Livingstone Online

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Our Critical Path

The publication of primary sources in any medium is a labour intensive task that requires the coordination of the administrative, research and technical activities of all the project members. To facilitate the production of our materials, Livingstone Online employs a detailed critical path that coordinates the work of the team to ensure the timely and efficient production of all our materials. This path is divided into five distinct yet overlapping divisions:

  I. Preliminary Research & Administrative Activities
 II. Transcription & Encoding of Primary Source Materials
III. Generation & Maintenance of Website Contents
IV. Technical Development & Innovation
 V. The Generation of Value Added Material

Preliminary Research & Administrative Activities

The first phase of our work takes place before any transcription activities. It includes:

  I. Undertaking research using published and unpublished sources to find manuscript exemplars
 II. Choosing a specific work for publication
III. Determining whether the work has been previously published
IV. Obtaining copyright clearance from the holder of the original for our publication
 V. Ordering hi-resolution colour scans of the work

Transcription & Encoding of Primary Source Materials

After all the appropriate clearances have been received, work begins on the cataloguing, transcription and encoding of the primary materials. This work is undertaken either directly from the physical relic in the archive or the hi-resolution scans (if available). During this phase of production:

  I. The manuscript is dated and its physical details are determined and logged
 II. The materials are transcribed and encoded by a researcher
III. The transcription is proof-read by someone else, usually a second researcher

IV. The XML syntax is validated and confirmed by the Technical Manager

V. The materials are proof-read again by a third researcher

VI. Clearance is received from the Senior Project Members for the publication of the transcription

The Generation & Maintenance of Website Contents

The website will be constantly evolving during the course of the project. Aside from the work required to maintain existing materials, the site itself will regularly expand with the addition of new transcriptions as well as to adjust to the recommendations and expectations of our users. The activities undertaken during this phase include:

I. Maintaining and updating current site contents

II. Evaluating user feedback and usage statistics in order to identify possible areas of expansion within the site

III. Researching and writing new scholarly content

Technical Development & Innovation

The technical aspects concerning the delivery of our materials will be subject to constant evolution in order to take advantage of continual developments in the field of electronic publication and the computer industry. At present, our current plans (subject to funding) are:

I. Developing an online database cataloguing Livingstone's works for the easy retrieval of information by our users

II. Implementing a framework for the dynamic transformation of our XML transcripts on the web server into web-readable forms

III. Installing a server-side solution that allows users to view and magnify manuscript images quickly and dynamically
All these activities will be undertaken using the established and free open-source software solutions employed by many large scale corporations and academic institutions rather than expensive proprietary software.

The Generation of Value Added Material

This is the last phase of our production process and takes place after the transcripts have been placed online for use by our viewers. It involves the generation of extensive value added material, such as explanatory notes and electronic indices, that can be dynamically customized according to the needs and preferences of individual users. This is accomplished by identifying, researching and coding content-level aspects of the primary materials, for example names, places, dates and technical terms. During this process, the Project members will:

I. Identify and markup significant content elements, such as names, places, dates

and technical terms

II. Research the marked up content

III. Write explanatory descriptions of the identified content text

IV. Link these descriptions to their instances within the transcripts

Find out about our tagging guidelines

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