

## Partnerships and Portals

THE WIDE RANGE of data formats, delivery mechanisms, and academic subject areas that the Arts and Humanities Data Service deals with means that it is essential that we engage with a variety of organisations and institutions so as to be able to offer and receive advice in the multi-faceted world of digital resources. This edition of the Newsletter deals with some of the contacts that AHDS service providers have built up. The Archaeology Data Service, for example, has exploited links with the new Learning and Teaching Support Network in order to gain advice on the construction of its online tutorials in archaeology. The Performing Arts Data Service has agreed a memorandum of understanding with the newly-created Managing Agent and Advisory Service for Moving Images and Audio (MAAS). The group will, along with the PADS, be an essential point of communication for those organising the digitisation of performing arts material, especially in overcoming the obstacles presented by rights clearance.

New collections, which are themselves the fruits of relationships with other organisations, are also featured in the newsletter. This includes the five collections recently accessioned by the Visual Arts Data Service (who now boast an imagebank numbering around 15,000) and the digitised maps of nineteenth-century parish boundaries provided by the History Data Service in collaboration with scholars from the University of Exeter. A resource now being made available from the Oxford Text Archive, the William Blake Archive, is also the result of collaboration, this time with the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at the University of Virginia.

The newsletter also points to the AHDS' service-wide engagement with the Humbul Humanities Hub of the Resource Discovery Network. The alliance between the AHDS and Humbul is a vital step in the evolution of resource provision in the arts

and humanities. The ultimate aim of the alliance is the merging of the interface of the current AHDS gateway to that of Humbul, thus offering a portal from which users can both locate websites and access data collections. With this users will have a powerful, navigable and convenient interface for accessing digital materials so to aid their research and teaching.



*Excavations made underneath Spitalfields Church, London, form the basis of one of the Archaeology Data Service's PATOIS tutorials. See page 3 for details*

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## The Humbul Approach to Digital Resources

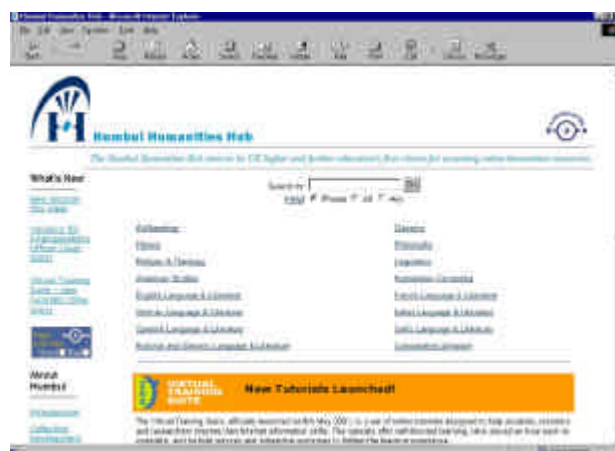


THE HUMBUL Humanities Hub <http://www.Humbul.ac.uk/> is part of the national Resource Discovery Network (RDN) and is funded by the JISC and the AHRB. Based at Oxford University's Humanities Computing Unit (where the Oxford Text Archive is also housed), Humbul finds, evaluates and catalogues Internet resources relevant to the study of the humanities. Subject areas supported by Humbul include archaeology, history, classics, religion, philosophy, English, and modern languages. The types of resources which may be found in Humbul's catalogue include online primary and secondary sources, bibliographic databases, electronic journals and other refereed publications, and project and subject association Web sites. Our collection development policy and extensive cataloguing guidelines details the *what* and the *how* of resource selection and description. Users can search Humbul by keyword or browse by subject and resource type. All our records are also available via the Resource Discovery Network's ResourceFinder which enables the simultaneous searching of records from all the hubs <http://www.rdn.ac.uk/>. The cataloguing of Internet resources is undertaken by subject experts based at various contributing institutions and organisations. We are still seeking help from institutions for a number of subject areas, including modern languages and literature. Please contact us if your department, library or organisation is interested, especially if you are in the business of developing local Internet subject gateways.

### My Humbul - records to go

We are exploring ways in which our user community might make better use of the data we collect about online humanities resources. For many users the starting point for accessing useful resources is not a service like Humbul, or a search engine or any other type of 'remote' resource but rather a local portal developed within their own institution. The challenge for Humbul, the RDN and also the AHDS is enabling our data to be integrated within local portals, gateways and virtual learning environ-

ments. 'RDN-include' enables the RDN's ResourceFinder and subject headings to be embedded within local Web pages. We are developing 'My Humbul' which takes this a step further and permits individual records to be embedded within local web pages. A lecturer or librarian, for example, will be able to mark, save and export records of interest. Using the 'Humbul-include' service the saved records can be dynamically embedded into a course page or local gateway alongside other recommended resources. My Humbul will also provide a weekly alerting service for saved searches and chosen subject areas notifying users by email of new records matching their selected criteria.



*The Humbul homepage, offering users the chance to search via subject area or the entire set of records*

### An Arts & Humanities Portal

Humbul works closely with the AHDS. Two of the AHDS service providers are contributors to Humbul, for example, and the AHDS and Humbul co-organised the successful series of Arts & Humanities Online seminars on digital resources. In the spirit of 'joined-up government' the AHDS and Humbul have planned a deeper level of collaboration to benefit the communities served by our organisations. We are pleased to report that Humbul and the AHDS have agreed to co-develop an arts and humanities portal as part of the RDN's Subject Portals Project (see <http://www.portal.ac.uk/>). The portal is intended to provide a subject-based view of the Distributed National Electronic Resource (DNER), the collection of resources which are currently described in the Resource Guide for the Arts and Humanities (for which see <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/subject/arts-hum/>). The portal will bring together data from catalogues across the AHDS and the RDN and

enable the cross-searching or browsing of many different types of humanities resources (e.g. bibliographic data, archival descriptions, image and text collections). The creation of this type of portal is not an easy task and requires dialogue with numerous other parties. We are planning, for instance, to work with staff at UCL's School of Library, Archive and Information Studies to build a subject classification scheme suitable for indexing digital objects. Since the fundamental purpose of the portal is to make it easier for the community to find, retrieve and use online data, we would also like to register and incorporate your opinions. If you would like to be consulted about the resources and functions you might expect a portal to contain, please register your interest with either Humbul or the AHDS. Humbul and the AHDS look forward to seeing more of each other!

*Michael Fraser, Humbul Humanities Hub,  
<mike.fraser@oucs.ox.ac.uk>*

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## Teaching, Learning and the Archaeology Data Service

LIKE ALL disciplines, archaeology has its own peculiar needs in terms of teaching and learning. Field classes, laboratory practices and lecture presentations are among the many skills that lecturers must develop. The foundation of an LTSN (Learning and Teaching Support Network) subject group for archaeology has provided for the first time a forum in which the skills necessary to become an effective practitioner in teaching archaeology can be discussed. Although only one part of a wider centre that also involves classics and history, and only inaugurated last year, the archaeology group has already had a significant impact. A series of workshops has highlighted the demand for targeted training in archaeology, while research has identified the need for support in different aspects of teaching.

Readers may be a little confused - thinking that this is the LTSN newsletter, not the Arts and Humanities Data Service version. However, in outlining the work of the LTSN, it is useful to think how our organisations can work together. For example, research by LTSN archaeology has shown a consistent demand for support with computer-based teaching and learning, particularly via the Internet. The ADS is well placed to help fill that gap. The ADS catalogue ArchSearch provides a secure, quality resource for students to find out about archaeology.

Additionally, the ADS and AHDS (and the Humbul gateway) can point lecturers to other websites or other information resources where these exist.

It is in the development of online teaching materials that the ADS and LTSN have worked most closely together. Readers of ADS News will be familiar with a project that is developing online teaching resources. This project, entitled PATOIS, is a joint venture funded by the JISC involving the ADS with a number of academic departments, and the electronic journal Internet Archaeology. The project has benefited tremendously from consultation with the LTSN. For example, as well as reviewing the format of the tutorials, the LTSN was able to provide useful advice on curriculum benchmarking. Their continued interest in the project will be an important element in its success. The ADS returns the compliment by supplying advice to the LTSN over the grants they make available to help develop teaching and learning resources. It is hard for LTSN staff to keep abreast of all the latest technical developments, so where an applicant seeks funds for a computing project, the ADS can advise.



*A burial vault underneath Spitalfields Church, the subject of one of the PATOIS tutorials*

There are many other areas where the ADS and the LTSN Archaeology will co-operate over the next few years. Both ADS and LTSN archaeology are relatively small organisations in comparison to other data services or full LTSN centres. Yet, as with many co-operative relationships, the two are bigger than the sum of the parts.

For more on the Patois Project, point your browser at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/patois/> For more on the LTSN Subject group for Archaeology, point your browser at <http://www.hca.ltsn.ac.uk/index.htm>

*William Kilbride,  
Archaeology Data Service*

## Collaborative Fine Art Pilot Takes Off

ONE OF the advantages of the Visual Arts Data Service's delivery system is that it can bring together digitised versions of physically separated images from disparate collections. This makes it easier to digitally 'curate' collections which do not exist in a physical sense. Executing such a task is not straightforward, however, for there can be large administrative and technical difficulties in bringing different collections of images together online.

With the launch of a new pilot project, which it will be managing from October 2001 until September 2002, VADS is addressing these problems. The project intends to establish the viability of building a digital collection of works of art, with all the contents being examples of high-quality practice in the fine arts. The project will exemplify the potential and consequences of networking in the real and virtual sense, and VADS will be collaborating with six UK art institutes, the Council for National Art Awards Trust, and key stakeholders from across all sectors.

The sample resource will consist of works held in a number of collections (created by both staff and students) held in various UK art institutes, along with the fruits of the full digitisation of the Council of National Art Awards Trust Art Collection, a rich array of work which includes pieces by important figures in British art such as Henry Moore, Bridget Riley and Richard Hamilton.

It is the feasibility, management and technicalities of creating one virtual collection from various physically distributed collections that will challenge existing protocols and require the re-thinking of costing and management methods. The importance of establishing the quality and suitability of works for inclusion in the collection will be paramount. A hanging committee will be established, consisting of eminent individuals from the world of fine art education, who will oversee selection of works and help to define policies for future reference.

As well as delivering the pilot resource on the Internet, VADS will produce a report, part of which will deal with scalability issues and the definition of models for the fully expandable implementation of a National Fine Art Education Digital Collection scheme across all relevant national institutions.

The project will collaborate with participants, stake-

holders and associates by setting up communications channels and raising awareness of the initiative and its results, thus ensuring dissemination to relevant communities. In so doing VADS will investigate the potential for further collaboration, in terms of academic, artistic and resourcing input for any forthcoming expandable model.

SINCE THE last AHDS Newsletter, VADS has launched 5 new fully searchable image collections online, bringing the total number of catalogued images to almost 15,000. In May, the *Design Council Slide Collection* was launched, illustrating the aesthetic and technological developments in British



*"So Skiffy-Skipt-on,  
with his wonted grace"  
by James Gillray, 1800  
© Bodleian Library,  
University of Oxford:  
John Johnson  
Collection*

product design from 1945 - 1990, as well as charting the council's own activities, and exemplifying design from other countries and periods. Next, the *African and Asian Visual Artists Archive* went live in June, giving web presence to the most comprehensive slide archive of contemporary visual art by artists of African and Asian descent working in the UK during the post-war period. Shortly afterwards, the *Spellman Collection of Victorian Music Covers* was accessioned, consisting of 800 items depicting popular

music and imagery of Victorian life, culture and pre-occupations. The last two collections to go live were two sections drawn from the *John*

*Johnson  
Collection of  
Printed  
Ephemera* - the Trades and Professions collection and the Political Prints collection. They



cover mainly the 18th and 19th centuries and provide a unique and often humorous insight into the social, political and economic history of the time.

*"Humbug" by April Brigden, 1971 © The  
Design Council: The Design Council Slide  
Collection*

*Polly Christie,  
Visual Arts Data Service*

## PADS & MAAS: A Wish-list for National Digitisation

The Performing Arts Data Service has recently agreed a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the Managing Agent and Advisory Service for Moving Images and Audio. MAAS Media Online, one of the most significant new content initiatives to be funded by the JISC, is a national service based on a partnership between the British Universities Film and Video Council and the Open University and is, amongst other tasks, acquiring moving pictures and sound for delivery online to the higher and further education communities in the UK.



*A still of a North Vietnamese woman soldier from Educational Television Films Ltd., a collection of historical footage which the MAAS are currently preparing for online streaming for HE and FE audiences.*

*For more details see*

*<http://www.bufvc.ac.uk/maas/content/index.html>*

The PADS and the MAAS are working together to provide advice and support services for moving image and audio data creators and users in the performing arts (music, dance, theatre, film and the broadcast arts). The PADS will also be supporting the MAAS in identifying resources that could usefully be digitised to support learning, teaching and research activities in the performing arts community.

The PADS enjoys regular contact with its user communities at workshops, conferences and other events (as well as keeping in touch via our helpdesk and through email) and it is common for our users to bemoan the lack of key primary content available for networked delivery. Although the technology needed to encode moving image and audio material is increasingly accessible, the performing arts community has, in general, been slow to digitise performance materials. This reluctance has, in part, been due to the enormous difficulties attached to rights clearance in this area.

The MAAS team includes rights clearance professionals from the Open University who will undertake to clear moving image and audio materials for delivery to the UK HE and FE sectors. Rights holders will be asked to release materials for a 10 year period in the first instance. Once the appropriate rights have been acquired, the MAAS will undertake to digitise materials and make them available for use over the academic network. The PADS will work with the MAAS to create metadata and other finding aids to ensure accessibility.

The MAAS is actively seeking 'wish lists' of materials of use to the academic community in the performing arts. These materials could include:

- ◆ Feature films not readily available on video or DVD, but accessible in archive collections such as the BFI.
- ◆ Videos of live performances by theatre or dance companies such as those held in the National Video Archive of Performance at the Theatre Museum, Covent Garden or at the Laban Centre.
- ◆ Radio or TV programmes from the BBC or from commercial broadcasters.
- ◆ Music recordings held in libraries or archives such as the British Music Information Centre or the British Library National Sound Archive or at commercial recording companies.

If you would like to see the creation of digitised copies of these materials for your teaching or research, please fill out the MAAS questionnaire at: <http://www.bufvc.ac.uk/maas/questionnaire.html> or contact Catherine Owen [cath@pads.ahds.ac.uk](mailto:cath@pads.ahds.ac.uk) at the PADS.

The MAAS also welcomes submissions from libraries, archives, museums and other institutions whose collections are appropriate for digitisation and delivery to the UK HE and FE sectors.

*Catherine Owen,  
Performing Arts Data Service*

#### Summary of MAAS Activities

##### As a Managing Agent MAAS:

- ◆ Identifies appropriate collections and prioritises content for clearance.
- ◆ Forms steering groups of academic and industry professionals.
- ◆ Clears third party rights and brokers contracts.
- ◆ Prepares content and metadata for delivery.

##### As an Advisory Service MAAS:

- ◆ Provides information and feedback to users on obtaining access .
- ◆ Promotes and advises on the use of appropriate technology and tools.
- ◆ Offers guidance on pedagogy.
- ◆ Gives user support and online advice.

## Is a picture worth a thousand words?

Despite the implication of its name, the Oxford Text Archive is interested in all forms of digital data, not simply electronic text. As the AHDS Service Provider responsible for collecting resources to support research and teaching in every area of literary and linguistic study, the OTA is keen to develop its holdings across the range of digital data types.

The William Blake Archive, developed by scholars working in collaboration with the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH) at the University of Virginia, is an extremely important hypermedia resource. All the digital texts and images in the Archive have been prepared to exacting scholarly standards, in an attempt to ensure that the material will meet the needs of researchers who approach Blake's works from a variety of academic perspectives.

The OTA has begun work with staff at IATH to offer UK-based scholars access to a fully functioning mir-

ror site of the William Blake Archive. The large images that the Archive contains, combined with peaks in demand for use of the trans-Atlantic link, can sometimes lead to a severe deterioration in service for UK users and this is frustrating for everyone concerned. The OTA's mirror site will both alleviate this problem, and provide UK scholars with access to the very latest version of the resource - as the mirror site will be dynamically updated, rather than a simple archival snapshot. The OTA will also be well-placed to integrate the Archive into its wider holdings (and those of the entire AHDS), so that scholars who might not previously have been aware of the Blake Archive, or of Blake's relevance to their area of study, will gain access to this important body of material.

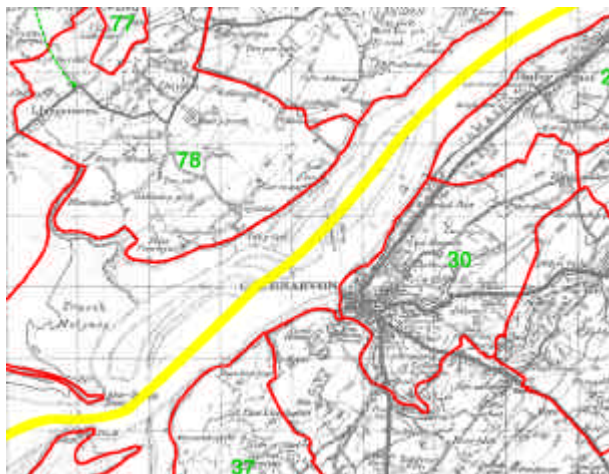
A further advantage of increased access to the Blake Archive will be the resource's ability to demonstrate how texts, images, and supplementary materials can be successfully combined to produce a valuable digital resource. The resource is a fine example of how offering both a transcribed electronic text (e.g. for searching and computer assisted analysis) and a high-quality digital page image of the original artefact, can be combined to produce a resource which meets the needs of several groups of scholars, and the general public. Increasingly, many literary scholars are taking an interest in the physical appearance of the texts they are studying, and whilst facsimiles used to be the preserve of those working with manuscripts and early printed books, nowadays digital technologies are making their production commonplace. Indeed, now that scanning and imaging techniques make it straightforward to capture a visual representation of a textual source, and these images can be easily organised and disseminated via the web, the OTA expects to accession a growing number of 'textual' resources which are, in fact, no more than collections of images - whilst the relative proportion of full-text transcriptions being produced may, in fact, go down.

However, the OTA will be working hard to ensure that the creators and users of digital resources are fully aware of the implications of this shift. It is important to highlight the fact that whilst images of texts can meet a variety of important research needs, if they are made available without textual transcriptions they are less well-suited to computer-assisted analysis and so limit the ability of scholars to fully exploit the potential of data in digital form.

*Michael Popham,  
Oxford Text Archive*

## The History Data Service: Pushing Back the Boundaries

A recently-deposited dataset generated from a study to map historical boundary information has led to a combined paper / electronic publication. The *Historic Parishes of England & Wales: An Electronic Map of Boundaries before 1850 with a Gazetteer and Metadata* by Roger J.P. Kain and Richard R. Oliver of the University of Exeter, comprises a set of CDs reproducing the whole of England and Wales, with pre-1850 parish (and township) boundaries traced over it and an accompanying book.



*A map of Caernarvon, South Wales, showing pre-1850 parish boundaries (red) and one county boundary (yellow)*

The basic element of the map is a scan of the Ordnance Survey one inch to one mile (1:63,360) New Popular Edition maps (1945-8) including National Grid, which is stored as grey tone sheet images. This enables physical, cultural and place-name content to be readily visible for orientation and general location purposes, while not obscuring the added boundary and reference number material. Added vector layers consist of the parish, county and administrative boundaries, and reference numbers that link places on the map to the gazetteer dataset that accompanies the maps.

The gazetteer dataset supplies information about the 18,355 areas thus traced, which includes details of alternative place names, the sources of boundaries, National Grid references, and the parish number assigned in the 1851 Census.

The accompanying book (ISBN 0 9540032 0 9),

published by the History Data Service, contains chapters on the value of a map of the 'historic parishes' of England and Wales; a discussion of the terminology connected with post medieval local administrative areas; a review of previous work undertaken on local boundaries; and a discussion of the wider project from which this electronic map was generated. It also contains an abbreviated version of the gazetteer, that can serve as a hard copy index to the places located on the electronic map.

The maps are available on CD in *Adobe Illustrator*™ v.6 (and higher) or *Adobe Acrobat* PDF™ formats. The *Adobe Illustrator* format is recommended if you already have the software, as it enables you to edit the maps and select the layers you can view. However, the *Adobe Acrobat* PDF format is perfectly suitable for viewing the maps, and the HDS will supply the necessary software.

The combination of book, metadata and digitised map is an invaluable tool for all those interested in plotting local-area-based data from the past (population, agricultural, statistics, tax data etc.) from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. In addition this resource will allow the "effective exploitation of many post-medieval to mid-Victorian historical sources collected by local administrative area" which has been hampered in the past by lack of information about the boundaries of those areas (the 'historic' or 'ancient' parishes).

A recent example of the use to which the *Historic Parishes* has been put can be seen in the efforts of a County Heritage Unit to locate a 'deserted medieval village' in the north of England. The village of Aismunderby, to the south of Ripon, was absorbed into a number of other parishes before 1850, and very little information has been available regarding the former extent of this township. The Highways Department of North Yorkshire County Council needed to trace the boundary in order to correctly relocate a boundary stone.

Both the book and the digitised map are available from the History Data Service, and an order form and further information can be obtained at: <http://www.ex.ac.uk/geography/research/boundaries.html>

*Mark Merry,  
History Data Service*

## Chuck Out Your E-Chintz

The Arts and Humanities Data Service recently re-launched its website, replacing the first edition with a site that has a more efficient navigation scheme and a more sleek, contemporary look. Users can now tailor their visit to the site according to their stage within a digitisation project (AHRB applicant, data creator, data depositor, etc.) or by the type of information they are trying to locate (training, news etc.). The redesign was implemented by Christopher Pressler, Information Systems Manager at the AHDS Executive. His strategy in creating the new site will be published as an article, "Chuck out your E-Chintz", in either the December or January edition of the *Library Association Record*.



The home page of the Arts and Humanities Data Service  
<<http://ahds.ac.uk>>

While some articles are currently being revised for publication on the new site, the most popular resources are already available. These include:

*Creating a Viable Scholarly Resource* -  
<<http://ahds.ac.uk/viable.htm>>

*Digitisation: A Project Planning Checklist* -  
<<http://ahds.ac.uk/checklist.htm>>

*Case Studies Index* - <<http://ahds.ac.uk/casestudies.htm>>

*Guides to Good Practice Index* -  
<<http://ahds.ac.uk/guides.htm>>

The refurbishment of the website is the first stage in the AHDS' plan to reorganise its methods of disseminating data, whether it be information about resource creation and use, or the actual collections it stores via the service providers' websites. As pointed out in Michael Fraser's article on Humbul, the

next stage in this plan is to develop an Arts and Humanities Portal, conjoining digital resources in AHDS collections with the gateway records held by Humbul, and, when it comes into existence, the Creative Arts and Industries hub of the Resource Discovery Network. When in place, this portal will be the humanities user's first port of call when attempting to locate digital resources for teaching and research.

## Workshops on Data Creation

To complement the advisory service it offers via the telephone, email and its array of websites, the Arts and Humanities Data Service is organising a series of workshops, to be held at various locations around the country. The workshops will be aimed at those commencing or planning digitisation projects, and may be of particular interest to those who are writing technical appendices to accompany AHRB application forms. Attention will be paid to topics such as project management, data modelling, preservation and delivery mechanisms. There will also be extended surgery sessions so that attendees can ask advice on problems germane to their own project.

The preliminary timetable is

London	-	17th	January	2002
Midlands	-	14th	February	2002
Scotland	-	14th	March	2002
South-West & Wales	-	11th	April	2002
North	-	2nd	May	2002

These dates and locations will be confirmed in November via the news page of AHDS Executive website <<http://ahds.ac.uk/news.htm>>. The information will also be made available on mailing lists and other channels of communication. Please contact <[alastair.dunning@ahds.ac.uk](mailto:alastair.dunning@ahds.ac.uk)> for any further information.

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