State of play

In the past decades, many digital scholarly edition projects have been published and are available, often for free, online. Most of these editions are arguably the best editions of their documents or texts available, and many offer features that could and probably already do advance the research in the respective fields to a considerable degree. However, despite these facts digital editions are pretty much universally neglected by the established review institutions. This has a number of reasons and consequences for the field of digital editing: 1) Editors of digital editions and their projects receive less credit and attention than their counterparts in the print-world, which forces these projects into the outskirts of the peer-control process, a cornerstone of academic excellence. 2) Scholars thinking of engaging in a digital edition project cannot rely on the criticism that projects similar to their own have received before in order to avoid related problems in their own work. 3) Digital editions have a greater level of complexity. Editors not only have to care about the traditional issues like, for instance, textual transmission, paleography, textual criticism etc., but they also need to engage with questions concerning the methodology and new forms of publication, their functionalities and design, all of which have been triggered by the possibilities of digital editions. This methodology, however, which is closely related to technical issues, is neglected by traditional reviews and hence there is no forum for the critical evaluation of the methodology of digital edition projects.

Addressing the problems

In order to address these issues, we have founded RIDE, a review journal dedicated to digital editions and resources. RIDE aims to direct attention to digital editions and to provide a forum in which expert peers criticise and discuss the efforts of digital editors in order to improve current practices and advance
future developments. It will do so by asking its reviewers to pay attention not only to the traditional virtues and vices of any edition, but also to the progressing methodology and its technical implications. Editors of existing digital editions will be able to improve their work by addressing criticism and digital editors in spe will be able to learn from previous problems both of a general nature as well as specific to their fields. Moreover, RIDE will help scholars working on the methodology and the development of the field of digital editing by collecting formal data about each project that is being reviewed. The reviews and factsheets will also provide a snapshot of a project at the time of the review, so that later developments can be compared – an important feature in a world that is characterised by a much higher dynamic than the print-world exhibits. All this, we hope, will contribute to the ongoing methodological discussions and help to establish a best practise editors can aim at as an ideal of a digital edition (aspects of this best practise, for example, touch on accuracy, citability, sustainability, long term preservation, documentation, transparency, etc.).

**Methods**

RIDE complies with the standards that have been developed for academic journals. Although we in principle regard digital editions as open-ended projects, we will only review those projects that have reached a maturity expected of a scholarly publication. Reviewers are guided by a catalogue of criteria that tries to cover a great variety of potentially interesting aspects of a digital edition project. Reviewers are asked to submit a substantial text that addresses the key features and problems of the reviewed project as well as to fill out a questionnaire that will accompany the written text as a fact sheet.

On submission, reviews will be blinded and referred to at least one peer-reviewer before a decision is made to either publish the review, to reject it, or to refer it back to the reviewer for improvement. RIDE will publish reviews in a variety of languages, but we encourage reviewers to write in English to allow for a wide reception; all reviews, however, will be accompanied by an English abstract. The reviews and questionnaires will be encoded in XML/TEI and can be read in an HTML version on our webpage or downloaded as PDF; citability of reviews is currently achieved through persistent URLs, but we aim at obtaining ISSN, URN or
DOI assignments in the near future. Finally, we also visualize some of the data gathered from the questionnaires and offer download-packages of all XML files to facilitate researchers with data for their own investigations and visualisations.

Editorial board and institutional background

RIDE was founded by the Institute for Documentology and Scholarly Editing, IDE (hence its acronym RIDE: Review Journal of the IDE). Members of the institute will take the place of the editor(s) of RIDE and will form the editorial board of the journal. The IDE has been an active part of the digital editing community for several years: it has guided and advised editors, organised a number of acclaimed summers schools on digital editing and contributed to the ongoing methodological debate by a series of publications (most notably, vols. 1, 4, 5 and 7-9 in the series Publications of the IDE). You can learn more about the IDE on its webpage or on Wikipedia (English / German).

June 2014, Philipp Steinkrüger, and the members of the IDE.