



## The Potential for Online PhD Programs in the Humanities

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Technology has reached a point where computer use is more of a degree of literacy than an alternate skill. While Higher Education has changed significantly with the advancement of technology, it has not fully embraced the possibilities in distance and digital education. Distance education has incorporated online degree programs from the associate's level on through to PhD and doctoral level studies. However, this is not as prevalent at the PhD level as it could be, and certainly not in the humanities. There is an entrepreneurial element that is missing from many of our institutions in higher education with regards to trying new systems of instruction and learning through the rapid advancements of technology and course delivery. In 2009, U.S. News & World Report ranked 149 doctoral programs in English in the United States [1]. None of these programs offered online PhD programs in English Literature. There has been very little research, if any, into the possibilities and effectiveness of an online PhD program in English Literature, or the rest of the Humanities. Based on the 149 institutions in the US offering a PhD in English Literature, there is likely to be a large percentage of potential candidates who are not able to attend English classes at a traditional PhD granting institution. Whether there is a problem attending classes in a traditional PhD program because of geography, career obligations, or family commitments, online PhD programs in the Humanities would certainly offer greater access to more graduate students through innovation and technology. New technologies and tools are available and being used on a global basis allowing for interaction and communication between students and teachers worldwide. Various systems of course delivery, student-faculty communication, electronic texts, video, and other multi-media, can be used to develop a completely online doctoral-level degree program in the humanities.