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1. Introduction

1   Since its creation, the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) has existed because of and to serve its community of practice. The TEI began in 1987 as an effort to "develop, maintain, and promulgate hardware- and software-independent methods for encoding humanities data in electronic form" (Text Encoding Initiative 2010). The need for these standards was articulated by computing humanists across academic and geographical borders who were frustrated by the unshareable, unsustainable commercial tools that were available to them. The prevalence of proprietary formats and platform-dependent tools made it difficult to distribute or reuse information, and therefore almost impossible for computing humanists to pool their data and collaborate on similar projects. In a way, the founders of the TEI were already a community of practice[1] who were as yet without a unified practice.

2   Comprised of educational institutions and academic libraries, the TEI Consortium (TEI-C) was created in 2001 as a way to formalize the existing relationships. The Consortium is mandated to maintain, develop, and promote the TEI, but also to "foster a broad-based user community with sustained involvement in the future development and widespread use of the TEI Guidelines" (Text Encoding Initiative 2010). It has continued to do this and, during the development of the most recent version of the TEI Guidelines (P5), put out a public call for feature requests in an effort to build the TEI that practitioners wanted. However, the rapid growth of those using TEI means that it may become increasingly difficult to communicate with and coordinate the entire community which has grown to include members who are not formally associated with the Consortium. These new community members are practitioners who have learned about the TEI through other sources and are using it for their projects without the benefits of support and community that membership might afford them.[2] However, a key challenge for the Consortium is identifying those individuals so that they might be brought more formally into the Consortium.

3   As a result, the Consortium discussed various ways in which it might meet this challenge while also building community in an entertaining manner. In 2007, at the TEI-C annual meeting, several members were discussing popular computational and social representations of TEI. A Google search for TEI returned a South Korean pop singer as the most likely result. This led to discussion about linking TEI and music in a way that could generate excitement about the TEI while also illustrating its usefulness. Those initial ideas grew into a series of discussions with members of the TEI Board about where recruitment efforts might be best placed. The goal would be to learn more about those who were practising TEI but were not yet members, and how those institutions where these members are based could be brought into the community more formally. A viral marketing experiment was designed to insight into the current status of the community practice, and how practitioners engage with the TEI.

4   This paper will begin by discussing the concept of viral marketing and its usefulness for the TEI. It will then describe the viral marketing experiment and the methodology behind it. Finally, it will report and discuss the findings of the experiment and make recommendations for future TEI recruitment and community-building efforts.

2. Viral Marketing and the Community of Practice

5   Viral Marketing was a good choice for the type of experiment that was discussed, for many reasons. A relatively new phenomenon, viral marketing is cost-effective, entertaining, and takes advantage of the existence of online communities. This made it ideal for the purposes of the TEI experiment.

6   Viral Marketing has been defined as "network-enhanced word of mouth" (Jurvetson and Draper 1997) or even as "word of mouse" (Skrob 2005). The emphasis in both of these concise definitions is on person-to-person communication of a message and on the online setting of the message. Rather than using mass media such as television, radio, or print to advertise, viral marketing takes advantage of free online media settings such as YouTube, Facebook, and weblogs. To become "viral," the video, image, or game should inspire users to pass the message along to their peers in the interest of sharing the experience. At the same time, they share information about the product or service behind that message.

7   The use of viral marketing is cost-effective not only because websites like YouTube and weblogs are free to use, but also because the message is transmitted by the target audience, not by paid marketing executives or media outlets. In this way, the target audiences, rather than the organization, identify those who would be most interested in the message. Viral marketing takes advantage of the ease with which a video on YouTube can be shared. With the click of a button, users can recommend the video to friends via any number of online social networks. The more entertaining and engaging the experience is, the more likely users are to pass along the link. One recent and well-known example of a successful viral marketing campaign is the Old Spice social media video responses campaign. Old Spice's spokesperson Isaiah Mustafa, spent two days in a bathroom set as his "The Man Your Man Could Smell Like" character, recording more than 180 video responses to comments from social network users (Reiss 2010). The viral campaign resulted in many millions of views and "the biggest gain in market share of any body wash over the four weeks ending June 13" (Van Buskirk 2010).

8   This type of marketing is an ideal choice for the TEI marketing experiment because of the goals of that experiment, which are (as previously stated) to identify and unify the community surrounding TEI. Viral marketing motivates viewers to pass the message along to others; this means that the TEI does not have to guess at who might be in this community. In this way, community-oriented marketing sustains itself while providing an accurate picture of the distribution of that community. Viral marketing can also help the TEI build that community by giving practitioners an opportunity to share an experience that requires an understanding of the TEI to be fully enjoyed and appreciated. This shared experience creates a feeling of community and of pride in the special knowledge shared, and a sense of being linked to other members of that community (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001).

3. Steps to Understanding TEI through the Viral Marketing Experiment

9   Once viral marketing was determined to be the appropriate strategy for this experiment, the next step was to design it. First, the viral message was prepared. Before releasing the viral message, benchmark data was collected; this provided a baseline usage pattern for the TEI website that could be used to measure the effect of the viral marketing experiment. Once the viral message was released, new data would be collected and compared against the benchmark data.

3.1. Creation and Launch of Viral Marketing Widget

10   Given the need to be an entertaining and interesting application of TEI, a video widget was determined to be the best medium. Because music had come up in the initial conversation about the experiment, the team's focus turned to applications of TEI to music and image. The music video for Bob Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues" was an ideal candidate. The visual imagery of the video consists of Bob Dylan standing in front of the camera holding a series of cue cards. Some of the cards contain song lyrics and others contain other text. These cards are themselves a kind of markup of the song. While the song plays, Dylan discards cue cards one at a time. The visual text provides clarification or comment on the song lyrics. TEI is a useful tool for encoding this video because it can juxtapose the song lyrics, the text on the cue cards, and any other visual elements in the video. Moreover, TEI allows the encoder to designate points of uncertainty in the text, which can be used to mark unclear words in the song lyrics, or places where the cue cards and lyrics are not identical. The encoding also provides

contextual information for pop culture references within the lyrics. All of this information can be included in the TEI encoding.

11   The video widget was created by a team of people, many of them part of the TEI community of practice themselves. Cara Leitch (song transcription), Dorothy Porter (transcription encoding), Liam Sherriff (video creation), and Karin Armstrong (website creation, video posting) combined their various skills and knowledge to create the video. None of these people is a marketing professional; they are graduate students and academics in the field of digital humanities. Thus, the TEI viral marketing widget was created by members of the TEI community itself, for other members of the community to enjoy. The key to viral marketing is that the experience be entertaining; otherwise, users will be unwilling to pass the message along to their peers. This team was interested in and engaged with the project which is a good indication that their peers, the target audience, were also likely to be interested and engaged. The final widget, as included below, shows the music video with the TEI encoding superimposed on the video image, scrolling by in time with the music. The final frame of the video provides the URLs for the widget home page and the TEI-C website.

Figure 1: TEI encoding of Dylan's Subterranean Homesick Blues
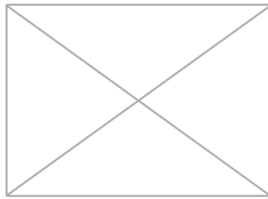
Please refer to the original online document." />This media file cannot be displayed in a PDF format. Please refer to the original online document.

Credits : Lynne Siemens, Ray Siemens and Hefeng (Eddie) Wen

Permalien : http://www.archive.org/details/TeiEncodingOfSubterraneanHomesickBlues

12   After the video widget had been created, it was posted to YouTube (Siemens et al. 2008). News of the video was circulated via the TEI mailing list and other humanities mailing lists. Released at midnight GMT on October 1, 2008, the video overtook the number one position on the YouTube Canada website before the sun rose on the west coast, and held that position for one hour. In order to gauge the interest in the video, the interest in the TEI-C that was inspired by the video and the discussion about the video by interested individuals, Google Analytics was used to track traffic to the TEI-C website and understand website users and habits. Further analysis of this data would provide insight into the TEI community of practice and identify previously unknown members of the community as well as potential new members. The goals of the experiment, as briefly described above, were to attract new visitors to the TEI-C website, to increase awareness of the TEI itself (and to distinguish it from the Korean pop singer of the same name), and to understand and unify this community.

3.2. Collection of Benchmark and Experiment Data

13   The release of the viral marketing widget accomplished one of the project goals, which was to share an entertaining experience with the rest of the TEI community. However, the goals of understanding the various groups who visited the TEI website via the widget would require more in-depth analysis. In order to gather the data required for such analysis, Google Analytics was embedded in a representative sample of web pages on the TEI site (http://www.tei-c.org). The traffic on those pages was then monitored as an experiment in using browsing patterns of those interested in TEI. To collect and analyze this data, University of Victoria MBA student Eddie Wen joined the team.[3]

14   The analysis of benchmark and experiment data provided a picture of the community of practice, which included TEI-C members and TEI practitioners whose institutions were not members, as well as related communities of practice (such as other digital humanists and XML users.) Figure 2 shows the relationship between these groups. TEI-C members are the core of that group. Moving outward, the next circle includes the larger group of non-TEI members and related communities of practice. Finally, the largest group is labelled "New Visitors." This

group includes users who were motivated by the video widget to visit the TEI-C site, but who are not yet part of the inner circle.

Figure 2: Target Groups
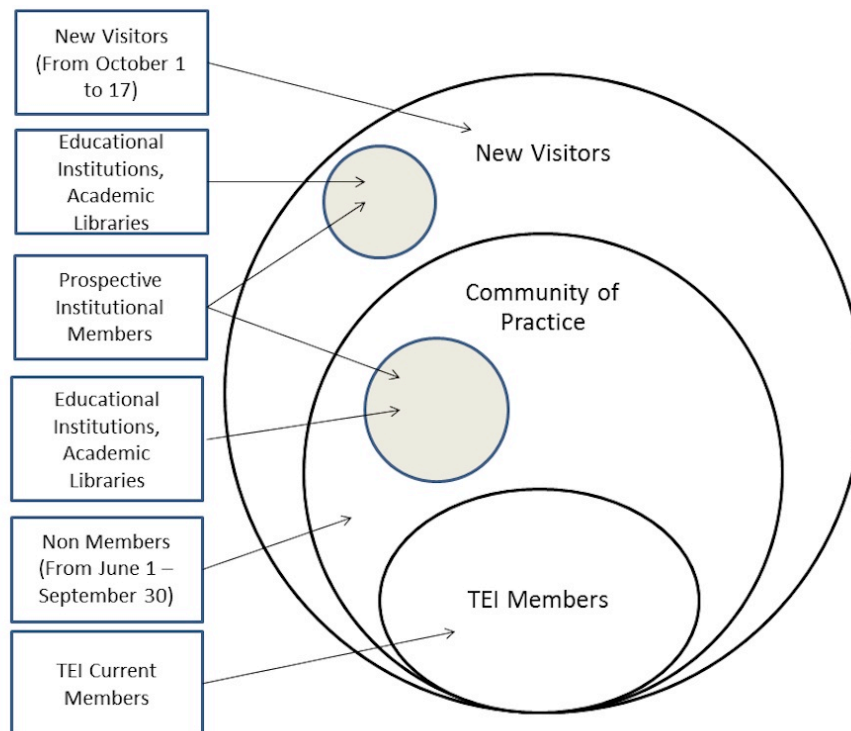
15   The experiment was approached in two stages. The first was the "benchmark" stage, which took place between June 1 and September 30, 2008. Using Google Analytics to track traffic to several pages on the TEI website, the team was able to gather information about the users' geographic location, the time spent on the TEI site, and the number of pages accessed during each visit. Next, a Google search allowed the team to identify the home institution of the visitor; they could then determine whether a given institution was a TEI member. If a user was not accessing the TEI website from an educational institution or academic library, their personal information was not included in the study. Those institutions known to be TEI members could then be excluded from the list of total site visitors to generate a list of non-member visiting institutions. Any institution that had contributed more than ten visits to the TEI-C site and had visited more than one page during each visit was considered to be an active user, and thus within the community of practice. These groups—the active TEI members and the larger community —exhibit certain browsing habits that would function as a baseline by which to evaluate new visitors in the next stage of the experiment.[4]

16   The benchmark data showed that 52 of the 82 TEI member institutions were making active, regular use of the TEI website. At this point, one of the limitations of the experiment can be seen. Many of the pages that were embedded with Google Analytics were portions of the TEI Guidelines, a comprehensive reference guide for the TEI. However, the TEI Guidelines are not solely available on the website. The TEI-C offers many options for using the Guidelines, such as ordering a print-on-demand copy, downloading a PDF version, or saving a copy of the HTML files locally.[5] The 30 TEI members who were not actively using the TEI website may have downloaded the TEI Guidelines to their local computers. This would mean that members would not be accessing those pages as often (or remaining on the site for as long a period of time), because they were not using it as a primary reference point. This does not mean that the 30 members are not participating in the formal relationship with TEI, but rather that their involvement in the community could not be accurately measured in this experiment.

17   After subtracting the 82 member institutions from the list of visiting institutions during the benchmark period, the results showed 5972 non-TEI-member visitors. Of that group, only 124 were institutionally-identified visitors who exhibited the same browsing patterns as the

more active TEI members. However, because the experiment was only designed to include institutionally-identified site visitors, any members of education institutions or academic libraries who accessed the TEI site from off-campus would not be included in the study. This is a further limitation of the experiment, but the data gathered still provides a useful starting point by which to evaluate the TEI website's audience.

18   The second stage of data collection was the "new data" phase, which took place from October 1 to 17, 2008. Beginning with the release of the widget on October 1, new visits to the TEI-C website were tracked. During this phase, the researchers were interested primarily in those users who had not visited the TEI-C site during the benchmark period, and especially those visitors who were motivated by the viral video widget to investigate the TEI-C site. Again, Google searches aided identification of the home institution of each visitor. The institutions listed in either of the groups defined during the benchmark stage were subtracted from the list of total new visitors to the site during the new data stage. This resulted in a list of 709 "widget-inspired" visitors. The browsing patterns (number of pages visited, length of stay on website) of those new visitors were then compared to the data collected during the benchmark stage, thus identifying those who exhibited the same browsing patterns as current TEI-C members. The final list of new visitors who satisfied all of those requirements was only four. However, as mentioned above, there may have been many more visitors who simply did not access the TEI website while on campus. This experiment necessarily excludes those visitors.

19   The data collected during the benchmark and new data stages was then analyzed to understand the qualities and habits of the three groups in question as well as their geographical distribution.

4. Discussion of Findings

20   Drawing upon the data, an understanding of scope and size of the TEI community of practice and potentially new members to this community can be identified. This picture can be explored from the perspective of visitor demographics, Web traffic analysis, and blog comments.

21   As seen in Figure 3, the first analysis of the data shows that this community and those just outside it is quite large. Initial analysis suggests that the community of practice might be around 5000, with 4000 being more active within the community. However, this picture can be refined further as discussed below.

Figure 3: Total Identifiable Groups
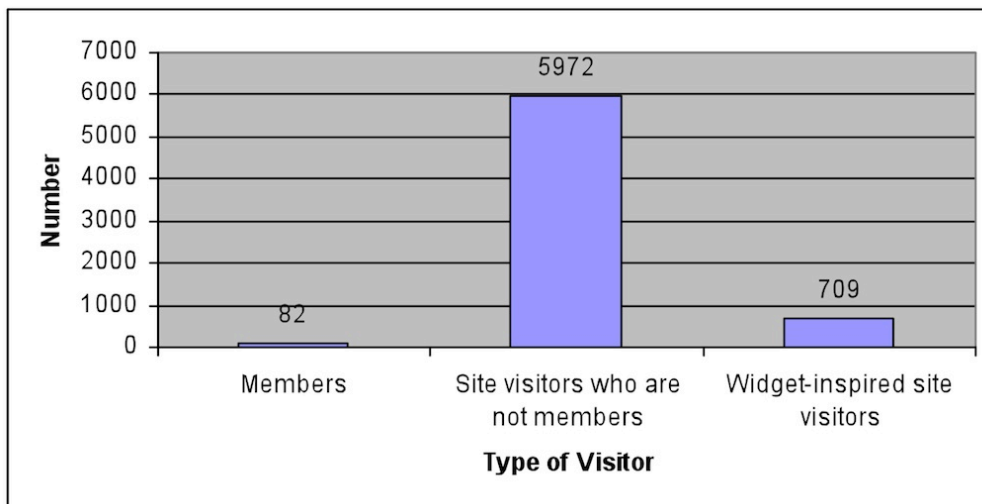
4.1. Visitor Demographics

22   The results of the viral marketing experiment show that visits to the site came from 153 countries, and that 50 of those countries make up 98% of total visits. The community is geographically very diverse and active.

23   Besides the TEI-C members, the larger community of practice can be identified by analyzing browsing patterns. Of those visitors who are not TEI-C members, 102 of them were considered to be the most active. The average site visits per user within this group were 29; they spent

an average of four minutes on the site (compared to a site average of 59 seconds); and they visited an average of 3.6 pages per visit (compared to a site average of 1.68). These visitors were visiting more often, staying longer, and accessing more pages during each visit than the average site visitor. These statistics demarcate a clear group of institutions which might benefit from a more formal involvement in the formal organization. Figure 4 provides a comparison of the number of members of each group who exhibit the similar browsing patterns

**Figure 4: Groups Showing Similar Browsing Patterns**
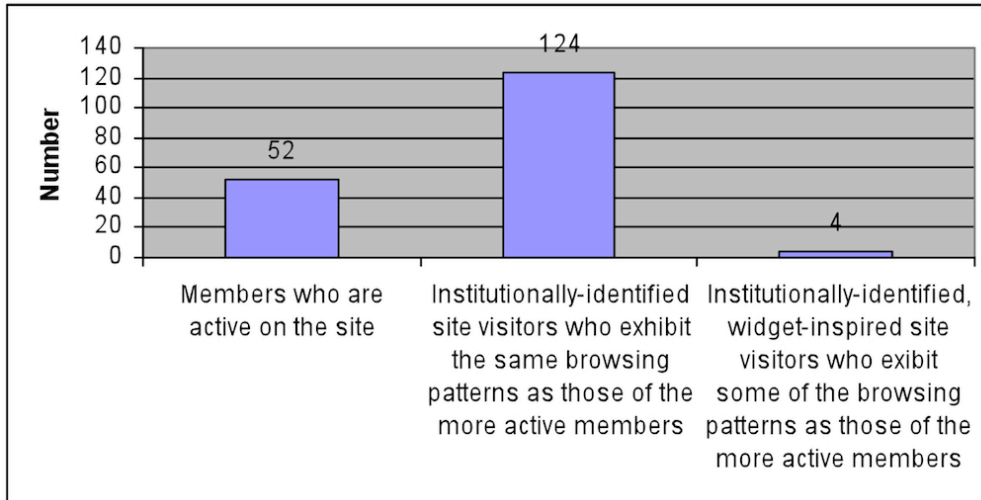
24   Drawing on Google Analytics data, the understanding of the larger TEI community can be further developed with an analysis of the geographical spread of visitors to the TEI website. Figure 5 shows the geographical distribution of visits by TEI-C members during the benchmark period.

Figure 5: Visits from TEI Members (June 1 to September 30)
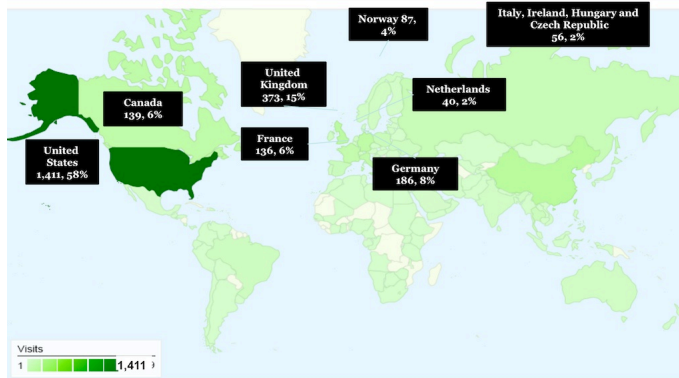
25   Not surprisingly, given the member profile within the Consortium, the majority of visits (58%) came from the United States. A further 15% came from the United Kingdom, and 8% were from Germany. When these numbers are compared to benchmark-period visits from those who were not TEI-C members (as seen in fig. 6) the result is that the majority of visitors are still from the United States (38%), but that China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan each account for 5% of visitors, and that 31% of visits came from "other" countries. This distribution confirms that those interested in TEI are much more widely distributed (geographically) than those who are currently members of the TEI-C.

Figure 6: Visits from Non-TEI-C Members (June 1 to September 30)
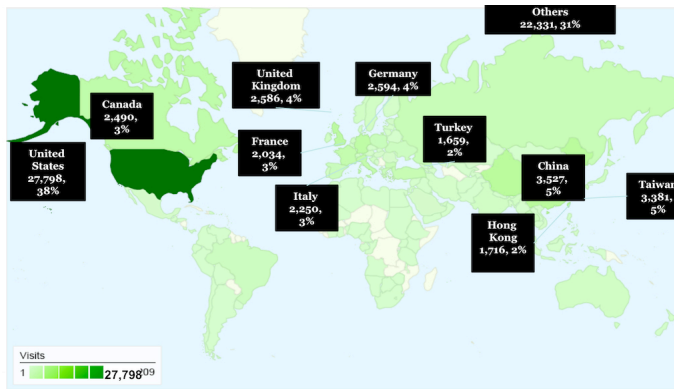
26   The final map (in fig. 7) shows the geographical distribution of widget-inspired visitors between 1 and 17 October. Again, the United States leads the visits with 44%. However, of the remaining visits, several countries register that have not appeared in previous results: India, Russia, and Israel are examples. This unexpected result shows that there was worldwide interest in the video widget and that it was able to attract people to the TEI website that otherwise might not have come across it. The results show that many non-member visitors were from non-English-speaking countries, but also that non-English-speaking members of TEI are less active on the website than English-speaking ones.

**Figure 7: New Visits (October 1 to 17)**
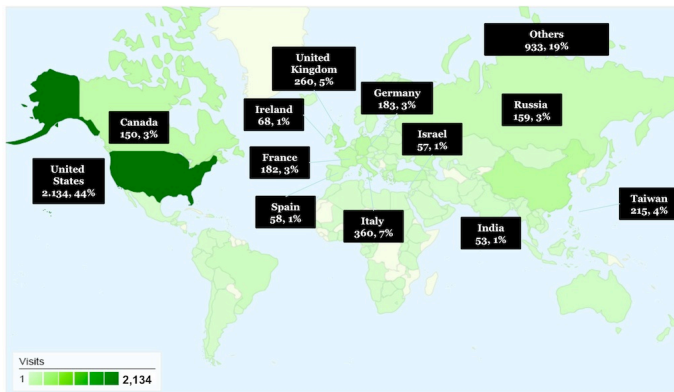
27   By analyzing the various data, a clearer picture of TEI's community of practice comes into focus. As can be seen from the illustrations, there is a larger community beyond the TEI-C members and these visitors share similar characteristics with TEI members. Likely involved in many activities similar to those of TEI-C members, they are probably using XML, encoding documents, and digitizing material—all of which can be made easier or more useful through the TEI. A more formal relationship with the TEI-C would thus be of most value to this group. The third and smallest group indicates the effectiveness of the viral video widget in reaching users who might be outside those adjacent communities of practice but still demonstrate an interest in TEI and were inspired by the widget. These users represent the broadening of the TEI's appeal, and may also be the target of future efforts to encourage more awareness and even potentially more formal membership in the TEI Consortium.

4.2. Website Traffic Analysis

28   A further analysis of website traffic can provide insight into usage over time and highlight significant events on the site. Figure 8 shows visits to the TEI website through the benchmark period and viral marketing experiment. Three spikes in usage can be identified, at points A, B, and C, and are of note.

Figure 8: Site Usage from May 1 to October 17

New vs. Returning: New Visitor — www.tei-c.org — May 1, 2008 - Oct 17, 2008 — Comparing to: Site
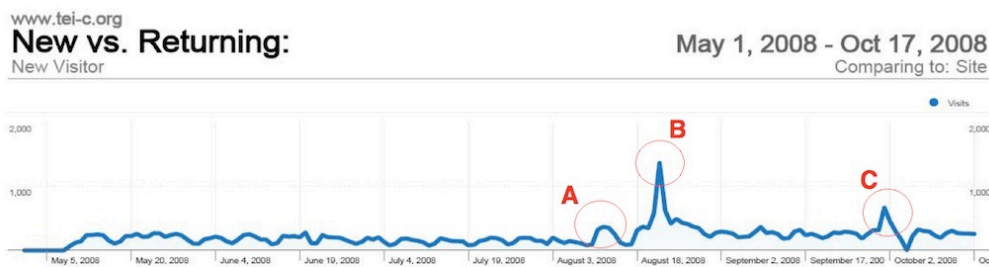
29   Traffic to the TEI-C website during the benchmark period is somewhat steady until August. The first small spike, at point A, occurs in late August, when faculty and staff began returning to educational institutions and academic libraries for the fall session and likely accounts for an increase in traffic as they return from holidays or simply start to access the TEI site from campus instead of from home. The spike at point B coincides with the launch of the Chinese TEI-encoded letters project, which appears to have created more traffic than the viral marketing experiment (Point C). (Unfortunately, the subsequent drop represents the TEI website's server crash, caused by the widget-inspired traffic.) After spike C, the traffic quickly returns to steady levels, although they are slightly higher than the benchmark levels.

4.3. Blogs and Comments from the Larger Community of Practice and Beyond

30   While the benchmark period was designed to define the immediate TEI community of practice, the viral marketing experiment was focused on identifying those who were just beyond this group and would be interested in TEI and the video widget. Initially, the experiment was designed to collect data from Google Analytics; however, as the video widget went viral an opportunity was created to analyze the blogs and online discussion about the experiment.

31   Nine websites or blogs announced the widget and hosted discussion, generating around 30 comments about the widget, TEI, XML, and "geekdom." In fact, YouTube itself generated much less interest than was originally expected; most of the widget-inspired increase in TEI website traffic on October 1 and 2 came via a post on MetaFilter.com (MetaFilter 2008). MetaFilter traffic accounted for 37% of new visits on October 1 and 2; more new visitors came from MetaFilter than from any other source (including the Google search engine).

32   Overall, the comments were in support of TEI and its associated relationships. Because these individuals were experienced in XML, though not necessarily in TEI, they had an appreciation for the video widget and the text encoding. As *richardaholden* commented "*This* video of Bob Dylan's Subterranean Homesick Blues overlaid with XML markup might be the geekiest thing I've ever seen. It's the work of a body called the Text Encoding Initiative, whose mission is to "develop and maintain Guidelines for the..." (Technorati 2008). Further, *jack_mo* wrote "Cheers Knappster, you just made me chuckle slightly while reading an XML file. I never thought that would happen" (MetaFilter). Further, *Ronnie Brown* praised the video by saying that it was the "Geekiest video ever. No exceptions. Language Log picks up the University of Victoria's Electronic Textual Cultures Laboratory Subterranean Homesick Blues project. Bob Dylan, XML and language dissection. That's what I'm talking about!" (Technorati 2008). Finally, *Gnomic* suggested the next project with "Now can they do Springsteen's Blinded By the Light?" (MetaFilter 2008).

33   In the spirit of debate, several critiqued or debated the encoding method. For example, *inn* asked "Am I missing something or did they only mark up selected words and phrases, not the full lyrics? Isn't the ability to have your annotations inline in the text part of the idea with TEI?" (MetaFilter 2008). Also, *jccummings* suggested that "It is interesting, I would have assumed that you'd use the 'spoken text' transcription module and code the lyrics as utterances (u) with the displayed boards as (writing)." (Siemens et al. 2008).

34   Of course, given that this video widget moved beyond the immediate TEI community practice, some individuals who access the widget were previously unaware of TEI and asked questions about it. Perhaps, *theoGoh* summed it up most succinctly with "For the benefit of the uninitiated, what's the point of doing this?" (Siemens et al. 2008). On the other hand, *alasdair*

showed some knowledge of the field, though not TEI, with "Hey, interesting. Not heard of the TEI before. Should I think of it as a competitor to the Dublin Core set of elements, or can/ should you use Dublin Core elements in TEI documents (without doing Namespace stuff, I mean)?" (MetaFilter 2008).

35   It is clear from the last group of comments that the widget certainly succeeded in its attempt to unite a community of practice (and geekiness). The comments and TEI website traffic both show that the general audience of YouTube was less likely to appreciate, understand, and follow up on the TEI widget than the MetaFilter audience. MetaFilter is a weblog, but instead of a small number of contributors, anyone can contribute to MetaFilter. Members generally provide links to interesting articles they have encountered elsewhere on the internet. Browsing MetaFilter is somewhat like browsing the "best of" the internet, according to its support base. Because of this "filtering" of content, it is not unreasonable to assume that MetaFilter might have a more engaged, focused audience in TEI than YouTube has.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

36   The viral marketing experiment ultimately succeeded in its goal of more clearly defining communities of practice and suggesting strategies to formalize the TEI community.

37   Primarily, the viral video was a success because it did indeed go viral. The video intrigued people, both within the TEI community of practice and outside that community. In fact, the widget attracted individuals and inspired comment and conversation in ways not anticipated. Indeed, perhaps the most interesting results were the comments and validation from the larger community itself and beyond. These comments clearly state their sense of the shared community experience of the video and the text encoding which underpinned it.

38   Second, the experiment provided enough data to begin defining TEI's community of practice. There is a clearer indication of who is using TEI, and therefore might benefit from a more formal relationship through TEI-C membership. The data collected also indicates that this community is big, both as defined by number and geographical spread.

39   Finally, the website tracking data can illustrate much about common usage patterns and browsing habits, as well as indicating the types of events draw people to the TEI website for information. The spike in traffic caused by the announcement of Chinese writings, for example, indicates that widely publicizing new TEI-encoded projects might in fact be the best method of marketing the usefulness of the TEI. As the TEI-C evaluates mechanisms to promote itself, it might consider that TEI projects themselves appear to be the best tool for creating awareness.

40   From these conclusions, several recommendations can be made on ways to enlarge and formalize the TEI community of practice

41   Given the geographical spread beyond English-speaking countries, TEI-C might consider providing several non-English language options for the website. As discussed above, the Google Analytics results show that many non-member visitors were from non-English-speaking countries, and also that non-English-speaking members of TEI are less active on the website than English-speaking ones. More language options would allow non-English-speaking visitors to engage more fully with the website and, by extension, the TEI community of practice.

42   TEI could also consider making a concentrated effort to spread announcements about events, workshops, and new project releases through sites like MetaFilter, which tend to reach a more specific audience than a site like YouTube, as seen in the comments discussed above. On a related note, TEI could seek out newly attracted visitors who already have knowledge of XML and computer programming languages for future viral experiments. Those users seemed to be most engaged in discussion in the widget comments.

43   The viral experiment was primarily a means to identify and understand the interest surrounding and commitment to the TEI. As a way to continue this community-building, and to put TEI at the centre of the community, the TEI should work on strengthening its brand image by embedding its logo in all emails, newsletters, and related projects. Furthermore, the creation of an online social community focused on TEI could become a place where users convene to learn about upcoming events, project announcements, as well as to network, discuss technical issues,

and get advice. For future viral experiments, this network could be used to launch a competition for the next encoded music video, film clip, or other media. Engaging the community in the early stages would strengthen the community of practice even further. Further, the TEI might consider tracking more formally those projects which have used TEI and evaluate the impact of the announcement of these projects on TEI's website. At the same time, the Consortium might encourage these TEI-encoded projects to more formally highlight the fact that they used TEI.

44 Finally, the TEI (as they have with the development of the P5 Guidelines) should continue to return to those members for more recommendations on how to improve the TEI Guidelines, website, brand, and community-building efforts. This could be accomplished by sending out surveys to current members, or by organizing focus groups of members and practitioners from different countries, backgrounds, and with different TEI-related goals.

45 In conclusion, this viral marketing experiment was created to generate an understanding of the TEI community of practice and those located just beyond. From the analysis of benchmark and the viral marketing experiment data, the TEI-C has a picture of the members of the community and potential ways to formalize this community. This community is diverse, widespread, and quite large. Further, with comments on YouTube and blogs, it is clear that individuals located outside the TEI community are interested in the TEI and its potential. Many of the comments promote the sense that the video can function as a shared community experience. The TEI-C's goal of sustaining a "broad-based user community" has certainly succeeded, as the TEI continues to grow.

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Notes

1 The term "community of practice" originates in cognitive anthropology, popularized by Lave and Wenger, who used it to designate a group of people who share an occupation, craft, or any set of practices; midwives are an example (Lave and Wenger 1991). The term has since been adapted for use in many other fields. In this paper, we use the term to indicate a group of people who share the same specialized knowledge and for whom that knowledge is central to their occupation. Specifically, we are discussing academic practitioners of TEI, but also adjacent communities of practice, such users of other methods of text encoding or digitization.

2 While membership primarily supports the maintenance of the TEI and brings the member formally into the community, there are more tangible benefits as well. Members have access to further training and consultation, the use of specialized digitization tools, and discounts on encoding and digitization software. Details about these and other benefits can be found at the TEI website: <http://www.tei-c.org/Membership/benefits.xml>.

3 Wen subsequently wrote a paper, titled "Research and Development of Viral Marketing and Brand Community Strategies for the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI)" about this experiment. His work has been an invaluable source for this paper.

4 For a full description of the methodology used in this experiment, see "Research and Development of Viral Marketing" pages 45-57 in Wen, 2008.

5 These options and more are available from the following website: <http://www.tei-c.org/Guidelines/P5/get_p5.xml>.

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Eddie Wen is a graduate of the University of Victoria's Master's of Business Administration program, who undertook working with the Text Encoding Initiative Board for what is reported on in this article. His fuller report, which also covers issues related to viral marketing, is documented in the Works Cited list.
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Abstract

If the notion of the methodological commons is as centrally located as we believe it to be in any visualization accurately depicting the intellectual structure of the digital humanities and digital literary studies (McCarty 2005, 119), then so, too, must be the community itself whose members provide that which populates the commons. As an interdiscipline, humanities computing has always well-understood its methodologies; indeed, the digital humanities (of which digital literary studies is a part), more generally, have made a virtue of the way in which they render explicit and tangible the theoretical models that govern the representative and analytical endeavour of their fields via computational application. So, too, have those in the field understood and documented its formal structures and institutional manifestations, a chief example being the Text Encoding Initiative itself. Less explicitly rendered and less formally documented–though intuited by its chief practitioners and builders–is the exact nature of the community itself, its depth and breadth, its own centre and, perhaps more important in a field whose embrace of interdisciplinarity is far from self-serving, its periphery and those aspects of which promise to become central.

This article presents work carried out in conjunction with the Text Encoding Initiative Consortium, a foundation of many digital literary studies projects, work that seeks to document the full nature of its community, from the institutional and research project groups that comprise the formal consortium at centre to those who appear on the other side of the easily-permeable periphery that separates it from the centre, largely individual practitioners in areas hitherto not closely identified with the digital humanities but clearly sharing methods and tools, thus suggesting their place in the same communities of practice, as they are members of the same methodological commons. This methodological approach is drawn from marketing and organizational behavior, manifest in social networking, in the study of viral marketing campaigns conducted in online environments. The method for this work was centred around a viral marketing experiment designed to showcase the TEI and novel ways that it can be used to encode different kinds of text. At the heart of the experiment was a Bob Dylan song and its associated video which incorporated text; encoded text was overlaid and the video was posted to YouTube and a blog with links to the TEI website with analysis of traffic patterns carried out.

Index terms

Keywords : community of practice, viral marketing

Author's notes