Issue 530: Bias

Worlding Public Cultures (WPC)

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What is often done

- Discussion around terminology and labelling
- Identify the provenance and biases of “innocent” tools and expose them
- Databases remain as basic systems of documentation
Re-thinking the cultural codes of new media: The question concerning ontology

"Turnbull (n.d) has explained that trying to preserve such knowledge according to a single common standard that emerges is a trap of Western thinking that ironically obliterates the diversity of the traditions from which these practices of knowledge emerge."

Re-thinking the cultural codes of new media: The question concerning ontology

Turnbull (1993) points out that the discrete demarcations and divisions that underpin the CIDOC CRM diagram are absent in indigenous ontologies. The ontology illustrated in Figure 4 privileges hierarchy, interoperability, mobility, and scientific abstraction and immutability (Boast et al., 2007), muting other non-Western ways of speaking, describing, and classifying. An indigenous, local knowledge-based ontology in contrast describes, performs, names, and classifies based on ontological concepts excluded from the CIDOC CRM model. While both Western and indigenous ontologies speak to narrating the world, they do so in very different manners that cannot be reconciled into a single ontology (Verran, 2002)

Re-thinking the cultural codes of new media: The question concerning ontology

No time or season ends in totality, nor could either be described as following a simple mathematical probability density-type function. Multiple states exist at once, and all states are present as continuous variables at all times and places.

Decolonising knowledge here and now

- Assigning epistemic authority to marginalised knowers and knowledge systems
- Abandon epistemic hierarchy of race
- Recentering knowledge to where the subject is
- Decolonisation does not happen once but it is ongoing

Bottom-up development

- CRM based on real data
- Data contested in memory organisations
- What in the CRM needs fixing?
CRM scope

- Issue is known to the SIG and inherent in many SIG discussions
- Use of structured data is a documentation bias
  - essential for information integration
- Remain at material level
  - avoid judgements, causality
- Principles for modelling ontologies
  - classes from neutral point of view ("transfer of custody" as opposed to "giving" or "taking")
What issue 530 is

- Previous discussions on bias not consolidated
- Partial understanding of what the concerns are
- Representation of countries outside Europe and North America is limited
  - Understanding of non-Western epistemologies may be limited
How to process the issue - proposal:

- Form a working group
  - WPC is a potential partner/forum

- Discuss and understand what the concerns are
  - Which forms of bias in data structures can interfere with cultural points of view, and what empirical or theoretical means we have to detect them?
  - Should documenting concepts of one’s culture as an empirical fact be regarded as bias?
  - Find common denominator or maximise diversity?

- Produce a statement on bias for the CRM specification document
- Establish criteria for examining classes and properties
- Create new issues for improving the model
Action to be taken

Discuss the proposal, improve and approve