



Digital Narrative Network Conference

keynote speaker: N Katherine Hayles

research presentations • artist talks • art exhibition • library exhibition

full program and sign up:

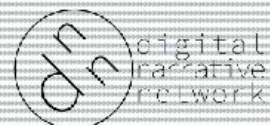
<https://www.uib.no/en/dnn/131147/digital-narrative-network-conference>

21st and 22nd november / 9am to 4pm

Knut Knaus auditorium

KMD - University of Bergen

Møllendalsveien 61



Digital Narrative Network Conference

Location: University of Bergen KMD, Møllendalsveien 61, 5009 Bergen

Thursday, November 21st

- 9:00-9:30 Welcome & Coffee (Foyer)
- 9:30-10:45 N. Katherine Hayles Keynote (Knut Knaus Auditorium)
- 10:45-12:00 Panel 1: Games and Narrative Complexity (Knut Knaus Auditorium)
- 12-1 Lunch (Foyer)
- 1-2 Panel 2: Artist Talks 1 (Knut Knaus Auditorium)
- 2:15-3:15 Panel 3: Haunted Spaces of Digital Culture (Knut Knaus Auditorium)
- 3:30-4:30 Panel 4: Electronic Literature and Political Realities (Knut Knaus Auditorium)
- 4:45-6 Book Launch & Exhibition Reception (Rom 61 and KMD Library)
- 7:30-10 Conference Dinner (for Presenters): Beaujolais Dinner at Bien Danmarksplas, Fjøsangerveien 30, 5054 Bergen

Friday, November 22nd

- 9-9:30 Coffee (Foyer)
- 9:30-10:30 Panel 5: Design Fictions (Knut Knaus Auditorium)
- 10:45-11:45 Panel 6: Artist Talks 2 (Knut Knaus Auditorium)
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch (Foyer)
- 1:15-2:15 Panel 7: Technology, Politics, and Social Change (Knut Knaus Auditorium)

2:30-3:45 Panel 8: Machine Visions (Knut Knaus Auditorium)

3:45-4:00 Closing discussion: Future of DNN

Keynote Address

N. Katherine Hayles: “Computers and Meaning: The Case of OpenAI's Text-Generating Program”

This talk will argue that computers do create, disseminate, and understand meaning, within their contexts and capabilities. Using criteria developed in biosemiotics for meaning-production by nonhuman animals and plants, the talk will extend these to computational media and specify what kinds of meanings emerge from the computational processing of information and algorithms. The contextual limits to meaning-production imply that humans and computers understand "meaning" in fundamentally different ways. The talk will take OpenAI's text-generation program as a case in point, comparing it to plans-scripts-goals programs such as Tailspin and to slot algorithms for text generation. Using neural net architecture and a powerful search algorithm, OpenAI's program is arguably the most advanced text generation program in existence. An open question is why so many of its productions turn out to be, if not exactly stories, certainly narratives. The talk will include a live demonstration of the program with audience participation.

Panel 1: Games and Narrative Complexity

Jan Noel Thon: “Narrative Complexity and Post/Digital Aesthetics in Recent Indie Games”

Building on a general argument that an analysis of video games' narrative complexity will always need to take into account the interrelation of their audiovisual, ludic, and narrative aesthetics, the proposed paper zooms in on the question how (some) recent indie games employ what could be described as post/digital aesthetics, extending not just to their audiovisual design and gameplay mechanics but also to the narrative strategies they employ.

Marieke Verbiesen: “Bit Crushes & Square Waves”

A presentation of the Sonic Game Space exhibition series I have been organising in Bergen - with a new upcoming show at USF in 2020. Sonic Game Space is a project that combines Exhibitions, Workshops, Presentations and Live performances, centered around the works by a group of artists that are connected through their work in early game console art. Their output spans a spectrum of forms including videos, performance & live music, sculpture & installation, often extending beyond the computer screen. Sonic Game Space investigates the concepts of playing with and exploring the obsolete game consoles that have had, and continue to have, a key influence on the development of audiovisual art and technology.

Yngvill Hopen & Linn Sovig: “How do we design a video game about depression that people will want to play?”

Yngvill Hopen is Creative Director and CEO at local game development studio, Henchman & Goon. They are currently working on a game about coping with depression and angst within an art form that usually encourages positive feeling of play. Their last game Pøde, was all about the loveliness of friendship and working together to solve problems. With “Sinking To The Surface” they’re working on a game that is communicating that some problems can’t be solved in a melancholic world. Producer, Linn Sovig, will do a short introduction of the game and then interview Yngvill Hopen on the challenges of a designing a game with a darker message.

Panel 2: Artist Talks

Jeremy Welsh: “The 101”

A digital slide show screening/presentation of part of an ongoing collaboration with British poet/author Paul A. Green. We have collaborated periodically since the 1980s as The Quantum Brothers, with performances, online works (these now defunct), videos and installations. The 101 is a series of fragmentary narratives framed as Keynote slides with animation and sound. Parts of our previous work have appeared in various publications and journals including *The J.G. Ballard Book* (Terminal Press 2013). The 101 is an unfixed work in progress, each presentation will be a new interpretation.

Linda Kronman: “Surveillance Stories”

Artists have noticed and made visible the increasing number of surveillance cameras in the cityscape. This talk is a brief summary on how artists have reflected upon post 9/11 surveillance focusing on uses of security cameras in storytelling with examples ranging from a manifesto for CCTV filmmakers to unauthorized access to ‘smart cameras’.

Mikkel Wettre: “The Aura of Electromagnetic Twilight”

In my sculpture-work I have taken eyesight and optical phenomena as a starting point for mechanical installations that engage the senses and serve as metaphorical depictions of the relationship between human and technical cognition. My presentation will track the development of recent projects and the role of imaginative awareness.

Panel 3: Haunted Spaces of Digital Culture

Kristian Bjørkelo: “We have been copy-pasting since forever”

Copypasta and creepypasta, while shaped by digital modalities and affordances, exist in the continuation of human storytelling, and constant, iterative retellings of tall tales, legends and myth. They are contemporary folklore. This presentation will tie these contemporary expressions to more traditional genres, and explore how post-Gutenberg modalities affect traditional narratives.

Erika Kvistad: “Home, again: Repetition and closure in haunted-house game narratives”

This presentation explores how two interactive haunted-house narratives, Kitty Horrorshow's *Anatomy*

(2016) and Michael Gendry's *Anchorhead* (1998), use their game mechanics to deny the reader/player the sense of an ending, leaving the reader/player stranded in the games' haunted space and damaged time.

Marianne Gunderson: "Your camera has detected motion"

This paper explores how machine vision devices figure in creepypasta narratives, converging around the relationship between agency, truth, and technology. It further argues that these stories can be read as affective articulations of cultural anxieties about our relationship to these technologies.

Panel 4: Electronic Literature and Political Realities

Veronica Gomez: "Gltopolitics of Experimental Translation: The Migration Of National Memories In Electronic Literature"

This short paper aims to describe gltopolitical interventions through expanded translation in electronic literature. We will refer to "Landscapes" by Laura Benech, and to a poetic intervention action on Twitter by Eugenio Tiselli to alert on the devastation of the Amazon. In both cases, the artists propose to translate a code into a digitally manipulated image, so that the scope of languages is extended and can no longer be limited to translation understood as an inter-national language system, as well as trans-national policies that govern the territories exceed the power of the nation-state in which they are applied, since they are part of a global-scale model.

Scott Rettberg: "Critical Digital Media"

This presentation will contextualize two projects, *Hearts and Minds: The Interrogations Project* (2015-17), and *Toxi*City: A Climate Change Narrative* (2013-17) from the perspective critical digital media. In this context, we describe critical digital media as new media art artifacts derived from interdisciplinary research focused on significant societal challenges. During a period when numerous governments and educational institutions are questioning the value of the arts and humanities to society in comparison to the hard sciences or market-driven professional training, I argue that critical projects driven by scientific research, non-fiction documentary evidence, and digital media aesthetics can have just as significant impacts in helping society to grapple with some of the most significant challenges of our time as can research driven by more traditional disciplinary approaches.

Nohelia Meza: "Visualising Latin American Discourses through a Digital Rhetoric Perspective"

Latin American electronic literature is still a relatively unexplored area of study as far as interdisciplinary research methodologies are concerned. This paper aims to construct a scientific and artistic exchange between Digital Rhetoric, Latin American Cultural Studies, and Digital Humanities to examine the role of digital rhetoric practices in the construction of cultural discourses in Latin American works of electronic literature. The main objective is to enable an interdisciplinary dialogue between these previous approaches in order to provide new methodological tools to study Latin American electronic literature from different disciplines and perspectives. The incorporation of digital practices in the humanities, such as data visualisation techniques will facilitate the evaluation, comparison, and analysis of the results. Following recent methodological approaches on Digital Rhetoric (Bouchardon, 2014; Brooke, 2009; Eyman, 2015; Saemmer, 2015), and Latin American Cultural Studies (Taylor & Pitman, 2007, 2013), this paper will address three main questions: 1) How are discourses and conceptualisations of Latin American-ness represented within different typologies of digital rhetoric practices in electronic literary

works? 2) How do Latin American e-lit works negotiate their identity through the rhetoric of cultural discourse? 3) How can we build bridges between traditional methods of analysis and digital humanities tools (i.e. data visualisation techniques) (Graham, 2017) to help the categorization of Latin American discourses and their association to specific digital rhetoric practices?

Panel 5: Design Fictions

Joseph Tabbi: “All Over Writing: Anne Burdick's Design Fiction”

Literature, etymologically “things made from letters,” is Robert Coover’s starting point in a 2018 American Scholar essay that does not forecast so much as inhabit “The End of Literature.” This essay, like Coover’s career and lifework exemplifies a kind of writing that is “all over” – in the double sense of being finished but also dispersing, even as the printed word itself is displaced into and reconfigured within digital media. That particular phrase, “All Over Writing” is one that Anne Burdick, Ewan Branda, and I chose for a panel we’d put together at a HASTAC conference of 2019, celebrating a 4th iteration of our collaborative literary project, ebr (www.electronicbookreview.com). Burdick, in the meantime has contributed essays of her own to the landmark 2012 collection, *Digital Humanities* (MIT Press). The underscore in the title conveys, as much as anything written in the book, how any relation between digital arts, literature, and the humanities must needs be a “thing made from letters.” More recently, Burdick interrupted her own career as Chair of Media Design Practices at Cal Arts to obtain a doctoral degree from Carnegie Mellon. Her “dissertation” took the form of a “Design Fiction,” titled *Trina*, that asks us to look at letters similarly – as objects in themselves as much as they are signifiers. Such an object-orientation opens the prospect of a literature that does not end, so much as it relocates the written text in a multi-medial environment where words (written and spoken) are experienced in much the same way we watch images and hear sounds: not as a “literary” removal from the world, and not as fictions we write or type but as objects we make and think with – along with other sights and sounds in a digital landscape.

Eric Rasmussen: “Digital Narrative, Textual Ecosystems, and the Work as Assemblage Novel: Long-Form Fiction for the Programming Era”

Partaking in efforts to bring the digital- and environmental humanities in dialogue, my talk will draw on the German ecocritic Hubert Zapf’s functional model of literature to outline the cultural-ecological potential of an emergent genre of post-digital narrative fiction first described by Katherine Hayles—the Work as Assemblage (WAA) novel. The focus will be on how William Gillespie’s *_Keyhole Factory_* functions as textual ecosystem designed to address concerns about reading practices in online environments.

Hilde Kramer: “Illustration as Sonic Practice”

This project investigates examines what happens when illustration practice is executed outside its traditional realm. Accepting the obligation to operate in the service of an idea and seeking to communicate something particular, the project seeks to identify a specific illustration methodology and constituted knowledge, and investigate these through the medium of sound. Beginning with central topoi in visual storytelling such as ‘character/ actor’, ‘scenography/ environment’ ‘narrative images’ ‘dramaturgy’/‘plot’ and ‘style’, the project investigates these topics solemnly through sound practice. May the transposition lead to “another thought,” and hence, discover new understanding of the field of illustration? The mediated content of the project is the layered history of a small suburban place of south

east Norway, Momarken; an ancient market place and arena for horse racing, that had a near escape from becoming the last Nazi-German concentration camp built on European territory.

Panel 6: Artist Talks 2

Eamon O’Kane: “And Time Begins Again”

Presentation about *And Time Begins Again* – an immersive digital video and sound installation relating to a derelict plant nursery in Odense, Denmark, where the artist lives and has a studio. This new work continues the O’Kane’s ongoing interest in architecture and specifically considers relationships to the human, the organic, the machine and the posthuman. The installation consists of an installation of videos and sound of the interior and exterior of the nursery, displayed as projections and on screens and made from recycled light components that were once used in the greenhouses to help plant growth. The films, taken over a period of ten years, depict details of the place in a state of abandonment. We see signs of the changing seasons and the slow take-over of weeds. We also see subtle signs of human interference and then the final demolition of the site and transference to the beginnings of a forest. The installation represents these different and overlapping rhythms of change.

Laurie Lax / Lucila Mayol: “Archaeological Fiction: Sagfjordbotn”

Presentation about an artwork that in its final form will become an Interactive Fiction with 3D audio. Our project is based on the remote fjord of Sagfjordbotn in Nordland. Like other remote places, Sagfjordbotn has been un-built following a process that could be compared to ‘programmed obsolescence’. The narrative will have three parallel levels, corresponding to different moments in time, that the reader will be able to travel between (1910s, 1960s and 2010s). A sound track featuring field recordings of water will consistently accompany the narrative on all three levels.

Terri Martilla: “we-cannot-take-them-all”

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Panel 7: Technology, Politics, and Social Change

Annelin Eriksen: “Immortality: The Changing Nature of the Human Being”

In this paper I analyse the creation of the humanoid Bina48 by the Terasem movement in Vermont (US)

and the cultural significance of new imaginaries of immortality. I question the idea of cultural change, and the notion of disruptive technologies by applying the analytics of cultural value systems.

Andrés Pardo Rodriguez: “National Digital Narratives”

Democratic governments often believe that providing access to technology results in positive social changes. Technological determinism as such needs to be reviewed, as there are hidden cultural layers that are not considered. This research analyzes the introduction of ICTs by central authorities: how they seek to create new national narratives through digital tools, and how users create online communication channels for everyday life. Case studies that are presented and discussed are: Le Kiosque - Minitel (France), E-stonia (Estonia), and Digital Kiosks and Routes of the Conflict (Colombia).

Mathias Klang & Nora Madison: “Barely Allowed: The Narratives of Nude Protest Online”

The body has often been used as a locus for protest messages. One such traditional protest strategy is nudity. This work examines the embodiment of protest narratives as mediated by social media platforms. Social media provides users with communication tools, but their popularity requires users to adopt platform-specific strategies in order to make their message acceptable. This study explores the ways in which platforms limit the ways in which bodies can be used for protest.

Panel 8: Machine Visions

Jill Walker Rettberg: “The Machine Vision Database: Machine Vision in Art, Games and Narratives”

The Machine Vision Database collects information about games, art and narratives that use or represent machine vision technologies. Our aim is to trace connections, similarities and differences in the ways machine vision is invoked culturally and aesthetically. You can follow trails through the material by browsing through the themes each work deals with, or the technologies they use and reference, or the attitudes shown towards machine vision. Or you can trace the ways different kinds of protagonist (human, machine, child, adult and more) engage with machine vision. The Machine Vision database is developed by the ERC project Machine Vision in Everyday Life: Playful Interactions with Visual Technologies in Digital Art, Games, Narratives and Social Media. It is currently (2019) in development, and is changing daily.

Maud Ceuterick: “Necessities and Challenges of Cultural Mapping”

May locative narratives and their mapping transform urban spaces? The mapping of locative narratives integrates individuals and communities into their environment, which may create a territory that is more inclusive than traditional mapping. Cultural mapping however also comes with challenges, including risks of fixing space, problems of surveillance, and the reproduction of established power relations.

Serge Bouchardon: “StoryFace: log onto a dating website and find love!”

"StoryFace" is an online digital creation based on the capture and recognition of facial emotions. The piece deals with issues of emotional surveillance and the industrialization of emotions. I might also

present "fred", an interactive narrative for smartphones, to go further in the reflexion on the links between digital interactive narratives and emotions.

Anne Karhio: ““Reboot?” Digital Forms and Narrative Poetry”

In this presentation I will discuss a selection of print and digital texts, from John Redmond’s MUDe to J. R. Carpenter’s TRANS.MISSION[A.DIALOGUE], to examine the transforming role of narrative poetry and poetics in contemporary media exchanges and environments. In scholarly discussions on literary forms and genres in digital platforms and networks, “poetry” and “narrative” have not infrequently been considered as oppositional approaches to literary practice. To some extent, this is simply a generalizing terminological shortcut: “poetry” in these instances refers to the tradition of the condensed short lyric as verbal craft, whereas “narrative” tends to stand for fiction, storytelling, or even prose. A number of works, however, incorporate both recognizably poetic techniques as well as narrative elements, despite the relative scarcity of scholarly engagement with narrative poetry specifically in the field of electronic literature. Several poets publishing in print have also drawn on digital platforms and genres to explore the potential of the long narrative poem in the digital age. How do authors of print and digital poetry envision the role and function of narrative poetry in the 21st century? And how can narrative poetry as one of the oldest literary forms be revitalized to address the language and practices of the networked society?.