

Hebrew Bible Database Wins Award

Program developed in part by Andrews faculty

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System for HEBrew Text: ANotations for Queries and Markup or SHEBANQ won the Best Digital Humanities (DH) tool or suite of tools for 2014. The system is produced by the Eep Talstra Center for Bible and Computer (ETCBC) and is powered by their database. One of the faculty members in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary's Department of Old Testament worked on the program with several others.

After several decades of development, ETCBC recently launched a database of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament). There are three team members: Wido van Peursen, leader of ETCBC who serves as initiator and strategic leader, Oliver Glanz, assistant professor of Old Testament at Andrews University who is an ETCBC data expert and contributes queries for teaching, and Dirk Roorda, a professor at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences who wrote most of the code.

SHEBANQ allows researchers to develop and share their queries with other researchers and uses a queries-as-annotations paradigm. Its web interface enables the running and saving of queries and adds them as annotations to the text. The database can be accessed by anyone.

This database is significant primarily for biblical scholars who study the Hebrew Bible. It makes the Hebrew text available and demonstrates how queries can function to address research questions. It also gives textual scholarship more empirical basis.

SHEBANQ can help the students and faculty by giving them a database to search the Hebrew Bible and connecting them with other Biblical scholars in their research.

The digital humanities awards are a set of annual awards for which the public can nominate different resources to recognize talent and expertise. A committee weeds out nominations based solely on whether the submission is a DH, if it's in the right category and if it was launched/published/majorly updated that same year. The awards are intended to raise awareness, put DH resources in the spotlight and engage users.

To learn more about the DH awards, visit dhawards.org. To use the SHEBANQ database or to learn more about it, visit shebanq.ancient-data.org.