

Human Computation and the Humanities (HCH)

February 22-23, 2014

Columbia University

Conference Organizers:

Jonathan Lawhead, MPhil (PhD candidate, Columbia University)
Daniel Estrada, MA (PhD candidate, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)

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Conference Description:

Human computation is an emerging area of transdisciplinary research. The field draws on insights from computer science, complexity theory, psychology, network theory, economics, engineering, machine learning, and many other disciplines to explore the computational potential of systems in which humans and machines collaborate to solve problems. Successful applications of the theory of human computation include von Ahn's reCAPTCHA, Amazon.com's mechanical turk, computationally significant games like Fold.it's protein folding puzzle game, and Google's Waze platform for monitoring traffic and road conditions.

While human computation is traditionally seen as field dominated by mathematically-oriented work, there is room for significant humanistic contribution. Human Computation and the Humanities (HCH) is designed to bring philosophers, historians, literary theorists, and other humanities scholars interested in human computation into dialog both with one another and with more traditional human computation researchers. Mary Catherine Bateson, in her introduction to the recent *Springer Handbook on Human Computation*, suggests that this field may potentially offer "models of interdependence and connectivity that will convey to those who work with them the conviction that individual voices and actions count." The study of human computation thus raises a number of issues relevant to the humanities, including the

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The study of human computation thus raises a number of issues relevant to the humanities, including the

nature of collective intelligence, the metaphysics of complex systems, the prerequisites for social collaboration, the ethics of privacy, the politics of self-organized societies, and many others.

We're interested in exploring this complex of questions from a transdisciplinary point of view--one that emphasizes collaboration between the humanities and the sciences. This conference would be a supplement and follow-up to the more general AAAI Conference on Human Computation and Crowdsourcing (HCOMP-2013), held November 6-9, 2013 in Palm Springs, California, USA, and would also come on the heels of the publication of Springer's *Handbook of Human Computation* in December 2013. These two events will provide ample fodder for cross-talk between the humanities and the sciences.

HCH is structured to maximize the opportunities for interdisciplinary engagement and reflection on a broad spectrum of topics related to human computation. HCH will highlight the transdisciplinary nature of the study of human computation, and engage with areas of academia and culture that might not generally participate in the discourse surrounding information processing and computation.

We invite proposals for both paper and panel presentations from scholars working in any field related to human computation. Submitted abstracts should be of approximately 300-400 words, and associated papers should be suitable for approximately 30 minute presentation time (4,000-5,000 words). Proposed panel discussions should include a clear description of the panel's topic, its relationship to human computation, and a suggested list of invited participants.

Proposals must be submitted by December 22, 2013, and should be submitted via email to swarm.over.glass@gmail.com. Decisions will be announced by January 13, 2014. The HCH will be held on February 22 and 23, and will take place on the campus of Columbia University. Travel funding may be available for selected participants.

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