The Desktop Fascinator AKA #DTeRrev

Less than two weeks ago I posted here on what I called the Desktop eRearch revolution. Jim Richardson gave that resulting discussion the twitter tag #DTeRrev. You can see what people said.

Since then we went ahead with the idea – Oliver Lucido has put together a version of The Fascinator that can index a hard drive and show it too you faceted by file type and by metadata. He started with mp3 files because they contain metadata, but the goal is to work with research data of all kinds.

We are going to be working initially with history data belonging to Leonie Jones – the goal will be to get the application to index and label her stuff, be able to back it up appropriately and/or send it to a public memory repository with appropriate access controls so the public get the bit they're meant to see and not the bit they are not meant to see.

Oliver's work is not quite ready for others to try out yet but he will be making it part of the existing install any minute now which means it will be easy to try out on *nix systems like Linux or Mac OS X. No Windows installer yet, sorry but Duncan Dickinson is looking into it.

Duncan made a new web site for The Fascinator. I have taken the feedback we got here and via Twitter and created an FAQ page. There are a couple of things still to add to that including:

1. Will it index email? (Ian Barnes) Good idea – probably would be great to reposit the email that goes along with a project with the other project materials.

2. Can it mint persistent identifiers? (Neil Dickson) Answer: Maybe, but the desktop is not really the place for persistence which is the reason for this application so maybe that should happen downstream. But certainly *unique identifiers* would make sense as an easy to deploy solution for giving things provisional names across versions of the same object (which we will tell apart by using hashes).