Digital Scholarly Editing and Memory Institutions

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Digitized collections in libraries and archives are produced, developed and maintained for different target audiences. In research libraries, the aims, tasks and outcomes of these projects can vary considerably. Depending on the parameters of the projects, the resources may have varying degrees of detail, documentation, presentation formats, accessibility, and measures to support trustworthiness and authenticity. Further, in digitizing and making available such materials, there is often a variety of agents involved. For instance, many libraries and archives rely on external agents for parts of the production process in the form of e.g. outsourcing. Such agents might bring even further sets of quality parameters and measures to the table. This might in turn have significant bearing on the value of the digitized resource, and the level of post-process work, use and re-use that can be performed with the digitized material within digital edition projects and other scholarly work.

These are important issues that need to be considered at the outset of any Digital Scholarly Editing project. Today, digitized resources are often the core materials of the Digital Scholarly Edition: they are the materials the editor works with, and on which she bases her editorial interpretation; but they are also the materials the edition's user comes into contact with, and on the basis of which the user bases her critical assessment of the editor's claims. Because the quality and authenticity of the digitized resources is paramount for the quality of the Digital Scholarly Edition, the benefits of good relations and clear agreements in this process of negotiation should not be underestimated. That is why we need to stop working on a case-by-case basis, and look for a more structural and systematic solution to the problem instead.

This poster presents a new DiXiT project to be conducted at the Swedish School of Library and Information Science (SSLIS) at the University of Borås, Sweden, that calls for a critical assessment of such digitization practices. As such, it will examine the collaborations and processes of negotiation between researchers, memory institutions, and other third party industrial agents. In practice, the project aims to tackle these issues on three levels: 1) the institutional level (how does a single memory institution deal with issues of quality control and authenticity of digital resources); 2) the national level (to what extent do memory institutions across a nation collaborate with one another to exchange standards and practices?); and 3) the international level (to what extent are such standards and practices shared and adhered to internationally?). To achieve this goal, the project will a.o. collaborate with DARIAH-BE, and DiXiT partners such as the Centre for Manuscript Genetics (CMG; University of Antwerp, Belgium) and the Swedish National Library in Stockholm.