

Digital methods for critical research

Tools and approaches for web-based and text-based analyses

Call for participation in workshop series

A series of three methodological workshops is organized and promoted by the Next Generation Global Studies group – NGGS (Department of Politics, Law and International Studies at the University of Padova) in cooperation with Elena Pavan (Department of Sociology and Social Research from the University of Trento) – to train in the use of tools and softwares for conducting research in the digital context.

The workshops will take place between September and November 2014.

Each workshop comprises 12/16 hours of lectures, guided practical activities and group discussions, and offers an opportunity to learn about and master innovative softwares for the conduct of critical research in the digital context.

Location (tbc): computer lab Palazzo Cesarotti, [via Cesarotti 10/12 Padova](#).

The series of workshop, held in English, is open to researchers, PhD and Master students from the Universities of Padova and Trento, who are conducting research or preparing their final thesis with a specific focus on/interest in the digital context broadly understood.

Since the workshops are open to a maximum of 15 participants, a selection will be made by the organizers, based on a 300/500 words abstract (in English) describing the main topic or current investigation, the adopted approach and relevance of participation in the workshop to their research and teaching activities (expected results).

Interested people should send their abstract to both Claudia Padovani and Elena Pavan by September 16 (email: claudia.padovani@unipd.it, Elena.Pavan@unitn.it).

Submission should include name, email and affiliation. Master students should also indicate the name of their thesis supervisor.

Participants are expected to attend the entire series of 3 workshops.

This activity is organized with the support of the degree course in European Studies, the Department of Law Politics and International Studies (SPGI) of the University of Padova, and of the Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Trento.

Thematic workshop 1 – 25-26 September 2014

Digital methods

Richard Rogers (University of Amsterdam e GocGov.Com Foundation)

The workshop opens with a discussion of how to repurpose "methods of the medium" for social and cultural scholarly research. Subsequently participants are trained in using digital methods in hands-on training sessions. How to use crawlers for dynamic URL sampling and issue mapping? How to employ scrapers to create a bias or partisanship diagnostic instrument? How to make use of social media so as to profile the preferences and tastes of politicians' friends, and also locate most engaged with content? How to make use of Twitter analytics to debanalize tweets, and provide compelling accounts of events on the ground? Finally, the presentation turns to the question of employing web data and metrics as societal indices more generally.



Richard Rogers, PhD is University Professor and holds the Chair in New Media & Digital Culture at the University of Amsterdam. He is Director of the Govcom.org Foundation, the group responsible for the Issue Crawler and other info-political tools, and the Digital Methods Initiative, reworking method for Internet research. Among other works, Rogers is author of *Information Politics on the Web* (MIT Press, 2004), awarded the best book of the year by the American Society of

Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T). His latest book, *Digital Methods*, published by MIT Press (2013) won the Outstanding Book Award from the International Communication Association. Rogers is a three-time Ford Fellow and has received research grants from the Soros Foundation, Open Society Institute, Mondriaan Foundation, MacArthur Foundation and Gates.

Suggested readings:

R. Rogers (2013). *Digital Methods*, MIT Press.

Thematic workshop 2 – 16-17 October 2014
Approaching texts: Doing analysis with NVivo 10

Luca Ghirotto (University of Verona and QSR International (UK) Limited)

This hands-on workshop is a basic introduction to NVivo and will provide you with the information and practice you need to get started with your own project.

Goals & Description

Familiarizing with the software.

We will familiarize with all the NVivo customizing tools to set our way of using the software.

Working in team on the same project.

NVivo allows to keep track of “who does what” within the same project which different researchers work on.

Storing and archiving data.

We will learn to import in NVivo different types of files: audio (.mp3, .wma, .wav), video (.mpg, .mpeg, .mpe, .wmv, .avi, .mov, .qt, .mp4), images (.bmp, .gif, .jpg, .jpeg, .tif, .tiff), and transcripts (.doc, .docx, .txt, .rtf).

Transcribing audio and video files directly in NVivo.

We will use the media tools incorporated in NVivo for transcribing audio/video files or only describing their content.

Setting the data researchers have already collected, preparing data for analysis.

We will learn how to create research cases, giving them attributes and different attributes' values. In addition, we will group data analysis phases in sets.

Importing materials from Word, Excel.

Importing material from Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Evernote.

Auto-coding for collecting answers to the same question in a node.

Freehand sketching.

NVivo Models allow the researcher to draw initial thoughts about the data. We will do some exercises for learning how to construct models, starting from our initial ideas.

Coding.

How to code materials? We will learn how to code audio, video and images as well as transcriptions. Even if NVivo was born to help induction in data analysis, NVivo facilitates also a-priori coding: when researchers want to fill categories coming from literature review, theoretical assumptions in a deductive manner.

Skipping transcriptions.

Audio and Video materials can be coded skipping the transcription process: NVivo media tool helps researchers to code during audio files listening or videos watching.

Editing, making annotations and linking project items to external files, web pages.

We will learn how to change what we have done previously, how to make annotations and how to create connections among project items or with external files (web pages included) that have something to do with the project.

Modelling.

We will learn how to construct models starting from added project items. We will export models as images for presentations.

Searching for an item of the project.

We will use the “find” tool of NVivo 10.

Searching for recurrences among data sources, coded data, and among different projects’ items.

We will learn how to ask questions to data using queries:

- searching for a text
- exploring word frequency
- doing a query about coding activity
- creating a matrix with coded data
- compounding different query criteria (for searching different types of project’s items).

Assessing the inter-coder agreement for internal qualitative research “validity”.

If we are working collectively in a team on the same project, NVivo 10 may calculate the level of coding agreement among researchers.

Showing the project: charting and reporting.

NVivo 10 can chart all the items like: query results, nodes, cases, etc. In addition, we will learn how to export lists of items and produce reports for showing every phases of the evolution of the project.

Luca Ghirotto, Ph.D. in Education, is contract professor at Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Verona. He is currently etutor at Faculty of Cognitive Sciences in Qualitative Research Methodology, and professor at Doctorate in Nursing Methodology Research, University of Genoa (Italy).

His research’s interests are

- *philosophy of education*: phenomenology and phenomenological pedagogy/education;
- *educational research*: early childhood learning and education;
- *educational perspectives*: Social Justice Education, Capability Approach;
- *research methodology*: qualitative methodologies, CAQDAS.

He is within scientific committee of *ENCYCLOPAIDEIA - Journal of Phenomenology and Education*, peer reviewer of *QHR – Qualitative Health Research*, and *IJQM – International Journal of Qualitative Methodology*. He also serves as curriculum specialist for infant-toddler centres and pre-schools, within Coopselios, social cooperative in Reggio Emilia, and as consultant in teachers' training.

Thematic workshop 3 – 20-21 November 2014
Social networks and critical research
Introduction to social network analysis and NodeXL
Elena Pavan (Università di Trento)

The workshop consists of two units. The first unit will deal with the basics of social network analysis, its peculiar approach to the study of social phenomena, the ways of organizing and representing data in graphs and matrices, the basic metrics to describe network structures, nodes' positions and groups' identification. Thus different strategies to define network boundaries will be illustrated focusing both on social networks offline and on relational structures derived from social media use. The second unit will see participants involved in a practical training on the use of NodeXL, a free network analysis software to elaborate network data and represent relational structures through graphs. Participants will be introduced to the basic functions of the software and will work on illustrative datasets from both the offline and the online digital space.



Elena Pavan is the leading investigator and project manager of REACTiON. She holds a degree in Communication Sciences (University of Padova, Italy, 2004) and a PhD in Sociology (University of Trento, 2009). She developed her expertise in the study and the use of social network analysis in various field of research (from supra national governance political processes to human-computer interaction) and in conjunction with other analytical techniques, such as lexicon-content analysis. Her most recent research interests pertain to the relationships between collective action/political participation and social media use. Within this area, she is working interdisciplinary to combine

technical and social knowledges into the study of socio-technical systems and is employing network analysis techniques and tools. She recently published in international journals and in relevant Italian journals. Her PhD dissertation on Internet governance and multistakeholderism has been released in January 2012 as a book for Lexington Publications.

Suggested readings:

D. Hansen, B. Shneiderman, M. Smith (2010). *Analyzing Social Media Networks with NodeXL*, Morgan Kaufmann.

Pavan, E. (2013). "Collective action and Web 2.0. An exploratory network analysis of Twitter use during campaigns". *Sociologica* 3/2013. Bologna: Il Mulino.