Can there be a Nordic digital humanities?
Keynote at Digital Humanities in the Nordic Countries, March 15-17, 2016
Patrik Svensson

In this talk, I will address three clusters of questions:

1. Is there a Nordic flavor of digital humanities? What does it even mean to imagine a Nordic digital humanities in the context of the organized digital humanities spreading across the world? What is the global perspective and what is local about the digital humanities?

2. What could the digital humanities become through the Nordic digital humanities? How do we make the most of this opportunity? What may be possible directions? What is the intellectual gist? How do we make a difference? What can we learn from others and from our own past?

3. What is the place of the digital humanities? How can we relate the digital humanities to the development of the humanities and the academy in the Nordic countries and internationally? How do we relate to areas such as environmental humanities, gender studies and urban studies?

I will develop an argument based on these questions and suggest a possible direction forward without prescribing any solutions or templates. In developing that argument, partly building on my new book (*Big Digital Humanities*), I will attempt to outline an intellectual-material basis for the field and discuss what it takes to make the digital humanities at this point in time. I argue that we need to see the digital humanities as a liminal and intersectional endeavor with a commitment to multiple genealogies, epistemic traditions and modes of engagement. DH can be a curated place with sharpness and generosity empowering intellectual pursuit and the development of humanistic infrastructure and arguments.

The talk will engage with a series of case studies, experiences and expressions.

Bio

Patrik Svensson is Professor of Humanities and Information Technology at Umeå University, and the former Director of HUMlab (2000-2014). He is a distinguished visiting fellow at the Graduate Center, City University New York during the academic year of 2015-2016.

Svensson's current work can be loosely organized under two themes: Digital Humanities and Conditions for Knowledge Production. The first theme includes research and practice in relation to the intersection of the humanities and information technology with a particular focus on the history, role and place of the digital humanities. The second theme addresses research infrastructure, spaces for learning and knowledge production, intellectual middleware, presentation software and academic events. His work seeks to be critical and interventionist.

Recent publications include *Between Humanities and the Digital* (co-edited with David Theo Goldberg, MIT Press, 2015), "'One Damn Slide After Another': PowerPoint at every Occasion for Speech" (with Erica Robles-Anderson, *Computational Culture* 5, 2016) and "Sorting out the Digital Humanities" (in *A New Companion to Digital Humanities*, 2016). Upcoming publications include "The Why and How of Middleware" (with Johanna Drucker, accepted for publication in *Digital Humanities Quarterly*) and *Big Digital Humanities: Imagining a Meeting Place for the Humanities and the Digital* (University of Michigan Press, to be published in 2016).

Examples of curated events are "Genres of Scholarly Knowledge Production" (HUMlab, Dec 10-12, 2014) and "Digging Deep: Ecosystems, Institutions and Processes for Critical Making" (with Matt Ratto and Shannon Mattern, CUNY Graduate Center, Dec 1, 2015).