

# Heldig – Helsinki Centre for Digital Humanities

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Computational methods provide ever more new research opportunities in humanities and social sciences, and digitalization rapidly change ways in which research is done. Digitalization and its applications, e.g., the web with its data, services, and applications, are closely related to the challenges of globalization and are changing the society in fundamental ways. These changes create a growing need for research and education in multidisciplinary Digital Humanities.

To address these challenges, a new centre Heldig for Digital Humanities has been established in Finland at the University of Helsinki (UH). Heldig is a research network and infrastructure for solving research problems in humanities and social sciences with novel computational methods, and for studying digitalization as a phenomenon. The goal is to form an ecosystem that fosters collaboration between academic research groups, memory organizations, companies, and the general public.

The Heldig strategy is based on four tiers: research, education, infrastructure, and society.

**Research** The challenges of digitalization are tackled by re-focusing, joining, and coordinating the intellectual and other resources in humanities, social sciences, and computer science across faculties, universities, and other stakeholders in the Helsinki capital area and internationally. Heldig is a major Finnish strategic profiling effort<sup>1</sup> in 2016-2020, funded by the Academy of Finland and UH, to take the needed steps to the digital future. As part of the activities, eight new tenure track professor positions in DH related fields will be established at UH in seven different faculties. In addition, Heldig advances several current strengths and initiatives at UH and beyond in the areas of natural language processing, computer aided linguistics, research on social and psychological aspects of digitalization, smart cities, quantitative social sciences, and digitized cultural heritage.

**Education** Heldig will provide DH education not only for students, but also for researchers and application developers in Digital Humanities. For this purpose, e.g., online learning materials are being developed related to Linked Data technologies.

**Infrastructures** A key ingredient of Heldig is to provide its ecosystem with support for digitizing, enriching, and publishing data and knowledge that is needed in DH research and is produced by it. Heldig is in the process of applying co-operating partnership with DARIAH and is participating the new EU project “DESIR - DARIAH ERIC Sustainability Refined”. The Finnish CLARIN node FIN-CLARIN is situated in Heldig.

**Society** Digitalization and globalization are changing the world. Fostering the utilization of the research results of Digital Humanities in the society is therefore of great importance and on the agenda of Heldig.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.aka.fi/en/about-us/media/press-releases/2016/finnish-universities-receive-50m-from-academy-of-finland-to-build-up-stronger-research-profiles/>

In this presentation, an overview of the ideas behind Heldig and a roadmap ahead is presented for discussion. Heldig centre started its activities on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, by a public Heldig Kick-off Symposium<sup>2</sup> with well over 200 registered participants, showing a great interest in activities like this in Finland.

More information: <http://heldig.fi>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://heldig.fi/heldig-kick-off-symposium>