

Home

The current home of Digital Humanities at SUNY Geneseo is [here](#). In spring 2013, it was [here](#). You're looking at the space where students in Honr 206 (Spring 2011) and Engl 390 (Spring 2012) worked. Explore and enjoy.



[Update on the Coming Revolution in Academia](#)

Paul Schacht posted on May 06, 2012

As the academic year concludes, the pace of mainstream commentary on the coming revolution in academia seems to be picking up. Here are a few recent things worth reading:

- [Harvard and M.I.T. Offer Free Online Courses \(NY Times\)](#)
- [How Harvard and MIT Could Boost Graduation Rates and Cut Student Loan Defaults \(ReadWriteWeb\)](#)
- [Science and Truth - We're All in it Together \(NY Times\)](#)
- [The Campus Tsunami \(NY Times\)](#)
- [Can the Colleges Be Saved? \(New York Review of Books\)](#)

And finally, here's something good on the related question of publishing's future:

- [How Books Will Survive Amazon \(New York Review of Books\)](#)



[Twitter becomes a key real-time tool for campaigns](#)

Unknown User (bmm18) posted on Apr 27, 2012

[This article](#) raises an interesting question: at what point does the "value" of digital publishing lie not so much in the content that is published, but in the medium through which such content is published?

Put another way, which is more substantive: the actual tweets that people write with the hashtag #dontdoublemyrate (the "content"), or the general fact that there exists a Twitter account with the hashtag #dontdoublemyrate (the "medium of publishing")?

To complicate things even further: can the hashtag #dontdoublemyrate simultaneously reflect *both* the medium of publishing (i.e. the Twitter account, itself) and the underlying content (that being the actual text, "dont double my rate")?

The bully pulpit has a new kind of altar call: "Tweet them. We've got a hashtag. Here's the hashtag for you to tweet them: #dontdoublemyrate."

President Obama repeated that Twitter hashtag twice more during a Tuesday speech opposing an increase in student loan interest rates. For good measure, he even had his Chapel Hill, N.C., audience chant it back to him.

- [twitter](#)
- [publishing](#)



[Thoreau Video Game](#)

Unknown User (mph9) posted on Apr 25, 2012

Earlier today on Twitter I saw someone post about a [Henry David Thoreau video game](#). Laughing to myself and thinking it wasn't entirely serious, I clicked on the link to discover I was wrong.

The article doesn't have a lot of specific information on the project, but talks about how USC was recently given a \$40,000 grant to create a video game based on Walden and Thoreau's time spent living on the lake.

Of all the subjects to create a video game on, this is definitely one of the last ones I would have predicted. It'll definitely be interesting to see it when it comes out.



[Thoreau Helps Scientists Track Climate Change](#)

Paul Schacht posted on Mar 31, 2012

As described [here](#):

... Thoreau ... meticulously observed the first flowering dates for over 500 species of wildflowers in Concord, Massachusetts, between 1851 and 1858, recording them in a set of tables. When Richard Primack, a biology professor at Boston University, and fellow researcher Abraham Miller-Rushing discovered Thoreau's unpublished records, they immediately realized how useful they would be for pinning down the impact of the changing climate over the last century and a half. The timing of seasonal events such as flowering dates is known as phenology, and the phenologies of plants in a temperate climate such as that of Massachusetts are very sensitive to temperature, say the scientists. Studying phenology is therefore a good indicator of ecological responses to climate change.

- [thoreau](#)
- [phenology](#)
- [plants](#)
- [flowers](#)
- [environment](#)
- [climate](#)



[Stunned Trekkies phasered by CBS](#)

Paul Schacht posted on Mar 29, 2012

[Here's a story](#) that speaks both to the changes in how people interact with media and creativity discussed by, among others, Yochai Benkler and Clay Shirky, and to the question of copyright's effects on culture explored by Lawrence Lessig. Examining the world of *Star Trek* fan fiction (fan television?) could be an interesting way to arrive at your own thesis about some of these matters; it could also make for a good [Storify](#).

- [copyright](#)
- [creativity](#)
- [media](#)
- [fanfiction](#)
- [television](#)
- [intellectual](#)
- [property](#)



[Supreme Court Sort of Rules on Patenting Nature](#)

Paul Schacht posted on Mar 28, 2012

[The Supreme Court has ruled](#) on whether the company Myriad Genetics can patent two genes connected with breast and ovarian cancer, a case I blogged about [in 2010](#) and again [last year](#). (At least, they've sort of ruled, telling the appeals court that reversed a lower court's ruling invalidating the patent to give the case another look.)

This case, together with the larger question whether some intellectual property claims represent an attempt to patent Nature itself, would make interesting material for a [Storify](#) or a conventional essay.

- [patent](#)
- [copyright](#)
- [nature](#)
- [genetics](#)
- [storify](#)



[Apple, Book Publishers, and the DOJ](#)

Paul Schacht posted on Mar 15, 2012

The Department of Justice's investigation of [possible collusion between Apple and five major publishers to fix e-book prices](#) has raised some interesting issues.

[Here's our old friend Scott Turow](#), President of the Author's Guild, which brought suit against Google's Book Search project in 2005. Earlier this semester, we looked at Turow's NY Times op-ed (co-authored by Paul Aiken and James Shapiro), "[Would the Bard Have Survived the Web](#)," which argues that the kind of "cultural paywall" erected by copyright law is essential to the flourishing of literary art such as Shakespeare's.

At [techdirt](#), Tim Cushing is more than skeptical of Turow's argument.

At [Slate](#), [Matthew Yglesias](#) steers something of a middle course; he sees the Author's Guild as unwilling to face the inevitable but also thinks the DOJ's case against Apple and the five publishers as "borderline absurd."

Anyone interested in assembling web resources and providing perspective on this developing story in [Storify](#)?



[While We're On The Subject...](#)

Unknown User (cjs3) posted on Feb 21, 2012

I just thought a few supplemental videos were in order since they haven't been posted yet.

[As we head into our discussion on Wealth of Networks and Power of Networks...](#)

As we leave the realm of copyright, culture, and Lawrence Lessig...

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

[Part 3](#)

[Part 4](#)

[The rationale for PIPA...](#)

[A loosely connected to our purposes, but nevertheless very interesting talk on internet censorship...](#)

[And, of course, a video on Thoreau's journal...](#)

Enjoy.



[Where does copyright come in?](#)

Unknown User (mph9) posted on Feb 15, 2012

During our class on Tuesday, I was reminded of an article I had read a couple of years ago that seemed relevant to our discussion. I'm not sure if [this](#) is the exact article, but it provides all the background.

It discusses the legal battle that has been occurring between the Israel National Library and the two daughters of Esther Hoffman over the ownership of a series of papers, including unpublished manuscripts, journals, and letters of Franza Kafka, the noted 20th century writer. When Kafka died in 1924, he entrusted all of his work to his close friend Max Brod, making him promise that he'd burn all of his unpublished, unfinished work after he passed. Brod escaped Prague, where he and Kafka had lived, when the Nazi's invaded and fled to Tel Aviv, Israel with the papers. Here, he broke the promise to his close friend and kept the work, publishing several of the novels and giving the rest of the work to his secretary, Esther Hoffman. When Hoffman died a few years ago, she passed the papers on to her two daughters.

The Israeli National Library intervened when the daughters attempted to sell some of the work. The Israeli National Library claims that the works represent a large part of their culture and heritage, much of which was lost during the Holocaust, and that it is essential that the works are revealed and stored in Israel. Currently, the works are being kept in private safety deposit boxes in Tel Aviv and Zurich, Switzerland. The daughters are arguing that they are their legal possessions and they should personally choose what they do with the manuscripts. An offer from Germany's literary archive to purchase the manuscripts has added further tension, uncovering negative feelings that Israel still holds for them from World War 2.

While the work has been examined since by select experts since the beginning of the trial, mentioned [here](#), the works are still unavailable to the greater public.

What I found interesting was that if the works were published, and copyright followed specifically, that the author's rights to their work expires after 70 years, then the manuscripts would already be public domain. In this case though, they are unpublished - meaning that copyright can not be applied to them. None of the articles I found on the subject made any mention of "hypothetical" copyright swaying the judge's position on the matter.

How do you feel about copyright in regard to unpublished works? Should they remain the sole property of those in their possession, or do those people have the right to pass them on to the public? Does Israel have any right to demand that the Hoffman sisters hand over the works to them, or should they be free to do with them whatever they want? Also, how should copyright be handled with works published after the original author has already died?

[2 Comments](#)



[How The Computer Will Save Poetry](#)

Unknown User (bmm18) posted on Feb 13, 2012

[Christian Harder](#), an undergraduate student at Virginia Tech, wrote [an article](#) this past summer entitled "How The Computer Will Save Poetry." In the article, Harder discusses the emergence of "conceptual literature," and more specifically, "conceptual poetry."

On the Internet, conceptualist literature takes on kaleidoscopic form, completely alien to the severe world of print: Pieces often feature aural experimentation, kinetic text, and diverse visual display. Commonly, viewers will guide a poem rather than simply reading it, becoming investigators -- rather than bystanders -- of art. These various digital combinations of form escape all reductive definitions of medium, and invite a reconsideration of literary practice.

Specifically, Hader presents the argument that, because the internet is "free from the politics of publishing," the author is able to expand their artistic scope in a way that fosters a reconsideration of the entire creative process.

Instead of asking, "What can I write?" the digital author asks: "How can I write?" In an age where popular print novels are bland regurgitations of romantic forms, this question has become invaluable.

Or, perhaps [as better put by](#) Kenneth Goldsmith, whom Hader cites as a "figurehead of conceptualist poets:"

Language as material, language as process, language as something to be shoveled into a machine and spread across pages, only to be discarded and recycled once again. Language as junk, language as detritus. Nutritionless language, meaningless language, unloved language, entartete sprache, everyday speech, illegibility, unreadability, machinistic repetition. Obsessive archiving & cataloging, the debased language of media & advertising; language more concerned with quantity than quality. How much did you say that paragraph weighed?

With all of this as a backdrop, I would like to discuss the relationship between "conceptualist poetry" and digital technology: to what extent can we separate the intellectual movement that underpins "conceptualist poetry," from the "tangible" or "practical" nature of technology? Is technology the sole inspiration for the movement? Or is technology only a means through which the movement, in and of itself, is being expressed?

[1 Comment](#) ·

- [poetry](#)
- [technology](#)
- [conceptualist](#)

[Read more Digital Humanities blogposts](#)

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- View the [syllabus for Honors 206-02 \(Spring 2011\)](#), [Digital Humanities](#).
- Check out, add to, and comment on our [community bookmarks](#).
- Join one of our online [discussions](#).
- Browse or help build our [List of Resources in Digital Humanities](#).

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(Some links require login)

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Want an **email notification** whenever there's anything new here? Mouse over the word "Browse" in the blue bar at the top of the page, choose "Advanced," and press "Start watching this space."

What we're talking about...

archives autonomy cartography **collaboration** community **copyright** creativity culture data democracy **digital** distraction education electronic free google groups **humanities** intellectual **internet** ip journalism **literature** maps media music narrative nature news nytimes objects open pedagogy poetry politics private property public reality revolution shakespeare **social** storytelling **technology** text tools **twitter** visualization wiki youth

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Blog Posts

Blog: [Boomerang Book-Throwing Action](#) created by Paul Schacht

Paul Schacht May 08, 2010

