

Call for Expressions of Interest for Participation in an AHRC Workshop on UK-Ireland Collaboration in the Digital Humanities

Introduction

The AHRC is pleased to announce a call for participants to attend a workshop on “UK-Ireland Collaboration in the Digital Humanities”. Organised in partnership with the Irish Research Council (IRC), the event will convene 50-60 leading experts from both countries to build a platform for new partnerships and projects that enhance the integration of humanities and technology in Digital Humanities development and build capacity across disciplines

The workshop will take place in Dublin from 22nd-23rd October 2019 and launch a new 3-year programme focused on UK-Ireland collaboration in Digital Humanities research for which the AHRC has received funding from the [UKRI Fund for International Collaboration](#). It will play a key role in shaping the thematic priorities to be taken forward through the programme and embedded within future funding calls, and in building the partnerships that will respond to the opportunities and challenges underpinning the programme.

Context

Digital Humanities represents a transformative and rapidly growing field in Ireland and the UK with well-established centres of excellence and innovation in both countries. It uses information and communication technologies to preserve artefacts, to make them more accessible to researchers and the public, and to analyse and mine their information in new and previously impossible ways.

Due to different patterns of funding and disciplinary alignments in the UK and Ireland, Digital Humanities has evolved in contrasting but complementary ways. In the UK, there has been significant investment in digitization projects (with a much larger corpus of digitized material than in Ireland). Due to the fact that much of this funding has come from the AHRC however, these projects often do not have the same interdisciplinary infrastructure or access to cross-disciplinary collaborations with Information and Communications Technology that exist in Ireland where funding has come from the Irish Research Council. Digital Humanities capacity in Ireland has also been more closely aligned with EU frameworks, including DARIAH, whereas the UK infrastructure has mainly been constructed through national frameworks such as AHDS and JISC. These contrasting models allow for important comparative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of different models of research infrastructure.

The programme being launched by this workshop seeks to exploit these complementary strengths by establishing new research partnerships that will deliver a transformational impact on Digital Humanities research in the UK and Ireland. It is anticipated that enhanced collaboration will achieve

a broad range of academic, social and economic impacts, for example by fostering new partnerships with the creative industries sector; enhancing public access to and engagement with cultural heritage; creating new standards in open access; and supporting new learning, educational and professional skills. More specifically, closer collaboration between Ireland and the UK will yield transformative step-changes in Digital Humanities scholarship including:

- Better integration of humanities and technology development in Digital Humanities, delivering major improvements in human-computer interaction by changing the constraints under which technological innovation is undertaken;
- Creation of more socially embedded and responsive technologies that are able to balance the needs of consumers, citizens and corporations, generating in turn improvements in the comprehensibility and legibility of big data and AI systems;
- Improved integration of AI assisted text mining methods with traditional critical and interpretative methodologies in the humanities through exploration of large scale historical and cultural data sets that will build and strengthen world class research capacity for interdisciplinary challenge-based research;
- A skills pipeline that produces data scientists who are able to integrate their work into a humanistic frame of reference and evaluate the ethical or cultural impact of digital technology, as well as digital humanists who are able to work across the humanities and technology sectors.

Workshop Aims

The workshop will be a key early-phase activity and provide an important platform for the delivery of the programme over subsequent years. Specifically, it aims to:

- Officially launch the programme;
- Convene leading research experts from the UK and Ireland in order to build new interdisciplinary partnerships around the vision, aims and objectives of the programme;
- Explore the complementary strengths of the UK and Ireland in the Digital Humanities and the value of working in closer collaboration in order to achieve world-leading standards;
- Identify thematic priorities to be taken forward by the partners and embedded within future funding calls.

Workshop format and themes

The workshop will focus on creating a discursive, open dialogue environment that is conducive to the generation of new ideas and helps to refine priorities and objectives. Whilst the exact format and agenda will be refined with Irish partners in due course, it is anticipated that this will include networking sessions; plenary discussions on the key opportunities and challenges; group discussions focused on specific topics; and prioritisation exercises that help to map future priorities to be taken forward by the AHRC and IRC.

It is anticipated that discussions will focus on themes including, but not limited to:

- Contemporary / disruptive approaches in the Digital Humanities: e.g. AI and virtual /augmented reality and legal and ethical issues relating to the digital;
- The creative industries and cultural heritage;

- The digital humanities and societal challenges.

The workshop will reflect the inherently multi-disciplinary nature of Digital Humanities scholarship and researchers with appropriate expertise from across the breadth of the arts and humanities are encouraged to apply. We also welcome applications from other disciplines where a capacity to engage with and enrich the overarching aims of the programme can be demonstrated.

Outputs

It is important to note that this workshop is not intended to be a stand-alone event, rather it is an opportunity to network, form partnerships, share expertise and begin discussions that will foster future collaborative activity in the field. As above, the workshop will play a key role in informing the thematic priorities to be taken forward by the programme and in future collaborative research activity supported by the partners.

It is anticipated that the AHRC and IRC will launch a joint call for Research Networking awards shortly after the workshop in order to consolidate partnerships and refine priorities. Further information on this call will be made available soon.

The AHRC intends to commission a report summarising the findings of the workshop and recommending next steps. This will be a key working document for the partners and serve to shape future activity and joint funding calls.

Call for Expressions of Interest

Expressions of interest to participate in the workshop are invited from UK-based researchers who meet AHRC's [standard eligibility requirements](#). Applicants should have a particular research interest in the topics outlined above and be able to demonstrate both the insights and approaches they would seek to bring to the workshop and what they would seek to gain from it.

Expressions of interest are welcome from researchers at all stages of their careers, including early career researchers. The AHRC expects to support the attendance of around 20-30 UK-based delegates, with the IRC identifying a similar number of experts based at Irish institutions.

To apply to attend, please complete the following Smart Survey questionnaire:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UK-IrelandCollaborationintheDigitalHumanitiesScopingWorkshop-EOI/>

The AHRC will process the information you send for the purposes of workshop attendance only, and the information will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Deadline for Submission of Eoi: 26th September 2019, 4pm (GMT)

Expressions of interest will be assessed by the AHRC, against the following criteria:

- Fit to call: the strength of the case made to attend the workshop and ability to support the realisation of its aims;
- Track record: a demonstrable history of research excellence, or equivalent professional experience, appropriate to career setting and stage;
- Development: the potential of the workshop to add value to the research and professional experience of the applicant, including the benefits of engaging with a wider network of individuals and organisations from the UK and Ireland, and the potential for those parties to benefit from the experience and perspectives of the applicant;
- Long-term plans: the ability of the applicant to perceive and articulate the longer-term potential benefits of the workshop, including to their own research, their discipline/field, and in terms of wider activity.

We aim to inform applicants of EoI outcomes by 4th October 2019.

Costs Covered

In line with the standard [AHRC Travel and Subsistence policy](#), the AHRC will pay for all transport (standard class), accommodation and subsistence costs incurred during the event. Detailed information about logistics and procedures will follow upon acceptance of an offer to attend. Please note that all costs will need to be claimed back through the AHRC expenses process.

Contact

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