evaluation Exchange (MIREX). This seeks to repeat the success of the Text Retrieval Conferences (TREC) evaluation approach by applying it to music information retrieval. However MIREX differs from TREC in that the test collections cannot be freely distributed owing to copyright issues. The community is therefore experimenting with creating a service-oriented architecture to support the labour-intensive evaluation work. The International Music Information Retrieval Systems Evaluation Laboratory (IMIRSEL) at UIUC collaborated with the Automated Learning Group in the development of a Music-to-Knowledge (M2K) music mining and evaluation framework. M2K has now begun experimenting with web services, so that submitters may deal with their collections locally. Like the AHDS preservation workflow, this approach could remove work pressure from the central institution, IMIRSEL. While service orientation in the arts and humanities is still in its infancy, the workshop presented a strong case that such an approach would help a highly-fragmented community such as the arts and humanities through linking digital resources and promoting their reuse.

Talking CGI

Paul Wells, Director, Animation Academy, Loughborough University, writes about the panel discussion he organized as part of The Art of British CGI: Contemporary, Independent and Television Animation conference, Animation Academy, Loughborough University (15 February 2007).

The Animation Academy Research Group in the School of Art and Design at Loughborough University recently staged the John Grace Memorial Conference, The Art of British CGI, at the Broadway Media Centre in Nottingham. The conference addressed the history, achievements and innovation of British computer animation from the early 1970s to the present day.



The conference commemorated the work of British animator John Grace who was Research Fellow in Animation Studies at Loughborough University

"Digital technologies influence and effect animation aesthetically, technically and ethically."

The centrepiece of the day was the AHRC ICT Methods Network sponsored 'Talking CGI' panel, featuring Dave Mousley, Managing Director of leading visual effects company, Red Vision; Andy McNamara,

CG Supervisor at Condor Digital; Marc Craste, animation director at studio AKA, and Johnny Hardstaff, leading artist and film-maker and chaired by Paul Wells. The Talking CGI panel addressed the impact, influence and effect of digital technologies on 'animation' as a form, aesthetically, technically, and ethically.

Dave Mousley demonstrated 'Red Legion', the 'crowd' generation and simulation software for 3D live action drama and reconstruction. He showed how the animated characters were created as a group with 'uniform' movement dynamics before variations of speed, size, action, imperative and terrain were added to facilitate collective activity that was pertinent to photorealistic settings. These settings included battle scenes, collective labour and large gatherings in communal spaces as well as more fantastical or unusual contexts: thousands of cats occupying an everyday street or rarely seen ants in a jungle environment.

Andy McNamara's work, like that of many animators embracing complex briefs in the commercial sector, has been necessarily underpinned by an approach to problem solving that couples creative improvisation with specific applications of pertinent software. He described how design work for BBC2 proved particularly problematic because the iconic '2', the channel's brand identity, could in no way be altered or distorted.

Marc Craste spoke about his work on the BAFTA award-winning short, 'Jojo in the Stars', as well as commercials for the National Lottery and Lloyds TSB. Craste stressed that he wanted to challenge the dominant 'Pixar' aesthetic in CGI, and indeed in photorealistic animation, by 'dirtying up' the look of 'Jojo', using visual sources from German Expressionism to the Surrealist tendencies in the work of Georges Melies, Tod Browning and David Lynch.

Johnny Hardstaff, who is also committed to re-defining the CGI 'palette', noted some of the potential contradictions and ethical dilemmas in using computer software and hardware. His own work – often a re-contextualization of established visual idioms – seeks to offer subversive imagery as a model of undermining what he suggests is the 'corporatization' of contemporary digital culture. These views acted as a suitable provocateur for the panel/audience exchange that followed the presentations.

A key area of concern at the panel proved to be how computer animation could so easily facilitate 'photorealist' representation and therefore challenge the apparent 'integrity' of documentary or factual programming. The audience was also highly engaged with issues concerning authorship and representation. The panel and the audience response did much to reinforce the view that it is not the computer that makes art, but artists.

The work shown by the panellists was apt demonstration of the high quality and varied outcomes enabled by the progressive use of computer-generated imagery.

Video and audio files of the panel will be available on the Methods Network website.

Forthcoming Activities

The Methods Network welcomes applications from individuals who would like to attend Methods Network workshops and seminars, but we must emphasize that registration is essential for these activities. Occasionally a Methods Network event will be by invitation only, but all resulting materials, including (where appropriate) podcasts, wikis, training workbooks, reports and publications will be made freely available to the community via the Methods Network website. All enquiries about registration for the Methods Network activities listed below should be sent by email to methnet@kcl.ac.uk. For further information about forthcoming activities see the Methods Network website.

Data Sans Frontiers: Web Portals and the Historic Environment - A workgroup organized by Stuart Jeffrey, ADS/AHDS Archaeology, University of York (25 May 2007)

Developing an International Framework for Audit and Certification of Trusted Digital Repositories - A seminar organized by Joy Davidson, HATII, University of Glasgow (June 2007)

New Protocols for Electroacoustic Music Analysis - A workshop organized by Leigh Landy, De Montfort University (12 June 2007)

From Abstract Data Mapping to 3D Photorealism: Understanding Emerging Intersections in Visualisation Practices and Techniques - A workshop organized by Julie Tolmie, 3DVisA, Kings College, University of London (19 June 2007)

Real-time Collaborative Art Making - A workshop organized by Gregory Sporton, University of Central England (20 July 2007)

Space/Time: Methods in geospatial computing for mapping the past – A workgroup organized by Stuart Dunn, AHESSC, Kings College, University of London (23 - 24 July 2007)

Text Mining for Historians - A workshop organized by Zoe Bliss, AHDS History, University of Essex. (17 – 18 July 2007)

Opening the Creative Studio – a hybrid activity comprising presentations and workshops, organized by David Gorton, Royal Academy of Music (10 September - 30 November 2007)

Annotating Image Archives To Support Literary Research – A workshop organized by Omer Rana, University of Cardiff (October 2007)

INTIMACY: Performing the Intimate in Proximal and Hybrid Environments - a hybrid workshop/seminar activity, organized by Maria Chatzichristodoulou (22 - 24 November 2007)

Resources

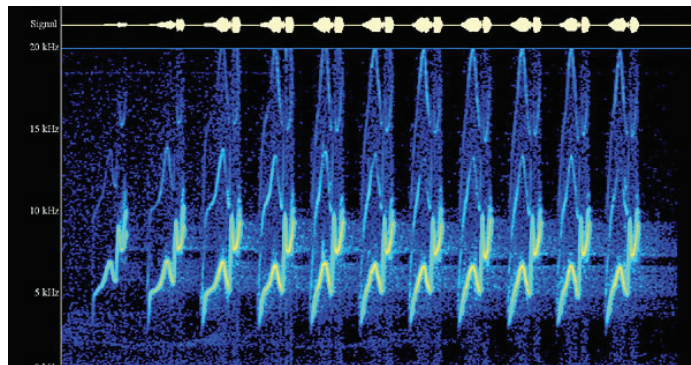
What digital tools can do for the arts and humanities

Neil Grindley, Senior Project Officer, AHRC ICT Methods Network, discusses the process of transforming Methods Network working papers into community resources

The idea for creating a series of 'working papers' followed on from the preparation of a paper for the 2006 DRHA (Digital Resources in the Humanities and Arts) conference held at Dartington College of Arts. This initial paper, entitled *What's in the Art Historian's Toolkit?* (<http://www.methodsnetwork.ac.uk/resources/workingpapers.html>), gives an overview of some of the tools and approaches available to those involved with art-historical research and purposefully introduces techniques more often associated with other subject areas such as corpus linguistics, computer science and literary studies.

"Working papers tackle tools usage from subject-specific standpoints."

The Methods Network has been set up, in part, to promote the benefits of adopting cross-disciplinary approaches and it is with this remit in mind that this series of working papers was conceived, the purpose of which is to tackle the broad theme of tools usage from a variety of different subject-specific standpoints.



Methods for musicology: tools such as Spectrogram 14 visualization software have advanced research in the area.

At the time of writing, several papers are available on the Methods Network website, and a number of others are imminent, following the incorporation of valuable and insightful comments from expert readers who have been invited to respond to first drafts of the documents. This iterative process of draft and response is intrinsic to the definition of these documents as 'working papers' and there is an expectation that those involved with the subjects referenced by the papers may wish to suggest amendments or contribute additional material.

In the case of the History Working Paper, Tools and Methods for Historical Research, it is currently possible to comment on the text (and indeed on any other aspect pertaining to 'Digital History') by registering and contributing to a new Methods Network forum that has been set up for the purpose (<http://www.digital-historian.net>). The expectation is that by opening out discussion about these documents to anyone with an interest in the topic, the original paper will be significantly enhanced by further commentary and may subsequently constitute a value-added resource that can be archived alongside other documentation that will be permanently available on the Methods Network website.

In the course of researching and writing the series, it has become apparent that although the theme of the papers is consistently broadly focused on the use of 'tools', it is not possible to apply a meaningful standard template to act as a framework for each of these documents. Although there is, inevitably, duplication across papers where techniques including text mining, mass digitization, geographical information systems, etc. are contextualized and briefly explained, the uptake and use of tools and techniques demonstrate different trajectories from discipline to discipline. As such, it is anticipated that the working papers may fulfil different functions for

different communities and may ultimately be useful in a number of non-exclusive ways.

- To provide a foundation document to provoke discussion and value-added commentary
- As reference documents that foreground links and references to other material
- As an introductory resource for researchers who are new to digital developments in a particular subject area
- As a knowledge-gathering exercise to assist the Methods Network with event organization and community-building activities

It is anticipated that on completion of the currently planned series of papers, there will be an opportunity to consider the use of tools across all subject areas and to generate a summary report outlining trends and patterns across the arts and humanities.

For information about forthcoming working papers, contact Neil Grindley (neil.grindley@kcl.ac.uk)

Illuminating advanced research methods: Methods Network case studies

Hazel Gardiner, Senior Project Officer, AHRC ICT Methods Network, highlights some of the research projects covered in Methods Network online case studies.

The Methods Network website hosts a series of case studies of research projects that employ advanced ICT methods as an integral part of the research process. These short studies form part of the range of support materials that the Methods Network provides for the arts and humanities community. Themes for case studies extend across arts and humanities disciplines and incorporate a range of technologies from the Access Grid to Robotics. As well as providing a resource and reference point for the community, Methods Network case studies also provide materials for the AHDS ICT Guides and feed into Methods Network community building activities. A few examples are given below.

“Case studies incorporate technologies from the Access Grid to Robotics.”

The potential of the Access Grid features heavily in any advanced methods context and among the case studies featured on the Methods Network website is that of the project Establishing Collaborative



The Plebeian Lives project shows the lives of ordinary people in eighteenth-century London. Marcellus Laroon the London Quaker (1688) reproduced courtesy of Tim Hitchcock

Postgraduate Research Programmes and Integrated Teaching Agendas using the Access Grid (Universities of Birmingham, Durham and Manchester and the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory). This project explores the application of Access Grid technologies in an educational context, aiming to investigate their scope across a range of issues from advancing delivery of and access to materials and resources to cross-institutional collaboration in teaching, harmonizing curricula, and enhancing postgraduate research student interaction between different institutions.

Another area of particular concern to the Methods Network is the integration

and repurposing of existing digital resources in order to advance scholarship. Plebeian Lives and the Making of Modern London, 1690-1800 is an exemplary model of such processes. This project, jointly run by the Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield and the University of Hertfordshire, aims to create a digital archive of manuscript and printed sources concerning the lives of ordinary people in eighteenth-century London, focusing on poor relief, criminal justice, and medical care. It incorporates a number of existing electronic resources, making use of recent technical advances in the analysis of multiple digital sources in order to construct individual life histories of eighteenth century Londoners. Collections of digitized resources are linked together using shared XML mark-up schema and sophisticated search engines, making it possible to assemble large and complex bodies of data from a variety of sources and extract key information from them.

On another theme, a distinctive approach to integrating finding aids may be seen in the experimental project Multidimensional Visualization of Archival Finding Aids based at the Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII) at the University of Glasgow. The project aims to create a ZigZagTM (<http://xanadu.com/zigzag>) implementation of two finding aids: the Gateway to Archives of Scottish Higher Education (GASHE) and Navigational Aids for the History of Science, Technology and the Environment (NAHSTE). It also aims to provide a multidimensional user interface which should prove a simple and intuitive means to navigate archival finding aids. Users will be able to view

multiple connections within and between archival collections that are currently difficult, if not impossible, to see.

For information about forthcoming case studies, contact Hazel Gardiner (hazel.gardiner@kcl.ac.uk)

Outreach and Community

Connecting the Nodes: New Approaches to Methods Network community building

Torsten Reimer, Senior Research Coordinator, AHRC ICT Methods Network, introduces expansions to Methods Network outreach activities.

Over the last two years, the Methods Network has supported the arts and humanities community by funding activities and making available a wide range of resources on the use of advanced ICT tools and methods within a research context. The variety of outputs and follow-ups resulting from our activities and the continued interest in our programme demonstrate the need for a forum to discuss and explore these comparatively new approaches. While being committed to continue this programme over the next year, we are also thinking about new ways to further enrich our activities, expand the outreach of the Methods Network and facilitate networking and collaboration between researchers and practitioners in the arts and humanities community – ideally beyond the existence of the Methods Network.

An important step in this direction will be the expansion of the 'Get Involved!' section of the Methods Network website over the next few months. As part of this, a Methods Network blog will be set up to encourage discussion by inviting guest authors from different backgrounds to comment on recent developments in their fields and the use of ICT in arts and humanities research in general. This blog will also focus on specific themes related to publications or events organized by the Methods Network or partner organizations such as the Arts and Humanities E-Science Support Centre (AHeSSC), and ICT Guides, a database comprising ICT methods, tools and projects hosted by the Arts and Humanities Data Service.

The wider community platform will eventually incorporate a variety of tools for online discussion and dissemination of information. It will allow comments on Methods Network resources and will point interested parties to other relevant resources. A forum to discuss the Methods

Network working paper Tools and Methods for Historical Research has already been set up: (<http://www.digital-historian.net>). Fora such as the 'Digital Historian' aim to promote and encourage debate with experts and practitioners in their respective fields as well as to provide additional resources and support to those who have just begun exploring the benefits of incorporating ICT methods in their research. By integrating this feedback into revised versions of the working papers or by directly feeding sections of the papers into other online communities (such as subject- or method-related wikis or mailing lists) we intend to turn these work-in-progress documents into community-driven resources that will ideally be kept up to date by their respective communities.

The Methods Network community platform will also have separate sections for our activities, giving the participants a space to discuss their interests and share information – before and after the respective event. This will facilitate the organization of follow-ups and the dissemination of selected materials and ideas to the community – allowing those not present at the activity to follow the discussion and take part in it. We also hope to encourage new ways of interaction between our users, for instance by exploring the integration of 'folksonomies' into the system: this would allow users to tag resources or even comments in a discussion forum and thereby create their own taxonomy that would react to new developments within a very dynamic area of research. Users will also be able to share their profiles, which will facilitate the making of new contacts, particularly as community activities initiated by our partner projects AHeSSC and ICT Guides will also take place on the same platform.

For all questions or suggestions please contact Torsten Reimer (torsten.reimer@kcl.ac.uk)

"The community platform is an opportunity to continue Methods Network activities beyond the existence of the project."

Apply for Funding from the AHRC ICT Methods Network

deadline 30 June 2007

Hazel Gardiner, Senior Project Officer, AHRC ICT Methods Network, reports on the call for proposals for activities.

The Methods Network invites the arts and humanities Higher Education community in the UK to submit proposals for Methods Network activities. Activities may include workshops, seminars, focused workgroups, postgraduate training events and publications.

The Methods Network is keen to support both single- and cross-disciplinary proposals and those that encourage new collaborative frameworks between technical specialists and arts and humanities researchers. The primary emphasis is on the use and reuse of digital resources.

Proposals for hybrid activities such as workshop / seminar / workgroup combinations are also welcomed, as are proposals for any other activity which falls within the Methods Network remit to support and promote the uses of advanced ICT methods in academic research.

Funding of up to £5000 is available for workshops and hybrid activities. Workshops provide training in advanced ICT methods for community members within academic institutions. They engage with issues such as: formal methods in analysis of source data and the creation of technical models; working with multiple technologies; and other matters of vital practical interest to the community.

Funding of up to £2000 is available for seminars. These may concentrate on highly-defined topics of interest and also problem areas within the community or may have a more general focus.

For information on eligibility and how to apply for funding see the Methods Network website. Please be aware that all applicants are expected to submit fully-formed proposals with full programme, budget and projected outcome details and with particular emphasis on the research significance of the proposed activity. Applications that fail to provide all required details will not be considered for funding. For further information about submitting a proposal contact Hazel Gardiner (hazel.gardiner@kcl.ac.uk).

Bursaries for Postgraduate Students

The Methods Network is committed to building a community of scholars who use advanced ICT methods in research in the arts and humanities, and has developed a bursary initiative to support postgraduate students. The scheme is intended to support students who wish to present papers at the Digital Resources for the Humanities and Arts (DRHA) Conference or to attend the Computers and the History of Art (CHArt) Conference.

Bursary winners in 2005 and 2006 felt that they had gained tremendously from being able to attend conferences which they otherwise could not afford. Most importantly, attending conferences such as CHArt and DRHA provides students with the opportunity to make contact with academics and practitioners in a focused environment where developing ideas might be discussed and advanced.

To be eligible to apply for a Methods Network bursary, you must be a postgraduate student engaged in full or part-time study at a British academic institution. Further information and an online application form are available on the Methods Network website.

3DVisA Student Award 2007

Deadline 1 October 2007



**3D Visualisation
in the Arts Network**

Anna Bentkowska-Kafel, Research Fellow, 3DVisA, outlines a new student award scheme.

The JISC 3D Visualization in the Arts Network (3DVisA) invites submissions to the 3DVisA Student Award 2007. The award will be for an essay on an innovative application of 3D computer graphics to any area of study in the arts and humanities. The winning essay will be published by 3DVisA and the author will receive a bursary of up to £300, sponsored by the AHRC Methods Network, to attend a UK conference of his or her choice. The 3DVisA Student Award is also sponsored by Intellect and Prestel publishers.

This award will be made to an undergraduate, postgraduate or Ph.D. student currently registered in the UK. The completed essay and application form must be submitted by 1 October 2007. The winner will be announced by 14 December 2007 and the winning essay published in the 3DVisA Bulletin in March 2008. Further details are available at <http://www.methodsnetwork.ac.uk/community/3dvisaaward.html>.

ICT Guides

An introduction to ICT Guides

Craig Bellamy, Research Associate, ICT Guides, writes about new developments for this initiative.



ICT Guides is a JISC-funded initiative housed at the AHDS, King's College London.

The purpose of ICT Guides is to provide a focal point for new and established digital arts and humanities researchers to find out about projects, the technical methods and tools they employ, and the individuals and centres involved in their realization.

The first iteration of ICT Guides was launched in late 2006 at De Montfort University. During this first stage of development, projects constructed within a UK funding council context were listed. In this next stage, projects created within specific subject communities, and employing specialized methods, are being emphasized which gives scope to include projects from all corners of the globe. This may include communities around say, nineteenth-century history and electronic textual studies, or the history of reading and the methods employed in gathering and presenting evidence. Recent additions to ICT Guides have included the PARADESIC (the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures) project from Australia, and an e-Science demonstrator project, Virtual Vellum. This project investigates technologies that facilitate the retrieval, manipulation and annotation ('hotspotting') of very high-resolution image datasets using the UK's high capacity Research Grid.

ICT Guides also intends to explore the development of a Virtual Research Environment (VRE), using open-source technologies such as SAKAI and encompassing bulletin boards, Wikis, and other such applications. It is hoped that this facility will give project developers an online space for discussion of their technical methodologies.

eSCIENCE

eScience arts and humanities theme begins

Stuart Dunn, Research Associate, AHeSSC, outlines the first phase of theme activities.

AHeSSC is undertaking a major series of activities in collaboration with the e-Science Institute (eSI), part of the National e-Science Centre in Edinburgh. Funding has been won for a 'theme' on arts and humanities e-Science. eSI themes aim to 'achieve new insights into a specific topic by investigating it in depth over a sustained period'. The AHeSSC theme will commence on 30 April 2007 and finish on 31 March 2008.

The first phase of activities will comprise seven public lectures. Sheila Anderson, director of the AHDS and co-director of AHeSSC, will provide an opening lecture on 30 April, which will set out the theme's aims and its context as defined by the AHDS e-Science Scoping Study. David Robey, Director of the AHRC ICT Programme, will follow Sheila Anderson's lecture with a presentation on the AHRC-JISC-EPSC e-Science Initiative, its impact and likely outcomes.

"The theme will investigate arts and humanities e-Science in depth."

The remaining lectures will comprise two or more speakers. A leading arts or humanities e-Science early adopter will give a presentation on the cutting-edge work they are engaged in, followed by a paper from a scientific expert giving a technical perspective on the issues raised.

- **18 June - David Shepherd** and colleagues from the universities of Sheffield and Lancaster will discuss **Methods and Technologies for Enabling Virtual Research Communities**, an overview of how artists and humanists can employ advanced methods and technologies in collaboration.
- **19 June - Mark Greengrass** (University of Sheffield, and an Associate Director of the Methods Network) and **Oscar Corcho** from Manchester University, will lecture on **Ontologies and Semantic Interoperability for Humanities Data**. This is a critical topic in particular for historical and textual studies.
- **20 June - Gabriel Bodard** (King's College London), **Juan Garces** (The British Library) and **Jean Carletta**

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(Edinburgh University) will elaborate on last year's Methods Network workshop on **Collaborative Text Editing**.

- **2 July** - **Mark Hedges** (AHDS), **Melissa Terras** (University College London), **Shirley Crompton** (Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils) will discuss **Grid Enabling Humanities Datasets**, an issue that will become increasingly important as grid scientists and arts and humanities scholars engage ever more closely.
- **6 July** - **e-Science and Performance** will be addressed by **Gregory Sporton** (University of Central England), **Russell Beale** (University of Birmingham) and **Angela Piccini** (Bristol University).
- **23 July** – The final lecture will be given by **Stuart Jeffrey** (AHDS Archaeology) and **Femke Reistma** (University of Edinburgh) on **Aspects of Space and Time in Humanities e-Science**.

The final lecture will be followed immediately by the Methods Network workshop **Space and Time: Methods in Geospatial Computing for Mapping the Past**, convened by **Stuart Dunn** (AHeSSC) and **Leif Isaksen** (Oxford Archaeology). This direct collaboration between the AHeSSC theme and the Methods Network will seek to provide a discipline-wide overview of geospatial methodologies in the key areas of Scale, Heterogeneity and Standards and Metadata. **Vince Gaffney** (University of Birmingham), **William Kilbride** (Glasgow Museums) and **Tom Elliott** (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) are confirmed as keynote speakers, and each session will be rapporteured by a distinguished scholar.

More information is available on the AHeSSC website (<http://www.ahessc.ac.uk/theme>). Further details may also be obtained from Stuart Dunn (stuart.dunn@kcl.ac.uk) or Tobias Blanke (tobias.blanke@kcl.ac.uk).