Evaluating Digital Scholarly Editions

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Abstract: "Digital Scholarly Editing is one of the core fields in Digital Humanities. It clearly connects one of the most venerable practices and methods of the humanities with the fundamentally different approach of digital scholarship. From the point of view of theory or perhaps even epistemology, we can consider Digital Editing a perfect test case to probe the assumption that there is a "fundamental change" in approach between traditional and digital scholarship. From the point of view of method, we are witnessing the further development and transformation of a method that has been developed over centuries. From the point of view of practice we have yet to identify and then perhaps grant canonical status to current best practices in the creation of scholarly editions. ..."
... All three perspectives demand a reliable empirical "fundament" which can be obtained by the criticism, comparison, and careful evaluation of current digital editions. In order to facilitate this, a list of assessment criteria has been created which serves as a basis for extensive reviews published in a dedicated online journal. By discussing the various items on the criteria list, we can observe whether with traditional versus digital editing we are talking about two completely different things or whether the core challenges in editing have to a large extent remained the same."
I. Scholarly Digital Editions?

II. Editorial Science?

III. Best Practice
   1. Empiricism
   2. Evaluation Criteria
   3. RIDE

IV. Conclusion
What is a Scholarly Digital Edition?

Everything already said?

Patrick Sahle, Den Haag, 2012,
http://prezi.com/mdt8efbe3o3a/

What is a Scholarly Edition?

Edition ist die erschließende Wiedergabe historischer Dokumente

A Scholarly Edition is the critical representation of historical documents.

L'édition scientifique consiste en la représentation critique des documents historiques
What is a Scholarly Edition?

A Scholarly Edition is the critical representation of historical documents.

- representation?
- critical?
- documents?
- historical?
What is a Scholarly *Digital* Edition?

A Scholarly Digital Edition is a scholarly edition that is guided by a digital paradigm

• **old goals!**
  • ground work for further research
  • critically produce the best text possible
  • stabilization, canonization, referencability

• **new goals?**
  • changing theoretical assumptions
  • new expectations towards editions
  • further usage scenarios
What is a Scholarly *Digital* Edition?

A Scholarly Digital Edition is a scholarly edition that is guided by a digital paradigm:

- is published with digital media
- cannot be printed without a essential loss of content or functionality

→ a digitized edition is not a digital edition
What is a Scholarly *Digital* Edition?

A Scholarly Digital Edition is a scholarly edition that is guided by a digital paradigm

- multimedia
- network
- process over product
- actors and roles
- complexity
- boundlessness?
What is a Scholarly Digital Edition?

A Scholarly Digital Edition is a scholarly edition that is guided by a digital paradigm

1. at the heart of the matter?
2. easy: single source principle
3. consequence: transmedialization thesis

What is a Scholarly *Digital* Edition?

A Scholarly Digital Edition is a scholarly edition that is guided by a digital paradigm

„the essence of the current media change is not a transition from analog to digital media but a shift from thinking in media to thinking in models and data“
Editorial Science?

1. a long tradition
2. various approaches and schools
3. electronic and digital editions
4. practice and theory
Digital Scholarly Editing
Theories, Models and Methods

By **Elena Pierazzo**

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252 pages

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Call for Papers: Convention 3, 5-7 October '16
organized in association with the European Society for Textual Scholarship (ESTS)
Digital Scholarly Editing: Theory, Practice, Methods • Antwerp, 5-7 October 2016 • Call for papers • Deadline: 20 March 2016 •

Missed an event? We provide presentation slides and more!

Digital Scholarly Editions Initial Training Network

DiXiT is an international network of high-profile institutions from the public and the private sector that are actively involved in the creation and publication of digital scholarly editions.

DiXiT is a coordinated training and research programme for early stage researchers and experienced researchers in the multi-
How to develop digital scholarship?

- theory and practice
- visibility
- discourse & evaluation
- acknowledgement
- credibility, crediting
What is the *Catalogue of Digital Editions*?

This wiki showcases the research data collection work I did as part of my PhD studies at the UCL Centre for Digital Humanities under the supervision of Prof. Melissa Terras and Simon Mahony. This research seeks to examine best practice in the field of digital editions by collating relevant evidence in a detailed catalogue of extant electronic text projects. The editions included in the Catalogue come from numerous sources and their selection follows basic criteria: the electronic texts can be ongoing or complete projects, born-digital editions or electronic reproductions of print volumes.

Lists of digital editions already exist and have been around for many years:

- Associazione per l'Informatica Umanistica e la Cultura Digitale Wiki
- Digital Classicist
- Dr. Aurélien Berra
- Dr. Paolo Monella *(section 2.2)*
- Dr. Cinzia Pusceddu
- Dr. Patrick Sahle's Catalog of Digital Scholarly Editions
- Hunter College
- Monastic Manuscript Project
- Projects using the TEI
- UCLA's Catalogue of Digitized Medieval Manuscripts
a catalog of
Digital Scholarly Editions
v 3.0, snapshot 2008ff
compiled by Patrick Sahle, last change 2016/02/21

by title
complete list a-z (386)

by general subject area
literature (164), history (158), science history (22), law history (4), art history (10), philosophy (25), music (8)

by material
single works (109), collected works (57), collections of texts (25), single manuscripts (74),
letters (58), diaries (17), charters (14), inscriptions (6), papers (38), archival holdings (10)

by language of material
latin (78), english (159), french (31), german (77), italian (14), other (35)

by epoch
antiquity (17), early (25) / high (37) / late (64) middle ages, early modern (69), modern (178)

recommended
some particularly interesting editions/projects (34)
Édition génétique des Caves du Vatican d'André Gide

Un événement majeur de l’édition scientifique de textes littéraires.
Un CD-Rom conçu, élaboré et présenté par Alain Goulet. Réalisation éditoriale : Pascal Mercier

Ce CD-Rom rassemble l’ensemble du dossier génétique de l’œuvre : documents préparatoires, notes, plans, brouillons, manuscrits… sous la forme d’images des documents originaux et de textes manuscrits. Il met en regard tous ces documents avec le texte de référence des Caves, et propose ainsi de suivre la préhistoire de l’œuvre mot à mot, ligne à ligne. Autour de ces textes sont proposés de nombreux dossiers documentaires, historico-critiques, bibliographiques… Cette édition génétique ouvre à de nouvelles interprétations et à de nouvelles lectures des Caves du Vatican.

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- Des dossiers documentaires
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See homepage.mac.com robots.txt page. Learn more about robots.txt.
Rudolf Bollier an Alfred Escher, s.l., s.d.

Mein Lieber

Herr W. ist damit einverstanden, daß man mit F. verhandelt. Ich hoffe, man kann gut enttretten.

F. habe ich nicht gesehen.

Willst Du über einen PSoldaten verfügen, so schreib mir nur ein Wort.

In Eile

Dein
Why evaluate?

• contribute to the discussion on theory and practice
• secure good practice
• consolidate methodology
• improve usability through convergence
• foster acknowledgment and crediting
Evaluation guidelines?

- Fotis Jannidis: Bewertungskriterien für elektronische Editionen, 1999
- MLA/CSE
  - Guidelines for Editors of Scholarly Editions, 2011
  - Considering the scholarly edition in the digital age: a white paper ..., 2015
- DFG: funding criteria for scholarly editions in literary studies, 2015
Weitere Schriften

Kriterien für die Besprechung digitaler Editionen


- Version 1.1.: deutsch | english | italiano
- Version 1.0.: deutsch
Criteria for Reviewing Scholarly Digital Editions, version 1.1

Patrick Sahle; in collaboration with Georg Vogeler and the members of the IDE; Version 1.1, June 2014 (Version 1.0, September 2012 – January 2014; German version 1.1:
http://www.i-d-e.de/reviews/kriterien-version-1-1

Major contributions to this English version by: Misha Broughton, James Cummings, Franz Fischer, Philipp Steinkrüger, Walter Scholger.

Preliminary remarks

Scope

Definitions. This paper provides a framework for the description and evaluation of scholarly digital editions (SDE).[1] A scholarly edition is an information resource which offers a critical representation of (normally) historical documents or texts. Scholarly digital editions are not merely publications in digital form; rather, they are information systems which follow a methodology determined by a digital paradigm, just as traditional print
Criteria for Evaluation

0. frame of application
1. preliminaries
2. subject and content
3. aims and methods
4. publication
5. conclusion
Criteria for Evaluation

frame of application

• definition of SDE: see above
• what’s in – what’s out?
  • in: wide range of material, approaches, schools
  • out: digital libraries / archives, corpora, retrospectively digitized editions
• “scholarly”
  • critical stance; academic quality
  • make your approach explicit; state your rules and act accordingly
Criteria for Evaluation

application of criteria

• general criteria & special criteria
• consider the background / conditions
  • material, transmission
  • theory and method
  • goals and aims
  • resources (time & money)
• mature publication vs. suggestions for improvement
• problem of double qualification
Criteria for Evaluation

preliminaries / opening the review

• profile of the reviewer (bias, competences)
• bibliographic description
• general introduction: what is the edition about?
• general framework of the edition: participants, roles, resources
Criteria for Evaluation

subject and content

• what does the edition contain?
  • primary material
  • edited material
  • critical material
  • additional material

• how does the edition relate to research?
Criteria for Evaluation

aims and methods

• theory approach? editorial school
• representation of documents and texts
• critical input: textual criticism, indexing, commentary
• data models
Criteria for Evaluation

publication I

• technical infrastructure
• interface and usability (text presentation, browse, search, indices, special features)
• metadata and interlinkage
• documentation
Criteria for Evaluation

publication II

• identification & citation
• licenses and rights
• spin-off, export formats, re-use, technical interfaces
• future outlook and sustainability
Criteria for Evaluation

conclusion

- terminology discussion: labeling and classification
Criteria for Evaluation

conclusion

• terminology discussion: labeling and classification
• realization of self set aims
• general requirements / state of the art
• specific contribution / particularities
• usability, usefulness, quality
• suggestions for improvement
ride – a review journal for digital editions and resources

• three issues, fourth in preparation
• goal: biannual publication
• five articles per issue
• blind peer review process
• fact sheets & tags
• managing editor, additional editors, guest editors, review-reviewers
empirical data?
ride – a review journal for digital editions and resources

• crediting and acknowledgment? real research articles in an international peer reviewed journal!
• published online (ISSN, DOIs forthcoming); PDF in institutional repository (?), printed volumes (?)
• open for reviews!
  – suggested editions vs. free choice
  – language policy
• special issues are possible
Conclusion

• large body of more or less experimental digital editions
• large body of theory reflection
• increasing convergence in theory, methods and practice
• digital editions not as an exception but the rule
• towards a stabilized best practice? Towards standard solutions?