Reflexive inertia : reinventing scholarship through digital practices
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STELLINGEN

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Reflexive Inertia. Reinventing Scholarship Through Digital Practices.

van Wolfgang Kaltenbrunner

1. The value of new digital tools to scholars does not solely depend on built-in capabilities and abstract epistemological benefits, but to a large extent on how meaningfully they can be integrated into a historically grown scholarly infrastructure (this thesis).

2. Difficulties in embedding new tools in existing research practices arise from an incongruence between technological affordances and the infrastructural configuration of scholarly work. Practitioners of digital scholarship may therefore find themselves unable to connect to established disciplinary structures, for example regarding conceptual frameworks, historically accumulated data work, as well as career opportunities (this thesis).

3. In a field characterized by a plurality of theories and approaches, small digital project formats will generate less friction because they make it easier to agree on packageable sequences of work (this thesis).

4. The move to digital scholarship blurs the traditional boundaries between intellectual work and the work of information professionals. Rather than an objective divide between substantively different activities, individual actors draw this boundary in a tactical way, for example to legitimize budget cuts or promote the creation of unconventional forms of knowledge (this thesis).

5. The currently popular notion of big data is problematic not only in that it downplays the function of disciplinary theories and methods, but also because it underestimates the function of data work in creating intellectual coherence. Amassing digital data and empirical material drawn from different contexts does not only result in more or better scholarly knowledge, but also in more fragmentation and uncertainty (this thesis).

6. From a systemic perspective, failed research (much like poverty) is the artificially privatized cost of more successful undertakings.

7. The historical strategy of purification, i.e. the practice of deleting the contingency in accounts of scientific work, can cause unhealthy cleaning compulsions. Moreover, it creates unwarranted jealousy among the neighbors of the purported ivory tower, as well as leading young researchers to underestimate the work necessary to furbish their domicile.

8. STS scholars' acknowledgment of the messiness and non-dualistic character of all research methods would lose its critical momentum if primarily used to develop a priori ontological claims about what reality 'really' is (cf. Mol, *The Body Multiple,* 2002; Jensen & Winthereik, *Monitoring Movements in Development Aid*, 2013).

9. Scholars and scholarly societies should consider a self-imposed publication limit, since an inflation of published papers drives down the price for academic labor, increases the material and symbolic capital of star researchers to the detriment of younger academics, and promotes hyper-specialization of core journals.

10. Bitterballen are not merely a meat-based Dutch specialty, but part of an initiation ritual into Dutch society.