*Notes from Digital Literary Stylistics SIG discussion, 12 July 2016, DH2016*

**Overview of Discussion Points**

**Characteristics of the SIG**

* Structurally lightweight
* Focused on advocacy and networking
* Interdisciplinary by nature

**Activities the SIG could/should undertake in the short term**

* Create a technical/theoretical challenge
* Curate a special issue
* Sponsor workshops, training events/schools, conference panels, other events
* Keep members in contact with one another and up to date about events and information of interest, i.e. via a mailing list

**Goals of the SIG**

* Define important, interesting, difficult questions for our group
* Focus on our values and priorities (i.e., ‘how do we remain literary scholars?’)
* Outline a set of best practices for our research
* Provide an online home/hub for information about:
	+ Best practices
	+ Events
	+ Research of interest
	+ Pedagogy
	+ Sharing corpora and code
* Curate a special issue on a topic of interest
	+ Perhaps on “digital literary stylistics and theory”

**Practical steps to take now**

* Define our goals
* Write a SIG proposal
	+ Including investigating the models of successful SIGs
* Decide whether we’d like to do a special issue, and if so, on what topic, and where to pitch it
* Connect interested members via:
	+ An online hub, including a GitHub organization
	+ A mailing list?

**Minutes**

Christof Schöch:

* **Idea of a challenge**:
	+ There’s an existing competition in textual forensics, with a platform; the organizers would probably be happy to add a few tasks that would be more stylistic in nature.
	+ There’s a conference associated where people can present their solution
	+ & of course someone wins, so we need a prize
		- (funding necessary for this?)
	+ As a SIG we’d define a task
		- This requires a commitment from our part
	+ Could be more than one task:
		- Ordering texts by their date
		- Authorship
		- Pastiche/parody
		- Fill in words/finish sentences

- In relation to the Q of **whether there should be a SIG**:

* + Yes! such a challenge would tie in with various things a SIG can do
		- task linked to important problems that we define in our agenda
		- would contribute to community building—an event, a goal
		- gives visibility to the SIG

Mike Kestemont:

* **SIG should be very lightweight**
* If we link to DARIAH and CLARIN, it may get difficult to get things done

Francesca Frontini

* Perhaps we could think about **infrastructures coming to us**, rather than vice-versa—we inform them of things we’re doing, and they share with their communities
* Or, perhaps we ask them to sponsor specific events

Hugh Craig:

* We should focus on **defining important questions** (not necessarily to create a challenge, but as a broader goal)
* Let’s define our SIG by saying, these are a few questions that we think are difficult, interesting, and important for our community
* This will provide an outline of what the group is up to

Francesca Frontini

* For the SIG proposal, we will indeed need to **define research Qs** that inform our group
* Some of these Qs could be operationalized as concrete tasks or projects or even events; others are more guiding/theoretical

Anne Bandry-Scubbi

* A Q we should keep in mind: **what do we need to do to remain literary scholars**?
* ABS proposes that people who are happiest in the field are those working with others: i.e. with computer scientists in labs, on mutual projects—situations in which each collaborator was able to participate in group projects, but also to publish in their own domain
* This means being able to understand enough of what the other person is doing—not all of it, but enough, to understand decisions being made
* On the issue of **best practices**:
	+ how to make these known?
	+ The goal would be to enable researchers who are not located in labs to access good practices
	+ These would not only be tools, but also methodologies or statistical tests. (Including references to people who have already experimented with these tools, test cases, etc.)

Francesca Frontini:

* We could have a **page on our SIG website that includes such best practices** information
* People can put their own experiments or experiences with such tools there

Mike Kestemont:

* We could **model ourselves on the Programming Historian**—the SIG could have a **pedagogical aspect**, then—we say, here are ten lessons about X

Berenike Herrmann:

* About the **challenge**: we could also consider **theory** as a topic or criterion. (For example: What’s the role of the author in stylistics? What is style?)

Mike Kestemont:

* This might be difficult to evaluate, though?

Audience member

* To effectively include theoretical dimension in the challenge, people who participate could be asked to **reflect on their methodological contribution** in their submissions—we could think of the challenge as theoretically motivated

Mike Kestemont:

* What about doing **a special issue** on **theory and stylometry**?

Natalie Houston:

* On the question of a **special issue:** we’ve had the beginnings of interesting conversations today—putting these conversations/ideas in print could be an opportunity to expand these conversations to include other communities and other scholars
* With Jonathan Reeve, considered **how to create data repositories** for the SIG, and an interest in creating **shared corpora**
* An idea for next year’s DH: what if we proposed **a panel for next year’s DH** conference featuring projects/analyses conducted on a shared corpus?

Francesca Frontini:

* There was such a panel at the last corpus linguistics conference—we could model on this—it was very successful

Mike Kestemont:

* We could consider TAPAS from TEI—not yet ready, but we could mine that in the future

Jonathan Reeve:

* Started a **GitHub organization** to share code
* Anyone can create a new repository—to share corpora, along with code
* There are major advantages to sharing code as you’re working on it, rather than using it only to ‘publish’ finalized code
* This fosters collaboration in an ongoing way
* Tweet at our hashtag (#styledh2016) “add me to the repository” and Jonathan will add you

Fabio Ciotti:

* ADHO special interest groups are **grass-roots by nature**
* But the ADHO steering committee is considering how to evaluate the effectiveness of these groups
* We should consider having **a concrete activity** to present to the governing body of ADHO ‘**to show that something has been done’**
* ADHO is an umbrella and coordinator of different constituent organizations—its role is a **role of advocacy**—not necessarily the place where everything that’s happening in the community needs to take place
* SIG’s main mission is that of advocacy—**not to be a place where we do research**—it’s a tool to do outreach, to put the community in contact
* So we shouldn’t say we’re a research group, but that we’re thinking of a set of activities that announces the activities of this subgroup, and we plan our activities around that (non-research) focus

Francesca Frontini:

* So we need to **concentrate on a list of goals**

Fabio Ciotti:

* We want to be **lightweight**, not weighed down by other infrastructures—but o the other hand there are existing groups, for example in DARIAH, related to our topic
* So it’d be strange if we didn’t put ourselves in dialogue with these groups
* For example: COST-Action might be useful, because non-Europeans can participate

Berenike Hermann:

* SIG could be **lightweight on a high level**, but **within the group**, there could be **all manner of collaborations, partnerships, events, etc.**
* SIG would offer **a network**, within which clusters could form
* What does in–name sponsorship mean? Once we apply, does ADHO give **money**? (Consensus is: probably not…)

Mike Kestemont:

* **But do we need money**?

Francesca Frontini:

* The SIG itself would **endorse certain activities**, such as workshops, or panels at the DH conferences…

Fabio Ciotti:

* …**or not**. Those kinds of advocacy are going to disappear—but there will be **other ways that the SIG could advocate**.

Natalie Houston:

* Let’s stress **interdisciplinary nature of this group** when we consider the advocacy side
* We have an **interesting conjunction of disciplines**, and when we leave such meetings we each go ‘back’ to our home scholarly communities
* So the SIG would have a **very important networking role** in keeping us in contact

Francesca Frontini:

* We could have a **mailing list**: a single channel where we could find information that would otherwise be dispersed
	+ Each of us could forward information to this list that would be of interest—this would already be a big step
	+ We could think of this as a filter on the mass of information that *could* be applicable to our group
* As for **practical steps now**:
	+ We need to **ID a contact person**
* [The group enthusiastically endorses Berenike Herrmann as our contact person.]
	+ Then we have to **write a proposal,** and investigate when to submit it
	+ **Email Berenike** if you want to join the initiative
	+ Please specify **in what capacity you’d like to participate**
* We’ll **use the workshop page to communicate** and keep you informed about the progress of the proposal
* Perhaps we can see **examples** of SIG proposals?
	+ (Fabio will look into this, but there’s no specific protocol)

Christof Schöch:

* We could just ask a current organizer of a SIG for examples—for example, **Geo Humanities**

Berenike Herrmann:

* Another goal of the SIG would be **to put people in contact regarding funding**, etc.
* But let’s start with a lightweight structure, and then let the rest grow from that

Returning to the topic of a **joint publication**:

* Christof Schöch: DHQ takes a really long time and they have a backlog
* What about **Digital Literary Studies**, run by James O’Sullivan? Submissions are not yet open, but they will be soon.
	+ On a side note: they’re looking for reviewers
* Cultural Analytics?
* Frontiers’ Digital Literary Studies
	+ Requires Gold Open Access—but we can apply for waivers

**What is the name of the SIG?**

* computational or quantitative literary stylistics
* digital stylistics?
* We settle on keeping the name we have: **digital literary stylistics**

**SIG proposal repository:** DLS-SIG

* A place to collaboratively edit a proposal
* A corpus already shared there by Jonathan Reeve