New portals for new sources and new historians:
the European History Primary Sources (EHPS)
by

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Abstract

Free access to scholarly internet documentation is today heavily challenged by private corporations especially within an important area of scholarly documentation, the field of out-of-copyright materials which is also the core business of Google and many National Libraries Worldwide. Important international commercial firms are more and more determining how researchers should access primary sources and secondary literature. This is why Cultural institutions –museums, archives, libraries, history associations, universities, etc.- should create small scale digital projects to support research in Digital Humanities and History. Confronted with these new digital primary source, these artifacts and "invented archives, the craft of historians is deeply evolving within a new Digital era. The emphasis should be on the role of small scale cultural institutions offering free access to such scholarly documentation: moreover, retrieving such digital sources fits into the new digital working stage of the historian and new "entries" to this documentation is needed. The European Primary Sources Portal EHPS, [http://primary-sources.eui.eu], was created under the auspices of the European University Institute's History Department and Library for supporting its doctoral and post-doctoral programs. It's a portal serving a community of Ph.D. researchers, post-doctoral fellows and professors (at the Department of History and Civilisation of the European University Institute, Florence, Italy), its users, with an easily searchable index of multi-lingual collections of scholarly websites that offer online access to digitised primary sources, invented archives and born digital sources related to the history of Europe, either as a whole or for individual countries. EHPS offers web 2.0. features to remain connected to the portal and be informed about new entries. EHPS is referencing only freely accessible primary sources in a digital world always more the "property" of private and commercial actors.

Keywords

Historian's craft, Digital History, Digital Historian, Primary Source Collections, E-resources, Digital libraries, Digital repositories, Metasources, Born digital Sources, Online Archives, History of Europe, European University Institute.

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1. An open digital society for readers, scholars and libraries ?

Has the scenario for making money out of old books any kind of relation with ongoing processes in our digital environment ? Before verifying these assumptions, if we want to access fully the materials not offered in Google Book Search, we should try to use alternative solutions. These solution are in the hand of smaller cultural institutions and public funding: if we leave aside the widest actors of the digital world, *Google*, we enter a fragmented reality of important small and medium scale web publication projects that are extremely useful to scholars but disseminated worldwide in many different institutions and, often, not clealy embedded inside these institutions. A networked scientific society is connecting potentially these virtual libraries for education and research. Instead of using physical connections to reach all the European cultural institutions and their documentation like it was still the case even twenty years ago, such a networked society would fulfill the role that Google may not be able nor willing to take care of: connecting the widest publics to the widest digital contents in OA, all the old books and publications worldwide and decide on scientific preservation policies for our future generations.

Digital contents are accessible freely even through smaller digital libraries and institutions. Non commercial primary sources and old books in digital formats exist without using GBS. These projects could be known, diffused and integrated in the academic world. It is the case with important collections of freely accessible e-books out-of-copyright: in the USA, the Internet Archive with *BookServer*, the *Open Library* and the *Gutenberg project*, and in Europe, the *Gallica2* project in France which is the core digital library for *Europeana* at the moment. These are some examples of millions of out-of-copyright books and printed materials already accessible freely sometimes within a descriptive context of useful meta-data s and text mining facilities.

During a recent international conference on *Contemporary History in the Digital Age* organized in Luxembourg this year in October,[1] Marin Dacos, director of the Cléo, *Centre pour l'édition électronique ouverte* in the CNRS in France[2] (he founded in 1999 the project *Revues.org*),[3] insisted in his keynote speech that if a History 2.0. has to be defined, it is because we are building new cyber-networks for accessing our sources. He underlined the fact that our goal was to bring scholarly literature and the primary sources to everybody's own computer. This has to be organized in a open society model -some of the ideas of the American *Open Archive Initiative*[4] and of the *Open Content Alliance*-[5] through web based 2.0. technologies and bypassing as much as possible, commercially owned technologies, commercial databases and private actors. If in a scholarly environment we trust only the e-corporations and their devices and web projects, we'll have to face what was done by Amazon in withdrawing George's Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm* from the Kindle device together with all the notes and the reflections added to these books. Single readers, unfortunately, had purchased Kindle thinking to keep safely archived in their Amazon device their own reflections and annotations.[6]

From the end of the 20th century, the world of digital libraries and scholarly digital contents was each day more in the hand of few private and commercial e-actors which used the intellectual production of scholars to create new revenues from online access to their own intellective production and scholarly contents. Essays written by academics were sold back to their libraries and their universities by commercial firms. A Web 2.0. debate *"avant-la-lettre"* was organized online in 2001 by Noga Arikha and Gloria Origgi for the *Centre Georges Pompidou* in Paris. Eminent scholars dealing with the online cultural environment and heritage[7] participated. The historian Theodore Zeldin, author of "an intimate history of humanity" and of a history of the French and of French "passions",[8] wrote a paper on "The Future of Internet". During the online discussion about the paper, he was asked about the growing internal fragmentation of the web and about the parallel existence of different levels of access to web contents many of which now only commercial. This closure of the access to web contents was summarized in French as "internet et les internet(s)."[9] The problem was to understand who was trying to oppose the overall control of Internet by private bodies in the name of a world community of scholars. These opponents were part, at that time, of the Open Access movement in the legal world and of the hackers movement in the "wild digital West".

Still today, a few years later, we should be aware of the importance of *Open source software* and *Open Archives* which are not depending totally on the money racket that digital publishers are trying to impose to public universities and cultural centers. In 1998, Stevan Harnad, a Hungarian cognitive scientist, professor in Québec and in Southampton in the United Kingdom, started to fight for an open scholarly literature freely accessible for a worldwide public of scientists in *Open Archives repositories* with no access fees and no copyright to pay for.[10] The movement later developed inside the activities of the *Open Society Institute*[11] created by his co-citizen, George Soros. The *Soros Foundations Network* also aims at keeping information and media, like the internet, independent and free. The Soros Foundation sustains today such important freely accessible digital libraries and archives like the *Open Society Archive, Archivum* and the *Parallel Archive*,[12] just to mention two projects based on an open access philosophy.

At the end of the 20th century, an *Open Access movement* was growing – PubMed, an index to medical literature was opened freely to the public in 1997, the *Open Archive Initiative* was created in 1999, and the *first major international* statement on open access, the *Budapest Open Access Initiative* was launched in February 2002 by Soros *Open Society Institute* before the *Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities* at the Max-Planck Institute in October 2003.[13]

Especially in continental Europe where the idea to promote multi-cultural diversity heavily sustains the whole European integration process, many libraries were anxiously faced with this equation: "always more e-contents at the highest possible costs for in English scholarly publications and primary sources = nothing more to spend for non English literature and primary sources, still mainly in print". Today, such an equation is still partially true although, the second part of it has been worked on, in continental Europe, by the European Commission and by huge investments within national public policies aiming at protecting the national and sub-national cultures using also digital formats. During the last 6-7 years, massive funding were

invested for digitizing the Continental European cultural heritage and with the idea of opening the new digital culture to the public and offering free access to scholarly publications (academic journals, working papers) and some important collections of primary sources within *Gallica* and, later, *Europeana*. These policies reacted also to the decline of all non-English languages due to the impact of the web on an "English" cultural globalization. In Europe, and at the international level, languages like French, Spanish, German and Italian are -also because of the Internet- becoming local languages linked mainly to a physical territory and something had to be done to keep and maintain, again through the web, their original cultural heritage.

The balance of globalization is decisively turning in the direction of a worldwide "in English" culture. This is true not only in the process of communication using English as "lingua franca", but because the main digital libraries containing the American and widest Anglo-Saxon cultural heritage, were digitized for commercial purposes by Thompson-Gale or by ProQuest, even by Brill and Elsevier on the continent in a very systematic way. When continental European libraries have money to spend today, they mainly invest for in English intellectual products, literature and primary sources. This is also possible because continental digitalized scholarship and primary sources are often freely accessible on the web because of the need to "defend" our multi-cultural heritage through public funding.

So, again, what to do -if anything could still be done- to support an Open Internet and to fight against these wide "digital divide" policies ? Even today, libraries are embedded in commercial policies aimed at creating these many "internets" mentioned in the conversation with Zeldin, as their consequences. The free web of important academic materials is losing ground each day and a commercial one aiming at selling even out-of-copyright digital materials which are in the public domain is dictating library acquisitions policies. This is happening mainly within the Anglo-Saxon cultural digital heritage even if sometime, non English, out-of-copyright historical documentation is becoming now part of a commercial business developed around our multi-cultural European heritage.[14]

But, how to face the severe threat to our academic library budgets in order to maintain digital collections and libraries accessible within a cultural and multi-lingual environment, a sensibility and a goal which are more requested in Continental Europe ? The *Minerva Project EContentPlus* supporting a European way for accessing best contents and develop best practices in the field of digital libraries, pointed essentially at multi-lingual contents and environments for developing European digital libraries,[15] with the support of the European Commission.

These oriented multi-lingual digital policies are supporting an online multi-cultural heritage but, to resist better the trend of a globalization where all cultures would disappear offering a unique way of thinking, two non-contradictory policies are still available. Continuing to promote nationally and internationally large scale digital libraries based on public funding but also -and this policy is more close to many national and local realities- promoting small scale "fair" commercial digital enterprises which are elaborating, thanks to *ad hoc* software's, raw digital contents within digital platforms for scientific purposes and asking for prices that libraries can still afford to pay and to support on the long run.

In this second direction, we could also think of the very many small scale digital projects maintained by cultural institutions even if, knowing about them in a cultural multi-lingual European and worldwide environment, becomes extremely difficult. In fact, these small scale scholarly digital projects have to be promoted and they have to be known by their potential qualified public in a socially networked web. Today, like in the very beginning of the web when it was still possible to "index" all the scholarly resources available for a specific discipline,[16] this informative role has again to be played by specialized portals and indexes to qualify better all these different available "internet(s)" and, especially promoting the OA digital libraries and projects.

2. History 2.0., primary sources and the historian's craft

So, the immediate future of research in the digital humanities and history will maybe have something to do with the creation of new tools for accessing and organizing digital contents and the development of research networks around them.[17] Such a direction was already foreseen in Tim O'Reilly's definition of Web 2.0 new concepts for the development of new networked and interactive web-sites also in the cultural sector.[18] Even *O'Reilly Media*, a private corporation, like the *Open Content Alliance*, is aiming "at building a digital archive of global content for universal access" and developing new technological interactive and interoperable ways, service based applications, to support such a universal goal.

What's true in the transformation of web contents following a 2.0 model for the whole humanities and social sciences areas, is also true in the digital history field.

In the growing Digital History and Digital Public History fields, there's a need to «secure» and integrate better the important technological developments into a more common and day to day «pratique de l'histoire» as Marc Bloch would have said.[19] This could also be done through an interactive participation of scientific networks and individuals to the access, use and preservation of digital data's even creating "invented archives". Historians need to organize better in their computers and through their browsers, the access to digital repositories and archives, manage data's through appropriate softwares, archive in durable and secure ways their digital artifacts and their scholarly essays. Historians need the right tools for searching scholarly materials and for teaching history through digital means. Important digital archives and invented archives, research tools, digital libraries and other e-resources are available online also within these different "internet(s)" we've been saying in the previous section, but we've still a lot to do in order to integrate historical scholarship into the digital history process. This is the time for a new craft and a new methodology for digital historian's daily activity.[20]

The most delicate challenge today is maybe not the process of digitizing and building digital libraries themselves even if, on the contrary, this was the case ten years ago. Now digital archives and libraries are accepted and supported widely by scholars. But the challenge, if we are not thinking about financial costs, is more about the technical and scientific ways these digitization processes are occurring and also the scale of these projects themselves matter. Methods used to build digital libraries are different today if we deal with commercial actors of the digitization process (and within commercial actors many differences are also existing) or,

with what publically funded cultural institution, libraries, archives and museums may wish to digitize under the supervision of skilled professionals and following scholarly procedures. *Digital history*, what we could also call, Web 2.0 history,[21] is made of new practices and new methods clashing with the traditions on which historical knowledge is built on. Often, digital history is about challenging traditional laws and skills adopted in the history profession questioning its own essence especially when the historian's craft is made of analyzing texts and writing about their authors.

The purpose of the digitization projects of historical materials were increasing in libraries and archives especially in North America at the end of the 1990s. Already at that time, it was done to facilitate the daily work of historians through online access to primary sources. At the beginning, these digital library initiatives took the form of a description of sources: online finding aids, indexes and catalogues, but were also starting to offer a digital copy –a meta-source-[22] of the documents themselves. However, while the digital resources helped in these years, more the teaching of history, historical research as such was still performed in a traditional way, working in 'physical' libraries and archives, institutions which, at that time, captured the principal activity of a "serious" historical research.

These characteristics of early digital libraries remained the same until a few years ago. What appears instead today, now that the web offers an enormous amount of digital primary sources and born digital sources accessible directly online, is that, at this point, physical archives may not be anymore the only scholarly places to look for original document and evidences in the course of historical research. Carl Smith, in a 1998 article, defines "serious" history as an "original work that is based on the best primary evidence, that is aware of other research, and that makes a group of sustained points about its subject. A part of this issue is whether serious historical research can be done online". [23] Ten years later, a librarian, Toby Graham Patterson, wrote in an essay about how and why accessing primary sources for US history, that digital sources are now "as important to information professionals as to historians, because the answer may determine how heavily academic institutions invest in online access to their collections. An affirmative answer is dependent on what is or can be made available in standardized formats and whether historians can access this information in a comprehensive way."[24]

But, the idea that web-based resources automatically provide us with a better understanding of history and also, with diverse capacities of writing history, not only in a linear mode, is still today coupled with the absence of a firm methodology for dealing with digital history and for analyzing digital sources for the writing of history. As the number of digital resources freely accessible and commercially sold, are increasing, so do questions about their creation, selection, re-use in the digital space in what appears a totally different "context" for the sources and, also within a more traditional historiography. To date, many discussions in the field of digital history, tend to focus on technical issues rather than offering the right methodological instruments to re-write the epistemological approach through the genuine presence of digital documents. Regarding the production of digital sources the question is not only how digital sources come into being and what the difference is between digitizing archival material/books and integrating native digital sources in new forms of archives, new digital contexts for new authenticity procedures within new web-sites, but also to perform a more simple and basic task: how to find them and use them in a professional context.

Also in the digital context, historians need to be aware that prior to becoming available on the internet, a selection of the documentation is being made by whoever is maintaining digital libraries and that this selection reflects current research interests, foci, and agendas and potentially reinforces these by virtue of what is, and what is not, included.

One may say that this is part of the process of selecting the necessary materials to write an historical essay. It could be found some identical and parallel developments when historians and ICT specialists are creating thematic web-sites (*September 11,*[25] *European Navigator,*[26] *Valley of the Shadow*[27]). New methodological issues are then arising, not only for who's creating these new web-sites, invented archives and primary source digital libraries, but also for who's using them for research and the writing of history, both in a traditional way or again for the web.

Who should tell the community about these methodological problems, who's behind a digital library or the historian using it ? Some years ago, in 2003, answering to Roy Rosenzweig's essay, *Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era*, Earle Havens (Wesleyan University), tried very clearly to question such a crucial problem that historians encountered when facing the use of digital libraries: "Consider my case […], -he was writing to Rosenzweig- as a scholar who works with early printed books and manuscripts, my inclination is to interpret these materials as documentary objects and sites of preservation in their own right, in addition to their value as historical texts. As a result, I often have reservations about the value of efforts to convert all manner of historical texts to digital formats. While these may expand opportunities for information retrieval and textual collation, such projects tend, to my mind, also to excise texts from their original places of preservation, putting them at a further remove from their "original."[28] Havens quoted Tom Tanselle criticisms made in 1990[29] because these early proponents of projects with digitized primary materials often failed to "build their arguments on a firm understanding (or at least an explicit acknowledgement) of the way historical study employs artifacts.[…] Provenance, watermarks, manuscript annotations, original formatting of texts, the presence or absence of an contemporary interpretive apparatus, etc., all attend upon the historicity and authenticity of a source, and simply converting texts to digital formats -as has been done, for example, with the *Perseus Digital Library*- can seriously undermine a student's, and a researcher's, understanding of the artifactual qualities of such sources."[30]

Speaking about his own work with digital primary sources, Havens interest was to address the practical level of the creation of digital artifacts and how digitization is perceived in the teaching and the research community. "Although I may well admire the main goal of a project like the *Perseus Digital Library*, he wrote, "to bring a wide range of source materials, to as large an audience as possible," I cannot help but question the inherent value of these web documents as "source materials."[31]

"Not unique to archives is the belief that the best way to understand archives is by studying them in their context, or in relation to their origins and in relation to other documents in a collection", was written recently by Mark Vajcner, archivist at the University of Regina in Canada. "Historical research -he says- was traditionally done by examining this context. A whole field of scholarly study, diplomatics, served to critically investigate literary and documentary sources. It is, […], the shared discursive practice of many professions. […] In today's online world many historical documents are available digitally, outside of the archives. Posted by a

wide range of institutions and individuals these documents, more often than not, are also separated from their historical and documentary context. Significantly the majority of archival digitization projects today are selective as well. Archivists, with some assistance from historians and other specialists, sift through a body of records, select key, seminal, or interesting documents, scan them and present them on the internet for all to see and hopefully use. The materials scanned and presented have not tended to be the full body of records but are documents removed from their collections and from their context". [32]

These issues are far from being totally solved when confronting ourselves with digital primary sources repositories but, on the other hand, are not qualifying all types of repositories available on the web but mainly the transposition of material archives to digital formats. In the material world, the documents were connected with their original context –even an archival context- which was telling about, adding a «sense» to them. In the digital environment instead, it is often the case that significant contexts are lost. This philological approach to digitized primary sources, is made of the history of text building and the construction of an historical environment for the history of the documents themselves like it has been recently recorded by Jerome McGann.[33]

The *Digital Locke Project* at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam for example, want to underline how important and essential these issues are when we deal with new digital libraries. Paul Schuurman, coordinator of the project, tries to define such a new philological and scientific way to organize online the presentation and retrieval of the complexity of texts. He's asking to preserve online the history of each manuscript with his own added documentation inside digital libraries implementing an apparatus of: "… historical and philosophical notes, a precise description of all relevant manuscripts, and a reconstruction of the genesis of the texts". Only in this way, the database will "reflect the often complicated structure of a single text that is based on more than one manuscript, and one single manuscript containing several texts."[34]

This philological problem arising with digital primary sources, challenged the traditional ways historians accessed and interrogated their materials. These issues were looked at closely in Italy by Stefano Vitali in his book about the "digital past"[35] written with the professional skills and the sensibility of an archivist and one of the most knowledgeable archivists who experienced the construction of archives within the two worlds, the material and the virtual, Isabella Zanni Rosiello, recorded such an issue looking at what was changing in the process of analyzing sources with the new digital media.[36] Primary sources still belong to their archival contexts even if these contexts are (re)-constructed in a virtual space which is "giving a sense" in itself through a firm contextual apparatus of online meta-data to each single meta-source connected online to the physical source has written Maria Guercio. [37]

But we have to be aware of one important new factor: in the digital environment, these procedures for reconstructing new contexts to old physical sources, have nothing to do with the significant new digital context of the sources. Even detached from their original context, the presence of digital artifacts in different web-sites, are becoming each time *new evidences*. They are requesting for themselves each time new critical interpretation to gather the new "sense" which only derivates from their new contexts of publication, the web-site itself.[38] This second option is now often the most common one when dealing with web-sites as primary sources sustaining historical research. So, primary sources in digital contexts have added more

complexity to the craft of historians used to define his methodology by analyzing "in archival contexts", analogical evidence.

Different questions arise today thanks to the web and influence the historical practice: the methodological consequences of using digitized and born-digital primary sources, particularly in comparison with 'traditional' printed sources is, of course, one of the most sensitive epistemological issue for today's historian. Digitization projects of primary sources is often semantically related to a national, or a supra-national, concern aiming at writing and reconstructing a "specific" history or memory. These processes are directly part of the construction of identities and are often only part of a more global legitimization process of common memories at various level: local, regional, national and international. The selection of digital primary sources and the construction of digital archives in the web are also responding to these goals that the digital historian should be aware of.[39]

What seems to happen today, is the distance created between new advanced web technologies in digital history, the presence of invented and interactive archives, and the construction of an epistemological object for history which would cope scientifically with all these innovations.

Like Edward Ayers tells us about the history of American Civil War and Abraham Lincoln, «thanks to the work of dedicated scholars and librarians, we also find ourselves in possession of millions of digital words, statistics, and images about the America in which Lincoln lived. The challenge now is to find meaning, coherence, and pattern in that abundance."[40]

The problem today, after the first important primary sources digitization in the 1990s, is more to go forward with new interpretations and new scenarios for historical research in a digital age made of an abundance of digital sources and materials now offered worldwide to historians. This is happening even if Roy Rosenzweig in his famous 2004 essay, challenged this idea of abundance due to the immediate volatility and disappearance of new digital media formats and web-sites.[41]

Kirsten Sword for instance, professor of American women's history at Indiana University, correctly underlines the link between the appearance of new projects with new digitized primary sources and the promotion of new research activities in her own historical field. But she's perfectly aware that few historians are willing to participate in the construction of these enormous digitization projects and maybe few are ready to use these new digital archives which are *de facto* offering an enormous potential for new historical inquiry. And this ignorance of web based documentation seems also to be the case even in the USA: "digital resources are expanding and redefining the archival base for most fields and thereby redefining the fields themselves, she said even if "this is driven more by libraries and the tech industry than by historians."[42]

Keeping "real history" away from digital libraries is exactly what has been noticed also in Italy with an in depth analysis of the impact of the historical study of the cooperative movement after the creation of two important web-sites with primary sources and secondary literature. A few years after their creation has written a young specialist of the history of cooperatives, Tito Menzani,[43] the historical web-sites about the history of the Italian Cooperative Movement, are used and quoted in the many books and articles published on the subject. The direct link between these digital libraries and historiography is not only qualitative

in the refinement of the historical enquiries but is here also a quantitative phenomenon which has been measured with his direct impact on the writing of history itself.[44]

3. Historian's need of online Open Access digital primary sources

In the United States, libraries were acting as digital publication centers before the creation of specialized institutions dealing with specific fields in the digital humanities, such as for instance, happened in Virginia.[45] Libraries promoted a digitization process directly from their primary source collections and their old book collections. Doing so, they have promoted an unmediated way to bring e-contents to the scientific community in the form of a scholarly interaction between their documentation and secondary literature in digital formats and the members of the local and international scientific communities.

Libraries which are leaders in the broad process of digitization can offer primary sources to their users in two ways: reaching commercial agreements with those, like *Google*, *Proquest* or *Thompson-Gale*, who would like to commercialize access to contents; or, on the other hand, would prefer to chose their own way to digitization and become part of the OA/OS movement to provide openly their users and the potential worldwide public of the web, with these contents.

So, following the second solution, libraries should become "publishers" of their own primary source collections as is already the case with many American academic libraries creating primary source digital libraries and with the Library of Congress which inaugurated this trend already in the early 1990's with its *American Memory*.[46] This is also true with scholarly literature, secondary sources, with the use OA repositories, a goal which is pursued by the *D-Space Foundation*, the creator of an open source software, which is also contributing to the *Open Content Alliance* project.[47]

These are indirect ways to "publish" scholarly contents and primary sources and to answer the threat to library finances coming from commercial actors. When a library decides to digitize its own old collection of books, pamphlets, maps, newspapers, archival documents, photographs, etc., even a very small scale, this library -everywhere in the world-, is becoming a "publisher" of its own digital artifacts. Doing this, libraries are working for the public good as cultural mediators creating their own digital libraries, they'll contribute to disseminate widely their digital heritage, "publishing" digital contents using metadata for further retrieval procedures and fully integrating them sometimes in their OPACs too. Catalogue-based indexes (OPAC) and finding aids will then become the two different ways libraries could offer to users to access digitized primary sources and secondary literature also incorporating them in broader digital libraries which are not "owning" their own "collections" but given access to them.

Many libraries behaved differently in these last five or six years, offering new services online and diversifying the ways to reach their public informing them about their collections and services. Integrating library catalogues inside a web 2.0 context, is used also to interact with digital resources and digital libraries in new semantic ways. Also important today for libraries and their OPACs -like Karen Caloun underlined in her survey for the Library of Congress in 2006-[48] is to go where the public is to be found in the web: directly inside social networks and informing their users through new small-scale blogging activities when creating a *Twitter* account. Libraries are now trying to differentiate the ways their collections, information and documentation is brought to each specialized public they serve. And they create appropriate tools to fulfill this goal. One of the many possible tools in this new web 2.0 perspective, was the creation in 2009, of a specific portal to access not owned primary digital sources, the *European*

History Primary sources – EHPS Portal at the European University Institute History Department and Library to support the needs of historians.

Steven Mintz, past president of *H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online*, a pioneer in the application of new technologies to history,[49] wrote about how a so-called *digital turn*, modified his own way to make history: "it has greatly expanded the range of sources—primary and secondary—that I use. [...] It has significantly improved my ability to retrieve the sources that I have read. [...] It has broadened my imagination. I have embraced audio and visual sources because they are much more accessible than in the past. [...] It has enlarged the way I disseminate my scholarship and interact with other scholars".[50]

Historians confronted with the digital age and digital history, even for those not thinking at all of producing digital artifacts within a Ph.D. research, needs to adopt a new digital craft made of new methodologies and new critical paradigms, as it has been briefly described in paragraph 3. This craft is made of different practical and methodological working stages interacting with the internet and the web. It is within these stages that the EUI EHPS portal integrates itself.

If we could divide the process of doing digital history, four different steps would describe the working process which an historian would be confronted with from the "production" of the digital documentation to an individual "consumption" of digital primary sources. This process of research is what we could call the practice of digital history:

1. Production of e-sources;

2. Information about e-sources;

3. Selection of e-sources and meta-sources from digital history web-sites

4. Use of e-sources in the process of writing history in a traditional way or for the web.

All these four different activities are each singularly and together too, defining the field of digital history as producing history through the use of the new media and the e-resources nowadays available on the web. These practices are enormously easier to deal with these days. More complex and specialized was the task of the historian confronted during the early humanities computing era in the 1960s and 1970s, when digitalization was only about counting numbers and statistics also without using a keyboard but programming enormous IBM mainframes. Today, digital tools are often *mash up* operations, small pieces of software embedded in other web-sites and adding specific services. They are simple to build and simple to use and their success will depend on how they facilitate the digital historian's activities and answers specific epistemological queries.

Archivists, librarians, museums and other cultural institutions doing "public digital history" are the modern publishers of web contents.[51] Huge digital projects in the digital humanities and in the field of digital history are now in the process of being coupled with other, tailored small scale projects in the field of digital humanities. These new projects are often using new 2.0 web technologies and are extremely useful to digital historian activities.

Digitizing less documentation is done today within libraries and smaller cultural institutions, to concentrate online on more specialized contents with high scientific standards and high technological added value. Many cultural institutions are populating the web with few archival issues of specialized academic journals, few newspapers, few archival documents, few individual documents, letters, photographs, videos, correspondences, oral history interviews, etc.. These new typology of digital library web-sites are organized to better allow interoperability and integration with their users.

On the contrary, there's also the wish to offer new tools for a tailored selection of contents in libraries aiming at loading on the web their own collections, information and documentation in all formats. This is done for allowing good retrieval procedures of the documentation and a better organization of digital documentation even for remote uses. These projects are often becoming a specific library "brand" and characterize the image of the cultural institutions vis-à-vis their specific public. This happens even better when offering minor quantities of content, less primary sources or secondary literature. Important in this case are the goals which should sustain scientific research in a specific area of the humanities and in history.

This new trend to support digitization of less pharaonic projects, with more precise and delimited contents is a new recommended policy for libraries when they would like to support digital history activities by creating digital contents. New forms of researches using digitized primary sources will soon be available in a semantic future Web 3.0. These sites will be based on what we could call a "semantic integration" between information also in the field of digitized primary sources.

The *European History Online* Project at the University of Mainz for example, will try to fulfill the gap between traditional ways of publication -even of primary sources publications in repositories- and new non-linear ways used to combine and integrate semantically the digital documentation, what they call "internet's full potential".[52] But the best way to understand how things are moving towards a better epistemological integration between static repositories of documents and secondary literature and historical web-sites, is to have a look at the transformation of some pioneering history web-sites in the UK.

If you search a name in the ODNB, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, let's say the 17th century philosopher "John Locke", viewing the entry, [53] you'll be told -like *Amazon* does from many years with its "adds" in the commercial sector or, academic libraries do suggesting full text contents or other databases to search in- that *other electronic resources* are available. These are still external e-resources outside the ODNB and, in the case of Locke, they were the *Electronic Enlightenment*, the *National Portrait Gallery*, the *National Register of Archives* and the *Royal Historical Society bibliography*. So you may wish to complete your information on Locke looking at a portrait in the *National Gallery*[54] or discover some archive documents in archival institutions around Britain which could also be directly accessible as digitized primary sources.[55] But today, like the EGO project in Mainz wants to underline, such a semantic integration of "similar" information will not happen anymore suggesting "external" links for adding new contents loading new web-sites. These full primary sources contents will be embedded altogether in a unique web-site project which will add value to each single web-site in itself. The primary sources will be merged intelligently directly harvesting and integrating these documents from different primary sources databases libraries and offer a potential primary source laboratory for historians to work with. This will happen with the web-site

London Lives[56] launched in March 2010, doing a unique search for a single person. The site integrates the famous *Old Bailey* database which is indexed in EHPS[57], with the *Plebeian Lives and the Making of Modern London, 1690 to 1800* web-site maintained by the University of Sheffield and other datasets in order to harvest primary information and sources on individuals and crimes in London during a large XVIII century: "*Plebeian Lives* [...] uses recent technical advances in the creation and analysis of multiple digital resources to create a comprehensive electronic edition of primary sources on criminal justice and the provision of poor relief and medical care in eighteenth-century London. This will make it possible for the first time to reconstruct how 'ordinary' Londoners interacted with various government and charitable institutions in the course of their daily lives."[58]

Let's hear about these possible changes from historians who were involved from the start in digital history and directed pioneering projects in the field in the USA.[59] Digital historians are now asking for a more stable and systematic use of the web and its possibilities to integrate digital tools in a daily activity. What has to be done today is not just to use passively the existing digital libraries and wed-site projects but to start using these to renovate the way scholarly history is being written. Doing history will not be possible anymore without taking into account these new types of integrated digital library contents like the example we just mentioned for Great Britain, *Plebeian Lives and the Making of Modern London*.

Edward L.Ayers realized between 1991 and 1993 a SGML project called «*The Valley of the Shadow, two communities in the American Civil War*» which became in 1996 a web project. After more than ten years of technical developments, the addition of an enormous amount of digitized primary sources about the Civil War in the USA and the creation of a digital historical archive of the project itself in 2007, Ayers is now suggesting us to change our agenda and not to launch such large scale projects: «we've tended to build big things in the hopes of capturing as many uses as possible. But maybe now we need to build lighter, smaller things. We might build simpler ways to use our vast collections. We might build expressly for the devices that we will increasingly use, devices that are far more portable, wireless, and ubiquitous than those to which we've become accustomed."[60]

But how to monitor these changes, how to list and index these scientific primary sources static web-sites, these new invented archives and also, in the future, new web-sites with integrated and semantic ways to present and match together different primary sources digital libraries ?

This could also be the role of the *European History Primary Source* portal.[61] EHPS integrates itself as a tool, a kind of finding aid, within this new "digital turn" when also non digital historians will have to look for their documentation in the web because of the many added values the internet will offer to the traditional ways of using documents.

The portal is aiming at tracing a map of all the different digital libraries and primary sources databases available for the history of Europe from medieval times to nowadays. As such, EHPS is part of the stages of the digital craft of historians which was mentioned earlier in this section. EHPS precisely enters the *second stage* of the digital historian's journey, because its main goal is about informing of the existence of digitized primary sources and trying to offer its users a way to access them inside their browser and for further uses, steps 3 and 4 of that same journey.

The portal EHPS was born as an autonomous part of the galaxy of web-sites belonging to the *World Wide Web Virtual Library History Central Catalogue* moved in 2004 from the University of Kansas to the European University Institute in Florence.[62] EHPS is dealing with the dissemination of *born-digital* or *meta-sources* belonging to new digital contexts separated from their "analogical" and material existence. EHPS is performing a selection of scholarly primary source web-sites which are offering systematic digitization of sources or publishing coherent collections of sources or even rare documents difficult to gather from physical archives.

The last case, the use of few isolated primary sources by students, is a very good way to teach them how history and historical argumentation is constructed and based on evidences. But educational web-sites or web-sites which are offering only a selection of documents -for the purpose of creating a virtual history exhibition on the web- are excluded from the portal. These documents aren't useful to construct an original scholarly research and are fulfilling other public history goals.[63]

EHPS responds, within its selected contents, to the question of how we could link better the process of searching for primary sources in the digital age thanks to History 2.0. services. In this way, EHPS is a complement of the new ways offered by new semantic OPACs for searching inside library holdings and combining internal search with external potential contents. Some libraries offer access to their projects and catalogues in *Facebook*, others use Blogs, Podcasts, RSS Feeds and Tweets to inform registered users about their activities and digital libraries. Academic libraries may also distribute internally to their users, the knowledge of other cultural institutions through reference networking tools on the web. Sharing meta-data in common open access applications is possible. Building a portal to access digital libraries and meta-sources or born digital sources to answer the needs of a specialized post-graduate international group of researchers and professors in history is exactly the recent History Department experience at the EUI. The EHPS *European History Primary Source* portal was added, in collaboration with the library, to other sources of information available.

An integration in a open access dimension, a capacity to "publish" contents also not belonging directly to the library through Web 2.0 based services and interacting with the users, these two issues discussed in the previous sections, are central for describing the goals and services offered by the *European History Primary Sources* portal which tries to answer the specific needs of a European community of historians based in Florence, Italy, at the *European University Institute*.[64]

Added to these considerations, it also has to be underlined the necessity of adopting low technological profile solutions. Few financial resources were available and no specialized ICT staff is working for the portal itself or would be available. Even within these severe limitations, EHPS searching capacities are able to suppress one step in the digital process of accessing primary sources online supporting postgraduate research in the history of Europe.

Furthermore it has to be mentioned that the EUI, founded in 1976, is a young institution with few old collections. The EUI library isn't an "old library *tout court* because it never even had a card catalogue but always had a computerized database of bibliographical records.[65] Such an academic library couldn't afford to deal with a massive selective project of digitization of owned primary sources collections being such a young cultural institution. In the 1980s, the library was concentrated on the purchase of primary sources in microforms. The retrieval and

the construction of a dedicated web-site for the publication of an original digital library of primary sources is not part of the library goals. Instead, the EUI Library is purchasing and accessing primary sources and secondary literature, mainly e-books from the XVI to XIX centuries,[66] also online, directly from commercial editors.

So, accessing digital primary sources at the EUI is accomplished locally, retrieving the microform documents, going on missions to other libraries and archives or, when possible, finding digital materials from remote cultural institutions digital libraries, a web based procedure. EHPS has been created in this context and, when possible, should avoid to go on mission abroad to consult "physical materials".

4. Description of the European History Primary Sources portal

The *European History Primary Sources* portal (EHPS) inaugurated officially in June 2009, is an index of scholarly web-sites that offer online access to primary sources on the history of Europe, and lists not only meta-sources but also include invented archives and born digital sources. This area of specialized research with all kind of documents and primary sources for the history of Europe is exactly where EHPS would try to become useful: "[…] As the number of digital archives and collections on the internet continues to grow, maintaining an overview becomes increasingly difficult. EHPS strives to fill that gap by listing the most important collections of digital primary sources for the history of Europe, either as a whole or for individual countries…."[67]

While not claiming to be complete, it contains the major national digital libraries and many smaller series of e-sources and smaller digitization projects in Europe. It thus reflects to a considerable extent the current state of digitization of historical source materials in Europe, as well as those digitized outside Europe pertaining to its history. EHPS offers the possibility to analyze the major trends in terms of how materials have been digitized to date and in which digital library context they are offered to the public. It queries essential methodological problems dealing with the use of primary documents in the field of digital history that we spoke earlier about and, when possible, aims to regroup the fragmented reality of digital libraries in a multi-national and multi-cultural environment inside the portal. As far as history of Europe and primary sources are concerned, EHPS would like to collect and connect altogether this heavily atomized reality of digital contents in many languages.

EHPS is made of a very light open source CMS cyber-infrastructure, easy to build and develop, easy to understand and use. EHPS is a small scale tool, low technological profile database using Dries Buytaert's Drupal open CMS,[68] and the *Zen theme* system for Drupal maintained by John Albin Wilkins.[69]

EHPS has been conceived as a web 2.0 tool. EUI history researchers from the Medieval times and the Renaissance period until the very recent contemporary history need to consult primary sources for writing their Ph.D., an original historical research based on solid primary evidences which can be traced searching in many different European archives and libraries and which are far from being immediately accessible from Italy. If books may be accessed in web based platform sometimes as e-books copy or using the *Inter Library Loan service* from other libraries, archival materials have to be consulted locally within the archival institutions they belong to. The History Department has to finance in this case researcher's missions abroad to work within different archival deposit.

Today not only the contents of the web are fragmented but also the meta-data describing contents are often lacking of interoperability and standards -even the OAI PMH standards are not widespread because of the widely divided world of e-publishing- and EHPS tries to integrate these contents bypassing meta-data harvesting and using an "in house" very basic table of tags defining few simple and directly understandable fields. It was difficult to define a list of sources used by historians for all periods from medieval times to nowadays and many manuals were consulted describing typologies of sources even for the new sources of the contemporary world.

Finally EHPS aims to win the participation of its specialized public in order to complete the single web-sites descriptions and abstracts it offers with personal experiences within these archives: it is hoped that EHPS would be considered not only as a redirecting device to other web-sites, but also as a research tool that needs critical judgments from its users for the benefit of other users. This would be also about collaborative tagging and creating more articulated *folksonomies* completing EHPS keywords. An "Amazon.com" type of collaborative filtering of contents is already offered if anybody wants to register. Only a classification from 1 to 5 stars of each web-site is offered currently. All these web 2.0. aspects of EHPS which would better qualify the portal as a social network for specialized scholars, is at the moment the less successful part of it. This is happening not only because of the type of public concerned by the portal, not the widest possible public but scholars and university members. It is difficult to

create appropriate ways of participation in networks when dealing with a very specialized and skilled collectivity of academics, hopefully, the EHPS users.

EHPS portal is a tool for indirectly «publishing» primary sources and offering them in a easy accessible way for any scholarly research from the request of a fully digitized single newspaper like *L'Unità* in Italy or l'*Indépendance belge* in Brussels to broader research topic like the *Cold War* or the *European Integration*, to a request for specific types of primary sources like posters or postcards for the history of the UK during the Victorian period, etc... Of course, the best solution would be to access freely available digitized primary sources materials for the history of Europe on the web directly from one's own personal computer. *Europeana* should provide in the future a good tool to answer some of these needs but is at the moment more about being a rich museum of rare and precious artifacts showing the treasure of the European common and national pasts and less a scientific tool for supporting post-graduate research activities. For postgraduate programs and further research activities programs, the need is to discover original and unexploited primary sources or to consult and precise the use of specific sources.

EHPS is providing also an easy way to be informed of new added contents in "real time" using few freely accessible web 2.0 devices integrated with the *Drupal* CMS. The small scale of the technologies embedded in the project are leaving more space to the maintainers, Gerben Zaagsma at *University College London* and myself at the EUI, coordinating a small group of contributors, to deal with the selection of multi-lingual web-sites indexed in the portal.

Within EHPS, primary sources are to be retrieved and accessed in two steps. The first step is made of a retrieval of the portal's contents, the second, viewing the primary sources, would have to be performed leaving EHPS itself, for the web-site where the sources are directly viewable.

Performing a search in EHPS is done using of four different ways.[70]

The simplest one is to browse one of the five categories offered in the left-hand column: Country, Language, Period, Subject, Type of source.

Find primary sources

| Country |
| Language |
| Period |
| Subject |
| Type of source |
| Combined category search |
| Free text search |
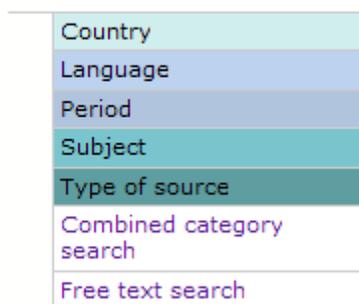
The most selective one is to search the portal's combination of tags,[71] the list of meta information divided within five different categories: a chronological one from the medieval times to nowadays; a linguistic one dealing with all the European languages in which the primary sources may have been written; a list of countries on which the sources are telling

something as single nation's history or on Europe as a whole; a <u>typology</u> of sources trying to define different kind of available digital documents and, finally, a broad list of <u>subjects</u> under which the primary sources may belong to.

▼ Scope

Items containing:

◉ **all** terms   ○ **any** terms

▼ Categories

Country:

☐ EUROPE	☐ Albania	☐ Austria	☐ Belgium	☐ Bosnia
☐ Bulgaria	☐ Croatia	☐ Czech Republic	☐ Denmark	☐ Estonia
☐ Finland	☐ France	☐ Germany	☐ Greece	☐ Hungary
☐ Iceland	☐ Ireland	☐ Italy	☐ Latvia	☐ Luxemburg
☐ Montenegro	☐ Netherlands	☐ Norway	☐ Poland	☐ Portugal
☐ Romania	☐ Russia	☐ Serbia	☐ Slovakia	☐ Slovenia
☐ Spain	☐ Sweden	☐ Switzerland	☐ Turkey	☐ Ukraine
☐ United Kingdom				

Language:

☐ all languages	☐ Arabic	☐ Basque	☐ Bulgarian	☐ Catalan
☐ Croatian	☐ Czech	☐ Danish	☐ Dutch	☐ English
☐ Estonian	☐ Finnish	☐ French	☐ Frisian	☐ Galician
☐ German	☐ Greek	☐ Hebrew	☐ Hungarian	☐ Icelandic
☐ Irish	☐ Italian	☐ Latin	☐ Latvian	☐ Luxemburgisch
☐ Norse	☐ Norwegian	☐ Old Greek	☐ Persian	☐ Polish
☐ Portugese	☐ Romanian	☐ Russian	☐ Scottish	☐ Serbian
☐ Slovak	☐ Slovenian	☐ Spanish	☐ Swedish	☐ Turkish
☐ Ukrainian	☐ Welsh	☐ Yiddish		

Period:

☐ all periods	☐ medieval	☐ 16th century	☐ 17th century	☐ 18th century
☐ 19th century	☐ 20th century	☐ 21th century		

Subject:

☐ all subjects	☐ architecture	☐ art	☐ cartography	☐ Cold War
☐ colonial	☐ cultural	☐ demographic	☐ economic	☐ environmental
☐ European integration	☐ financial	☐ foreign relations	☐ gender	☐ Holocaust
☐ institutional	☐ intellectual	☐ legal	☐ linguistic	☐ literary
☐ migration	☐ military	☐ music	☐ oral	☐ political
☐ religious	☐ rural	☐ science	☐ social	☐ sport
☐ urban				

A third primary source retrieval possibility is offered with a free text search -also in advanced mode- in the whole indexed content of EHPS.[72] This search is useful when names, places, titles of primary sources are already known by who's using EHPS in order to discover them through the descriptive abstracts created for each single web-site indexed.

A fourth way to search for contents is going also outside EHPS itself, using the *Google Custom Search*[73] for a Search inside the listed web-sites -at the moment- more than 700 indexed EHPS web-sites.

Search listed websites

Google™ Custom Search

Search

Being informed about new contents is easy without loading the home page of the portal. It is possible to receive *RSS Feeds* connected to *Google Reader* or as a widget in *Google Home Page*. Registered users[74] have the possibility to "vote" for the qualities of the indexed web-site and can even comment, annotate and complete the abstract and the description of each single web-site with their own information. This possibility has been designed to enhance the portal with added information to EHPS indexed and abstracted entries.

Google™ Add to Google

European History Primary sources - Latest entries
http://primary-sources.eui.eu/content/feed

Google offers two different ways to keep up-to-date with your favorite sites:

Following EHPS directly from Twitter is also possible. Each time a new web-site is added to the portal, whoever follows EHPS receives a tweet with the following information: title of the indexed site and URL to visit it.[75]

There's also the possibility to subscribe to EHPS's page in the most widely used social network *Facebook* and to be informed on all new entries and information there too commenting on new entries.[76]

A registered user is also able to create ones own list of bookmarks and to come back to them easily. He's also able to suggest via a web-form new web-sites to be included in the portal.

WWW Virtual Library History

pean History Primary Sources

European University Institute

Suggest a website

You must *login* or *register* to view this form.

We very much welcome suggestions for websites that could be included on EHPS. At the moment only registered users can use the webform below to suggest a new website.

If you want to suggest a new website please bear in mind that EHPS has only one aim: to provide **direct access** to digitised primary sources. EHPS does not list inventories of sources, bibliographies or virtual exhibitions, however useful these might be.

User account

Create new account | Log in | Request new password

Account information

Username: *

Spaces are allowed; punctuation is not allowed except for periods, hyphens, and underscores.

E-mail address: *

A valid e-mail address. All e-mails from the system will be sent to this address. The e-mail address is not made public and w

Real name of user

Your name: *

Fill in your real name here.

Word verification: *

W9YWL
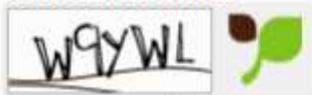
(play audio CAPTCHA)

Type the characters you see in the picture above; if you can't read them, submit the form and a new image will be generated.

Create new account

Some News and archived News are also directly available on the portal itself. These aren't including new web-sites but general information about the management of the portal, forms of working collaboration and some other important information dealing with archives and digital archives.[77]

Google Analytics is monitoring accesses to the portal which was officially launched the 8th of June 2009. After few month of activity, we may say that some of the first web-sites indexed were already viewed more than 1.000 times each and the portal has been abstracted in *Intute*[78] and reviewed in *H-Soz-u-Kult*[79] and is connected within specific widgets in some library and digital humanities web-sites.[80]

European history primary sources

Title:	European history primary sources	⊕ Save
Description:	The European history primary sources website is a portal maintained by the Library and the Department of History and Civilisation of the European University Institute. It is also part of the World Wide Web Virtual Library History that is hosted at the EUI. It comprises a directory of links to primary resources relating to European history from medieval times to the present day. These include ebooks, archives, documents, newspapers, diaries, images, video films and other texts. It is possible to search the site or browse by country, time period, theme or type of resource. All aspects of history are covered including economic history, social history, political history and religious history. Each resource has an added description of content.	
Keywords · controlled:	social history; colonial history; cultural history; economic history; urban history; european studies; modern history; religious history; political history;	
Type:	Resource guides and directories	
URL:	http://primary-sources.eui.eu/	
Classification:	Modern languages and area studies > Europe Social sciences > Politics Social sciences > Government policy	
Country of origin:	Italy	
User rating	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆	

What would of course change enormously the importance of the portal would be to become as complete as possible for all primary sources digital libraries on the history of Europe completing and specializing for primary sources, the aims and contents of the of the *Multilingual inventory of Cultural Heritage in Europe*, the *Michael* multi-lingual portal,[81] the *Minerva* project[82] with its own criteria defining the best web practices in the field of humanities and other European projects portals which are also included in EHPS[83] so to become the main history portal for multi-lingual contents on the history of Europe.

If the consensus of the community of historians will grow, who knows ? Until now, accesses to the portal have increased exponentially during a year of activity following the pattern described by *Alexa*.[84]

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[1] Digital Humanities Luxembourg: Contemporary history in the digital age, URL: [http://www.digitalhumanities.lu/Pages/default.aspx], the papers presented to the conference will be published by Peter Lang in 2010.

[2] CLEO, URL: [http://cleo.cnrs.fr/].

[3] Revues.org, URL: [http://www.revues.org/]

[4] "The Open Archives Initiative develops and promotes interoperability standards that aim to facilitate the efficient dissemination of content. OAI has its roots in the open access and institutional repository movements", Open Archives Initiative, URL: [http://www.openarchives.org/].

[5] "The Open Content Alliance is administered by the Internet Archive and encourages access to and reuse of collections in the archive, while respecting the content owners and contributors", URL: [http://www.opencontentalliance.org/about/]

[6] David Pogue: "Amazon.com Plays Big Brother With Famous E-Books", 17 Juillet 2009, New York Times, URL: [http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/07/17/amazoncom-plays-big-brother-with-a-famous-e-book/]; François Arias: "Kindle: L'affaire «1984» devant les tribunaux. Les excuses publiques du PDG d'Amazon n'y ont rien fait, l'affaire de la suppression des romans d'Orwell finira devant le juge.", lundi 3 août 2009, dans Ecrans, un site de Libération, [http://www.ecrans.fr/Kindle-la-suppresion-devant-les,7847.html]; Grégoire Leménager : «Amazon fait le ménage chez Big Brother», 20 juillet 2009, Le Nouvel Observateur, [http://bibliobs.nouvelobs.com/20090720/13890/amazon-fait-le-menage-chez-big-brother].

[7] Noga Arikha and Gloria Origgi: Text-e, URL: [http://www.text-e.org/index.cfm?switchLang=Eng].

[8] Theodore Zeldin: Histoire des passions françaises, 1848-1945, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980 and An intimate history of humanity., London: Vintage, 1998.

[9] «Cher monsieur Zeldin, […] vous insistez sur internet comme moyen de communication - sur qui communique et comment – […] et, moins, sur internet comme accès à des contenus ou à des connaissances, qu'elles soient scientifiques ou non […]. Les professionnels des contenus scientifiques et non, les éditeurs du numérique, offrent toujours plus de jardins clos et de propriétés privées qui empêchent l'accès direct aux contenus et fragmentent le web en de nombreuses banques de données propriétaires […]. Ce processus de concentration des accès aux contenus est en train de reproduire l'antique division qu'il y avait auparavant entre les bibliothèques importantes, les lieux clefs de la culture et la

"province" ou la "périphérie" de celle-ci qui, aujourd'hui, se trouve aussi à Paris ! Qui n'aura pas accès à ces fournisseurs de contenu ne pourra visionner un tableau en ligne, une photographie, un reportage vidéo, un film, l'encyclopédie de D'Alembert ou lire un essai de Théodore Zeldin. Nous nous dirigeons à grands pas vers cette réalité ou, pensez-vous que l'idée implicite de liberté des accès qu'internet offre dans ses chromosomes réussira à reprendre le dessus ? Et si oui, comment procéder pour combattre cette bataille si nous avons encore la possibilité de la combattre?", Serge Noiret, "Internet et les internet(s), lettre à Théodore Zeldin, Vendredi 14 Décembre 2001", in The Future of the Internet: A conversation with Theodore Zeldin, Friday, December 14, 2001 - Monday, December 31, 2001, URL : [http://www.text-e.org/debats/index.cfm?fa=view&type=view&ConfText_ID=9&Parent=0&Intervention_ID=332&Top_ID=332]

[10] Stevan Harnad: "Open Access to Peer-Reviewed Research Through Author/Institution Self-Archiving: Maximizing Research Impact by Maximizing Online Access.", in: Judith Andrews and Derek Law, (eds.): Digital Libraries: Policy Planning and Practice. London: Ashgate Publishing 2003, URL: [http://www.ecs.soton.ac.uk/~harnad/Temp/digital-libraries.htm] and the French version: «Ciélographie et ciélolexie: Anomalie post-gutenbergienne et comment la résoudre.» in Noga Arikha and Gloria Origgi, (eds) Le texte à l'heure de l'Internet. Paris, Bibliothèque du Centre Georges Pompidou, 2003, pp.77-103, URLs, [http://www.ecs.soton.ac.uk/~harnad/Temp/cielographie.pdf] and in Text-e, cit., URL: [http://www.text-e.org/conf/index.cfm?ConfText_ID=7]. The first reflections of Harnad on Open Access are published in "Scholarly Skywriting and the Prepublication Continuum of Scientific Inquiry", in Psychological Science, 1/1990, pp.342-343 which was reprinted in Current Contents, 45, pp.9-13, 11 November 1991), URL: [http://www.cogsci.soton.ac.uk/~harnad/Papers/Harnad/harnad90. skywriting.html]. Important also is "Post Gutenberg Galaxy: the fourth revolution in the means of production of knowledge.", in The public-access Computer system review, I/2, 1991, pp.39-53, (reprinted in PACS Annual Review, Vol.2, 1992 and in R. D. Mason (ed.) Computer Conferencing: The Last Word., Vancouver CA : Beach Holme Publishers, 1992 and in M. Strangelove and D. Kovacs: Directory of Electronic Journals, Newsletters, and Academic Discussion Lists, 2nd edition, Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, Office of Scientific & Academic Publishing, 1992), URL: [http://www.cogsci.soton.ac.uk/~harnad/Papers/Harnad/harnad91.postgutenberg.html]. See also, Steven Harnad, H. Varian e R. Parks: Academic publishing in the online era: What Will Be For-Fee And What Will Be For-Free?, in Culture Machine, 2000, n. 2, URL: [http://www.cogsci. soton.ac.uk/~harnad/Temp/Varian/new1.htm] e url: [http://culturemachine. tees.ac.uk/frm_f1.htm].

[11] Open Society Institute, URL: [http://www.soros.org/].

[12] Open Society Archive - Archivum, URL: [http://www.osaarchivum.org/] in EHPS, URL: [http://primary-sources.eui.eu/web-site/osa-archivum] and the Parallel Archive, URL: [http://www.parallelarchive.org/], in EHPS: [http://primary-sources.eui.eu/web-site/parallel-archive-pa].

[13] Berlin Declaration, URL: [http://oa.mpg.de/openaccess-berlin/berlindeclaration.html].

[14] As an example, we may quote this important and costly Brill database for early modern German and Dutch pamphlets: TEMPO, The Early Modern Pamphlets Online, URL: [http://tempo.idcpublishers.info/]. Interesting also to look at the growing primary source databases offered to medieval historians by the Brepols Publisher Online in Belgium called Brepolis, URL: [http://www.brepolis.net/].

[15] "Starting from October 2006 MINERVA Project is enlarged to MINERVA EC, MInisterial NEtwoRk for Valorising Activities in digitization, eContentplus Supporting the European Digital Library, URL: [http://www.minervaeurope.org/home.htm].

[16] Lynn H.Nelson's WWW VL History Central Catalogue, was born in 1993 in Kansas. It answered the idea of indexing better the specialized history web contents. See, Some History, URL: [http://vlib.iue.it/history/about/about.html#background].

[17] According to Gino Roncaglia, web 2.0 transformation in the field of digital humanities and history are organized around the idea of networking the research process, "Web 2.0 and the future of Research: new tools for research networks, in Contemporary history in the digital age, URL: [http://www.digitalhumanities.lu/Pages/default.aspx], cit..

[18] Tim O'Reilly's define the caracteristics and principles of Web 2.0. companies, their "core competencies", as the following: "services, not packaged software, with cost-effective scalability; control over unique, hard-to-recreate data sources that get richer as more people use them; trusting business models". Tim O'Reilly "What Is Web 2.0. Design Patterns and Business users as co-developers", in O'Reilly, 30th September 2005, URL: [http://oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html?page=1.

[19] Marc Bloch: The historian's craft, New York, Vintage Books, 1953.

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complexity of its subject as well as the chosen approach of EGO demands a specific mode of publication. They are not covered by a single printed and therefore linear publication but only by the consequent employment of multimedia items and typed links. Europäische Geschichte Online thus combines scholarly expertise and the comprehensive qualities of a handbook, with the wide-ranging research, indexing, and publication options new media has to offer. EGO is therefore not only based on printed sources and research literature but also incorporates scholarly internet resources. Each knowledge complement interweaves a number of various sources – written, audio or visual. Instead of aggregating data, EGO offers self-contained, analytical and problem-orientated knowledge complements. EGO does not simply provide some mere scholarly service, but implements a media change for comprehensive analytical surveys in the humanities."

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