References to e-texts in academic publications

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore roles of electronic texts (e-texts) in research enquiry in literary and historical studies, and to deepen the understanding of the nature of scholars' engagement with e-texts as primary materials. The study includes an investigation of references to e-texts and discussions about researchers' citation practices in interviews.

Design/methodology/approach – Qualitative methodology was used to explore scholars' interactions with e-texts in 30 research projects. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to examine citations and any other acknowledgments of e-texts in participants' prepublications and published works. In-depth semi-structured interviews provided data for findings about researchers' citation practices.

Findings – Formal acknowledgments of e-texts do not represent the depth and breadth of researchers' interactions with e-texts. Assessments of the relevance and trustworthiness of e-texts, as well as considerations of disciplinary cultures, had some impact on researchers' citation practices.

Research limitations/implications – The study was based on in-depth data-gathering from a small group of participants. It does not have any statistical significance and the findings cannot be generalized, but comparisons with other scholars in literary and historical studies are possible. The study indicated a need for further investigation of changing academic practices in general and citation practices in particular.

Practical implications – The findings have implications for the development of standards and institutional support for research in the humanities.

Originality/value – The study provides new insights into the phenomenon of a very small number of citations of electronic sources in publications in the humanities, and considers issues related to citations from the perspective of changing academic cultures.

Keywords User studies, Information studies, Researchers, Humanities, Research

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Primary materials in the humanities

Rapidly growing online resources include digitised materials from large libraries, small local archives and private collections, as well as "electronically born" official documents, works of art and products of popular culture. These resources provide a large body of primary data for research in the humanities, which relies on investigation of wide-ranging materials from all historical periods.

The importance of primary sources, especially textual materials, for a large part of humanities research has been well documented. Primary materials provide an essential basis for historians' interpretation (Delgadillo and Lynch, 1999; Tibbo, 2003) and some historians "described their use of primary sources as the heart of what they do" (Case, 1991, p. 74). Fulton (1991) also noted the importance of manuscripts and unpublished

sources for research in literary and historical studies, although the value of these materials may vary, depending on the topic.

The significance of web sites as primary sources is unclear. Only seven out of 278 historians in Dalton and Charnigo's (2004) study mentioned web sites as sources, but Houghton *et al.* (2003) found that a range of web resources were perceived as essential, and that included resources discovered by generic search engines such as Google. The meaning of the difference in findings is not clear, but it may be attributed to different samples in the two studies – Dalton and Charnigo studied a group of American historians, whereas Houghton, Steele and Henty referred to Australian researchers in the humanities and social sciences.

The importance of a source may depend more on an individual project and interpretation than on any objective assessment of its significance. In some projects, a web site on popular culture may have the same importance as an archival document (Palmer and Neumann, 2002; Palmer, 2005).

Direct access to originals is repeatedly mentioned as crucial, because scholars need to investigate various details of originals to detect clues required for the research. Steedman asserts that "[t]he historian's massive authority as a writer derives from two factors: the ways archives are, and the conventional rhetoric of history writing, which always asserts . . . that you *know* because you have been there" (Steedman, 2001, para 39).

Although direct access to primary materials is very important to many scholars, it is often very difficult for a number of reasons. Trips to distant locations where scholars can view originals are costly and time-consuming. The problem is aggravated by the fact that large parts of special collections are not easily identified. Another problem in accessing primary materials is related to acquisition policies, which promote collection of certain types of materials. A historian was concerned that ". . . there must be a whole field of what was important to people at one time that for a variety of reasons didn't get into academic libraries in the late nineteenth century" (Case, 1991, p. 73).

Online resources provide primary materials that are difficult, if not impossible, to discover by traditional finding aids. In some cases, digitization of small, remote and/or private collections makes available historical documents and literary texts that were inaccessible before, but the question is how useful and appropriate these electronic materials are for scholarly purposes.

Authenticity

A major obstacle to working with online sources seems to be researchers' doubts about their reliability and authenticity, which is central to the use of resources for research. Bearman and Trant (1998) pointed out that convincing scholarly arguments depended on judgments about the authenticity of source materials – their origin, completeness and internal integrity.

Since the judgment of authenticity of source materials is a necessary part of scholarly work, the question is, why is it posing particular problems when materials are in electronic form? Part of the answer relates to the quality of these materials. Electronic documents can be published by anyone and, as noted by Bearman and Trant (1998), forgeries are much easier. Historical reasons also play a part. The first full-text databases chose out-of-copyright editions rather than the best ones, which made users rightly suspicious of their quality (Warwick, 2001).

On the other hand, digitised electronic documents provide minute details, which are not accessible to most people. Reading Chaucer in the manuscripts "is baffling – you are encountering a whole world of cultural codes, expressed in the letter shapes, the layout, organization, and decoration of the manuscripts. To give people images of this quality is to give them the exhilaration of the original" (Robinson, 1993, p. 13). Detailed presentation of digital facsimile editions, with capacities for image manipulation, sometimes make an electronic image superior to seeing the original in a good light (Duggan, 1996).

An obstacle in using and publicly acknowledging rigorously developed electronic sources is the lack of widely accepted criteria and details, which are needed for evaluation. Critically important for judgment of the authenticity of an electronic document are its provenance and a detailed declaration of transformation identifiable in metadata (Gladney and Bennett, 2003), but this information is not always available.

Detailed documentation about electronic sources in general and digitized materials in particular would play a significant role in assuring reliability, but it is unlikely to resolve all the different requirements for authenticity. The view of authenticity as a social construction emphasises that notions and judgments of authenticity are changeable and dependent on the social context (MacNeil and Mak, 2007). The ease of reproduction and repurposing of electronic information makes questions about contextual and cultural authenticity particularly relevant. The changeable and socially bound nature of authenticity comes to the fore through multiple electronic representations of a document. Judgments about authenticity of the same historical document may depend on whether it appears on a personal web site, in the context of promotion of a political party or in a digitized museum collection. The judgment as to which representation is most authentic is closely related to the judgment about authoritativeness of the source, to the point that "authentic" and "authoritative" can become synonymous.

Authority
Authenticity of representation and authority of the source are main criteria for accepting or rejecting information for academic purposes. According to Buckland, cognitive access and acceptability are two major barriers to users' access to information. Cognitive access means that the recipient has "sufficient expertise to understand or, at least, misunderstand the information", and acceptability means that "[t]he recipient must be willing to accept the information, believing it to be true and not rejecting it as awkward" (Buckland, 1991, p. 113). The latter is particularly important in the context of scholarly information use.

Acceptability of information can be considered in terms of cognitive authority, defined as "influence on one's thoughts that one would consciously recognise as proper" (Wilson, 1983, p. 15). Authority is a matter of degree. Judgment of the degree of authority of information sources has become particularly difficult in online environments, but the clues associated with belonging to a certain group provide some reference points. Rieh (2002) suggested that the perception of authority was often based on group identification, so academics valued academic information while bankers trusted information on bank web sites. According to Rieh, judgment of cognitive authority of online information was characterized by six factors: "trustworthiness, reliability, scholarliness, credibility, officialness and

authoritativeness" (Rieh, 2002, p. 153). Like authenticity, the understanding of factors that contribute to the perception of authority is dependent on the group's norms and values. Lankes (2008) argued that in assessing online sources, users look for reliability rather than authority in the sense that commonalities between a number of information sources are more important than the authority of a trusted information provider.

A critical question concerns which knowledge and which sources can be accepted as authoritative or at least reliable in academic circles. Burnett and McKinley (1998) suggested that the perception of cognitive authority might be affected by the media through which it was received. More verifiable media, such as print, are perceived to have more cognitive authority, but in situations where currency was important, databases would have more authority than books.

The relationship between knowledge and power has been a topic of considerable discussion, notably in Foucault's work. Lyotard (1984) argued that power relations had a strong influence on knowledge claims. Wilson (1983) wrote that the struggle for authority prevailed in the knowledge industry, in which everyone tried to convince peers of the worth of his or her own knowledge. According to these views, power relations play a significant role in the social construction of authority.

Despite dominant power relationships associated with claims to knowledge and truth, Foucault (1980, p. 81) found evidence of "insurrection of subjugated knowledges" in recent times. These knowledges appeared as buried and disguised historical content and as "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (Foucault, 1980, p. 82). Foucault argued that critical discourses in the previous "fifteen years have in effect discovered their essential force in this association between the buried knowledges of erudition and those disqualified from the hierarchy of knowledges and sciences" (Foucault, 1980, p. 82). Foucault named this union genealogy and saw it as anti-sciences, opposing centralizing powers associated with an organized scientific discourse rather than the contents and methods of a science.

Act of citation
The selection of information sources is a fundamental part of the research process, which is often based on wide-ranging criteria, aiming to assess relevance, trustworthiness and authority of the sources. The use of selected information always involves some form of its integration in research. Although use is the main purpose of information searching, indicators and measures of information use are very limited. In academic research, scholars' intellectual engagement with texts is often traced through citations as a readily available measure of the use of ideas. The large number of citations is considered to be an indicator of the value of a cited work and is used in processes of academic promotion. According to Cronin (1996), citation counts are strongly associated with career advancements.

While it is accepted that citations are a valuable subset of all the used information, the literature offers different interpretations of what this selection represents. Bornmann and Daniel (2008) reviewed studies of citing behavior and found two competing theories: normative theory stresses the importance of relevance and usefulness of a source, while the social constructive view sees citation as a social process open to personal bias and social pressures. In the normative framework,

citation is indicative of the intellectual influence of a work and bibliometric analysis is suitable for the evaluation of academic research.

According to views which stress social aspects, citations are not only used in academic writing to support an argument on the basis of trustworthiness and relevance of the source, but they are also selected to situate one's work intellectually and socially: "Citation, one historian suggested 'serves a social and institutional as much as an epistemological function'" (Becher and Trowler, 2001, p. 114). Brooks (1985, p. 228) found that a need to persuade colleagues of the correctness of one's own research and the act of giving positive credit to the cited source were two motives that humanists indicated as the most influential in their decisions to cite a source. The act of citing is an acknowledgment that the cited work deserved attention (Gilbert, 1977, p. 117). According to Gilbert, it involves a complex negotiation, because the author could not be sure who would read the work and what readers would consider worthy of citation.

The interpretations, which consider citations primarily as a tool of persuasion, are aligned with previously discussed views of cognitive authority and power relations. From this vantage point, the final selection of citations seems to be strongly influenced by social rules for establishing one's cognitive authority and, consequently, gaining power in academic circles.

Citation of electronic sources

A small number of studies which considered citation of electronic sources in the humanities indicate that these materials are largely absent from publications in the humanities. Knievel and Kellsey (2005) found that books represented over 74 per cent of all citations in a range of humanities journals published in 2002, while internet sources represented only 0.3 per cent of all references. Graham's (2000) study showed that investigated publications in history had fewer than 2 per cent of references to e-sources. A study of 80 articles in the period between 1997 and 2000 showed that only three articles included references to electronic sources (Graham, 2001). Graham (2002) noted that, in the opinion of historians, their colleagues did not respect citations of electronic sources and digitised documents were not equivalent to the original. Graham suggested that these two reasons explained why historians preferred to cite print.

Scholars in American literature valued searchable texts because they allowed them to make "intellectual connections that were previously impractical, if not impossible" (Brogan and Rentfrow, 2005, p. 21). However, "[f]ew are willing to use digital texts (outside e-journal articles) as the 'text of record for a scholarly article' – even those digital resources (texts and archives) produced by their peers, by university libraries, or by otherwise credible publishers" (Brogan and Rentfrow, 2005, p. 21). This finding was supported by McGann's (2005) survey of relevant print scholarship, which showed that few authors cited the electronic Rossetti Archive, although it is an authoritative scholarly edition.

Although electronic resources have not been accepted immediately in other disciplines, it seems that scholars in the humanities have been more reluctant to cite electronic resources. Robinson (2007) found that most references in the toxicology literature are to traditional resources, but there is a significant increase of citations to web-based materials – from a mean of 3 per cent in 2000 to 19 per cent in 2005. Herring (2002) analysed citations to electronic resources in a sample of academic, peer-reviewed

journals in 1999 and 2000, and found considerable variations in journals with different disciplinary subjects. Journal subjects "religion and society" and gender studies were the closest to the humanities. It is indicative that the lowest number of citations was in journals with the subject "religion and society" (6.3 per cent), followed by psychology (11 per cent) and gender studies (20 per cent). All other journals (all in sciences and social sciences) had more than 40 per cent of references to electronic resources.

Explanation of these citation patterns in the humanities is largely absent from the literature. Weedman pointed out that humanities scholars cite and co-author less frequently than others, and "these formal relationships are not by themselves adequate measures of the intellectual exchanges in the field" (Weedman, 1993, p. 771). Dalbello *et al*. (2006) suggested that electronic documents had a widespread use in supporting humanities research, but they were still invisible in citation practices. These views provide some reference points in considering the citations of electronic sources in general and primary resources in particular, which are for the most part uninvestigated phenomena.

Methodology

An investigation of references to electronic texts in academic publications in the humanities was part of the study, which aimed to interpret roles of e-texts in research enquiry, and to deepen the understanding of the nature of scholars' engagement with e-texts. Qualitative methodology was used to investigate roles of electronic texts in academic research projects in literary and historical studies. The study focused on the engagement with electronic texts as primary materials, used as a resource and tool, as opposed to projects that aim to produce electronic textual editions or enhance electronic texts in any way.

E-text was defined as any textual material in electronic form, used as a primary source in literary and historical studies. Primary electronic materials, or electronic texts, are usually poetry, stories, novels, plays, and a variety of historical documents – government, public or private. Digitised archival copies of magazines and newspapers or web sites could be electronic texts when they are used as primary sources. Electronic texts could be written or spoken (for example, oral histories), digitised or created electronically, stand-alone documents or part of electronic databases and editions.

Scholars from six universities in two Australian cities and one participant from a university in the USA (altogether 16 participants) participated in the study and discussed thirty research projects. Nine historians and seven literary scholars participated in the study. Each participant was asked to discuss a finished and a current research project in which e-texts were used at least once. The study has had two phases. The first phase included in-depth semi-structured interviews, examination of participants' manuscripts and published works, as well as examination of some e-texts, which they mentioned during interviews. The second phase involved detailed data-gathering from a small group of academics drawn from the participants in the first phase. Data-gathering forms, audio-tapes on which participants recorded their comments about their interactions with e-texts and interviews were used to collect data in the second phase of the study. Data were analysed by adopting a hermeneutical approach and grounded theory techniques described by Strauss (1987), Strauss and Corbin (1998a, b) and Glaser (1998). Additional details about methodology can be found in Sukovic (2008).

The exploration of different ways in which study participants integrated results of their interactions with e-texts into their research included the examination of participants' written works arising from the investigated projects. The study focused on research projects that aimed to have output in traditional formats. In some cases, when participants produced creative multimedia works as well, those works were examined to aid an understanding of participants' accounts and reflections. However, since traditional output was of interest from the perspective of the study design and since electronic works did not have references and bibliography, they were not counted for the examination of references.

The traditional academic output arising from the investigated projects consisted of 22 works – mainly scholarly books, book chapters and journal articles, but also a novel and a conference paper. The novel was included because it was the result of academic research and included acknowledgments of main sources of information. Published works or, in a few cases, manuscripts of prepublications were available from 15 participants. One participant did not have any written output from an investigated project during the period of this study. A number of current projects did not have any finished publications at the time of the study. Manuscripts were considered when they were in the final stages and included references.

References to e-texts were followed by examining acknowledgments, notes, reference lists and bibliographies. I read all the shorter pieces and two books in full, and browsed the content of other books to follow the development of scholars' ideas discussed during the interviews and to note if the authors mentioned an e-text in an informal way, but that was not the case in any of the examined works.

Data gathered from the examination of participants' written works was compared with statements about referencing practices from interviews. Some academics who participated in the second phase of the study discussed their views of referencing practices in final interviews.

In order to protect participants' anonymity, numerical codes were used instead of names to label all data gathered during the study. The labels are in the format 1/1, 2/1, or 1/2, 2/2 etc., the first number indicating the number of the participant and the second standing for stage 1 or 2 of the study (e.g., 2/1 means participant 2 in stage 1).

Evaluation and selection of e-texts

The study explored interactions with e-texts and found that these resources were searched and used throughout the research process. The focus in this article is on decisions directly related to citation practices. The evaluation and selection of texts necessarily precede any decision to use the retrieved texts to inform research, so it is considered here in some detail. Participants in the study evaluated usefulness of the retrieved source essentially by answering two questions: "Is this source trustworthy?" and "What does it contribute to my understanding of the topic?"

Trustworthiness

Participants established trustworthiness by confirming the authenticity and reliability of the source. They compared digitized e-texts with originals and print editions, checked provenance, context and details in the e-text. In most cases, researchers would verify e-text against a print version, but in some instances the process of verification worked in the opposite direction, depending on which source is considered to be closer

to the original. Original publications and primary materials in the original form were highly valued whenever they were accessible. Participant 8/1 worked with well-established written translations of prayers in print version as well as with transcriptions of oral prayers in the original language, available from a database of e-texts on CD. In this case, e-text was considered to be more trustworthy because it was closer to the original:

> I've got a modern translation of it [in print form]. But, you know, you can trust most of it, but when it comes to the important stuff that you're looking at, you need to go back to the original material, go back to the primary source. And what we've got here is the primary source [on CD] (Participant 8/1).

Cross-checking information in a variety of different types of sources, formats or editions was mentioned as a common practice. Some participants checked different web sites to confirm reliability of the text, while others did not feel they could rely on online sources for the final confirmation. In some instances, online sources were more trustworthy than a print edition, where they provided several reliable versions of a text. For example, Participant 10/1 regularly checked one web site, which provided the means for comparison of the Biblical text in several languages. In this instance, the web site provided quality editions and the researcher was able to establish meanings of a passage by comparing expressions in different languages.

Some participants confirmed information with colleagues, in person and on discussion lists, and with people who were perceived as authorities. People, such as the author, a colleague, a librarian or an archivist, were often perceived as reliable sources of information. Reputable people and organizations can act as guarantors for a source. Institutions and organizations were perceived as reputable because of their history of being trustworthy and the high quality of their editorial practices (participants 10/1 and 13/1). Participants tended to trust big publishers, government and academic institutions that had produced a reputable source in the field.

When a reputable publisher produced an electronic and a print edition of a work, and if currency was an issue, e-text would be more reliable because the electronic edition would be updated more often. Participant 10/1 gave an example of a reference work, but the same was the case with trusted online sources of contemporary poetry in comparison with their print counterparts, because new poems would appear on web sites before they become available in print publications.

Electronic search engines were not only quicker than people, but they provided a more reliable and accurate search mechanism for some types of queries. Participant 14/1 talked about repeating searching that had been done with traditional sources when they became digitised: "But when I went back, as I increasingly began to use the electronic form, I would go back to do it more, because you can actually do it more systematically".

The lack of trustworthiness was associated with the lack of clear authority of the author, which is often the case with anonymous sources and e-texts authored or prepared by amateurs. It was also problematic if the reliability of editorial practices or the motives for publishing were not established. Participant 14/1 talked about searching for information on Martin Delaney "who was a kind of back to Africa sort of person in the 19th century". The researcher had found some good web sites, but kept ordering print materials on interlibrary loan to check information. He explained why web sites were not sufficient sources of information:

Because I realise that Martin Delaney is a politically very – like a lot of these characters – is very politically sensitive. And people who are interested in promoting black pride may only give the most favorable quotations from Martin Delaney... They do quote whole speeches but there's a question surrounding whether Martin Delaney was really a separationist or an integrationist or what combination of that and therefore it's necessary to go to the full – it's just what the historian has to do all the time, go to the full range of sources (Participant 14/1).

Since the credentials of authors and publishers often remain unclear on the internet, scholars generally tended to be very careful with the use of information found online outside reputable academic sources. I asked Participant 10/1 what made a publisher reputable and he responded: "History. The fact they've been reputable over a century or they have a reputation for accuracy. In other words, you trust their reputation the way you would an individual and you grant the trust by the fact they were trustworthy in the past". When I asked whether the lack of tradition of trust on the internet was the main problem, the researcher said:

It's partly that and partly the fact that everybody looks the same on the Internet; a large company's web site could look exactly the same as a factory running from the backyard. [...] And that's the problem with the Internet. You have the sense of anonymity, almost impossibility of picking up what is trustworthy from what's not (Participant 10/1).

A number of participants said that they would take unverifiable e-texts into account for ideas, but they would avoid quoting them or building an argument based on them. Even when sources were reputable, digitization processes were seen to be leaving too large a margin for error. Participant 14/1 talked about verifying passages from e-text published on reputable sites, because the process of scanning and optical character recognition were not completely accurate.

Table I summarizes characteristics of trustworthy and untrustworthy e-texts. The judgment about trustworthiness is, essentially, based on the assessment of authenticity and accuracy of the information source.

Contribution to the topic
While traditional indicators of authority, such as a reputable publisher or trusted institution, had a significant role to play in establishing trustworthiness, there were many instances when the value of e-text lay in providing information that was not available from official sources, including reputable print editions. One participant talked about a book, which was banned for a period of time awaiting a court decision.

	Trustworthy	Untrustworthy
Authenticity (based on closeness to the original, can be verified)	Original text ("without adulteration")	Web sites with summarised material
	Material that can be cross-checked	Any substitute
General accuracy	Originals	Any record describing materials
	Regular updates	
	Accuracy of online searching	Transcriptions
Accuracy of facts	Factual information	Inaccurate facts
	Reputable source	Source not reputable

Table I.
Characteristics of
trustworthy e-texts

The book appeared on a web site of unknown origin during the period of prohibition without the author's consent and disappeared when the book became officially available, providing an alternative, although illegal, dissemination channel. The participant was in a position to judge that the illegal online copy was a trustworthy reproduction of the book. In another case, online publishing provided a document which was omitted from print editions. Participant 11/1, for example, studied linguistic and political views in a historical period, and discussed a particular work of the author under study which contained some extreme statements. This work was available online and was not included in print editions. The participant valued access to this text because it enabled deeper insights into the author's thought.

Scholars who worked on topics that explored cultural and contemporary issues valued direct access to memory, opinions and experiences of different people contained in blogs and online discussion forums. Participant 7/1 said that she would not expect historically reliable information "from an article that someone puts up on an informal web site saying that [historical personality] was in love with his cabin boy" and added that, in a way, the historical accuracy was not important for a project exploring cultural phenomena:

> Because the context of where something emerges like that, whether it's false or true or whatever isn't my project [. . .] And that would be a story in itself about why someone wanted to have something that they wanted to call authentic for themselves.

The presence of searchable information systems containing a wide variety of texts and willingness to go beyond authoritative sources could be explained as an indication of a postmodern mentality:

> That people are no longer basically trustful of single authoritative disposition, single authoritative discourse, they want to be able to cross-reference, cross-check, find a secondary opinion, etc. etc., and come to their own belief rather than just accept an authorized view. And that, I think, is partly to do with the amount of change or the amount of instability or the amount of contradictory or multifarious belief systems that everyone encounters now in their everyday life (Participant 13/1).

The need for accuracy and authenticity varied significantly, depending on the discipline and topic. The researchers working in interdisciplinary areas were more likely to need indexes and catalogues to help them in negotiating a large amount of material, even if they became intermediaries between the researcher and a document. The researchers working on specific historical topics required very accurate e-texts, whereas their colleagues who investigated topics that involved contemporary perceptions or cultural memory appreciated access to all sorts of materials. Previous experience in working with historical documents in microform helped some participants feel comfortable with digitized materials from trusted sources, because they were familiar with different forms of representations of primary materials, such as images of manuscript pages on microfilms.

The value of a variety of e-texts, regardless of their trustworthiness, is in the way they help the researcher explore the topic, stimulate ideas and feed his or her creativity. Participant 16/1, for example, valued e-texts that brought new aesthetic quality and looked for pieces that did something "linguistically subversive". Participant 1/2 talked about searching and browsing on the Internet because "it allows me to feed an imaginative process" when writing a fictional work. Some researchers, such as

Participant 15/1, talked about free experimentation with electronic media. In situations where a variety of e-texts of uneven quality was accepted and even welcomed, the evaluation criteria evolved around the question: "What does this text contribute to my understanding of the topic?"

Referencing practices

The study participants used a wide variety of e-texts for their research, but very few of these sources appeared in published works. The investigation of the use of e-texts revealed some of the academics' referencing practices and reasons for their decisions to cite an electronic source or omit it from a publication.

Of the 22 works resulting from thirty projects and available during the study period, half did not mention electronic texts in any way and another half did refer to an e-text at least once. Works that did not mention e-texts included a novel, which contained a general acknowledgment of the main sources of information, but did not mention e-texts. The other two works in this group had one reference to an online source each: one referred to an institutional web site and another referred to a well-known reference source. These references did not count as e-texts because they did not fit the definition of e-texts as primary materials investigated in the study.

In total, 11 works that did refer to e-texts included four works in which the only reference was to e-texts created by the actual author. One of these four works mentioned a database created by the author in the methodology chapter and in an appendix. This researcher did not create e-texts, but he digitised texts and authored the database, which was developed as a research tool.

Only seven works referred to e-texts that were not created by the actual author. These seven works were written by five participants (31 per cent of the total number of participants). In all of these works, with one exception, e-texts represented a very small part of all references. The exception was a journal article, in which 24 per cent of references were to e-texts. The article was published in an academic journal (see Table II).

The references clearly did not represent the extent of e-text use in the research. All of the participants who discussed their referencing practices said that they made decisions about what to include in final works based on their assessment of the trustworthiness of e-texts that they used and the sense of what was an acceptable practice. Texts, which were initially selected to inform research, were not included in published works, even if they were considered fully trustworthy, provided that trustworthiness of the sources was a requirement. The trustworthy and relevant texts were further considered from the perspective of acceptable practices, but there was some uncertainty about current academic standards:

Publications	Number	Per cent	
Investigated publications	22	100	
Publications with no reference to e-texts	11	50	
Publications with references to e-texts	11	50	
Self-reference only	4	18	**Table II.**
Reference to other e- texts	7	32	Summary of references to e-texts

I think the good question is, you know, is it legitimate to cite web pages in a theoretical paper and how often should we do this and should it be balanced with journals and other texts? Can you do a whole research paper based on web sites other than if you are writing about web sites? So those kinds of things would be good to ask or even just use as a discussion point around contemporary research in any area (Participant 1/1).

Practices used by publishers served as an indication of what was the right approach in some cases. Participant 1/1 mentioned that researchers would solve questions about referencing on their own and with the publisher. Participant 14/1 did not like how references to online sources appeared on the page. The researcher had problems with making long addresses fit neatly in a line, but he mentioned that publishers knew how to deal with formatting the text: "I hate looking at that. And when I'm submitting it for publication I have all these sort of fears that they won't know what to do with it either. But they seem to have mysterious ways of actually handling that that I don't know about" (Participant 14/1).

There were concerns about the trustworthiness of e-texts in general. A number of participants checked e-texts against hard copies and cited hard copies. Participant 5/1 mentioned that she would refer to a reliable digitised work if she did not consult the hard copy, but in most cases she managed to check the hard copy. Participant 14/1 had the practice of finding an e-text, checking and citing a print copy, and using the e-text to copy and paste passages into his own writing. He cited e-texts if he fully trusted their reliability.

Traditions of a particular field have had influence on decisions about how to cite resources. Some researchers always cited original works in hard copy, regardless of the mode of access mainly because it was the accepted practice. A senior researcher in the field of literary history explained his practice:

I always cite the originals and the way I date them too is, I put the original date and at the end I put the date of the reprint. So in this case, I put the original but I didn't put the web site or whatever.

Is there any particular reason for that?

When I think back, I think at the time there might've been that sort of . . . I suppose . . . oh, I am trying to look at my own subconscious, it might've been a feeling that the electronic site was not as authoritative as the original itself. But I suppose normally, I . . . the bibliography can be seen as a working tool. But, you know, I suppose it's the traditions of our field, you know, the reference to original source, no matter how we access it (Participant 11/1).

The practice of citing originals without indicating electronic access was often mentioned in relation to citing e-texts available as.pdf files because they look like print publications. Participant 1/2 would cite.pdf as print except in the case of rare original materials, and Participant 5/2 would cite e-texts and hard copies when both were consulted.

Out of five participants who cited e-texts that were not authored by themselves, two worked with departments of media studies, and three were historians whose projects included some aspects of media history or contemporary topics. Researchers associated with departments of media studies cited e-texts, when they thought they were the most appropriate source, and seemed to be less reluctant to acknowledge the use of e-texts. These two researchers and a historian who worked on contemporary topics often used e-texts that did not exist in any other form. Considerations of

established disciplinary practices were an important part of researchers' decisions about which sources to include and how to present their published works.

Influence of research cultures

Perception of the research culture in which they work had a strong influence on participants' decisions about how to present their research results. The perceived peer attitudes were of critical importance in the way participants viewed their research context. A tension between new research approaches and traditional practices determined some decisions about acknowledging the use of electronic texts.

Peers

The success of a research project is often judged by peers' reactions. Researchers discussed and demonstrated with their choices about how to present research results that they carefully considered peers' reactions. There was an element of anxiety because of possible harsh judgments: "And for academics, there's always this anxiety around people dying to trip you up over something, that kind of anxiety academics have about competitiveness and all that stuff" (Participant 1/2).

When asked about peers' acceptance of e-texts, most participants initially answered that e-texts were generally accepted and the use was supported, but further discussions revealed that the researchers were not sure what their colleagues were actually thinking about these resources and what they were doing. The perceptions of peers' attitudes were often based on clues. No one mentioned a formal discussion within a disciplinary group about the use of e-texts. As Participant 14/1 said, e-texts were "something that might be discussed in the staffroom as a kind of lunchtime topic, along with plagiarism and whatever else..."

The perception that traditional academic historians were opposed to the use of e-texts was strong enough that one of the researchers (Participant 6/2) wrote a book in which he avoided mentioning e-texts in order to keep the traditional part of his audience engaged. Omitting e-texts from the references was a way of ensuring that more conservative historians remained focused on the argument. Although the researcher believed that some e-texts used in the research were serious and authoritative, and he did not have a policy of avoiding the mention of e-texts in published works, he did not want to cite e-texts in this particular book. The avoidance of e-text was part of putting key ideas within protocols accepted by traditional historians.

This particular book not only dealt with a controversial topic, but it was written in a way which combined the traditional historical with the literary style of writing and challenged traditional notions of an academic historical text. The researcher used e-texts extensively during the research process and they influenced the choice of the writing style. When asked if the non-traditional academic style had anything to do with the decision to exclude e-texts from the book, the researcher responded:

> I knew that I was already pushing the edges and taking risks with the style that I didn't want to lose those people, I wanted to challenge them but keep them in the book. And . . . I did think if I start to throw in sort of citations that are from a protocol that they don't agree with, it might be the way where they could just say, "Uh, this book, I don't need to engage with it any more" (Participant 6/2).

Peers' resistance was more a subtle feeling than an explicit pressure. Even the researcher who omitted e-texts to make sure that more conservative colleagues stayed with the book did not find strong evidence that peers were opposed to the use of e-texts: "I'm feeling that that's the case, but I actually don't feel ... bullied by that at all" (Participant 6/2). For this participant, the presentation of research "was a strategic question of writing in relation to authority".

Another researcher talked about "feeling uneasy" that research could be based on Internet sources because historians do not regard internet sources highly:

> But if you're writing your work, like at the moment I'm writing a kind of general synthesis and I could get a lot of the materials off the internet but I would feel very uneasy about presenting that to a profession which would sort of look at it and say, oh I suppose would say, "Oh, it's all just from internet sources". There is a prejudice against Internet sources (Participant 14/1).

Conflicting peers' responses were apparent in a situation where a historian wrote an article on research based on a range of non-traditional sources, including e-texts. This was the article that had the highest number of references to e-texts found in the study (i.e. 24 per cent). The article also referred to other unconventional academic sources. The project had a contemporary topic for which traditional academic sources did not exist. When the researcher submitted an article to an academic historical journal, she received conflicting responses:

> And when I wrote the [topic] article, the two referees from the journal, one of them sent back a no, saying every source in this is a newspaper or magazine article or television documentary, it's not proper academic work. And the other one said, "Cutting edge, deeply original, should be published" (Participant 9/1).

The researcher changed the article so that it excluded part of the original research to include some academic sources. This article was the first academic response to a contemporary event and, as the researcher said, "It's now been cited by at least half a dozen other people who are now working on [topic]". The researcher's initial response to the question about the acceptance of e-texts was that no one in the profession objected to the use of e-texts.

Although participants generally believed that peers made evaluations based on evidence, a number of participants preferred to cite e-texts as print publications, either because they checked the originals or because.pdf files came from trusted sources and were presented in a way that was faithful to print publications. One senior participant found that there was a more positive attitude towards primary than towards secondary sources in electronic form because of the limitations of physical collections, but still preferred to cite print publications.

A positive attitude to the practice of using e-sources may depend on the field and the quality of available sources. In fields where e-texts seemed to be accepted, originals were not readily accessible and scholars were used to working with facsimiles, transcriptions or translations (for example, studies of Buddhist religious texts). People working in relatively new departments, such as creative communication or media studies, did not seem to perceive or to be affected by peers' resistance because they cited e-texts when appropriate, and they either did not discuss peers' attitudes or they said that they were not concerned with negative views. For example, Participant 15/1,

who worked in literary and media studies, commented that he wrote "without an umpire or referee in mind".

The discussed perceptions indicated that peers' negative attitudes or uncertainty about peers' attitudes did inhibit a full engagement with e-texts, particularly citing them in published works. Peers' positive attitudes to the use of e-texts were not discussed as an influence on participants' work.

Research topics and sources
In the dynamic academic field, traditional sources of information do not have the same exclusive value as they once did, because new sources of information have become relevant as well: "We find out about things on CNN, off the web sites, out of blogs, just think of how important blogs have been during the Iraq war, and journalists and magazine staff writers can actually produce really significant material" (Participant 5/2). According to this historian, a quickly articulated response to some of these materials can be valuable for an understanding of current events. Online textual materials have contributed to investigation of contemporary topics. I asked this researcher what had changed in academic practice, considering that some important events were happening during the twentieth century as well and people knew about them. Participant 5/2 responded: "It was just accepted that the kind of sober, reflective study would come later. And also, academics didn't work so much on really contemporary material".

The choices of research topics and information sources are interlinked. E-texts have become part of a negotiation between new academic interests and demands on the one hand, and tradition on the other. Work on contemporary topics was not a traditional practice in historical research, but an increasing number of scholars nowadays want to research current phenomena. Some participants commented that it had become common for academics to gather at conferences and seminars to reflect on recently published books, contemporary events and topics from popular culture. The described reasons were twofold. First, the research of contemporary topics was quicker, so it has become necessary to satisfy job demands and provide output required for career advancement. In the opinion of Participant 9/1, bodies that govern research grants are in favor of fashionable interests. Second, it is important to historicise current phenomena. Participant 14/1 talked about certain phenomena on the internet, such as the support for and appearance of American right-wing political web sites, and the need to document occurrences of these web sites and make a comment based on historical criticism.

Participant 5/2 also discussed a need to make an academic comment on current events, but she thought that more traditional historians did not accept this sort of research. E-texts provide material for researching contemporary issues, but they are often dismissed with other non-traditional sources, such as newspaper articles and films, as inappropriate for academic research. When asked about the role of e-texts in the shift to contemporary topics, the researcher answered that web sites were the best way to access alternative communities and their documentation. Participant 5/2 saw changes in the selection of research topics and sources of information as signs of a collapse of high into low culture, which affected academic approaches to research.

Participant 5/2 talked about "dressing up" research on contemporary topics to make it more acceptable to traditional colleagues. Accepted disciplinary theory and

references are the main tools used for "dressing up", as well as demonstrating "that things that used to be thought of as ephemeral or transient can now have greater importance for people". The main purpose of "dressing up" is to connect the research with "an existing discourse. That's important. To convince those in power in the discourse" (Participant 5/2).

The researcher's age was repeatedly mentioned as a contributing factor that can influence the use of e-texts. Some participants discussed unfolding changes in academic research in relation to generational changes. Older scholars were more likely to be in a position of power, from where they would promote traditional forms of scholarship. It was described how Participant 6/2 wrote "in relation to authority" for the audience of traditionalist historians. Participant 5/2 considered a role of academic authority figures in channeling changes in research practices:

> And so the big guns have grown up in a different kind of scholarship and they're the ones who edit the journals and who run the big publishing houses. So another thing that's important is that you convince them that you really can do real scholarship the way they see real scholarship, even though you are moving into risky and different material, it's still real, it's serious, you know how to use a library and do proper footnotes and all that kind of thing. So those sorts of things are important. I think that's basically it. It's a kind of professional accreditation problem that people who work in really kind of out there fields are stuck with.

The "out there fields" refer to non-traditional historical research into contemporary alternative phenomena. However, researchers who work on more traditional topics also pay a great deal of attention to issues of accreditation and engagement with the scholarly audience. The acceptable use of citations is an important part of writing in relation to authority.

Discussion

The multifarious nature of scholars' use of e-texts, revealed in the study, was not reflected in citation practices. Consideration of reasons for citation and acknowledgment practices provides evidence to support both normative and social constructive views.

The lack of credibility or unclear trustworthiness of many primary materials in electronic form made these e-texts less useful for scholarly argument. The medium has had influence on the judgments of trustworthiness of a source. Even when digitized materials were established as trustworthy sources, hard copies were often cited because they provided final evidence and were considered as more authoritative. Print media was generally perceived as more trustworthy because of the trustworthiness of editorial practices, whereas digitized materials were perceived as less reliable due to imperfect processes such as the optical character recognition. At the same time, e-texts were viewed as more trustworthy when currency and thorough searching were important.

Differences in publishing practices and characteristics of electronic and analog media explain only some reasons for researchers' decisions to include a source of information in their published works. Social constructs of authority and acceptable academic practices had an important role to play in shaping a scholarly work. The lack of clarity about what is an acceptable scholarly practice, the perceived peers' negative attitudes to e-texts or their contradictory responses, as well as the influence of

traditional scholarly authorities, all had an impact on decisions either to omit e-texts from academic publications or to cite print rather than an electronic copy of a work.

The traditions of a particular discipline seemed to have some influence on scholars' willingness to cite e-texts. It appeared that electronic sources were more accepted in relatively new fields, which have special interest in electronic media. Historians who were interested in studying contemporary phenomena found main, if not only, materials, in electronic and other non-conventional sources. Their use of non-traditional sources was balanced against the requirement to follow established scholarly practices. While the acceptance of e-texts in these fields seems to be a result of the disciplinary focus on new media in the first case or availability of e-texts for contemporary topics in the latter, there is a question as to whether researchers in the new fields are more inclined to work in non-traditional areas and to use non-conventional information sources due to personal characteristics and/or contextual influences.

In situations where researchers decided to exclude electronic resources to comply with expressed or perceived requirements of academic publishers, these sources still had some impact on their research. Influences, which are not recognized in citations because of the need to satisfy academic authorities, form an undercurrent in academic writing that is comparable with Foucault's subjugated knowledges. Shifts between different citation practices not only seem to reflect a variable value of e-texts and different disciplinary traditions, but also the changing notions of cognitive authority.

The study points to the need for a further investigation of influences of existing practices and traditions on the way in which scholars interact with and use electronic texts both as primary and secondary sources. Further investigation of the use of electronic materials, which are relatively new and less accepted in academic circles, may reveal some current practices, and underpinning values and traditions from a new perspective. Further research into academic practices in general and citation practices in particular would inform institutional research support, and guide the development of standards in the provision and evaluation of electronic sources. Investigation of the social dynamics that underpin and often determine research practices may provide significant insights into the contemporary processes of knowledge production.

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