

Epistemic Encounters

Interdisciplinary collaboration in developing VREs

Smiljana Antonijević

**Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences
Roskilde University**

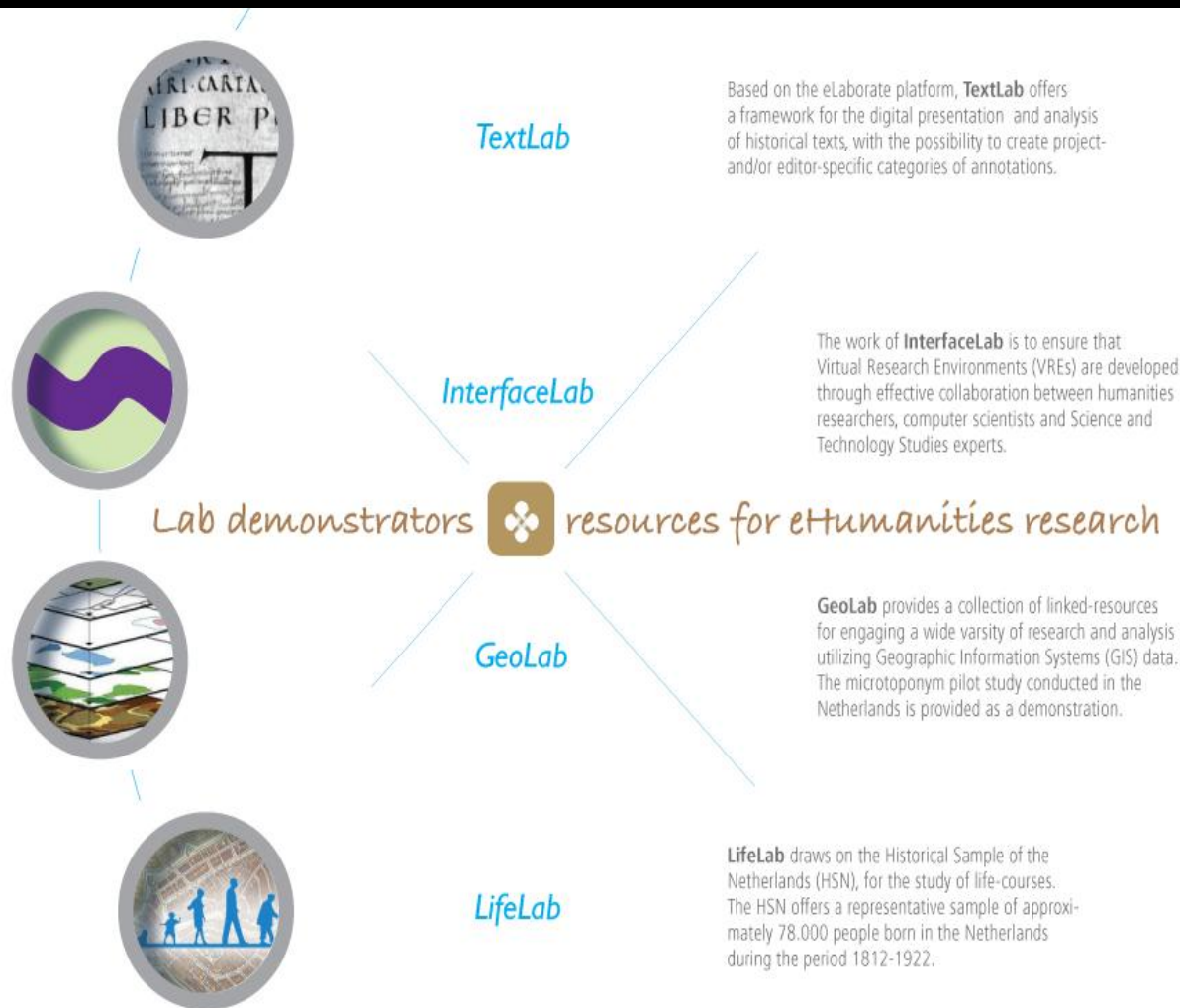
Interdisciplinary Insights
Oxford Internet Institute
March 12, 2012

‘I went to sleep one day a cultural critic, and woke the next metamorphosed into a data processor.’

Alan Liu, 2002

Overview

- Alfalab, Digitizing Words of Power, fieldwork
- Interface Lab
- Our approach to developing virtual research environments (VREs)
- Voices from the field

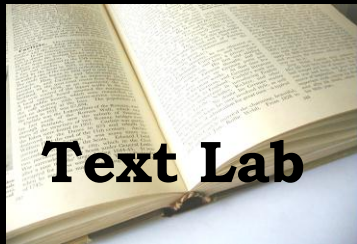


Alfalab

Six KNAW institutes

Linguists, historians, IT engineers, STS experts ...

Top-down initiative



Named entity recognition

Transcription and annotation of textual sources

E-laborate: Carolingian Scholarship - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Delicious Bookmarks Tools Help

http://martianus.huygensinstituut.knaw.nl/path/facsimile/leiden_vossianus_48/book_2_de_nuptiis/folio_11r/

E-laborate: Carolingian Scholarship

Carolingian Scholarship | Glosses on Martianus Capella

Carolingian Scholarship / facsimile / leiden_vossianus_48 / book_2_de_nuptiis / Folio 11r (incipit liber 2)

Navigation Search Add panel Print Huygens Instituut elaborate

Facsimile Transcription Annotations

Change panel Change panel Change panel

Folio 11r (incipit liber 2)
[folio 11 recto, linea 7] #24#

MARTIANI MINEI FELICIS CAPELLAE

LIBER PRIMUS EXPLICIT. INCIPIT II.

§9§Sed 1 purum 2 astrificis 2 caelum scandeat 4 habenis
6 || Nox 6 revocans 7 merso 8 fulgentia sydera phaebo. ||

Ardua 9 10 tunc senior 11 succendit 12 plaustra || Et spiras
13 torvo nituerunt 14 astra draconis 15 16 .||

Auratis etiam fragrans splendebat 17 18 in armis || Qui trait
19 aestifero fulgentem syron ortu 20 . ||

Hoc quoque nisi acis 21 22 quod sparsum 23 floribus
ardet 24 . || Multiplici ambitum 25 redimitur lumine
sertum. 26 ||

Virginis 27 in interea trepidans perlabitur 28 aures. ||
Fama 29 iovis magno dum complet tecta boatu. 30 31 32 ||

1 Sed poetico fimento nox habere equos dicitur sicut dies id est sol

2 purum serenum

3 astrificis igneis

4 scandeat ascendeat

5 habenis quadrigis

6 Nox luna

7 revocans lucere faciens

8 merso occaso

9 Ardua ardua plaustra duos arcturos Elicem et Cenosuram

10 Ardua excelsa

11 senior Ideo senior quia principale signum est inter aquilonia under et Artofilax dicitur i. custos plaustrum

12 succendit booties

cf. DISC, Leiden University Library
Facsimile for this folium also available from Digital Special Collections at Leiden University Library web site.

Transferring data from tiler01.huygensinstituut.knaw.nl...

start E-laborate: Carolingian...

zotero 2:22 PM



Historical GIS

Web-based map
annotation

http://194.171.192.4/?db=nederland&ranf=Fryslan&layer=630Kadaster+1832+percelen+fryslan&layer=620Kadaster+1832+gebouwen+fryslan&useCM=1&fn=provincie&fv=fryslan

persistent-identifier Gmail Apple Google Maps Wikipedia Timesheet

Go to Layers Background Overview Google Maps Search

Information

Mga B240 (Kadaster 1832 gebouwen fryslan)

gebouw	Mga B240
soort_eigendom	Huis en Erf
bel_inkomen	21

Mga B240 (Kadaster 1832 percelen fryslan)

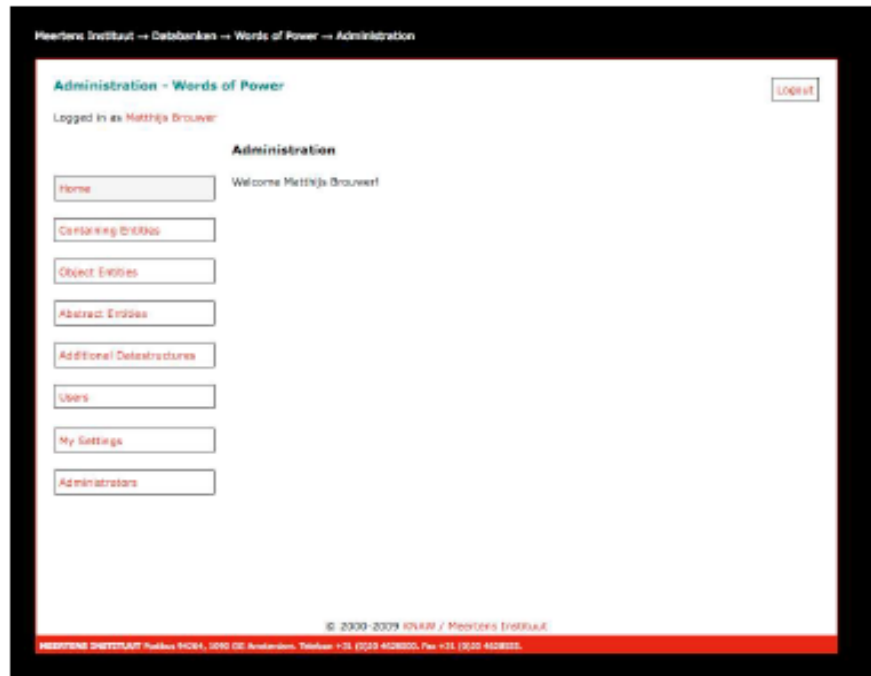
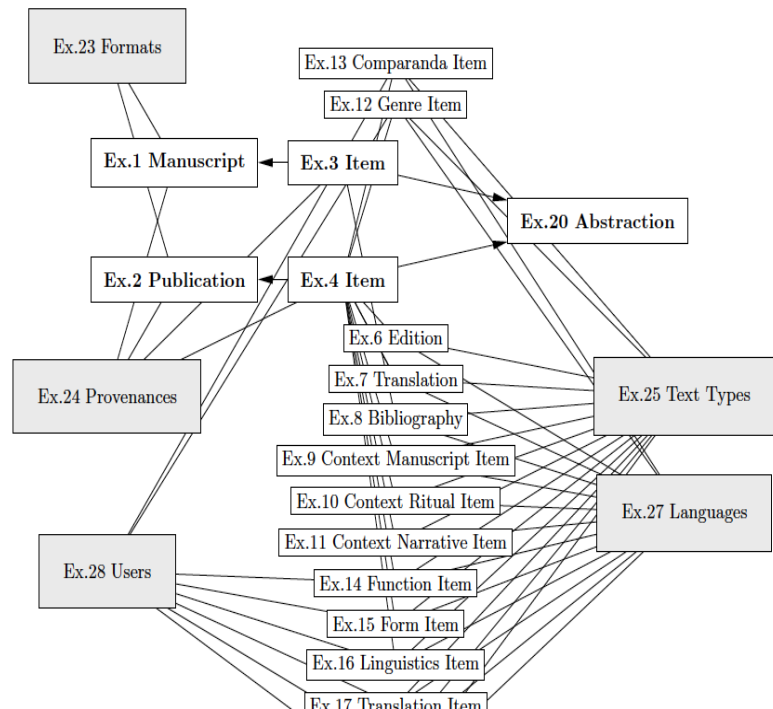
scale: 27.17m coordinate: 211974,552212

Tronde Legend Information



Portal for historical
population counts

Open and easy access to
the data of the Historical
Sample of the Netherlands



VRE for interdisciplinary and multilingual study of 'words of power'

Digitizing Words of Power

KNAW and University of Amsterdam

Historians of religion, ethnologists, IT, STS..

Bottom-up initiative



InterfaceLab

The work of **InterfaceLab** is to ensure that Virtual Research Environments (VREs) are developed through effective collaboration between humanities researchers, computer scientists and Science and Technology Studies experts.

Lab demonstrators



resources for eHumanities research

InterfaceLab promotes cross-disciplinary use of data and tools among researchers, by demonstrating how their different methods can be bridged.



User-testing sessions

Connecting epistemic cultures

Developing cross-disciplinary understanding

Promoting user-centered approach

Implementing feedback cycles



Discussing epistemological and methodological differences

Developing common vocabulary

Promoting collaborative writing

Supporting shared values



Team meetings

Listening to voices from the field

Harvesting best practices

Sharing experiences

Supporting collaboration

Fieldwork



Sharing experiences and practices

Presenting our approach

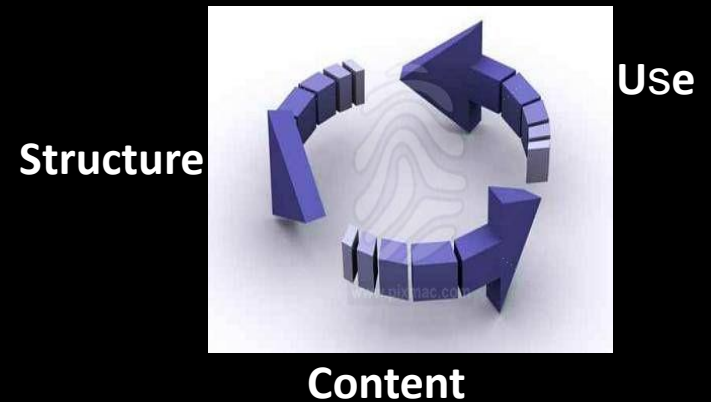
Supporting interaction within the
community of practice

Promoting critical reflection



Dissemination

Our approach



Fostering epistemic encounters and user involvement early and often

Developing non-data driven approach (data linked to interrogation)

Recognizing researchers' sensibility to new ways of working

Understanding cultures of formalization

Accepting boundaries or limits of technology

Fieldwork

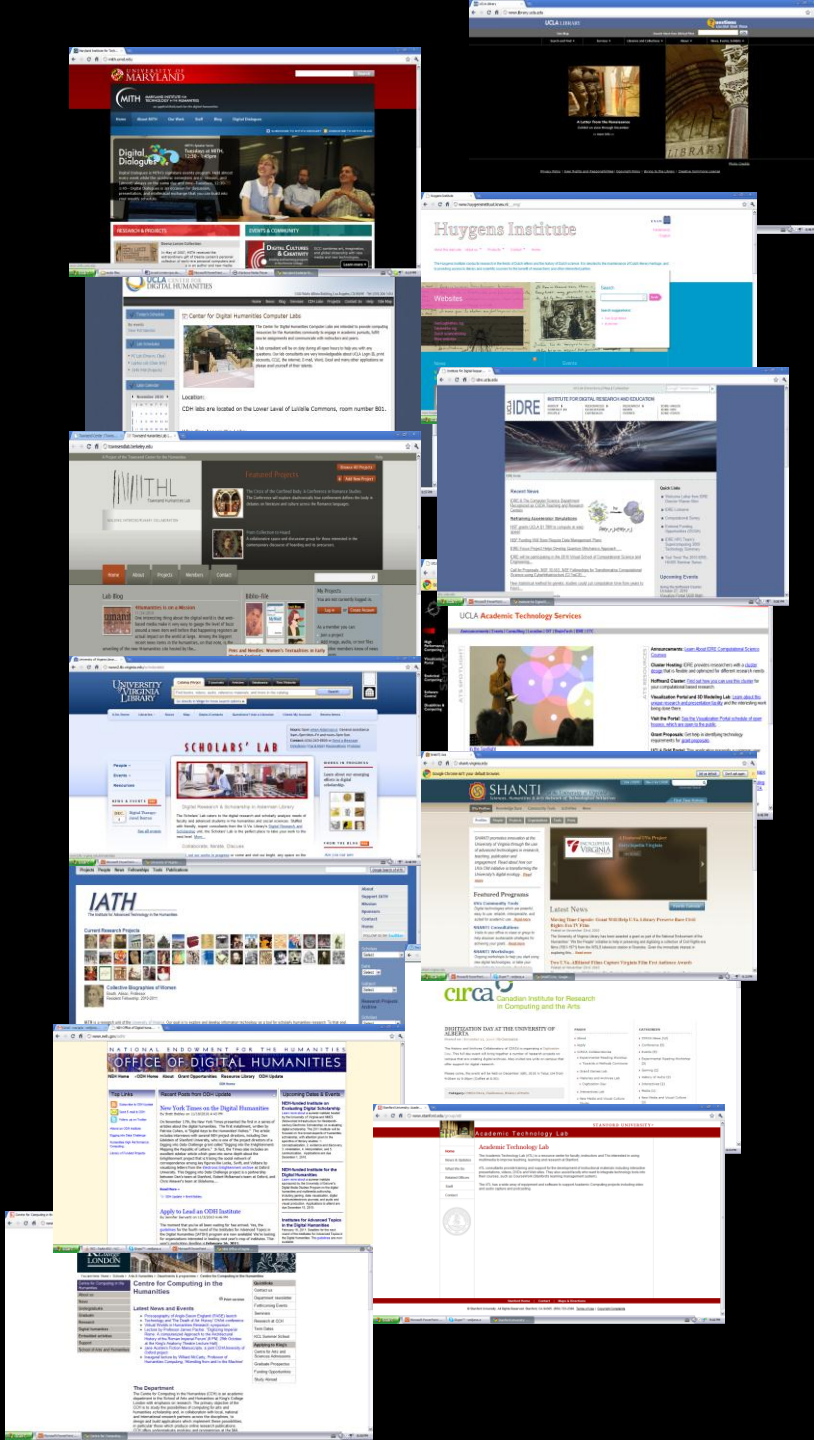
Alfalab (KNAW) and
Humanities Information
Practices (Oxford Internet
Institute)

April-October, 2010.

25 academic institutions;
Europe, USA, Canada

Site visits, observations, in-
depth interviews

Researchers, developers,
funders, policy makers,
students



Developing digital tools and resources

‘In those days [10 years ago] computer scientists at your own university wouldn’t even want to talk to you. Even now when we work with them **what computer science recognizes as research and what digital humanities recognize as research are different things.**’

Challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration

Developing digital tools and resources

‘Humanists ... are lacking a frame within which to say what they might expect, or what they might want, in a way that would help development process. The first thing that we need more of is just better and easier communications across IT people, computer scientists and humanists. The languages are very different, hugely different.’

Challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration

Developing digital tools and resources

Challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration

‘Unless humanists take seriously two things, firstly **the value of their own contributions to the migration of cultural legacy into the digital environment, and secondly, the really central value of the humanistic perspective on knowledge,** then these environments will be built without the humanists, and that would be a huge mistake.’

Developing digital tools and resources

‘It needs to be **open source**, **interoperable**, **sustainable**, which means not so specialized and boutique that the success or failure in the long term of a particular tool depends on three or four scholars who use it and love it.’

Apps (microservices) instead of generic or ‘boutique’ resources

Developing digital tools and resources

‘A massive problem of the last couple of decades of building these ‘one size fits all’ sort of solutions, which does not work either. Apps—it’s a different generation in software development...with apps, you let the community define what works.’

Apps (microservices) instead of generic vs. ‘boutique’ resources

Developing digital tools and resources

‘For example, I do not use Zotero, my students do. I don’t know why except that I am too lazy. **A lot of it is just a habit.** I am so busy, I just focus on what needs to be done.’

Respecting researchers’ practices

Developing digital tools and resources

‘It was as if the scales dropped from our eyes, it was as we had seen the future. The world was the same and yet completely different and new. We’ve gotten much more familiar with these kinds of technologies and possibilities, we do not have that sort of ‘ah’ experience every day.’

Going beyond ‘ah!’ experience

Developing digital tools and resources

‘We have now digitized a lot of resources, we have those silos of information, so **trying to manage the delusion of data is a priority**, something that certainly everyone is grappling with.’

Going beyond ‘ah!’
experience

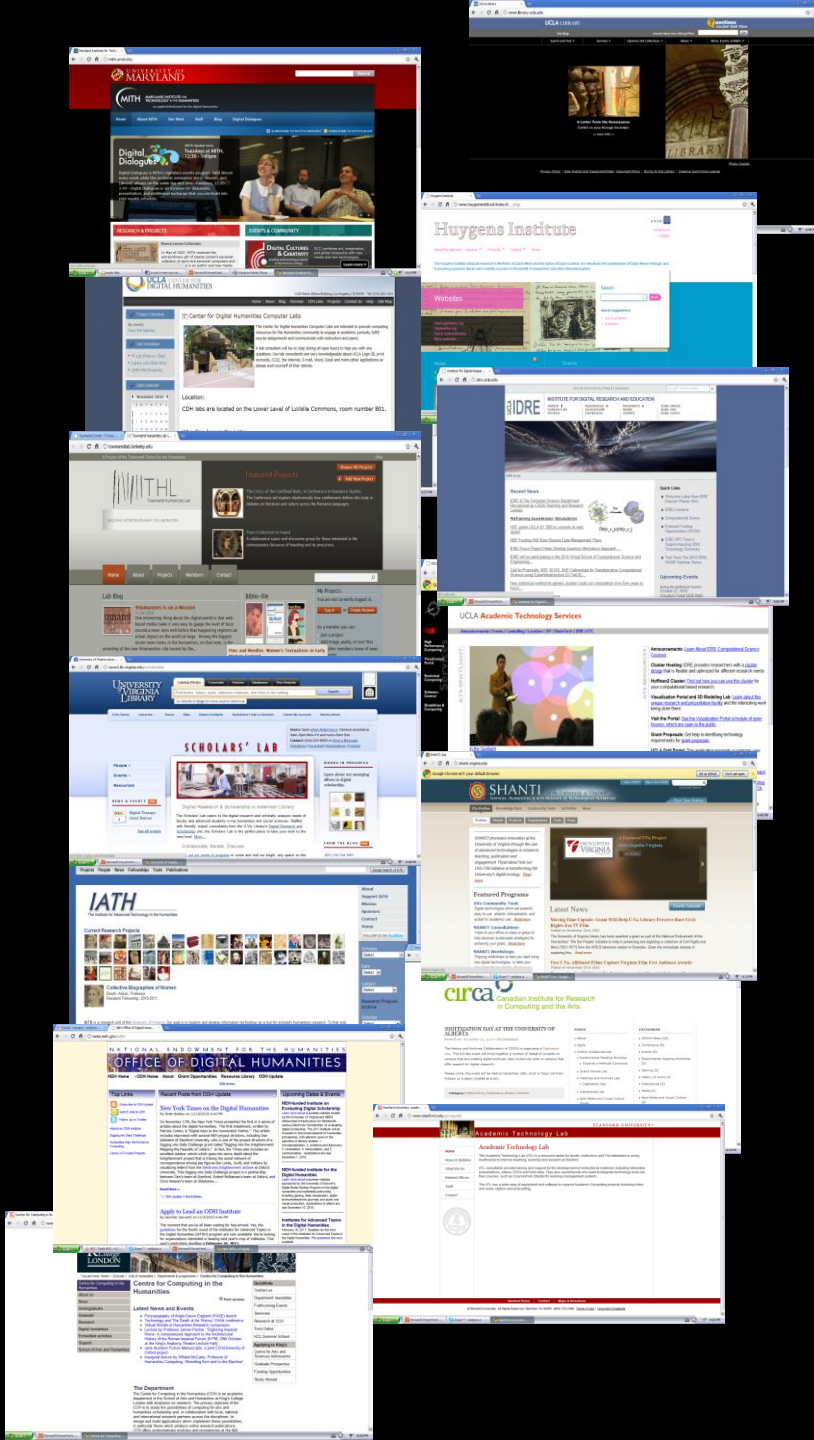
VREs

Floating signifier

Importance and problems of combining corpora and tools

Importance of developing research communities

Key challenges/requirements: interpretative level; linked data; preservation



Future directions and recommendations

Links within and among
institutions

Research questions as a
driving force

Educating researchers

Crusade

Trick

Inspire them to think

Digital or only humanities
and social sciences?

“Slow time” for digital
humanities and social
sciences

Educating scholarly
fields

Thank you

www.smiljana.org

smiljana@smiljana.org