

CREATE NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR DIGITAL HUMANITIES RESEARCHERS



Photo credits: Andrea Kane, photographer;
taken at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton.

DELIVER UPON THE POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES

New Technology Delivers Enhanced Discovery

Emerging from the field of humanities computing which dates back to the late 1940s, digital humanities is, in many ways, still a growing discipline. With that growth comes exciting opportunities for researchers and libraries and a host of challenges to consider.

For researchers, digital humanities scholarship is fueling new ways of interrogating content, analyzing insights and communicating discoveries, while also fundamentally shifting how scholars partner together to make new types of research possible. Collaboration is a key driver of change, as people with diverse backgrounds and skills come together to address common barriers centered on the application of new tools to content that isn't always prepped and accessible.

As expert content curators and skilled technologists, librarians are natural collaborators throughout this process. Libraries around the world are embracing the opportunity to help faculty and students navigate ground-breaking research methodologies and achieve new outcomes. While funding for humanities resources is increasingly limited, digital humanities initiatives typically garner more support than traditional programs, positioning libraries well to actively engage at every step of the process.

Together with libraries, Gale is poised to help colleges and universities launch, enhance or accelerate their digital scholarship programs. Gale's *Digital Scholar Lab*, developed with participation from beta testers across a wide range of institutions and organizations, is designed specifically to provide the opportunity for researchers of all levels to engage with the humanities in entirely new ways. By integrating an unmatched depth and breadth of digital primary source content with the most popular digital humanities tools, Gale's *Digital Scholar Lab* provides a new lens through which to explore history, empowering researchers to generate world-altering conclusions and outcomes.



CHALLENGES PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES

Academic librarians have long provided researchers with the necessary resources to excel in their scholarly pursuits—from incoming freshmen assignments to the demands of doctorate studies. With the emerging emphasis on digital humanities, challenges have emerged:

ACCESS TO QUALITY CONTENT

Authoritative content is not always accessible or in a usable format, leading some scholars to spend years collecting and months preparing content sets, often through arduous curation and cleaning processes that don't leverage the collections and/or expertise available through their libraries.

CHALLENGES IN HOSTING CONTENT

While Gale has provided hard drives to support text and data mining for more than a decade, libraries still encounter challenges hosting content in an environment that supports researchers' access and workflow.

INTIMIDATING AND COMPLEX TOOLS

The exhaustive possibilities and volume of tools for engaging with digital humanities data can be difficult for beginning researchers to navigate.

SUPPORT STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

Designed with an extensively user-tested, intuitive interface, Gale's *Digital Scholar Lab* provides a familiar navigational environment to support both students who are new to data mining as well as seasoned scholars. It combines analysis-ready raw text data with digital tools and customizable algorithms to create visualizations and analyses crucial to successful digital scholarship.

REMOVE BARRIERS TO DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP

Finding, cleaning, and organizing data for analysis is a key consideration in the process of text mining that is necessary to generate meaningful results. Gale's *Digital Scholar Lab* removes these barriers and streamlines the workflow process, allowing researchers to spend more time identifying previously undiscovered data, testing theories, analyzing results, and gaining new insights.

CREATE AWARENESS OF YOUR LIBRARY'S ASSETS

Gale's *Digital Scholar Lab* enhances the value of existing and future Gale Primary Sources by making the essential archive content open to new research methods and new researchers. This gives the library an opportunity to develop and strengthen connections with faculty and students, and to demonstrate the impact of library collections on research and teaching outcomes.

THE POTENTIAL OF THE DIGITAL SCHOLAR LAB

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Gale's *Digital Scholar Lab* offers a straightforward entry point into digital humanities while providing value to established practitioners.

THE PROMISE OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES



Academia has always brought forth significant opportunities for exploration, growth, and unforeseen discovery, and I believe the digital humanities to be a significant paradigm shift. The digital humanities encourage scholars to look at their areas of research through a new lens, using computational methodologies to approach, visualize, and present their research to an audience—both scholarly and general—through the harnessing of a technological aesthetic.

The digital humanities support and often necessitate interdisciplinary work among humanists, social scientists, computer scientists, artists, and more. The collaborative approach to scholarship fosters professional and scholarly networks, sometimes “nudging” us from a more familiar comfort zone of independent work. While the providing significant promise to advance scholarship and pedagogy, the enormity of opportunity can overwhelm new practitioners.



Wendy Perla Kurtz, Ph.D. Digital Humanities Specialist Gale, a Cengage company.

To learn more about Wendy's background in digital humanities visit gale.com/scholarlab

GATHERING AND PREPARING CONTENT

Sourcing available datasets can be challenging, while curating, cleaning, and organizing content for analysis is extremely time consuming. Faced with overburdened course schedules, instructors have limited time to gather materials, and the end results don't always support core needs. The *Digital Scholar Lab* allows students and scholars to focus on their fundamental research questions and explore new ways to approach them while improving digital literacy.

A TOOL BUILT FOR HUMANISTS

While there are tools specifically designed to support digital humanities research and pedagogy, many emerge from other fields such as medicine or urban planning. Practitioners must evaluate tools to determine which will best meet goals without compromising objectives. The *Digital Scholar Lab* was developed specifically for the use of humanists to compile and explore large corpora of documents.

A SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Rather than spend funds to host text-mining content available to a limited number of individuals, the *Digital Scholar Lab* provides a cloud-based solution for anyone, anytime, anywhere access via the Internet.

A RESOURCE FOR TEACHING AND INSTRUCTION



Gale's *Digital Scholar Lab* streamlines and facilitates the workflows of running a text mining project. Rather than spending significant time and energy with the technological roadblocks of launching a text mining project, instructors can highlight the more theoretical implications of the project workflow to then fully explore them with their students.

Whether discussing the OCR process, metadata standards, data set creation or topics related to distant reading and interpretations of visualizations, Gale's *Digital Scholar Lab* makes intuitive and appropriate levels of digital literacy available to students.

While Gale's *Digital Scholar Lab* alleviates some of the difficulties associated with the traditional workflows of text mining and visualization projects, that doesn't mean that the analysis tools, their implications, and the interpretation of output is easy to perform. Gale's *Digital Scholar Lab* surfaces the complexities of the process, especially for novice users who may not realize the inherent decision-making required in something as fundamental as what constitutes an archive.



Sarah Ketchley, Ph.D. Egyptology, teaches introductory courses in digital humanities and digital scholarship to graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Washington and is a Digital Humanities Specialist at Gale. Hear her thoughts on how Gale's *Digital Scholar Lab* supports classroom instruction.

GALE'S COMMITMENT TO ONGOING SUPPORT OF DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP

Gale's longstanding commitment to innovation in scholarly endeavors has allowed us to consistently develop and deliver solutions that encourage discovery at all levels. We have supported digital scholarship for more than a decade by providing Text Data Mining drives with raw text data and we also recognized the need for a resource to support digital scholarship as a critical initiative in academia.

Our product specialists, who each have vast expertise in digital scholarship, will provide the support needed to deliver a seamless and engaging experience.

GET STARTED

Contact your rep or go to gale.com/scholarlab to request a trial and learn more about how the *Digital Scholar Lab* will help launch, enhance or accelerate your digital scholarship program.

