

Topic Maps for Digital Scholarly Monographs Presentation

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Abstract

This presentation will outline work on a new approach to digital scholarly monograph subject metadata currently being undertaken by New York University's Digital Library Technology Services department as part of the Mellon-funded grant project, Enhanced Networked Monographs (ENM).

Expanding on the current NYU Press Open Access Books initiative (NYU Press, 2017), the ENM project will provide enhanced web-based access to selected books from NYU Press, the University of Minnesota Press, and the University of Michigan Press. In addition to annotation and full-text search, the ENM website will provide users with innovative paths of discovery and navigation via a "topic map" of names and concepts derived from back-of-book index entries.

The ENM project does not make use of the Topic Maps standard (ISO, 2006), but rather its basic underlying data model. ENM topic records are created and managed in the Topic Curation Toolkit (TCT). Developed by Infoloom Inc (Infoloom, 2017), the TCT is comprised of a database of topic records and a web-based editor interface. Through ingest scripts and subsequent human intervention, the TCT combines automatic and manual processing of EPUB indexes. NYU and Infoloom's experimentation with topic records as an alternate type of subject metadata represents a novel attempt to make machine use of an existing information structure hitherto geared principally toward human consumption.

This presentation will discuss the opportunities and issues that arise when transforming metadata created for the small-scale context of an individual book to a larger scale that cuts across texts. An overview of the workflow for creating topic map records, including a discussion of the role of human curation, will be provided. Topic map publishing will also be described, specifically the mapping of topic map records to JSON-LD and the design of ENM website features that make use of topics to provide users with enhanced navigation.

References

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