Collaborative Academic Writing: Tools and Features

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Birds of a Feather Session
“The Tyranny of Distance”

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Overview

- **Introduction**: What's the issue?
- **Main part:**
  - **Requirements**: What features do we want?
  - **Options**: Which tools can we choose from?
  - **Overview**: Tools and features matrix
  - **Tools**: Which features does a given tool have?
  - **Features**: How are they implemented in various tools?
- **Conclusion**: How can we move forward?
Introduction: What's the issue?

• Writing has changed
  – no longer a solitary activity
  – a network of people and discourses
  – across distance in space, but also in time and formats, ...

• The situation today
  – Various use cases: articles, reports, minutes, documentation, edited volumes, textbooks ...
  – Plenty of requirements, plenty of tools
## Features: What do we want?

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Options: Which tools are there?

- **Some established players**
  - Microsoft Word / Libre Office with Dropbox
  - Google Drive/Docs, Mediawiki

- **Some strong contenders**
  - ZOHO Docs, Confluence Wiki
  - Etherpad, Git/GitHub; ownCloud

- **Some (very) interesting newbies**
  - Fidus Writer, Penflip, DH Writer
  - (Marquee, Draft, Editorially, ...)
## Tools & Features: Overview

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Tool: Etherpad

Methodensession in Passau

Organisatorisches
Ankündigung: http://www.dhd2014.uni-passau.de/programm/workshops/#c40179
DARIAH-Wiki:https://dev2.dariah.eu/wiki/pages/viewpage.action?pagid=25460941

Zeitplan und Themen (90 Min.)
- 5: Einleitung
- 10+5: Überblick über das Methodenfeld (Basis: Report/Taxonomie): https://github.com/Tadirah/TaDiRAH
- 10+5: Use Case: Quantitative Textanalyse? Was machen wir, welche Anforderungen an die Infrastruktur ergeben sich daraus?
- 10+5: Use Case Annotation
- 10: Abschlussdiskussion
# Tool: Etherpad

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Digitale Textkodierung mit TEI

# DARIAH-DE Tutorial Digitale Textkodierung mit TEI

## Aufgabe 03: Erste Schritte der Textkodierung mit XML/TEI (Beispiel: Postkarte)

Autor: Christof Schöch
Version 1.0, 09/2013
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### Überblick

Hinweise: Diese Aufgabe setzt die Kenntnis von Referat 03, "TEI und das Modul core", voraus. Außerdem setzt diese Aufgabe voraus, dass Sie <a
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The red herring

This article begins with a definition of the theoryconcept of red herring in crime fiction (see Patterson 1998, 12).

\[ x = 2 \times y \]

Although not a recent article, it still provides the best introduction to this issue.

Bibliography

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Feature: concurrent ed., track changes

• Mediawiki
  - no real-time concurrent editing; concurrent editing of different sections possible; merge conflicts can be managed.
  - version control: every time you save, a version is saved
  - track changes: compare versions, see who changed what; no option to check who made a specific edit.

• Microsoft Word / Libre Office with Dropbox
  - no real-time concurrent editing
  - merge conflicts are detected but not resolved
  - track changes is very well-supported
  - versioning is not well-supported
Feature: concurrent editing, etc.

• Etherpad
  – full real-time concurrent editing (per-character, per split-second)
  – track changes: who wrote what (color-coding)
  – versioning: flag intermediate versions, watch writing process

• Penflip
  – no concurrent editing, instead: Git-style fork, commit & merge
  – track changes: yes, but a bit cumbersome
  – versioning: yes, version history, flags.
Conclusion (1): No one tool is perfect

• The bottom line
  – Each tool excels at some features, none has all the features
  – Some features are mutually exclusive (ex.: concurrent editing vs. offline support; simplicity vs. full feature set)

• The consequence
  – For each task, you need to choose the best tool
  – Each tool: different syntax, login, features, user interface
  – People don't like that > resistance
Conclusion (2): the next steps

• **Avoid wrong paths**
  – Let's not wait for the perfect do-it-all tool
  – Let's certainly not try and build the perfect do-it-all tool ourselves

• **Our best option**
  – Recognize each tool's strengths („do one thing and do it well“)
  – Work on making it easier to move between them (import/export, format conversions)
  – Work on making it easier for people to use different tools (single sign-on, similar UI principles; exemplary: Fidus Writer)
Thank you!

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Annex: tools with links

- Confluence – www.confluence.atlassian.com
- Dropbox – www.dropbox.com
- Etherpad – www.etherpad.org
- Fidus Writer – www.fiduswriter.org
- Git / GitHub – www.github.com
- Google Drive – www.drive.google.com
- Libre Office – www.libreoffice.org
- Mediawiki – www.mediawiki.org
- ownCloud – www.owncloud.org
- Penflip – www.penflip.com
- ZOHO Docs / Writer – www.writer.zoho.com