學術報導

Introduction to the course of Humanities Resources
【人文學資源】課程介紹

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A short introduction to Professor Lin(林富士教授)

Professor Lin received a PhD in Princeton University in East Asian studies. He is a resourceful scholar. No matter what topic is mentioned in the class, I mean anything, he can explain the origins and the implications of the subject, just like a historian.

A short introduction to John

John was an exchange librarian to Tunghai University Library in 1994. I once wrote a report on his revisit to Tunghai University Library for the Tunghai University Library Newsletter Number 10. John now works as an information specialist for the US Government.

A short introduction to Emily

Emily received a PhD degree in Institute of Information Management of National Chiao-Tung University. She is now an Assistant Professor in the Department of Information Management, Tunghai University, Taiwan. Research areas: data mining, library and information science, and artificial intelligence.

Week 1

It was exciting to have the first class on Humanities Resources with so many classmates. Professor Lin outlined this course and all attendants introduced themselves to each other. It was really a happy hour for me. I did enjoy it.

Week 2

John and Emily joined us in the class discussion.

Hi, Jack.　How are you?　I saw this interesting website about Web 2.0.　You may enjoy it. http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/10_future_web_trends.php

Week 3

Information Revolution

Professor Lin asked two philosophical questions related to the information revolution to start the second class. First he wanted to know what we thought of when he mentioned the word "revolution". Second he asked what is the difference between human beings and animals except morality, which was emphasized by the ancient China philosopher Monzie?

What's your opinion?

John's opinion

Jack,

How are you?　I was in Rio earlier this week.　Next week I'm traveling again, too.　I've been thinking about your question.　"Revolution" means change in English.　Of course when I think of revolution I think of the American Revolution in the 18th century. Americans threw the British out of the colonies. Of course there's been another revolution in the last few years.　A digital or information revolution. How we find information has changed. We used to find information in books then radio and television came along.　Now information is found via the Internet.　A lot of information comes to us anecdotally -- from informal conversation with friends and acquaintances.　Social communities are also a source of information.　People get information from emails, Youtube, second life, and other electronic sources.　Blogs are very popular and a lot of information is taken from websites.

Your other question about humans and animals is a bit more

challenging.   Humans differ because we can take in information and use, develop it or mold it into knowledge.   That's different from animals who act instinctively.   I'll keep thinking on this one.   Let me know what your classmates think.

Week 4

About Reading

Professor Lin introduced four kinds of reading strategy in the fourth class.

1) Bibliographic Reading

2) Reading with questions

3) Dialogue-style Reading

4) Critical Reading

Which one do you prefer? Why?

Week 5

The impact and solutions to technology

This week Professor Lin focused on two topics:

1) The impact to society and culture caused by technology.

2) The solutions to that impact by understanding the characteristics of technology and developing the ability to use technology.

Are there other options we can choose in this digital environment?

On the second topic, I think I will now take a more flexible approach when dealing with these new digital materials. Anyway, I have profited greatly from these new technologies.

John's opinion

It's a consideration for technology.   That is, some people have been left out of the technological changes and as a result are information deficient or lacking the means to get information.   Elderly come to mind as people that are not always skilled at using the Internet and as a result miss a great deal of information.   Similarly, people living in extreme poverty without access to computers or the cybernet are left on the shoulder of the information highway.   I think this is an important discussion that cannot be ignored.

Week 6

Two speakers talked about Taiwan Memory

Speaker Miss Lin talked about digitalization to Taiwan's Knowledge Network. A question aroused my attention about metadata standards. I myself proposed the question about whether Taiwan Memory included tacit knowledge which is not easy to discover.

Speaker Mr. Lin discussed two main points: how to find the information we need and how to find the right information. He also talked about the development of knowledge organization and knowledge management. He showed us some databases of Chinese and Taiwanese collections.

These two speeches were quite impressive.   Professor Lin promised inviting more experts to talk about other information related topics. I am looking forward to attending these seminars.

Week 7

About the internet

There are several questions which need to be discussed.

1) Why does the digital divide still exits? How do we deal with it? What can we do about it?

2) What can we do now on the internet?

3) What if our abilities of living are replaced by robots? How will we survive?

4) What are the advantages and disadvantages of the internet?

Do any answers to these questions come to your mind?

John's opinion

Good questions!   There's a digital divide the same as there is a generational divide and a income divide.   Poor people cannot afford computers or Internet access. They often live in areas where there are no access options.   For example the libraries in underdeveloped areas are often among the last to be wired or they may not be wired at all or there may be no libraries in poor neighborhoods. Similarly the schools are not as good in poor areas and

therefore they are not wired.   The elderly tend not to access the Internet simply because they don't know how or they fear something new.   I believe there's a professor in Maryland who studied the elderly's use of computers in China.   It shows a big gap.   The only way I can suggest to deal with this is more money.   Connect the poor neighborhoods.   Offer classes to seniors and continue government support of the Internet.

Advantages of Internet?   I can write to my friend in Taiwan at almost no cost and communicate with a friend I've had for 15 years.   That's a big advantage.   Also, people can shop from home -- what an advantage to disabled and old folks.   Information can be exchanged within minutes to people all over the world.   I love it!

What do you think?

Week 8

The combination of time and space

This week Professor Lin invited Professor Lai to talk about the combination of time and space. The focus was on the development of GIS.

Professor Lai quoted "Geography is to space what history is to time" from Jerome Dobson. It was a good start. Then Professor Lai showed us some pictures about the residential changes in Taipei Basin since 1895. The transformation from old pictures to GIS pictures was quite impressive. It was an enlightening speech.

Can you answer these two questions?

1) What is "Historiography"? Can it be translated into Chinese?

2) What are the purposes of combining history, maps and GIS?

Emily's opinion

"Historiography" is the records of historical events. The word can also refer to a body of historical work.   In Chinese, we call it "史編" or "編史工作". There are many approaches of history, such as oral history based on the personal experiences and impressions of the storyteller, and social history

which is the view of historical evidence from the point of view of developing social trends.

I think why we need to combine history, maps and GIS is like to know the human lives and societies in the past. The relationship is important when trying to recreate a comprehensive cartographic history of the time. It is amazing that some GIS websites allow geographers, cartographers, and researchers to integrate historical maps with modern satellite imagery, aerial photos, and other geospatial imagery.

Week 9

Understanding media

This week one question mentioned in class kept making me sleepless, "Can we survive without computers?"

When we discussed the book "Understanding Media : The Extensions of Man" by Corinne McLuhan, we tried to think of any disadvantage of the computer, as related to the extensions of man. Some of my classmates talked about the injuries to their bodies and spirit caused by using computers. Some questions came up during the discussion. "Can we survive without computers" is one of them. Other questions like "what will you do when a computer is unreachable?"; "what are your strategies when you face information anxiety?" and "what will we do when there is too much information?" were also brought up in the class.

What are your ideas about these questions?

John's opinion

Regarding your questions, I think we can manage without computers because we did so before they existed.   The problem is without computers we will have a major change in lifestyle.   So many things we take for granted like cars that the mechanic checks with a computer; grocery checkouts; hospital visits and on and on.   We did it before but it would be an adjustment.   Too much information?   I don't know.   Information is the root of knowledge.   I don't think we can ever have too much knowledge or information.   The key

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is how do we organize the information.   That's where librarians come in of course.   We are the experts at categorizing and classification. Do you agree?

Week 10

What a graduate student should do in conducting research

This week Professor Lin reminded us that a graduate student should do something creative, explore something new, and discover something which no one else has discovered. It was very helpful. I will remember that. Thank you, Professor Lin.

Week 11

Metadata

Professor Lin invited Special Manager Miss Chen to speak on" The study of metadata from the aspect of cultural heritage--its theory and practice". It was a really wonderful speech. Miss Chen gave a very clear description of every aspect of metadata. No doubt about it, she is an expert on this topic.

On preservation metadata, Miss Chen mentioned the National Library of Australia. Can anybody tell us   what the National Library of Australia has done on preservation metadata? Why did she mention it?

Emily's opinion

Preservation metadata is to ensure that supporting and documenting the long-term preservation of digital materials. It is the development of structured ways to describe and record information needed to manage the preservation of digital resources. I think Miss Chen mention the national library of Australia (NLA) resulted from the most abundant of NLA's collections of the materials. NLA was one of libraries that make efforts to develop preservation metadata element sets. NLA established the Preserving and Accessing Networked DOcumentary Resources of Australia (PANDORA) which is an operational proof-of-concept digital in 1996 dedicated to the preservation of and long-term access to networked publications in Australia. The project was designed to support the

preservation of both digitized and born-digital objects. For more information, see http://pandora.nla.gov.au/.

Week 12

History of Media

This week we read "Une histoire des médias" by Jean-Noel Jeanneney and discussed the developments of media in different times and different spaces. I did enjoy discovering the different varieties of media which have influenced the society, culture, and politics.

One question proposed by Professor Lin is quite worthy for us to think over: "What is the impact to library services caused by the development of the internet, a new form of media?"

Emily's opinion

It's another amazing internet media. With the coming era of the Internet, information communication is much different from traditional media because of the characteristic of the Internet. With all digitizing materials accumulating up to thousands on thousands terms of pages, images and metadata according to National Central Library's 2003 report in Taiwan, we know that internet can deliver copyright-clear materials or authorized materials through Internet or traditional mailing service.

Week 13

Debate

This week we had a fierce debate on whether the National Library should digitize its book holdings and make it accessible to the public. Some instructions by Professor Lin about debate skills helped the debate go on smoothly. At the end of the debate, both sides proposed fiercely their pro and con points on this subject.

What's your position on the subject of this debate?

John's opinion

Regarding the National Library. Yes, I'm in favor of digitizing as much as possible. The library should be in the public trust. As a result all of their

materials should be accessible to the public.   It follows from the basic rule of "universal access."   Digitizing makes so much sense.   In fact it bypasses the problem of access for those who live too far from the National Library. What arguments did people make who oppose this?   I'd like to know.

Week 14

LC Saxophone

This week we visited the Memorial Hall of Lien Cheng Saxophone at Houli, Taichung County. The legendary story about Chang Lien-Cheng was amazing. Chang produced his first saxophone in 1948. He then taught his neighbors unselfishly to make saxophones and a new industry was begun in Houli. Now Houli is the most famous saxophone production place in Taiwan. According to Professor Cheow, the most difficult part of digitizing 400 saxophone components is how to design and to manage the right metadata to promote the saxophone industry. Does anyone know how to do this?

Week 15

Visit to the National Museum of Natural Science

This week we went to the National Museum of Natural Science to see some digitization projects of its collections.

Seeing is believing. Wow! I have never had such a good opportunity to take a real look at the National Museum of Natural Science like this one. There are so many valuable collections in this museum. We were treated like VIP by all narrators who showed us their collections with one hundred percent hospitality. These collections are very rare in Taiwan.

Let us come back to how they digitized these collections. That was the main purpose of this visit. Some of these collections are touchable. Some of them are out of reach. Some of these collections are real things. Some of them are virtual material. The problem is: How to digitize all these collections and show them to the public in a single webpage?

Emily's opinion

Generally, we can convert printed, manuscript, sculptured and pictorial information into digital images for use in computer-based applications. It can be done in a number of ways and with varying levels of precision. The most widely used device is scanner which creates digital images of documents or picture in much the same way as a photocopy machine does. There are also digital cameras with higher-resolution images than scanners that record images on computer rather than on film. In addition, hi-tech 3D computer graphics are commonly used to describe the cultural objects; therefore, those out-of-reach objects can be browsed by people around the world.

Week 16

Integration of Buddha Text, Tripitaka catalogs and GIS

This week Professor Lin invited Professor Du to speak on some Buddhist Digital Projects. Professor Du made a very intriguing talk about matters which were quite new to me. I was astonished by his resourceful idea on organizing digital projects and the ability to forecast the access habit of future internet users.

Professor Du focused on four topics:

1) CBETA

2) Buddhist Digital Projects

3) Time-Spatial & Concordance

4) Buddhist Informatics

I totally agreed with Professor Du's ideas on planning digital projects. He said it will be OK only if one can pay absolute attention to three rules to design a digital project: the Sutra(Content); the Vinaya(Standard); and the Abhidharma(Technology and Research).

Do you know the real meaning of "sleeping"(睡覺)by integrating Buddhist Sutras, Tripitaka catalogs, Concordance Tools, and GIS?

John's opinion

Wow, Jack! You're asking me questions to which I have no answers. This is a very interesting area, however. When I was in Long Beach I met with

some professors that wanted to digitize Cambodian Buddhist documents.   It never went anywhere though since it required a lot of money for equipment. Please continue to write me about this project.   I'm very interested.

John and Lokananda Bhikkhu's opinion

Please see my friend's message below.   He is a Buddhist monk from Bangladesh and he also has a library degree.   He currently lives in California. Maybe these sites would be of some interest to you.

Dear John, Sir:

Your forwarded item looks nice. There are plenty of digital Buddhist sites in the Internet world. I am sure your friend could get them easily. Here are a few:

1) Reference Guide for Buddhist Studies

2) PALICANON

3)ROMANIZED SANSKRIT Canons

Your friend also can look at

A Catalogue (of the Chinese Translation) of Buddhist Tripitaka (the sacred canon of the Buddhists in China and Japan) by Bunyiu Nanjio, Oxford: Claredon Press,   BQ1210 A12N3 1980

Good Luck.

Lokananda Bhikkhu

Week 17

The assignment

In the last two weeks, all my classmates made presentations on some digital projects for Taiwan Memory and some search engines for Web 2.0. I introduced Taiwan Local Documents & Images Database and Flickr to Professor Lin and my classmates. It was a lot of fun. I used my hometown and my pictures as examples to explain how these two databases work. My pictures are now on Flickr. I make a big breakthrough by putting my pictures on the internet. I thought I would never put any of my pictures on the internet.

The questions for this week are:

1) Can you introduce us to one of your favorite databases which is about American Memory, Taiwan Memory, or the Memory of another country?

2) What are your ideas about Web 2.0?

John's opinion

I guess my favorite American Memory site is the American Memory site: http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html.   It links to all sorts of information about the U.S. Presented by the Library of Congress, it's easy to navigate and good for all ages.   Take a look if you don't know it already.

 Web 2.0 or Internet 2.0 has its strength in the ability to communicate at a higher level.   Blogging, for example, allows people from all over the year to express an opinion, offer advice or give information to any number of potential users.   New technologies like blackberry allow for more frequent and delivery of information.   What does this mean?   More overload for us older folks who still like to get information via magazines, newspapers, TV and even the telephone.   For younger people who are growing up on 2.0 it provides an excellent means of communicating and even learning.

 What do you think?

Week 18

The End

This is the end of this semester. At last class, my classmates presented their final assignments on different topics. My team did deep research on the Inca Empire. We designed a homepage which included much data about the Inca Empire and its culture as a demonstration for Professor Lin and our classmates. My team did an excellent job on the presentation.

I attended all the Humanities Resources classes this semester. Actually I loved it very much and I reaped abundantly from this course.

後記：本報導係本館採編組組員陳勝雄(Jack)於國立中興大學圖書資訊學研究所進修時所修【人文學資源】一門課之活動報導。