Managing Qualitative Data

From Online Communities and Sources

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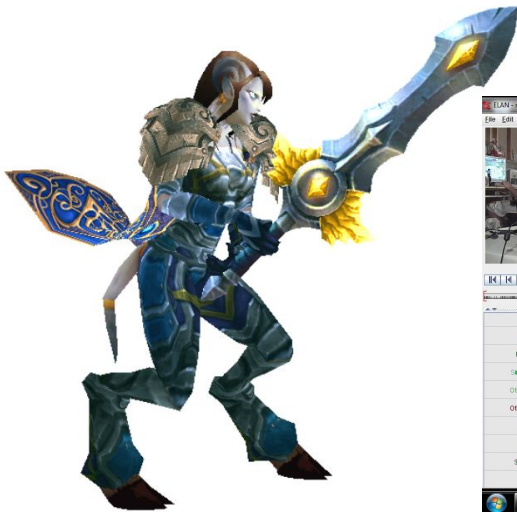lbcollister@pitt.edu
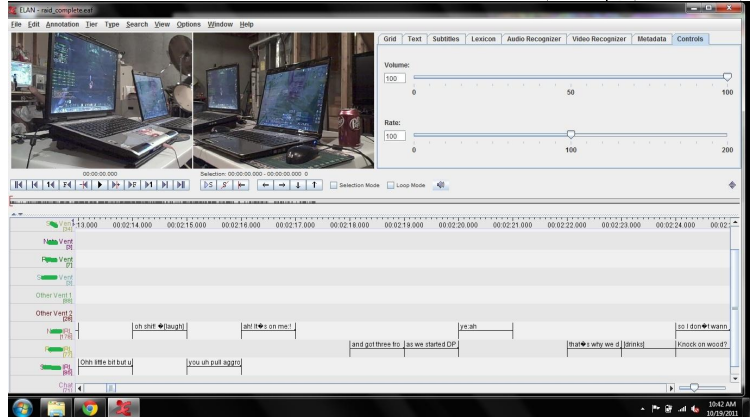Twitter @parnopaeus   **Slides: bit.ly/ManagingQualData**

A quick introduction of who I am and why I'm here talking to you:
I'm our Scholarly Communication Librarian, but I'm also a linguist and an ethnographer.

In a previous life...

My dissertation work was a 5-year ethnography of the online game World of Warcraft, in which I looked at gender, language, and mode of communication. I spent most of those five years struggling with how to manage all of my data, which included endless text chat logs, screenshots and images, short videos recorded by my participants, audio interviews, blog posts, forums, on and on and on. I made a lot of mistakes and I have a huge "wish I had" list. So that is why I am here, to have this conversation with you all who are present, about some of the things I "wish I had" done that might help you not have those same wishes in the future.

Outline

- What can "count" as qualitative data?
  - Tool: Padlet
- How can we save & sort qualitative data?
  - Tool: Evernote
- Making data collection a little bit easier.
  - Tool: IFTTT

I am going to introduce you to a few of my favorite tools that I discovered, but there are new tools coming out every day and not everything is suited for everyone. My focus is going to be on free tools that are easy to use and can be used for a lot of things. I'll show you these and some things we can do with them, and then I'll ask you to brainstorm about some communities that you are familiar with and share any tools that you find useful. We'll report out at the end. I intend for this workshop to last about an hour and a half, with plenty of time at the end to stick around, continue the conversation, and play with any of the tools that we discovered.

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WHAT ARE YOUR DATA?

bit.ly/QualDataPadlet

Let's start, though, with a really fundamental question: what *is* data, anyway? I want to brainstorm a little bit, so let's use one of my favorite collaborative brainstorming tools, Padlet. Go to this URL please:
http://padlet.com/lbcollister/qualitativedata
Here you can double click to create a new 'note', and there you can type text and add an attachment if you'd like, including uploading an image, linking to something, or depositing something like an audio file. You can create an account to keep track of your notes - you can see the ones that belong to me here - or you can do this anonymously.
Furthermore, you can arrange notes by moving them around, just click and drag.

So go ahead and take 5 minutes to play a little bit with this and add some of your ideas about what qualitative data can look like.

As you can see, we have a lot of different kinds of data here. And all of these data aren't really suited to a spreadsheet or a file system. We need to be able to search and tag and organize.

Evernote

Your digital filing cabinet!

- Save (almost) any kind of object in a note.
- Convenient Web Clipper for Chrome, Safari, Firefox, IE.
- Bookmark URLs from object location.
- Screenshot a section of a page (even on Windows).
- Tag notes and search for later use.
- Sync to many devices.

My favorite tool for this is Evernote.

Evernote is basically a digital filing cabinet. You can store just about any kind of information in it, it has a "web clipper" which can save websites, images, documents, e-mails, and all kinds of things, and within evernote you can tag notes to easily organize them and do a search (you can even search text in images). It also syncs to many devices so you always have your notes with you.

Does anyone in here use Evernote already? What for?

Sample Notebook

bit.ly/GnomeRun

Here's a link to an Evernote notebook for one of my research projects.
https://www.evernote.com/pub/lbcollister/gnomerun
You can explore this notebook at this link.

This is a notebook for some advertising and information about a yearly charity event organized by members of the World of Warcraft guild that I studied, which is a 'race for the cure' style event in the game world to benefit the Cleveland Clinic's breast cancer vaccine research program. In this Notebook, I have blog posts, websites, screenshots, social media posts, podcasts, videos, and text-based interviews.

You can see that it saves not only the images, but also the links to where I got the posts. This is because I largely used the Evernote Web Clipper, which is a browser extension that they have for all browsers - I use Chrome, so it's easy there.
The web interface you're looking at is not particularly fantastic if you don't have an account and you're not joined to the folder, so I'm going to show you what this looks like in my desktop client.

Evernote Web Clipper

Save just about anything
from the web!

evernote.com/webclipper

Evernote web clipper:

Where to get it? https://evernote.com/webclipper/?downloaded

How to use it? Just click the button and clip - let's see a quick demo. You can clip full pages, articles, bookmark URLs, or take screenshots. Here I'm going to take a quick screenshot.

Clip something, e.g. the header image from https://www.facebook.com/RunningofTheGnomes/

You can also annotate if something really stands out to you!

Sharing & Portability of Evernote Notes

Notes & Notebooks can be exported as HTML files.

Notes & Notebooks can be "published" online for public sharing.

Collaborators can join the same Evernote folder to view, add, change, and annotate documents.
      (NOTE: I do not recommend Evernote for writing collaboratively.
       Instead, use Authorea, Google Docs, or something else.)

Some words on the portability of Evernote notes and notebooks - these can be exported as HTML files, and you can export entire notebooks at a time. The actual evernote format is proprietary and I'm not sure about its readibility, but you do have this option here for exporting in HTML that could be read by other programs.
If you're into Open Science, you can "publish" notebooks for public sharing, such as I did with my Gnome Run notebook for this workshop today.
Collaborators can join the same Evernote folder to add data, annotate files, and tag and change files. However, I don't recommend Evernote at all for collaborative authoring; in this case, use Authorea, Google Docs, Overleaf, or something else more suited. (Authorea is my new favorite.)

Advanced Evernote Tips

8 Tips on Evernote for Research: **bit.ly/8WaysEvernote**

How Academics & Scholars Use Evernote: **bit.ly/EvernoteAcademics**

In Depth Evernote for Academics: **techademic.co/evernote/**

Using Evernote for a Thesis: **bit.ly/EvernoteThesis**

Evernote (etc.) & Ethnography: **bit.ly/EvernoteEthnography**

There are a lot of people who come up with even more complex tagging schemes than I do and who have written extensively about their use of evernote. Here are some blog posts for people who are really interested with ideas on how to do this kind of work. There's even an entire 'course' on Evernote for Academics in this list.

AUTOMATE DATA GATHERING

IFTTT

ifttt.com

"IF This Then That"

- Create recipes to automatically log activity.
- Connects to Social Media platforms.
- Can use Evernote, Google Drive, etc. to store data.

So I imagine that if you're going through the Internet, clicking a bunch of links, you can use the Web Clipper. But what if there's activity somewhere that you don't know about or something you want to make sure to systematically capture? Say, an Instagram account or a Twitter hashtag - or even something saved in your RSS reader?

Fortunately, there's a tool for that to make your life a bit easier.

It's called IFTTT - IF This Then That - and it's an automatic tool that triggers when an event happens. A lot of folks use this to, for example, also post something to Twitter when they post on Facebook, or to tweet about a new blog post they wrote. I, personally, use it to back up all of my photos from Instagram to Dropbox, so I have a folder full of photos and I don't have to search through my feed. However, this has great data collection usage.

Helpful Recipes

[Archive tweets from a specific user into Evernote](#).

[Save tweets with a specific #hashtag to Google Sheets](#).

[Store Instagram photos from a user in Evernote](#).

Here are a couple of my favorite recipes (these are links, so you can look at this later and grab these): saving tweets from a user to Evernote, and storing Instagram photos from a user in Evernote. These don't have to be you! I also have one on here for archiving a tweet with a specific hashtag to Google Sheets. This is better than Evernote for my own purposes because you can create columns with cells with a header to store username, time, and link.

IFTTT for Data

collecting recipes

Returning to our Padlet
(bit.ly/QualDataPadlet)

-Find IFTTT recipes that
help collect data in some
of these mediums

-Add links to these
recipes to the Padlet

So now, for an activity, I'd like us to explore IFTTT, first individually, then in a group to discuss the findings. Remember our Padlet from earlier where we talked about what kinds of data we use and what 'counts' as data? Let's return to that. For those of you who contributed to this, have a look in IFTTT and see if there is a recipe in here that could make collecting data easier.

Closing Thoughts

Some final thoughts for the workshop:
There are a LOT more tools out there for Qualitative Data, but I hope I've given you some inspiration and a place to start.

DiRT Directory

dirtdirectory.org

One place to go to find a lot of tools is this Dirt Directory. You can search by what you want to do and how. These aren't all free tools, of course, but some of them are, and it might serve your needs.

Inspiration / Resources

Ethnography Matters. "Writing Live Fieldnotes" (using Instagram, Evernote, and other apps): http://ethnographymatters.net/blog/2012/08/02/writing-live-fieldnotes-towards-a-more-open-ethnography/

Borgman, Christine L. 2015. *Big data, little data, no data: Scholarship in the networked world.* Chapters 2 and 4.

Here are a couple of resources that I used for inspiration. This blog post at Ethnography Matters really blew my mind - this person basically took live, public fieldnotes using instagram and wrote about the process. Definitely check it out, there's a lot of stuff in here that is really interesting to think about.

And these chapters on data in this book by Christine L. Borgman, who was here just a few weeks ago. These two chapters are really great and come at data from an interesting angle.

THANK YOU!

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