A New Platform for Editing Digital Multimedia: The eTalks

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Abstract The eTalks are a new digital multimedia editing plaform developed at the University of Lausanne: their application is implemented via an easy-to-use editor interface, designed for the use of researchers themselves, to create and edit original eTalks. This permits the linking together of images, sounds and textual materials with hyperlinks, enriching it with relevant information. The final release of eTalks allows complete 'citability' of its contents: each and every portion of the researchers' talks can be precisely referred to and thus cited with a specific identifier, just like any traditional, paper-based scientific publication but with all the potential for plural literacies. It is openly accessible and the code is open source, including guidelines to install the eTalks. It contributes to the development of multiliteracies in the digital academic production of knowledge.

Keywords. Multiliteracies, digital edition, eTalks, electronic publishing, enhanced talks.

1. Introduction: Academic Communication and Digital Multiliteracies

Printed monographs, collected essays and articles have been cornerstones of modern academic communication for decades. If the use and teaching of rhetoric was expunged from German and French universities at the end of the 19th century [1], today, the strong presence of orality in digital publications invites one to reconsider the place of rhetoric in academic communication. As Kress argued in 1998, digital culture leads to the emergence of plural literacies, or multiliteracies [2]. The preoccupation with multiliteracies in academic publications and education began before the expression "digital humanities" came into being, and outside of the Humanities and Computing field. In 1996, the *Harvard Educational Review* (*HER*) published an article illustrating how literacy pedagogy in the digital age can reflect societal changes such as globalization, technology and increasing cultural and social diversity [3]. Before this junction within digital culture, the term 'literacy', born in the middle of the 19th century at the height of printed culture [4], was first changed to plural form by ethnologists and anthropologists [5], then by Ancient Classicists [6]. Naturally, this plural term has come into contact with present Western culture in the digital age.

In a 2012 article, Tanya Clement draws a picture of digital academic communication and education, putting forth the core term "multiliteracies" in her definition thereof. She discusses diverse DH pedagogies, such as new media studies and game studies, by looking at multiliteracies "that are engaged within undergraduate humanities curricula through general skills, principles and habits of mind that allow

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students to progress within and engage society in the twenty-first century" [7]. The current students in classrooms have still been trained at school in a quasi-unique literacy mode: printed literacy. However, they are living in a cultural world that has already switched to multimodal literacies. These same students will be the future scholars who produce knowledge in multimodal digital ways. Convinced that textuality, images and sounds have to be used together in Humanist digital academic publications [8] and that digital multiliteracies have to meet high editorial requirements, we have built a new editorial form: the eTalk, based first and foremost on speeches of scholars.

2. The eTalks

Simple videos or MP3 recordings of lectures may prove insufficient to many researchers since they are not quotable in detail and they do not offer the possibility of being combined with textuality, images, hyperlinks, and references. Consequently, the eTalks application implements an easy-to-use editor interface, designed for the use by researchers themselves, to create and edit original enhanced talks. This permits the linking together of images, sounds and textual materials with hyperlinks, thereby enriching the content with relevant information. The result of the edition is displayed through a viewer interface, allowing one to experiment with the entire eTalk or to actively navigate, scroll and search inside its content. After having recorded the speech of the scholar, the software, Audacity, allows for the splitting of the speech in pieces of 2-3 sentences. Each piece of speech can be associated with its written version, a slide, images, or hyperlinks and so forth. Each piece is also quotable with a specific URL: a new kind of reference (see a presentation video[2]). Thus, the final release of eTalks allows for the complete 'citability' of its contents: each and every portion of the researchers' talks can be precisely referred to and therefore cited, just like any traditional, paper-based scientific publication but with all the potential for plural literacies.

The concept of the eTalk was developed by Claire Clivaz (UNIL) and Frédéric Kaplan (EPFL) in conjunction with an interdisciplinary team of colleagues. The core of the eTalk engine was developed in JavaScript by Frédéric Kaplan and Cyril Bornet (EPFL). The code is now available as open source on Github as a free application for further development[3]; we will soon provide the relevant guidelines to interested users[4]. The eTalks are currently being developed and disseminated further by an interdisciplinary team of researchers in Digital Humanities and bioinformatics, at the University of Lausanne (CH)[5]. As of now, three series of eTalks have been published as openly accessible: twelve on funerary rituals, two on the institutional biobank of Lausanne, and one on a DH2014 lecture.[6] A new series is being prepared regarding the topic of the enhanced human. The eTalks are now in development by institutional and research

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[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHqX-DVoBb8; all the hyperlinks have been last accessed on 05/15/2015.
[3] https://github.com/OZWE/eTalk
[4] Please contact claire.clivaz@unil.ch for the guidelines.
[5] Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics (SIB/VITAL-IT) and LADHUL (Laboratory of Digital Humanities and Cultures), at the University of Lausanne (CH): Claire Clivaz, Cécile Pache, Marion Rivoal and Martial Sankar.
[6] etalk.vital-it.ch/rites-funeraires; etalk.vital-it.ch/mooser; etalk.vital-it.ch/dh

collaborations, notably: colleagues from the Pedagogical High School of Lausanne (HEPVaud)[7] and the ERASMUS+ dariahTeach project[8], whose purpose is to offer a webportal in 2017 that will include digital teaching modules. The following pattern summarizes how an eTalk is built.
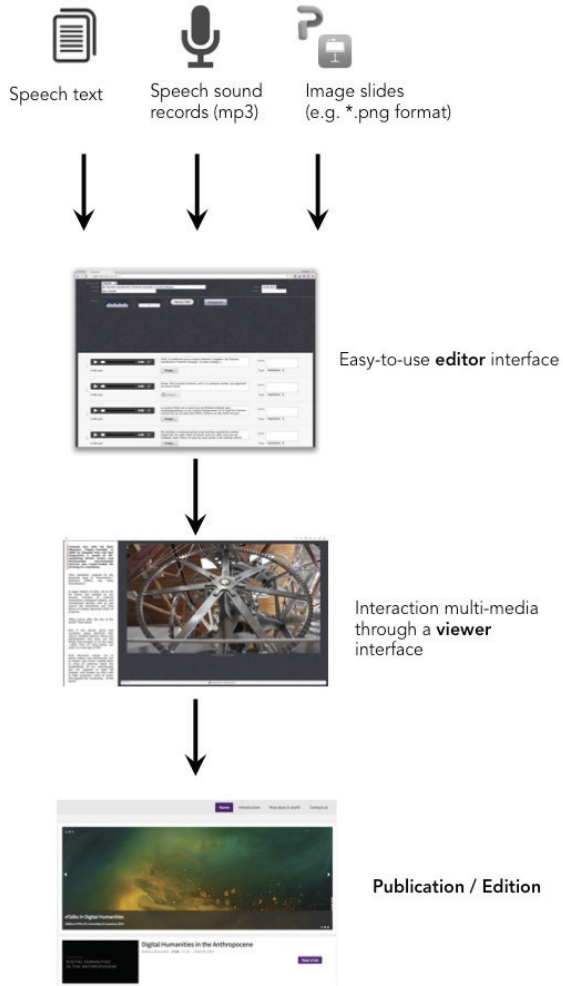

Figure 1. The eTalks editing process

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[7] Prof. Nicole Durisch Gauthier and Prof. Christine Fawer Caputo.
[8] On twitter: @dariahTeach

3. eTalk Software Improvements and Future Directions

With respect to improvements and the future direction of eTalks, we will soon provide guidelines for future authors aiming to record an eTalk of their work. Those guidelines will permit a more efficient exchange between our team and the author during the creation process, such as providing image format and size requirements. With regards to the eTalk software specifically, several major improvements will be considered. Firstly, the eTalk application is currently only accessible through the Chrome, Safari and Internet Explorer browsers. Making allowances for multi-browser compatibility will be one of our first tasks, Mozilla/Firefox in particular. A user-rights management system also has to be established: it will allow for the coping with of a steady increase in eTalk projects and their authors' expectations in terms of privacy and diffusion.

We also aim to extend the range of media supported, such as enabling the citation of short films in eTalks, as well as the use of a stable URL system for quotation[9]. Moreover, sharing options have to be taken into consideration in order to take full advantage of social media sharing possibilities and the increase of authors' eTalk visibility. A top-level web application has to be designed, including the implementation of a search engine. This would permit users to search for specific eTalks, authors or topics inside the eTalk library. However, we will also continue to explore collaborations with the usual publishers and to examine the diffusion of eTalks with their help. Finally, in collaboration with the ERASMUS+ dariahTeach project, we will develop the most efficient way of recording and editing an eTalk by oneself with some editorial help from our team. Our purpose is to encourage academics to use this method of editing to quickly make their recent talks and slides available online.

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[9] See for example www.purl.org.