

Bio statement

Øyvind Eide is a senior analyst at the Unit for Digital Documentation, University of Oslo. He is on leave from 2009 to 2012 in order to do a PhD at the Department of Digital Humanities, King's College London.

Eide has been involved in several digitisation and database development projects in the humanities. He is one of the conveners of the TEI Ontologies SIG and an elected member of the Executive Committee of the ALLC.

His research interests include modelling geographical expressions found in texts into conceptual models and, more generally, the connection between text encoding and ontological systems.

Abstract: Reading the text, walking the terrain, following the map: Do we see the same landscape?

Maps and texts are different media. Reading a text gives quite a different understanding of an unknown landscape from the one learned from reading a map. If this abstract is accepted, the paper will show in some detail how maps and verbal texts are different media, and how these differences have consequences not only for *how* things are said, but also for *what* can be said at all using these two media.

In an interview at the farm Solem in August 1742, the farmer Ole Nilsen said that “North of there, no peasant farms are found.”¹ How can we put the knowledge expressed in this sentence on a map? First we need to know where to put the “there” referred to and how far north the “north of there” implies. Given that we are able to decide on that, how do we express the fact that no farms are found? We could make the area north of “there” blank. But blankness on a map does not say “no farms”, it rather says “nothing of interest”—after all, we know there are things everywhere; stone, trees, etc. And maybe a farm or two, even if the map is blank.

How can we better understand such problems? The method to be presented in the paper includes the creation of a conceptual model of the geographical information read out of a text. By attempting to produce maps

¹“Norden der fra, er ingen bonde gaard.” *Major Peter Schnitlers grenseeksaminasjon-protokoller 1742–1745, volume 1* (Oslo, 1962), page 152.

from the information thus modelled, the differences between what can be expressed in the text and what can be expressed as a map is documented.