

Media Suite: Scholarly Research Environment for Multimedia Archives

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ABSTRACT

This demo paper describes the Media Suite, a research environment for scholars in the Digital Humanities specifically geared towards searching, exploring and analyzing large multimedia collections in archival institutions.

1 INTRODUCTION

Scholarly access to large multimedia collections that are distributed across various institutional content providers is an important use case in the CLARIAH¹ project. The use case specifically, but not exclusively, applies to media scholars that are interested in multimedia data sets hosted by archives and libraries. Access can be regarded as enabling (i) *distant reading* –which of the spread collections could be of interest for my research question– and (ii) *close reading*: what are individual items (e.g., videos) or even parts of these items (e.g., video segments) in a collection that add to my research question.

To enable such type of access we develop an advanced research environment, called the *Media Suite*. The Media Suite incorporates a series of prototype tools developed individually in earlier projects –AVResearcher XL, CoMeRDa, Trove, Oral History Today (OHT), and DIVE++– each having a specific ‘flavor’ with respect to searching and analyzing multimedia data: advanced single collection search, comparative search, multimedia multi-collection search, and exploratory search.

2 USER REQUIREMENTS

Building a generic infrastructure that facilitates all of the functionalities of these prototypes, on a wide range of data sets is a challenging task. The digital humanities (DH) community incorporates a wide diversity of scholars with different research questions, methods, and levels of expertise in working with information processing techniques and technologies with very different research interests and goals; every research group in DH is working with different types of data and their research objectives pose specific requirements on the research tools that cannot be easily facilitated using a single, generic approach. At the same time, there are similarities in the methods used by different scholars (e.g., [1]) that can be used for generalized tool development.

¹Common Lab Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities

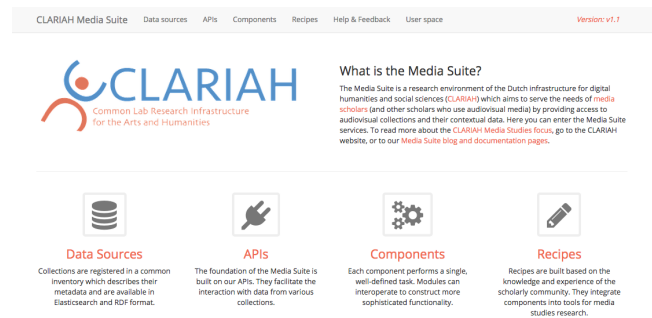


Figure 1: Home page of the CLARIAH Media Suite V1.1

3 SYSTEM OVERVIEW

A scholar entering the Media Suite first has to log in as access to (some of) the institutional collections is restricted to academic researchers only. Next, the scholar is provided with a tool for data selection, out of a registry of available collections and various ‘pipelines’ or ‘recipes’ to search and analyze selected collections. For example, there is a recipe that takes a full institutional collection (e.g., Sound and Vision RTV archive) and enables advanced search, play-out and annotation capabilities. Or, a recipe that allows the comparison of occurrences of topics in different multimedia collections (e.g., Sound and Vision RTV archive and the newspaper archive of the Dutch National Library).

In May 2017 we released version 1 of the Media Suite. At the workshop we will provide a sneak preview of version 2 that will be released end of 2017. The (tentative) final version is planned at the end of 2018 when the CLARIAH project finishes.

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REFERENCES

- [1] Stef Scagliola Franciska de Jong, Roeland Ordelman. 2011. Audio-visual Collections and the User Needs of Scholars in the Humanities: a Case for Co-Development. In *Proceedings of the 2nd Conference on Supporting Digital Humanities (SDH 2011)*. Centre for Language Technology, Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark, 7. ISBN=not assigned.