“May the text rise up to meet you” – New ways of reading old manuscripts

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The Elwood Viewer

Aims
- Tight coordination of text and image
- Visual cueing to guide/influence reader attention
- Paraccusmic use of certain red colors
- Ease of navigation – especially at opportune moments
- Handy advanced tools – all within a metaphorical arm’s reach
- Simple, no-cost programming environment, open to enhancement

Design Principles
- Pure visual space for text and image (no windowing)
- No scrolling
- Minimal decoration: No chrome. Don’t frame the view
- Provide information as needed: avoid data overload
- Interface open visual content
- Balanced web-developed “animation”
- Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity
- Less display = no display. It won’t be used

Programming Methods
- Written almost entirely in JavaScript (using a bit of XML)
- Ancillary (non-text) data in JSON (JavaScript Object Notation)
- Write hooks to AJAX for eventual web-based distribution of content
- Avoid loading multiple HTML pages. Use DOM and XHTML to interchange across, DHTML for effects
- Flatten/recast XML trees as needed to achieve processing efficiency

Aims

The Elwood Viewer’s distinctive display of image and text is arranged in three panels. Interaction initiated by scanning over the text or image causes a dynamic highlighting of corresponding lines in the text and image panels as well as the presentation of a callout panel containing an enlarged image of each line as it becomes the focus of attention. Continued movement of the mouse over the text or the document image brings about a coordinated change in the highlighting of lines in the text and image panels as well as in the enlarged line image presented in the callout panel.

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Dynamic Layout

In addition to the enlargements of sections of the document image provided in the callout panel, Elwood provides two tools to assist in the examination of document images. The first is a rectangular magnifier that provides enlargements spanning the horizontal dimension of the document page. The second is a rectangular magnifier equipped with variable magnification levels and a series of electronic filters that permit a reader to view the document under a variety of simulated light sources.

In addition to presenting on-the-fly concordances of text, the Elwood viewer is capable of presenting readers with "line image" concordances consisting of footnotes (with useful tools and phrases highlighted) and corresponding manuscript images as illustrated above.

Analytical Tools

For further information

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