S-3 – Doing History of Science in a Digital, Global, Networked Community: Tools and Services Linking Scholars and Scholarship

Commission on Bibliography and Documentation

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Abstract:
Reference tools and services tie scholarly communities together. This was true in the past as it is today. At the turn of the twentieth century, several large and distinguished bibliographies of history of science were begun and helped give rise to the discipline by connecting scholars together in a shared enterprise. One hundred years later, the world of information has changed dramatically as we have moved into a new global networked world. Many new kinds of reference tools have emerged to meet new needs of a robust and healthy scholarly enterprise, tools that range from simple bibliographical databases to full-text search engines to publishing and commenting tools that allow scholars to interact much more freely with one another. These new tools have transformed the expectations and nature of scholarship and the scholarly community itself.

The transformations have had both good and bad effects on scholarship. There remain many challenges in this new age of networked information but also many extraordinary advances. In each of the last three congresses the Commission on Bibliography and Documentation has hosted symposia that bring together scholars, archivists, and librarians who have worked on tools and reference resources for the discipline in order to help keep each other abreast of the latest resources in this rapidly changing environment and to work together on common projects.

This four-session symposium features the work of historians who have run or designed digitally based scholarly reference resources as well as librarians and archivists who study and learn to navigate these resources. The authors of the papers have been asked to focus on how these new digital projects have attempted to address the current needs of scholarship: How successful have they been? Where have they not lived up to expectations? What are the most pressing needs for the next decade? What kinds of resources do historians of science and technology need to access in order to produce good work?

Keywords: Digital humanities – Scholarly reference resources – Bibliography and documentation – Library tools and services – Archive tools and services.

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