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Digital Humanities and Computer-Mediated Instruction in Slavic Studies

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THINKFINITY GRANT 2011

"DIGITAL HUMANITIES AND COMPUTER-MEDIATED INSTRUCTION IN SLAVIC STUDIES"

Cornerstone 3: Interdisciplinary Programs, Including Informatics

Andriy Danylenko (Modern Languages, Dyson), principal investigator
Ronald Frank (History Department, Dyson), co-investigator
November 28, 2011

(Note: This is a preliminary report submitted in response to a request for information in conjunction with the application by the investigators for a second-phase grant for 2012. The project described below is currently in its final stage.)

The original goals of the project were outlined as follows:

(i) **Development of a secure, pass-protected website** with the following two sections: (a) **preparation of searchable text resources**: scanning, converting PDF-files into Word format and vice versa, of primary and secondary sources, excerpts from historical records, chronicles, etc.; search and integration of linked data; (b) **digitalization of images**: slides, scanned pictures, personal or copyright protected photos of cultural artifacts, geographical places, etc.

(ii) **Creation of a digital** (interactive) **atlas**, and

(iii) **Creation of the Assessment Toolkit.**

THE 2011 PROVOST THINKFINITY GRANT RESULTS:

1. **The Digital Atlas *Kyivan Rus' and its Neighbors in the 10th-11th cc*. has been created**; it is currently accessible at a password-protected site

   The atlas will be published by mid-December and will be accessible to students in relevant courses via a password secured portal.

2. The following activities contributed to the creation of the Digital Atlas:

- The principal investigator held meetings with the student aide(s) (Igor Pokryshevsky, Raju Pokija, and Daniel Cohn) on a weekly basis, while coordinating activities with the second investigator, Ronald K. Frank;
- The investigators analyzed primary and secondary sources on the history, culture, and literature of the Kyivan Rus', sorted out digitalized images, digitalized additional images, which all were integrated in the Digital Atlas;
- Special Cyrillic- and Greek-based fonts together with necessary diacritics were selected to be used both in transliteration and in parallel texts (e.g. excerpt from *De administrando imperio*).
- The principal investigator wrote 25 micro-essays integrated under 9 major labels on the Digital Atlas (Rus', Moravia, Poland, Missions, Tmutorokan, Scripts, the Khazars, Dnieper Rapids, Kyivan Rus'), containing historical, geographical, and sociolinguistic information pertinent to the period of 900–1200; the principal investigator made special research on the Old Church Slavonic part of the Digital Atlas (missions, script, major texts, etc.); the second investigator compiled a chronological table for the Frankish Empire;
- The principal investigator compiled indices of personal names, geographical names, peoples, polities, and written records;
- Excerpts from the historical documents (orphan publications of chronicles, hagiographic texts, and the like) were selected, copied, edited and scanned: Ibn-Khurdadbih, Jordanes on the Slavs, Procopius on the Slavs, *Chronicle of Novgorod*, the Rus' Primary Chronicle, the Tale of Igor, *De administrando imperio* (parallel text Greek and English). Scholarly publications on the name Rus' and Nordic peoples as discussed in Islamic, Latin, and Byzantine records were added.

- With the assistance of the student aides working on the Digital Atlas, the text-based material and images were uploaded, links to the indices created, texts from primary and secondary sources integrated;
- The co-investigator prepared a study-guide and 2 quizzes based on the material included in the Digital Atlas;
- Due to the amount of data to be processed by the investigators, completion of the computer-based assessment toolkit had to be postponed until the second phase of the project.

What is left to complete by 15 December 2011: new texts will be added to the Sources. The co-investigator will prepare essays on the German tribes, the Golden Horde, the Mongol-Tatars, and Novgorod Republic. Collaboration technologies (blogs) to share documents and discuss concepts will be also prepared by the co-investigator.

Impact of the Project. The development of computer-based course shells will provide a base for cooperation among faculty and students, as well as student research.

In the 2012 Spring semester the Digital Atlas will be used as a pilot project in INT 297G Slavic Civilizations (A. Danylenko, R. Frank) and HIS 114R Russia and Eastern Europe (Robert Swacker) with a combined enrollment of 50 students, including those fulfilling both core curriculum requirements as well as requirements in the History and the Modern Languages and Cultures degree programs. Daniel Cohn, a history major, has been successfully participating in the project since September 2011 and expressed his intention to continue working on the Digital Atlas in the future.

The Digital Atlas is an **ongoing project** to be expanded by subsequent chronological layers, enhanced interactive features and collaboration opportunities, and a computer-based assessment toolkit.