

tend to “gloss over” the realities on the ground. The small, poor farmer operates in conditions that do not even fall under the basic categories of the standard. Those left on the margins are excluded from the standard not only because they don’t matter, but also because it may seem to be too difficult to make the standard expressive enough.

A good classification can function as a theory (Kwaśnik 1992). That is, we can use it to describe, explain and predict (e.g., the Periodic Table of Elements). Even a flawed classification, though, has some theory or world view or set of assumptions behind it – and so it is for standards as well. It was interesting to note how many of the standards had behind them some formal set of assumptions, from the theory of deterioration (in insurance, p. 100), to human nature (in social engineering in Hungary, p. 123), to actuarial theory and reasoning with statistics. Functioning theoretically, a classification can serve as a lens into the domain it represents. Similarly, Millerand and Bowker state that metadata standards, for instance, are not neutral but can “condition access to data” (p. 154) and therefore function as a form of knowledge in themselves.

There are many other aspects of classification that seem pertinent to standards such as: flexibility, hospitality, parsimony and elegance. I think there is a connection between standards and classification because both can serve to represent, define, connect, smooth distinctions, make distinctions, and reduce to essentials. It might be fruitful, having read this book, to now examine classifications using the analytic commonalities outlined by the editors in the first essay.

Most of the time I personally appreciate standards, and am especially aware of them when they are missing. Being a cataloger (um, knowledge organizer) I do, after all, think fondly of the simultaneous ingenuity and nonsense of my AACR2. I wished, sometimes, while reading this book, to learn about some of the thorny problems that have been solved by standards—the beauty of the Pantone color chart and the clever color-numbering system on my L’Oreal hair rinse, the amusing but helpful alcohol-level indications on Finnish beer ... the list goes on. The book takes a mostly critical approach, but it is for a good purpose. I am now sensitized to the subtleties and intended and unintended consequences of not only the standards themselves, but also the standard-development process. Thus, another question that might well summarize this book, besides the one the authors posed of how people deal with standards,

is what do the standards say about us? The contributing authors of this volume have illuminated a great deal but have also planted the seeds of many interesting investigations and discussions to come.

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*Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*. Digital Research in the Arts and Humanities. London: Ashgate, 2009. Hardcover: 224 pages. English. ISBN-13: 978-0754673071

## 1.0 Edition-work: digital critical editions and the digital humanities

The first volume of the Series “Digital Research in the Arts and Humanities,” *Text Editing, Print, and the Digital World* is a summative and reflective anthology concerning the inception and growth of several text-based digital collections projects. The essays express diverse viewpoints- contributions come from librarians, curators, textual scholars, historians and administrators from both public and educational institutions. The volume's focus is on the scholarly act of editing and the creation of editions as scholarship. It thoughtfully introduces the rigor and values of the

practice, while dealing with practical examples of how these factors are reconciled with those of digital “editing.” Editing, and the edition, are discussed in broad context: for example, a discussion by contributors grappling with the gaps between text and code accompanies a comparison of the bounded print edition with the proposed “Open source critical edition” (one that, as the author suggests, is quite treacherously never finalized). Beyond the talk of scholarly process is an open questioning of what editions, editing, and scholarship are for, and who or what purposes they may serve. This critique is surprisingly original, and runs throughout the volume. It is significant not just to those involved in bibliographic study, but to anyone involved in producing cultural objects.

Digital humanities has become an umbrella term in the last decade, referring in many instances to the use of technology for humanists, but most notably, for engaging digital technologies for humanities scholarship. Many credit the inception of the discipline to literary study: the work of Roberto Busa (1974, 1980) an Aquinas scholar, integrated digital indexing technologies as early as 1949. Subsequent research in art history (in the 1980s), archeology (as early as 1976), classics (in the 1970s), and history (in the 1970s), integrated database technology, content analysis, and quantitative analysis into research practice and teaching methods. (Comprehensive histories this can be found in Hockey 2004, and Robinson 1997.)

The volume is ecumenical but directive, combining academic work in the humanistic disciplines with practice-centered writing. Its readings could be central to such an introductory graduate course, and in their reading, could spur discussion as to some of the central scholarly and practical questions of large scale digital projects. “Text Editing” will no doubt be useful in teaching courses in this arena. Editor Kathryn Sutherland has an impressive textual studies c.v., including the 2005 work *Jane Austen's Textual Lives: From Aeschylus to Bollywood*, and an output in digital textual studies that includes 1997's *Electronic text: investigations in method and theory*, and with coauthor Deegan, *Transferred Illusions: Digital Technology and the Forms of Print* (2009).

The work in this book can be contextualized historically in relation to two movements. First, in the work in the UK at the end of the 1970s, including the Oxford Text Archive and the Oxford Concordance Program, which exploited the capabilities of text processing in order to achieve unprecedented

developments in indexing, referencing, and analyzing texts, and whose descendents have developed increasingly sophisticated scholarly editions and public programs. Second, the development and dissemination, stateside, of the Text Encoding Initiative, beginning in 1991, a language for document markup: supported by funded initiatives for TEI and in TEI instruction for Humanities scholars.

At the time of this writing, the UK, Canada, Australia, Egypt, and many countries in the European Union have rather robust national level infrastructure for the digitization of archival and manuscript materials in Libraries, Archives and Museums, and programs for integrating scholarship into the design and creation of online exhibits and editions. By contrast, the United States lacks in a central funding agency for such activities: the Library of Congress and National Archives are not “National” in the sense that they serve institutions across the country: they cannot serve the same infrastructural function. “Digital Humanities” has thus sprang forth in the U.S. as an entrepreneurial venture in which institutions and individual scholars seek funding and legitimacy for their own digitization and computing work in the neoliberal academic environment.

Without affiliations at the national level, scholars such as Johannah Drucker and Dan Cohen have emerged as hybrid scholar-managers, offering both experiential accounts of overseeing digitization programs, and academic vision for the present, if not future of digital. Despite the lack of clear work direction, U.S. institutions by the mid 2000s offer dedicated courses in digital humanities in both LIS programs and traditional humanities graduate departments. A market for suitable textbooks has emerged, in which the likely standard is Siemens, Scriebman and Unsworth's *A Companion to Digital Humanities* (2005), a sizeable anthology integrating many major perspectives.

The book is divided into two sections, “In Theory” and “In Practice,” but concerns itself chiefly with the conceptual aspects of digital text projects. While there is not a chapter on, for instance, choosing and implementing metadata standards, there is thoughtful discussion as to how they may be conceived in terms of project planning. The editors have achieved an admirable balance in terms of practical concern and scholarly analysis.

In the first section, topics of bibliographic theory and textual criticism are discussed in the context of the contemporary online environment. The textual scholar (and volume editor) Kathryn Deegan's essay

attempts to trace the trajectory of textual criticism up to the present, reconciling, if not reimagining the focus of textual criticism to the work of interface design. Swedish LIS scholar Mats Dahlstrom's essay, "The Compleat Edition," addresses the economic and production factors of the electronic scholarly text while framing the questions of editioning within a user-oriented context. Paul Eggert, an English professor at New South Wales, takes inventory of the process of making a scholarly edition, weighing the process in the digital realm against that in a print publication sense. The essay from Gabriel Bodard and Juan Garces, (from Reading and the British Library, respectively), uses the experience of engineering a critical edition to argue for "Open Source Critical Editions", a stance unsurprisingly zeitgeist, but one that is challenging, if not contradictory, to the traditions of scholarly process outlined in the volume.

In the second section of the book, case studies of digital projects are presented with mind to the pragmatic aspects of their execution. However, these essays are thoughtful and timely, not merely the "how we did it" stuff of professional publications. In many respects, the essays in this section of the volume provide a gateway to a more advanced critical understanding of digitization's possibilities.

One key example of how this volume elegantly brings themes of practice into a scholarly perspective is the essay "Editions and Archives." In the context of their work, James Mussel and Suzanne Paylor, literary scholars who held positions on the Nineteenth Century Serials Edition, provide a fascinating and thorough account of the challenges faced by the project. They ruminate on the changing and variable nature of serial printing during the latter half of the nineteenth century. As print genres emerged and evolved, (e.g. the daily newspaper and the "tabloid") the discourse of these formats shaped readers notions of their importance and permanence. The authors survey scholars' differing notions of "ephemeral" literature, and contemplate how to capture this online.

These essays mentioned each address a heart of the matter in digital humanities: a competing interest between access and authority, and a somewhat unifying effort to translate the erudition and process of the past few centuries of academic discourse, all the while discarding some of the more cumbersome aspects of scholarly communication. What's hinted at, if not directly addressed is the more mundane problem of labor duplication between the scholars of the humanities and the custodians of cultural objects,

i.e., librarians, archivists, and curators. The perspectives in the volume generally reflect on thoughtful collaboration, but also a reconciliation of these factors. As said previously, this is a conceptual working-through, not a program-setting book- solutions for funding collaborative work environments are not touched on.

Funding in general is not addressed in the volume. As the contributors hail largely from the UK and the European continent, it is noted that funding, along with standards and procedure, has come from governmental sources. For the U.S. based researcher, this raises questions of the feasibility of large-scale digital projects without central funding sources. Without central guidelines as to standards, and without much investment in cyberinfrastructure for humanities resources, how can a larger network of digital humanities form to serve present users and build collections for future ones? There are very real issues of digital preservation and migration posed by even the most well-planned digital project, and any long-term strategy has to involve a larger effort in this area.

The implicit elements in this volume are those that may be the most revealing to those interested in knowledge organization- institutionalization and infrastructure. Most, if not all of the contributions to the volume reflect the experience of government-funded projects carried out with strategic support of large scale initiatives. The summative effect of this volume is an argument towards this sort of structural planning, and is one that researchers in the US are largely without answers to, and ones to which Knowledge Organization scholars are keen to take interest.

## 2.0 Markup: libraries, collections, and bibliography

Espen Ore of the National Library of Norway begins his essay "They hid their books underground," with an account of the Library of Alexandria.

In retracing this ancient relationship between textual scholarship and the organization of knowledge, Ore points to a key issue for the development of textual resources. As work goes forth in digital projects, how is "markup" developed and expounded upon? This is a central consideration of those exploring Web 2.0 tools in collection design: building an open record of archival research.

The relationship between scholarship and custody is a tendentious one in special collections. Archivists and librarians seek to "serve" their researchers, all the while governing access to materials. Directors of lar-

ge special collections libraries are in many cases PhDs in the humanities, and provide oversight in terms of collecting, scholarly value, and academic administration. They have not, historically, been involved in the description, arrangement, or organization of collections. They do not answer reference questions. For academics, with cursory training of the mechanics of digitization, without insight or experience into the maintenance of collections, to engage in and take ownership of collection curation, is to signal a massive shift in the labor structure of libraries and archives. And to state the obvious, librarians are largely female, archivists are less so, but women are still predominant in the profession. The ranks of institutional directors are largely male, as are those of the digital humanists.

It's worth noting that rare book librarianship has occupied a unique niche in the scholarly tradition of library science, and one not instantly translated to the current streams of information science study. In the mid to late twentieth century, rare book scholarship drew upon a sort of literary scholarship concerned with the condition of the text, and a bibliographic method that sought to quantify the existence of artifacts. Unlike classification, rare book librarianship concerns itself with time and environment, rather than use and totality. The business of rare books and manuscripts is a key part of the practical handling of such materials, and is thus socially and intellectually rooted in the discipline. Rare book collecting is a gentlemanly hobby, and to tend to the collections of extraordinary monetary, as well as historical and cultural value, requires at least some adherence to norms of use and ownership.

The rare books and archival communities have respectively complex relationships with description and conceptions of classification. Longtime holdouts on standardization, MARC cataloging standards have been seen in the rare books community as inadequate, and to the archives community, completely inappropriate. Within factions of archivists, description standards are held with varying degrees of contempt. Until the 1980s, many collections of literary manuscripts eschewed the standard finding aids and catalog records for intricate in-house protocol for describing materials, often a page at a time. The *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*, a decades-long effort to centralize collections listings, could be considered a failure by most current standards. By the turn of the millennium, leaders in the field issued grave warnings on "Hidden Collections," an attempt to address that most repositories had

anywhere from a quarter to a half of their holdings without comprehensive collection records and were basically hidden outside of institutional walls.

The situation as described could be read, especially by those outside these communities, as an indictment of how behind the times rare book librarians and archivists are. But an alternate reading can yield a potent critique of standards adaption, and perhaps one that can lend us a better understanding of how collections can be facilitated and audiences served in both physical and digital environments. For example, the emphasis on procedure in special collections is far stronger than that in other library environments, and in many ways, in-person service is seen as an integral part of access to the collection; in this situation, this guidance is seen as surpassing, if not altogether eclipsing the collection's textual record. The complex semiotics of the special collections reading room can be endlessly unpacked, yielding a rich testament to the academic, social and public contexts of archival collections and rare books.

It is a common refrain amongst those in the special collections community that faculty and the public demand that collections be put online, without regard to the management and maintenance of digital collections, and without a clue towards this intricate history and the context. Without acknowledging the complex dynamics of the administration and access to materials, digital humanities forsakes addressing a large stumbling block to the sort of democratic digital future it proposes: creating it in a just, efficient, and thoughtful way.

What is necessary for the future of digital scholarship, and digital collections, is a new strain of institutional leadership. Scholars interested in curating digital collections must engage with not only the "tools" of the web, but the goals of maintaining the artifacts they create. Together with LAM professionals, faculty must strive to integrate not only the use of collections, but work of designing and maintaining them into their teaching. By making pathways towards holistic operations of building, maintaining, and supporting collections, those at the crossroads of digital collections have an opportunity to re-envision the process of description and access.

### 3.0 What is the role of knowledge organization?

As a final point, I would like to examine how the field of knowledge organization may engage with this juncture of activity. For the readers of this journal, the question resulting from this work seems to

be, "What is the significance of digital texts, and what role, if any, does knowledge organization play in their development?" Digital library, or digital humanities projects do not serve as straightforward examples of classification work, and the traditional practical effects of knowledge organization teaching-cataloging, indexing, and other descriptive activities, are rarely represented in digital projects in their traditional forms. In the case of such as EXAMPLE, the work is done not by librarians at all, but by academics in a new venture. But surely the intersection of knowledge resources with scholarly work is a natural entre for knowledge organization.

We may draw on the work of the digital humanities movement, and their contention that the experience of putting a collection online is one of individual scholarly engagement, and not exclusively the domain of institutional work. Such an assertion takes a radically different stance towards order and information design than the one we tend to use in knowledge organization. But by elevating the process of gathering and presenting materials, and by illuminating the decision-making behind making collections available online, we may be able to expand our knowledge of this aspect of KO practice.

This is not a huge tactical leap. Scholars such as Claire Beghtol and Barbara Kwasnik have worked on domain-specific knowledge organization, providing analyses of how those domain-cultivated perspectives, scholarly or otherwise, contributes in conceptualization of form and function in KO systems. Their research is invaluable in these situations, as the firsthand observations of digital humanists, as in this volume, as to the construction of online text environments can illustrate and validate many of their claims.

Digital humanities, as it stands, lacks the perspective lent by LIS' development of "the user" as a design aspect and as a rhetorical entry. While much ink is spilled as to scholarly working standards in this volume, not much consideration is paid to ramifications of design for users without regard to presumptions of disciplinary mindset. This is not to say that disciplinary concerns are not user concerns, but rather that a scholarly perspective could critique and enhance our notions of user publics. A more thorough understanding of concepts such as authenticity from a user standpoint would, in fact, illuminate studies such as this. Conversely, facilities of search, retrieval, or user features are not explored in the tactical essays in this volume, and their implications are not considered in the critical essays. To this reader,

this is a serious oversight, one to which leaves the community involved in such projects-without tools to engage with their environments.

In order to determine what may be the role for knowledge organization (and other) scholarship in this area, it is first necessary to examine the aims and means of digital projects such as those involved in this book. The cases detailed in the volume are efforts to do the work of libraries and universities in public online arenas. In another direction, these are first attempts to arrange infrastructure for literary scholarship, presumably for future iterations of it. In a sense, the questions raised by these essays are the questions which permeate much of the literature of information science realms, and questions by which knowledge organization specialists are especially qualified to discuss. Knowledge organization, with its critical mastery of form, representation, subject, and access, holds a range of nuanced perspectives especially relevant to the development of digital text environments.

Recent popular works such as David Weinberger's *Everything is Miscellaneous* and Clay Shirky's *Here comes everybody*, have engaged the KO community in recent years. But KO stands to gain more from engaging with humanities scholarship at the emerging digital crossroads. KO stands to fill a substantial role in this environment. The volume reviewed is not a pop-scholarship work on the grand textual revolution, but rather a careful gathering of what can be accounted for in the realm of textual interfaces, based on the experiences and proximity of the scholars to such projects. By analyzing relationships between documents, labor, and users, we stand to witness some substantial paradigm shifts. Drawing on our critiques, we may develop schemes for streamlining processes, integrating specific sorts of knowledge, and fully engaging the scholarly process. We may have a hand in reimagining the description and maintenance of unique materials, and in forging new partnerships for our work.

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