Hi. My name is Michael Pidd. I am director of The Digital Humanities Institute at the University of Sheffield. I want to thank you for your interest in our masters programmes in Digital Culture and Cultural Data.

Why our MA programmes are important

We believe that our masters programmes are important for training the next generation of leaders in the digital media, arts, cultural heritage and information technology sectors. Digital culture is everywhere: from education to entertainment; from home to work; from news to politics; from social interaction to business and commerce. And digital culture cannot exist without cultural data: data that describes and is created by human culture and society. Data is now the oil that drives human culture.

Therefore, digital media and technology requires more than programmers, engineers and technicians if it is to truly reflect and respond to the needs of human culture. We believe that digital media, products and services of the future need to be designed, shaped and managed by people who have an arts and humanities perspective, who have an understanding of human culture and society, and who have the critical skills and thought leadership that are necessary to create and innovate in digital culture.

For these reasons we have carefully designed two masters programmes that should prepare you for careers in a world that increasingly will need people who understand digital culture and cultural data. Our aim is to turn you into what we call Next-Generation Thinkers.

Introducing the Digital Humanities Institute

In these videos we will outline the aims and topics that will be covered by each of the programmes, and their value to you in your future career.

But first I would like to give you some background to who we are and what we do at The Digital Humanities Institute.

The Digital Humanities Institute, or "DHI", is located in the University's Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Established in 1994, we are the UK's leading centre for digital culture and cultural data. We specialise in designing and delivering digital projects in the arts, humanities, and cultural heritage sectors, throughout the UK and internationally. The DHI's staff are a team of researchers, project managers and software developers.

In over 25 years we have delivered more than 120 technology projects, and our digital publishing service maintains over 70 public websites and information services. However, during this time we have never taught our knowledge or expertise to students. So we are very excited to announce these new masters programmes, and you will be the first people that we will share our ideas with.

Introducing the MA in Digital Culture & Communication and the MA in Cultural Data Management & Communication

The first programme is called Digital Culture and Communication. On this course you will explore the ways in which digital technologies are transforming human experience and artistic and humanistic practices.

The second programme is called Cultural Data Management and Communication. This programme will develop your understanding of the principles and methods of managing, analysing and communicating different types of cultural data.

Whereas the MA in Digital Culture is focussed on understanding the theory and contexts of digital culture, the MA in Cultural Data is focussed on methods for managing and using cultural data. But both of these programmes enable you to study many of the DHI's modules; including cultural theory, data science, project management, and digital product design from an arts and humanities perspective.

I should stress that you do not need to have programming or mathematical skills in order to complete our masters programmes. We won't be teaching you how to become a software developer. Both programmes are designed to develop your knowledge and thus your confidence for pursuing a leadership role in a company or organisation in the arts, cultural heritage, digital media or information technology sectors.

Your learning experience

I would now like to say something about how our programmes are taught, and what your learning experience will be.

First, and importantly, we look forward to you sharing your ideas with us. Our masters programmes will be an opportunity for you to develop knowledge and expertise using culture that is of interest to you. So although our teaching examples will be drawn from British and Western European culture, if you are an international student we look forward to learning how digital culture and cultural data are used in your own country. You will always be permitted to use examples from your own culture throughout the course; in seminars and coursework, for example.

Both programmes will be taught by staff at The Digital Humanities Institute, supported by colleagues from departments and schools in the Faculty of Arts. Your tutors will be Dr Seth Mehl, Jamie McLaughlin, Professor Nikki Dibben, and me.

Lessons will be in the form of seminars, consisting of a mix of lectures, demonstrations, group discussions, and team working. Additionally, you will do research, produce course work and give presentations, both independently and in groups.

Your assessment will be in the form of reflective blog posts, short essays, projects and an e-portfolio. The e-portfolio will be a curated, reflective body of work which you will develop during the course of your studies. It will have the same status as a dissertation or thesis.

We have designed our programmes to give you the best opportunity to express your learning, knowledge, expertise and creative thinking.

We have further videos which describe our individual programmes and modules. But on behalf of the University and the DHI, I want to thank you for listening and hope that you will join us in September. Thank you.