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SPOTLIGHT ON DIGITAL HUMANITIES

A Collection of Project Reviews in the New Frontier of Historical Research and Expression

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In the short decades since the technological boom of the 1990s, no corner of our world has been untouched. Research and methodology, in particularly, have changed in order to benefit from the ability to analyze and synthesize mass amounts of data. In the Humanities and Social Sciences, these changes have created a new sub-field of research—Digital Humanities. Digital Humanities, or DH as it is colloquially referred to, is the intersection of traditional materials and sources with computational techniques. DH is trying to bring its subjects to life by creating visual representations understandable and pleasing to every viewer.

In the pages following, *UCLAHJ* contributors review several projects of different types in order to spotlight the variety of work done under the umbrella description of Digital Humanities. More than the push for preservation of archives through simple digitization, the following projects have tried to make historical research beyond the traditional dimensions of text and paper. The first project under review is the New York Public Library's *Navigating the Green Book*. This project is an interactive map which helps visitors to plot road trips and nights out on the town according to the restrictions and limitations faced by black Americans during the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s detailed in the publication *Negro Motorist' Green Book*. The second review is of *Linked Jazz*, an online network visualization tool. This project highlights the communities and relationships of jazz musicians so that each visitor to the site is able to see how people form interpersonal networks which influence them and everyone they meet. This project uses sources from oral history interviews and ever-growing lists of jazz musician names. The final review is of *Form and Landscape*, a

digitization and research project based on the photographic archives of Southern California Edison. This project, focused on the history and intersectionality of Los Angeles, has had many forms, but now exists as a, originally unplanned, digital gallery.

While these few project reviews cannot convey the breadth of programs recently developed and currently growing in Digital Humanities, they can provide a glimpse into the new world of research access and historical revelation which we are entering. Hopefully, as more and more people are able to view the past firsthand, attention and interest will blossom and uncover more connections, correlations, and unsung heroes of history.