

Call for papers N°1 - *Balisages*, Enssib's new online journal

BORN-DIGITAL OBJECTS: TRANSFORMATIONS AND NEW DOCUMENTARY CHALLENGES?

Special issue coordinated by Benoît Epron, Nathalie Pinède and Agnieszka Tona

Can *Smart City* applications, 3D displays, tweets, or software be considered as documents? Is the concept of “document” still valid in a structurally unstable digital context that is continuously changing? Such questions emerge naturally when we consider the born-digital objects which are thriving today in a great variety of forms. Behind the term “born-digital”, we here refer to any entity, produced using digital technology and perceived by our senses (of sight, hearing or touch). C. Paloque-Berges (2016) offers the following typology: digital data; computer code; digital documents; tangible artifacts. In our interpretation, we focus on non-stabilised digital productions which fit into a flow approach (Rifkin and St Upery, 2002): research data, source codes, simulations or displays, data from social networks, Video on Demand services, data from connected objects, web pages, Wikipedia (Barbe et al., 2015), video games, music streaming, interactive streetmaps and plans, digital works of art... This list is by no means exhaustive.

Several features can be highlighted to characterize such objects. In our approach, they are progressively constructed through a complex system, organised in layers and of which certain elements in the core of the machine remain practically invisible to the user and are therefore not easy to understand. The data is recorded in a file, which is encoded in a specific computer format, which in its turn determines the type of software which can be used to read the file, and the type of compatible hardware (computer, smartphone, etc.). Furthermore they cover several areas (technical, social, legal, etc.), as with the logistical aspect: they no longer exist as autonomous and unique objects but are part of a flow logistics system (Robert & Pinède, 2012). Similarly, it is not uncommon for them to form and transform on the screen varying according to the digital shapes they take on (Robert & Tona, 2016). One of the remarkable features of these objects is therefore this permanent reconfiguration related to the digital environment from which they are engendered. Complex, multi-form, hybrid (partly digital, partly physical), dynamic, connected to one another or to other objects (especially in the context of the Internet of Things), they possess unique structuring properties that raise many questions, especially when considered as documentary objects (Delve and Anderson, 2014).

It is this problem that we intend to explore in the first issue of the Journal *Balisages*: how to deal with the structural instability of these complex and evolving objects from an info-documentary point of view? The example of INRIA's *Software Heritage* is significant in this respect. It aims to "collect all publicly available software items in source code form, together with their development history, then massively duplicate them to ensure their preservation, and finally share them with all who need them". This raises traditionally documentary issues for objects that are not documents in the traditional sense (Abramatic et al., 2018).

It is therefore this conflict between born digital objects of a heterogeneous, unstable, complex, dynamic and hybrid nature and the established documentation rationale (collection, description, classification, sharing, dissemination, conservation and archiving...) that we wish to investigate here, by exploring the nature of permanence and ongoing renewal, based on examples of various objects (research data, cultural products, scientific objects, heritage objects, to name but a few...).

The following questions shall be addressed in particular:

- How can a "born- digital object" be qualified? Is it still a document?
- What are the challenges resulting from these new digital objects compared to traditional documentary objects as far as documentary practice is concerned? Do these new objects escape the classic documentary rationale?
- What approaches related to technical devices make their access, outreach, dissemination, etc. possible?
- Which actors do they mobilise? Which documentary ecosystems do they belong to? What new skills (documentary or other) do they require?
- What legal and ethical issues do they raise?

Schedule

- 15th June 2019 : submission of manuscripts for peer-review
- 15th September 2019 : referees' reports
- 1st November 2019 : receipt of final versions of manuscripts
- December 2019 : publication of the 1st issue of the journal *Balisages*

Guidelines for authors

Submissions in both French and English are welcome. The texts must be approximately 40,000 characters long (including spaces). Authors are encouraged to comply with the guidelines concerning the formatting of the text and the standardisation of bibliographic references (see submission guidelines below). Manuscripts will be subject to 2 blind peer reviews.

Article proposals should be sent to the three coordinators of this special issue, Benoît Epron (benoit.epron@hesge.ch), Nathalie Pinède (Nathalie.Pinede@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr) and Agnieszka Tona (agnieszka.tona@enssib.fr).

Bibliographic references

Abramatic, J.F., Di Cosmo, R. & Zacchiroli, S. (2018). Building the universal archive of source code. *Communication of the ACM*, vol. 61 (n° 10), p. 29-31. DOI : [10.1145/3183558](https://doi.org/10.1145/3183558).

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Delve, J & Anderson, D. (2014). *Preserving Complex Digital Objects*. London : Facet.

Paloque-Berges, C. (2016). Les sources nativement numériques pour les sciences humaines et sociales. *Histoire@Politique*, 30 (3), 221-244. DOI : [10.3917/hp.030.0221](https://doi.org/10.3917/hp.030.0221).

Rifkin, J. & Saint-Upéry, M. (2002). *L'âge de l'accès: La révolution de la nouvelle économie*. Paris: La Découverte.

Robert, P. & Tona, A. (2016). Du mode d'existence des quasi-objets documentarisés. *Hermès*, 74 (1), 219-228. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-hermes-la-revue-2016-1-page-219.htm>.

Robert, P. & Pinède, N. (2012). Le document numérique, un nouvel équipement politique de la mémoire sociale ? *Communication & Organisation*, 42, 191-201. DOI : [10.4000/communicationorganisation.3948](https://doi.org/10.4000/communicationorganisation.3948)

Submission guidelines

1. Article formatting

Articles can be submitted in French or English in Word, Open Office odt or Markdown formats: for Word, just use this suggested [style sheet](#). The files will then be processed and converted in order to be published online following the METOPES editorial process text formatting guidelines (XML-TEI standard).

Texts must include a maximum of around 40,000 characters all included (footnotes, bibliography, keywords, summaries, spaces). Authors are encouraged to comply with the text formatting guidelines and the standardisation of bibliographic references.

Article metadata

They are provided by the author on a separate 1st page ([see style sheet](#)), and must contain these 4 levels of indexation:

- Article title
- Author /Affiliation/Email address
- Summaries in both French and English (1,500 characters incl. spaces)
- French and English keywords (a minimum of 5)

Size and font

The article must be written with font Times New Roman size 12.

Headings and subheadings

Keep to a limit of 4 heading levels which should be in title case (T 1, T 2, T 3, T4).

Quotes format

Quotes in French

- When they are brief: they are incorporated in the text with " "
- When they are long, they should be quoted in a separate paragraph without " "

Quotes in English

- When they are brief: they are incorporated in the text in italics using " "
- When they are long, they should be written in italics in a separate paragraph without " "

Formatting and layout of illustrations, tables, diagrams, graphs & photos

They should be provided in a separate file with a quality resolution of 300 dpi, in jpeg format.

Authors must make sure that their illustrations are free of copyright restrictions. Otherwise, they are responsible for obtaining permission to publish and include the written permission with their submission.

Each illustration must be numbered in the text (e. g. Fig. 1, Fig. 2, etc.) and have a descriptive caption in italics with details to identify it: title (date, place) and author

(copyright, source). The title and descriptive caption should appear below the illustration (Figure 1: *title of the figure*).

Formatting of bibliographic references

The bibliographic standardisation model is the format defined by the APA (American Psychological Association).

The cited references are placed at the end of the text under the heading Bibliography and can be imported in APA format from a bibliographic management software.

The presentation of references (intra-textual) in the body of the text according to the APA standard (Author, Year) should not duplicate footnotes.

For a book

Name, I. (Year). *Book title*. Place: publisher.

For an article in a journal or a periodical

Name, I. (Year). Article title. *Journal or periodical title*, volume (N°), number of pages. DOI.

For a contribution to a collective work

Name, I. (Year). Article title. In Book Authors Name, I. (eds.), *Book title* (number of pages), place: publisher.

For an online reference

Name, I. (Year). Title of the online reference. Found on <http://URLcomplet>

For theses, dissertations and reports

Name, I. (Year). *Title of the thesis, dissertation or report*. University or source, place.

For oral communications

Name, I. (Date). *Communication title*. Communication presented at the following conference/seminar, place.

*

‘I’ stands for first name Initial

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For other types of references (audio, video, radio, press, etc.) or additions, please refer to the APA standard: [norme APA](#).

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2. Manuscript submission

Article proposals should be sent electronically as an attachment in.doc,.odt or.md format directly to the call coordinators or to the following address: balisages@listes.huma-num.fr. Authors should ensure that their work is unpublished and entirely original, and does not borrow from any other work of any kind whatsoever, which could engage the publisher's liability. Manuscripts will be subject to two blind reviews by a peer review committee, whose members will be selected according to their area of expertise upon receipt of the articles.

3. Liability and copyright

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Balisages is at the intersection of information, communication and library sciences, as well as an open anthropology (in the sense of a glance and not a discipline) of knowledge. A field that must therefore be mapped between digital and semiotic markers (« balises » in French), to promote or stimulate innovative intelligence on issues that affect both the document and the data, paper and digital as well as the forces that affect them.