Introduction to the Digital Documents Track

This is the fifth year in which Digital Documents has been a major focus at HICSS. What, in the past, we have described as a “new emerging field” is beginning to mature. However, since its inception, Digital Documents has drawn much of its strength from the diversity of its content; and I am happy to report that maturity does not appear to be limiting diversity.

In terms of the actual numbers, this volume is slightly more modest than its predecessor: 33 papers, as opposed to 36 at the previous HICSS. We also have only five minitracks, one fewer than last year:

- Genre in Digital Documents
- Human Factors and Usability Issues
- Persistent Conversation: Discourse and Digital Documents
- Understanding Digital Documents
- Speculations: Documents in the Digital Culture

However, these numbers conceal a Darwinian process that selected out two extremely interesting proposals for minitracks that simply did not attract sufficient participation. It is also worth noting that only the first of these minitracks is a continuation of a minitrack from last year; all the others are introducing new themes.

We are also introducing a new theme in the form of a workshop: Digital Documents in Pre-University Education. This is a topic that tends to receive far less attention than it deserves; yet it addresses a critical role for digital documents that was only addressed for the first time last year at the Digital Documents in Context minitrack. This year the workshop will serve as a test bed for this extremely important theme; and, if there is sufficient interest, we hope that this theme will be promoted to a minitrack for next year’s Digital Documents track.

I wish to thank all the people who have contributed to the maturing of this track. I am particularly indebted to the minitrack coordinators for recruiting and reviewing so many interesting contributions. I shall let each of them provide their own introduction to the material they are presenting. I also wish to thank everyone who participated in the review process and the HICSS administration for all the help they have provided in the preparation of our materials.

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