

NeMO - NeDiMAH Methods Ontology

Use Case Maryl:

Project: Typology of weblog genres

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Aiming to imprint the research process on the NeDiMAH Methods Ontology, this document presents the scope and description of a case study of humanities research. This use case was provided by Marciej Maryl in the context of his participation at the NeDiMAH Methods Ontology Workshop held in the Hague in December 2014.

Use Case Maryl: Project Typology of weblog genres

Typology of weblog genres

(Please note that the described activity is only a part of a larger research project “Blog as a new form of electronic writing”, 2012-2014, funded by the National Science Center in Poland)

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The aim of this study was to create a typology of weblog genres, based on the metadata derived from popular Polish blogging platforms. In this study blog is understood as a format, i.e. as a technological platform for diverse genres. Blogs will be hence approached as textual or rhetorical hybrids (cf. Jamieson and Campbell 1982; Miller and Shepherd 2004). This approach shifts the research perspective from investigation of genre features of a blog towards the analysis of genres the blog format may contain.

In some blogging services bloggers assign a category (or multiple categories) to their blogs, in order to “tag” the content for future readers. This study analyzed those categories and provided a model of blog genre typology based on those metadata. The study had two phases. In phase one methods of qualitative content analysis were applied, whereas in phase two the analysis categories from 88 000 blogs was assisted by Gephi visualization software.

Phase one was dedicated to the cross-platform analysis of 127 blog categories and 164 subcategories from the leading Polish blogging services. Every platform provides a closed list of such categories (around 30-40), from which individual bloggers chose the ones that correspond with their texts. Through the content-analysis the team identified the main groups of such categories: topic (e.g. travel, hobby, computer); form (e.g. videoblog; photoblog); genre (e.g. journal, gossip); communication (e.g. female matters; teen blogs); perspective (e.g. longing,

chill-out). Three coders assigned all the categories and subcategories to those groups. The results were as follows: topic (70%), communication (13%), form (6%), genre (6%), perspective (5%).

Although most of the categories were topic-oriented, researchers realized that genre and formal categories were also frequently used as an surplus to topical categories. They decided to analyze the relationship between multiple categories in the phase two.

Phase two was focused on Bloog.pl, one of the largest blogging services in Poland. This study analyzed the sequences of 2-3 categories assigned to individual blogs by their authors (e.g. "Film, stars, music" ; or "Stars, music, gossip"; or "Leisure, female matters, journals" to name just a few from the most frequent sequences). These sequences were retrieved from over 88 000 blogs and analyzed with Gephi. The analysis revealed four main groups of blogs related to such matters as (1) gossip; (2) private life; (3) leisure; (4) public sphere. Those groups can be interpreted in connection to the offline genres of a tabloid, journal, magazine and newspaper as blog genres.