

Aesthetic Computing

Software as Cultural Product

Paul A. Fishwick



Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, Thomas Gainsborough, 1750.

FEBRUARY 15, 12-1PM

SMATHERS LIBRARY 1st Floor Conference Room

Digital Humanities Working Group brown-bag discussion

As with human languages (English, French, Swahili), the structures and effects of formal languages such as software are with us everywhere: in kitchen appliances, automobiles, airplanes, and increasingly in smart homes and office buildings. This ubiquity of software creates a world that is highly digital. However, as engaged citizens, we know very little about this world. We do see the effects of the interactive interfaces or “texts” that make the world possible, but not inside the “black box” of how these texts are created/shaped. These texts are known by different names such as code, software, data, and model, but we refer to all of this as “software.” The pervasive nature of software has recently begun to attract artists and humanities scholars. Could software be a new literary form? I’ll overview this trend by suggesting that we need to pay special attention to embodied cognition as a key ingredient in knowledge production in the digital age. Then, I’ll apply embodied concepts from the philosophy of mind, applied linguistics, and mathematics education to illustrate how an understanding of embodiment in textual production can allow us to represent software to make it more broadly engaging and expand our notion of literacy. Attendees are invited to read the following draft chapter prior to the talk:

<http://www.cise.ufl.edu/~fishwick/ac/ACChapter.pdf>

Bio: Paul A. Fishwick is Professor and Director of Digital Arts & Science in the Department of Computer and Information Science & Engineering

Digital Humanities @ UF: <http://www.humanities.ufl.edu/digitalhum.html>