World Web Watch.

Par . Le 23 October 2012
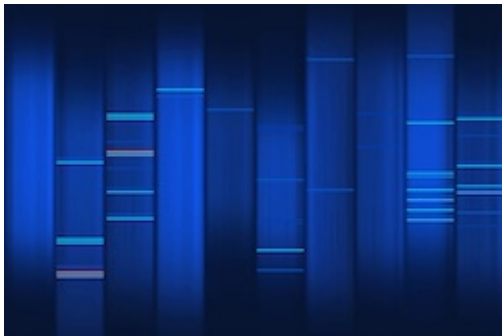

Illustration : Nate Steiner, « Web-graphics dna», 09.08.2006, Flickr, (licence Creative Commons).

The Chôros Lab based in EPFL is offering a PhD grant starting from January 2013.

The aim of this research is to study the Web as a Social Sciences corpus in order to descry the complexity of the World. In particular, as many possible conceptions of the World will be explored, both in terms of diversity and similarity.

Candidate's Profile.

A Master's degree, preferably in Social Sciences (geography, sociology, anthropology, political science, economy) is required, as well as high linguistic skills, including Mandarin (compulsory), English and French. High understanding of the Internet (principles and practices) is equally important.

In-depth knowledge of Social Sciences is essential to embrace this project. Data sources and information will have to be analysed, regarding complex as well as original problematics related to key issues of the contemporary world.

The candidate must have command of the main languages used on the Internet in order to carry out this research (especially Mandarin, English, Spanish and French). Wikipedia is a good example of this challenge: it is a promising source, but appears useless without a deep understanding of the content. In this research, Chinese corpus will be particularly emphasized, hence the requirement of Mandarin.

Lastly, ability to master programming languages would be highly beneficial. Software adapted to

the analysis of this promising corpus will be developed within the Chôros Lab. Basics knowledge of programming languages would be a significant asset (PHP, Java, Perl or Python).

Framework of the Research.

This PhD project will be associated up with wider research carried out within the Chôros laboratory. It considers the Web as an opportunity for Social Sciences to improve the way in which the World can be explored.

The Internet is so important in contemporary practices that it could potentially be a very rich source of information for Social Sciences. Such a quantity and diversity of practices and discourses is opening innovative ways of understanding the complexity of the World. This approach certainly implies significant bias, however to a lesser extent than common alternative approaches which have difficulty accessing so much information in such a large scale.

In conclusion, this PhD project aims at surmounting the following difficulties:

– Identifying the most relevant corpuses.

– Identifying the main biases of these corpuses in order to reduce their impact.

– Identifying the appropriate problematics likely to descry the convergence and divergence of contemporary world experiences.

– Elaborating a generic data mining process that could exploit, organize and display this complexity.

Host laboratory

This grant is offered by the Chôros laboratory based in EPFL (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne). This laboratory focuses on Social sciences of inhabited spaces: cities, territories and networks.

Application deadline.

December 15th 2012.

Gross Annual Income.

51100 CHF / 42 000 € per year.

Contact.

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Pour faire référence à cet article :

"World Web Watch. ", *EspacesTemps.net*, Publications, 23.10.2012
https://www.espacestemps.net/en/articles/world-web-watch-ce-que-le-web-peut-nous-dire-du-monde/