University of Glasgow

Arts Lab & HATII Seminar Series: New Directions in Digital Humanities

(1) ART MEETS ASTROPHYSICS

Applying the Galaxy Zoo model of public engagement to the cataloguing of the nation's oil paintings

7 October 2010 5.15pm
Main Lecture Theatre, Sir Alexander Stone Building
16 University Gardens, Glasgow

Speakers:

Andrew Greg
Director, National Inventory Research Project,
History of Art, University of Glasgow

Dr Arfon Smith
Galaxy Zoo Technical Lead,
Oxford Astrophysics, University of Oxford

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The Public Catalogue Foundation has been collecting information on the 200,000 oil paintings in public ownership in the UK. Before the Your Paintings database is put online to the public by the BBC it needs to be made fully searchable by tagging with concepts such as subject, style and date.

The enormous task of (reliably and accurately) describing the pictorial content of 200,000 paintings requires a revolutionary new approach ... that developed by Galaxy Zoo to analyse the structures of galaxies. Galaxy Zoo 2, for example, attracted 250,000 amateur participants who made 60 million classifications of 250,000 galaxies in 14 months, which, with the application of clever statistical algorithms, produced results as accurate as professional astronomers would have achieved.

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