Thursday – 09-12-2024

11:00 am

Session 2A

Room:
Lecture hall 114

Topic:

Form of presentation:
Paper

Duration:
90 Minutes

Location subject to change

From manual labour to artificial intelligence: developments in data literacy using the example of the Repertorium Academicum Germanicum (2001-2023).

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The Repertorium Academicum Germanicum (RAG) is a digital research project on scholars in the Middle Ages and their impact on society in pre-modern Europe (1250-1550). The RAG database contains around 62,000 scholars with 400,000 life points located at 26,000 locations. The data is based on the university registers. The registers usually contain the names and places of origin of the students as well as the date of enrolment. This initial data is enriched in the research database with biographical data on subjects studied, professional activities and written works. The aim of the project is to create a knowledge-based prosopographic basis for research on the impact of scholars in premodern Europe.

Since 2020, the RAG has been a sub-project of the umbrella project Repertorium Academicum (REPAC), which is being carried out at the Historical Institute of the University of Bern. The RAG, which was digitally orientated from the outset, can be described as a pioneering project in digital prosopography. The aim of the conference paper is to illustrate the developments in the field of data competences over the last 20 years using the RAG as a case study. Methods, procedures and best practices will be presented and future-oriented approaches will be discussed. Data competences in the RAG can be divided into two areas: data collection, which includes the compilation and enrichment of data, and data analysis. In the case of data collection, which was originally only carried out manually, computerised, automated processes were added over time. The same applies to the second area of data analysis. This includes compiling a selection of data, statistical evaluations and data visualisations (maps, networks, time series). Of crucial importance in data analysis, however, is the interpretation of the results against the background of historical contextualisation. The data alone is only the tip of the iceberg. The rest of the iceberg (context) only becomes apparent when it is analysed using specialist knowledge. This means also that different skills are required for data collection and data analysis. In addition, we can now work in both areas using computer-aided methods of artificial intelligence as a supplement. The extent to which artificial intelligence is changing the way we work and where its potential lies will be discussed in this conference paper.