

Participants

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Where do you start? What question are you trying to answer? What need are you trying to meet?

G. Can: Start with simpler/cleaner data. Volunteers learn to recognize more difficult patterns/images/content over time.

J. Iranowka: More materials than volunteers. Inspired by Transcribe Bentham. Challenged by finding volunteers in Scandinavia. Most volunteers from across the globe. Pursued “niche sourcing” -- 30-40 volunteers. Recruited via social media. Tried reward system with points.

Reasons to start:

- Materials -- tens of thousands of pages of city history across five centuries (1,000+ registers). Wanted to expose materials. Found funding in 2008 for mass digitization of manuscripts. Proposed project to government. At the time, opposition from university because project seemed to big. Now a good relationship, primarily because of high quality of transcriptions.
 - How quality was achieved: transcribers sent all work to central checkpoint. Staff responsibility to check all transcriptions, send back (so volunteers could learn from mistakes), then back to staff. Software highlighted mistakes/deletions in red, additions in green.
 - Identified successful/proficient volunteers to become correctors (sharing workload)
 - Two people look at each transcription.
 - Transcriptions published on site w/ transcribers name/link to image.
 - Volunteers also involved with digitization and image processing.
 - Create an environment that volunteers enjoy. Volunteers are best ambassadors for project.
 - Use software developed by University of Cologne to mark up transcriptions. Now supported by Cologne Center of E-Humanities (CCEH). Open source.

Tips:

- Documentation, including wordlists, flexible search (wildcards, etc.)
- Create online community for volunteers, e.g. Ning.
- Quality control -- two people checking each transcription.
- No time requirements for volunteers -- can work as flexibly as they want (as little or as much)
- Rewarding/encouraging volunteers: Volunteers earn points, can trade points for books, posters, etc.

Additional questions:

How do you shift from transcription to analysis?