

Tutorial/Workshop Session 3: Pascal Föhr (@PFHist) (Basel University): Historical Sources Criticism in the Digital Age

Workshop starts with an online research exercise: "History of the Internet"

- approach
- tools
- results (kind of sources)
- usage

We're back in 15 minutes ;-) 15 minute-discussion by group is up!

How to get information?

Group 1: started with discussion, looking for a definition of the Internet. Definitional approach (OED), looking in bibliography of Wikipedia to link to NSF.gov website, Google search yielded internet-society.org, ...

Group 2 used also Google. Consulted also a virtual catalog and used also Google picture search

Group 3: History of the Internet from unknown authorities, pictures, jstor general articles (and googlescholar), short histories of the internet -- a lot about specific aspects of internet rather than

Group 4: approach similar to other groups; concern with objectives (article? academic article? presentation? audience? credible authorities under these parameters)

- (Merci à xaentenza pour la référence: <http://web.archive.org/web/>)

Remarks about research:

- we talk about digital objects, not only texts.

- Tools: most groups used google at first
- **problems with Google:** "traduction" -- to quote in google is to quote in the world?
- Problems with google: you will always find something!
- - he tricked us!
- - assumed knowledge about what's in archives, catalogues, etc.
- - alternatives to google ([Fehler! Linkverweis ungültig.](#) -> not to be confused with duck duck goose
- - "google is the end of the search engine as we know it"

What is a digital object?

- 01 - binary (code) ... "binary solo.... 0001110001000011001" <-- this makes 57881 :-) -->
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTjoleUj00g>

- additional information

- file

- "machine readable"
- software
- immaterial (débat: you need for example a storage, you need also an interface)
- clarification: what is an object? (it's anything digital)
 - Discussion:
 - Photo example: <http://www.worldpressphoto.org/awards/2013/spot-news/paul-hansen>
 - - image manipulated digitally - is it still a photo? is it manipulated? or is authentic?
 - - concern with intentional manipulation
 - - how many originals are there?
 - - what makes digital changes special when we see the same techniques in analog photography
 - - note: nothing has been "manipulated" in the photo -- there have "only" been filters added
 - comparison to Trotsky being photoshopped out: <http://www.ww2incolor.com/d/515471-4/Trotsky+out>

Catharina Schreiber: "A digital source ('born digital source') is genuinely digital, multimodal and -dimensional, modifiable, process orientated as well as independent in time and space.

*multidimensional -

*modifiable - process changes

Problems working with and using digital objects

Accessibility/traceability: do we have access to the source, and how long do we have access to the source?

- manipulation of sources

Digital sources can be:

- not available
- updated
- manipulated

Authenticity/integrity

Saving/storing of digital information.

Is there a protection against saving? (have to save the whole page).

Example: sounds and music in <http://www.incredibox.com/en/play#>

- can we save it/ can we use it as a source. Problems of copyright. Can we save it from manipulation.
- basically the issue is the intangibility of digital sources (i think)
- tools with which we look at images

Presentation

Preservation

- original (and originality) lost

Destruction

- by accident or deliberately

Multimedia

- for literature or music, important to see versions

Publication services

- slideshare, RSS feed, etc.
- google maps
- accessibility changes etc.

Manipulation

...

Internal/external criticism:

Internal criticism: problems if we use digital objects? (il est allé trop vite là...)

Possible solutions

- 1) archiving websites
- 2) digital footprinting
- 3) Zotero (saving the website as a pdf)
- 4) checking caches

Comment: we have citation methods that take into account mutability of websites, although students can't be trusted (to cite properly)...

In other words we need to trust the citation; the author needs authority.

Digital manuscript: it can be changed. If you can fix it, fix it. [I disagree! That's nothing new... the same problems existed with printed books]

Historical method

Versioning: know what you're using ("version 1.7" of the document for example)

Hash code: large numbers and digits. What you can do with it you can download your object, put it through your program, and detect a manipulation but you don't know which one.

Metadata

Local data container

scientific platforms must implement security features

Researcher driven archiving: Institution with governmental support

Bunker archiving - network systems (one of); put it in a cave and never touch it again. [aka hoarding] Accessibility issues.

Suggestions for scientific writing

- figshare: <http://figshare.com>

Questions

a) Difference between the digital documents and print documents not so big. Ex: digital manuscripts, but a printed book... also has many editions (ex. 19th century and list of errata)

Internal criticism (errata, remarks) vs external criticism (several libraries, so if you want to change something, you have to go to all libraries and change that thing you want to change).

b) Every question asked is equally applicable to printed matter (consensus in the room? seems so)

-- suggestion about changing terminology

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