



Events

PAUL WOUTERS

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Tuesday, May 1, 2007

3:30 pm

Communications 202

Reception to follow

Forging a New Academic Identity: Key Dilemmas and Challenges in Digital Scholarship

Scholars interested in the application of new technologies in their research usually emphasize the technology's promise: new ways of handling their materials, more efficient or effective working routines, or even completely new research questions. Enthusiasts can underestimate the amount of work needed to make new technologies work, and the conflicts that emerge with existing methodological standards—but this is part of the adventure, isn't it? In virtually every field, these pioneers in new forms of scholarship are confronted with skeptics, who tend to point to the possible problems of using new technology: potential disruption of existing quality standards, the uncertainties with respect to outcome, and the huge investments needed in terms of precious research time and support staff.

In this talk Wouters will analyze these new technologies as the construction site of new academic and scholarly identities. This talk may also clarify why some technological interventions in scholarly practice may be perceived as threatening. For some these technologies may undermine a specific interpretation of what it is to be a scholar, while promoting an alternative form of academic life. This analytical perspective can also be used to study new cyberinfrastructures, digital workbenches, and information environments with respect to their implications for academic life forms.

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