

# Introduction to the Special Issue: “Digital Humanities for Inclusion”

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## 1 Introduction

It is with immense pride and anticipation that we introduce the fifth volume of the Journal of Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa (JDHASA), centred on the theme “Digital Humanities for Inclusion.”

The Digital Humanities field has matured into a vibrant academic domain characterised by exploration and innovation both in Southern Africa and abroad. It is with a sense of duty and optimism that we present publications that were presented at the 2023 edition of the Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa (DHASA) conference. This conference series serves as a guiding light, illuminating the path towards deeper engagement and a more promising future for Digital Humanities within Southern Africa.

The Digital Humanities landscape in Southern Africa, although in its nascent stages, brims with potential. This volume serves as a critical conduit, addressing the necessity for growth and collaboration within this discipline. In doing so, it seeks to unveil the diverse and visionary minds contributing to Digital Humanities, particularly within the distinctive context of Southern Africa.

The core of this volume lies in the convergence of expert scholars, researchers, and practitioners who possess a keen focus on, or affiliations with, the Southern African region. The contents of this volume transcends the mere exchange of knowledge; it serves as a springboard for networking and col-

laborative efforts. Our aspiration is to forge new partnerships and inspire further research by bringing together experts and novice scholars in the field of Digital Humanities.

Contained within this volume is a pool of collective wisdom and research contributions from the DHASA community. It stands as a testament to our ceaseless pursuit of knowledge and inclusivity within the realm of Digital Humanities. We extend a warm invitation for people to peruse these pages, explore the insights and discoveries contained within, and join us in commemorating the spirit of Digital Humanities within the Southern African context.

## 2 Submissions

Authors were asked to submit either long or short papers for publication in this volume. Additionally, people could submit an abstract (only). All accepted submissions were allocated time for presentation at the DHASA conference.

All submissions to this volume underwent a thorough single-blind peer-review process. Each long and short paper was reviewed by three reviewers, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation. Similarly, each abstract submission (not contained in this volume) received the attention of two reviewers. In this single-blind review process, the reviewers had access to the names of the authors, but the authors did not have access to the identities of the reviewers.

In total, we received 47 submissions, of which eleven were not accepted, resulting in an acceptance rate of 74.5%. Unfortunately, five papers were withdrawn. In the end, a total of 31 submissions (out of 47 initial submissions, 66.0%) were retained. The accepted articles include 20 long papers, six short papers, and five abstracts. The abstract submissions are not contained in this volume. This publication adheres to the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) 60% rule. The collection features authors from a total of 22 institutions. Of the 31 featured publications, 14 are student papers, which is exciting given that our call for papers encouraged the submission of student papers.



Furthermore, ten of the submissions resulted from authors affiliated with institutions that are outside the Southern African region.

We extend our sincere thanks to all the authors for their valuable submissions and their diligent efforts in preparing manuscripts for publication.

### 3 Accepted articles

The accepted articles cover a wide range of topics. For instance, the volume contains publications on language related issues (dictionaries, language and identity, poetry, computational linguistics), education, digital arts, social media, history to name a few. These themes are extremely important and align with several sustainable development goals (SDGs) as identified by the United Nations (see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>), in particular, quality education and reduced inequalities.

The conference theme, “Digital Humanities for Inclusion,” delves into important topics, including the preservation of marginalised voices, the multifaceted intersections of race, gender, and more in digital research, and the potential for Digital Humanities to facilitate transformative change in society. We also examine its role in promoting inclusivity and fairness by engaging marginalised communities and furthering knowledge decolonisation.

### 4 Program committee

We wish to express our deep gratitude to all the reviewers who contributed to the review process. The program committee’s task to ensure the quality of the accepted submissions cannot be overlooked. The reviewers are listed below:

- Aby Louw, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
- Alan Murdoch, South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
- Alette Schoon, Rhodes University
- Alette Schoon, Rhodes University
- Amanda du Preez, University of Pretoria

- Andiswa Bukula, South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
- Ayodele James Akinola, Michigan Technological University
- Benito Trollip, South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
- Deon du Plessis, South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
- Diko Mlamli, University of South Africa
- Friedel Wolff, South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
- Gabby Dlamini, Nelson Mandela University
- Gonneke Groenen, North-West University
- Gordon Matthew, North-West University
- Héniel Fourie, North-West University
- Ilana Wilken, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
- Johannes Sibeko, Nelson Mandela University
- Jonathan Van Der Walt, Nelson Mandela University
- Juan Steyn, South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
- Justus Roux, Stellenbosch University
- Laurette Marais, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
- Marissa Griesel, University of Pretoria
- Martin Puttkammer, South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
- Menno van Zaanen, South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
- Mmasibidi Setaka, South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
- Mukhtar Raban, Nelson Mandela University
- Muzi Matfunjwa, South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
- Papi Lemeko, Central University of Technology



- Pia Bombardella, North-West University
- Ray Siemens, University of Victoria
- Roald Eiselen, North-West University
- Rooiweither Mabuya, South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
- Rory du Plessis, University of Pretoria
- Tanja Gaustad Van Zaanen, Centre for Text Technology
- Tarryn Rennie, Nelson Mandela University

The DHASA conference encompasses a spectrum of contributions spanning diverse domains of Digital Humanities, encompassing areas such as language, literature, visual arts, history, language technologies, and more. Our overarching objective is to nurture an all-inclusive scientific community within the Digital Humanities arena.

## 5 Programme Chairs

We also extend our gratitude to the following people for chairing the sessions at the conference:

- Alan Murdoch
- Andiswa Bukula
- Anelda van der Walt
- Benito Trollip
- Gabby Dlamini
- Ilana Wilken
- Lamla Notshulwana
- Mmasibidi Setaka
- Mukhtar Raban
- Nomfundo Khumalo
- Nosiphiwo Mazaleni
- Rooweither Mabuya

## 6 Conclusion

To ensure maximum visibility and knowledge sharing, the articles contained in this volume were also orally presented at the Fourth conference of the Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa. See <https://dh2023.digitalhumanities.org.za/> for more details of the conference. At this conference workshops and tutorials were provided as well, equipping participants with knowledge and insights into pioneering technologies and tools, thereby enriching their journey within the Digital Humanities domain.

