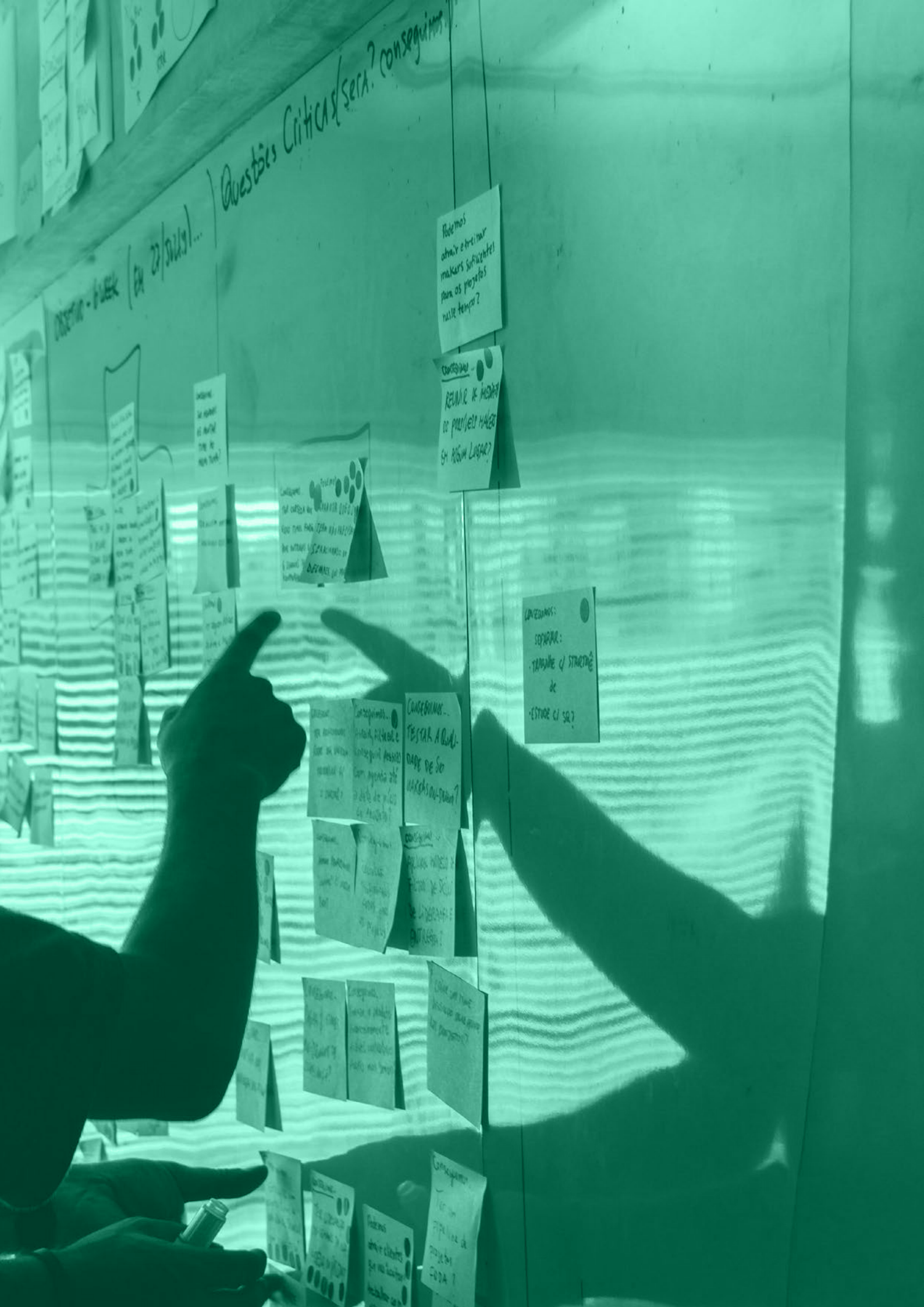
Questões Críticas (será? conseguimos?)

SUMMARY OF THE ROUNDTABLE "SETTING UP A DH CURRICULUM OR CERTIFICATE" AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA (TORONTO, MARCH 19, 2019)

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ABSTRACT | This summary is a short overview of a roundtable discussion that took place at the Renaissance Society of America on the topic of the structure and organization of a Digital Humanities curriculum. I invited two representatives of European and two of US curricula, which were split up respectively into one for Digital Art History and one for general Digital Humanities: Leif Isaksen (Professor of Digital Humanities, Exeter), Peter Bell (Junior professor for Digital Humanities, with a focus on Digital Art History, Erlangen-Nürnberg), Hannah Jacobs (Digital Humanities Specialist in the Wired! Lab for Digital Art & Visual Culture, Duke University), and Ashley Sanders Garcia (Vice Chair of the Digital Humanities Program, UCLA). Both of the European cases are recent implementations of new curricula, whereas the US-American had established courses. While established studies do exist in Europe, as for example at the University of London, they are still quite rare.

KEYWORDS | DAH community, teaching DAH, interdisciplinary collaboration, DH community, teaching DH

At UCLA, the DH program was established in 2011 and counts today as one of the biggest in the US and elsewhere. Besides Ashley Sanders Garcia as vice-chair, there are 12 faculty members and collaborators, supported by 28 affiliates from other faculties. Through several labs, a wide array of practical initiatives as well as support for projects are provided by the library, the Institute for Digital Research & Education, and the Digital Research Consortium. There are about 150 BA students, which makes this curriculum one of the most substantial branches at the university. Most students have backgrounds in the social sciences, life sciences and cognitive sciences. The BA curriculum consists of six basic modules, among which figure: an introduction, computer science, statistics, GIS, and those collaborating on a project. Further modules offer data cleaning and visualization, meta data, mapping, networking, text analysis, 3D, digital storytelling, HTML and CSS, but also the ability to develop proper research questions. The DH program at UCLA is therefore one of the biggest and most comprehensive that exist, and it is supported by a large number of faculty. Despite the demand for DH specialists, most students end up seeking careers beyond their field, like jobs in marketing, design or consulting, i.e. in professional fields that are interested in students who come from a digital background.

Leif Isaksen at Exeter is developing a new multi-disciplinary DH curriculum, which is connected to a DH lab with six collaborators and three faculty members. Aided by further faculty, there are a total of four instructors. Not only do they offer courses for students, but also for professional development (for example on TEI). The multi-disciplinary DH curriculum offers general courses as introductions, but also discipline-specific modules in the liberal arts and DH, which are usually easier to teach and understand. A balance between practical and theoretical parts is important for them. The courses offered fully depend on the specializations of the faculty members. In order to offer a broader spectrum, lab staff is integrated into teaching wherever their specializations fill a lacuna.

Duke University's Wired! Lab was established some years ago with a focus on Digital Art History. The lab cooperates with several faculties, the library and the IT department. Despite a narrow concentration on visual studies and a limited number of students, the Wired! Lab is able to offer a variety of degrees: an MA in Digital Art History & Computational Media, a PhD program in Digital Knowledge, a PhD program in Computational Media Arts & Culture, and a certificate in Information Science and Studies. Soon there will be a

co-major in Computer Science & Arts Studies. Each semester the lab offers two courses on digital methods and project collaboration.

Peter Bell teaches Digital Art History within a major branch of Digital Humanities at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg. Digital Art History belongs to the general masters program in DH that was established in 2014. This branch, initiated in 2019, is the most recent addition within a cooperation of three subjects: language and text, society and environment, image and media. The aim is to offer a variety of choices to students, but also to teach as much in a hands-on manner as possible. The branch of Digital Art History teaches introductions to the digital image, the object and its visualizations, and focuses thereafter on competencies related to Cultural Heritage and its data in the context of GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums). Therefore, a local collaboration with museums is one of the main focuses of this specialization, both in terms of topics to be taught, but also in terms of practical collaborations, where museum staff are transmitting precise knowledge related to data organization (for example with CIDOC-CRM). Furthermore, an international collaboration is sought, which will be established through a membership in the EU-Flagship project "Time Machine".

The final discussion focused on similarities and differences between the various curricula. All of the universities aimed at a high level of practical advice and project collaboration designed centrally to transmit qualifications for the future job market. Therefore, each branch developed institutional projects in addition to teaching general introductions, tools and methods. Many publications and discussions have already focused on the aims of these new curricula. Students are trained to be mediators between computer scientists and the humanities. They are not experts in either of these two orientations because the main focus of the curricula lies at their intersections and on overlapping topics, rather than on essential and specialized knowledge in any one field. As a crucial consequence, one may discuss how much they are able to initiate DH projects and pursue them because they lack critical knowledge in both the humanities and in computer science, while they may still serve as a project lead who brings both parties together.

Through all four parties on this roundtable it became clear that students studying computer languages mostly only learn Python, Java, and JavaScript in order to quickly transmit the essentials. Further introductions seem impossible due to the brevity of the curricula. This seems to be the case everywhere, even in the more complex and established programs at UCLA and Duke University. There figure hardly any HTML, JSON or query languages like SPARQL. Therefore, the curricula offer little Text Mining, Big Data analysis or image visualizations with IIIF. This new generation of DH specialists will certainly not provide a substitute for computer engineers, but this is also not the aim of the curriculum.

The further discussion included the audience as well. It was a common conviction that these curricula needed more financial support for their initial establishment than many others because of their substantial associated costs (including the digital lab, technical equipment and staff). In most cases, the new curricula were born out of the personal efforts of faculty. Almost everywhere a substantial grant was necessary to set up the courses (for example through the Mellon Foundation). Ideally, after some initial years of support, they would be able to carry along on their own.

Finally, the future career of the students needs to be discussed. Both curricula of the US-American departments can already look back to successful results concerning the future prospective of their students. While they were educating their students for a future career in DH, the variety of potential job possibilities does not yet seem to be imaginable. Many professional fields seem to be waiting for collaborators with the skills of digital team players, and these fields seem to be going far beyond the usual DH world. These new "digital natives" are open to digital innovation, and they have learned how to collaboratively look for new fields. After all, their teachers also, who mostly came from traditional humanities subjects, had to creatively look for a new digital world, and this flexibility has been passed on to their students.

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