

Using a data ontology to understand the relational dynamics of film audiences



Beyond the Multiplex: audiences for specialised film in English regions

@BeyondMultiplex | www.beyondthemultiplex.net

Matthew Hanchard | Peter Merrington

Digital Humanities Congress | University of Sheffield | 06-08th September 2018



Bridgette Wessels (PI)
Matthew Hanchard
Peter Merrington



Simeon Yates (Col)



David Forrest (Col)
Mike Pidd (Col)
Katherine Rogers



Andrew Higson (Col)
Roderik Smits
Nathan Townsend

Outline

- About the project
- Developing a data ontology (for a database) from qualitative data
- Our methods of data collection methods and how they relate to each other
- Our workflow: from qualitative data analysis to database development and the challenges it presents
- A short sketch of the qualitative data (on audiences)
- Progress and next steps

About the project

Researching relationships between audiences and specialised film

- Central research question: How do audiences engage with and form in different ways around specialised films in English regions?
- This question poses both theoretical and methodological challenges that the research design responds to by using a new digital methodology for film audience research: an ontology database built from mixed methods research.

Context: Film audiences in English regions

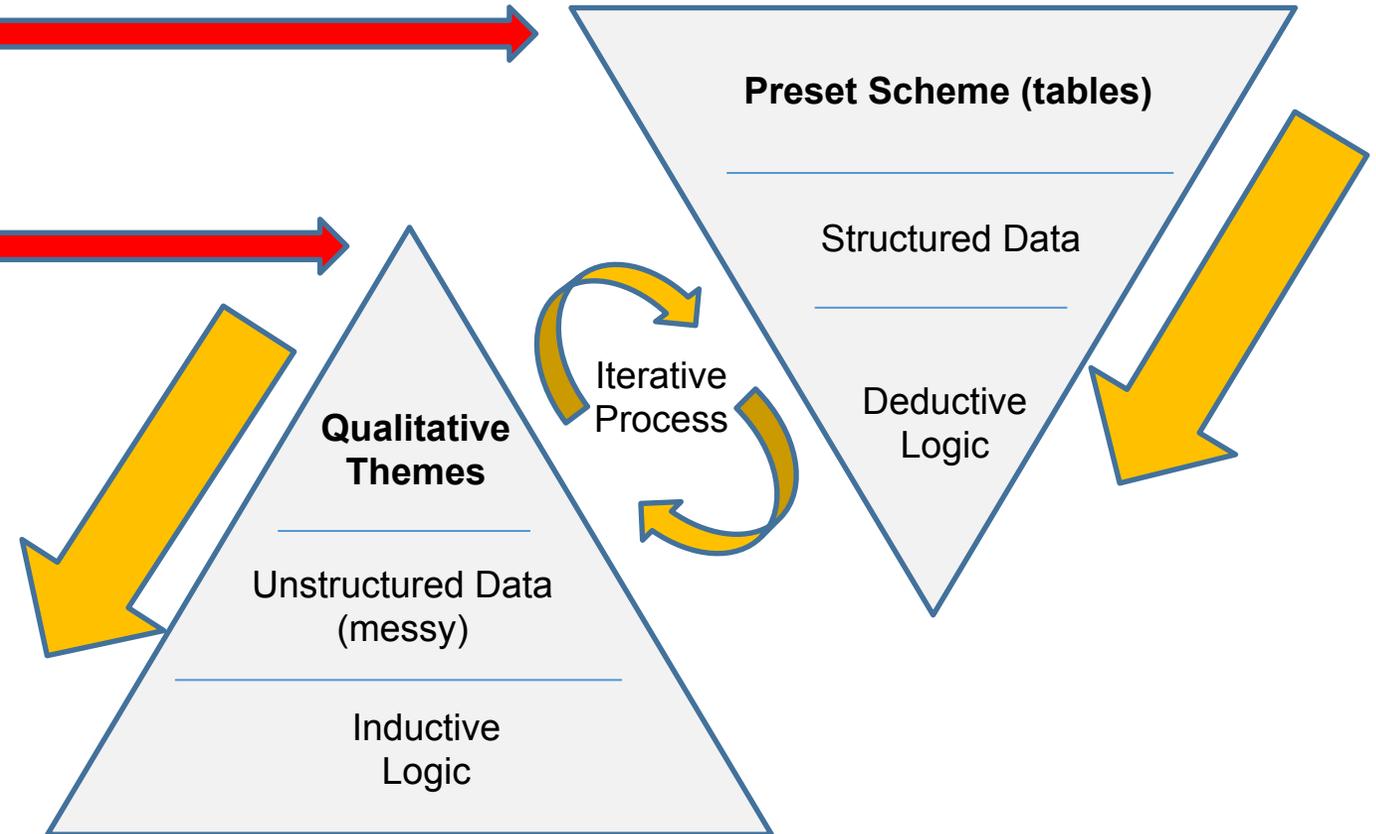
- While provision of mainstream film is good across England, provision of specialised film is low in the regions outside London.
- Specialised Film is a term used by the BFI for a film outside a mainstream or highly commercial genre, including small-scale British films, foreign language film, feature-length documentary, artists' film, archive film and classic cinema, and films with unconventional narratives, themes or cinematic technique, including films with stories and subjects relating to diversity (for example Black, Asian and minority ethnic people; disability; LGBT).
- In 2017, 760 films (an average of almost 15 per week) were released for a week or more in the UK and Republic of Ireland. At the end of 2016, the UK had 4,150 screens, 104 more than 2015, in 766 cinemas. Only 7% of screens showed mainly 'specialised' (ie non-mainstream) programming. There are significant regional variations. (BFI Statistical Yearbook)

Aims and impact of the project

- 1) Understand how to enable a wider range of audiences to participate in a more diverse film culture that embraces the wealth of films beyond the mainstream
- 2) How to optimise the cultural value of engaging with those less familiar films, identified here as 'specialised' films
- 3) Support those working in film and with film audiences by providing: evidence, analytical data tools, and digital methodology for audience research

Data ontology and methodology

WP 1	Develop ontology
WP 2	Analyse policy documents
WP 3	Develop socio-cultural Index
WP 4	Interviews (x 200)
WP 5	Survey (~5000)
WP 6	Elite interviews (x 28)
WP 7	Focus groups (x 16)
WP 8	Data analysis (search and visualisation)
WP 9	Develop website and API
WP 10	Writing (various outputs)
Wp 11	Impact activities (various)
WP 12	Management and communication



Methods of data collection

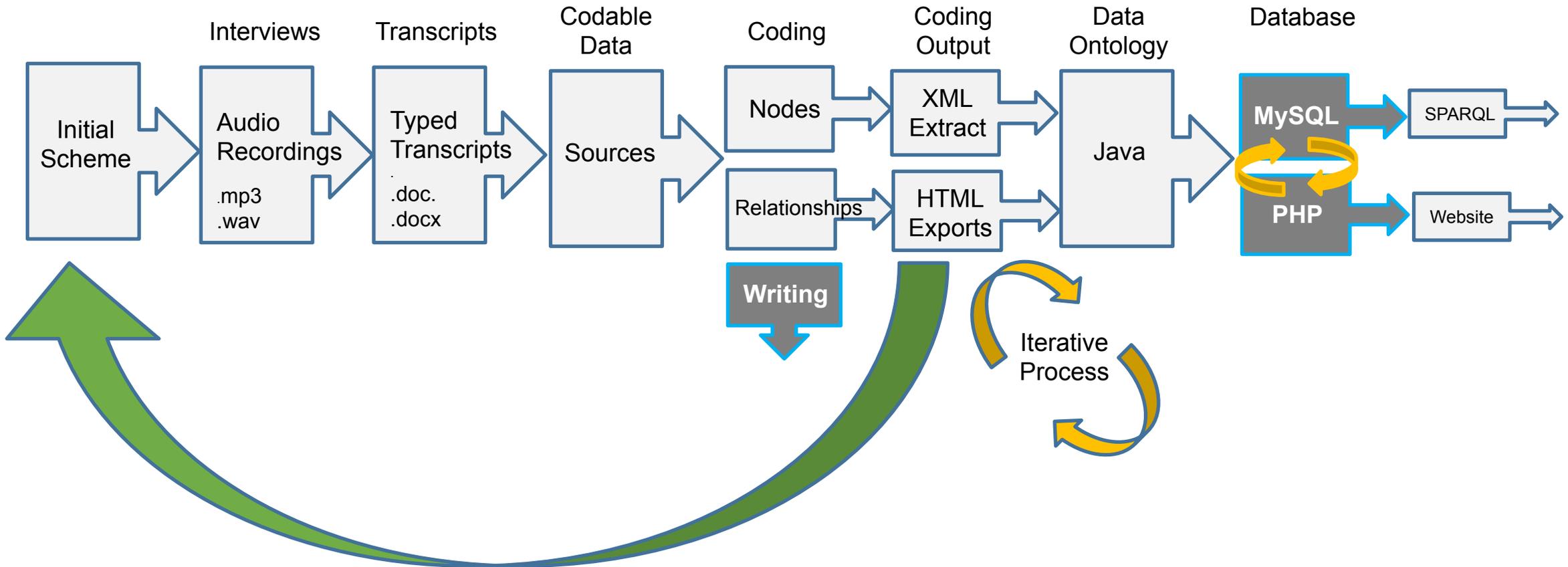
- WP1 - Ontology Development
- WP2 - Document Analysis of Policy and Industry Trends
- WP3 - Development of Socio-Cultural Index of Each Region

WP4 - Semi-Structured Interviews with Audience Members (200 interviews across four regions) - gathering rich and detailed accounts of people's everyday film watching habits and what film means for them.

- WP5 - Longitudinal Survey
- WP6 - Semi-structured Interviews with Industry, Regional Providers and Policy Stakeholders
- WP7 - Focus Groups (Film Elicitation)
- WP8 - Data Search, Visualisation and Analysis

Workflow

Iteratively developing a data ontology: working with qualitative data



Challenges

- Double-coding
- Keeping consistency
- Balancing the development of a data ontology with ongoing changes to the coding scheme
- Working with latent and overt relationships

...with an awareness of the wider research design – including other data

Using the database and project outputs

- Limitations of existing methods of film audience research
- A relational approach – ‘audiencehood’
- Querying qualitative and quantitative data together – new insights

Outputs for stakeholders

A collaborative approach working with the BFI’s regional Film Audience Network (FAN)

- Freely available online resource providing access to data collected in the project for re-use
- Search and visualisation tools for the online resource
- A regional map that links to data sources for studying audiences and regional film provision
- Workshops on digital analysis and audience ontologies
- Recommendations for developing audiences
- Final conference bringing together stakeholders and academics, papers will be published online and open source



Thank you...

...any questions?

@BeyondMultiplex | www.beyondthemultiplex.net