

# 數位人文學之可能性及限制

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## 摘要

因為網路與電子資料庫的大興，數位人文學得以發展，以史學為例，它使得研究者不再像以前那樣耗費許多時間反覆查閱史書，或四處求索相關研究資訊，以建立相關的輔助性知識。

四十四年前（1968），法國史家勒·華·拉杜里（E. Le Roy Ladurie）發表了一篇震動一時，但卻只有薄薄數頁的短文：〈史家與電腦〉。在這篇文章的末尾，他宣稱，至遲到八〇年代，史學家如果想要生存，他或她必須同時是一個電腦程式設計者。我們細看他所條舉的非電腦不可的領域，大致集中在人口史、物價史、家庭史等高度需要計量的領域，而批評者們則認為這與重視歷史解釋、重視歷史敘述、重視意義發掘的史學互相排斥。

但是近十年的發展，證明拉杜里把電腦的功能想得太窄了，電腦不只能計量，它還有許許多多的功能。我個人完全了解過度依賴數位工具的危險，並且始終堅信，對於文本細密而又富想像力地解讀，仍是治學之首要條件，但是電子文獻也可以起一種畫龍點睛式的輔助作用。電腦與解釋或意義的發掘不一定互斥，甚至還可以尋找到一個新的接榫點……。

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# Digital Humanities: Possibilities and Limitations

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## Abstract

The rise of the Internet and electronic databases spurs the emerging of digital humanities. Taking historical studies as an example, technology can facilitate researchers' work on indexing and searching research materials in order to create an ancillary facility of knowledge formation, which used to be time consuming.

Forty-four years ago (1968), French historian E. Le Roy Ladurie published "the historian and the computer," a short essay with only few pages but enough to impact the research communities. Le Roy Ladurie prophesied that "by 1980s, historian will have to be a programmer in order to survive." At least in the area of quantitative history, including the topics regarding to demography, commodity prices and households, he believed computers would be indispensable. However, the quantitative technology has been seen incompatible to the traditional historical approach, which emphasized on interpretation, narratives, and discovery of meanings.

The recent development of information technology provides historians far more research tools than Ladurie's illustration of history and computing. Although my primary method of research is still based on careful and creative interpretation of historical documents, I also consider electronic database as an ancillary facility for information discovery. With full understanding of the disadvantage of over-dependence on digital technology, I believe we might be able to make the most of it, and include new research methods into the interpretation and meaning-discovery of historical approach.

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