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Building a participative digital humanities network: the Potsdam example



Data-SHS Week
Framing Workshop : “Visual Ecology & Archives”
Nanterre, 12 december 2025



What is the DH Network Potsdam?

tl;dr: An collaborative network of researchers from various disciplines trying to promote digital methods in the humanities at Potsdam University and beyond.

Key Facts:

- First phase: started in 2018 and running until 2024
- Second phase: 2025-2027, identified as *Potenzialbereich* by the UP
- 35+ members from multiple institutions
- Integrated into national and international collaboration networks
- Brings together technical expertise with humanities knowledge and methods



Mission and Strategy

Core goals:

- Foster the development of digital projects at the University of Potsdam's Arts Faculty
- Establish Potsdam as a leading hub for digital humanities research and training in Germany and in Europe

How we achieve this:

- Organise training programs, workshops, hackathons, spring schools
- Host international lecture series, conferences, and visiting guests
- Promote Open Science and research infrastructure development



Three Main Research Lines

1. New Computational Philology: Text, Speech, Literature

- Computational Literary Studies (CLS)
- **DraCor Project** (dracor.org): major infrastructure for digital drama research
- Network analysis, stylometry, text mining

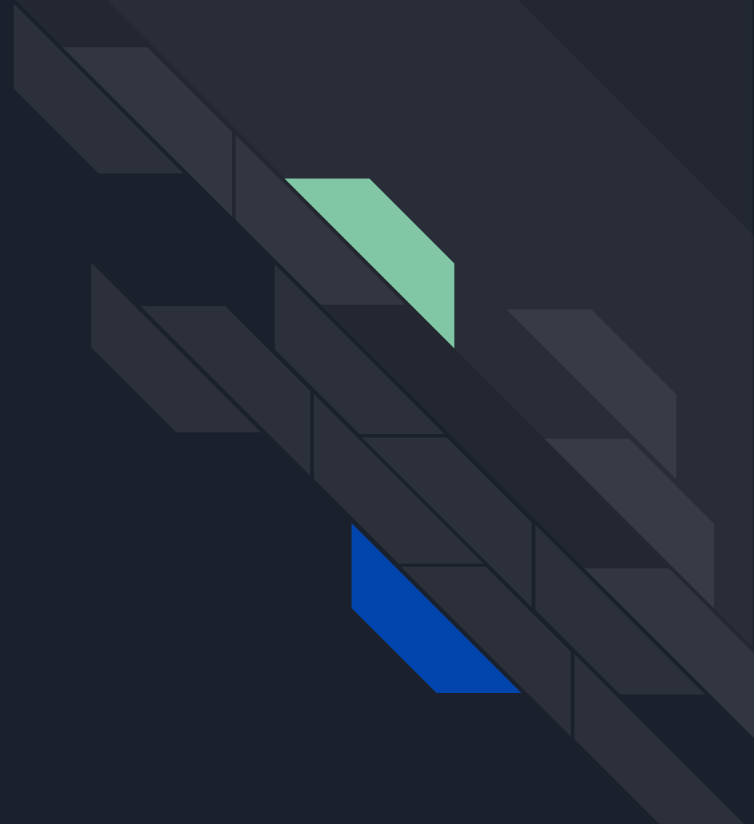
2. Digital Collection Studies: Archives, Corpora, Editions

- Visualization of cultural collections and archives
- Museum and library digitization projects
- Data management and open science practices

3. Digital Environmental Humanities: Data, Media, Cultures

- Climate change communication and visualization
- Environmental data and media studies
- **EcoCor Project** (ecocor.org): programmable corpus for ecocriticism research

Our formats





“Code & Culture” Lecture Series

- Monthly lecture series on digital approaches of literature and culture
- Streamed on Zoom, with international speakers and growing audience
- In the winter semester 2025-2026: Environmental Digital Humanities focus, preparing our Hackathon

Workshop series

- Digital collections (Omeka-S)
- Data wrangling (OpenRefine)
- Introduction to TEI-XML
- Introduction to programming for humanists (#Python4Poets)

1. Potsdam Spring School: “Text as Data”

- A cooperation with the Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg
- One-week intensive program introducing text-based digital humanities techniques
- Workshops and lectures by international instructors
- More than 130 application, resulting in 18 participants from four continents
- Travel grants & social programme





Digital Humanities Early Career Fellowship 2025/2026

Target: Up to 10 PhD candidates and Master's students from the Arts Faculty

Goal: provide essential DH skills for conducting academic research

Fellowship Curriculum: Cleaning, managing, processing and sharing humanistic data; data visualisation and science communication; working efficiently with LLMs

Bonus: Joint attendance at **DHd 2026 conference in Vienna** (February 23-27, 2026) with travel expenses covered

DraCor Summit 2025



- Five-day international event at Freie Universität Berlin
- +60 participants from nearly 20 countries
- Focus: the Drama Corpora (DraCor) project and the field of computational drama analysis
- Programme: Keynote by Clarisse Bardiot (Rennes 2), training sessions, corpus conference, drama analysis workshop, barcamp, coworking... and a DH-themed card game tournament!





Henriette Herz Hackathons

- **Goals:** “make a creative and productive contribution to the creation of knowledge and the recruitment of excellent digital humanists for German universities”
- **Funding:** Alexander von Humboldt Foundation’s Henriette Herz Prize, DH Network budget
- **Past Themes:**
 - **#DHJewish Hackathons** (2022, 2024)
 - Focus: Digital transformation of Jewish cultural heritage
 - **Digital Environmental Hackathons** (2023, 2026)
 - Focus: New readings of environmental data

#EcoHack2023: Environmental Data, Media and the Humanities

Potsdam, 31 May-2 June 2023

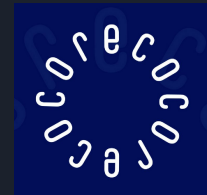
Goal: “explore the unrealised potential of weather and climate data for the Digital Humanities”

Proposed challenges:

- *Repurposing Forest Media*
- *Counter-Visualisations of Ensemble Forecasts (for Mainstream Use)*
- *Weather Horoscope*
- *Combining Weather Data from Ships Logs with Corpus from Cultural Texts*
- *EcoCor (A Programmable Corpus for Research in Ecocriticism)*
- *Toward a Glossary of English "Climate Discourse Compounds"*



EcoCor: Ecocritical Corpora



English EcoCor

Search

Author ▲▼	Title ▲▼	Year ▲▼	Chapters ▲▼	Entities ▲▼
White, Gilbert Q772840	The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne	1789	2	149 (3)
Radcliffe, Ann Q231944	The Mysteries of Udolpho	1794	57	46 (2)
Godwin, Mary Q47152	Frankenstein	1818	11	27 (2)
Godwin, Mary Q47152	The Last Man	1826	31	65 (2)
Bronte, Emily Q80137	Wuthering Heights	1847	0	52 (2)

- **What is this?** “an open source collection of programmable corpora (for reading and) for research in computational literary studies as well as in digital environmental humanities”
- **Current prototype:** TEI-coded corpora of English and German texts + a microservice that extracts plant and animal taxon names from literary texts



#EcoHack2026: Environments in and as Networks

A collaborative event on challenges and research perspectives in Digital Environmental Humanities, focusing on the methodology of network analysis, on the idea of environments as networks, and on the representation of environments in neural networks

Lecture series: November 2025-March 2026

Pre-workshop: 28-30 January 2026

Main workshop: 15-17 April 2026

(registration still open, join us!)



Merci de votre attention!

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