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The Scholarly Publisher and the E-Book

The New Wave or Just Hollywood?

Eileen Gardiner & Ron Musto

- Introduction
- The New Wave?
- Hollywood?
- Jacques Rivette's *Out 1*
- The Challenges
- Some Ways Forward



[Slide 1] Our topic today is the publishing of digital scholarship, most especially the currency of the realm in the humanities: the monograph. I'll speak for about 13 minutes, addressing what we see as the major conundrum in digital scholarship. Eileen Gardiner will then take the next 13 or so minutes to speak to possible ways out of this conundrum.

Our colleagues on this panel are addressing readership, economics, legal issues, and access to and preservation of digital scholarship. We will focus on the creation of these works and the age-old collaboration between publisher and author. We've been asked to speak from the publishers' perspective, but we will speak here not as publishers in the business sense, but as publishers from the editor's perspective.

Since the beginning of the digital era, talking about e-books has always involved comparisons and metaphors, many of them hearkening back to well-known print analogies. We have all heard these, and we will not belabor them here today: an e-book is like an ancient scroll, like a medieval codex, like a Renaissance printed book, comparisons that Jim O'Donnell made clear to us 20 years ago.

But today we'd like to propose a different comparison, something more kinetic, that focuses less on the physical medium and its antecedents and more on this publisher-author collaboration: that is, the e-book as cinema. We recognize many of the essential differences between the two media: the passive nature of film's reception, the two-dimensional nature of projected film, etc. But we have a specific cinema in mind: the *Nouvelle Vague* or "New Wave," and specific comments about relationships within its authorial community that may be relevant to our discussion.

[Slides 2-7.] We all know these iconic images from some of the greatest New Wave films, largely the product of the late 1950s and early 1960s by such directors as Truffaut, Godard, Rohmer, Varda, Resnais and others in France; Richardson, Davis and Lester in England.

Truffaut: Les Quatre Cents Coups (Jean-Pierre L aud)



Rohmer: Ma Nuit chez Maud
(Jean-Louis Trintignant, Françoise Fabian)



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Agnès Varda: Cléo de 5 à 7
(Corinne Marchand, Antoine Bourseiller)



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Truffaut: Jules & Jim
(Jeanne Moreau, Henri Serre, Oskar Werner)



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Richard Lester: A Hard Day's Night
(Unidentified Actors)



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Godard:
À bout de
souffle
(Jean-Paul
Belmondo
& Jean
Seberg)



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Building on American Film Noir and Italian Neo-Realism of the 1940s and 1950s, New Wave films startled the world of cinema with their quick jump cuts, their minimalist means, their unorthodox framing and editing, their existential themes, their discontinuities and rejection of linear narrative, their improvisational relationships between director and actor as auteur and collaborator, and their deliberate attempt to upset viewer habits of reception and expectation. Like today's digital humanists, they combined existing technologies, new techniques, and a new sensibility to subject matter and audience. They also took advantage of distribution networks that gave screen space to Truffaut, Godard, and Fellini right next to Hitchcock, John Houston and Douglas Sirk. In much the same way 1960s scholarship like Kristeller's *Renaissance Thought* shared bookstore space with Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, and at roughly the same price point.

As the 1960s passed, the forms and approaches of the New Wave were adopted by the large studios and commercial production houses of the Continent and the USA. Their quirky characters and offbeat plots merged with the violent matinee formulas of Hollywood. [Slide 8] Bonnie & Clyde is the most frequently cited example.

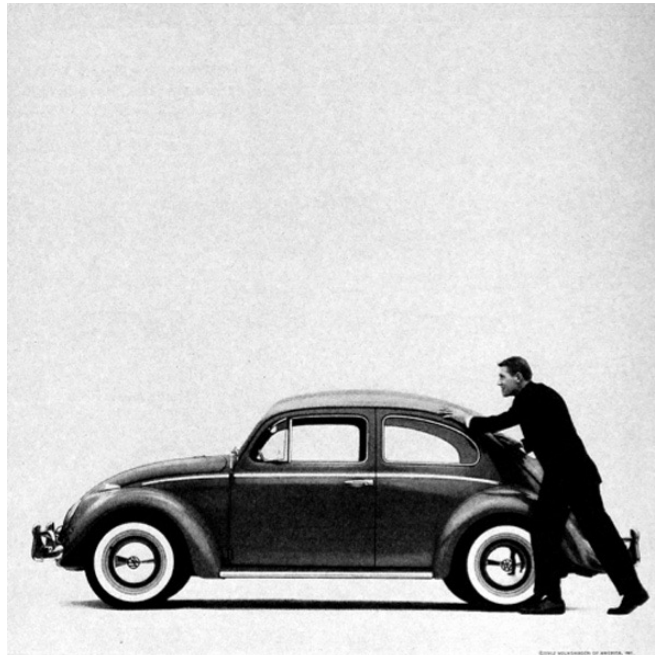
Arthur
Penn:
Bonnie &
Clyde
(Warren
Beatty
Faye
Dunnaway)



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New Wave's minimalist visuality and ironic distance became the new standard for Madison Avenue [Slide 9]. New and startling techniques and attitudes were quickly tamed to the needs of commerce, large-scale production, marketing and established hierarchies until they once again became cliché, formula and standard issue. Most viewers today would see little special in New Wave films, except perhaps for their unabashed politics.

Doyle Dane Bernbach: VW Bug Ad 1960s



And if you run out of gas, it's easy to push.

See?
We think of everything.
Getting a Volkswagen to the side of the road is a pushover.
It's a little surprising that VW owners don't run out of gas more often.
A figure like 32 miles to the gallon can make you a little hazy about when you

last filled up.
And you spend so little time in gas stations, there are almost no reminders.
You'll probably never need oil between changes, for example.
You'll never need water or anti-freeze because the engine is air-cooled.
40,000 miles on a set of tires won't break

any Volkswagen records.
And repairs are few and far between.
So this year we've installed a gas gauge to help you remember.
But we haven't taken all the fun away.
You still have to remember to look at it.



But this shift was not inevitable, nor universal, and most of the original New Wave directors and actors continued to produce fresh and unsettling visions and narratives — or negations of narrative — into the early 21st century. They continue to have many — small scale — successors.

Continuing to stretch our metaphor, our question today therefore will be whether scholarly publication in the digital era is now New Wave or just Hollywood. Will new digital scholarship follow the trail of New Wave cinema? Will it be relegated to creative marginalization, cut off from major funding, distribution and audience? Or will it be coopted into commercial standardization and formal mediocrity? Will our digital *Breathless* become just another VW commercial or *Bonnie & Clyde*, or will it have a vigorous and independent future?

Out 1: “The Holy Grail of New Wave”



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[Slide 10] To really discuss what made the New Wave so new and why it is relevant to digital scholarship today, we’d like to focus on the 1971 film by Jacques Rivette, *Noli me tangere* or *OUT 1*. Though few remember this and even fewer have ever seen it, *OUT 1* has been acclaimed as the “Holy Grail of the New Wave.” Why?

Jacques Rivette's *OUT 1* is 13-hour film in 8 episodes created in collaboration with a cast of the most renowned New Wave actors and cinematographers. It follows the fate of two experimental theater companies in Paris in 1970 — in the aftermath of May '68. It attempts to create a de-centered narrative built around dance, music, theater, and literature: from Aeschylus, Corneille and Balzac to North African drumming, Lewis Carroll and Georges Perec. **[Slide: 11]**

Out 1: Assembling Forces (Pierre Baillot, Karen Puig, Michèle Moretti, Marcel Bozonnet, Alain Libolt, Hermine Karagheuz)



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It is both a mystery story — Balzac's *L'Histoire des Treize* provides a framework around the discovery of a vague and open-ended web of political — possibly criminal — co-conspirators **[Slides 12 & 13]** —

Out 1: Research (Jean-Pierre Léaud)



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Out 1: Compilation (Juliet Berto)



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and a deep and lingering meditation on the art of theater and of creative collaboration: artistic, social and political **[Slide 14]**.

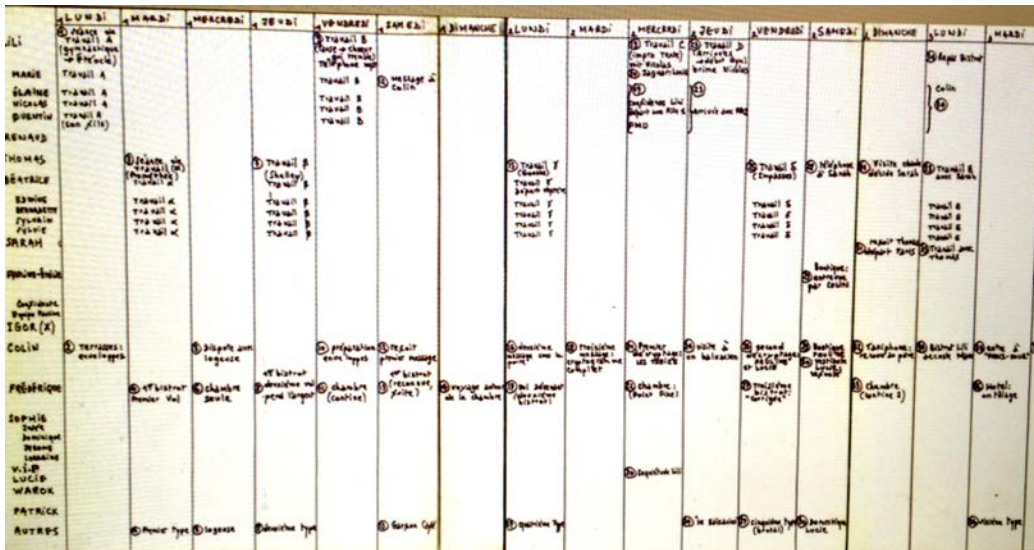
Out 1: Collaboration
(Christiane Corthay, Sylvain Corthay, Bernadette Onfroy,
Monique Clément, Edwine Moatti, Michael Lonsdale)



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OUT 1 went far beyond the limits of mainstream cinema. It was filmed without a screenplay or script. It was hung loosely on a schematic diagram produced by Rivette. [Slide 15]

OUT 1: Rivette's "Plot" Diagram



OUT 1: Rivette's scene "script"

FILM: <i>OUT 1</i>		Journée du <i>20 Avril 1970</i>		Jour de tournage: <i>1</i>	
ou EXTÉRIEUR <i>intérieurs</i>	PLATEAUX	DÉCORS <i>lieu de Travail Lili</i>			
JOURNÉES N° <i>1/A - 1/B - 1/C - 1/D - 1/E - 2/A - 2/B - 2/C - 2/D - 2/E</i>					
DES PLANS..... <i>110</i>		PLANS SUPPLÉMENTAIRES TOURNÉS	PLANS SUPPRIMÉS	PLANS REFAITS	MINUTAGE
nés ce jour..... <i>10</i>	Aujourd'hui...				<i>16'45"</i>
nés précédemment. <i>10</i>	Précédemment.				
reste à tourner <i>séquences 108</i>	Totaux...				<i>16'45"</i>

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The actors were shown only the most basic outlines of a plot, [Slide 16] given the interconnecting network of their individual stories, and asked to improvise everything from their characters' names, to their backstories, to their lines, to their interactions with the other characters. The film thus became the result of an intricate web of interaction among the cast and characters, production crew and director/author. This interaction created a constantly shifting exploration of individuals and the relationships between and among them and with their social, political and creative environment. The two theater troops' ultimate dissolution points perhaps to the failure of May '68, perhaps to the open-ended processes of creative thought and action, perhaps to Rivette's own sense of dis-illusion.

The film itself — like a heavily glossed medieval manuscript or today's advanced digital scholarship — is thus less a commercial product than an open-ended process, never-final in form and capable of taking so many different directions from the same

starting points and assembled creative forces. *OUT 1* is multipolar and multivalent: both in its creation and in its reception and interpretation.

I mentioned that *OUT 1* has been called the “Holy Grail of New Wave Cinema,” and this is more appropriate than it first appears. Like the legend of the Holy Grail in medieval literature, the story reveals itself to be less about the goal (i.e., for a product) than the quest or process itself.

But our metaphor — however stretched — is also a loaded one. *OUT 1* turned out to be a failure. Made in 1971, *OUT 1* was only shown to a small audience of cineasts and never found theatrical release until 2015. Why? Perhaps its ties to developments in Paris in May ’68 ruined its chances. French National Television showed a brief interest in the film, but backed off without explanation. Or perhaps its non-conventional form, approach and demands upon viewers’ acculturated skills and expectations guaranteed its isolation.

After one or two partial showings, it disappeared. Theatrical prints were never preserved. Only daily rushes survived. Legend crept up around the masterpiece, so much so that when the film’s importance was finally acknowledged — 40 years later — it had to be reconstructed from the producer’s private reels, archived in his garage. A collaborative effort managed to put together the means — both financial and human — to restore the film.

Again, *OUT 1*’s original failure was not a question of technique. Its New Wave techniques were easily appropriated. (Think again of the fast cutting and camera angles, the hand-held tracking and framing of experimental films, which have been taken over wholesale by Madison Avenue and Hollywood). Its failure was, rather, due to a combination of forces: of cultural, economic and indeed broadly political forces that blocked such new directions. Today such forces have constrained most cinema to standard 110-minute formats and to reiterative combinations of narrative, characters and techniques. Audience expectations, habits of reception, and tools of interpretation have followed suit.

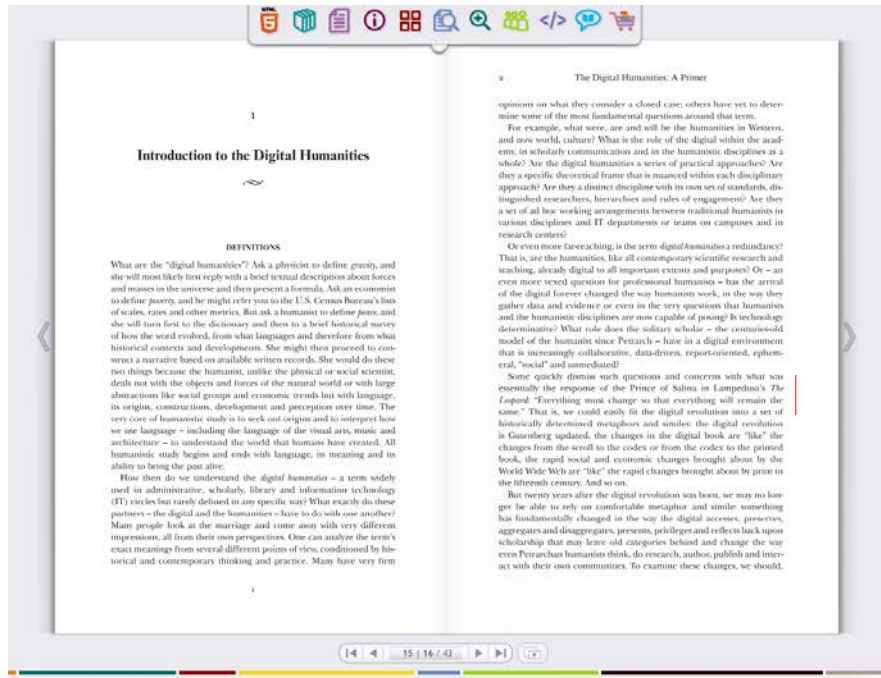
To carry the metaphor back home: in the end, will digital scholarship remain an *Out 1*, open-ended, highly collaborative, multivalent and multipolar? Or will it be reduced to high technology and specialized skill applied to the age-old linear modes of the print book, just as current cinema has become little more than high technology applied to the most traditional of plots and characters? Will digital scholarship retain its innovative structures and forms? Will it reflect the new insights, relevance and interconnectedness of humanities research and evidence?

[Slide 17] Will it look like *Star Wars* — full of “bells and whistles,” lasers and death stars — thoroughly linear and traditional in its creation and its reception?



[Slide 18] Will a generation of research, writing, editing and publishing in the new digital humanities be reduced to a one-size-fits-all, mass-produced computer

The New Digital Monograph?



version of a print monograph, produced by one of the largest university presses in the world? I picked this page by serendipity, quoting Lampedusa's *The Leopard*, as the Prince of Salina states why he support's Garibaldi's revolution: "Everything must change so that everything will remain the same." Again, just by serendipity, a statue of Garibaldi stands right outside the windows of this room.

Or will digital scholarship resemble Rivette's *OUT 1*: collaborative, multipolar, multivalent, and multidirectional, open to all possibilities?

Eileen Gardiner will now attempt to resolve our conundrum.

Thanks.

Thanks, Ron. And thanks again to Ann and to the Charleston Company, as well as to our hosts for this retreat.

As Ron already noted, although we were assigned to speak from the publishers' perspective here, we are not really speaking of publishers in the business sense, but of publishers in the editor's sense.

To unravel the conundrum that Ron has laid out, we think it will be helpful to try to identify the primary objective of current e-books producers. As Ron noted, scholars tend to make comparisons to history, and especially to books and manuscripts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The goal of book production in those times was seriously about the preservation of knowledge. When we look at the goal of **e-book** producers, however, the comparison to the past breaks down. *At this point*, we are better off using our New Wave metaphor when we want to make our comparisons to the goals of **e-book** producers. Especially if we want to determine the likely fate of scholarly e-books. We have to look for the e-book equivalent in the world of film, in fact in Hollywood, and examine the relationship of producer to product.

Let's use Amazon and the Kindle to stand in here for any number of ebook creators, vendors and distributors, from the Nook to Kobo and Overdrive, Ingram and, of course Google. AMAZON is the MGM or the DreamWorks of book publishing. Now, places like Amazon, and particularly Google, have made some interesting claims about their role in the preservation of knowledge, but what really is their goal? What is their target? And what makes most sense for them? The goal — the same as for the major film studios — is commercial domination.

Now if commercial domination is the goal, what are they targeting to achieve such domination? Is it the brick & mortar bookstore? The college bookstore? The Library? Probably all of them.

Now, to achieve their goal of commercial domination what makes the most sense for these e-book producers and distributors? What are they producing to effect this domination? It's a uniform & industrialized product. Ron has already shown us

examples of what Hollywood did to New Wave. It took some ideas, some techniques but produced flat, linear narratives.

For these big commercial producers it's a question of return-on-investment—not a question of scholarship and particularly not a question about content. In this environment, industrial considerations, assert themselves, considerations of unit price, unit cost, cost of storage and distribution. True experimentation is marginalized. We can see this clearly in cinema, but it is no less true in publishing as well.

Now, thanks to Amazon + Google, almost everything in print has already been digitized. Everything new is created already digital. And the commercial, industrialized e-book is the efficient delivery of almost totally flat digitized text, a closed linear narrative.

But, in fact, for scholars the text should not be product but process. The potential of the e-book is to never be finished. It is open to any amount of accretion over time and space. **It responds to knowledge.** We are here talking specifically of the scholarly monograph as e-book.

The scholarly monograph is, of course, a specialist work of writing (in contrast to things like reference works) a specialist work of writing on a single subject or a single aspect of a subject, usually by a single author. But this definition certainly needs to be adapted to the new ways of presenting knowledge. Is there any such thing really now as a single subject? And given the exponential growth of scholarship is *one single* author *even capable* of mastering a single subject?

A decade ago, Ron and I heard one of the most prominent Shakespeare scholars declare that there is no way to keep up with the scholarship produced in that field. All the other scholars sitting around the conference table, warily agreed.

Then just five years later, the situation could be easily acknowledged in print: musing on the need for a “Definitive” biography on Bernard of Clairvaux, for instance, one expert, who has worked on that man for over 50 years, wrote: “It

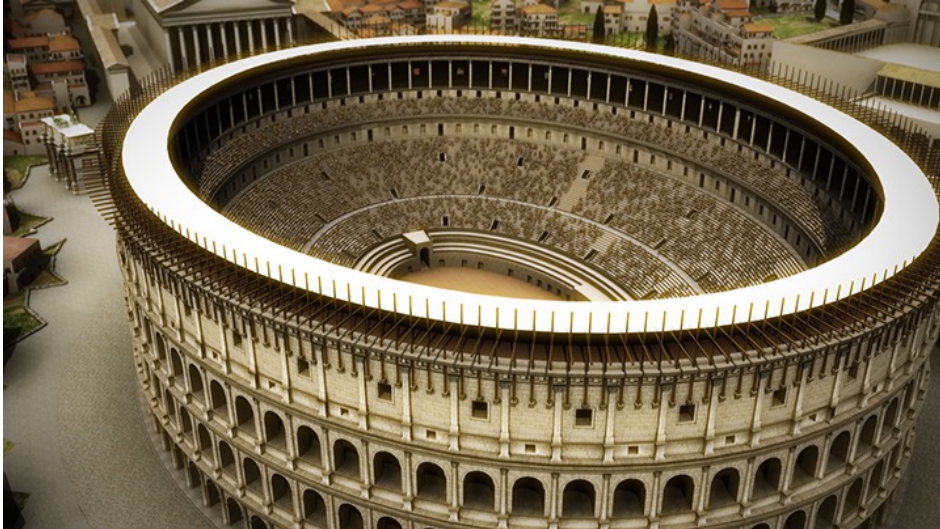
eludes us, perhaps because ... the number of studies on Bernard, especially in the last decades, has multiplied beyond number, and so any one scholar would not be able to have command of the material that [a biographer] in the 1890s mastered.” The scholarly monograph has had to focus on ever narrower topics in order to fit the form of scholarly publishing that we hold so dear — a form delivered to us from the later 19th-century, when the knowledge base and available documents were infinitely minuscule compared with today’s abundance. It is a form still dominant today: 250 print pages with 12 illustrations sold to between 100 and 200 research libraries.

We have had a century of reducing first-hand, high-end research to fit between the covers of a book, a format that it has now clearly outgrown. Will we be appeased by the fact that we can now read that same book on a screen instead of on paper? Or can we adjust our thinking to create interpretative works that are truly native to the new media possibilities? Is it still possible to rescue the e-book so that it obeys the needs of current research rather than the needs of **corporate** interests : can we rescue the research monograph from the flat linear narrative and breath new life into it?

To understand the possibilities, we must recognize that on some level it’s very simple: there are only three things that can be delivered digitally: text (including number), image and sound (which also encompass video). This is how we represent everything in the digital. And these can be manipulated in the digital environment to represent time and space. So it should not be too hard for even major producers to incorporate these tools into e-books and still be able to publish an efficient, easy-to-produce and deliver industrialized product.

But although new tools and techniques are already an integral part of the way many scholars work, they are **NOT** now encompassed in the standardized e-book alternatives. For example:

Rome Reborn: 3-D Modeling

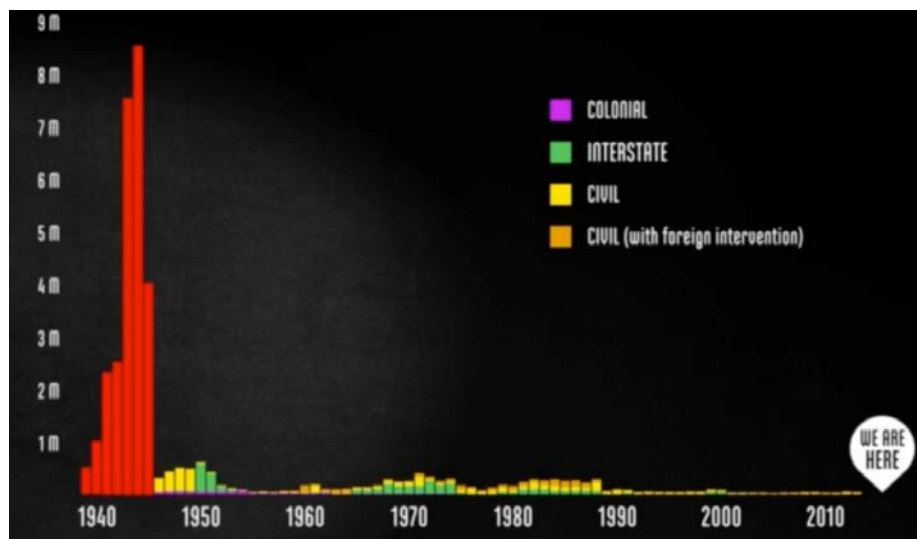


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3D Digital Modeling [Slide 19]: As a case in point, we have *Rome Reborn*, an international initiative to create 3D digital models illustrating the urban development of Rome from the first settlement in the late Bronze Age to the depopulation of the city in the early Middle Ages. This goes beyond mere illustration into digital documentation of the best kind.

Data Visualization [Slide 20]: We have projects like *The Fallen of World War II* a half-hour, data visualization project that creates an interactive documentary to examine the human cost of the Second World War and the decline in battle deaths in the years since the war. Why can't this be fit into the current ebook format?

Fallen of World War II: Data Visualization



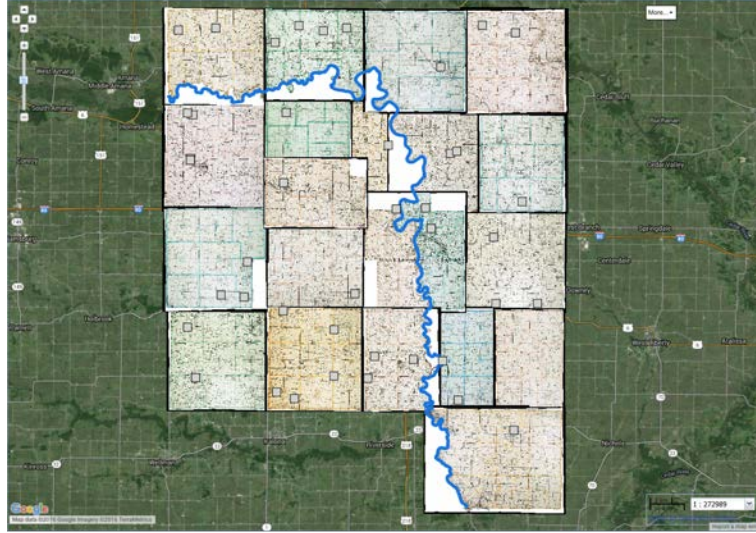
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St. John's Day Fires: Audio & Video Processing



Audio and Video Processing [Slide 21]: This is used extensively for records of the 20th century, from folklore and anthropology to political science and performance history. As an example, we have the *St. John's Eve Bonfire* collection — a still is shown here. It uses audio and video processing to document, preserve and demonstrate the traditional, annual mid-summer bonfires.

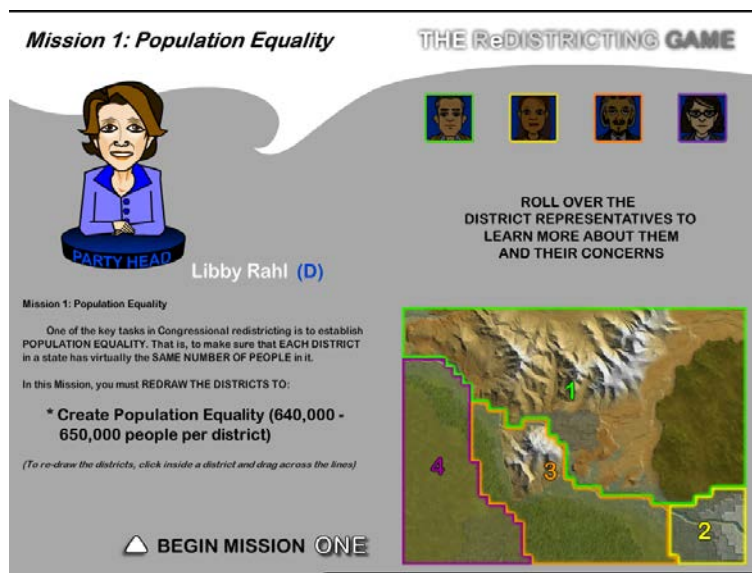
Digital Johnson County: Mapping



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Mapping [Slide 22]: This can be effectively used to illustrate an enormous diversity of information. For example, *Digital Johnson County*, shown here, uses mapping to document the social, natural, and political history of one county in Iowa.

The Redistricting Game: Gaming



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Gaming [Slide 23]: Although often more useful in pedagogy than in research, the potential of gaming can be seen in interactive tools like *The Redistricting Game*, which also can be used to examine alternative models and outcomes for political redistricting.

As we said, these are not just sophisticated illustration, but they are becoming the visual, and auditory, architectural and statistical, equivalent of the text-privileged monograph.

We could continue with examples of the digital tools available to change e-books from the flat delivery of digitized files: tools for databases, text and data mining, brainstorming, searching, crowd-sourcing and even reviewing.

It is clear that the capacity already exist for integrating new tools and techniques in e-books. Corporations, foundations, and museums are already doing this, creating some of the most innovative approaches to our understanding to the past. Academics and scholars are also using these tools, but the formats they are then expected to conform to — the formats generally open and familiar to them for publication — discourage them from fully embracing the new tools and techniques. But, as we already explained, it is not really a question of **tools and techniques**.

So again what is the challenge? And how do we address it?

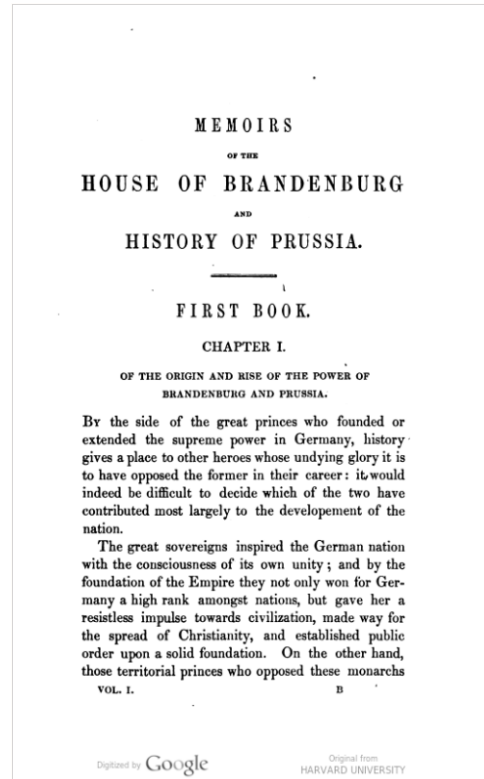
We, as editors, see the challenge as twofold. **First** to create a sustainable environment for collaboration and authorship that enables scholars to take full advantage of digital possibilities, and the **second** is to create an audience for the form of publication delivering those new possibilities.

How do we create a sustainable environment for authors? First of all the whole idea of authorship in this age needs to be revised. As I already noted, it is nearly impossible to master a single field given the amount of material now available. Scholars therefore need to embrace fully the idea of collaboration in order to really produce scholarship that advances knowledge in meaningful ways. And when we talk about collaboration, we are not talking about one scholar/one technician type of collaboration. And we are not talking about collected essays as an ideal form of collaboration.

We have to stop looking to the 19th century monograph [Slide 24]

Print Book of the Nineteenth Century

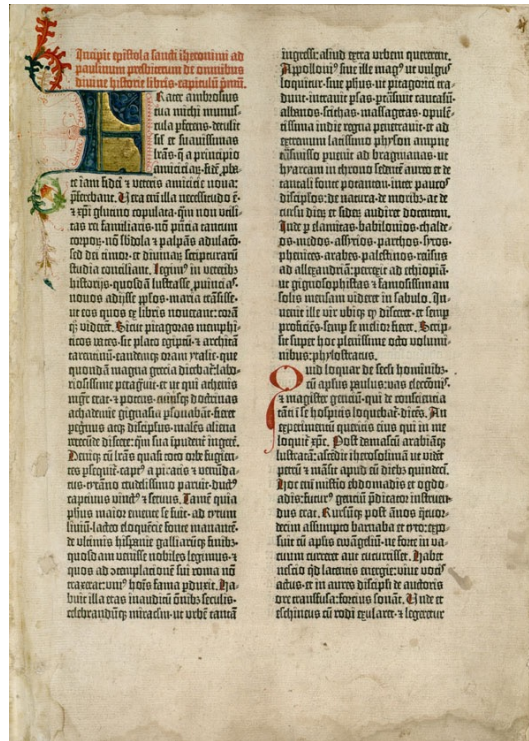
(Leopold von Ranke,
*Memoirs of the House of
Brandenburg*, 1849)



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or even the standardized print book of the Renaissance [Slide 25] for our publication model.

Print Book of the Renaissance (Gutenberg Bible, c. 1455)



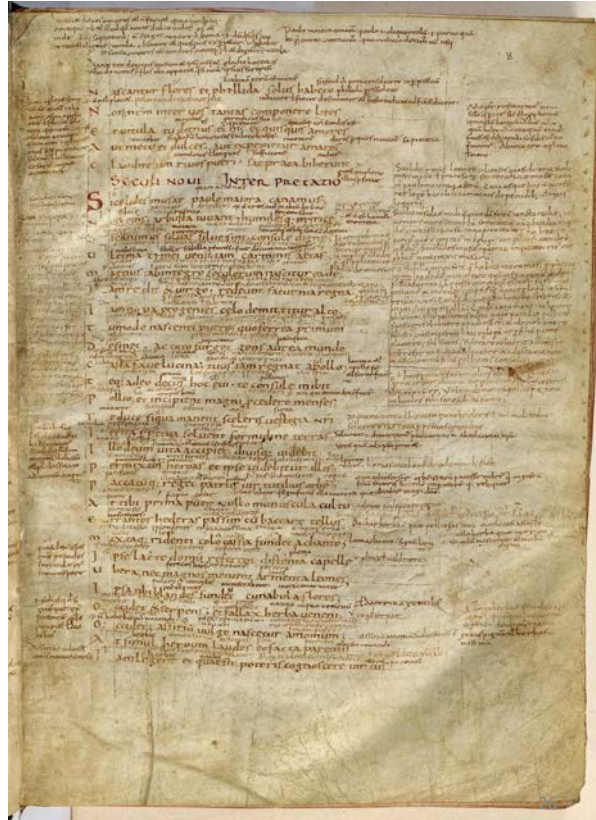
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We need to look instead back to the manuscript culture of the Middle Ages [Slide 26]: A time when the melding of authorship, editorship and readership — *auctor*

Medieval Manuscript

Virgil, with Gloss of Servius

(Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire, Section Médecine, H 253, fol. 8r. 9-10th c.)



and *scriptor* — was the only way to deal with the proliferation of information with the technology then available.

The monasteries of the Middle Ages provided the environment for this work. The universities and libraries of the 20th century were targeted as the locus for the new digital environment.

The vision of providing a mental and creative space and framework for collaboration is quickly fading, and without that, few will be capable of pulling this together for themselves. Perhaps scholars will have to rely on platforms like academia.edu, Vimeo and Wikipedia, YouTube, Picasa and Instagram when all else

Jacques Rivette: Coordinating Collaboration



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fails. What we really need is a new generation of Jacques Rivette's [Slide 27] guiding authors in the collaboration. **Libraries** can play a role here.

We hear much about the library as publisher. In the United States, at least, there is certainly still a role for them to claim. What is required is a place that includes technology and technical expertise, but more important it includes a virtual space for collaboration, sharing, linking and moving forward with the creation of new forms of knowledge. But just when libraries have been about to undertake this task they are being buffeted by the economic and political forces emerging in the corporate university. Will they be able to both maintain their independence and marshal the necessary resources to succeed?

The second challenge we listed is to create the audience, something that even Rivette was not able to achieve. Rivette was an author and a director, not a distributor or businessman, and there was no MGM willing to distribute a work like OUT 1. The audience was there, but not large enough to support commercial distribution. It took 45 years for the commercial release of OUT 1 with the audience for this type of work only developing and growing over time. We have already waited 20 years for the audience for real e-books. Perhaps before too much longer, the solution to **audience** will emerge from the library world where access to, and curation and preservation of projects can be regularized outside the predictable frameworks of commercial interests and mass production.

Thank you!