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Neither Computer Science, nor Information Studies, nor Humanities Enough: What Is the Status of a Digital Humanities Conference Paper?

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This paper explores the disciplinary and regional conventions that surround the status of conference papers throughout their lifecycle from submission/abstract, review, presentation, and in some cases, publication. Focusing on national and international Digital Humanities conferences, while also acknowledging disciplinary conferences that inform Digital Humanities, this paper blends close readings of conference calls for papers with analysis of conference practices to reckon with what constitutes a conference submission and its status in relationship to disciplinary conventions, peer review, and publication outcomes. Ultimately, we argue that the best practice for Digital Humanities conferences is to be clear on the review and publication process so that participants can gauge how to accurately reflect their contributions.

Cet article explore les conventions disciplinaires et régionales qui entourent le statut d'articles présentés à des conférences durant leurs cycles de vie ; leur soumission/résumé, leur revue, leur présentation et, dans certains cas, leur publication. En se concentrant sur des conférences d'humanités numériques nationales et internationales et en reconnaissant des conférences disciplinaires incorporant les humanités numériques, cet article intègre des lectures attentives d'appels de propositions pour des conférences avec une analyse de pratiques de conférences afin de tenir compte de ce qui constitue une soumission de conférence et son statut par rapport à des conventions disciplinaires, à la critique des pairs et aux publications. Finalement, nous soutenons que les bonnes pratiques pour les conférences d'humanités numériques consistent en un processus de revue et publication clair qui permet à des participants de mieux comprendre comment représenter leurs contributions de façon précise.

Introduction

Today, Digital Humanities conferences bring together scholars from humanities, arts, social sciences, computing, and beyond. The representativeness of interests within those fields is astonishingly widespread. At the same conference, one can learn about text encoding projects, high performance computing efforts, immersive reality, pedagogical developments, and wearable/haptic computing in addition to computational linguistics, digital editing, databases, pedagogy, and the like. In part, this is a result of the growth of Digital Humanities research and teaching over the decades. Where there were once dozens of projects in specialized centres, now Digital Humanities encapsulates thousands, if not tens of thousands, of projects and efforts within and outside the academy. Projects are now the work of students and members of the public alongside faculty, staff, and technologists. These efforts exist along a spectrum from an individual researcher to teams that straddle institutional, national, and disciplinary backgrounds. From one or two parallel sessions with a single demonstration session in the early days of Digital Humanities conferences (the 1970s), the international Digital Humanities conference has now grown to seven or even nine parallel sessions bolstered by workshops, fora, demonstrations, etc. The conference program represents self-selection of individuals who identify as digital humanists; however, it also is a manifestation of how members of the Digital Humanities community serving on the program committee and as reviewers view the potential contributions of self-identified digital humanists. Digital Humanities has, for almost two decades, continually rehashed what constitutes Digital Humanities, who can contribute, and what value those contributions and definition have in relation to other disciplines. One result of the repetitive questioning is a strong sense of alienation felt by those who aren't part of a given community. Within the context of conferences and Digital Humanities, the conference functions to illuminate whether reviewers and the program committee value certain types of research, teaching, and contributions within Digital Humanities writ large.

Nickoal Eichmann-Kalwara, Scott Weingart, Matthew Lincoln, and team have explored how accepted submissions exist in the Digital Humanities conference spaces with their aptly named "Index of Digital Humanities Conferences," which, as of September 2022, represents "8,573 presentations from 505 Digital Humanities conferences spanning 62 years, featuring 10,083 different authors hailing from 2,799 institutions and 86 countries" (Eichmann-Kalwara et al. 2020). Over the last seven years (2014–2021), Digital Humanities scholars have contributed 3,995 submissions to this dataset via their participation in the annual Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO) conference. Each year, these submissions offer an

up-to-the-moment glimpse of the current practices of scholarship. From submissions reporting research results to ones focused on pedagogy, technical developments, and even failure, the annual Digital Humanities conference provides a stage for scholars to present and discuss their work to Digital Humanities audiences writ large. The rich dataset of the Index offers users the ability to explore conference presentations, authors, and the changes over time from the vantage point of Digital Humanities conferences. Our paper tackles the underlying theoretical questions of what constitutes a Digital Humanities conference submission.

At its core, this paper explores the question of how conference submissions and presentations are represented—to our universities, our tenure and promotion committees, to other disciplines, and to our own communities—both prior to submission and upon acceptance. Is it an abstract of a paper? Is it a full paper? Is it a presentation? What is the length of a submission? Are citations required? What rules govern the submission of multiple abstracts within the same conference or across conferences in the field? While these questions may seem minor, the variety of answers expressed within the ADHO conference process over the last seven years illustrates contested terrain that reflects a lack of standardized understanding of what constitutes a conference submission. This is terrain that is not unique to Digital Humanities; in fact, the humanities and its associated disciplines suffer from similar confusion and opaqueness. This article considers the history and current practices of Digital Humanities conference submissions and publications stemming from conferences. This analysis, furthermore, helps situate and make legible Digital Humanities practices to those in related disciplines and beyond.

Conference submissions and presentations occupy a significant portion of an academic CV and dossier. Given that conferences serve as scholarly products for assessment in promotion and tenure, this concern is not just for scholars, but is also vital for consideration by administrators, staff, and members of the wider academic community. It is therefore important to clarify the status of these scholarly artifacts to make our CVs and dossiers legible both within and beyond our disciplinary fields. Assessment is not a conference product's only function, however. The "publish or perish" metric tied to resources, funding, and employment encourages researchers to present the same material to differing Digital Humanities audiences. It also pressures scholars to present work through conferences even as the conference presentation is devalued against published monographs, articles, and the like. Conference presentations serve as an important benchmark for scholarly feedback and revision, particularly for collaborative and interdisciplinary work where one's audience might be more expansive.

Drawing on our experience as program committee chairs for DH2020, we argue that there is a need to consider the a priori state of the conference submission as a fundamental artifact of scholarly production. We seek to address this as a result of the confusion that we faced as program chairs in trying to respond to individuals who sought to understand how to cite their conference contributions. Were abstracts peer-reviewed? Were they published? Could someone submit previously presented work? Could a lightly revised version of a previous conference presentation at a different Digital Humanities conference also be presented at the international conference? Are submissions published as abstracts, proceedings, or something entirely different? How does a DH conference paper compare to other conferences?

We suggest that the Digital Humanities needs to reckon with what constitutes a conference submission. Digital Humanities conferences often incorporate new formats; yet, as those innovations have been introduced, there has not been a commensurate conversation about how those format changes might shift related practices in the publication of abstracts and proceedings. In this paper, we consider the disciplinary and regional conventions that surround the status of conference submissions in Digital Humanities. We consider how conference submissions are defined, reviewed, and (in some cases) published. We do this in the context of the larger disciplines that are stakeholders in Digital Humanities conferences, like computer science, information science, and humanities disciplines. This reckoning is not to enforce standardization vis-à-vis length, citation, or limiting the ability of researchers to submit to conferences on the same research topic *across* the variety of Digital Humanities conferences. Instead, it is to suggest that there is a need for transparency *within* conferences about the role submissions play and the rules by which submissions will be judged and published. Ultimately, we argue that the best practice for Digital Humanities conferences is to be clear on the review and publication process so that participants can gauge how to accurately reflect their contributions and represent them within their scholarly dossier. Digital humanists are often evaluated by people with little or no familiarity with the relevant theory, method, and research ecosystem. Conventions associated with Digital Humanities conferences, particularly around abstracts/submissions, presentations, and publication practices, do not fall into traditional assessment criteria.

Scope and method

In our discussion of the status of conference abstracts and papers, we focus mainly on the international Digital Humanities conference, called "Digital Humanities [Year]," which is put on by the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO), a meta-organization comprising many constituent organizations (ADHO 2022).

Limiting ourselves to the period from 2014 to 2020 and the four largest constituent organizations—Association for Computers and the Humanities (ACH); Australasian Association for Digital Humanities (aaDH); Canadian Society for Digital Humanities/ Société canadienne des humanités numériques (CSDH/SCHN); and European Association for Digital Humanities (EADH)—we examine the relationship between the call for papers for the ADHO international conference and the individual regional and national conferences of ADHO member organizations. It is important to recognize the need to study not just accepted contributions as a representation of the field, but also the calls for papers that solicit submissions in the first place. Digital Humanities conferences need to preserve calls for papers as artifacts that represent scholarly conventions. They offer a concrete representation of the history of Digital Humanities as articulated by one conference. One initial activity of this paper was the collection of calls for papers from the last six years of the ADHO Digital Humanities conference, as well as recent CFPs from regional and national associations. In just these few short years, a number of CFPs have been deaccessioned from the conference website; we turned to the Wayback Machine and personal files to recover them. Despite the existence of published proceedings, there is not a similar published collection of CFPs as permanent DOIs. Digital Humanities conferences should address this lack of preservation.

This paper responds to Christine L. Borgman's call for self-reflection on Digital Humanities practices when it comes to publication (Borgman 2009). Deploying a mixed-methods approach of self-reflection, quantitative analysis, and close reading, our focus is conference submissions and the call for papers that determine what constitutes a submission. Each Digital Humanities-adjacent discipline has different standards when it comes to conference abstracts and their associated submissions: Are they full papers? Are they limited abstracts that might evolve? Are they peer reviewed? Do abstracts count as publications—and at what point? While these questions may seem merely notional, they are important because how we represent Digital Humanities scholarship within and beyond our discipline directly affects hiring, tenure, and promotion practices, which, in turn, shape the voices in our scholarly discipline(s).

We recognize the Anglo-centric nature of this analysis; yet, it is our hope that it serves as a starting point for future analyses of all ADHO constituent organizations, as well as non-ADHO organizations that participate in Digital Humanities teaching and research or that are Digital Humanities adjacent like Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory (HASTAC), an interdisciplinary community of humanists, artists, social scientists, scientists, and technologists, or the Digital Library Federation (DLF). Regional and national conferences often conform to the established norms around conference submissions from that area or proscribed by a national

funding agency. Digital Humanities conference submissions that take place as part of another conference often adopt the disciplinary and submission conventions of that discipline. The American Historical Association does not accept individual papers or presentations except in poster format (AHA 2022). As a result, each session organizer has the ability to incorporate either presentations, papers, or both in response to the "Call for Presentations." The call states "paper or presentation" with a heavy emphasis on collecting short descriptions of what will be presented. The Modern Language Association preserves the "Call for Papers," yet their conference guidelines revert to "presentation" as the default submission type. This "fuzzy" status where papers might be requested yet never delivered in written form has long been a hallmark of humanities conferences. The Digital Humanities has likewise adopted this fuzzy status as the conference straddles disciplinary and geographic faultlines and so does not fit easily into a single norm for evaluation. Complicating the fuzzy inputs of paper/presentation are the outputs of the conference. Most conferences, including ADHO and its regional and national conferences, publish a book of abstracts; some also produce either full or selected proceedings, which are not always well understood, even by conference participants.

Disciplinary expectations: Between computer science, information science, and the humanities

Digital Humanities and its associated practices are the result of the convergence of the interests, explorations, and disciplines of the humanities with the study, analysis, and development of computer science and technology. For some researchers, this convergence might be sustained and long-term, as it is for those who apply humanistic analysis to technology and its artifacts. For others, the convergence might be momentary and only through the lens of using digital tools rather than interrogating and reshaping them. Because the location of convergence is highly idiosyncratic to the scholar, scholarly and disciplinary conventions vary. DH scholars have spent extensive amounts of time, for example, discussing whether digital humanists need to code or should learn statistics and mathematical principles (see, for instance, Ramsay 2011; Burdick et al. 2012; and Jockers 2013). Less time has been spent considering where digital humanists fit into disciplinary conferences outside the humanities. Although Digital Humanities is interdisciplinary, there has been little consideration of which practices traverse disciplinary conventions and which are entirely discarded. This paper suggests that we must consider the extreme poles of Digital Humanities—computer science and the humanities—as they are expressed through conferences and their approaches. While we have situated conferences along an imagined linear continuum, we recognize

that many conferences and practices, including Digital Humanities, deemphasize linear relationships. Importantly, no matter where the conference is located within the extremes, conference practices function as a method of gatekeeping that can limit who participates and who benefits from conference products and practices.

We acknowledge that part of the dynamics of conferences is the conferrance of a prestige economy. Conferences with lower acceptances rates are perceived by promotion and tenure committees as well as peers as being of higher quality; those with lower rates are articulated as less selective. The reality though is often that quality is not necessarily aligned directly to the acceptance rates. In our experience, conferences with high acceptance rates (like CSDH-SCHN and ACH) have high-quality scholarship. Furthermore, conferences that prioritize low acceptance rates can often value that prestige over the inclusion of varied scholarship that might challenge the central tenets of the discipline. Indeed, creating transparent conference processes in order to develop a program that follows principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion will always yield better scholarship as it brings new voices and ideas into conversation. (For more on fostering diverse Digital Humanities conferences, see Estill et al. 2022, especially the sections on "Representation on the Program Committee," "Keynotes Speakers," "Multilingualism," and conclusion and recommendations.)

We first turn to computer science because, as George Vrettas and Mark Sanderson explain, Computer Science "values conferences as a publication venue more highly than any other academic field of study" (Vrettas and Sanderson 2015, abstract). Indeed, one national report, *Academic Careers for Experimental Computer Scientists and Engineers*, notes that the "research community depends heavily on conferences to communicate new knowledge, and conferences are widely regarded as the preferred medium for maximizing the intellectual impact of ECSE [Experimental Computer Scientists and Engineers] research" (Computer Science and Telecommunications Board of the National Research Council 1994, 6). For some branches of computer science, "conference publication is preferred to journal publication, and the premier conferences are generally more selective than the premier journals" (Patterson, Snyder, and Ullman 1999). As Patterson, Snyder, and Ullman point out:

> The reason conference publication is preferred to journal publication, at least for experimentalists, is the shorter time to print (7 months vs 1–2 years), the opportunity to describe the work before one's peers at a public presentation, and the more complete level of review (4–5 evaluations per paper compared to 2–3 for an archival journal) [Academic Careers, 94]. Publication in the prestige conferences is inferior to the prestige journals only in having significant page limitations and little time

> to polish the paper. In those dimensions that count most, conferences are superior. (Patterson, Snyder, and Ullman 1999)

Bertrand Meyer, Christine Choppy, Jørgen Staunstrup, and Jan van Leeuwen, likewise, highlight that computer science is "unlike disciplines where the prestige goes to journals and conferences are for raw initial results" (Meyer et al. 2009, 433). Computer science often has to differentiate the value it places on conference submissions from other scholarly disciplines both in relationship to scholarly output and in the tenure and promotion process. It is not uncommon for computer scientists to work collaboratively, to sub-divide their work for multiple conference presentations simultaneously, and to encourage rapid release of their work through open science and open scholarship initiatives. IEEE, the largest professional association for technologies, offers a submission template for use with its conferences. They explicitly note that it is designed to "provide a consistent format for papers appearing in the conference proceedings" (IEEE 2019). They sponsor more than 1,600 conferences and events across the globe, many of whom utilize a double column paper as its main submission artifact. While length may vary slightly between the various conferences, submissions frequently bump up against the maximum lengths of eight or ten pages. So important is the conference format and its relationship to publication that IEEE offers the "Publication Recommender" service which allows scholars to select keywords, upload their abstract or article file, and identify what date they wish to publish by. Using the keyword "Digital Humanities," for example, suggests more than 184 publications and 535 conferences where one's work might be relevant. The importance of conference submissions to the discipline is not without critique. Republication of papers through conference proceedings, the cost of conference attendance (including travel and accommodations), and inequities in the review process have all been noted as problems associated with the preference for computer science conferences and their associated proceedings having dramatically expanded the number of conferences annually (Fortnow 2009; Franceschet 2010).

Information scientists who are engaged in both computer science and the Digital Humanities find themselves between the poles of computer science and humanities practice. The Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) includes scholars from the "fields of information science, computer science, linguistics, management, librarianship, engineering, data science, information architecture, law, medicine, chemistry, education, and related technology" (ASIS&T 2022). Their call for submissions notes that they accept papers in both long (10 page) and short formats (4 page), which are subjected to double-anonymous peer review, as are posters. Panels

(4-page descriptions), alternative events (4-page descriptions), and workshops (2-page descriptions) all undergo single anonymous review and are not anonymized. Importantly, ASIS&T notes in their submission template that submitters must "state clearly what you have done, not merely what you plan to do, and explain how your work is different from previously published work, i.e. *the unique contribution that your work makes to the field*" (ASIS&T 2021). The bifurcated peer review process of double-anonymous for papers and single-anonymous for all other submission formats suggests a privileging of written papers as scholarly artifacts.

In humanities departments, conference submissions can count very little towards tenure and promotion: journal articles, book chapters, and monographs are the main currency for promotion—and, indeed, on the job market. In 2010, Gregory M. Colón Semenza advised graduate students in the humanities that "$1.25 and ten conference credits on your CV will get you a steaming cup of coffee. Conference presentations are not substitutes for publications, and they are worth very little in and of themselves" (Semenza 2010, 197). In the over-a-decade since Semenza offered this advice to humanities graduate students, not much has changed except the price of coffee. Indeed, in both the "Report of the MLA [Modern Language Association] Task Force on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion" (MLA 2007) and the "AHA [American Historical Association] Guidelines on the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship by Historians" (AHA 2015), conference papers are not even considered as scholarly outputs to be evaluated by tenure and promotion committees. Yet, they represent a significant amount of academic labour by authors, peer reviewers, and conference organizers. They also occupy a large portion of one's CV. (For more on academic labour in relation to conferences and Digital Humanities conferences in particular, see Estill et al. 2022.)

The process of applying to most humanities conferences—and, consequently, the status of conference submissions— is markedly different from the process for applying for computer science conferences. As with CS and other disciplines, there are a range of conferences from the prestigious international and national to much more narrow specialities like the International John Bunyan Society's triennial conference. Some conferences or colloquia are one-time-only events, which, when focused on a specific topic, can be prestigious and lead to publications (for instance, colloquia sponsored by the Folger Institute). Calls for papers routinely ask for the submission of brief abstracts and often interchangeably use language of call for papers, call for presentations, and call for submissions. The MLA, for example, does not post one unified call for papers, but rather posts numerous calls for panels from Allied Organizations, Special Sessions, Forums, MLA Committees, and Working Groups. Searching the 2022 call for papers

(in January 2021) demonstrates that more of these calls ask for 250-word abstracts than any other word count. Humanities conferences that request abstracts of 250–300 words are, indeed, the norm (see Appendix 1 for a quantification of this claim); some abstracts run up to 500 words. As Appendix 1 demonstrates, it is extremely unusual to see calls for abstracts for individual conference papers over 500 words: Indeed, often, entire panel proposals are in the 750–1000-word range for conference presentations. The varying length of submissions in computer science, information science, and humanities publications reflects the state of their peer review: Computer scientists and information sciences can submit complete conference papers for review, whereas humanities scholars usually submit only a brief abstract.

Further muddying the issue of abstract versus full paper in the Digital Humanities is the peer review process that is undertaken once a scholar has submitted. For many humanities conferences, the brief (often ~300 word) abstracts are read and simply accepted or rejected accordingly. Indeed, for many humanities conferences, the abstracts are reviewed by the program committee, but the submitters do not receive feedback for revision, let alone peer review. (For more on peer review, see Estill et al. 2022; Eve et al. 2021; and Estill and Guiliano 2020.) This, for example, occurs for the MLA, AHA, National Council on Public History (NCPH), and other prominent humanities organizations. For the annual Digital Humanities conference, however, submissions receive feedback from reviewers in the reviewer pool. For DH2020, for instance, the average number of reviews per submission was 5.5 per abstract (see **Table 1**). This included comments from at least one member of the program committee. After receiving feedback, submitters then had the option to write a response to the program committee indicating how they plan to take this information into account (this was formerly called the "rebuttal period" but is now the "response phase"). Although these conference submissions receive more peer review than many humanities conference papers receive, the entire conference presentation or poster is never vetted in full before the conference. Importantly, while the reviewing process with feedback can be useful for submitters in revising their potential conference contributions, and having multiple peer reviewers assessing the contribution can provide greater nuance where selection decisions may be marginal, the amount of time and labour contributed to this process is tremendous. **Table 1** provides an overview of the DH2020 peer review contributions by format. Even if every reviewer took just 10 minutes to complete their review, this process represents almost 600 hours of volunteer labour. Most reviewers, though, report taking much longer to review abstracts, which likely would inflate that 562–hour figure significantly.

Type	Number of total submissions	Number of reviews assigned	Number of reviews completed	% of reviews complete	Avg # of reviews per submission
Short Presentation	220	1293	1208	93.00%	5.5
Long Presentation	170	1019	961	94.00%	5.7
Poster	114	705	612	87.00%	5.4
Lightning Talks	36	171	165	96.00%	4.6
Panel	31	184	175	95.00%	5.6
Forum	22	135	128	95.00%	5.8
Pre-Conference Tutorial and Workshop	22	135	123	91.00%	5.6
Sum	615	3642	3372	93.00%	5.5

Table 1: Rates of reviewing for DH2020 conference submissions sorted by total number of submissions.

In Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) defines a "refereed" publication as one that is reviewed "in its entirety" before being published, which means that most humanities conference submissions are non-refereed, because, to use SSHRC's turn of phrase, they are evaluated on the basis of "merely an abstract" (SSHRC 2019). The US-based National Endowment for the Humanities offers no guidance on the status of what constitutes peer review, nor do recent guidelines produced by humanities and Digital Humanities associations (ACH 2016; MLA Task Force for Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion 2007). As a result, scholars are left to their own devices to decide whether a program committee of colleagues constitutes peer review; whether peer review of abstracts but not final presentations or finals constitutes peer review; or whether acceptance without any feedback meets the expectation of peer review. As **Table 1** demonstrates, scholars are spending a lot of time reviewing when their reviews are, by some funding organizations, not considered to be official "peer reviews." In the best-case scenario, these reviews help submitters refine, expand, and otherwise improve their ideas; in the worst, they can be perfunctory.

Humanities scholars often see a conference presentation as one step towards a bigger publication: They present work-in-progress at a conference in order to get feedback on what will be later expanded and published as a journal article, chapter

in an edited collection, or monograph. Information scientists generally share that practice with their presentations varying from fully complete to preliminary work. For Computer Scientists, however, the conference publication is frequently the terminal state of publication: It is the finished product that will not be revised. Digital Humanities abstracts, as the following section will outline, can be caught between disciplinary conventions of computer science, information science, and humanities when it comes to the length of proposal, peer review/feedback, and status of abstract/paper/publication.

The call for papers and recent DH CFPs

Having articulated some of the key disciplinary differences in computer science, information science, and humanities when it comes to conference submissions, we now turn to how conference calls for papers are crafted by Digital Humanities organizations. Generally, within Digital Humanities organizations, calls for papers are written collaboratively among the conference program committee members. These individuals are members of the relevant constituent association and are generally appointed by the executive committees or president of that specific association. ACH and CSDH/SCHN both appoint their program committees; nine and six members for 2021, respectively. Committee members are mainly drawn from the executive council of their organizations with one or more spaces reserved for either representatives from the local host committee or the membership at large. EADH has a similar structure except its program committee comprises representatives directly from EADH, as well as from its associate and partner organizations, resulting in a nineteen-member committee (EADH 2020b). These three approaches for committee construction are in stark contrast to the Japanese Association for Digital Humanities whose program committee is both significantly larger and has, from its inception a decade ago, incorporated international representatives who may or may not be members of the association. The 2020 JADH conference includes thirty-seven representatives, fourteen of whom reside outside Japan. This range of committee sizes, as well as representation of associate organizations or those outside the executive, matters not only because of the mechanics of program committee labour, but also because every individual represents a set of disciplinary and personal interests that might shape the conference call for papers. For the international Digital Humanities conference, the call for papers is often crafted at least a year in advance of the date of the conference.

While a full consideration of conference themes within the context of calls for papers is beyond the scope of this paper, future study of conference themes as registered in CFPs will certainly bear fruit. Indeed, the inner workings of how CFPs are constructed and the negotiations around statements of conference themes, disciplinary and sub-disciplinary interests, and required components are largely obscured by the conference organizing process. None of the major Digital Humanities conferences provide statements on their conference websites reflecting how the program committee is determined, nor do any of them provide publicly available information on the call for papers as a procedural document. In fact, we have not been able to identify any major scholarly association who provides this type of material. At most, some organizations have hosted reflective activities by past program committees or roundtables on conferences in relation to major issues (e.g., diversity, equity, inclusion). Most Digital Humanities associations simply post the call and the list of committee members and assume that submitters will understand the document and the influence (or lack thereof) of program committee members on its production. The international DH conference is an exception to this. It is governed by a publicly available conference protocol that specifies that there is a model call for papers that are made available to the DH program committees and identifies how the program committee will be composed (Conference Coordinating Committee of the ADHO 2020). Yet, as the authors can attest from their service as 2020 program committee chairs and as a member of a previous program committee (Guiliano, DH2016), calls for proposals are statements of priorities and placements within the discipline. They include mechanistic statements of basic information—due dates, submission types, formats, etc.—but they also include ontological statements that articulate social, cultural, and organizational values. The clearest representation of this is the inclusion of a conference theme within the CFP and an associated itemized list of potential areas one might submit in. A call might directly address the desire for submitters to respond to concerns over social justice and decolonial approaches as ACH's did for 2021:

> ACH recognizes that this work is inherently and inextricably sociopolitical, and thus especially welcomes proposals that emphasize social justice in the context of anti-racist work, Black studies, Latinx studies, Indigenous studies, cultural and critical ethnic studies, intersectional feminism, postcolonial and decolonial studies, and queer interventions in digital studies. (ACH 2020)

It might also directly request submissions that consider Digital Humanities in light of particular approaches, as JADH2021 did by asking submitters to consider addressing the experience and impact of COVID-19 on research within the field (JADH 2020). Calls might also pose questions that it seeks to have submitters address, as CSDH/SCHN did in its 2021 request for submissions (Canadian Society for Digital Humanities/Société canadienne des humanités numériques 2020). These articulations serve an important function, as they signal to potential submitters, both existing members and those who might join primarily to present at the conference, what types of scholarship and approaches are welcomed at the conference.

Turning to the mechanics of the call, there are a number of key questions that it answers for submitters. Does the conference encourage submissions of undergraduate and graduate students, staff, or those outside the academy? Does the conference welcome submissions in multiple languages or in multiple formats? What types of content must a proposal have? A scope and methods section? A works cited section? Is the review process single-anonymous, double-anonymous, or completely open? Each of these questions should be addressed in an effective call for papers. For this paper, we focus on one single aspect of calls for papers, that is, submission length. As the most recent calls for papers from these organizations demonstrate, there is not a uniformity of submission length when it comes to Digital Humanities conferences, which reflects the lack of a single set of disciplinary standards when it comes to conference abstracts, review, and status of publication. We did not survey all regional Digital Humanities conferences, but we did turn to those that are constituent organizations of the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations. We did not include centerNet in our discussion because it does not run a traditional conference, but rather coordinates the Day of Digital Humanities (centerNet 2021). This leaves out well-respected conferences such as Keystone DH (an inter-university conference based in Pennsylvania), DHNB (Digital Humanities in the Nordic and Baltic Countries), and many others. Showing the variance even within ADHO constituent organizations, however, foregrounds the importance of making the elements of the conference call for papers and conference process transparent.

Table 2 and **Figure 1** demonstrate the breadth of practices across international Digital Humanities conferences when it comes to requested abstract length. We note that although some of these conferences took place virtually because of the pandemic, when normally they would have taken place in-person, the requested abstract lengths are consistent with previous years. Note that for DHASA for EADH, this was only the second official conference and so there is only a single comparator year.

Organization	Conference (citation)	Submission length for long paper proposals	Submission length for short paper proposals	Submission length for poster proposals
Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa	DHASA 2021 (DHASA 2021)	max 10 pages (not counting references)	n/a	max 6 pages (not counting references)
European Association for Digital Humanities	EADH 2021 (EADH 2020a)	1200–1500 words	750–1000 words	500–750 words
Taiwanese Association for Digital Humanities	DADH 2021	1000–1500	1000–1500	500–1000
Australasian Association for Digital Humanities	DHA2020 (aaDH 2019)	max 1000 words	max 1000 words	max 1000 words
Humanistica, L'association francophone des humanités numériques/ digitales	Humanistica 2021 (Humanistica 2020)	500–1000 words	n/a	250–500 words
Japanese Association for Digital Humanities	JADH 2021 (JADH 2020)	500–1000 words	500–1000 words	500–1000 words
Red de Humanidades Digitales	Encuentro HD 2020 (Red de Humanidades Digitales 2020)	max 500 words	max 500 words	max 500 words
Canadian Society for Digital Humanities / Société canadienne des humanités numériques	CSDH/ SCHN2021 (Canadian Society for Digital Humanities/ Société canadienne des humanités numériques 2020)	500 words	n/a	250–500 ("digital demonstrations")
Association for Computers and the Humanities	ACH 2021 (ACH 2020)	250 words	250 words	250 words

Table 2: Length of proposals for ADHO constituent organization conferences sorted by length of proposal for long paper. This data was compiled with the most recent call for proposals from each organization. aaDH, for instance, is biennial, and so 2020 is the most recent CFP.

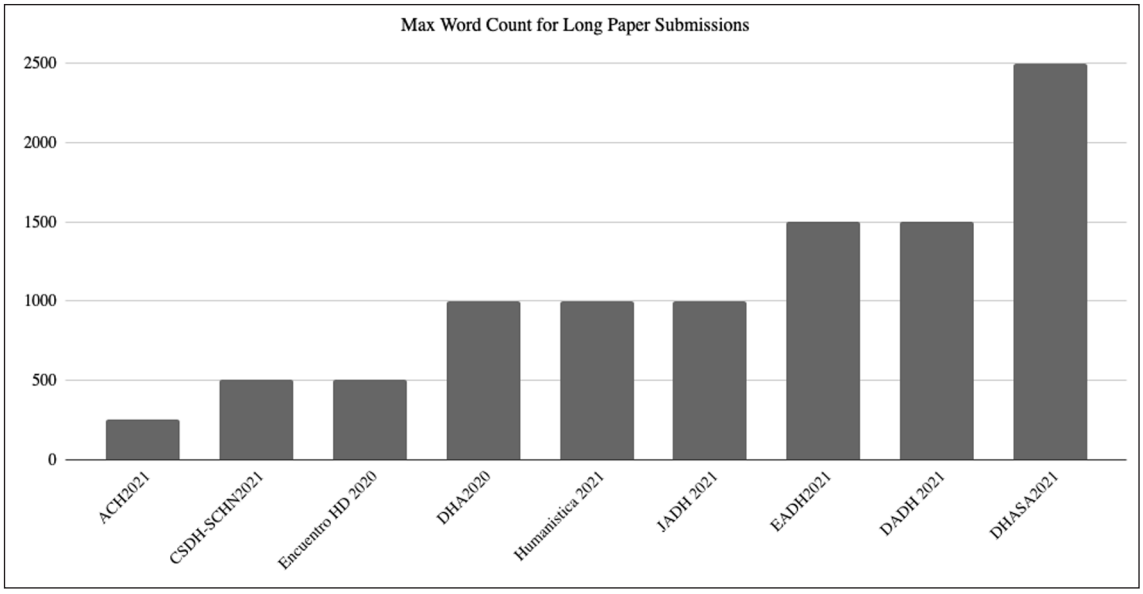

Figure 1: Comparison of maximum word count requested for long paper submissions (see Table 1 for more details). For this figure, we assume 10 pages to be double-spaced and so roughly 2500 words. We note that many calls for paper do not specify if the word or page count is inclusive or exclusive of references.

The three conferences located in the Americas (ACH, CSDH/SCHN, and RedHD) request markedly shorter papers than the other conferences, with the shortest abstracts being for ACH. The 2021 Association for Computers and the Humanities conference continued its previous parameters of 250-word submissions for individual contributions (individual presentations, lightning talks, posters) and 500-word submissions for collective contributions (panels, roundtables, and fora). Likewise, for the 2021 conference, CSDH/SCHN solicited paper abstracts of 500 words (with guidelines to "specify … thesis, methodology, and conclusions") for twenty-minute presentations; panel proposals with "a brief introduction to the topic, a list of presenters, and a 250–500 word proposal for each paper" for sixty-minutes panels with 2–6 speakers; and 250-word proposals for digital demonstrations (Canadian Society for Digital Humanities/Société canadienne des humanités numériques 2020). RedHD, like ACH, used a single word length for all individual submissions (long papers, short papers, and posters) capped at 500 words. Ultimately, the North American Digital Humanities Conferences (ACH and CSDH-SCHN) follow the conventions we might expect of North American humanities conferences in general: The calls for papers request not entire papers but abstracts (of no more than 500 words). The North American humanities model, furthermore, is not the same as pre-publication review of entire papers; these conference papers participate more in ongoing conversations than in the presentation of final, polished research.

Conversely, EADH (Europe) had the longest requested abstracts, with long paper abstracts being from 1200–1500 words. TADH (Taiwan) likewise accepted abstracts of up to 1500 words for long papers. Most of the other organizations above have ranges of around 1000 words for many submission types; and while these are well beyond most humanist and North American submission lengths, they are much shorter than computer science standards and, by many standards, would not count as peer-reviewed because they are not vetted in their entirety. Longer submissions to a conference, of course, do not guarantee higher quality.

As a newer conference emerging (they have had two official conferences and are not constituted by existing groups like EADH), DHASA (South Africa) has the ability to chart its own course. DHASA takes a different approach entirely: They require full papers for consideration for both presentations (10 pages excluding references) and poster presentations (6 pages excluding references). The ten-page submission format does not identify the duration of presentation. It is unclear what the duration of a presentation actually is. Requiring poster submitters to also submit six pages of text makes poster presentations more labour-intensive than other conferences, especially given that effective posters are not simply text blocks and rather communicate information visually. The 2021 DHASA CFP notes: "All accepted submissions that are presented at the conference will be published in the conference proceedings."

As **Table 2** demonstrates, geography shapes expectations about conference submissions as much as discipline. There is no international consensus on how long Digital Humanities conference submissions should be, even within the constituent organizations of ADHO, let alone beyond. There is a need to discuss and clearly identify what motivates the decision making around formats, submission lengths, and proceedings. Who might be accommodated by longer, more complex submission requirements, and who might benefit from shorter, less onerous processes? Similarly, given the flexible nature associated with conference proceedings, are books of abstracts and proceedings comparable across associations, or should they be distinct from one another?

Current practices of ADHO CFP (2015–2020)

The Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO) international conference is sponsored by a different constituent organization each year, relating to the geographic location of the conference. As the constituent organizations have different approaches to the status of abstracts and conference papers (such as ACH, CSDH, and EADH discussed above), this introduces a tension in how different years of the conference situate and perceive the status of abstracts and conference papers. The changing value

can be seen in something as simple as the acronym CFP: In some years, it stands for "call for proposals," which signals that people are not submitting their full papers, whereas, in other years, it stands for "call for papers," which can signal that people would submit their full papers (or almost their full papers) for consideration.

Table 3 shows the range in submission lengths for three types of submission: long papers, short papers, and posters. Conferences invited different kinds of proposals, including panels and workshops/tutorials; there were innovations for different conferences such as the call for virtual short papers for DH2017 and the call for lightning talks for DH2020. We note that the longstanding inclusion of posters in the DH conference, which can elicit some of the most valuable discussion, "are sometimes viewed warily in the humanities and social sciences as interlopers from the STEM disciplines" (Berdahl and Malloy 2018, 84).

Conference Year	Conference Location	Submission length for long paper proposals	Submission length for short paper proposals	Submission length for poster proposals
DH2020 (2020 Program Committee of the Alliance for Digital Humanities Associations 2019)	Ottawa, Canada	750–1000 words	250–500 words	200–500 words
DH2019 (2019 Program Committee of the Alliance for Digital Humanities Associations 2018)	Utrecht, The Netherlands	max 1500 words	max 1000 words	max 750 words
DH2018 (2018 Program Committee of the Alliance for Digital Humanities Associations 2017)	Mexico City, Mexico	max 1500 words	max 1000 words	max 750 words
DH2017 (2017 Program Committee of the Alliance for Digital Humanities Associations 2016)	Montreal, Canada	750–1500 words	750–1500 words	500–750 words
DH2016 (2016 Program Committee of the Alliance for Digital Humanities Associations 2015)	Kraków, Poland	750–1500 words	750–1500 words	500–750 words
DH2015 (2015 Program Committee of the Alliance for Digital Humanities Associations 2014)	Sydney, Australia	750–1500 words	750–1500 words	500–750 words

Table 3: Comparison of submission lengths for recent ADHO-sponsored DH conferences.

Just as the length of papers at the ADHO conference well exceeds the expected length of conference submissions for humanities conferences, it also falls well short of the expected length of submission for computer science abstracts, where submitters

send their complete papers. Before DH2020, as **Table 3** demonstrates, the conference maintained fairly stable lengths for proposals, which called for abstracts far greater (double or triple) those requested by the North American-based Digital Humanities conferences: ACH, CSDH/SCHN, and RedHD. Indeed, the maximum length of 1500 words for a DH abstract is five times longer than ACH and CSDH/SCHN's conference paper abstract and three times as long as RedHD. As program committee chairs for DH2020, we tried to make the submission word counts even lower. (Lowering the word count for DH2020 submissions to reduce barriers also aligned to the then-most-recent North American conference, DH2018, where abstracts in the 250–500-word range were "destroyed" in peer review.) This was intentional to align them with the regional standards and to alleviate the burden on the program committee and reviewers (all of whom are unpaid volunteers). It was also an effort to help clarify that the conference valued abstracts and presentations in line with traditional expectations of humanities.

The questions of abstract length, the peer review process, and the role of scholarly citation requirements should not be the only questions answered by the call for proposals. A number of challenges from DH2020 illuminated that expectations about the reuse of material needs to be outlined clearly in the CFP. What percentage of previously presented work is considered acceptable in Digital Humanities conference papers? Can it be a lightly revised version of a previous conference presentation? An entirely new angle on the presentation? Naturally, in Digital Humanities, people will talk about the same project at multiple conferences and over multiple years. But what do program committees do with the exact same text of a paper published in conference proceedings that has been resubmitted to the international conference?

While the DH2020 call for papers designated long papers as the appropriate format for completed work, neither the call for papers nor the conference guidelines specify whether previously presented or published papers are permitted. As a result, for DH2020, a number of reviewers flagged or rated poorly submissions that they felt were either too similar to previously published work or that reminded them of presentations they'd heard at other Digital Humanities conferences. Indeed, for DH2020, we had one submission that was taken verbatim from another conference proceedings, right down to the double-column publication layout. Unfortunately, the Conference Protocols provided no guidance on what to do with this submission. Few of the constituent organizations make their position on previously presented work, with the exception of Humanistica, whose 2021 CFP specifies: "Les résumés doivent être des textes originaux, qui n'ont pas été présentés ou publiés ailleurs [The abstracts must be original texts that have not been presented or published elsewhere]," and JADH, whose CFP notes that

the long paper format "are intended for presenting substantial unpublished research," but does not make the same claim for other formats. Does this imply that published research is welcomed in other formats? Or is it assumed that people know not to submit previously published research at all? Either assumption, however, remains only an assumption and is not clear from the documentation.

Presenting similar or the exact same work in multiple conferences with differing audiences makes sense from the perspective of researchers who might be seeking more feedback or to bring their work to audiences who may not have heard it previously. Aimée Morrison ponders if recycling presentations and writing overlapping publications can help deepen, broaden, and open scholarly practice (Morrison 2011). She asks: Can it "deepen (my knowledge by repeated trials), broaden (my scope by bringing different theories to bear on one set of practices), and open (by sharing my work more widely and frequently)?" Jo Van Every likewise points out that "the primary reason for publishing and presenting your work at conferences, public lectures, or wherever, should be to communicate"; she notes that different conferences will have different audiences (Van Every 2011). Furthermore, Van Every notes, well-communicated research will be tailored, that is, slightly different for each audience.

Re-presenting the same work or versions of the same work can also, for collaborative teams, allows differing members of the team to serve as the presenter. This is particularly valuable for teams that include individuals of multiple ranks where asserting one's contributions might shape their resume, tenure, and promotion dossier, or potential interest they may garner on the job market. Additionally, submitters may struggle to match publication cycles and release dates with conference abstract due dates and conference presentation dates. The amount of time from announcement of the call for papers, to the deadline for submissions, to the actual dates of the conference can vary widely; however, most Digital Humanities conferences range in the seven-to-nine-months range between announcement of the call and the actual presentation itself. Even DH2019, which introduced the "late-breaking" submission format to allow for work completed between the submission deadline and the conference date, struggled with the issue of timing. It accepted just ten "late-breaking" submissions. The dilemma of how much re-use is acceptable in conference papers is further complicated by the publication process for journal articles, which can run from just a few months to years depending on the publication. As when to submit one's work to the conference is entirely idiosyncratic to the submitter(s), the variety of how related work is released publicly varies. Can an author submit the same or slightly different abstract to multiple Digital Humanities conferences run by different associations in the same year? Or could

a submitter present one version of an abstract one year to the annual international conference and a slightly different version the following year? How much replication is too much? As ADHO (and its constituent organizations) does not maintain an authoritative database of submissions for its conferences, program committees are left to navigate these issues on their own. We could, of course, utilize the highly useful Index of Digital Humanities Conferences; however, choosing to reject a submission for being duplicative would likely constitute a policy decision, which would fall to ADHO and likely its Conference Coordinating Committee. When we encountered this issue in 2020, there was reluctance to formulate a policy mid-conference process; however, because ADHO is continually mid-conference with three conferences always being managed, there is never an appropriate time to address policy changes. Additionally, any policy changes can take years to implement, as we found when ADHO changed its policies months into our process; we were "grandfathered" in and used the previous versions.

Likewise, similar issues arise with multiple submissions from the same research project within the program. Currently the international program limits the number of times someone can serve as a presenter on the program. The line between "presenting author" and "author" can also challenge differing expectations about how many authors can and should be listed for each submission. Some expect dissertation advisors to be listed as co-authors even if they did not, for instance, actually write any of the material. Others assume that "author" is reflective of the status of "project contributor," regardless of whether the person actually authored the abstract or conference presentation. This thorny issue deserves more attention than can be given here, but it is useful to pause to note that astute research teams have parcelled out portions of their research into differing formats with different members of the team serving as presenters. As such, you might attend a lightning talk that discusses user experience, a poster presentation discussing a technical stack, a short paper on forthcoming work that constitutes a new stage within the project, and a long paper reporting results from a grant or major stage of completed work. Those who work on multi-institutional projects, projects that serve as aggregations or collaborative initiatives, or those that take place over multiple years are especially susceptible to the critique that their work has been previously published or presented. Each of these presentations might be significantly different, but to reviewers and even the program committee, there may be concerns about oversaturation of the potential audience. For years where there is a limit on the number of sequential sessions, the question of submitting across presentation types becomes particularly important. Choosing to admit the same research team into multiple formats can then limit a program committee's ability to admit a different submitter.

Conference proceedings and books of abstracts

The status of conference abstracts is complicated by the status of publications that emerge from the conferences: proceedings, books of abstracts, journal articles, etc. The annual DH conference, for instance, publishes a book of abstracts that includes every abstract submitted to the conference (most recently, Crompton, Estill, and Guiliano 2020). The official book of abstracts is not available until after the conference is completed, though a draft book of abstracts is often available beforehand so conference attendees can decide which sessions to attend. The ADHO conference protocols differentiate the book of abstracts from the conference proceedings: "A selection of conference papers will be published in ADHO journals (*DSH* [*Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*], *DHQ* [*Digital Humanities Quarterly*], *Digital Studies/Le Champ Numérique*, etc.)" (Conference Coordinating Committee of the ADHO 2020). The book of abstracts is not, then, conference proceedings for the international DH conference. The proceedings are, in fact, reserved for full articles that are invited.

Many constituent organizations do not publish a "book of abstracts" per se; rather, some make abstracts available as part of the program so that conference attendees can determine which sessions to attend. Some of the organizations specify that conference papers can lead to publication, which suggests that the conference itself is not the terminal publication. The CSDH/SCHN (Canada) CFP, for instance, noted that "Selected papers from the conference will appear in special collections published in the CSDH/SCHN society journal, *Digital Studies/Le champ numérique* (http://www.digitalstudies.org)." The DADH (Taiwan) CFP noted that submitters "will be asked to revise the paper based on the discussion at the meeting and submit it for review; those who pass the review will be included in the journal *Digital Collection and Digital Humanities* sponsored by the Taiwan Digital Humanities Association" [translation from Google Translate]. Although the CSDH/SCHN model suggests that only a few people will be asked to submit to the journal, and the DADH model suggests that everyone will be asked to submit to the journal, both make it clear that there will be revision and additional peer review of the papers. Humanistica's CFP leaves it up to the submitter: "Des articles découlant des communications pourront librement être soumis à la revue *Humanités numériques*. [Articles deriving from conference papers can be freely submitted to the journal *Humanités numériques*]" (translation ours). In many cases, books of abstracts or conference proceedings follow entirely separate pipelines for both peer reviewing and editorial work. This results in additional labour, including soliciting revised materials, editorial revisions and proofreading, layout and design, digital and non-digital publishing, etc. Unsurprisingly, this work adds months, if not a full year, to

the volunteer commitment of Program Chairs and others, on top of the two years of conference organizing itself.

For CSDH/SCHN, DADH, and Humanistica, the conference presentation is not the final publication. This is in contrast to DHNB (Digital Humanities in the Nordic and Baltic Countries) and Associazione Informatica Umanistica e Cultura Digitale (AIUCD), both associate organizations of the European DH association who offer both "proceedings" and "post-proceedings" as part of their conferences. Proceedings are "selected papers of the DHNB2020 conference [that] are being published in the proceedings. The number of papers included in the proceedings is 38 which is more than one third of all accepted proposals. All the papers have undergone peer review by two or mostly three reviewers, and the authors have revised their manuscripts according to the reviewers' comments and suggestions" (Reinsone, Daugavietis, and Baklāne 2020). Post-proceedings differentiate themselves by a "a minimum of 50% new content," if the author had published in the proceedings, and a new title (DHNB 2020). The case of DHNB offers a potentially interesting model in that it clearly differentiates the percentage of work that must be new. However, it is not clear whether that new work is generated through conference feedback mechanisms like audience comments and reviewer feedback. Presumably, the majority of revision is as a result of the three-panel reviewer process; but further clarification might suggest that the post-proceedings, because of their requirement for new material, behave more like a traditional journal than a conference proceeding. Likewise, AIUCD clearly outlines the distinction between abstracts generated in the process of submissions versus revised and extended abstracts that are peer reviewed and published post-conference (AIUCD 2021). AIUCD's phrasing expresses that the difference between the book of abstracts and the extended book of abstracts should be evident: Participants are invited to submit a "more extensive version of their contribution . . . obviously going through a double blind peer review process" (AIUCD 2021). Organizations might embrace what both DHNB and AIUCD have done with providing an editorial note that outlines these distinctions in both the call for proceedings/post-proceedings and in the published volumes. The EADH call for papers valorizes the importance of the book of abstracts, noting: "The conference book of abstracts will not only be sent to the British Library which keeps a Conference index, but will also be archived in EADH's open access Zenodo Community where a DOI is automatically assigned to it" (EADH 2020a). Adding the EADH book of abstracts to the British Library index and adding a DOI makes ephemeral conference presentations more easily findable by those who were not in attendance and makes the work citable; it does not, however, make the submissions into peer-reviewed publications.

The international Digital Humanities conference has, historically, tended more towards European practices when it comes to submission lengths (see **Tables 2** and **3**) and publishing a book of abstracts. However, in practical terms, the status of publication of abstracts for the international DH conference is similar to a traditional North American humanities model: The conference paper/presentation itself is not vetted in full before it is published, and selected conference presentations are invited to be expanded to longer publications that then undergo a separate peer review process. This differs markedly from the computer science view of conference papers as vetted in full and as publications in their own right; indeed, in computer science, conference papers are sometimes referred to as "conference publications" (*Academic Careers* 7; Patterson, Snyder, and Ullman 1999, A). Digital Humanities does not need to become computer science for validation, nor does it need to follow an existing model; however, we should be intentional and consistently define the words we use: submission, abstract, presentation, paper, publication, peer review.

Conclusion: What should be the future of calls for papers?

Given the variety of conference practices and assumptions represented by this brief analysis of just a few elements and mechanics around conference calls for papers, the only thing certain is the lack of clarity and consistency in existing practices. As such, we recommend that conference organizers (working in Digital Humanities and beyond) create a welcoming environment for participants by offering guidelines and expectations.

First, and most importantly, there is a clear and present need to establish publicly available documentation on the conference website that outlines the full conference process from the creation of a program committee through building a call for papers, into the reviewing process, and into publication opportunities associated with these events. This would include an "approved" vocabulary of terms that identify not only what that term is (e.g., paper, poster, presentation) but also the elements associated with the term. For example, statements like the following can create shared expectations: "all papers are peer reviewed by appointed program committee members in a single-anonymous peer review process. Long papers comprise x number of pages that include the required elements of a, b, c." The call for papers, books of abstracts, proceedings, and conference documentation, including copies of annual reports, should be published with DOIs within an institutional or other permanent repository so that it is permanently available to the academic community, including submitters, those who contribute to the conferences, and future tenure and promotion committees.

Second, conference organizers should be clear on the expectations of abstracts—do they need to cite existing scholarship? does that need to be DH-specific scholarship? do citations count in the word count?—and how they will be evaluated. Program committees should provide templates of successful abstracts for each type of conference contribution and, where possible, note how those abstracts align to peer reviewing criteria. Finally, conference organizers should clearly explain (in a public-facing venue such as the website or blog) where their process has diverged from the published documentation.

Although creating additional documentation introduces additional labour, the benefits outweigh the costs. The act of writing documentation spurs reflection and discussion, which makes thought processes explicit and tacit decisions legible. Offering this documentation not only clarifies expectations, but also establishes a culture of transparency that can assist future conference organizers in their efforts. Too often the knowledge accrued during the conference planning process is discarded through rotation of committee members; without access to those experiences, conferences effectively start anew every year by reinventing processes and starting conferences over. By publishing documentation that outlines decisions and renders the hidden apparent, the labour invested will no longer be lost. Additionally, as we seek to broaden the experiences gained in conference organizing, knowledge access will no longer rely on the kindness of strangers, but instead be ready for those undertaking conference work for the first time. This amounts to effective generational knowledge transfer and will subtly redistribute knowledge across the field. Conference organization will never be without its challenges, but we do not have to make the same mistakes across years. Furthermore, as outlined above, conference documentation benefits people creating CVs and dossiers, those reading and evaluating CVs and dossiers, and newcomers to the field.

Conference organizers alone will not be able to address the uncertainties discussed in this article. Submitters should also consider their responsibilities as contributors to Digital Humanities communities. First, we encourage the publication of all conference artifacts (e.g., abstracts, slides, written papers, revised papers, etc.) with DOIs in institutional repositories or other permanent repositories. Submitters should also link to relevant calls for papers and other conference documentation within their CV or dossier so that evaluators can track the relationship between the conference contribution and conference processes—especially when addressing audiences in other fields or explicating interdisciplinary work like that often found in Digital Humanities. Second, those who participate in peer review activities should list that activity on their annual reports, curriculum vitae, and other reporting documents to ensure the

recognition of that labour as labour. As CSDH/SCHN2021 Conference Program co-chair Harvey Quamen notes, "If indeed we collectively are a community that thrives due to the benefits of peer review, the work of peer review clearly needs to be valued much more highly" (Quamen 2021, personal communication). Third, submitters are encouraged to cite how conference presentations and publications are related to one another (e.g., derived from, expanded from, duplicate of). This may occur in a footnote, dossier, or project websites. Finally, where conference organizers fail to provide appropriate documentation or apply terminology consistently, submitters are encouraged to ask for those issues to be clarified and documented publicly. While this may place the submitter in an uncomfortable position, it ultimately will strengthen the conference as a whole by ensuring an even playing field for all participants.

Conference papers are an important part of scholarship: They offer the opportunity for feedback and strengthening of ideas. While we are not advocating a single format or style for conference submissions, papers, and publications within Digital Humanities or across all fields and conferences, we are suggesting that a conversation among conference organizers would be an important step forward to understand how the often-chaotic deployment of varying calls and processes impacts potential submitters and the community at large. All too often, academia is criticized for having a "hidden curriculum" that is unwelcoming to newcomers, discourages interdisciplinary work, and makes it challenging to undertake collaborations. Clarifying the conference process for all involved can foster opportunities for better scholarship at all points along the way.

Appendix

Table 4 was completed in January 2021 by searching the University of Pennsylvania English department's "Call for Papers" website. This site, where anyone can post calls for papers, "welcome[s] literature and humanities calls for papers." This site is only English-language calls for papers, and, as such, English-speaking countries are the most represented. **Figure 2** visually demonstrates that 250 and 300 are the numbers that appear most in the CFPs. Searching the site for items from the past year (using the site's search feature, which is Google site search), we searched for the numbers in column 1; column 2 is the number of results, excluding those that Google omitted because they were "very similar to the [results] already displayed"; column 3 is the figure with probably duplicates included; column 4 is notes. Because people submit their own calls to this site, and it can take up to 48 hours to appear, there are sometimes exact duplicates; in other instances, updates to calls are published as original calls and not as modifications to the first call, which causes some of the other duplications.

Number in CFP	# of results (probable duplicates excluded)	# of results (duplicates included)	
150	103	111	
200	146	156	
250	246	263	
300	284	299	
350	35	39	
400	52	55	
500	177	202	
600	4	4	None of these were word counts in calls for conference papers
700	9	9	None of these were word counts in calls for conference papers
750	13	13	Although some of these were in conference calls, these were 750-word limits for panels, not individual papers
800	17	18	Only one of these results was a call for an individual paper for a conference
1000	70	72	Only one of these results was a call for an individual paper for a conference
2000	80	90	None of these were word counts for calls for individual conference papers

Table 4: Calls for paper lengths of requested papers.

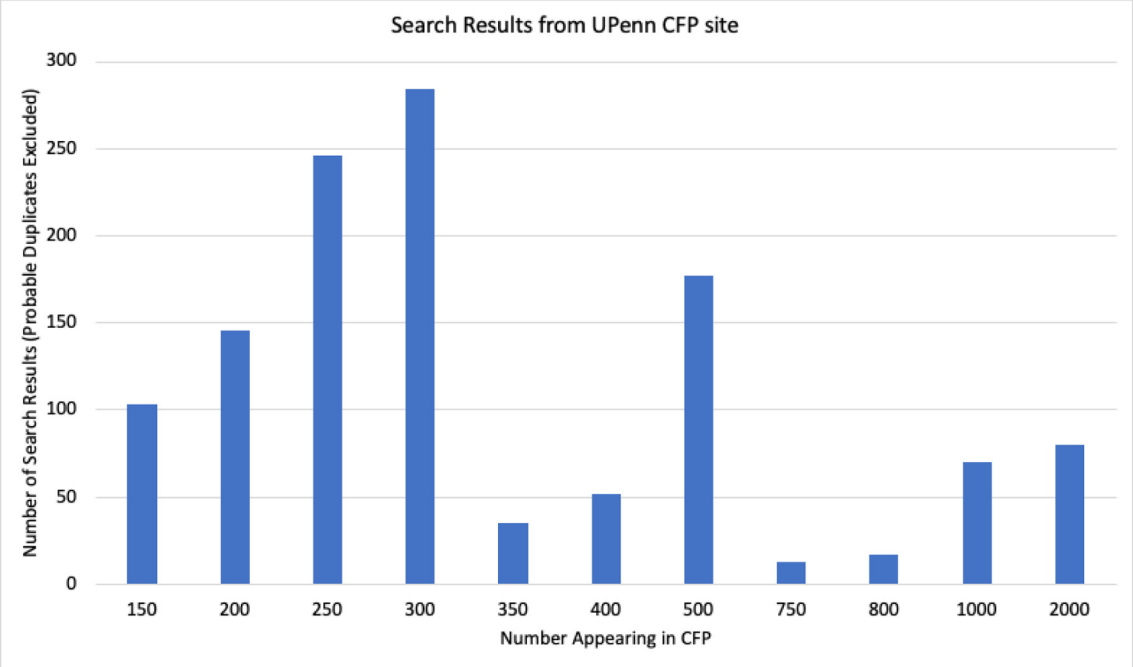

Figure 2: Search results from UPenn CFP site.

Not every instance of a number in these calls is a page number, but most are (unless otherwise indicated). In all categories, numbers sometimes represented dates or showed the passage of time: For example, one call was titled "Tobias Smollett at 300" (Jones 2020). Some calls specify only one number, such as "max 300 words"; in this case, they are represented in the table only once. Other calls offer a range, such as "200-300 words," in which case, they are represented in the table twice. Most ranges were "200–300" or "300–500."

We omitted the following searches from **Figure 2** because they did not return any results relating to word counts (results in brackets after each number searched): 450 (6, 7); 900 (0, 0).

At the 500-word count, some of the proposals were being sought for chapters for edited collections. For 600, 700, 800, and above, sometimes the word count was the lower end of a word-count range for a review or short article. The calls for items with 1000 words in the range were for "short reflection pieces"; "opinion pieces"; "vignettes and praxis essays"; "featurettes"; flash fiction; chapter proposals; book reviews; panels at conferences including all abstracts; and undergraduate academic essays. Sometimes 1000 referred to prize money or article publishing fees in various currencies. In only one case was there a call for individual conference papers with 1000 words.

When it comes to the results for 2000, many of them are citations in the calls to works published in the year 2000. One was a character limit for the submission of a conference paper: requesting "Proposals of up to 2000 characters including spaces (around 350 words)" (Díaz-Basteris 2020).

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Ethics and consent

Data associated with this publication was derived from published conference calls for papers, websites, and the Index of Digital Humanities Conferences which makes its data available for download. All data utilized herein is considered "fair use" and is credited within the publication's citations. We have included some materials from the DH2020 program committee chair report, which is not currently publicly available.

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The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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Authorship is alphabetical. Both authors contributed equally to this paper.
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Editorial

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