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**CAWI for DH**

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The survey method of using questionnaires for acquiring different kinds of information from the population is a classic way to collect data. Mathematics, sociology and other sciences have developed a coherent theoretical methodology and have accumulated experience-based knowledge for using online survey tools, and the main research question in this paper concerns the differences between ‘classical’ (mostly quantitative) survey and those we are employing in Digital Humanities (DH): what are the most important aspects when it comes to CAWI (computer assisted web interview also called web, electronic, online, internet survey) for DH?

To answer this question, we will make a schematic comparison of most popular CAWI used in social sciences and those in DH, looking at previous experience of our work in fields and institutions of sociology, statistics and folkloristics, as well an analysis of recent DH literature.

Examples of surveys can be traced back to ancient civilizations, like censuses or standardised agricultural data recordings. The main instrument of this method is questioning (closed-ended or open-ended) which should be asked exactly the same way to all the representatives of surveyed population. During the last 20-25 years the internet survey method has been well developed and more and more frequently employed in social sciences and marketing research, among others. Usually CAWI is designed for acquiring quantitative data, but as in other most used survey modes (face-to-face, telephone or mail interviews) it can be used to collect qualitative data such as un- or semi-structured text/ speech, pictures, sounds etc.

In this paper, we focus on the case of Latvian folkloristics in the realm of DH**.** In recent years, the CAWI methodology has been used more and more within projects of the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia (ILFA, UL). At the same time, the knowledge of this method in this field is somehow limited (because lack of previous experience and in many cases, education—the humanities curriculum usually does not include quantitative methods). This paper seeks to analyse specificity of CAWI designed for our needs of DH, which can differ significantly from those of the social sciences.

Questionnaires as an approach for collecting data of traditional culture date back to an early stage of the disciplinary history of Latvian folkloristics, namely, to the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (published by Dāvis Ozoliņš, Eduard Wolter, Pēteris Šmits, Pēteris Birkerts). The Archives of Latvian Folklore was established in 1924. Its founder and the first Head, folklorist and schoolteacher Anna Bērzkalne, utilized questionnaires (*jautājumu lapas*) on various topics of Latvian folklore on a regular basis and distributed them to the Archives’ contributors (schoolteachers, students, local historians and other volunteers). She both created original sets of questions herself and translated and adapted those by the Estonian and Finnish folklore scholars (instructions for collecting children’s songs by Walter Anderson; questionnaires of folk beliefs by O. A. F. Mustonen alias Oskar Anders Ferdinand Lönnbohm and Viljo Johannes Mansikka). These localised equivalents were published in the press. Printed questionnaires, such as “House and Household”, “Fishing and Fish”, “Relations between Relatives and Neighbors” and others, presented sets of questions of which were formulated in a suggestive way so that everyone who had some interest could easily engage in the work. The hand-written responses were sent to the Archives of Latvian Folklore from all regions of the country; the collection of folk beliefs in the late 1920s greatly supplemented the range of materials at the Archives.

However, the life of the survey as a method of collecting folklore in Latvia did not last long. Soon after World War II it was overcome by the dominance of professional collective fieldwork, and, at the end of the 20th century, by individual field research, including mainly face-to-face qualitative interviews with informants.

           Only in 2017 did the Archives of Latvian Folklore, ILFA, UL, revitalize the approach of remote data collecting via the online questionnaires. With the project “Empowering knowledge society: interdisciplinary perspectives on public involvement in the production of digital cultural heritage” (funded by the European Regional Development Fund), a virtual inquiry module has been developed. The working group of virtual ethnography launched a series of online surveys aimed to study the calendric practices of individuals in the 21st century. Along with working out the iterative inquiry, data accumulation, and analysis tools, researchers have tried to find solutions to the technical and ethical challenges of the modern day.