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Association for Literary and Linguistic Computing

Chair's Report 1999-2000

Introduction

This is a time of unprecedented challenge and opportunity for an association such as ours. Key factors in this include:

- the continuing rapid pace of technological developments
- the development of sophisticated but approachable tools
- the creation of increasing numbers of electronic works of scholarly reference
- ever increasing numbers of researchers, teachers and students who are developing interests in the creation and use of digital tools or resources
- a general context of rapidly expanding digital media, digital resources, and digital culture

The Association tackles these challenges and opportunities in a variety of ways:

- through its journal, Literary and Linguistic Computing;
- through the annual joint conferences it promotes in collaboration with the Association for Computers and the Humanities;
- through a number of initiatives whose purpose is to promote the aims of the Association, seeking both to draw more people into the ALLC's activities and to take expertise and experience in literary and linguistic computing into new areas.

Journal

The journal continues to go from strength to strength, and for this we have to thank not only the contributors but also the energy and enthusiasm of the Editor - Marilyn Deegan - and Assistant Editor - Stuart Lee. The journal both reflects and supports the scholarly activities of Association members and the widening range of research projects and technological developments that are of interest to them.

The success of the journal is also the key factor in the current financial stability and health of the Association, allowing it to embark on a number of initiatives whose purpose is to promote the Association's goals.

Conferences

The annual joint international conference on which the Association collaborates with the Association for Computers and the Humanities continues to play an important role. The 2000 conference at the University of Glasgow is proving to be very successful, with papers, posters and demonstrations covering a wide range of subjects and projects.

We owe a debt of thanks to the Programme Committee for the 2000 Conference. This was chaired by Paul Fortier, with John Dawson, Laszlo Hunyadi and Elisabeth Burr as the additional ALLC members. We must also thank the local organisers in Glasgow - Jean Anderson and Fiona Tweedie - and their team.

Bursary scheme

The bursary scheme continues to be very successful, with the maximum number of 5 awards being made in 2000, for the second year in succession. The encouragement and opportunities this gives to the young scholars who win the awards should be seen as a valuable contribution to the future development of humanities computing scholarship; at the same time the vitality and new ideas which these young scholars bring is of great benefit to the conferences and to the Association more generally.

Workshop programme

The Association is in process of initiating this programme, whose goal is to promote awareness and enhance skills in the application of computing techniques and digital resources in humanistic research and teaching. An initial workshop was run at the University of Macedonia, in Thessaloniki, Greece in May 2000. Following the general principles adopted by the Association, the local arrangements and costs were dealt with by the host institution, and the ALLC paid for the travel of the teachers. The workshop was well attended and was extremely well received. A report will be published in due course. On the basis of the principles originally adopted by the Association and the experience gained in Thessaloniki a formal specification of the scheme is in process of being drawn up, and this will be circulated as widely as possible. The Committee has agreed to make up to 2,500 GBP available to support each workshop, for up to two workshops per year.

Postgraduate competition

The Committee would like to institute a 'postgraduate prize' based on an annual competition. A scheme for this competition and proposals for the prize are being drawn up.

Special Projects fund

The Committee is considering the establishment of an annual project support fund under which Association members would be able to apply for financial support for small projects.

Association communications

Association web site: efforts have been made to bring the web site up to date and to make it more complete. However, there is more work to be done, even to cover

what has already been agreed, and new ideas and suggestions are put forward with some regularity.

Email addresses: it is still not possible to communicate with ALLC members by email. A written request sent to all members fell on largely deaf ears. However, OUP has agreed to include a space for email address on the journal renewal forms, so it may be possible in the future to use this medium.

Officers and Committee

A 'mid-term' meeting of the Committee was held at King's College London in April 2000. This was felt to be very productive, and there are now plans for a further 'mid-term' meeting to be held in December 2000.

I would like to record my thanks to the Officers of the ALLC and to all the Committee members for their support and for their commitment to the work of the Association.

Harold Short
July 2000

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