Mapping EDEN Proposal

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Overview

Description

Mapping EDEN is an experiment in wedding sociological critique with a craft-tradition of Computer Science seeking artifacts and ways of making and doing that suggest fresh approaches to multiple disciplines.

Background

Ideally, the goal of Science, Technology and Society is to do work that is fully engaged with the practical details of human experience and effort and uses that engagement to develop theoretical understandings that reveal new points of contact and analyses. Sismondo (2008) describes this ideal as an "engaged program" that seeks to use pertinent topics in theoretically interesting ways. This project attempts to realize these qualities by simultaneously applying theoretical critiques to a situated and particular software tool and modifying that tool in conversation with those critiques. The end goal is a process-object that exists both as a fully functional piece of software and a record of the progress towards analyzing and creating that software from an existing base. I chose this particular form because it draws from both the traditions of software development and Science, Technology and Society scholarship but sets neither above the other. An engaged product must strive to be fully available to more than just the scholars of the social sciences.

Merits

Primarily, this project grew out of a sense of the disconnect between the making and doing of Science, Technology and Society and the making and doing of engineering. This approach was inspired the approaches of Roy (2018) and Subramaniam (2014) in working to learn more through their combination of the scientific method with feminist critique. My project is not one centered on feminist critique, but within my own background of craft Computer Science (see Ensmenger, 2012).

Background

Intellectual Heritage

Software Studies

Situated Knowledges

Design

Methods

The aim of this project is to put academic work in conversation with practical tools as well as put academic criticism in conversation with work to transform the same tools. This will draw on Science, Technology and Society's tradition of Making and Doing as well as traditional methods for analysis and critique. A PDF of this document can be found at `https://github.com/aeturnum/masters_project/blob/master/full_proposal.pdf`.

The LaTeXsource file can be found at `https://github.com/aeturnum/masters_project/blob/master/full_proposal.tex`.

Fieldsites

The EDEN software package, developed by the Sahana Foundation (a non-profit) and deployed to manage disaster response, appears to be an excellent fit for this project. It is designed with a purpose and with the intent to save lives. It has good reason to simplify and focus perspectives of those using the tool and to problematize particular aspects of the situation while allowing others to remain innocuous. Its lack of commercial motivation will also likely simply the process of decomposing whom its perspectives benefit.

The software's homepage can be found here: `https://sahanafoundation.org/`. A demo version of it running on the Sahana foundation can be found here: `http://demo.sahanafoundation.org/eden/`. Its source code can be found here: `https://github.com/sahana/eden`

Research Questions

What ways of knowing and doing are assisted by the design of EDEN?

What epistemological traditions are centered in EDEN's methods for storing data? Whose needs are attended to first in this particular product?

Schedule

Quarter	Quality	Time Allocation	Goal
Fall	Reading	80%	800 pages read with notes
	Writing	10%	Notes and planning documents
	Coding	10%	Notes on project structure
Winter	Reading	40%	Final selection of bibliography with additions based on notes and readings.
	Writing	30%	Outline for final paper with 20% of content finished
	Coding	30%	Rough modifications completed, but in need of polish
Fall	Reading	10%	Unexpected additions to literature and gathering specific quotes from previously completed elements.
	Writing	40%	Final paper
	Coding	40%	Full branch of EDEN project with documentation and demonstration server.

Impacts

Artifacts

Goals

Suggested Bibliography

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