Digitally Speaking

TAMU Libraries Supports ETDs

Below: What could a thesis or dissertation be as an electronic document?

In 2002, TAMU Libraries launched a project to archive electronic theses and dissertations (ETD). The Libraries’ Digital Initiatives Research and Technology group has now established an online collection of over 1400 ETDs, including a growing number in the humanities: thirteen in English, eight in History, three in Modern and Classical Languages, and nine in Philosophy.

As Dr. John Leggett, Associate Dean, TAMU Libraries, points out, the electronic publication of theses and dissertations opens a whole new world of scholarship for graduate students. In addition to traditional text, ETDs can include embedded images and sophisticated digital appendices, including data sets, computer programs, and video components.

Furthermore, Web publication increases exposure to scholars throughout the world, increasing the impact of the work, quite an advantage for a newly minted scholar trying to establish an academic reputation. In fact, Google Scholar has already cited many of A&M’s ETDs.

Perhaps future ETDs will include not only a variety of digital media, but will also give the reader the ability to interact with the material, to manipulate data sets, link to other publications, or contribute comments on the work.

See more at: etd.tamu.edu

NEW EDITED VOLUME ON THE CREATION OF DIGITAL INFORMATION

Creation, Use, and Deployment of Digital Information is a new volume edited by Herre van Oostendorp, Leen Breure, and Andrew Dillon. The authors present the results of research studies on how digital information should be designed and how artifacts or systems containing digital content should maximize usability. The book also explains how context can influence the nature and the effectiveness of digital communication.

Topics are addressed from philosophical, cognitive, and technical perspectives, covering a range of theoretical and practical approaches to information studies. The book is intended for academics in Science, the Arts, Psychology, Education, and Computing Science.

Breure and van Oostendorp are at Utrecht University. Andrew Dillon is the dean of the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin. The book is published by Erlbaum and held by TAMU Libraries. See... erlbaum.com

Happenings

§ The Humanities Informatics Working Group (HIWG) will meet for lunch and discussion on alternate Wednesdays this fall.

§ A Digital Education Working Group is being organized within the College of Education and Human Development. The group will meet in October to discuss digital research initiatives.

§ For meeting dates and details, contact Dr. Tim Manning.

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“You don’t write because you want to say something, you write because you have something to say.”

-F. Scott Fitzgerald
RICE APPOINTS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CONNEXIONS PROGRAM

Launched by Rice University in 1999, the Connexions project seeks to change how knowledge is developed and shared by providing access to a collection of freely available scholarly materials along with a powerful set of free software tools so that authors, instructors, and learners may interact with the content. Users can both access the content and contribute their own content, expanding the collection.

On July 5, 2005, Dr. W. Joseph (Joey) King was appointed to lead the Connexions team as Executive Director. Dr. King has a varied background with experience in telecommunications research, human-computer interface design, network tools, investment banking, foundation management, and entrepreneurship. See... cnx.rice.edu

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF LEARNING OBJECTS

The term ‘learning object’ suggests some form of discrete entity: So, does that entity more closely resemble a solid, a liquid, or a gas? Does it represent a structure, a concept, a procedure, or a principle? Is it an example, a simulation, an aid, or a test? Of course, the answer to all those questions is yes. What’s different about learning objects is their reduced granularity and the implications of modularizing instruction.

When instruction is broken down into discrete components that can be assembled in different ways, sharing is encouraged because instructors can assemble someone else’s components in a way that still maintains their personal expression of the material. Student-centered learning is emphasized because digital libraries that contain the objects can be broadly accessible as reference sources for students. For the same reason, institutional boundaries are deemphasized as large learning object libraries become available to all. This creates an environment for quality stratification. Perhaps peer review or just popularity will propel the best to the top as instruction benefits from processes similar to those that create excellence in scholarly publication.

U.C. BERKELEY CREATES ADVANCED SEARCH TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Twenty faculty members from various departments at the University of California at Berkeley will staff an interdisciplinary center intended to create a new generation of Internet search technologies. New search capabilities are needed to handle the variety of different media; books, scholarly works, video programs, that are now online and to cope with the explosive growth of online information in general. There is also a need to facilitate more discriminating queries as users attempt new tasks on the Internet. Participation is being sought by search giants such as Google. For more information, do a search on search tool at www.berkeley.edu/news