# ISAKSEN — Linking

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**Linking Humanities Data Geospatially with Pelagios and *Recogito***

### Isaksen, L. and Ridge, M.

After the initial burst of investment in the digitization of humanities resources, more recent work in the digital humanities has begun to address the problem of siloed information by bridging heterogeneous and independently maintained datasets. One such approach is Linked Open Data, which has given rise to an emerging and diverse ecology of projects, collectively building the digital foundations for new modes of discovery, analysis, and representation (Elliott, 2014). The potentially unlimited number of resources to which this methodology is suited means that establishing a healthy community of practice is essential in order for it to scale. This workshop offers a hands-on introduction to the theory and practice of Linked Open Data in the humanities through the framework of the Pelagios project.

Pelagios is an award-winning multi-year initiative—funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, JISC, and the AHRC—that is semantically linking a large corpus of geospatial documents from Latin, Greek, European medieval and maritime, as well as early Islamic and Chinese traditions. For this purpose we have developed *Recogito*, an open-source online platform for associating place references in maps and texts with URI-based gazetters of historical places (GPL v.3 licensed source code hosted athttp://pelagios.org/recogito/documentation). *Recogito* has been under development for almost two years and is a fully functioning toolkit for annotation that draws upon the maturing ecosystem of digital gazetteers for classical and post-classical eras. Sources already in *Recogito* include Herodotus’ *Histories*, Roman itineraries, portolan charts, mappae mundi, accounts of pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and al-Muqaddasi’s description of the Islamic world.

The workshop will demonstrate how geospatial data can be created from humanities sources, whether textual or cartographic, and re-purposed in a variety of ways. The workshop will comprise four short (45-min.) sessions:

1. A short tutorial introducing the project along with the basic goals and practices of annotating materials with *Recogito*, including principles that can be extended to a wide variety of other historical entities such as people and events.

2. A practical session dedicated to creating semantic geo-annotations by using a visual tool to mark up place references in a wide range of pre-modern maps, itineraries, and geographic descriptions.

3. A hands-on session devoted to ‘georesolution’, associating the annotations with an entry in an online gazetteer.

4. The final session will provide concrete examples by which participants can make use of the data they and others have created, either through the use of Pelagios’ sophisticated API, or as a CSV file that can be visualised or analysed in GIS or a spreadsheet, and encourage participants to reflect on the application of these approaches to their own work.

The tools and methods will continue to be available to participants after the workshops, allowing them to make use of *Recogito* for their own needs.

### Description of Target Audience and Expected Number of Participants

This workshop will appeal to anyone seeking practical approaches to Linked Open Data with low barriers to entry and well-defined benefits, and conversely, anyone interested in new developments in spatial technologies. We particularly welcome those with an interest in semantically annotating their own content so that it can draw on and contribute to the developing Linked Data ecosystem. (Participants wishing to do so should contact the organisers in advance.) We will be able to support a maximum of 30 participants. No previous knowledge of geospatial or semantic technologies is required.

Thanks to the Andrew W. Mellon foundation and a DM2E/OKFN Open Humanities Award, Pelagios has already run three highly successful workshops about *Recogito* at Tufts University, the University of Heidelberg, and the University of Applied Science Mainz. In addition to this, an emerging community of contributors has formed around *Recogito*, focussing on particular areas of content and improving usability through their feedback. On this basis we are confident that participants will both gain practical experience and find the workshop intellectually stimulating.

Further information about previous workshops is available at

http://dm2e.eu/open-humanities-awards-sea-change-update-2/

http://dm2e.eu/open-humanities-awards-sea-change-final-update/

### Technical Support

A projector and screen, along with wireless Internet access are the only essential requirements.

### Contact Information

*Leif Isaksen*Leif is a lecturer in archaeology and co-directs the Web Science Innovation Centre for Doctoral Training at the University of Southampton. He is particularly interested in historical and contemporary representations of space and geography, using a variety of digital approaches to explore this topic, including GIS, Linked Open Data, and network analysis. He is an executive committee member of the European Association for the Digital Humanities (EADH), a trustee of the International Society for the History of the Map (ISHMap), and chairs the Space and Time working group of the Network of Digital Methods in the Arts and Humanities (NeDiMAH).

*Mia Ridge*Mia’s PhD in digital humanities (Open University) uses methods from human-computer interaction and user experience design to understand effective design for participatory digital history and the collaborative enhancement of historical materials. Mia has published and presented widely on her key areas of interest, including user experience design, human-computer interaction, open cultural data, audience engagement, and crowdsourcing in the cultural heritage sector. She is chair of the Museums Computer Group (MCG) and a member of the Executive Council of the Association for Computers and the Humanities (ACH).

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Up to 30 participants will be able to take part. They will require their own laptop with wireless access and a browser.

**References**

**Elliott, T., Heath, S. and Muccigrosso, J.** (2014). Prologue and Introduction. *ISAW Papers* 7, http://dlib.nyu.edu/awdl/isaw/isaw-papers/7/elliott-heath-muccigrosso/.