AHRC ICT Methods Network Expert Seminar

SUSTAINABILITY OF DIGITAL RESOURCES IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Franklin-Wilkins Building, King's College, London, Wednesday 29 November 2006

PROGRAMME

Investment in digitization initiatives over the past 15 years has created a critical mass of digital resources for the arts and humanities, and use of these resources is changing the way that scholars do research. However, there are concerns over the long-term sustainability of these resources. The recent AHRC Resource Enhancement Scheme Review noted that sustainability was an issue for a 'significant number' of projects. Projects require maintenance to respond to technological and software developments allowing continued access to the resource and its functionality for users. Long-term projects require continued funding and staff time to develop the resource in terms of additional material, editing, indexing and cross-referencing. Whilst deposit of such resources with the AHDS ensures preservation of the data, full functionality of the resource is still not guaranteed for many resources. The question goes beyond that of 'preservation' of digital data. It concerns the long-term management of these resources over the entire 'digital life cycle'. This includes support for users of the resources; an understanding and awareness of methodologies of use; institutional commitment to digital resources and integration of research resources within institutional research cultures.

The AHRC ICT Methods Network Expert Seminar addressed these issues from a number of perspectives: that of the funding agencies who support this work; project directors who are involved in the development of digital resources; directors of centres and organizations with a remit to sustain digital resources over the long term; users of digital resources; and representatives from other communities, including libraries and archives. The event provided an opportunity to explore the question of sustainability in some detail, and to make some strategic recommendations for how this agenda might be taken forward in the arts and humanities, as well as to learn about work going on in this area in other research communities. We hope that the outcomes of this event might also contribute to the AHRC's strategies on sustainability.

10.00	*Registration*
	Introduction – Lorna Hughes (Rapporteur)
10.30	David Robey, AHRC ICT Programme, UK.
11.00	Suzanne Lodato, The Andrew W Mellon Foundation, US.
11.30	*Coffee*
12:00	Sheila Anderson, Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS), London, UK.*
12.30	Response to morning session, and discussion
13.00	*Lunch*
14.00	Michael Jubb, Research Information Network (RIN), London, UK.
14.30	Rob Procter, National Centre for e-Social Science (NCeSS), University of Manchester, UK.*
15:00	*Tea and Coffee*
15.30	David Bates and Jane Winters, Institute of Historical Research (IHR), University of London, UK
16:00	David Shepherd, Humanities Research Institute (HRI), University of Sheffield, UK.
16.30	Concluding discussion
17.00	*End*

*Sheila Anderson and Rob Proctor were unable to present papers as planned.