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Editorial

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The publication of a new issue of the e-journal *Digithum* is always a good time not only to offer an overview of its content but also to reflect on different aspects of the increasingly widespread phenomenon of online publishing in general and on the focus and goals of our e-journal in particular.

With regard to the first of those topics, academic e-journals are undeniably on the rise in the Catalan cultural sphere, as are coordination and dissemination efforts and the application of international standards (such as OJS, which *Digithum* now uses, or ISO standards). The third Catalan Conference on Scientific Journals¹ held in March 2010, made this abundantly clear, whilst also showing that, as with many countries, one of the things preventing many outstanding Catalan academic journals from having a strong international presence is the language in which they are (naturally) written. *Digithum*, which was launched online and has thus taken advantage of the digital medium from the start, is a Catalan journal and as such ensures access to its content in Catalan. (Indeed, failure to do so would be a clear violation of its obvious and non-negotiable commitment to Catalan culture). However, it also offers much of its content (including all abstracts and many full articles) in English and Spanish, as well as in other languages in which articles are originally received. The obstacles to multilingual access are always exclusively economic and therefore can, and must, be overcome.

The issue of the consequences for research authors of publishing in journals (online or otherwise) was addressed in the most recent edition of the workshops for reflection and debate held by AQU Catalunya (the Catalan university system's quality agency) in conjunction with the Catalan universities on 28 and 29 January 2010. The event, entitled Research Assessment in the Humanities and Social Sciences, aimed to enhance research assessment by reaching a consensus within the Catalan scientific community. Among other aspects, participants underscored that the quality of an article or journal does not depend on the language in

which it is written or its regional character and that these factors must therefore not be used as grounds for exclusion or failure to assess it. Emphasis was likewise placed on the value of books and book chapters as vehicles for disseminating research results in the disciplines in question, and participants called for quality criteria for university and private academic publishers, as well as for journal databases with clear, objective criteria for inclusion and measuring progress. We second this call and moreover demand a more comprehensive spectrum of Catalan scientific publications that takes into account the full range of thriving fields and levels without neglecting or undervaluing any of them.

Digithum has built a name for itself in recent years and today ranks—albeit modestly—among the high-profile journals considered attractive places to publish by academics. This notwithstanding, it remains firmly committed to constant improvement and progress and is aware that it must clarify and strengthen its identity within the Catalan university publications for the research community. It aspires to encompass all manner of reflections on contemporary culture, which never unfolds in a vacuum, but rather builds, through action or reaction, on the culture that came before it. It also seeks to highlight the changes that modern society is effecting in the methods and aims of the social sciences and humanities (cross-disciplinary approaches and the hybridisation of methods and perspectives, the revisiting of formerly sacred cows, the identification and analysis of new aims, the new analytical tools and perspectives offered by technology and the uses to which it is put, shifts in current and past paradigms and their potential comparability, etc.).

On the whole, the current issue fulfils these goals, as both the articles that make up the dossier and those in the Miscellany section fall firmly within *Digithum's* core mission of showcasing research and reflections on culture in the digital age.

The dossier "From the Digitization of Culture to Digital Culture", coordinated by the lecturer Pau Alsina, aims to redouble

1. See: <<http://taller.iec.cat/jcrc/>>.



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the journal's effort to examine some of the most salient aspects of today's culture. Its articles, written by high-profile authors from around the world, explore the consequences of the increasingly intertwined relationship between culture and digital technologies. Charlie Gere's article, "Some Thoughts on Digital Culture", examines the impact of today's digital technologies on our conceptions of subject, consumption and community. In "Avatar = Pinocchio 2.0 or 'La fine della società dello spettacolo'", the professor Derrick de Kerckhove reflects on the imagination behind today's 3D images and virtual reality. Tiziana Terranova's article, "Another Life: Social Cooperation and A-organic Life", discusses key issues in the political economy of digital culture. It is followed by Rodrigo Savazoni's article, "Democracy, Innovation and Digital Culture", which sets out a series of ideas regarding the use of digital technologies in Brazil. The dossier ends with an article by Aleksandra Uzelak entitled "Digital culture as a converging paradigm for technology and culture: Challenges for the culture sector", which explores the challenges posed to the culture sector by the convergence of culture and technology.

The articles in the Miscellany section focus on some of the intersections between the world of culture and communications technology. Meritzell Ramírez's article, "'A click to reach God': A literary review of the religious use of the Internet", offers a broad

and rigorous overview of studies of religion online. Alessandra Miccalizzi's article, "Mourning network: new social practices in on-line communities" presents the conclusions of an ethnographic study of certain websites as meeting places to share grief. "From Masks to Avatars: Transformations through Digital Prostheses", by Renato Teixeira, reflects on the use of masks and avatars and their pivotal role in how we interact and see ourselves. The article by Santiago J. Paricio and Juan P. Martínez, "New Ways to Revitalise Minority Languages: The Repercussions of the Internet in the Case of Aragonese", uses a specific case to highlight the role that the internet can play in breathing new life (in the form of new venues, new speakers, contact among old and new speakers, educational activities, etc.) into languages subjected to processes of minoritisation.

Finally, the Editorial Board would like to use this presentation of the new issue of *Digithum* to thank the technical team responsible for coordinating the online edition for an excellent job and the Arts and Humanities Department and the UOC as a whole for their support. We would also like to thank the members of the Advisory Board for their suggestions and, in particular, the people responsible for revising the articles for their meticulous and anonymous work. In short, we must thank all these people, loudly and publicly, as together they are what allow us to continue improving the journal and to strengthen its presence.

