FuD – A Virtual Research Environment for the Humanities and Social Sciences

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The software FuD is a Virtual Research Environment (VRE) for the Humanities and Social Sciences. It supports collaborative research, independent of time and space restrictions, during the different phases of the research process: from data collection and analysis, to the publication and digital preservation of research results and research data.

Being a multifunctional tool, FuD can be used for a great variety of projects and their workflows. At the moment, several projects are collecting and analyzing historical data with FuD by using prosopographical methods. Other projects are using FuD to copy-edit and publish editions of sources and registers in print and online form. Tools for discourse analysis, network analysis, and geographical research methods are provided within the FuD software and are used by several projects.

Based on interdisciplinary requirements, FuD provides a wide range of functionalities for the different workflows for IT-supported research:

The data collection component provides a large variety of flexible and adaptable entry forms for text and metadata acquisition. The system already supports the data input of a number of different document types. Mechanisms for organizing documents and exchanging data have been implemented. In the analysis component different tools are provided for text and image analysis. All procedures rely on the principle of connecting text passages or image section with entries in research schemas by using links and providing the possibility to enrich them with additional information. By using the annotation tool, researchers can add information to the text such as comments or even a text-critical apparatus. In addition, external software tools can be connected like the transcription tool Transcribo (transcribo.org).

For online publishing, FuD offers two systems: Based on the specific needs of the particular project, one or the other will be selected: The FEDORA software is used to assist the researchers of the German Historical Institute Paris to publish the uncollected correspondences of Constance de Salm for further scientific use. More than 7.000 letters were collected in FuD with all their respective inventory data. Keywords and small abstracts have been added. The metadata and digital copies of the letters are published on the website www.constance-de-salm.de. The cake-php publishing tool is developed in cooperation with the Philipps University Marburg. Here nearly 4.500 letters of August Wilhelm Schlegel are collected, organized, annotated and transcribed with the help of FuD. Indices of persons, places and oeuvres are built up and are linked to the Integrated Authority File (GND) of the German National Library. The online publication (august-wilhelm-schlegel.de) provides the metadata, full text, indices and images for each letter.

The archival component of FuD helps to prepare the research data for long-term preservation. For Trier University, FuD offers an interface to the University's Virtual Data Repository, called "ViDa" (vida.uni-trier.de).

Since 2004 FuD has been developed at Trier University in collaboration with the Research Centre Europe (FZE) (fze.uni-trier.de) and the Trier Center for Digital Humanities (TCDH) (kompetenzzentrum.uni-trier.de). By now over 20 projects are working with the software system. Since June 2015 the permanent operation of the VRE is ensured by Trier University due to the establishment of the Service Center eSciences (esciences.uni-trier.de). The FuD basis team, consisting of humanities scholars and computer scientists, guarantees a sustainable and reliable software development by finding software solutions for various research projects inside and outside of Trier University.

For more information about FuD visit our website fud.uni-trier.de.