On Promises Kept: Archives and Editions
A personal view.

Manfred Thaller, Brühl
May 31st, 2018
Napoli, Dall’analogico al digitale.
Digital editions: first generation
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Digital editions: first generation

“Leibniz Akademieausgabe” (example: vol. II 1), since 1975 prepared electronically, first publication 1981.

Basic target: print
Additional tools: derivates from electronic texts.

Access: http://www.uni-muenster.de/Leibniz/seite2.html
Responsible for paradigm: Wilhelm Ott
Digital editions: first generation

The medium is unchanged. However:

- Intermediate stages of work can also be prepared for print.
- Additional tools for search in text become available over time.

Principle: A digital edition is not static, but dynamic.
Corollary: It never is finished.
Digital editions: second generation
Digital editions: second generation / 1
Digital editions: second generation / 1


Basic (original) target: CD-ROM (currently: DVD)

Current information: http://ebeowulf.uky.edu/

Responsible for paradigm: Kevin Kiernan
The medium is a discrete set of digital containers (CD-ROMs / DVDs)
- Manuscript images and transcriptions / reconstitution of “correct” text are connected, for academic as well as educational reasons.
- Manuscripts are enhanced before classical editorial work by electronic means.
- Embedded into environment of digital resources and tools.

Principle: An editor shows the documents on which the interpretation is based.
Corollary: If something seems strange, check for yourself.
Philosophische Untersuchungen
Versuch einer Umarbeitung

Augustinus beschreibt das Lernen der menschlichen Sprache (Confessiones 1.8)

"...cum ... appellabant rem aliquum et cum secundum aliquam
movere vel, eadem et eadem hoc ut, ut eadem
vel, eadem."

War es so beschrieben, du bist vorher an einer gewissen
wie etwa 'Man', 'Brat', 'Tisch', und nur entfernt an

Philosophische Untersuchungen

Versuch einer Umarbeitung.

Das Lernen der menschlichen Sprache beschreibt
Augustinus. Er beschreibt das Lernen...

(Confessiones 1.8)

"...cum ... appellabant rem aliquam et cum secundum..."
“Wittgenstein Nachlass / Bergen edition”,

Target: CD-ROM set

Background information: http://wab.uib.no/

Responsible for paradigm: Claus Huitfeldt
Digital editions: second generation / 2

The medium is a discrete set of digital containers (CD-ROMs)

- Manuscript images and transcriptions / reconstitution of “correct” text are connected, for academic reasons.
- Very big effort to give normalized as well as diplomatic transcriptions.

Principle: *Integrate two editions targeted at different communities into one.*

Corollary: *Allow different concepts of what an edition requires.*
Digital editions: second generation / 3

The Wife of Bath's Prologue
Edited by Peter Robinson

Base Text for Collation
Click on any word to see all the readings in witnesses at that word; click on a line number to see what witnesses have this line.

1. Experience/ thogh noon auctoritee
2. Were in this world/ is right ynogh for me
3. To speke of wo/ that is in mariage
4. For lordynges/ sith that I twelf yeer
Click the icon to the left to see the text of all witnesses to a reading; click on the sigil for any witness to see the text only of that witness. The base text line here is:

1 Experience / thogh noon auctoritee
Witnesses lacking line 1
  4 witnesses Cn En2 Gg Ha5

The lemma for the following variant or variants is: Experience

Agreeing with the lemma: 42 witnesses Ad1 Ad3 Bo1 Bo2 Ch Cx1 Cx2 Dd Dl Ds El En1 En3 Ha2 Ha4 He Hg Hk Ht Lc Ld2 Ln Ma Mc Mg Ne Ni Ph2 Ph3 Pn Ps Pw Py Ra1 Ra3 Ry2 Se Si Tc1 Tc2 To Wy

Reading: Experiment

10 witnesses Bw Cp Fi Gl La Ld1 Mm Ry1 Sl1 Sl2
“Peter Robinson’s Canterbury Tales editions”, 1996 –

Original target: CD-ROM sets

Background information:
http://www.textualcommunities.usask.ca/web/canterbury-tales/home

Responsible for paradigm: Peter Robinson
Digital editions: second generation / 3

The medium is a discrete set of digital containers (CD-ROMs)
❖ Focus is on handling of apparatus criticus.
❖ Emphasis on editorial process and its connection to software tools (collation).

Principle: *Witnesses may be as important as the “correct” archetype*
Digital editions: the way to the third generation
Digital editions ca. 2000: a puzzle

Peter Robinson: *Despite great promise ... digital editions have not been as successful with the general scholarly community as was expected by early digital theorists.*

(Digital Medievalist 1, 2005)

One reason in the nineties: A new software package and a new interface for each and every new digital edition …
Digital editions ca. 2000: a puzzle

One reason in the nineties: A new software package and a new interface for each and every new digital edition …

However, also in the nineties:

The WWW established de facto standards for user interfaces.
Digital editions: second and a half generation

Almost all second generation digital editions were transferred into the internet – but without major conceptual innovations.

Duderstadt project, 1996 onward:

77,285 archival pages scanned and available in the internet.

Duderstadt project, 1996 onward:

Try to integrate editorial proof of concept

(Malte Rehbein)

Duderstadt project, 1996 onward:

Try to integrate editorial proof of concept

(Malte Rehbein)
Third generation = second generation + WWW?

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(Digital Medievalist 1, 2005)

The great promise of systematic digitization transferred the technology leadership and the focus of interest from editorial projects to systematic digitization but reduced the limelight on editions.
Digital editions: fourth generation
Collaboration 2018: Itinera Nova Leuven

The great promise of systematic digitization transferred the technology leadership from editorial projects to systematic digitization …

… and the move towards collaboration and cooperation was often concentrated on attracting the interest of the lay community.
Collaboration 2018: Itinera Nova Leuven

Stadsarchief van Leuven, 2009 onwards:

Series of protocols 1362-1795, currently 830,000 pages digitized

itineranova.be
Collaboration 2018: Itinera Nova Leuven

Stadsarchief van Leuven, 2009 onwards:

Series of protocols 1362-1795, currently 830,000 pages

itineranova.be
Digital editions: fourth generation / 1

The medium is the internet
❖ Editorial activities are handled collaboratively.
❖ Lay communities are involved.

Principle: Collections cannot be edited, but access can be approved.
Corollary: This you can do as non-specialist.
Collaboration 2018: Monasterium

The medium is the internet

- Editorial activities are handled collaboratively.
- All tools are fully supportive of the relevant academic standards.

Principle: *Whole collections cannot be edited, but access can be approved step by step.*

Corollary: *You can follow this principle keeping editorial quality alive.*
Collaboration 2018: S. Maria della Grotta

The medium is the internet

- Editorial activities are handled collaboratively.
- All tools are fully supportive of the relevant academic standards.

Principle: An edition can be embedded into an archive.
A Promise kept

The great promise of digital editions in the time of the internet has been:

Create digital editions by a **collaborative** effort following academic standards, and **embed** them into an integrating structure, which **blurs the borders between archives and editions**.
A Promise kept

The edition of the abbey S. Maria della Grotta has kept that promise.
Thank you for keeping the promise!

manfred.thaller@uni-koeln.de
IvoryTower.hypotheses.org