UniLux01

INTERVIEWER: Which digital technologies do you use when writing academic texts? Please, describe the process from the idea formation to the final draft and provide some examples of tools.

Even when I go to the archives?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, why not.

In the archive centres I create a Word document for each archive I receive. I take pictures with my mobile phone and I have a program that transforms my pictures into PDFs, so normally it's one or two PDFs per archive. It depends if there is a lot to be shot. The problem is that I read less and less at the archive centre. Sometimes I don't even write down what I take pictures of anymore. Sometimes I take photographs and at some point I have to find the time to see the PDFs. In the evening I transfer the PDFs from my phone to my computer. And I also started to make a kind of Log book for the archive numbers I had ordered and looked at, to get a glimpse of what I've done because I work on plenty of different topics and sometimes I leave things unsettled for 2 years.

You know, during the PhD thesis you go every week to the archive centre on a topic. This is a little bit different now. What changes in writing is that I never have 2 or 3 weeks in a row anymore to write on the same topic. During the confinement, as I was theoretically on sabbatical, I was not engaged in a lot of things but I work on 3 different articles and I take one day in the week per article. I re-open my PDF's and I take notes in a word file of important ideas and at the same time I open the document where I write the article and I can put quotes right away in the article. Now I can see the interest of this Log book because the last time I worked on archives I'm using for one of my current paper it was 13 months ago. I also have a Log book for each article, I write down the books I read, the archives I've read, the emails, etc.

INTERVIEWER: Is it a paper or digital Log book?

A free office document. This is for the archives. For all the books I read, I manage them entirely by Zotero. I've been using Zotero now since August 2009. For the books/articles I'm hyper methodical, I have 15 000 references in Zotero and I also use Zotero to store PDFs of books and articles. I had searched a lot of press, I also put HTML in Zotero. I also use Zotero to create my references. I don't use paper at all. I read history books on paper for leisure but for work I have them all in PDF and I read them in PDF. It's also something that has changed in the last year. I used to be on Linux but it is catastrophic for PDFs reading and you don't have ADOBE

for OCR. Now I'm on Windows, I can make text recognition, it works quite well because I work mostly on typed archives.

INTERVIEWER: Do you use any digital tools enabling workflow planning and monitoring? Give examples.

Yes, this Log book, a dumb Word file.

INTERVIEWER How did you learn to use them?

Self-learning.

INTERVIEWER: Let's move to publishing. What types of scholarly outputs have you published in the course of the past two years? (It could be in the form of a journal article, book or book chapter, paper in an edited volume or conference proceedings, SSH blogs/platforms, data source, software, multimedia).

So, articles in journals, books, chapters in books and the BGL virtual exhibition.

INTERVIEWER: No blog?

I stopped three or four years ago.

INTERVIEWER: Which ones did you write individually and which ones were co-written?

There's everything, I've done a book by myself, journal articles by myself and with others and the virtual exhibition with others, I've never done a multimedia thing alone.

INTERVIEWER: Now I would like you to choose one output which you'd find most interesting for our discussion in terms of form (If applicable, it could be an example of an innovative genre of scholarly communication, like blog post, project website, multimedia scholarly edition, social-media post, etc.) We will talk about this output in more detail.

There's only the virtual exhibition.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you choose this particular form for this output?

It was mandated by my director.

INTERVIEWER: What were the main challenges in finding the appropriate publisher or publication channel?

There was no challenge because C²DH had already a channel, it was clear that we were going to do this with a system.

INTERVIEWER: Which system?

It's a kind of Wordpress that is behind the exhibition.

INTERVIEWER: Does this belong to C²DH or is it outsourcing?

It belongs to C²DH, it's a content manager for building web pages.

INTERVIEWER: When choosing a publishing venue are you attentive to bibliometrics (h-index, open/new metrics)?

Yes in general.

INTERVIEWER : What about this one in particular?

No, the virtual exhibit will never be cited by anyone.

INTERVIEWER: What are the advantages and disadvantages of using that form?

You can add videos, images, you can even add archives, not just a quote, it's less fixed. There is no final date for publication, you can update the content, add documents regularly, it's more dynamic.

INTERVIEWER: How long did the publication process take from the moment of finishing the draft?

Given the time pressure, zero. But I guess you could say that's an advantage. With Benjamin our printed publication took a year and a half. For the exhibition the next day it was fine. There was no peer review and all that.

INTERVIEWER: Which parts of the publication process were the most time-consuming?

Once we'd written the texts we wasted a lot of time on the technical side to integrate the texts and photos. The virtual exhibition side... writing the text was fast. It took a long time to get from the written text to the layout as it was supposed to appear on the website.

INTERVIEWER: What could have been done more efficiently? How?

We were a fairly large team and coordination took a lot of time. The discussion with the colleague who had to take care of the technical side, we didn't understand each other, he thought we didn't have the technical skills, we thought he didn't understand what we wanted.

INTERVIEWER: Who made decisions about approving your output for publications?

At the bank, they reread the text and asked to cut part of it out.

INTERVIEWER: Do you perceive any difference between papers which resulted from collaboration as opposed to individual pieces?

Yes, I find it interesting to work with someone to be able to discuss the structure, the writing, the sources we use. I have 2 or 3 people with whom I'm very complementary, I like it. You need to have a very strong trust with the person, as we discuss a lot anyway. I also have 2 articles that I never wrote because I couldn't stand the criticisms that others made and we got angry. But that didn't discourage me and I prefer to write an article in collaboration with someone else.

INTERVIEWER: Have you used any digital tools enabling collaborative writing?

I use Google drive a lot. And Zotero to share PDFs of articles.

INTERVIEWER: Who was in charge of the writing process? Did you have a "leading" author or was it an equal collaboration?

Until now it has always been equal.

INTERVIEWER: Even with your PhD student?

Yeah, we split the work 50-50.

INTERVIEWER: Let's talk about evaluating. We are still discussing the chosen output. When discovering new scholarship or doing literature review, how do you make decisions about trustability and quality?

If it's a good journal, an author who's already published, if it's an academic publisher. I didn't differentiate on secondary literature between this project and others.

INTERVIEWER: Do you trust work more if it has been peer reviewed? Why?

I don't check if it has been peer reviewed, I use Google Scholar a lot but I'm not going to check if the article is peer-reviewed or not. For the books, at Editions du Seuil for example, I don't know if it's indicated. I suppose that today almost all journals are peer-reviewed. It's a question that I almost never ask myself in fact.

INTERVIEWER: When you receive an invitation to peer review a scholarly object, what are the circumstances that help you to decide whether to accept or decline?

No more than two a year. When I'm asked, it's usually always on topics I know. I accept two reports and two article reviews a year.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever been rewarded for the reviewing activity?

No.

INTERVIEWER: What would increase your motivation to peer-review?

I have great motivation but nothing.

INTERVIEWER: Is the output you have chosen for this discussion available openly online?

Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Where and why did you choose this dissemination venue? [

It was a public history project, that was the point. Doing this behind a paywall would have been ridiculous.

INTERVIEWER: Are you a part of any online group or network for researchers?

Yes.

INTERVIEWER : What other methods of communication about this research did you use? Here we ask about communicating your outputs through diverse forms in various phases of the research process.

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, some mailing lists and journalists specifically targeted.

INTERVIEWER: At the end or throughout the whole project?

I tweeted sometimes about some findings in the archives. I also used Facebook when I found fun stuff. But I didn't attend conferences like I do for articles.

INTERVIEWER: Did anyone help you with that?

Yes, our communication office.

INTERVIEWER: Which communication channels are useful and appropriate for communicating with the audience in SSH?

I use twitter a lot, I still find it works well.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see a need for changes in the field of communication about scientific papers in SSH? What could be improved from your perspective?

For history, I often feel comfortable with this system. What I find interesting are programs like the radio show, *La fabrique de l'histoire*, that reveal how research is carried out.

INTERVIEWER: When you hear "scholarly text" what comes to your mind?

A text published in an academic journal with footnotes and peer-review.

INTERVIEWER: What role do other materials (data, images, software, etc.) play in the process of writing and publishing?

I'm quite conservative, I've rarely read anything that tries to integrate... […]. It's also a question of habit. I read the text. I'm not going to spend so much time on the videos for example.

INTERVIEWER: What is your opinion about publishing the entire material from a given study in SSH: whole interviews, annotated texts, research protocols, data collected in the research process etc.?

It doesn't make any sense. I already don't have time to read all the articles I want to read. I understand it intellectually, but given the time I have, I don't think I would take the time to get into an underground area below the article.

INTERVIEWER: Do existing metadata schemes cover the needs of scholarly writing and integrating various metadata: publication metadata, research data metadata, non-textual content metadata?

I use Google scholar, I know there are metadata behind it, but it's still a very basic approach to metadata.

INTERVIEWER: Which innovative genres and formats of scholarly communication are you familiar with? (e.g. website, software, blog, social media posts, etc)

Blogs, twitter, websites, but for me it's more of an adjunct to academic publishing. The blog also allows to support someone in writing an article or a book and can give access to the raw data but I remain quite conservative, once I read the final article I won't go into it anymore. It can be a level to access the shaping of history.

INTERVIEWER: What is the audience of innovative forms and genres? Does it overlap with the audience of more traditional forms of scholarly communication?

Again, when I write an academic article it's for a fairly small audience and I don't think these new technologies are going to change that. I don't think anybody who's not interested in history is going to start reading about neuroleptics in the fifties.

INTERVIEWER: How to assess the impact of new genres in comparison to bibliometric impact factor of traditional communication?

It's kind of hard to say. My blog has never been mentioned in a book. I have a feeling that so far Google Scholar is mostly limited to books and articles. And I don't exactly know how the evaluations within the university take it into account.

INTERVIEWER: Should all innovative genres be peer-reviewed? Are there any differences? What do you think about citing new writing forms when writing an academic publication?

I don't think everything should be peer-reviewed, not necessarily for the blogs, where we can publish faster. For me it's often complementary things. But in Frédéric's digital book, there's collective peer-review and I find it interesting too.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think there are publication types that count more in your career assessment/academic profile than others? What are these and why?

Yes, peer-review articles in English.

INTERVIEWER: Not books?

Less and less, even if in history it's still valued. It's important for the qualifications.

INTERVIEWER: Could writing for the non-scholarly audience be a source of academic prestige?

I don't know if it's academic prestige, but I think it's also part of our job to be a public figure as well.

INTERVIEWER: What are the elements that make up the prestige of a publication?

The reputation of the journal.

INTERVIEWER: Are some innovative forms and genres of scholarly communication considered to be more prestigious than others?

No.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think about the prestige of OA publications?

It's not a question of prestige, there's good and bad Open Access.

INTERVIEWER: Which actors have currently the strongest influence on publishing: policy-makers, funders, research institutions, publishers, early career researchers, senior researchers. Why?

Those who are on the editorial board and who determine who will peer-review the paper to and a little bit the funders. If you have money today... a friend proposed a book to the Oxford University Press and they had so much funding...

INTERVIEWER: Who are gatekeepers in scholarly communications? Reviewers, editors, editor in chief?

The editor in chief, the question is played out before… whom the editor in chief or the editorial board is going to give the paper to…

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that peer review is effectively conducted by the best experts? Are they rather early career researchers or senior staff?

I don't know, it depends of the journals. Today the problem is more about finding people who do the reviews.

INTERVIEWER: Let's come back to peer-review. What are the main functions of peer review? (gatekeeping, improving scholarly work, filtering?)

Improving, I really think that each time it was hard but it's always better afterwards, it's finally a rather great chance.

INTERVIEWER: Should the peer review be published together with the paper?

Theoretically no, the published paper is different at the end. The review is not about the published paper.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever heard about open peer review?

Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think about it?

It exists around a community as in the case of Frédéric and Caroline's book, people who have a loyalty, so I don't think open peer review would fall from the sky.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever taken part in it as an author or reviewer? If so, what were your impressions?

In Frederic and Caroline's book once, I made one or two remarks in a chapter I was interested in.

INTERVIEWER: In your opinion, is it easy or difficult to find researchers willing to participate in innovative peer-review practices?

In the two journals I'm involved in, it's not like that.

INTERVIEWER: How does a budget influence or limit the horizon of choice with regards to publishing venue or format?

Yes, the budget has an influence, if I don't get the translations, I can't publish in English. Now there are more and more journals where you have to pay beforehand, but I know that in Luxembourg this is not a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Is there any institutional or national support for covering the publication fees.

Yes, the FNR and the C^2DH.

INTERVIEWER: Is it possible to obtain financial support from beyond academia, like crowdfunding?

I never tried.

INTERVIEWER: We arrive to the synthesis. What are the tools or services that you really miss from the current landscape, that would make the publication process much easier?

I'm more interested in text mining tools and stuff like that, but it's not about publishing.

INTERVIEWER: What is the most important thing that should be changed in order to improve the current scholarly communication system?

That everything would be accessible for free. We don't have access to all the journals in our academic package.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know any innovative publishing projects that we should examine?

The Journal of Digital History soon to be launched.