Annotation & Applications

Annotation Everywhere

Funding from Mellon’s MATC prize for Pliny was used to support an experimental implementation of WordHoard in the Pliny context.

This required a rethinking of the roles of different WordHoard punch or Pliny’s Eclipse-based-workbench.

The WordHoard text display

- WordHoard’s text display shows what the integration is like.
- Here we see a tool in it connected to a web page, showing the user’s element in the mix of the tool’s “shamest / don’t’s”.
- Pliny’s workbench design allows any Pliny resources, including, for example, a taskbar, to be connected to a WordHoard text display, or vice versa.

• There is recognition of the huge potential significance of Web 2.0 social networking within the DH. This has resulted in the adoption of tools such as blogs, wikis, and RSS feeds.

• Many in the DH have, as a consequence, framed Annotation primarily in this context as a kind of web public social networking activity. We believe that Pliny shows that there is more mileage in viewing Annotation in its personal context, as a tool that is a significant element of research practice for many scholars.

• When viewed this way, we see digital Annotation as more similar to what happens when someone annotates printed material in the conventional way, rather than as a social Web 2.0-like activity.

WordHoard & Pliny

- Annotation in a printed book is a component of the scholar’s workbench function. This might include, for example, annotating a word in a dictionary, or it might involve a new name for the tool assembly.

- Our recent thinking here, then, involves developing a variety of the “shamest / don’ts” of Annotation applications.

- Conventionally Annotation supports annotation of other applications. If you wanted to say anything about one of the other applications, you would be unable to do so.

- As a result, we’ve also added annotation capabilities to other applications, so that the user can add annotation annotations about them too.

Dynamic Targets

- Most thinking about Annotation in the DH community has been based on static annotation targets inspired by the pre-digital fixed printed page. However, WordHoard’s concordance display allows the user to interact with it and change what is actually visible — it is dynamic.

- Putting our work in the context of an ongoing effort to break down the barriers between applications models has resulted in an experimental packaging of components.

- The experimental packaging of Pliny developed as a prototype that allows the user to run multiple applications.

- The general nature of the concordance display, then, blurs the distinction between the two applications models. There, the target is the responsibility of the target publisher, and the annotation is part of the responsibility of the annotator. Here the target for annotation is the result of both what the publisher/data provider and the user have done together.

Yet Another Scholar’s Workbench?

- The WordHoard prototype is a prototype.

- However, people can run it, and expand the ideas in the way that annotation uses other digital media.

Try it yourself

- The WordHoard prototype is a prototype.

- However, people can run it, and expand the ideas in the way that annotation uses other digital media.

- We are grateful to Harold Short, and the continued provision of some of the ideas for this work.

Acknowledgements

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- We are grateful to Prof. Martin Muller and the team who developed WordHoard at Northwestern University, for their interest and support for our experiment.

- We are grateful to Dr. Harold Short, and to the remainder of the DH community, including, for example, at least two others.

When WordHoard met Pliny: breaking down interaction silos between applications

Scholarly research in the humanities often involves, through annotation and notetaking, the bringing together of materials from different sources.

Web pages and most digital applications work against the ability by the user to juxtapose materials from different sources (for example, a Web page and the original text) to preserve those juxtapositions that are interesting. In this sense, they are all siloing applications: they prevent barriers between other applications that a researcher gathering them together effectively.

Scholarly annotation and notetaking should be recognised as a kind of “anti-siloing” activity, since scholarly research involves the juxtaposition of material from a range of different sources.

In the following schematic, we see a representation of the role of annotations in Pliny’s approach to interpretation building.

The annotations (shown as links) not only provide access points between the digital objects, but also serve as a kind of semi-permanent memory of the interaction. The digital model of this semi-permanent memory is the annotation in Pliny. When a reader writes on a book page s/he creates a place that is thought of as a kind of “service” provided by a digital resource like a website, but in Pliny’s workbench design allows any Pliny resources, including, for example, a taskbar, to be connected to a WordHoard text display, or vice versa.

A humanities scholar is likely to develop his/her interpretation from reading across a range of sources, perhaps made available through different applications. Then, if we take up the digital service and call it “annotation” component to get the following schematic representation.

In this type of interpretation building, the annotator (shown as a kind of semi-permanent memory of the interaction) suggests the digital model of this semi-permanent memory is the annotation in Pliny. When a reader writes on a book page s/he creates a place that is thought of as a kind of “service” provided by a digital resource like a website, but in Pliny’s workbench design allows any Pliny resources, including, for example, a taskbar, to be connected to a WordHoard text display, or vice versa.

When a reader visits a book page s/he annotates a place that may be different “application” in order.

The point of the page is to make the public available the place that was written on the page or the publicising of the book.

The reader’s annotation component is a semi-permanent memory of the reading activity. The reader’s annotation component is a semi-permanent memory of the reading activity. The reader’s annotation component is a semi-permanent memory of the reading activity.

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