Making History in the Information Society

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1. THE CONTEXT

▶ Information society:

"is where the citizens of the developed world live today, experiencing it in their everyday practice" (Manovich 2005):

- *Infosphere* (Floridi 2009), Networked society;

- Big data, data deluge;

- *Internet Galaxy* (Castells 2002).

▶ Digital turn:

Increasing usage of digital technologies in all human activities; started in the 90's and increased with Web 2.0 (2005):

- Communication;

- New Media;

- Digital Humanities.

Internet Map

2. SOME QUESTIONS

► How History can deal with information overload?

Digitalization has put into crisis historical method which is based on source's critical validation ad usage.

The fluidity and the ephemeral constitution of digital document (texts, images, films…) are difficult to approach with classical KOS (Knowledge Organization System); this problems are increased by the Web that make information ready always and everywhere.

Examples:

- In 2100 historians will have access to primary sources of Trump's presidential campaign? (Twitter)

- How sources are conserved on Web?

► Creative approach → cultural heritage – digital history

Rethinking Paul Otlet, Vannervar Bush and Ted Nelson's documentations systems. Historians have to think on Marc Bloch's exhortation :

"l'outil, certes, ne fait pas la science, mais une société qui prétend respecter les sciences ne devrait pas se désintéresser de leurs outils"
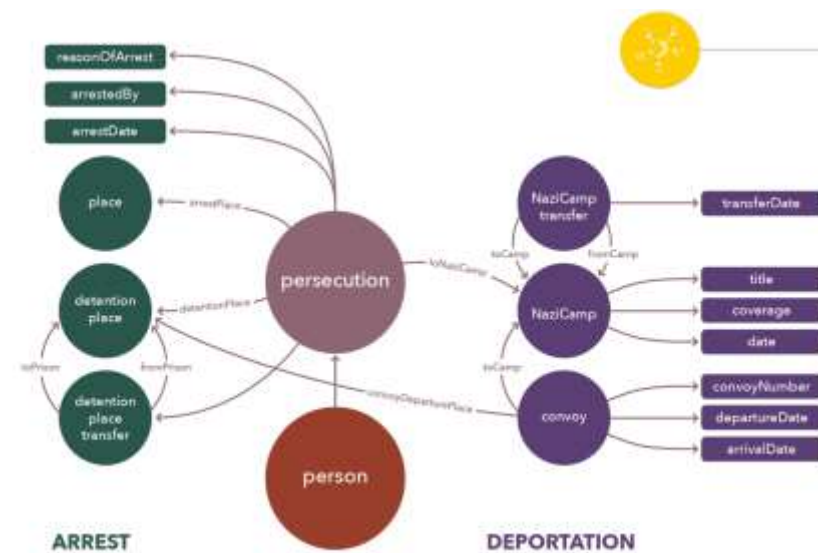(*Apologie pour l'Historie* p.67)
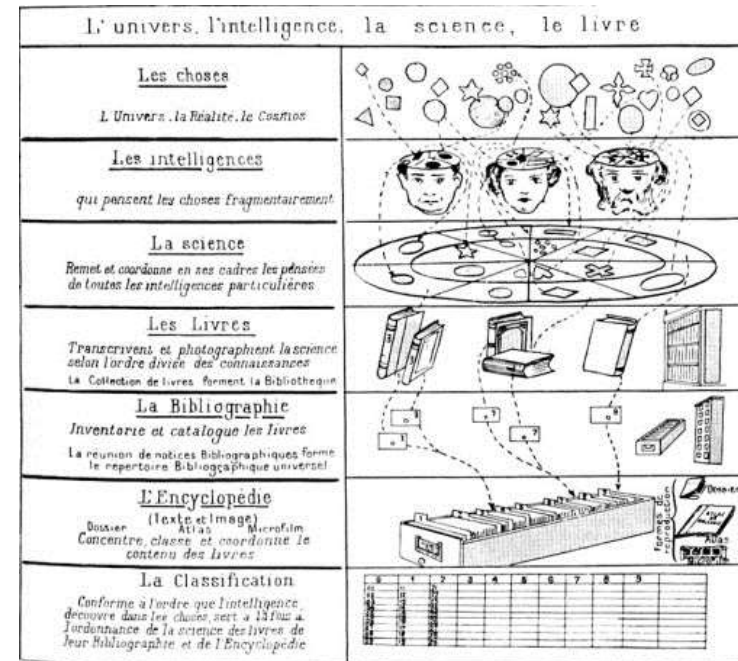
▶ Linked Open Data (LOD)

Semantic Web technologies and ontologies (XML, RDF, SPARQL, Owl…) can provide a stable framework for data conservation and machine readable datasets (e.g. dBpedia): "a *web of things in the world, described by data on the Web*" (Berners-Lee – Bizer – Heath 2009).

There are many examples on LOD for cultural heritage (Europeana). In Italy the CDEC (Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea), a research center in Milan focused on Jewish history, has employed LOD for his digital library (http://digital-library.cdec.it/cdec-web).

Goals:

• reorganize the collection (books, films,

images…) and the systems previously used for digitation

→ Better library's user experience (also web)

• build an ontology for data's organization, *fil rouge*

is represented by the person → possibility of interactive

visualization of data

(http://dati.cdec.it/lodlive/?http://dati.cdec.it/lod/shoah/person/4919)