

Announcement

Announcing the Linked Open Data (LOD) Special Interest Group

We are pleased to announce the formation of a new Alliance of Digital Humanities Organisations [Special Interest Group](#), the ADHO LOD SIG. Linked Open Data (LOD) conveys the idea of the Web as platform for loosely-coupled, distributed services that offer data in an accessible, open way, following the [Linked Data principles](#) as described by Tim Berners-Lee.

A large number of DH projects generate data. When this data is published as LOD, both scholars and machines are able to combine data from different projects, creating new datasets for research. DH is making extensive use of open source software and open access venues for publication. The same reasons for releasing research reporting and software products under open licenses - transparency, serendipity and social responsibility - should encourage us to release our research data as LOD as well.

The Mission of the ADHO Linked Open Data (LOD) SIG is to bridge between the DH community and the semantic web community, encouraging and facilitating the interconnection and interoperability of open online Humanities resources, by raising awareness of new developments (both content and technology) and discussing and developing best practices.

To that end, a website (WHICH ONE?), twitter account (@LODDH) and listserv for the LOD SIG have been created to encourage and facilitate communication among members. Please consider subscribing to the listserv to stay informed as the SIG gets underway ([subscribe here](#)).

A copy of the proposal as approved by the ADHO steering committee is [HERE](#). The SIG encourages additional members from all fields and all regions of the globe. More information on joining the SIG can be found [HERE](#).

ADHO Linked Open Data SIG

Rationale

Various initiatives in the digital humanities (DH) have sought to develop an infrastructure for DH research. One of the more promising platforms, coming from outside of DH, is the web-as-platform as part of the semantic web effort: loosely-coupled, distributed services using

resource oriented architectures¹ and linked open data (LOD)². This platform provides all of the affordances sought in the larger infrastructure projects, but unlike these other projects, the web does not seek to centralize control of any resources. The web-as-platform and LOD maximize the agency of all participants.

This ability to create purposeful mashups is the great benefit of LOD. A large number of DH projects generate data. When this data is published as LOD, scholars are able to combine data from different projects, creating a new dataset for their research. DH has embraced open access as shown by the number of open access journals focused on the field. Projects release software as open source. The same reasons for releasing research reporting and software products under open licenses should encourage us to release research data as LOD.

Linked Open Data by this definition is guided by the Linked Open Data 'rules' described by Tim Berners-Lee at: <http://www.w3.org/DesignIssues/LinkedData.html>

1. Use URIs as names for things
2. Use HTTP URIs so that people can look up those names.
3. When someone looks up a URI, provide useful information, using the standards (RDF*, SPARQL)
4. Include links to other URIs. so that they can discover more things.

With the adjunct rule (rule zero) that the data should be openly available on the Web.

We do not expect that all resources should adopt all rules, but see this as an *aspirational goal*, acknowledging that this will be an organic process, leading to unexpected and serendipitous connectivity over time. Technologies typically deployed in an LOD context (RDF, SPARQL, and above all HTTP URIs) do not provide a complete solution set for DH challenges, let alone Humanities challenges, but function as 'glue' between larger systems in which other technologies (such as JavaScript, JSON, web mapping, etc.) come into play.

Undertaking this process is by no means straightforward and many of the challenges are social rather than technical. In particular there is a need for *conventional* (as opposed to *standardised*) adoption of URI-based vocabularies for shared concept schemes, which may include places, people or thesaurus terms. Furthermore, any given resource set will only ever capture an infinitely small fraction of the potential range of human, cultural and social phenomena of interest to Humanists and the wider public. Thus, a fundamental question for all such resource providers is to indicate how their contribution might articulate with an infinitely extensible range of current and future complementary datasets.

¹ Fielding, Roy Thomas. *Architectural Styles and the Design of Network-based Software Architectures*. Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Irvine (2000).
<<http://www.ics.uci.edu/~fielding/pubs/dissertation/top.htm>>

² O'Reilly, Tim. "What is Web 2.0: Design patterns and business models for the next generation of software." *Communications & strategies* 1 (2007): 18-.

Given the social nature of these questions, it is extremely important to maintain a public forum in which those with an interest in LOD in the Digital Humanities, can encounter colleagues with related interests (in terms of content, information structures, or both), and assist them in the process of relating their work in ways that improve their discovery and cross-navigability.

Mission

The Mission of the ADHO Linked Open Data (LOD) SIG is to bridge between the DH community and the semantic web community of practice, encouraging and facilitating the *interconnection* and interoperability of open online Humanities resources, by raising awareness of new developments (both content and technology) and discussing and developing best practices.

Anticipated Activities

The SIG will predominantly act as an online forum for:

- a) the mutual discovery of projects that wish to connect openly and multilaterally
- b) identification of common controlled vocabularies, gazetteers and thesauri
- c) discussing best practice in SKOS, vocabulary management, semantic annotation for specific use cases.³
- d) promote wider understanding of LOD among digital humanists:
 - i) coordinating workshops for THATCamp and relevant conferences
 - ii) publish white papers and reports for practitioners
 - iii) suggest/develop curricula
- e) fostering cross-links to SIGs concerned with LOD in other domains.⁴

Structure

The ADHO LOD SIG is open to anyone with an interest in LOD and its use and potential for the Digital Humanities. It will be represented in the ADHO by a Co-ordinator who is a member of of an ADHO Constituent Organisation. This position will be re-elected annually by blind poll. A Co-ordinator will not be able to serve more than one consecutive term. Failure to identify a candidate for to act as Co-ordinator will lead to the dissolution of the SIG.

Resources

The ADHO LOD SIG will establish whatever free-for-use digital resources (blogs, wikis, data-hosting, etc.) as are necessary to undertake its activities effectively.

³ including ontologies such as Open Annotation: <http://www.openannotation.org/>

⁴such as Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums: <http://lodlam.net>, and the Open Knowledge Foundation: <http://lists.okfn.org/mailman/listinfo/open-humanities>

Expressions of interest

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