

EMPOWERING the Humanities

Digital Humanities Speaker Series

Mapping the Networks of Viral Texts in Nineteenth-Century America

Tuesday, March 5, 2013, 7:00pm

Cordell's work focuses on identifying texts that "went viral" in 19th-century American newspapers and magazines—including literary texts like Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "The Celestial Railroad," but also jokes, news reports, and semifictional anecdotes.

In collaboration with colleagues in English and Computer Science, Cordell is developing tools to automatically identify viral texts in databases of 19th-century print, and to analyze their spread across the nation using geospatial and network visualization. His research promises to foreground long-forgotten texts that were among the most widely read pieces of writing in 19th-century America. Ultimately, however, he hopes to **theorize** how and why texts spread in 19th-century America, constructing a set of models that can describe nineteenth-century textual virality.

Ryan Cordell, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Northeastern University
Contributor to ProfHacker blog,
Chronicle of Higher Education



Blount Auditorium
Wentworth Institute of Technology
550 Parker Street, Boston
wit.edu/humanities