

SDH/SEMI Panel: Explorations in a Variety of Interfaces for the Reading of a Database

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A Textual Database of Dreams and the New Context of Reading

Christian Vandendorpe (Département de lettres françaises,
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The advent of the web has fostered the development of specialised textual databases, dedicated to tabular collections of snippets of our literary heritage. Their purpose is to facilitate the study of a particular phenomenon through the centuries. Henceforth, the act of reading tends to adopt a tabular way of reading as the one advocated by Claude Lévy Strauss for the study of myths. In order to focus on a specific case, we shall examine the textual mysql database <http://www.reves.ca>, a collection of some fifteen hundred dream narratives from various cultures since Homer and the Bible, and discuss its goals and its initial interface. The challenge is to design an interface that would be both efficient and exciting, inducing in the reader the desire of reading and helping him or her to explore the database and to make meaningful relations between the data.

The Mandala as an Interface to a Textual Database

Stan Ruecker (University of Alberta) and *Stéfan Sinclair*
(McMaster University)

The Mandala is a Java-xml application that makes visible the relations between sets of data. Its playful interface is designed to elicit a meaningful reading activity by the user in order to facilitate an in-depth exploration of the contents. We shall examine how it works with <http://www.reves.ca>, its potential and its pertinence in the new context of reading.

Towards More Powerful Semantic Interfaces

Dominic Forest (École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de
l'information, Université de Montréal)

In this presentation, I will discuss the preliminary results of a research initiative where we explored the relevance of applying text mining techniques on a literary corpus. The corpus used in this work is composed of short thematically-related literary texts stored in a database. The main objective of this project is twofold. First, we want to explore if traditional text mining techniques can successfully be used to assist the extraction and analysis of relevant information found in literary texts. Secondly, we also want to explore if computer-assisted text analysis tools and text mining techniques can be useful to help access to valuable literary information stored in a textual database. This talk will be divided in three main parts. First, I will present the fundamental text mining concepts and techniques. In the second part, I will describe the computer-assisted text analysis processes that were applied on the online textual database (<http://www.reves.ca>). Finally, I will discuss some of the results we obtained and give an overview of the future work that will be done in this project.