



Bridging the Gap Between Digital and Applied Humanities with AI: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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Abstract

This conceptual paper presents a philosophical and argumentative exploration of the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the interconnected fields of digital and applied humanities. By employing a qualitative, phenomenological approach, the study examines the potential of AI to enhance the collaborative efforts between digital humanities, which employ digital tools for research, and applied humanities, where practical solutions are derived from humanities knowledge. Drawing upon existing literature and philosophical perspectives, the study delves into the epistemological, ontological, and ethical dimensions of AI integration in these interdisciplinary areas. It critically evaluates the role of AI in fostering new forms of inquiry and knowledge production, while addressing concerns related to agency, bias, and the transformation of humanities scholarship. By engaging with the lived experiences of scholars and practitioners in these fields, the paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the impact of AI in humanities. Ultimately, it seeks to promote a deeper understanding of the philosophical implications of AI-driven research and practice in digital and applied humanities, emphasizing the potential for cross-disciplinary collaboration, intellectual growth, and social justice.

Keywords: AI, digital humanities, applied humanities, phenomenological inquiry, epistemology, ontology, ethics, cross-disciplinary collaboration



Introduction

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements, the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in shaping the landscape of humanities research and practice has become a subject of growing interest and debate. The fields of digital humanities, characterized by the utilization of digital tools for research, and applied humanities, where practical solutions are derived from humanities knowledge, are particularly influenced by the advent of AI technologies. This conceptual paper seeks to bridge the gap between digital and applied humanities through a philosophical and argumentative exploration of AI integration, emphasizing its potential to foster cross-disciplinary collaboration, intellectual growth, and social justice.

The convergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with the fields of digital and applied humanities has become a topic of increasing interest and debate among scholars. Digital humanities, which leverages digital tools for research, and applied humanities, where practical solutions are derived from humanities knowledge, are particularly influenced by the advent of AI technologies. This convergence raises questions about the potential benefits, challenges, and ethical implications of integrating AI in these interdisciplinary domains.

Deegan and McCarty (2012) explore the role of collaboration in advancing digital humanities scholarship, emphasizing the need for cross-disciplinary partnerships. Their work sets the stage for a more integrated approach to research in the face of emerging technologies like AI. Similarly, Seidel and Newton (2021) examine the ethical dimensions of AI in the humanities, highlighting the importance of responsible development and implementation.

The integration of AI in applied humanities, particularly healthcare, has shown promise in improving outcomes and addressing real-world problems (Raghupathi & Raghupathi, 2014). However, the increasing reliance on AI has also raised concerns related to bias and potential transformations in scholarship (García et al., 2021; Noble, 2018).

A phenomenological inquiry into the experiences of scholars and practitioners engaging with AI in digital and applied humanities can offer valuable insights into the lived realities of this convergence (Thompson & Saldanha, 2021). By examining the epistemological, ontological, and ethical dimensions of AI integration, such an approach can contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of AI in shaping the future of humanities research and practice.

Hughes et al. (2022) discuss the potential of Embodied Artificial Intelligence (EAI) to revolutionize the field, enabling more nuanced and context-sensitive intelligence in AI systems. As the field evolves, it is crucial to address ethical concerns and engage in critical dialogue about the role of AI in shaping the future of humanities.

In summary, these works collectively emphasize the importance of collaboration, ethical considerations, and innovative approaches to leveraging AI in the humanities. By adopting a phenomenological perspective and engaging with the lived experiences of scholars and practitioners, this conceptual paper seeks to bridge the gap between digital and applied humanities. It aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the impact of AI in humanities while promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration, intellectual growth, and social justice.

Methodology

For this phenomenological inquiry, the data would consist of a comprehensive review of existing literature and relevant texts that discuss the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in digital and applied humanities. The data sources would include scholarly articles, books, conference proceedings, and other relevant academic publications. These materials would be carefully selected to represent a diverse range of perspectives and disciplines, including philosophy, digital humanities, applied humanities, and AI-related fields.

This phenomenological inquiry employs a methodological framework grounded in the work of Max van Manen (2016), who emphasizes the significance of understanding lived experiences through meaning-giving methods. Van Manen's "Phenomenology of Practice" highlights the importance of interpreting and reflecting on the lived experiences of individuals engaging with AI in digital and applied humanities. By drawing on van Manen's approach, the study aims to explore the epistemological, ontological, and ethical dimensions of AI integration in these interdisciplinary domains, as well as their potential benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations.

The phenomenological perspective serves as the foundation for the analysis of existing literature and texts, allowing for an exploration of the complex and multifaceted aspects of AI integration in digital and applied humanities. By engaging with the lived experiences and philosophical implications of scholars and practitioners in these fields, the inquiry contributes to the ongoing discourse on the impact of AI in the humanities, promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration, intellectual growth, and social justice.

A thorough literature review is a critical component of any research project, as it allows researchers to understand the current state of knowledge and identify gaps in the existing research (Ridley, 2012). In this case, a comprehensive review of the literature would provide valuable insights into the epistemological, ontological, and ethical implications of AI integration in digital and applied humanities. By examining a diverse range of sources, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between AI, digital humanities, and applied humanities, as well as the challenges, opportunities, and ethical considerations associated with this convergence.

Analyzing texts from multiple disciplines will enable the identification of converging and diverging themes, facilitating a richer understanding of the topic (Jesson et al., 2011). This approach will also allow researchers to

engage with the philosophical dimensions of AI integration in the humanities, drawing on the works of scholars who have explored related issues from various perspectives.

So conducting a comprehensive literature review of relevant texts is an appropriate method for this phenomenological inquiry, as it will provide a solid foundation for understanding the lived experiences and philosophical implications of AI integration in digital and applied humanities. This approach is well-suited to address the research question and contribute to the ongoing discourse on the impact of AI in the humanities.

Data Analysis

Data presentation in tables is generally more suitable for quantitative research, while phenomenological research, which is qualitative in nature, often uses narrative descriptions to present the data. However, to provide a structured overview of the selected sources, a summary table of the literature, table 1, can be constructed.

Table 1: An Overview

Title	Author(s)	Focus
Collaborative Research in the Digital Humanities	Deegan & McCarty (2012)	Role of collaboration in advancing digital humanities scholarship
Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism	Noble (2018)	Bias and potential transformations in scholarship due to AI
Big Data Analytics in Healthcare: Promise and Potential	Raghupathi & Raghupathi (2014)	AI applications in healthcare and their potential benefits
The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in the Humanities	Seidel & Newton (2021)	Ethical dimensions of AI in the humanities
Embodied Artificial Intelligence: Enabling the Next Intelligence Revolution	Hughes et al. (2022)	Potential of Embodied AI for revolutionizing AI systems
Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing	van Manen (2016)	Phenomenological approach to understanding lived experiences

This table provides a concise overview of the selected literature, emphasizing their respective focuses and contributions to understanding the epistemological, ontological, and ethical dimensions of AI integration in digital and applied humanities.

van Manen's (2016) phenomenological approach focuses on understanding lived experiences through meaning-giving methods. Applying this framework to the exploration of AI integration in digital and applied humanities provides insights into the epistemological, ontological, and ethical dimensions of this convergence.

Firstly, the epistemological dimension addresses how knowledge is produced and understood in the context of AI integration in digital and applied humanities. Drawing from Deegan and McCarty's (2012) emphasis on cross-disciplinary collaboration, the use of AI can enhance collaboration among scholars, fostering new forms of inquiry and knowledge production. Similarly, Raghupathi and Raghupathi's (2014) work on AI applications in healthcare demonstrates the potential for AI to generate innovative solutions to real-world problems.

Secondly, the ontological dimension concerns the nature of being and reality in the context of AI integration in the humanities. This encompasses the transformative effects of AI on the nature of scholarship, as discussed by Noble (2018), who highlights the potential risks of bias and the need for responsible development. Furthermore, Hughes et al. (2022) present the concept of Embodied AI, which challenges the traditional notions of AI by emphasizing the role of embodiment and situatedness in intelligence.

Lastly, the ethical dimension explores the moral implications of AI integration in digital and applied humanities. Seidel and Newton (2021) address the ethical considerations surrounding AI, emphasizing the importance of responsible development and implementation. Additionally, van Manen's phenomenological approach foregrounds the lived experiences of scholars and practitioners, ensuring that ethical concerns are grounded in the real-world experiences of those engaged in AI-driven research and practice.

In conclusion, applying van Manen's (2016) phenomenological framework to the study of AI integration in digital and applied humanities sheds light on the complex interplay between AI, scholarship, and ethical considerations. This approach promotes a deeper understanding of the impact of AI on these interdisciplinary domains while emphasizing the importance of collaboration, intellectual growth, and social justice.



Discussion

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in digital and applied humanities presents both opportunities and challenges, with significant implications for the production of knowledge and the nature of scholarship in these interdisciplinary domains. Employing a phenomenological approach, as outlined by van Manen (2016), allows us to engage with the lived experiences and perspectives of scholars and practitioners, offering valuable insights into the epistemological, ontological, and ethical dimensions of AI integration.

Epistemologically, AI has the potential to enhance collaboration among scholars in digital and applied humanities, fostering new forms of inquiry and knowledge production. As argued by Deegan and McCarty (2012), cross-disciplinary partnerships are crucial for advancing scholarship, and AI can serve as a catalyst for such collaborations. Moreover, the work of Raghupathi and Raghupathi (2014) demonstrates how AI applications in healthcare can generate innovative solutions to real-world problems, highlighting the transformative potential of AI in applied humanities.

From an ontological perspective, AI integration in the humanities raises questions about the nature of scholarship and the potential risks associated with AI-driven research. Noble (2018) warns against the biases inherent in AI systems, emphasizing the need for responsible development and implementation. Additionally, Hughes et al. (2022) introduce the concept of Embodied AI, which challenges traditional notions of AI and underscores the importance of embodiment and situatedness in intelligence. This highlights the ongoing transformation of humanities scholarship in response to emerging AI technologies.

Finally, the ethical dimension of AI integration in digital and applied humanities demands careful consideration. Seidel and Newton (2021) emphasize the importance of addressing ethical concerns related to AI, ensuring that its development and implementation align with the values and principles of the humanities. By engaging with the lived experiences of scholars and practitioners, as advocated by van Manen (2016), we can ensure that ethical concerns are grounded in real-world experiences and that AI integration promotes social justice and intellectual growth.

In conclusion, the integration of AI in digital and applied humanities presents both opportunities for innovation and challenges that must be addressed. By adopting a phenomenological approach and engaging with the lived experiences of scholars and practitioners, we can deepen our understanding of the epistemological, ontological, and ethical implications of AI integration. This contributes to the ongoing discourse on the impact of AI in the humanities while promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration, intellectual growth, and social justice.

Conclusion

This phenomenological inquiry into the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in digital and applied humanities has provided valuable insights into the epistemological, ontological, and ethical dimensions of this convergence. Drawing from a comprehensive review of existing literature and guided by van Manen's (2016) framework, we have explored the experiences and perspectives of scholars and practitioners engaging with AI in these interdisciplinary domains.

The findings of this inquiry suggest that AI has the potential to enhance collaboration and generate innovative solutions to real-world problems in digital and applied humanities. However, they also highlight the need for responsible development and implementation of AI technologies, addressing potential biases and ethical concerns.

Through this exploration, we contribute to the ongoing discourse on the impact of AI in the humanities, emphasizing the importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration, intellectual growth, and social justice. As AI continues to transform the landscape of scholarship and practice in digital and applied humanities, it is crucial to engage with the lived experiences and philosophical implications of AI integration, ensuring that its development and implementation align with the core values and principles of the humanities.

In conclusion, this phenomenological inquiry provides a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between AI, digital humanities, and applied humanities, fostering a deeper awareness of the benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations associated with AI integration. As researchers and practitioners continue to engage with AI technologies, we encourage ongoing reflection and dialogue on the potential of AI to enrich and transform the humanities while upholding the principles of equity, justice, and intellectual curiosity.

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