
Apollinaire-Marie Curie platform presentation, Labex OBVIL

Delphine Vernozy*¹, Paule Desmouliere*², and Krystelle Denis*^{1,3}

¹Observatoire de la vie littéraire (OBVIL) – Université Paris-Sorbonne - Paris IV – 28 rue Serpente, France

²Observatoire de la vie littéraire (Labex OBVIL) – Université Paris-Sorbonne - Paris IV – 28 rue Serpente, 75006, France

³metaLAB at Harvard (metaLAB) – United States

Abstract

” Mémoires de Apollinaire-Marie Curie ” (” Memories of Apollinaire-Marie Curie ”) is a new research collaboration between L’Observatoire de La vie Littéraire (OBVIL) at the Université Paris-Sorbonne, metaLAB at Harvard, and several major French libraries. Building on a previous experiment by metaLab on the Harvard Museum collections (Lightbox), OBVIL is currently working on the design and construction of a nomadic interactive installation and database, which will visualize and formally organize a myriad of media artifacts: manuscripts, texts, audio, videos, photographs, and newspapers, paintings, engravings, but also intermedia objects such as archival notebooks and filmed concerts. In the first stage of the research, the platform focuses on the French poet Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) and the scientist Marie Curie (1867-1934). The documents taken into account will span from the early 1900s to the current day.

At present, many of these resources currently lie dormant in several Parisian libraries and archives, such as the BnF, the INA (Institut National de l’Audiovisuel) and the Bibliothèque Littéraire Jacques Doucet. One of the aims of the project is to build a toolbox that will allow students, scholars, and aficionados to explore Apollinaire and Marie Curie’s life and work through the lens of new educational and research digital interfaces. Once the platform on Marie Curie and Apollinaire is set up, the goal is to construct a prototype for a new type of digital collection which can be extended to other archival materials.

Alongside building a research tool, OBVIL is developing an organizational logic which can be implemented by teachers and researchers, gathering documents and metadata from various existing collections. The platform explores the many uses of metadata both as a first step towards the conception of efficient and pedagogical interfaces, and as a tool for analysis and research in its own right. The variegated types of media archived in the libraries are so diverse, that in order to understand the connections between different objects, a complex ‘spatial’ order has to be advanced. How can we generate an intuitive visual framework for researchers to understand and teach the complex many-to-many relationships amongst archival documents? The platform allows to view objects both individually and aggregately, enabling both qualitative and quantitative research among and across thousands of documents. What kind of patterns can be discovered when mapping human and non-human actors’ interactions, such as the elements in Apollinaire’s poems spatially laid across a world

*Speaker

map? The project challenges the ways users approach archive material (usually in a very text based fashion) by giving them the ability to query and search through objects spatially using interactive maps and visualizations.

During this conference, OBVIL will present preliminary versions of the ongoing prototype, as well as an overview throughout the process of collecting, researching developed thus far, reflecting upon the obstacles encountered along the way, and the new directions they open up for the research.

Keywords: Digital collection, visualisation, rare books, archives, libraries, noSQL, database, meta-data, data, multimedia, mapping, France, BNF, EdTech, teaching, research