

P. Taranto*, G. Di Liberti, S. Motta

Aix-Marseille University, France, Aix-en-Provence, Centre Gilles Gaston Granger, UMR 7304

*e-mail: pascal.taranto@univ-amu.fr**PROJECT LABΩ**

A new concept of an online research and training platform for the implementation of collaborative thematic projects, particularly in the SHS field, LABΩ enables the rapid launch and successful completion of a research programme virtually mobilising an international, multidisciplinary and multi-level network (from the enlightened amateur to the PR via the doctoral student) without having to seek funding but solely on the basis of the scientific interest of the project. The article was first published in French in the form of an interview with the director of the Gilles Gaston Granger Center P. Taranto (*Dématérialiser la recherche pour revenir à l'essentiel: le projet LABΩ // La Lettre de l'InSHS, N°66, juillet 2020, pp. 14-17*). The article reveals the details of one of the center's scientific projects on the implementation of scientific research in the field of humanities in the modern digital world. The authors answer the question of how digitalization processes affect the process and methodology of scientific work in the digital world, as well as reveal the essence of the digital tools offered by the platform LABΩ for this. The article is published as part of the implementation of a joint European-Kazakhstan project "Digital humanities in the Republic of Kazakhstan: local solutions for global problems" co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The project includes lectures, the creation of MOOC courses, and a number of scientific publications. The authors of the article invite Kazakhstani researchers to discuss and share experiences on the topic of digital humanitarian research in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Key words: digital humanities, digitalization, international projects, LABΩ, Republic of Kazakhstan.

П. Таранто*, Д. Ди Либерти, С. Мотта

Экс-Марсель Университеті, Центр Жиль Гастон Гранже, Франция, Экс-ан-Прованс қ., UMR 7304

* e-mail: pascal.taranto@univ-amu.fr**LABΩ жобасы**

Бірлесе жүргізілетін тақырыптық жобаларды, әсіресе SHS, LAB салалары бойынша жобаларды жүзеге асыруға арналған онлайн-зерттеу мен оқыту платформаларының жаңа концепциясы зерттеу бағдарламасын қаржыландыру іздеуді қажет етпей-ақ, тек жобаның ғылыми мүдделерінің негізінде ғана халықаралық, көпсалалы және көпдеңгейлі жүйені (сауатты қызығушыдан бастап докторант арқылы PR-ға дейін) қамти отырып тез іске қосуға және табысты аяқтауға мүмкіндік береді. Мақала алғаш рет француз тілінде Жиль Гастон Гранже орталығының директоры П. Тарантоның интервьюі түрінде жарияланды (*Dématérialiser la recherche pour revenir à l'essentiel: le projet LABΩ // La Lettre de l'InSHS, N°66, juillet 2020, pp. 14-17*). Мақала орталықтың қазіргі заманғы цифрлы әлемде гуманитарлық пәндер саласындағы ғылыми зерттеулерді жүзеге асыруға қатысты ғылыми жобаларының бірі туралы толығырақ баяндайды. Авторлар цифрландыру үдерісі цифрлық әлемде ғылыми жұмыс жүргізудің үдерісі мен әдістемесіне қалай әсер ететіні туралы сұраққа жауап береді, сонымен қатар, платформаның осыған арналған цифрлық құралдарының мәнін ашады. Мақала Еуроодақтың гранттық қаржыландыру бағдарламасына ие болған «Қазақстан Республикасындағы цифрлы гуманитаристика: жаһандық мәселелерді локалды шешу» атты еуропалық-қазақстандық жобаны жүзеге асыру аясында жарияланып отыр. Жоба бойынша дәрістер жүргізіліп, КАОК дайындалады және ғылыми мақалалар жарияланады. Мақала авторлары қазақстандық зерттеушілерді Қазақстан Республикасындағы цифрлы гуманитарлық зерттеулер тақырыбы бойынша пікірталасқа және ой бөлісуге шақырады.

Түйін сөздер: цифрлы гуманитарлық ғылымдар, цифрландыру, халықаралық жобалар, LABΩ, Қазақстан Республикасы.

П. Таранто*, Д. Ди Либерти, С. Мотта

Университет Экс-Марсель, Франция, г. Экс-ан-Прованс, Центр Жиль Гастон Гранже, UMR 7304

*e-mail: pascal.taranto@univ-amu.fr

Проект LABΩ

Новая концепция онлайн-исследовательской и учебной платформы для реализации совместных тематических проектов, особенно в области SHS, LAB, позволяет быстро запустить и успешно завершить исследовательскую программу, практически мобилизуя международную, многопрофильную и многоуровневую сеть (от просвещенного любителя до профессионала и докторанта) без необходимости изыскивать финансирование, но исключительно на основе научных интересов проекта. Статья впервые была опубликована на французском языке в форме интервью директора Центра Жиль Гастон Гранже П. Таранто (Dématiser la recherche pour revenir à l'essentiel : le projet LABΩ // La Lettre de l'InSHS, №66, juillet 2020, pp. 14-17). Статья раскрывает подробности одного из научных проектов центра, касающегося реализации научных исследований в области гуманитарных дисциплин в современном цифровом мире. Авторы отвечают на вопрос о том, как процессы цифровизации влияют на процесс и методологию осуществления научной работы в цифровом мире, а также раскрывают суть предлагаемых платформой цифровых инструментов для этого. Статья издается в рамках реализации совместного европейско-казахстанского проекта по грантовому финансированию программы Европейского Союза «Цифровая гуманитаристика в Республике Казахстан: локальные решения глобальных проблем». Проект включает в себя чтение лекций, создание курсов MOOC, ряд научных публикаций. Авторы статьи приглашают казахстанских исследователей к дискуссии и обмену опытом на тему цифровых гуманитарных исследований в Республике Казахстан.

Ключевые слова: цифровые гуманитарные науки, цифровизация, международные проекты, LABΩ, Республика Казахстан.

Introduction

“Doing research”. In a nutshell, it means confronting problems relating to knowledge, studying – in a laboratory, in an archive or elsewhere – advancing hypotheses, defining concepts and sharing ideas and results. The involvement and enthusiasm of a researcher depends on the possibility of making this naïve – or native – representation of research current and concrete: exploring, studying, thinking, sharing. However, research is also the institution that organises communities of researchers, offers them a framework and objectives, and discusses scientific and budgetary policies with them. For several years now, successive upheavals have shaped a new academic landscape that raises many questions about the aims of research activity.

Justification of the choice of articles, goals and objectives

One of the driving forces behind this transformation has been the introduction of a policy of calls for projects in parallel with sustainable funding, and recently, an increasingly important place has been given to the “valorisation” of knowledge, in which the SHS are also called upon to take part. These new missions have an impact on the very foundation of

the teaching-research profession, as they take a significant amount of research time away from the time spent on research, solely for the purpose of writing, carrying out and, when the hoped-for funding is obtained, administering projects. When this is not the case, which is the case for the vast majority of projects, the researcher is entitled to ask himself what “excellence” in research means in this new landscape, how it is evaluated, and how to articulate with traditionally conceived research the new missions of management and administration that seem far removed from it and may repel potential candidates.

The DGRI (Directorate General for Research and Innovation) has, in a letter sent recently (20 June 2020), proposed a questionnaire “to researchers and teacher-researchers who have difficulties or do not dare to submit within a European framework”, in order to try to understand why the participation rates of French researchers in PRCI (EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation) calls remains desperately low and half as low as expected (around 8%). However, the difficulties or shyness of the researchers may not be to blame. More simply, we believe that most of them think that the cost of personal investment outweighs the chance of benefiting from the scheme, and that they fear that if they succeed they will have to do something other than what they are passionate about: *doing research*.

Scientific research methodology

The project LABΩ was born out of this observation.

We start from the following principles:

1) Excellence is the quality of research in progress or finished, not planned. Excellent research is that which is produced according to a process that guarantees its *scientific* quality. This question of “scientificity” is fundamental for the SHS, which produces knowledge where experimentation and quantification of phenomena can never justify the complexity of their objects, and are sometimes reduced to chasing after a form of science that is not their own for fear of not being legitimate and missing the funding train.

2) Ideally, excellent research is that which is produced by a group of specialists working together to develop an answer to a problem, or seeking the agreement of minds, which is one form of “objectivity”. This collaborative way of working is a self-evaluating process, a form of permanent *peer-reviewing*, a true peer review, not an expert review. It requires in return a certain renunciation of auctoriality. Submitting one’s own work line by line to the criticism and revisions of others may hurt the ego of the individual researcher, but it legitimises the scientific value of the work. We are convinced that the incessant dialogue of a team producing collective intelligence and emulation is a much more convincing validation criterion than the blind evaluation of one or two peers. Faced with the enormous amount of publications and data available on any given research topic, only teamwork allows us to take stock and build reference publications. Against a proliferation of hyper-specialised, sometimes redundant publications, LABΩ aims for *fewer publications*, but supported by a lot of collective work, according to the FAIR model (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable). LABΩ wants to be a digital third place where the generosity of donation, exchange of ideas and the surplus of intellectual work replaces the meagre savings of repetition of the already known under the banner of specialisation, in a context of deadly academic competition.

3) Digital innovation that would enable excellence through collaboration must be thought of as a *device* and not as a mere *tool*. As with an old Hasselblad camera, taken to the moon on the Apollo missions, the best technology equals the greatest simplicity and essential functions. This camera, because of its simple excellence, invented a style and an image ethic, and for this reason it went from being a camera to being a device. The device that LABΩ

wants to be – a project platform and collaborative editing software with new functionalities – embodies this desire to intervene directly on the working conditions of the researcher by revaluing the essential functions of intellectual and scientific life and by simplifying the conditions of its exercise. Unlike the many multitasking collaborative work tools that are designed for the company, LABΩ only wants to retain essential functionalities for research. This move towards greater simplicity and ergonomics is crucial if researchers are not to be constantly disappointed by the unfulfilled promises of digital technology to facilitate and free up their research time. As the Covid-19 crisis has shown again recently, concerns have arisen in the scientific community about the omnipresence of digital tools, accelerated by teleworking, and the distortion they are likely to cause to their activity. It must be possible to oppose the enslavement by the tool with a device that liberates.

The material description of LABΩ is quite easy to do. LABΩ is an international city of online research where each researcher can open his or her own laboratory, set up his or her own international team (even including non-academics) and access tools and databases without waiting for funding and without time constraints to bring his or her project to life, because it is the research itself that must set the tempo. Via a website, a researcher, regardless of his or her status, can open a research project and access an online collaborative editor. At the time of its opening, no one will evaluate his project, the way it is held, its feasibility or its network. On the other hand, he will agree to respect an ethical charter, built around a few basic principles: agree to work in a spirit of *limited copyleft*, i.e. authorising to give one’s work – and one’s auctoriality – to a work team; commit to building such a team, because the quality of the project will depend precisely on the activity of its members; archive the entire process of drawing up the text, because the strength of LABΩ lies in going back and measuring the scope of a project on the basis of the intellectual activity, exchanges, controversies and revisions that have accompanied the project. Finally, it undertakes to proceed with a complete indexing of the text produced using semantic tags that will enable search engines to find not key words, but significant inflections of thought: theses, arguments, paradigms, examples, etc.

Results and discussion

Full access to the resources and the possibility of a label of excellence through LabΩ will be reserved for teacher-researchers whose institutions

wish to support the project through the purchase of licences or the service. In other words, the platforms are open access, but some services are the responsibility of the institutions. This choice is dictated by a constraint, a political-scientific reason and an economic-political reason. The constraint concerns access to databases: even if our desire is to broaden access to scientific databases, the conditions of access are determined by the evolution of the notion of «participatory science» and for certain research by the need to protect intellectual property. The political-scientific reason is that we want to encourage independent, precarious or privately invested researchers to build partnerships with research and higher education institutions. The economic-political reason is, finally, very simple: to make LABΩ a stable and sustainable structure, we need a sustainable source of funding to be able to increase its storage capacity, develop functionalities, and meet user requirements. The self-financing of LABΩ via a system of licences or Software as a Service (SaaS) is therefore an objective of the development currently underway. Beyond this, we also aim to make LABΩ – in its full version – free for all research institutions in developing countries, and for any association or citizen project requiring a collaborative tool for text development or data collection and processing.

There are many questions today about the function and value of the human and social sciences, particularly in relation to the still-fluctuating field of the Digital Humanities.

The fruitfulness of an approach in which the SHS, far from being confined to an ornamental discourse on so-called “societal” emergencies, are on the contrary a force for structuring scientific synergies that intends to give meaning and perspective to research activity, is already evident in this project. After the *Innovative SHS* exhibition in Lille (France, 2019), where we presented LABΩ, we were solicited by various units to build together truly multidisciplinary projects, and to find funding for them on the basis of the SHS/hard sciences articulation. Partnerships have been built with science units in order to bring out scientific and social innovation, such as the SMILE project on the collective use of pollution data (co-sponsored by the CGGG and INS2I); the EPIDEMAP+ project on epidemiological modelling (co-ported in pre-maturity with the UMR LIS) and others still in gestation, on orphan diseases (Or-

phandi project), national education (Scolab project) and doctoral training (collaborative theses). These projects are concrete applications of our philosophy of open and participatory science, and they also bear our conviction that it has become necessary to involve citizens in scientific activity, via collaborative digital devices, which come to envelop and give political and social meaning to advanced technologies (microelectronics, AI, etc.). In particular, this is how the SHS can fight, in their own way, against the crisis of authority and the resulting democratic deficit, which are generated by disinformation and irrationalism – the dark side of the internet.

Conclusion

In summary:

LABΩ is a collaborative editor in a specialised ENT. The project aims to produce benchmark results through a process that allows an accurate assessment of the quality of individual contributions («permanent *peer-reviewing*”). It is both :

1. An incubator for scientific projects (which can also serve as a nursery for calls for projects). It enables the relevance or fruitfulness of an idea to be tested quickly, and for «heavy» calls (ANR, ERC) to structure projects that really prove their worth, if such funding is required;
2. A hub of services and tools currently scattered over the net and underused or poorly known (Inist, Istex, HAL bases and tools, engines, translators);
3. An *OpenEdition* data generator for research, including an innovative semantic indexing system. The research and theses produced on LABΩ are designed to be the subject of collections in OE (CLEO).

Six current research pitfalls could be overcome with this process:

- The standardisation of SHS projects through the policy of calls for projects as it is currently conceived
- The waste of time and public money generated by this process
- The demobilisation of researchers
- The decline in the quality of the scientific level induced by the pressure to publish
- Problems related to the scientific publishing market (support for *Open Edition*)
- The great difficulty of objective evaluation of research results.

Литература

- Турарбекова Л.В., Сапарова Д.Р., Нурфер Т. (2020). «Гипотеза префигуративности цифровой культуры поколения Y, Z на постсоветском пространстве» // Вестник КазНУ. Серия философия, культурология, политология. – №3, 2020. – С. 59-66.
- Carrozza, C. (2018). "Re-Conceptualizing Social Research in the 'Digital Era'. Issues of Scholarships, Methods, and Epistemologies." *Análise Social*, vol. 53, no. 228, pp. 652–671.
- Castells M. Space of Flows, Space of Places: Materials for a Theory of Urbanism in the Information Age, P. 230-240//URL:<http://jeremiahcommunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Castells-Space-of-Flows....pdf> (dated from 04.01.2020).
- Dématérialiser la recherche pour revenir à l'essentiel : le projet LABΩ // *La Lettre de l'InSHS*, №66, juillet 2020, pp. 14-17.
- Van Dijk, Jan A.G.M. (2006). *The Network Society*. London, SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Van Dijk, Jan A.G.M. (2012). The Evolution of the Digital Divide: The Digital Divide turns to Inequality of Skills and Usage, in J. Bus et al. (Eds.), *Digital Enlightenment Yearbook*, IOS Press. Pp. 57-75.
- Friedman, T. L. (2005) *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux (FSG)
- Haelermans, C. (2017). Digital Tools in Education. In *On Usage, Effects, and the Role of the Teacher*. Stockholm: SNS Förlag
- Heidegger M. (1977) *The question concerning technology and Other Essays*, New-York – London: Garland Publishing, pp.3-35.
- Innovatives SHS, 15-16 mai 2019, Lille (https://innovatives.cnrs.fr/spip.php?page=article&id_article=196)
- International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA, 2018). *Digitalization Will Transform the Global Economy*.
- Mary Hafeli, Juan Carlos Castro, Julia Marshall, & Chris Grodoski. (2017). Cultivating Research Through Digital Ecosystems. *Visual Arts Research*, 43(1), 1-7. doi:10.5406/visuartsrese.43.1.0001
- Neeman E. (2012), « Culture numérique et auctorialité : réflexions sur un bouleversement », *A contrario*, vol. 17, no. 1: 3-36.
- Warschauer, M. (2003). *Technology and Social Inclusion, Rethinking the Digital Divide*, The MIT Press, Cambridge MA, London, 2003.
- Wellman, B., Berkowitz S.D. (Eds.). *Social Structures, A network approach*. Jai Press, Greenwich Conn., London, 1988.

References

- Turarbekova L.V., Saparova D.R., Nurfer T. (2020). «Gipoteza prefigurativnosti czifrovoj kul'tury` pokoleniya Y, Z na post-sovetskom prostranstve». *Vestnik KazNU. Seriya filosofiya, kul'turologiya, politologiya*. #3, 2020 g. Str. 59-66.
- Carrozza, C. (2018). "Re-Conceptualizing Social Research in the 'Digital Era'. Issues of Scholarships, Methods, and Epistemologies." *Análise Social*, vol. 53, no. 228, pp. 652–671.
- Castells M. Space of Flows, Space of Places: Materials for a Theory of Urbanism in the Information Age, P. 230-240//URL:<http://jeremiahcommunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Castells-Space-of-Flows....pdf> (dated from 04.01.2020).
- Dématérialiser la recherche pour revenir à l'essentiel : le projet LABΩ // *La Lettre de l'InSHS*, №66, juillet 2020, pp. 14-17.
- Van Dijk, Jan A.G.M. (2006). *The Network Society*. London, SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Van Dijk, Jan A.G.M. (2012). The Evolution of the Digital Divide: The Digital Divide turns to Inequality of Skills and Usage, in J. Bus et al. (Eds.), *Digital Enlightenment Yearbook*, IOS Press. Pp. 57-75.
- Friedman, T. L. (2005) *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux (FSG)
- Haelermans, C. (2017). Digital Tools in Education. In *On Usage, Effects, and the Role of the Teacher*. Stockholm: SNS Förlag
- Heidegger M. (1977) *The question concerning technology and Other Essays*, New-York – London: Garland Publishing, pp.3-35.
- Innovatives SHS, 15-16 mai 2019, Lille (https://innovatives.cnrs.fr/spip.php?page=article&id_article=196)
- International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA, 2018). *Digitalization Will Transform the Global Economy*.
- Mary Hafeli, Juan Carlos Castro, Julia Marshall, & Chris Grodoski. (2017). Cultivating Research Through Digital Ecosystems. *Visual Arts Research*, 43(1), 1-7. doi:10.5406/visuartsrese.43.1.0001
- Neeman E. (2012), « Culture numérique et auctorialité : réflexions sur un bouleversement », *A contrario*, vol. 17, no. 1: 3-36.
- Warschauer, M. (2003). *Technology and Social Inclusion, Rethinking the Digital Divide*, The MIT Press, Cambridge MA, London, 2003.
- Wellman, B., Berkowitz S.D. (Eds.). *Social Structures, A network approach*. Jai Press, Greenwich Conn., London, 1988.