

# Literary and Linguistic Computing

## Report for ALLC, ADHO and ACH committee meetings

Marilyn Deegan, Editor-in-Chief, 16 June 2008

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### 1. Copy

Unsolicited copy is very slow this year, some of which can be attributed to the UK Research Assessment Exercise effect. UK academics rushed to have work published by the end of 2007, so are not submitting articles at the moment. However, we have two special issues coming up: the papers from DH2007, edited by Ray Siemens and John Unsworth, and a collection of papers on editing that Julia Flanders and Edward Vanhoutte are editing. We are also publishing the TEI@20 papers, probably as an extra issue.

### 2. Focus of the journal

I am including here the material that I put together on the focus of the journal for the meeting last year—it would be helpful if we had time to discuss this.

The editorial team has been having some discussions about the scope of the journal, which we have discussed this in the past between ourselves and with the committees, in particular the ALLC committee as the issue was one which we have been talking about since before *CHUM* was dropped. We haven't come to any firm conclusions, but we feel that it is time to raise the issue again. Historically, the journal did what the original title suggests: it published articles on literary and linguistic computing, with a good deal of focus on text analysis, authorship studies, corpus linguistics. It tended to steer clear of 'hard' computational linguistics. But the ALLC has changed focus over the years, as the use of computers in the humanities extended, and the journal extended its remit. When I took over in 1996, I wanted to extend the remit even further, and we have often had discussions about just how far that should go. We do tend still to focus on text primarily, we don't publish too much on music, art, archaeology, or even history. When we had discussions with *DHQ* at the start, we felt that perhaps *DHQ* would publish work that lends itself more naturally to a more dynamic online presentation—perhaps with some kind of interactive components. Looking at the first issues of *DHQ*, there is nothing that couldn't have worked for *LLC* (though some of the colour images would have been printed as B&W in the paper journal). This is in no way a criticism, merely a comment. *DHQ* has achieved a very high standard in a very short time.

We do need to consider how we define ourselves now, and how we relate to what *DHQ* publishes. What do we mean by 'digital scholarship' in the humanities in our journal title? Who should be defining this? Many of our authors still see us as a journal that does the things we always did--we get many authorship and text analysis, computational linguistics etc. Some of the papers are very specialized, and my feeling is that we should be publishing over a broad range that suits our readership. I sometimes struggle very hard to find suitable reviewers for papers, which indicated to me that the appeal of them would be very narrow. We do need fairly soon to agree a scope and a mission for the journal, and the editorial team really needs input from the Associations and the editorial board. the editorial board etc.

### **3. Some problems**

We have had a couple of problematic issues this year. We had an accusation of plagiarism in January 2008, with a young scholar accusing another young scholar of appropriating a key idea without attribution. This was investigated thoroughly by the editorial team, an independent expert, and OUP, and was discussed extensively with both scholars. We have concluded that there was no intention to plagiarize, and that the correspondences were accidental, but we are publishing a note citing the work of the scholar who has complained. The complainant is not happy about this, but I think we have to do it for the integrity of the journal.

In March, OUP had a message through the journal feedback form from an American scholar reporting that he had accidentally discovered a much more blatant case of plagiarism. Six whole pages of an article had been copied wholesale, without a word changed, from a well-known article published 10 years earlier. We have been in touch with the two authors of the earlier article. One has not replied, the other appeared to find it amusing. We are discussing with OUP how best to withdraw this article from the journal, and we will then write to the author informing him of our decision. There is also a suggestion that we inform the author's employers; we would appreciate guidance on this.

In May, we were approached by an author who had submitted an article through the online system whose article seemed to have become known in the community without his knowledge, and he feared that there had been some kind of breach of confidentiality in our processes. As it happened, we had approached four potential reviewers, three of whom had declined to review. We wrote to all these potential reviewers and also checked that none of us in the editorial team had inadvertently mentioned it to someone. We are pleased to report that the source of the information was found to come from outside the journal, and the author is happy that our processes are as secure as they can be.

### **4. Digitization of ALLC Bulletin and Journal**

We have been talking for some years about the digitization of the *ALLC Bulletin* and *Journal* in order that we present to our readers the complete back runs of everything that the Association has published. Edward Vanhoutte has now obtained a full set of these and has done a complete page count in order that we can cost the digitisation and plan the delivery. We would like to have the issues rekeyed and present the pages as searchable PDFs, but have not yet resolved how best to deliver them. We would like an in principle agreement from the Committee that this is something that the Association should do. The editorial team, in particular myself and Edward, would like to take responsibility for managing this on behalf of and in consultation

with the Committee. We propose that we come back to the Committee with a full costed proposal which can be circulated by email, and would request that a decision to proceed could also be made on the basis of an email discussion. We would hope to be ready to circulate a proposal in the next two months.