

ENHANCED PUBLICATION GIVES VETERANS A VOICE

PUBLISHING IN CONTEXT

The *Veteran Tapes* collection breaks through the boundaries between disciplines and between the reader and the people whose voices we hear. This scholarly publication is an example of a new type of enhanced publication.



PHOTO: IVAR PEL

Stef Scagliola,
wetenschappelijk
medewerker,
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It seemed like such a good idea. Since 2007, thousands of Dutch veterans have been interviewed about their experiences, and the aim was to make the whole collection of interviews available to anyone interested – not just historians but also psychologists, sociologists, etc. ‘But I soon discovered by talking to researchers in various disciplines that they would not in fact make much use of the material’, says project coordinator Stef Scagliola. ‘That’s because social scientists are used to collecting their own material and keeping it to themselves, meaning that the data is not available for reuse.’

The reuse of research data is also one of the core principles of DANS, the national data archive under the authority of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). In fact, the research world is engaged in what amounts to the wholesale destruction of capital. SURFfoundation has therefore pressed for research data to be made accessible in combination with texts, namely as ‘enhanced publications’.

UNCERTAINTY OR RESIGNATION

The Dutch Veterans Institute and DANS decided to bring out an example of an enhanced publication. ‘We selected twenty-five representative interviews,’ says Stef Scagliola, ‘and offered them to researchers in a wide variety of disciplines. The resulting collection is special for two reasons. First of all, it offers a multidisciplinary approach to a single set of sources. Secondly, you don’t only read the passages that researchers use in their publication; all the digital articles also include audio clips that you just need to click on to hear.’

Enhanced publications link research to Web 3.0


The key to the success of enhanced publications is Web 3.0, also known as the 'semantic web'. This collection of standards enables creators of enhanced publications to indicate the relationships between the items used so that they can be recognised and understood by computers. This makes it much easier and quicker for researchers to determine which publications have made use of a specific dataset or how an author has used a particular audio file. The semantic web also makes it possible to clearly visualise pieces of information as a coherent whole. This means you can navigate through a network of knowledge, so to speak, which increases the transparency of the research.

The *Veteran Tapes* collection is therefore a genuine 'enhanced publication'. You can hear the emotion in the voices of the veterans, but also their uncertainty or their resignation.

As part of the project – which was partly funded by SURFFoundation – Radboud University Nijmegen and DANS developed a 'clip cutter' that allows researchers to clip sections from the oral interviews and link them to their digital article.

Enhanced publications make research data reusable

FLYING START

Stef Scagliola explains that reusing and enhancing digital data offers all kinds of possibilities for teaching and also definitely for preliminary research. 'It means you can formulate research questions about post-traumatic stress caused by combat experience much more effectively if you can first listen to the interviews. It gives you a kind of flying start with your research. It's also a way for us to encourage research that goes beyond the boundaries of disciplines because we can make the material available in an accessible manner and provide a lot of contextual information.' 

Aad van de Wijngaart



MORE INFORMATION

SURFFFOUNDATION VETERAN TAPES EP PROJECT:
bit.ly/gieXBU

ENHANCED PUBLICATIONS:
www.surffoundation.nl/verrijktepublicaties

VETERANS PROJECT:
www.watveteranenvertellen.nl