

Genealogy as digital objects with stories to support research

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Within GLAM institutions there is often tension between the collection and storing of data and its use within research, particularly regarding its authenticity and research value. In this presentation, using the Chinese Genealogy Knowledge Service Platform¹, maintained by Shanghai Library, we use methodology from storytelling and chronotope theory (Bakhtin, 2001) to bridge the gap between cultural heritage data and research.

This platform aggregates genealogy data and links family names to resources in other libraries in China and beyond. The project places the narrative time-space continuum in the context of cultural heritage resources using genealogy data to explore changes in family names using two main dimensions: chronological (temporal) and spatial.



Figure 1 Two main dimensions (temporal & spatial) used to explore family names

The family names and related elements in our collections are rich data that possess narrative characteristics allowing us to analyze them from diverse perspectives (Dunn & Schumacher, 2016). They help the designing of narrative experience for both users and researchers, allowing this data to tell the stories behind collections (Vrettakis et al., 2019) with the unique advantage of providing perspectives from diverse groups with different social identities. They give a voice to the ordinary people of Shanghai, and particularly the endangered vernacular *Shanghainese* dialect.

Our project has the interest of library users, exploring family history, but the challenge is to facilitate collaborations with researchers, helping them use our data more effectively. The current phase develops systems to help researchers identify problems and solve specific research questions, and for the library to work closely with them supporting their research

¹ <https://jiapu.library.sh.cn/>

journey.

References

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