

## **Facilitating reusable third-party annotations in the digital edition**

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In the conference on 'Annotation in Scholarly Editions and Research', we would like to discuss our work to facilitate third-party annotations in the digital edition: annotations on an edition made by researchers unaffiliated to the edition project, as a contribution to the explanatory material already present on the site, for purposes of private study or for publication in conjunction with a scholarly article.

The more specific question that we want to explore is how to facilitate anchoring the annotation to a specific location in the digital edition. We need to make sure that (1) the annotation addresses a component in the logical information structure that defines the edition (and not a location in an HTML page which is merely one representation of an edited text), and (2) the information structure is described in sufficient detail to distinguish the edited text or document (the object of editing) from its (multiple) representation(s) in the edition. It should be possible to annotate (parts of) the document or work being edited (e.g. a manuscript page or a canonical location in a work) as well as its transcription, its translation or a page image. In the work, we might want to explain an obscure sentence; in the transcription, we might want to discuss an incorrect reading; in the translation we might want to point out a translation error.

This paper continues our earlier work on the subject. In Boot, Haentjens Dekker, Koolen and Melgar (2017) we argued RDFa provides a suitable technology for embedding the required information in the edition's HTML pages. In Boot and Koolen (2018) we discuss an FRBR<sub>oo</sub>-based ontology of the editorial domain, capable of describing both the objects of editing (Text and Document) and their representation in the edition. We have a fully functional and open source prototype of an annotation tool that over the coming years will be actively developed, for use in multiple disciplines, in the Dutch CLARIAH (= CLARIN + DARIAH) infrastructure.

In the Wuppertal conference we would like to show how an ontology-aware annotation tool can use the ontology in the context of an edition of the letters of Vincent van Gogh. In that edition, four representations of the letter are available: a line-by-line (diplomatic) transcription, a running (critical) text, a translation into English and a page image. We will show how annotations made in the context of one such representation can be made to address either that specific representation or the underlying abstract text, and thus be displayed either in one representation only, or in all representations.

Being able to accomplish this on a technical level is neat, but only a first step. We will also discuss the potential impact on humanities research practice: the possibility to (collaboratively) create, organize and share annotations of different types offers researchers access to layers of

interpretation made by others. This could have fundamental implications for the transmission of knowledge in the humanities.

## **Literature**

Boot, P, Haentjens Dekker, R, Koolen, M, Melgar, L. (2017). Facilitating Fine-grained Open Annotations of Scholarly Sources. In: *Conference abstracts Digital Humanities 2017, Montreal*.

Boot, P., Koolen, M (2018). A FRBROO-based annotation ontology for digital editing. In: *Conference abstracts European Association for Digital Humanities 2018, Galway*.

## **Biographical notes:**

Marijn Koolen:

Marijn Koolen studied artificial intelligence and wrote his PhD thesis on using hyperlinks in information retrieval algorithms. He has worked on scholarly annotation for digital humanities research and on annotation-related information behaviour and information systems. He works as a researcher and developer at the Humanities Cluster of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences where he leads a project on developing annotation support within the CLARIAH research infrastructure project.

Peter Boot:

Peter Boot studied mathematics and Dutch language and literature; he wrote his PhD thesis about annotation in scholarly digital editions and its implications for humanities scholarship. He is employed as a senior researcher at the Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands where he works among other things as a consultant in several edition projects.