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The Digital Edition as a Data Resource (Abstract)

What is a digital edition? This question seems to suggest an easy answer, namely that a digital edition is a traditional edition in digital format. But it has already been pointed out by Sahle and others that a digital edition is not a digitized edition, and that the transformation to a digital format necessitates a different kind of theory of document and text.

However, despite various new approaches it is still far from clear in what this different nature of a digital edition consists or what are the parts or properties being constitutive for digital editions. In my paper I will elaborate on the relevant properties and features of the digital edition and will argue that in order to assess it properly it is important to change the view from the visible presentation or surface of the edition to its underlying data structure and algorithmic potential. The data structure of the digital edition or in a broader sense the digital publication allows for different ways of usages.

A digital edition may be part of a larger distributed network or of a library data collection. Access is provided by interfaces or sophisticated search tools.

Accordingly, encoding an edition requires new concepts and standards to satisfy these kinds of requirements in order to provide both a reading text and a consistent data resource.