

Conclusions and Group Discussion

James Cummings

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Conclusions

What conclusions can we draw from our superficial yet intensive survey of the TEI?

The wrong way of thinking about the TEI

- A traditional (if large) research project with soft funding, driven by academic curiosity
- A codification of best practice, with no formal maintenance method
- Uncertain licencing and development practices
- Unmanageably complex except by the priesthood — or simultaneously as too simple for real scholarly work
- Lack of specific tools to *do* something with a TEI text
- Failure to market the advantages of rich markup

The good way of thinking about the TEI

- A funded international consortium supported by major institutions
- Proper open source licence, with openly visible development on Sourceforge
- Architecture rethought to facilitate expansion and integration with other systems
- Self documenting, each release fully validated, delivered using standard mechanisms
- Publicly available processing tools managed together with the Guidelines
- Active developer community, wiki, SIGs, test files, exemplars, regular updates...

Two reasons why standards fail

- The theory is not yet ripe
- The "not invented here" attitude: the community of users is too diverse

Some real life examples

- make the browser do the work: Early America's Digital Archive (<http://www.mith2.umd.edu/eada/>)
- make the client do the work: Artamène, ou Le Grand Cyrus (<http://www.artamene.org/>)
- handling multiple scripts: Samyukta Agama (<http://buddhistinformatics.chibs.edu.tw/BZA/>)
- digital archive: Swinburne Archive (<http://swinburnearchive.indiana.edu/swinburne/www/swinburne/>)

Conclusions

- even the simplest of approaches allows you to share your encoding, your analysis
- the more ambitious your markup, the more sophisticated the possibilities
- there is a common set of techniques and tools: you don't need to re-invent the wheel
- TEI XML empowers the data provider: you determine what can be done with your materials

Group Discussion

Although I know this survey of the TEI has been overly fast and superficial, with not enough time for exercises, I'd be interested in your thoughts on how to improve it.

Alternatively, if you have questions on how to encode something in TEI XML, ask away!

Upcoming courses:

- DHO Summer School 2009: 13-17 July 2009
- Oxford: TEI Summer School: 20-24 July 2009