

Building a large-scale, decentralized academic social network with WordPress and ActivityPub

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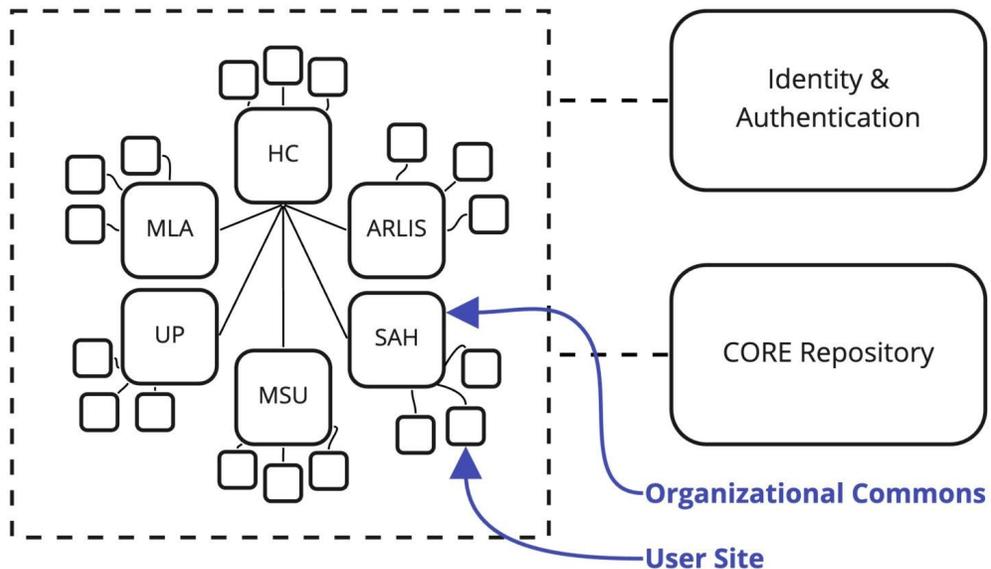


What is Humanities Commons?

- ▶ Created in 2016 as a social network and collaboration space for scholars and students
- ▶ 7 nodes including MLA, AUPresses, and MSU
- ▶ 52,000+ members
- ▶ CORE repository includes 22,000+ deposits in 33 languages

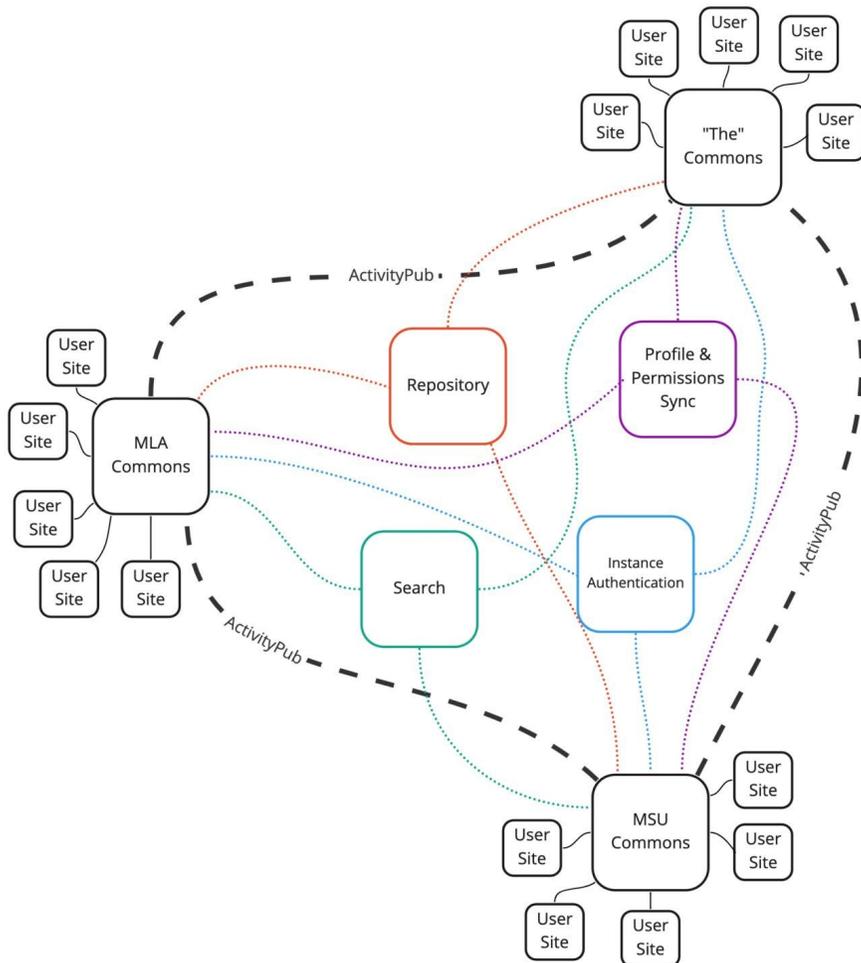
The screenshot shows the Humanities Commons website. At the top left is the logo with 'HC' and 'HUMANITIES COMMONS'. A search bar is in the top center, and a user profile for 'Bonnie Russell' is in the top right. A left sidebar contains navigation links: News Feed, Members, Groups, Sites, CORE Repository, Help & Support, HC Organizations, About, Roadmap, and Team Blog. The main content area features the 'HUMANITIES COMMONS' logo and a welcome message: 'Welcome to Humanities Commons, the network for people working in the humanities. Discover the latest open-access scholarship and teaching materials, make interdisciplinary connections, build a WordPress Web site, and increase the impact of your work by sharing it in the repository. Brought to you by the MLA.' Below this is a section titled 'Humanities Commons is Moving... and Growing' with a colorful graphic of people. To the right of the main text is a vertical menu with buttons: 'Update your profile', 'Join a group', 'Create a site', 'Share & preserve your work', 'Discover OA scholarship', and 'See what's new'. Further right is a section titled 'Here to Share Your Work?' with a 'Go to CORE' button and text: 'Go to CORE to upload and archive work in our open-access repository.' Below that is a section titled 'Digital Pedagogy in the Humanities' with a colorful image of objects and text: 'Explore key concepts in digital pedagogy through hundreds of curated artifacts, collected by editors Rebecca Frost.'

Current Architecture



- ▶ A single multisite multi-network installation
- ▶ The good:
 - ▶ Updates run on one site
 - ▶ User permissions set in one place
- ▶ The bad:
 - ▶ Commons team is responsible for all maintenance and administration
 - ▶ Hard to scale

Planned Architecture



- ▶ Sites will be split into separate instances
- ▶ Users on their “home” Commons would interact as they always have
- ▶ ActivityPub will be used to interact between sites AND with other ActivityPub-compatible clients
- ▶ Federation allows organizations and institutions to control their own instances

What's Next?



Commons API



Groups and profiles rebuilt to use the ActivityPub protocol



Expect to see the phasing in of our new federated model over the next two years



Keep up to date on changes by visiting our Building the Commons blog at <https://building.hcommons.org/>

Questions?



- ▶ Email me at bonnie@msu.edu
- ▶ Follow me on Mastodon at [BatsInLavender@hcommons.social](https://hcommons.social/@BatsInLavender)
- ▶ Find more information on our team, site governance, and our values and mission statements on <https://sustaining.hcommons.org>

Thank you!