

International Symposium on Digital Humanities

Edited Symposium Report Monograph

Theme: "Exploring Digital Tools for Interdisciplinary Research"

Peter University, Achina-Onneh, Nigeria

25–27 March 2026

Edited by

Augustine Farinola

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International Symposium on Digital Humanities
Edited Symposium Report Monograph

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Foreword

The *International Symposium on Digital Humanities*, hosted by Peter University in collaboration with the African Digital Humanities Lab, marks an important moment in the growing conversation about digital scholarship within African higher education. Organised around the theme **“Exploring Digital Tools for Interdisciplinary Research,”** the symposium brought together scholars, researchers, teachers, and students to reflect on the changing relationship between the humanities and computation, and to consider how digital methods can expand the scope, visibility, and relevance of academic inquiry.

What made this symposium particularly significant was its refusal to treat Digital Humanities as merely technical or peripheral. Across the two days, participants encountered Digital Humanities as an intellectual, methodological, and institutional field—one concerned not only with tools, but with interpretation, ethics, collaboration, infrastructure, and the future of knowledge production. The sessions on textual analysis, African Digital Humanities, digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and core methods of interpretation demonstrated that digital tools matter not simply because they make research faster, but because they enable new questions, new patterns of analysis, and new forms of scholarly engagement.

The symposium was also notable for the way it situated Digital Humanities within African realities. Questions of linguistic diversity, low-resource languages, infrastructural limitation, community-centred research, localisation, and institutional development were not treated as secondary matters; they were central to the event’s purpose. In that respect, the symposium opened an important space for thinking about African Digital Humanities not as an afterthought to a global field, but as a site of innovation, ownership, and intellectual contribution in its own right.

This booklet preserves the intellectual energy of that gathering. It is both a record of what was shared and a contribution to the continuing work that the symposium set in motion. It is hoped that the pages that follow will serve scholars, students, and institutions seeking not only to remember the event, but also to build upon it.

Preface / Editorial Note

I have prepared this booklet as an edited report of the *International Symposium on Digital Humanities* held at Peter University on **Wednesday, 25 March 2026** and **Friday, 27 March 2026**. The event, organised in collaboration with the African Digital Humanities Lab, was designed as a forum for examining the role of digital tools in interdisciplinary research, with particular attention to the opportunities and challenges of Digital Humanities within African contexts.

The purpose of this publication is twofold. First, it offers a durable record of the symposium's lectures, discussions, and reflections. Second, it reshapes the spoken sessions into a coherent written form suitable for publication, wider circulation, and future reference. This booklet is therefore not a verbatim transcript collection. It is an edited symposium monograph in which I have transformed oral presentations into polished narrative chapters while retaining the substance and intellectual direction of each contribution.

In preparing the text, I have also arranged the booklet to reflect those priorities. It includes not only reports of the sessions, but also interpretive framing intended to show the wider significance of the event for African Digital Humanities, institutional development, and future scholarly practice. The result is meant to function not merely as a record of proceedings, but as a readable and citable publication that speaks to a larger academic future.

Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge all those whose efforts made the *International Symposium on Digital Humanities* possible.

Special appreciation is extended to **Peter University** for hosting the symposium and for creating an enabling academic space in which conversations on Digital Humanities could be advanced meaningfully. Gratitude is equally due to the **African Digital Humanities Lab** for its collaborative role in organising the event and in sustaining the wider training community from which this symposium emerged.

Particular thanks are due to **Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell** for his extraordinary generosity, intellectual leadership, and long-standing commitment to training and mentoring scholars within this growing field. His willingness to share decades of knowledge, support open collaboration, and contribute so freely to African Digital Humanities initiatives was repeatedly acknowledged during the symposium itself.

Appreciation is also extended to the featured speakers and contributors whose sessions gave the symposium its depth and range: **Rev. Fr. Prof. Emmanuel C. Umezina, Dr Christopher Obumneke, Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell, Dr. Reggemore Marongedze, Yohanna Joseph Waliya, and Abel Ochika**. Their presentations collectively shaped the event into a rich conversation on textual analysis, African Digital Humanities, infrastructure, artificial intelligence, methodology, and the future of interdisciplinary research.

Warm thanks are due to the organising team and coordinators, including those who worked quietly behind the scenes to facilitate the sessions, moderate discussions, manage communication, and support participants both physically and virtually. I am especially grateful for the collective effort that made it possible for me to moderate the symposium and sustain interaction across sessions.

I also gratefully acknowledge **Joseph Odo and Dr. Ozioma Okay-Kalu** as part of the organising team, whose role in the coordination

of the symposium and in the event's concluding reflections contributed significantly to its overall success.

Finally, I extend sincere gratitude to all participants—lecturers, students, researchers, and guests—whose questions, engagement, and willingness to learn gave the symposium its collaborative spirit. This booklet stands as a record not only of what was presented, but of a scholarly community in formation.

Chapter 1. About the Symposium

The *International Symposium on Digital Humanities* was conceived as a timely academic intervention dedicated to exploring how digital tools can enrich, extend, and transform interdisciplinary research. Hosted by **Peter University** in collaboration with the **African Digital Humanities Lab**, the symposium took place over two days—**Wednesday, 25 March 2026** and **Friday, 27 March 2026**—and brought together scholars, researchers, lecturers, and students for sustained reflection on the role of computation in humanities scholarship. The programme combined welcome addresses, keynote lectures, methodological presentations, and discussion sessions, thereby creating a space in which conceptual reflection and practical engagement could develop side by side.

The symposium was delivered in a **hybrid format**, combining in-person participation at Peter University with online attendance across both days. Deduplicated webinar attendance logs indicate that **71 unique online participants** joined the Day 1 sessions on **25 March 2026**, while **32 unique online participants** joined the Day 2 sessions on **27 March 2026**. When both days are reconciled, the symposium recorded **89 unique online participants** in total. Of these, **14 attended both days**, while **75 participated on only one day**, including **57 who attended only Day 1** and **18 who attended only Day 2**. These figures reflect online participation captured through webinar logs and do not necessarily represent the full number of participants physically present at the venue, particularly where multiple in-person attendees may have joined through a shared institutional connection.

At the centre of the event was the theme **“Exploring Digital Tools for Interdisciplinary Research.”** This theme expressed a conviction that recurred throughout the symposium: contemporary scholarship can no longer remain confined within isolated disciplinary boundaries. As the Vice Chancellor observed in his opening address, the social, historical, and cultural questions of the present demand interdisciplinary responses, and Digital Humanities offers important tools for analysing, visualising, and

interpreting patterns that might otherwise remain hidden. In this respect, the symposium was not simply about adopting new technologies; it was about rethinking scholarship itself in relation to new forms of inquiry, visibility, and collaboration.

The event also responded to the growing recognition that **Digital Humanities is no longer a marginal or experimental enterprise**, but an increasingly significant domain of teaching, research, and institutional development. Across the sessions, speakers consistently described Digital Humanities as a field that brings computational methods into productive conversation with humanistic inquiry, enabling scholars to move from raw materials to richer forms of interpretation. It was presented as methodological in character, interpretive in orientation, and collaborative in practice. In other words, the symposium made clear that Digital Humanities is not merely about software use; it is about asking better questions, working with more complex forms of evidence, and generating new ways of understanding texts, archives, languages, and cultural materials.

One of the symposium's most important interventions was its insistence on locating Digital Humanities within **African contexts**. Rather than presenting the field as something already complete and settled elsewhere, several speakers demonstrated that African Digital Humanities must be understood in relation to local histories, linguistic diversity, infrastructural disparities, postcolonial archival conditions, and community-centred modes of knowledge production. Discussions of low-resource languages, data sovereignty, digitisation, curriculum design, and localisation made it clear that the African context does not merely receive Digital Humanities; it actively reshapes and redefines it. The symposium therefore opened an important space for thinking about African Digital Humanities as a field of ownership, adaptation, and intellectual contribution in its own right.

A further defining feature of the event was its strong commitment to **capacity building**. The symposium was designed not only for established scholars, but also for lecturers, early-career researchers, and students encountering Digital Humanities for the first time. This pedagogical dimension was particularly visible in the introductory and methods-based sessions, which explained what Digital Humanities is, how texts are prepared for analysis, how tools such as Voyant can be used, and how

digital methods relate to more familiar forms of qualitative interpretation. The closing remarks reinforced this orientation by urging participants to continue their engagement through the African Digital Humanities Lab's website, webinars, short courses, and hackathons, thereby framing the symposium as an entry point into a longer training ecosystem rather than a one-off event.

Equally significant was the symposium's emphasis on **collaboration**. Throughout the programme, speakers and participants stressed the need for stronger partnerships between humanities scholars and computer scientists, as well as among universities, research communities, and digital initiatives within and beyond Africa. Digital Humanities was thus imagined not as the work of the isolated scholar, but as a field sustained by shared expertise, infrastructural support, ethical reflection, and institutional imagination. This collaborative vision was especially important in a context where the development of new curricula, tools, labs, and projects depends upon sustained cooperation across disciplinary and institutional boundaries.

The symposium may therefore be understood as significant in three closely connected ways. First, it introduced participants to the conceptual and methodological foundations of Digital Humanities. Second, it created a space for sustained reflection on African Digital Humanities as an emerging yet necessary field of research and practice. Third, it strengthened the case for institutional development through courses, laboratories, centres, collaborative projects, and continuing training. These three dimensions—intellectual, contextual, and institutional—together define the significance of the symposium and explain why it merits preservation in the form of this booklet.

In preserving the proceedings of this event, the present volume records more than a sequence of presentations. It documents a moment of scholarly formation: a moment in which Digital Humanities was discussed not simply as a collection of digital tools, but as a growing academic practice with the potential to reshape research, teaching, collaboration, and knowledge production within and beyond African universities.

Chapter 2

Welcome Address

Rev. Fr. Prof. Emmanuel C. Umezina,

Vice Chancellor, Peter University

The symposium opened with a warm and visionary welcome address delivered by the Vice Chancellor of Peter University, **Rev. Fr. Prof. Emmanuel C. Umezina**. In his remarks, he presented the event as a landmark moment for the University: an occasion that brought together its commitment to the preservation of knowledge with the transformative possibilities of computational technology. He framed the symposium as taking place at a significant intellectual intersection, where established scholarly traditions meet emerging digital methods capable of expanding the future of research and teaching.

Reflecting on the symposium theme, **“Exploring Digital Tools for Interdisciplinary Research,”** the Vice Chancellor emphasised that scholarship can no longer remain confined within isolated disciplinary spaces. The social, historical, and cultural questions of the present, he noted, demand interdisciplinary answers, and Digital Humanities offers an important set of tools for building those answers. In this framing, the symposium was presented not merely as an academic gathering, but as an opportunity to rethink how knowledge is produced, analysed, and shared in a rapidly changing intellectual environment.

A central emphasis of the address was the value of digital methods for deepening research and extending its reach. According to the Vice Chancellor, Digital Humanities enables scholars to **analyse, visualise, and interpret complex data**, making visible patterns that might otherwise remain hidden. He linked this analytical capacity to the growing importance of research visibility in an increasingly interconnected world. Digital tools, in his view, do not only support interpretation; they also create wider opportunities for public engagement, scholarly communication, and collaboration across institutions and national boundaries.

The Vice Chancellor also extended a warm welcome to the invited speakers, delegates, and participants who had gathered from within and beyond Nigeria. He thanked them for bringing their expertise to Peter

University and encouraged all attendees to engage deeply with the sessions, ask bold questions, and use the symposium as a space for forging new collaborations. He expressed confidence that the conversations initiated during the event would not only enrich individual research efforts, but would also contribute to shaping the future of digital scholarship at Peter University and beyond.

As an opening reflection, the address established both the intellectual and institutional tone of the symposium. It presented Digital Humanities as a field of promise, relevance, and urgency, while positioning the event itself as an important step in Peter University's engagement with new forms of interdisciplinary scholarship.

Chapter 3

Computationally Driven Text Analysis and the Digital Humanities: From the Concordance to Voyant

Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell

The first major lecture of the symposium was delivered by **Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell**, who offered a historically grounded and conceptually lucid introduction to computational text analysis as a foundational practice in Digital Humanities. Framed in his slides as “**Computationally Driven Text Analysis and the Digital Humanities: From the Concordance to Voyant,**” the lecture traced a long arc from medieval concordance traditions to contemporary digital tools, showing that Digital Humanities is not merely a recent technological development but part of a much longer history of reading aids, interpretive instruments, and scholarly experimentation.

A central starting point of the lecture was **Father Roberto Busa (1913–2011)**, whose *Index Thomisticus* project was presented as one of the foundational moments in the history of Digital Humanities. Rockwell explained that Busa developed, in the 1940s, a vision for processing the more than **10.6 million words** of Thomas Aquinas through **IBM punch-card technology**. He met **Thomas Watson of IBM** in 1949, worked with IBM collaborator **Paul Tasman**, and eventually brought the project to completion in print in **1980**, with a website appearing much later in **2005**. In Rockwell’s account, the importance of this project lay not only in its scale, but in the way it forced scholars to confront two enduring questions: how to represent text in machine-readable form, and how to process that representation in ways meaningful to humanities inquiry.

The lecture also reached further back, connecting modern computational text analysis to the older history of the **concordance**. Rockwell identified the concordance as a reading and interpretive tool with roots in the **thirteenth century**, associated with **Hugo de Saint-Cher**, and described it as an alphabetical index showing where words appear in a target text. This history allowed him to make an important hermeneutic point: concordances are not neutral. They assume some degree of coherence or unity in the text being studied. By foregrounding this assumption, Rockwell

showed that Digital Humanities is not simply a technical procedure; it is also shaped by interpretive commitments and habits of reading.

One of the strongest features of the lecture was its attention to the **material history of textual representation**. The slides showed an **IBM punched card** as a concrete model of how textual units had to be broken down and encoded for machine processing. Related slides on the **Busa-Tasman workflow** illustrated the movement from **phrase cards** to **word cards** to **form cards**, while the reproduced **1952 flow chart** highlighted the role of **manual lemmatisation**, including the moment where the “scholar writes entry word list.” These examples made clear that early humanities computing was never purely mechanical. It depended on hybrid labour in which technical systems and scholarly judgement were tightly interwoven.

From this point, Rockwell moved through what the slides present as a **selective history of reading tools**. That history progressed from early biblical concordances to Busa’s *Index Thomisticus*, then to the **batch concordancers** of the 1970s, followed by **interactive concordancers** in the 1980s, the rise of **text-mining and visualisation** in the 1990s, and finally the present moment of AI-enabled custom tool development. This sequence helped participants see Digital Humanities not as a sudden break from earlier scholarship, but as an evolving response to the parallel developments of **text digitisation** and **process design** for reading at scale.

A major distinction in the lecture was between **batch** and **interactive** systems. Batch concordancers, Rockwell explained, ran first on **mainframes** and later on **PCs**, taking electronic text as input and producing a printed output. They automated the production of concordances, but interpretation still largely happened outside the machine. By contrast, he introduced **ARRAS**, developed by **John B. Smith** in the 1980s as the **ARchive Retrieval and Analysis System**, running on IBM’s **Conversational Monitor System**. ARRAS allowed scholars to query texts dynamically and interact with patterns directly on screen, rather than waiting for a static printout. This was presented as a genuine turning point in the history of digital reading.

Rockwell then turned to **TACT**, associated with **John Bradley** and dated to **1989**. TACT ran on an affordable **IBM PC or clone**, was released

at the **Dynamic Text** conference, and was designed by researchers for researchers. In Rockwell's narrative, TACT played an important role in the democratisation of text analysis by moving interactive digital reading from specialised institutional machines to the personal computer. The subsequent emergence of **TACTweb** in the mid-1990s extended that movement into the web environment, opening the way for more networked and accessible forms of textual analysis.

The culmination of this history was **Voyant Tools**, which Rockwell presented not merely as software, but as the result of a different model of scholarly practice. He linked Voyant to his collaborative work with **Stefan Sinclair** and to the conceptual framework of *Hermeneutica*, describing both as part of an **agile collaborative practice** in which tools and interpretations are developed together. This marked a clear departure from earlier divisions of labour between scholar, operator, and programmer. In Rockwell's account, Digital Humanities at its best is collaborative not only institutionally, but epistemologically: interpretation and tool-building evolve together.

The practical importance of the lecture became especially clear in Rockwell's discussion of **Voyant Tools** as an accessible entry point into Digital Humanities. He presented Voyant as a free and flexible environment in which students and researchers can begin working with texts quickly and meaningfully. Because it can be used online, on personal computers, or through modest local server arrangements, Voyant was especially relevant to participants thinking about Digital Humanities in African universities and other low-resource contexts. In discussion, Rockwell described it as an **"on-ramp"** into Digital Humanities: a way of beginning with available tools, experimenting with multiple forms of analysis and visualisation, and gradually moving toward deeper forms of inquiry.

The final movement of the lecture looked ahead to the present and future role of **AI** in Digital Humanities. The slides explicitly asked how AI is changing the field and suggested that it can assist with **text preparation and enrichment, synthesis, summary, analysis**, and even the creation of **custom tools**. This forward-looking note was important because it prevented the lecture from becoming a closed historical narrative. Instead, Rockwell presented the history from concordance to Voyant as part of an ongoing trajectory, one now entering a new phase in which AI-assisted and

“roll-your-own” computing are reshaping the possibilities of scholarship once again.

Taken together, Rockwell’s lecture accomplished three things of lasting importance for the symposium. It provided participants with a **history** of computational text analysis, a **theory** of digital interpretation as collaborative and hermeneutic, and a **practical entry point** through Voyant Tools. For the wider purposes of the symposium, the lecture established textual analysis as both a gateway into Digital Humanities and a lens through which to understand the field’s longer intellectual development. It gave participants not only a tool to use, but a tradition to think within.

Chapter 4

African Digital Humanities: Contexts, Case Studies and Community-Centred Practices

Dr. Reggemore Marongedze

In the second major lecture of Day 1, **Dr. Reggemore Marongedze** offered a wide-ranging and intellectually grounded account of **African Digital Humanities**, focusing on its contexts, case studies, and community-centred practices. His lecture was significant not only because it described what is already taking shape across the continent, but because it proposed a framework for thinking about what African Digital Humanities is, why it matters, and how it ought to be developed. Rather than treating Digital Humanities in Africa as a delayed imitation of work already institutionalised elsewhere, Marongedze argued that it must be understood as a field shaped by African histories, African linguistic realities, African institutional conditions, and African community priorities.

A central starting point of the lecture was the question of **geography**. Marongedze explained that his interest in mapping the global distribution of Digital Humanities emerged from a practical institutional challenge. When he was involved in establishing the **MA in Digital Humanities at the University of Zimbabwe in 2020**, he was confronted with skepticism about whether Digital Humanities was a legitimate or established field at all. That question prompted him to investigate the “geographies of Digital Humanities” by examining where Digital Humanities centres, degree programmes, projects, associations, and labs were actually located around the world. From this effort he developed a dataset and an application known as **GeoDH**, which enabled him not only to answer local institutional doubt but also to make visible the uneven global distribution of the field itself.

This geographical approach led to one of the lecture’s most striking observations: the profound imbalance in the global distribution of Digital Humanities infrastructure. Marongedze noted that by the periods he examined, countries such as the **United States**, the **United Kingdom**, and **Japan** had already developed significant numbers of Digital Humanities centres and institutional formations, while Africa had only a very small

number in comparison. He did not present this imbalance as a reason for despair, however. Instead, he treated it as both diagnosis and provocation. If Africa remains institutionally underrepresented in the field, then the challenge is not merely to lament that absence, but to ask how African scholars and institutions might intervene in the global landscape with urgency, clarity, and intellectual confidence.

The lecture then turned to the conceptual problem of **definition**. Marongedze acknowledged that Digital Humanities is difficult to define in a single, definitive way. It is an evolving field, open rather than closed, and characterised by plurality rather than fixed orthodoxy. Yet he identified a particularly useful common thread: Digital Humanities may be understood as involving both the **digitisation of the humanities** and the **humanisation of the digital**. This dual formulation was especially productive. It suggested that Digital Humanities is not simply a matter of moving humanities materials into digital form, but also of ensuring that digital processes remain accountable to humanistic inquiry, interpretation, and cultural meaning. In this respect, Marongedze positioned Digital Humanities as both methodological and critical: a field concerned not only with tools, but with the rethinking of knowledge in the digital age.

A major strength of the lecture lay in its insistence that African Digital Humanities must be approached through **specific African cases** rather than abstract generalities. Marongedze showed that the field is already emerging across the continent, but in ways profoundly shaped by local and regional realities. One of his clearest examples was the **South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR)**, which he presented as a major national initiative devoted to the digitisation of indigenous and under-resourced African languages. The significance of this example lay not simply in the existence of a centre, but in what it revealed about the relationship between Digital Humanities and linguistic politics. In South Africa, the development of digital language resources is inseparable from the country's multilingual reality, its history of unequal language development, and its efforts to make indigenous languages more visible and more usable within digital environments.

Related to this, Marongedze referred to the **Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa (DHASA)** and to gatherings that bring together computer scientists, linguists, and other scholars working at the

intersection of language, computation, and cultural analysis. He also mentioned initiatives such as **Masakhane**, which have become increasingly important in African language technology and natural language processing. These examples were especially valuable because they showed that African Digital Humanities is not confined to literary analysis or archival work in a narrow sense. It also includes language-resource development, corpus construction, computational linguistics, and collaborative innovation around under-resourced languages.

The lecture also highlighted developments in **Nigeria** and **Zimbabwe**, thereby broadening the discussion beyond Southern Africa. Marongedze referred to the **Digital Humanities Association of Nigeria** and to activities taking place in Nigerian universities, including at institutions such as the **University of Lagos**. He then returned to the Zimbabwean case, which served as one of his most concrete examples of curricular and institutional development. The **MA in Digital Humanities at the University of Zimbabwe**, as he described it, was deliberately designed to combine theoretical grounding, research methods, practical tools, and programming with a strong orientation toward community engagement. It was not conceived as a programme built around abstract theory or imported technical skills alone. Rather, it was structured to connect digital methods to actual social realities and locally meaningful forms of knowledge production.

One of the most distinctive aspects of the Zimbabwean programme, as Marongedze explained, is its **community project module**. In this component, students identify a real issue, gap, or challenge within a community and then develop a Digital Humanities-inspired response. That response may involve documentation, archiving, interpretation, analysis, or some form of practical intervention. The importance of this approach is considerable. It treats community not as a passive source of data but as the living context within which digital scholarship must operate. In doing so, it resists a purely technocratic model of Digital Humanities and instead advances a socially grounded practice in which tools are used in response to real needs and in relation to real people.

Marongedze also identified several broader structural forces shaping African Digital Humanities. One of these was the **postcolonial condition of archives and knowledge access**. He observed that many materials

relevant to African history, language, and culture remain held in European universities, libraries, and repositories. This means that African Digital Humanities cannot be understood simply as a matter of local digitisation. It must also confront asymmetries of access, location, and control inherited from colonial histories. This was one of the lecture's most important interventions, because it framed Digital Humanities as a field entangled with the politics of archival power and knowledge circulation.

Another major issue was **linguistic diversity**. Marongedze reminded participants that Africa contains more than **2,500 languages**, many of which remain digitally marginal or are classified as low-resource languages because their online presence, corpora, and computational tools remain limited. This gave language a central place in his vision of African Digital Humanities. It is not enough, in his account, to speak vaguely of "African content." One must ask which languages are visible, which remain absent, and what infrastructures are required to correct this imbalance. In this way, the lecture placed language development, corpus-building, and digital representation at the heart of African Digital Humanities.

Closely related to this were questions of **data sovereignty and cultural governance**. Marongedze stressed the need to think carefully about access, consent, decision-making, and the control of cultural materials. In the African context, these questions are especially urgent because they intersect with histories of extraction, marginalisation, and unequal technical power. His argument was that African Digital Humanities must be built not only on innovation, but on governance principles attentive to justice and accountability. Cultural data cannot simply be digitised and circulated without asking who authorises its use, who benefits from it, and who determines how it is interpreted and preserved.

The lecture also confronted the problem of **infrastructural constraint** directly. Marongedze acknowledged that in many African countries Digital Humanities work continues under conditions shaped by unreliable internet access, unequal availability of devices, limited technical support, and uneven training opportunities. Yet he did not allow those constraints to define the field negatively. Instead, he suggested that they should inform a realistic and collaborative approach to institutional development. Strategic partnerships, targeted training, and carefully designed programmes can all help address such constraints over time. What

matters is not pretending the problem does not exist, but building Digital Humanities with these realities in view.

One of the most important dimensions of the lecture was its emphasis on **ethics and sustainability**. Marongedze argued that African Digital Humanities must be guided by principles such as **co-design, shared research authority, nuanced consent, collaborative metadata practices, capacity building, and long-term stewardship**. These principles matter because they shape the difference between extractive digitisation and genuinely community-centred scholarship. Drawing on examples such as community archiving, digital dictionaries, heritage digitisation, multilingual corpora, text mining, GIS, and language documentation, he showed that ethical practice requires more than technical competence. It requires the inclusion of communities in defining problems, interpreting data, and governing outcomes.

His remarks on **community-centred practice** were especially compelling. For Marongedze, community participation is not an optional ethical supplement added after a project is already designed. It is the constituent of good African Digital Humanities. Whether one is recording endangered languages, building dictionaries, digitising heritage, or creating corpora, the knowledge and interpretive authority of the community remain indispensable. This has methodological as well as ethical implications. It means that authenticity, context, meaning, and sustainability depend on collaboration with the people whose languages, histories, or practices are being represented.

The lecture concluded by articulating a clear and ambitious vision. African Digital Humanities, as Marongedze presented it, must be simultaneously **infrastructural, critical, and collaborative**. It must build centres, curricula, tools, and training pathways, but it must also remain alert to the political histories of knowledge, the uneven digital presence of African languages, and the ethical demands of working with communities rather than merely on them. In this way, the lecture provided more than a survey of current activity. It offered a conceptual map of African Digital Humanities as a field in formation: already active, already meaningful, but still challenged to define itself in ways that are locally grounded, methodologically serious, and socially responsible.

Within the broader architecture of the symposium, Marongedze's lecture performed a crucial function. If Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell's earlier presentation established the longer history of computational text analysis and the interpretive tradition from which Digital Humanities emerged, Marongedze's lecture asked what it means to inhabit that tradition from an African standpoint. His answer was that African Digital Humanities must not be measured solely by how well it catches up with global institutional norms, but by how effectively it reorients Digital Humanities toward African languages, African archives, African communities, and African futures.

Chapter 5

TAPoR: A Story of Digital Humanities Infrastructure

Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell

In his Day 2 lecture, **Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell** shifted the symposium's focus from tools themselves to the broader and often neglected question of **infrastructure**. Framed in his slides as "**TAPoR: A Story of Digital Humanities Infrastructure,**" the lecture used the history of the **TAPoR** project to explore what it actually takes to build, support, sustain, and sometimes redesign Digital Humanities environments. Rather than treating infrastructure as a technical background that sits quietly behind scholarship, Rockwell presented it as one of the field's most decisive intellectual and institutional questions. In his account, Digital Humanities depends not only on methods and ideas, but also on labs, servers, technical support, training systems, maintenance strategies, user communities, and institutional commitments that allow scholarly work to endure over time.

Rockwell began by explaining the origins of **TAPoR**, the acronym for **Text Analysis Portal for Research**. As the slides indicate, the name also drew on the Old English word **taper**, suggesting a small light or flame, while the project itself emerged through a major **Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI)** infrastructure grant awarded in **2002**. That grant supported Digital Humanities infrastructure across **six universities**, funding **labs, computers, software, support, and servers**. From the outset, TAPoR was conceived as a **vertical portal**: a comprehensive environment intended to serve a specific scholarly community by integrating the major resources that community would need into one system.

One of the most illuminating features of the lecture was Rockwell's explanation of what this portal model was meant to do. A key diagram in the slides shows TAPoR as a hub connecting **representative texts, found and created texts, commercial and open-source tools, created tools and chains, documentation and training, publishing and project tools, skins, and human-computer interface design**. At the centre of this model stood the **projects workspace**, with the underlying principle that "**Tools + Texts = Projects.**" This formula captured the intellectual

ambition of TAPoR. It was intended not simply as a storage site or a search interface, but as a full research environment where texts, tools, training materials, workflows, and publication functions could come together in the service of scholarly inquiry. The slides further note that an **alpha release** appeared on **19 November 2004**, developed with **OpenSky Solutions**.

Rockwell reinforced this account by referring to TAPoR's interface components, including screens devoted to **texts and tools**, a **workbench**, and a **news system**. These examples made clear that TAPoR was envisioned as an integrated scholarly ecosystem rather than a single-purpose application. Users could manage texts, choose or broker tools, run analyses, store results, and access training or project-related information within the same environment. The lecture thus demonstrated that TAPoR was one of the more ambitious attempts in early twenty-first-century Digital Humanities to create an all-in-one portal for text analysis and project development.

Yet one of the lecture's greatest strengths was Rockwell's willingness to describe the first version of TAPoR as a **failure**. He did so without defensiveness. Instead, he treated failure as intellectually productive. In the lecture, he invoked the value of failure in electronic scholarly work, and the slides summarise the reasons for the **failure of TAPoR 1** with striking clarity: it was a **vertical portal**, it **tried to do everything**, it **duplicated existing tools**, it was **technically complex, expensive to maintain**, and depended too heavily on external uptake and web services that proved unsustainable. Rockwell's point was not that ambition is itself a mistake, but that ambition without sustainability produces fragile systems. In one of the lecture's most memorable observations, he reminded the audience that funding always runs out eventually; projects designed as though generous support will continue indefinitely are therefore structurally vulnerable from the beginning.

This moment of failure became, in Rockwell's telling, the point at which a more mature understanding of infrastructure emerged. Rather than abandoning the project, he and his collaborators used failure to rethink what Digital Humanities infrastructure should actually do. One of the most important slides in this part of the lecture presents what might be called a **project-centred model of infrastructure**. It identifies the stages of a Digital Humanities project as **conception**, **granting**,

scanning/encoding/programming, sharing/publishing, maintenance, and archiving. Around these stages, the slide lists the forms of infrastructure required to support them: **advising and support, professional support, discovery tools, labs and tools for projects, collaboration tools, analysis and visualisation tools, servers and networks, conferences and publications, technical staff, support and funding, and digital repositories.** This framework was especially valuable because it expanded the audience's sense of what infrastructure means. Infrastructure, in Rockwell's account, is not just hardware or software; it is the full ecology of scholarly support that allows projects to be conceived, built, sustained, and preserved.

The redesign that followed produced what the slides describe as “**TAPoR 2 and 3.**” The principle guiding this redesign was explicit: “**Do one thing well.**” Instead of trying to maintain an all-in-one portal, the project was divided into more focused functions. **TAPoR** itself became more clearly associated with **discovery**, helping users find and learn about tools, while **Voyant** took on the more specific role of **text analysis**. The slides summarise the new design philosophy in a series of concise principles: **don't duplicate, don't depend on continuous funding, work with students, work with local facilities and support, start focused, iteratively work with users, and don't think you know it all.** These principles gave the lecture an unusual tone of practical wisdom. They suggested that the most sustainable Digital Humanities projects are not those that attempt total control, but those that remain modest, adaptive, and responsive to actual user needs and institutional realities.

A further dimension of the redesign involved a commitment to **openness and transferability**. Rockwell noted that TAPoR's data and discovery work were made openly available, and the slides point to the **SSH Open Marketplace** as a broader environment into which such work could contribute. This was a particularly important lesson. Sustainable Digital Humanities does not necessarily mean preserving every project forever in its original form. Sometimes sustainability means designing resources in ways that allow them to be adopted, reused, or absorbed into larger infrastructures when those become more robust than the initiating project itself.

From this case study, Rockwell drew a series of broader lessons. One slide explicitly titled “**Some Lessons**” lists: **minimal computing where possible**, the **KISS principle** (“Keep It Simple and Serviceable”), **working with what is at hand**, **collaborating with others**, **advocating for people**, **supporting your supporters**, and **involving students**. These lessons resonated strongly with the wider concerns of the symposium, especially in relation to African institutions working under conditions of constraint. Rockwell’s point was not that scarcity is ideal, but that sustainability requires realism. Projects should be built in relation to the infrastructures actually available, not in anticipation of support that may never materialise.

The lecture then deepened into a reflection “**On sustainable DH,**” which the slides divide into **political** and **ethical** dimensions. Politically, Rockwell argued for building Digital Humanities into **courses and programmes**, investing in **people**, building **associations and societies**, thinking seriously about **long-term maintenance**, learning how to **celebrate and end projects**, and supporting **common infrastructure** rather than isolated personal systems. Ethically, the slides emphasise the need to **recognise and give credit**, **advocate for appropriate Digital Humanities**, **support supporters politically**, **avoid fear of failure**, allow for **graceful degradation**, and **care for people rather than technology**. This paired structure was one of the lecture’s most intellectually mature features. It showed that infrastructure is never just an engineering problem. It is also a question of values, institutional culture, labour, and responsibility.

Several parts of the live discussion reinforced this point. Rockwell argued that universities are most likely to sustain Digital Humanities when it is embedded in **teaching** and **academic programmes**, because courses create institutional reasons for continuity: they attract students, justify appointments, generate communities of practice, and provide ongoing grounds for support. By contrast, projects that exist only as temporary research ventures funded externally often become precarious as soon as funding lapses. He also stressed repeatedly that **people outlast machines**. Servers, software, and hardware age quickly; trained students, committed staff, collaborators, and scholarly communities continue to generate new work and renew the field. This view helps explain why he repeatedly returned to the importance of students and local support systems.

Rockwell's remarks on **grant seeking** were similarly practical. Rather than speaking of grants as abstract pools of money, he encouraged participants to identify the concrete resources they actually need: server space, programming assistance, student help, training, or collaborative support. Some of these needs, he suggested, can be met through **in-kind contributions**, shared infrastructure, or institutional facilities rather than through large dedicated budgets. This advice was especially pertinent for the symposium's audience, many of whom were thinking about Digital Humanities development in low-resource environments. Sustainability, in this account, begins not by maximising ambition but by identifying what is already available, what can be shared, and how modest resources can be made more effective through collaboration.

Another notable aspect of the lecture was Rockwell's insistence that projects should sometimes be allowed to **end well**. One of the slides asks, in effect, whether we know how to "bury" projects rather than endlessly keeping them half-alive. The point was not to encourage neglect, but to insist that good project design includes the possibility of **closure, preservation, and graceful degradation**. Sustainability does not always mean indefinite continuation in the same form. It may also mean knowing when a project has reached its natural endpoint, how its contributions can be documented, and how its data or lessons can be passed into other infrastructures.

Taken together, the transcript and slides make clear that this lecture was one of the symposium's most substantial meditations on what Digital Humanities requires in order to endure. TAPoR functioned as a case study, but the deeper argument extended well beyond that single project. Infrastructure, Rockwell demonstrated, is not simply the background condition of Digital Humanities; it is part of its intellectual substance. To build Digital Humanities is to build systems of support, habits of collaboration, cultures of credit, forms of teaching, and realistic plans for maintenance, adaptation, and change. In this respect, the lecture offered more than a project history. It provided a philosophy of Digital Humanities infrastructure grounded in experience, humility, and long-term care.

Chapter 6

AI and Large Language Models in Humanities Research: Possibilities, Limits and Governance

Yohanna Joseph Waliya

In this lecture, **Yohanna Joseph Waliya** addressed one of the most pressing questions facing contemporary humanities scholarship: what role should **artificial intelligence** and **large language models (LLMs)** play in research, interpretation, and knowledge production? His presentation, titled **“AI and Large Language Models in Humanities Research: Possibilities, Limits and Governance,”** brought the symposium directly into current debates about the promises and dangers of AI, especially as these bear upon African languages, humanities methods, and academic integrity. The lecture was notable for the balance it attempted to maintain. It neither dismissed AI as a threat to be rejected outright nor celebrated it uncritically as a solution to every scholarly difficulty. Instead, it presented AI as a powerful but limited set of tools whose value depends upon human judgement, ethical governance, and contextual awareness.

Waliya began by locating large language models within the broader field of AI as **language-based computational systems** trained on large bodies of text. Because language lies at the heart of much humanities work, he argued that LLMs have immediate relevance to the field. Humanities scholars work with texts, discourse, archives, testimony, interpretation, and meaning; AI now offers systems capable of processing language at scales that would previously have been difficult to imagine within traditional scholarship. From this perspective, AI becomes significant not simply because it can generate text, but because it can assist with searching, summarising, pattern-finding, translation, classification, and exploratory analysis across large corpora. This potential makes it especially attractive within Digital Humanities, where scale and computation already play an important role.

A central thread running through the lecture was the relationship between AI and **African languages**. Waliya repeatedly drew attention to the fact that many African languages remain **low-resource languages**, lacking sufficient digitised data, corpora, tools, and training materials to be

effectively represented in mainstream AI systems. This concern was not incidental to the lecture; it was one of its defining concerns. AI, in his account, is not a neutral global resource equally available to all languages and cultures. It reflects the inequalities of the data on which it is trained. When languages are absent or only weakly represented in digital form, the models built on them reproduce that absence. The significance of this point is considerable: it ties AI directly to the larger African Digital Humanities agenda of corpus-building, digitisation, annotation, and resource development.

In illustrating this issue, Waliya referred to emerging **African-centred language models** and related computational initiatives, noting that scholars are beginning to build or adapt models that better recognise African linguistic contexts. Such work is essential if African languages are to become fully usable within AI-supported research environments. He also indicated that some languages remain effectively unusable within present systems because they still lack the necessary digital resources. This reinforced the lecture's broader argument that AI progress in African contexts cannot be separated from the foundational work of language digitisation. To speak of AI capacity without speaking of data creation, corpora, and linguistic visibility would therefore be misleading.

The **possibilities** opened by AI formed the next major part of the lecture. Waliya suggested that large language models can help scholars work with very large archives and corpora in ways that were previously difficult or impossible. They can support **mass querying of texts**, assist in identifying patterns across large datasets, and help researchers scan significant volumes of literature within a compressed period of time. This is especially useful in early research stages such as literature review, thematic exploration, and corpus navigation. In his account, AI extends the reach of humanities research by making possible forms of exploratory engagement that would otherwise require enormous time and labour.

He also pointed to the importance of AI for **language preservation and cultural heritage work**. If languages can be digitised, annotated, and incorporated into computational systems, then AI may contribute to keeping them visible and usable within digital environments. Likewise, archives and cultural artefacts can become more accessible when connected to searchable and processable corpora. Waliya's point here was not that AI

automatically preserves culture, but that it may support preservation efforts when paired with deliberate work in data creation and linguistic resource development. In this respect, the lecture built a strong bridge back to earlier symposium discussions on endangered languages, low-resource settings, and African Digital Humanities.

Another possibility he emphasised was the value of AI for forms of **analysis already familiar in Digital Humanities**, such as sentiment analysis, text classification, and broader natural language processing tasks. These possibilities were framed as ways of helping humanities researchers engage larger evidence bases and produce more systematic forms of exploratory analysis. Waliya also suggested that such tools can make humanities research more legible within interdisciplinary environments often dominated by quantitative or experimental expectations. This does not mean, in his account, that the humanities must abandon interpretation in favour of computation. Rather, it means that AI can help the humanities scale up certain aspects of inquiry while still leaving interpretive responsibility intact.

Yet the lecture was equally forceful in outlining the **limits** of these technologies. Waliya stressed that AI and LLMs cannot be trusted uncritically because their outputs depend upon the quality, scope, and biases of the data on which they are trained. If the underlying data is biased, incomplete, or noisy, the resulting output may be distorted or unreliable. He warned that AI systems may produce information that is inaccurate, irrelevant, or entirely fabricated. This concern aligns closely with the broader issues of **hallucination**, **AI literacy**, and **researcher caution** highlighted in the presentation bibliography, which included sources on AI ethics, academic writing frameworks, AI literacy guides, and the challenges of low-resource language use in large language models.

This led to one of the chapter's central intellectual claims: AI may assist research, but it cannot replace the scholar's **critical mind**. Waliya repeatedly returned to the importance of human reasoning, interpretation, and responsibility. Even when machine systems become more sophisticated, the humanities scholar must still ask whether a response is contextually sound, historically plausible, ethically acceptable, and intellectually rigorous. In this respect, the lecture resisted technological determinism. The point of AI is not to dissolve the human role in scholarship, but to create a new

environment in which the human researcher must become even more self-conscious, critical, and methodologically alert.

For this reason, the issue of **governance** was crucial. Waliya argued that the use of AI in humanities research must be disciplined by ethical frameworks, transparency, attribution, and respect for academic rules. This concern is strongly reinforced by the bibliography attached to the presentation, which cites **UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence**, an **ethical framework for the use of AI in academic writing**, **guidelines for AI in scientific publishing**, a **Duke University guide on AI literacy and hallucinations**, and resources addressing the problem of **LLMs in low-resource contexts**. The presence of these references confirms that governance was not an incidental add-on to the lecture, but part of its explicit scholarly structure.

Within this governance framework, Waliya emphasised several practical concerns. One was the necessity of **proper attribution**, especially when AI systems rely on existing sources, human writing, or copyrighted materials. Another was the danger of **plagiarism** and uncritical dependence on machine-generated text. He also pointed to the broader need for institutional and governmental policies capable of regulating how AI is used in research and academic writing. These concerns are especially pressing in university settings, where the boundary between assistance and substitution can quickly become blurred if AI systems are used carelessly. The lecture therefore framed governance not as an external restriction, but as a condition for responsible and credible scholarship.

A particularly important idea in the lecture was the call for **hybrid research practice**. Waliya did not imagine the future of humanities research as purely human or purely machine. Rather, he advocated a mode of work in which machine systems assist with search, pattern recognition, and scale, while human beings remain responsible for interpretation, verification, contextualisation, and judgement. This hybrid model fits closely with the wider logic of Digital Humanities as it emerged throughout the symposium. Digital tools expand what scholars can do, but they do not remove the need for humanistic reading, conceptual framing, or ethical accountability. Indeed, they make those responsibilities more visible.

The lecture also contributed to a larger reflection on the **future of humanities methods**. Waliya implied that AI may make humanities research more visibly interdisciplinary, especially where it brings scholars into closer engagement with computer science, machine learning, and data-driven forms of inquiry. This does not mean that the humanities become reducible to computational science. Rather, it means that humanities researchers must now learn to inhabit an environment in which interpretation increasingly takes place alongside and through computational systems. This shift has implications not only for research practice, but also for teaching, supervision, and institutional policy.

The lecture concluded on a strongly human-centred note. Even in a world increasingly shaped by intelligent systems, Waliya argued, humanities scholars must continue to place **human meaning above machine automation**. He closed with a warning against surrendering too much interpretive authority to non-human systems and insisted that the humanities must preserve their concern with human value, human responsibility, and human understanding. However dramatic the rhetoric became at points, the underlying message remained consistent: AI is powerful, but it must remain subordinate to responsible scholarship.

Seen in the larger architecture of the symposium, this lecture performed an important bridging function. Earlier sessions had introduced participants to Digital Humanities tools, African Digital Humanities, and digital infrastructure. Waliya's lecture brought those conversations decisively into the present by asking what happens when a new generation of generative and language-based systems enters the humanities space. His answer was complex but clear: AI creates significant new possibilities for humanities research, especially in relation to scale, access, and language technology, but it also intensifies the need for ethics, governance, critical verification, and renewed investment in African language resources. In that sense, the lecture advanced the symposium's larger intellectual project by showing that the future of Digital Humanities will be shaped not only by what tools can do, but by how responsibly scholars choose to use them.

Chapter 7

From Text to Insight: Core DH Methods of Analysis and Interpretation

Abel Ochika

In this session, **Abel Ochika** offered one of the symposium's clearest methodological introductions to Digital Humanities by focusing on how scholars move from raw textual material to meaningful interpretation. His lecture, **"From Text to Insight: Core DH Methods of Analysis and Interpretation,"** was explicitly framed as an introductory intervention for students and researchers who were new to Digital Humanities and needed a practical route into the field. That framing was important. Whereas earlier sessions had concentrated on the history, politics, infrastructure, and conceptual scope of Digital Humanities, Ochika's lecture addressed a more immediate question: **what do Digital Humanities researchers actually do when they begin to work with texts?**

At the centre of the lecture was the proposition that **Digital Humanities is a bridge between computational methods and humanistic inquiry.** Ochika used this formulation to clarify that the field is not simply about adopting software or producing attractive visualisations. Its larger purpose remains interpretive. The humanities have always been concerned with meaning, context, value, representation, and cultural significance. What Digital Humanities changes is not the need for interpretation, but the pathways through which interpretation can proceed. Computational methods, in his account, make it possible to move from raw material to structured insight with greater scale, speed, and formal clarity, while still retaining the critical and interpretive labour that defines humanistic scholarship.

One of the lecture's most useful early contributions was its treatment of the word **"text."** Ochika deliberately expanded the term beyond written language alone. For the purposes of Digital Humanities, he suggested, a text may include any humanly produced object or expression that can be interpreted: a historical artefact, a song, a film, or another cultural form that conveys meaning and can be studied analytically. This clarification mattered because it opened Digital Humanities beyond a narrowly literary frame and

made clear that the field can engage a wide range of cultural materials. In doing so, the lecture remained accessible to participants from multiple disciplinary backgrounds, including literature, history, linguistics, media studies, and cultural studies.

From this conceptual starting point, the lecture moved to the first major practical problem in Digital Humanities: **textual data preparation**. Ochika emphasised that before any convincing analysis can take place, materials must first be converted into **machine-readable form**. This step is often overlooked by beginners, who may assume that the analytical process begins only once a tool has been opened. In reality, the quality of the eventual interpretation depends heavily upon how the source text has been prepared. Ochika referred to practical tools and techniques for this work, including OCR-based approaches and related processes that allow printed or otherwise non-digital materials to enter computational workflows. He even mentioned accessible tools such as **Google Lens** for converting print into machine-readable text, thereby keeping the lecture grounded in practical realities rather than abstract technicality.

But making a text machine-readable, he insisted, is not sufficient. It must also be **cleaned**. OCR outputs can contain errors, irrelevant characters, noise, and distortions that affect the quality of later analysis. For this reason, Ochika introduced participants to the importance of correcting irregularities, removing what is not analytically relevant, and preparing the text so that it reflects the research object as accurately as possible. In this context he referred to processes such as **tokenisation** and **lemmatisation**, both of which help structure the dataset for analysis. The methodological lesson here was straightforward but crucial: preparation is not a secondary task, but a foundational stage of the research process. Poorly prepared data produces weak interpretation; reliable data makes stronger insight possible.

A further layer of this preparatory work involved what Ochika described as **metadata enrichment**. Here he stressed the importance of adding contextual fields such as author, genre, date, and related tags that help situate the text analytically. Metadata allows a dataset to become more than a string of words. It turns it into a structured research object. This point was methodologically important because it demonstrated that Digital Humanities does not treat texts as disembodied linguistic matter. Instead, it

depends on contextual information that keeps interpretation historically and culturally grounded even within computational processes.

From data preparation, the lecture moved to **text mining** and forms of what is often called **distant reading**. The significance of these methods lies in their capacity to reveal patterns that may not be immediately visible through ordinary close reading. A researcher may read a novel from beginning to end and still not easily identify the total word count, the most frequent terms, repeated collocations, or the thematic concentration of certain ideas. Digital tools, by contrast, can make such patterns visible very quickly. Ochika therefore introduced several analytical procedures that participants might use, including **word frequency analysis**, **collocation analysis**, **topic modelling**, and **sentiment analysis**. These methods, he suggested, do not replace interpretation; they expand the scale at which interpretation can occur and help scholars detect repetition, emphasis, and structure across larger bodies of material.

A major practical focus of the lecture was **Voyant Tools**, which Ochika presented as a particularly useful environment for beginners in Digital Humanities. This emphasis complemented Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell's earlier lecture, but shifted the focus from history to application. For Ochika, Voyant was valuable because of its accessibility and design: it allows users to see multiple analytical functions operating on the same corpus within a visually organised interface. In this way, it makes Digital Humanities methods more intelligible to new researchers, especially those who may be intimidated by technical vocabulary or by the assumption that meaningful digital work requires advanced coding skills from the outset. He recommended Voyant not as the only tool available, but as an especially practical gateway into the field.

The lecture also widened its methodological scope beyond lexical analysis alone. Ochika introduced **network analysis** as a way of studying the relationships among characters, places, ideas, or ideological structures. In this framework, entities become **nodes**, and their relationships become **edges**, allowing patterns of connection to be visualised and interpreted. This was an important expansion, because it showed that Digital Humanities is not limited to counting words or charting frequencies. It can also help researchers model relations, structures, and conceptual patterns within cultural material. By introducing this area, even briefly, Ochika

helped participants see Digital Humanities as a diverse methodological field rather than a single-tool practice.

Similarly, he referred to **spatial and temporal analysis**, suggesting that digital methods can help scholars connect place, chronology, and meaning when exploring historical or cultural documents. Such methods are particularly useful for work involving travel narratives, historical archives, memory studies, mapping projects, or other materials in which place and time are analytically central. Even though the lecture treated these areas only in introductory form, their inclusion was important because it underscored the breadth of Digital Humanities and the range of questions it can support.

One of the most compelling parts of the lecture concerned **visualisation**. Ochika described visualisation as a kind of game changer in his own research, a means by which explanation becomes easier and patterns become more legible. This practical testimony mattered because it translated abstract claims about Digital Humanities into actual scholarly experience. Visualisation, in his account, is not decorative. It is interpretive. It helps researchers see what is foregrounded, how emphasis is distributed, and where trends or concentrations appear. Word clouds, trend graphs, charts, and interactive dashboards are therefore not simply presentational devices; they become tools of analytical discovery.

He used the **word cloud** as a particularly accessible example. Because frequently occurring words appear more prominently, the word cloud offers an immediate visual indication of what dominates a text or corpus. He also referred to trend graphs and charts, which help researchers understand how terms or themes are distributed. These examples were pedagogically effective because they translated computational analysis into forms that participants could grasp quickly. For newcomers to Digital Humanities, this mattered a great deal. The lecture did not assume prior technical confidence, but instead built understanding through examples that were visually and conceptually manageable.

Yet the lecture did not lapse into technological enthusiasm without caution. One of its most important intellectual interventions was the insistence that **digital tools are not neutral**. Ochika reminded participants that algorithms carry assumptions and biases, and that those biases can shape the outputs researchers receive. This observation connected his

lecture directly to the symposium's broader concerns about ethics, AI, and the politics of digital systems. Even where a tool appears efficient or persuasive, the humanities scholar must still ask: what assumptions structure the tool? What nuances might be lost? What perspectives might be amplified or erased? By foregrounding these questions, Ochika ensured that his presentation remained recognisably humanistic even while teaching computational methods.

This led directly into another major theme: the relationship between **quantitative and qualitative interpretation**. Ochika argued that Digital Humanities is strongest when it balances the two. Quantitative methods reveal patterns, frequencies, repetitions, and large-scale structures. Qualitative interpretation supplies context, nuance, depth, and critical judgement. Neither is sufficient on its own. If a researcher knows only that a word appears frequently, that fact alone does not explain what the pattern means; interpretation remains necessary. Conversely, qualitative interpretation without any attention to larger structures may miss significant textual tendencies. The robustness of Digital Humanities, therefore, lies precisely in this intersection. It is where pattern meets meaning.

The lecture's concluding reflections reinforced this point. Ochika suggested that Digital Humanities allows scholars to ask **better-informed questions**, not simply to obtain faster answers. This formulation is especially strong because it resists the temptation to reduce the field to efficiency. Digital Humanities matters not only because it accelerates certain tasks, but because it changes the horizon of inquiry. By making new forms of evidence visible, revealing patterns at different scales, and enabling multiple modes of visual and relational analysis, it invites researchers to pose questions they might not otherwise have seen. In this respect, Digital Humanities does not replace the humanities. It deepens them by widening the evidentiary and methodological field within which interpretation takes place.

Seen within the larger architecture of the symposium, Ochika's lecture performed a crucial pedagogical function. Earlier sessions had introduced participants to the history of computational text analysis, the African Digital Humanities landscape, digital infrastructure, and AI in humanities research. This lecture translated those larger conversations into a practical research workflow. It showed how a scholar begins: by defining the text, preparing

the data, selecting tools, identifying patterns, visualising results, and returning critically to interpretation. That sequence made the session especially valuable for students and early-career researchers, since it transformed Digital Humanities from a broad and potentially intimidating concept into a workable scholarly practice.

Ultimately, **“From Text to Insight”** was an apt title. The lecture demonstrated that Digital Humanities is not fundamentally about text as raw information, but about the movement from textual material to interpretive understanding. Ochika’s central contribution lay in showing that this movement is both technical and critical, both computational and humanistic. Tools help surface patterns, but insight still depends upon judgement. Methods create structure, but meaning remains an interpretive achievement. For that reason, the lecture stands as one of the clearest statements in the symposium of what Digital Humanities looks like when it becomes research practice rather than abstract possibility.

Chapter 8

Discussion Highlights and Emerging Debates

The discussion sessions that followed the formal lectures were among the most revealing parts of the symposium. If the lectures established the conceptual, historical, and methodological foundations of Digital Humanities, the discussions exposed the institutional tensions, practical uncertainties, and emerging possibilities that accompany the field when it is taken seriously within African universities. Across both days, participants did not merely ask for clarification. They pushed speakers toward questions of legitimacy, collaboration, ethics, localisation, training, and infrastructural feasibility. As a result, the discussion rounds functioned not as supplementary exchanges, but as a major intellectual layer of the symposium itself.

One of the earliest themes to emerge was the question of **where Digital Humanities has historically been located within the university**. In response to questions about the role of English departments and libraries, **Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell** offered a politically astute account of why English departments became so prominent in the development of Digital Humanities in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. English departments, he explained, were often larger than other humanities units, had clearer employment pathways for graduates, and occupied an expansive institutional position that enabled them to absorb neighbouring domains such as comparative literature, philosophy, and cultural studies. They also inherited a strong investment in canonical textual traditions, particularly Shakespeare, which made early concordance work and text analysis institutionally intelligible within them. This exchange was important because it showed that the history of Digital Humanities cannot be reduced to technical innovation alone; it must also be understood in relation to academic size, disciplinary status, and the politics of institutional legitimacy.

Closely related to this was a broader discussion of **infrastructure and invisibility**. Rockwell suggested that libraries and other forms of institutional support have always been central to humanities work, even when their contributions are not always explicitly recognised. Humanists, he

argued, often sustain an image of the lone thinker or sole author, when in reality their work depends on multiple layers of support: librarians, archives, graduate assistants, classrooms, computing services, and other infrastructures that remain essential even when they are rhetorically backgrounded. This point resonated strongly with the symposium's larger concern for African Digital Humanities, where building a field requires attention not only to ideas and tools, but also to the often invisible structures that make scholarship possible.

A second major theme concerned the relationship between **computer science and Digital Humanities**. This issue surfaced repeatedly, in part because computer science students and faculty were present and actively asking where they fit within the emerging field. Several participants wanted to know whether Digital Humanities simply required them to learn existing tools such as Voyant, or whether there was a deeper and more substantive role for computational disciplines. Rockwell's response was unequivocal: computer scientists, statisticians, and technically trained researchers are not peripheral helpers but crucial collaborators. Large-scale text mining, word embeddings, topic modelling, XML processing, interface design, server administration, and tool development all depend on knowledge that many humanists do not possess in full. At the same time, he stressed that such collaboration becomes meaningful only when all sides learn to formulate questions that matter intellectually to everyone involved. In this sense, the symposium advanced a strong model of Digital Humanities as shared inquiry rather than one-sided technical service.

This led naturally to a deeper reflection on the **difficulty of collaboration itself**. Rockwell observed that collaboration does not succeed automatically simply because people express interest in it. It requires mutual learning, translation across disciplinary vocabularies, and the development of research agendas that benefit all partners. Scientists may feel they are being asked merely to build tools for somebody else's project, while humanists may feel technically overwhelmed or conceptually displaced. The symposium's discussions were especially valuable because they did not romanticise collaboration; they presented it as necessary but laborious, requiring patience, negotiation, and the willingness to revise one's own intellectual assumptions.

Another central theme was the **politics of legitimacy**. Rockwell reflected candidly on his own experience of being told as a graduate student that computing should be hidden from his CV because it would be seen as lesser or even disqualifying work. He connected this to wider tensions within the humanities, where new technical practices often encounter suspicion, especially when they appear to challenge established models of scholarly authority. Participants linked this history to the present moment of AI, where a similar polarisation has emerged: some scholars see generative tools as corrupting or dehumanising, while others embrace them too readily. One of the most productive insights to emerge from the discussions was therefore historical: current anxieties about AI in the humanities echo earlier anxieties about computing itself. The implication was not that such concerns are irrational, but that they must be addressed historically, critically, and dialogically rather than through simple acceptance or rejection.

A particularly important debate arose around the naming of **African Digital Humanities**. Participants asked whether it is necessary or desirable to specify the field in regional terms, given that one does not always hear equally common labels such as “Canadian Digital Humanities” or “British Digital Humanities” in the same way. In response, **Dr. Reggemore Marongedze** argued that there is nothing apologetic or limiting about naming African Digital Humanities. On the contrary, naming produces visibility, identity, and ownership. It allows practitioners to acknowledge that scholarly work emerges from specific conditions and geographies, and that those conditions affect what kinds of tools, methods, and priorities make sense. This view was strengthened by interventions from Dr Ignatius Ezeani, who pointed out that many existing tools fail when applied to African languages, domains, or datasets because they were not built with those contexts in mind. In that sense, “African Digital Humanities” is not merely a geographical label; it is also a methodological and epistemic intervention.

Closely connected to this was the question of **curriculum and programme design**. Participants wanted to know how universities in Nigeria and elsewhere might establish Digital Humanities programmes and what kinds of challenges should be expected. Marongedze’s experience with the **MA in Digital Humanities at the University of Zimbabwe** became

an especially useful reference point. One challenge, he noted, is institutional incomprehension: before a programme can be approved or supported, colleagues often have to be persuaded that Digital Humanities is a legitimate field at all. A second challenge concerns the level of entry—whether to begin at undergraduate or postgraduate stage. His own strategy had been to design a master’s-level programme capable of bringing together graduates from multiple disciplines and then training them in digital methods. These exchanges showed that building Digital Humanities institutionally requires more than curriculum documents; it requires persuasion, negotiation, and internal intellectual advocacy.

The discussions also returned repeatedly to the importance of **hands-on training**. Participants observed that conceptual presentations, while valuable, are not enough for many newcomers. There was a clear call for more practical workshops, more contextual examples, and more curated resources that would help lecturers, students, and early-career researchers begin using Digital Humanities tools with confidence. This emphasis on training reflected one of the symposium’s larger pedagogical commitments: Digital Humanities must be taught not only through theory, but through guided practice. The idea that resources mentioned during the sessions—such as Voyant, TAPoR, SADiLaR, and related initiatives—should be curated and shared was part of the same logic. The field grows not only through lectures, but through accessible pathways into repeated experimentation and learning.

By Day 2, the tone of discussion became even more concretely grounded, particularly around the realities of **working in Nigerian institutions**. A question about whether Voyant could be used on Android phones led to a brief but revealing exchange about device access. The answer was that the platform might open on a phone, but the best experience requires a computer. Although this seemed like a minor technical detail, it exposed a larger structural issue: in many low-resource settings, the devices scholars actually possess shape what forms of digital work are realistically available to them. This question of access did not remain abstract. Participants also spoke openly about inadequate facilities, unstable infrastructure, and the need to improvise. These remarks gave the discussions one of their most important dimensions: they located Digital

Humanities not in ideal conditions, but within the ordinary constraints of African university life.

In response to questions about Nigeria specifically, both **Abel Ochika** and **Yohanna Joseph Waliya** highlighted the extent to which current work often depends on **personal effort, improvisation, and self-training**. Ochika described the work of early practitioners as pathfinding: pushing through difficulties now so that later researchers will have a more established route. Waliya added a more personal account of pursuing Digital Humanities work from outside computer science, stressing the importance of individual commitment, collaborative learning, and persistence even where institutional structures are weak. His remarks about supervisors who initially did not understand Digital Humanities were especially revealing. They showed that one of the real barriers to the field's growth is not only lack of equipment, but lack of conceptual recognition within existing academic supervision structures.

The discussions also generated sustained reflection on **ethics and bias**, especially in relation to AI and large-scale analysis. One participant working with Holocaust testimony posed a particularly significant question: how can computational methods be used at scale without dehumanising the material or making it seem as though human beings no longer matter? Rockwell's answer was strikingly philosophical. He argued that there is no single technical solution to such ethical tensions; the answer lies in **dialogue**—dialogue with students, with colleagues, with disciplinary traditions, and with the technologies themselves. He insisted that the humanities have always used technology, even if earlier technologies such as books and libraries became so familiar as to seem transparent. The issue is therefore not whether technology is used, but how appropriately and reflectively it is used in a given context.

This ethical reflection continued on Day 2 through questions about the relationship between the **human mind and AI** in interpretation. Could bias ever be substantially reduced? How should critical thinking interact with machine-assisted pattern recognition? Rockwell's response was again careful and unsensational. He argued that no practice—human or computational—produces wholly unbiased answers. Every inquiry begins from a position, a framing, or a horizon of questioning. What matters, therefore, is not the impossible elimination of bias, but the constant testing

of interpretations. Computational findings must be double-checked, compared against other methods, and returned to the text through close reading. Ochika extended this point by framing the issue in terms of **credibility, validity, and robustness**, arguing that triangulation across methods is what gives research its strength. AI and computational tools may reveal patterns, but those patterns remain hypotheses until they are critically interpreted and verified.

A final recurring theme was the relationship between **technology, humility, and continuity**. Rockwell remarked that his job was not to preserve the book as an object, but to preserve a history of thinking about human expression. This statement captures something essential about the discussion sessions as a whole. Participants were not being invited to abandon traditional humanistic values in favour of machines, nor to preserve older forms unchanged out of nostalgia. They were being asked to think historically, critically, and humbly about the technologies at hand, and to use them in ways that keep humanistic inquiry alive under new conditions. In this respect, the discussion rounds gave the symposium some of its deepest intellectual force. They showed that Digital Humanities in Africa is not simply a matter of acquiring tools; it is a matter of negotiating methods, institutional politics, ethics, access, and collaboration in ways that remain critically and socially responsive.

Taken together, the discussion sessions transformed the symposium from a sequence of lectures into a genuine space of collective inquiry. They revealed that the major debates around Digital Humanities in African contexts include institutional legitimacy, interdisciplinary translation, curriculum design, language inequality, infrastructural scarcity, practical training, ethical use of AI, and the continuing authority of human interpretation. That is precisely why these discussions matter. They do not merely record audience reactions; they capture the contested terrain on which African Digital Humanities is presently being built.

Chapter 9

Synthesis, Outcomes, and Future Directions

By the close of the symposium, it had become clear that the event had done far more than introduce participants to a set of digital tools. It has opened a broader conversation about the changing nature of humanities research, the institutional future of Digital Humanities in Africa, and the conditions under which digital scholarship can become intellectually serious, socially grounded, and sustainable. Across the welcome address, keynote lectures, methodological sessions, and discussion rounds, the symposium repeatedly returned to a cluster of interrelated concerns: interdisciplinarity, textual analysis, African Digital Humanities, infrastructure, artificial intelligence, collaboration, training, and the ethical responsibilities of scholars working in digital environments. Taken together, these concerns form the intellectual core of the symposium and explain its longer-term significance.

One of the symposium's most consistent achievements was to establish **Digital Humanities as an interdisciplinary field rather than a technical supplement**. From the Vice Chancellor's opening reflection onward, participants were encouraged to see Digital Humanities as a response to the increasing complexity of contemporary scholarship, where social, historical, linguistic, and cultural questions cannot be adequately addressed within narrow disciplinary boundaries. This interdisciplinary vision was reinforced repeatedly in the lectures and discussions, especially in exchanges about the relationship between humanities scholars and computer scientists. The symposium therefore challenged any simple assumption that Digital Humanities belongs wholly either to the humanities or to computing. Instead, it presented the field as a meeting ground where interpretation, computation, design, and critical reasoning must learn to work together.

A second major outcome was the clear identification of **textual analysis as a foundational gateway into Digital Humanities**. Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell's lecture traced a historical trajectory from medieval concordances to Voyant Tools, showing that computational text analysis is rooted in a much older scholarly tradition of organising and interrogating texts. Abel Ochika's methodological presentation then

translated that history into practical workflow, explaining how machine-readable texts are prepared, cleaned, enriched, analysed, and interpreted. Together, these sessions provided participants with both historical depth and procedural clarity. They demonstrated that Digital Humanities does not begin with abstract theory alone, but with concrete work on texts, datasets, and interpretive tools. For many participants, this was among the symposium's most immediate contributions: it offered an intellectually grounded and methodologically accessible route into the field.

The symposium also made a significant contribution by insisting that **African Digital Humanities must be articulated in its own right**. Dr. Reggemore Marongedze's lecture and the subsequent discussions showed that African Digital Humanities is not simply a regional application of a universal method. It is a field shaped by African archives, African languages, African institutional conditions, and African community needs. The discussions around naming were especially important in this regard. Participants argued that the adjective "African" is not a limitation or apology, but a form of visibility, ownership, and methodological honesty. It acknowledges that tools do not operate in a vacuum, that language technologies often fail in low-resource contexts, and that African institutions must develop approaches responsive to their own realities rather than merely importing frameworks developed elsewhere.

Related to this was the symposium's strong emphasis on **language, digitisation, and low-resource contexts**. Again and again, speakers returned to the problem that many African languages remain underrepresented online, under-resourced computationally, and therefore marginal within both Digital Humanities and AI systems. This concern appeared in Marongedze's discussion of language-resource development and community-centred projects, in Waliya's lecture on the limitations of large language models, and in the discussions about localisation and tool adaptation. One of the symposium's most important intellectual outcomes, therefore, is that it placed language justice near the centre of African Digital Humanities. This is significant because it reframes digitisation not merely as technical work, but as part of a larger struggle over visibility, inclusion, and epistemic presence in digital knowledge systems.

Another important result of the event was its deepened understanding of **infrastructure as a scholarly question**. Prof. Rockwell's TAPoR

lecture, especially when read alongside the discussion sessions, made clear that Digital Humanities cannot be sustained by enthusiasm alone. Labs, servers, technical support, training structures, grant strategies, maintenance plans, discovery tools, and digital repositories all form part of the infrastructural ecology within which research becomes possible. The symposium's contribution here was especially valuable because it resisted the temptation to glamorise technological accumulation. Rockwell argued instead for modest, focused, sustainable systems built around people, courses, local support, and long-term thinking. In this way, the event helped redefine infrastructure not as a hidden technical background, but as a core intellectual and institutional concern of Digital Humanities itself.

The symposium also offered a mature and balanced intervention into current debates about **AI and large language models in humanities research**. Waliya's lecture, reinforced by later discussion, made two key points at once. First, AI creates significant new opportunities: searching across large corpora, summarising material, assisting translation, supporting preservation, and enabling new forms of exploratory analysis. Second, these tools are bounded by bias, hallucination, opacity, and uneven language representation. The event's contribution here was to reject both alarmist refusal and uncritical adoption. Instead, the dominant view across the lecture and the discussion was that AI should be used within a framework of verification, attribution, governance, and human critical judgement. This balanced position is one of the symposium's most timely outcomes, because it provides a principled basis for engaging AI without surrendering scholarly responsibility.

Equally significant was the symposium's repeated insistence on **collaboration as method**. This point emerged not only in the formal lectures but also in exchanges about supervision, curriculum development, team-building, and interdisciplinary practice. Digital Humanities was consistently presented as a field that cannot flourish under the old image of the isolated scholarly genius. It depends on programmers, teachers, students, librarians, interface designers, archivists, community partners, and institutional supporters. More importantly, it requires collaboration to be intellectually reciprocal rather than hierarchical. The event repeatedly stressed that humanists should not regard computer scientists as mere service providers, and technologists should not approach humanities

projects as technically trivial tasks. One of the symposium's most durable outcomes is therefore the recognition that Digital Humanities collaboration succeeds only when shared questions, shared language, and shared ownership are deliberately cultivated.

A further major outcome was the clear identification of **capacity building as the central institutional pathway forward**. The symposium did not imagine that a two-day event could, by itself, produce expertise. On the contrary, several speakers stressed that Digital Humanities grows through repetition, practice, and sustained pedagogical structures. The MA in Digital Humanities at the University of Zimbabwe was discussed as one model; the African Digital Humanities Lab's continuing webinars, short courses, hackathons, and training materials were another. The closing reflections made this especially explicit by framing the symposium not as an end point, but as a beginning. This is perhaps one of the symposium's most practical contributions: it linked inspiration to actual structures of continuation. Instead of ending with abstract enthusiasm, it pointed participants toward communities, platforms, and training ecosystems capable of supporting further growth.

From these broad themes, several **concrete outcomes** may be identified. First, the symposium succeeded in creating a shared conceptual vocabulary around Digital Humanities for a mixed audience of lecturers, researchers, students, and technically oriented participants. Second, it introduced participants to a number of usable tools, methods, and historical frameworks that can immediately inform teaching and research. Third, it provided institutional examples—from Canada, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria—that participants can draw upon when making the case for courses, programmes, labs, or collaborative initiatives in their own institutions. Fourth, it clarified that African Digital Humanities must be built with deliberate attention to linguistic diversity, community participation, and infrastructural realism. Fifth, it reaffirmed the continuing role of the African Digital Humanities Lab as a node for learning, networking, and collaboration beyond the symposium itself.

The symposium also opened several clear **future directions** for research and institutional development. One is the expansion of **Digital Humanities curricula** in African universities, whether through full degree programmes, modular courses, or interdisciplinary short offerings. Another

is the development of **digital language resources** for African languages, especially those still categorised as low-resource within computational systems. A third is the strengthening of **local infrastructure** through common servers, open tools, institutional repositories, and shared technical support. A fourth is the development of **ethical and policy frameworks** around AI use in teaching and research. A fifth is the cultivation of **community-centred projects** that treat local communities as co-participants in knowledge production rather than as passive sources of data. These directions do not exhaust the possibilities opened by the symposium, but they provide a clear map of the field's most immediate next steps.

Perhaps the most enduring lesson of the symposium is that Digital Humanities in African contexts must be built through a careful combination of **ambition and realism**. The lectures inspired participants with histories of innovation, collaborative tool-building, and emerging AI possibilities. The discussions, however, reminded everyone that institutional scepticism, infrastructural scarcity, device limitations, supervisory gaps, and uneven technical support remain very real. The event's intellectual maturity lay in its refusal to choose between optimism and constraint. Instead, it suggested that the future of African Digital Humanities depends precisely on working intelligently within present limits while building toward stronger structures over time.

In that sense, the symposium's most lasting contribution may be the way it redefined Digital Humanities as a **field of practice, relation, and responsibility**. It is a field of practice because it requires methods, tools, workflows, and technical competencies. It is a field of relation because it depends upon collaboration across disciplines, institutions, and communities. And it is a field of responsibility because its growth raises questions of ethics, credit, language justice, infrastructure, and human judgement. By foregrounding all three dimensions, the symposium moved beyond introductory enthusiasm and laid a more serious foundation for future work. That is why it deserves to be remembered not only as an event, but as a formative moment in the continuing development of African Digital Humanities.

Chapter 10

Closing Reflections

The symposium concluded in a manner entirely consistent with its wider intellectual and institutional aims. The closing reflections, delivered by **Dr. Ozioma Okay-Kalu**, reframed the two-day programme not as a self-contained academic event, but as the beginning of a longer journey in **training, collaboration, and community formation**. This was one of the clearest messages to emerge from the event as a whole. From the opening sessions onward, participants had been introduced to Digital Humanities as a field that depends on continuity rather than one-off exposure, and the closing reflections made that principle explicit. The final message was unmistakable: the symposium might be ending, but the work of learning, building, and collaborating in African Digital Humanities had only just begun.

A strong note of **gratitude** shaped the closing remarks. Members of the organising network, especially the **African Digital Humanities Lab**, were warmly acknowledged for the labour that made the symposium possible. Particular recognition was given to me as a central animating force within that network, someone who helped sustain momentum, draw people back together, and keep the community active even when energy began to fade. This expression of gratitude was more than ceremonial courtesy. It reinforced one of the symposium's recurrent themes: Digital Humanities is sustained by people, and often by people whose labour is organisational, pedagogical, and relational as much as intellectual. The building of a field depends not only on formal scholarship, but also on those who convene, remind, organise, and continue the work between public events.

The closing reflections also returned with notable warmth to the contribution of **Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell**. Throughout the symposium, Rockwell had functioned not only as a lecturer, but also as a figure of ongoing mentorship and transnational collaboration. In the closing session he was thanked for the generosity with which he has repeatedly shared time, expertise, and intellectual support with scholars and learners he may not know personally. This acknowledgement was significant because it illuminated the kind of scholarly culture the symposium was trying to

cultivate: one grounded in openness, pedagogy, and the circulation of knowledge rather than the guarding of expertise. In many ways, the gratitude directed toward Rockwell was also gratitude for a model of Digital Humanities leadership built around mentorship, accessibility, and sustained scholarly generosity.

As a member of the organising team and the speaker who delivered the closing remarks, **Dr. Ozioma Okay-Kalu** occupied an especially important place in bringing the symposium to a thoughtful and forward-looking conclusion.

Yet the most important contribution of the closing remarks lay in their insistence on **continuity**. The speaker made clear that the symposium should not be mistaken for a complete introduction to Digital Humanities, nor should attendance at the event be treated as the endpoint of one's engagement with the field. On the contrary, participants were urged to continue their learning through the **African Digital Humanities Lab website**, where they could access training materials, videos, and short courses. Reference was also made to previous **hackathons** and to future training events already being planned. This emphasis extended the symposium's pedagogical logic beyond the event itself and reinforced the idea that Digital Humanities expertise is cultivated through repeated, structured, and cumulative engagement.

The remarks also highlighted the value of **certificate-based learning** and structured short courses, not as ends in themselves, but as means of encouraging sustained participation and recognising effort. What is striking here is that the closing session did not present Digital Humanities as a casual or superficial skill set that one could absorb passively after a few hours of exposure. Instead, it insisted that genuine competence requires deeper study, continued practice, and the willingness to move beyond first curiosity. This insistence echoed earlier discussions in the symposium about training, curriculum design, and the need for practical, hands-on engagement rather than purely conceptual orientation.

Another important note in the closing reflections was the emphasis on **training trainers**. Hackathons and workshops were described not only as opportunities for individual learning, but as spaces in which participants could develop the capacity to support others in turn. This was particularly

significant in the context of African Digital Humanities. In regions where formal programmes remain limited and institutional support is still emerging, the multiplication of capable local trainers becomes one of the most effective ways of growing the field. In that sense, the closing session reaffirmed a model of distributed capacity building: the future of African Digital Humanities depends not on a single centre or a small number of experts, but on a widening network of people who can teach, adapt, and build within their own institutions and communities.

The closing remarks also returned to a more concise explanation of what **Digital Humanities** is for those who may still have felt uncertain. The field was described in practical terms as the use of digital tools to conduct and enrich research in the humanities. This explanation, though simple, was strategically important. It repositioned Digital Humanities as approachable rather than intimidating and emphasised that its appeal lies partly in the way it combines **quantitative outputs** with **qualitative interpretation**. This hybrid mode—using extraction, analysis, and visualisation tools while still applying humanistic judgement—had already emerged as a central theme throughout the symposium. The closing session distilled that idea into a compact form that participants could carry with them after the event.

A further notable theme was the call for **broader participation**, especially from students and lecturers who had not yet entered the Digital Humanities space. The speaker expressed surprise that more humanities students were not present, particularly given that many of them would soon be undertaking thesis or dissertation research. This observation was more than a passing remark. It pointed to an important institutional implication of the symposium: Digital Humanities has immediate relevance for students at the moment they begin designing and executing research projects. The tools and methods discussed over the two days were presented as capable of helping such students collect data, analyse evidence, and visualise results more efficiently and imaginatively. The implication was clear: future symposia and training initiatives should seek even stronger student participation.

The remarks also stressed the need for a **serious and sustained community of practice**. Building a team, the speaker observed, is not easy. It requires researchers, lecturers, and students who are willing to remain

involved rather than simply attending a single event. This point resonates strongly with the symposium as a whole. Again and again, speakers had stressed that Digital Humanities cannot flourish through isolated individual enthusiasm alone. It requires communities, associations, labs, recurring events, collaborative relationships, and shared labour. The closing reflections returned to that principle and turned it into a practical appeal: those who are serious about the field should stay connected, make their contact details available, and participate in future initiatives.

Another important dimension of the closing session was its appreciation of **Peter University** as host. The institution was thanked for giving students and staff the opportunity to encounter Digital Humanities more directly and for creating an environment in which such a symposium could take place. The speaker also indicated that the African Digital Humanities Lab remained open to future collaboration with the university, whether through additional seminars, projects, or training activities. This was a significant closing gesture because it transformed the host institution from a venue into a potential long-term partner. The symposium therefore ended not with separation, but with the possibility of expanded institutional relationship.

The mention of future **collective projects**, including a **book project**, extended this forward-looking orientation further. It suggested that the symposium was not only about learning from invited experts, but also about generating new collaborative outputs among participants themselves. This is one of the clearest indications that the event succeeded in becoming more than a lecture series. By the end, it had begun to imagine its participants as potential co-workers in an ongoing field of practice. The movement from audience to community, and from event to project, is one of the strongest markers of the symposium's success.

Taken as a whole, the closing reflections crystallised several of the symposium's most important lessons. They affirmed that Digital Humanities in Africa must be built through generosity, collaboration, continued training, and institutional partnership. They reaffirmed that expertise grows through repeated engagement and that communities matter as much as tools. They also left participants with a practical map of continuation: remain connected to the African Digital Humanities Lab, participate in webinars and hackathons, pursue short-course training, and

carry the symposium's conversations back into teaching, research, supervision, and institutional planning. In this way, the closing session did not merely thank participants for attending; it challenged them to become part of an ongoing movement.

In the final analysis, the closing reflections gave the symposium an ending that was not truly an ending. They transformed closure into transition. The event concluded, but the field remained open; the sessions finished, but the learning was expected to continue; the gathering dispersed, but the network was invited to stay active. That is perhaps the most fitting way for a symposium on Digital Humanities to end. A field built on evolving tools, collaborative communities, and unfinished futures should not close with finality, but with invitation. The closing remarks offered precisely that: an invitation to continue building African Digital Humanities together.

Appendix A. Full Programme of the Symposium

International Symposium on Digital Humanities

Theme: *Exploring Digital Tools for Interdisciplinary Research*

Day 1 — Wednesday, 25 March 2026

Welcome Address by **Rev. Fr. Prof. Emmanuel C. Umezina**,
Vice Chancellor, Peter University

Lecture: **Computationally Driven Text Analysis and the Digital Humanities: From the Concordance to Voyant** —
Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell

Discussion and Q&A

Lecture: **African Digital Humanities: Contexts, Case Studies and Community-Centred Practices** — **Dr. Reggemore Marongedze**

Discussion and Q&A

Day 2 — Friday, 27 March 2026

Opening Remarks by **Dr Christopher Obumneke**

Lecture: **TAPoR: A Story of Digital Humanities Infrastructure** — **Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell**

Lecture: **AI and Large Language Models in Humanities Research: Possibilities, Limits and Governance** — **Yohanna Joseph Waliya**

Lecture: **From Text to Insight: Core DH Methods of Analysis and Interpretation** — **Abel Ochika**

Discussion and Q&A

Closing Remarks by **Dr. Ozioma Okay-Kalu**

Appendix B. Speaker Profiles

Rev. Fr. Prof. Emmanuel C. Umezina

Rev. Fr. Prof. Emmanuel C. Umezina is Vice-Chancellor of Peter University and a scholar associated with music, culture, and education. At the symposium, he delivered the welcome address and situated the event within the University's commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship, innovation, and the future of research in a digitally connected world.

Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell

Prof. Geoffrey Martin Rockwell is a Professor at the University of Alberta and one of the leading international figures in Digital Humanities. His work spans computational text analysis, textual visualisation, humanities computing, tool development, and the ethics of digital technologies. At the symposium, he delivered lectures on the history of computational text analysis, Voyant Tools, and Digital Humanities infrastructure through the TAPoR project.

Dr. Reggemore Marongedze

Dr. Reggemore Marongedze is a scholar of African Digital Humanities, computational linguistics, digital literary criticism, and cultural studies. His work addresses the geographies of Digital Humanities, African language resources, community-centred digital practice, and the wider institutional development of African Digital Humanities. At the symposium, he presented on African Digital Humanities through contexts, case studies, and community-centred practices.

Yohanna Joseph Waliya

Yohanna Joseph Waliya is a Nigerian scholar, lecturer, and creative writer whose work spans Digital Humanities, African e-literature, and French literary studies. His public-facing academic and professional profile links him to teaching, writing, and research in both English- and French-language contexts. At the symposium, he presented on artificial intelligence and large language models in humanities research, focusing on possibility, limitation, and governance.

Abel Ochika

Abel Ochika is a researcher and emerging Digital Humanities practitioner with interests in language, textual analysis, and the interpretive use of digital tools. His work reflects a strong concern for accessible methods, pedagogy, and the practical introduction of computational approaches into humanities research. At the symposium, he delivered the methodological lecture **“From Text to Insight: Core DH Methods of Analysis and Interpretation.”**

Dr Christopher Obumneke

Dr Christopher Obumneke is a scholar in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Peter University, Achina-Onneh. His academic profile reflects interests in mathematical modelling and applied quantitative analysis. At the symposium, he delivered the Day 2 opening remarks, reflecting on the impact of the first day’s sessions and reaffirming the event’s wider call to action around digital scholarship, cultural preservation, and African participation in global knowledge production.

Dr. Ozioma Okay-Kalu

Dr. Ozioma Okay-Kalu was part of the organising team of the *International Symposium on Digital Humanities* and also delivered the

closing remarks. Her contribution to the event extended beyond coordination into intellectual stewardship, helping to frame the symposium's broader significance and to emphasise the importance of continuity, collaboration, and capacity building in African Digital Humanities.

Augustine Farinola

Augustine Farinola is the writer and editor of this report, moderator of the symposium, and a central coordinator of the event's flow and interaction. His role in the symposium extended across moderation, participant engagement, session coordination, and the wider collaborative work of the African Digital Humanities Lab.

Appendix C. Digital Humanities Resources Mentioned During the Symposium

The symposium referenced a number of tools, projects, and training initiatives that can serve as entry points for further study and practice in Digital Humanities.

Core Digital Humanities Tools and Platforms

Voyant Tools

A free, web-based environment for textual analysis and visualisation. Voyant was repeatedly presented during the symposium as an accessible “on-ramp” into Digital Humanities for students, lecturers, and researchers.

URL: <https://voyant-tools.org/>

Voyant Tools Help / Documentation

Official help and documentation site for Voyant Tools.

URL: <https://voyant-tools.org/docs/>

TAPoR

Originally conceived as the Text Analysis Portal for Research, TAPoR was discussed as an important experiment in Digital Humanities infrastructure and as part of the intellectual history that led toward more focused tools such as Voyant.

URL: <https://tapor.ca/>

Hermeneuti.ca / Hermeneutica Companion Site

Referenced in relation to the collaborative philosophy underpinning Voyant and the development of tools alongside interpretation.

URL: <https://hermeneuti.ca/>

African Digital Humanities Lab

A continuing training and collaboration platform referenced throughout the symposium. Participants were encouraged to engage with its website, webinars, hackathons, short courses, and future projects.

URL: <https://www.africandigitalhumanities.ca/>

African Digital Humanities and Language Infrastructure

South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR)

Presented as a major example of African Digital Humanities infrastructure focused on indigenous and under-resourced languages.

URL: <https://sadilar.org/>

Masakhane

A collaborative African research initiative focused on natural language processing and machine translation for African languages.

URL: <https://www.masakhane.io/>

Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa (DHASA)

Referenced as an institutional and networking example within African Digital Humanities.

URL: <https://digitalhumanities.org.za/>

Digital Humanities Association of Nigeria (DHAN)

Mentioned as part of the growing ecosystem of African Digital Humanities networks and institutional efforts. Public-facing pages currently available include the association's social channels.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/dhanigeria/>

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZwRjqwaZPxA3I6jXJRrGMg>

SSH Open Marketplace

Referenced in relation to TAPoR's later emphasis on discovery and openness within broader shared infrastructures.

URL: <https://marketplace.sshopencloud.eu/>

African NLP Models, Repositories, and Datasets

SERENGETI

Paper: *SERENGETI: Massively Multilingual Language Models for Africa* (Adebara et al., 2023)

ACL Anthology: <https://aclanthology.org/2023.findings-acl.97/>

arXiv: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2212.10785>

GitHub: <https://github.com/UBC-NLP/serengeti>

Hugging Face: <https://huggingface.co/UBC-NLP/serengeti-E250>

Resources: AfroNLU benchmark (20 datasets across 8 NLU tasks); approximately 42GB pretraining corpus.

Cheetah

Paper: *Cheetah: Natural Language Generation for 517 African Languages* (Adebara et al., 2024)

ACL Anthology: <https://aclanthology.org/2024.acl-long.691/>

arXiv: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2401.01053>

GitHub: <https://github.com/UBC-NLP/Cheetah>

Hugging Face: <https://huggingface.co/UBC-NLP/cheetah-base>

Resources: AfroNLG benchmark (67 test sets for generation tasks).

AfriByT5, AfriMT5, and AfriMBART

Paper: *A Few Thousand Translations Go a Long Way! Leveraging Pre-trained Models for African News Translation* (Adelani et al., 2022)

ACL Anthology: <https://aclanthology.org/2022.naacl-main.223/>

arXiv: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2205.02022>

GitHub: <https://github.com/masakhane-io/lafand-mt>

Hugging Face: searchable under AfriMT5, AfriByT5, and AfriMBART on the Hugging Face hub

Resources: MAFAND-MT (Masakhane Afrocentric News Dataset for Machine Translation); AfroMAFT corpus.

AfriBERTa

Paper: *Small Data? No Problem! Exploring the Viability of Pretrained Multilingual Language Models for Low-resourced Languages* (Ogueji et al., 2021)

ACL Anthology: <https://aclanthology.org/2021.mrl-1.11/>

arXiv: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2108.05033>

GitHub: <https://github.com/castorini/afriberta>

Hugging Face: https://huggingface.co/castorini/afriberta_small ;

https://huggingface.co/castorini/afriberta_base ;

https://huggingface.co/castorini/afriberta_large

Dataset: <https://huggingface.co/datasets/castorini/afriberta-corpus>

AfriTeVa and AfriTeVa V2 (AfriTeVa-keji)

Papers:

- *AfriTeVa: Extending “Small Data” Pretraining Approaches to Sequence-to-Sequence Models* (Ogundepo et al., 2022)

- *Better Quality Pre-training Data and T5 Models for African Languages* (Oladipo et al., 2023)

ACL Anthology (V2): <https://aclanthology.org/2023.emnlp-main.11/>

GitHub (V1): <https://github.com/castorini/afriteva>

GitHub (V2): <https://github.com/castorini/AfriTeVa-keji>

Hugging Face: searchable under [castorini/afriteva_v2_base](https://huggingface.co/castorini/afriteva_v2_base) on the Hugging Face hub

Resources: AfriBERTa corpus (V1); WURA dataset (V2).

AfroLM

Paper: *AfroLM: A Self-Active Learning-based Multilingual Pretrained Language Model for 23 African Languages* (Dossou et al., 2022)

ACL Anthology: <https://aclanthology.org/2022.sustainlp-1.11/>

arXiv: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2211.03263>

GitHub: https://github.com/bonaventuredossou/MLM_AL

Hugging Face: https://huggingface.co/bonadossou/afrolm_active_learning

Dataset:

https://huggingface.co/datasets/bonadossou/afrolm_active_learning_data
set

AfroXLMR

Paper: *Adapting Pre-trained Language Models to African Languages via Multilingual Adaptive Fine-Tuning* (Alabi et al., 2022)

ACL Anthology: <https://aclanthology.org/2022.coling-1.382/>

arXiv: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2204.06487>

GitHub: <https://github.com/uds-lsv/afro-maft>

Hugging Face: <https://huggingface.co/Davlan/afro-xlmr-large-29L>

Resources: AfroMAFT corpus; MasakhaNER 1.0 and 2.0.

Appendix D. Selected Bibliography

The following bibliography brings together works and resources directly relevant to the symposium’s themes, especially Digital Humanities, AI ethics, large language models, low-resource language contexts, and African NLP models. Entries have been standardized in a consistent scholarly format.

General Digital Humanities, AI, and Ethics

Assael, Y., Sommerschild, T., Shillingford, B., Bordbar, M., Pavlopoulos, J., Chatzipanagiotou, M., Androutsopoulos, I., Prag, J., and de Freitas, N. 2022. “Restoring and Attributing Ancient Texts Using Deep Neural Networks.” *Nature* 603: 280–283. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-04448-z>

Mann, S. P., Vazirani, A. A., Aboy, M., Earp, B. D., Minssen, T., Cohen, I. G., and Savulescu, J. 2024. “Guidelines for Ethical Use and Acknowledgement of Large Language Models in Academic Writing.” *Nature Machine Intelligence* 6 (11): 1272–1274. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s42256-024-00922-7>

Oxford Humanities Division. 2024. “Ethical Framework for Use of AI in Academic Research and Writing.” University of Oxford. <https://www.humanities.ox.ac.uk/article/ethical-framework-for-use-of-ai-in-academic-research>

Pava, J. N., Meinhardt, C., Uz Zaman, H. B., Friedman, T., Truong, S. T., Zhang, D., Cryst, E., Marivate, V., and Koyejo, S. 2025. “Mind the (Language) Gap: Mapping the Challenges of LLM Development in Low-Resource Language Contexts.” Stanford Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence. <https://hai.stanford.edu/policy/mind-the-language-gap-mapping-the-challenges-of-llm-development-in-low-resource-language-contexts>

Raschka, S. 2025. “The State of LLMs 2025: Progress, Problems, and Predictions.” *Ahead of AI Magazine*, 30 December 2025. <https://magazine.sebastianraschka.com/p/state-of-llms-2025>

UNESCO. 2021. *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*. Paris: UNESCO. <https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence/recommendation-ethics>

University of Oxford Press. 2026. “Author Use of Artificial Intelligence.” Oxford Academic. <https://academic.oup.com/pages/for-authors/books/author-use-of-artificial-intelligence>

Zhong, T., Yang, Z., Liu, Z., Zhang, R., Liu, Y., Sun, H., Pan, Y., Li, Y., Zhou, Y., Jiang, H., Chen, J., and Liu, T. 2024. “Opportunities and Challenges of Large Language Models for Low-Resource Languages in Humanities Research.” *arXiv*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2412.04497>

African NLP and Language Technology

Adelani, D. I., Alabi, J. O., Muennighoff, N., Mittal, S., Choudhury, M., Ruder, S., and others. 2022. “A Few Thousand Translations Go a Long Way! Leveraging Pre-trained Models for African News Translation.” *Proceedings of NAACL-HLT 2022*, 3053–3066. <https://aclanthology.org/2022.naacl-main.223/>

Adebara, I., Elmadany, A., Abdul-Mageed, M., and Inciarte, A. A. 2023. “SERENGETI: Massively Multilingual Language Models for Africa.” *Findings of ACL 2023*, 1563–1584. <https://aclanthology.org/2023.findings-acl.97/>

Adebara, I., Elmadany, A., and Abdul-Mageed, M. 2024. “Cheetah: Natural Language Generation for 517 African Languages.” *Proceedings of ACL 2024*, 12817–12843. <https://aclanthology.org/2024.acl-long.691/>

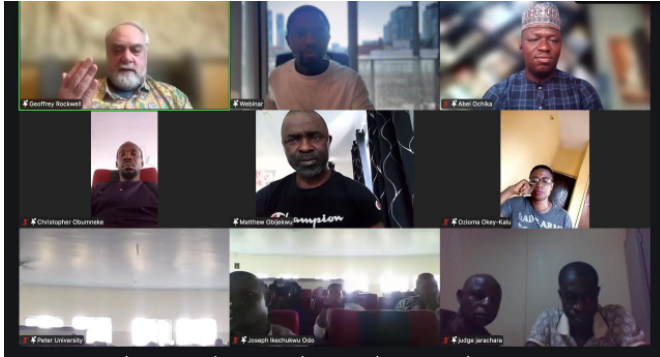
Alabi, J. O., Amponsah-Kaakyire, K., Adelani, D. I., and España-Bonet, C. 2022. “Adapting Pre-trained Language Models to African Languages via Multilingual Adaptive Fine-Tuning.” *Proceedings of COLING 2022*, 4334–4349. <https://aclanthology.org/2022.coling-1.382/>

Dossou, B. F. P., Emezue, C. C., Smith, J. K., Dossou, B. F., and Seddah, D. 2022. “AfroLM: A Self-Active Learning-based Multilingual Pretrained Language Model for 23 African Languages.” *Proceedings of the First Workshop on Sustainable Language Technologies for African Languages*, 52–64. <https://aclanthology.org/2022.sustainlp-1.11/>

Ogueji, K., Zhu, Y., and Lin, J. 2021. “Small Data? No Problem! Exploring the Viability of Pretrained Multilingual Language Models for Low-resourced Languages.” *Proceedings of the 1st Workshop on Multilingual Representation Learning*, 116–126. <https://aclanthology.org/2021.mrl-1.11/>

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Oladipo, A., Ogueji, K., and Lin, J. 2023. “Better Quality Pre-training Data and T5 Models for African Languages.” *Proceedings of EMNLP 2023*, 182–198. <https://aclanthology.org/2023.emnlp-main.1>




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*Exploring Digital Tools for Interdisciplinary
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Venue: Virtual/Peter University Auditorium


Prof. Geoffrey Rockwell
Professor, Program Co-ordinator
University of Alberta, Canada


Dr. Roggemore Manigede
Associate Professor of History and African
Studies, University of Toronto


Yahzama Joseph WALIYA
PhD Student, University of Lagos, and
Lecturer at The AGC, Lagos State
Nigeria


Abel Ochina
Assistant Professor, University of Lagos,
Nigeria


REV. FR. PROF. EMMANUEL C. UMEHINWA
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Augustine Faribello
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Dr. Osoma Okey-Kalu
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Dr. Christopher
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