



Digital Social Science and Oral Narrative Research 2018

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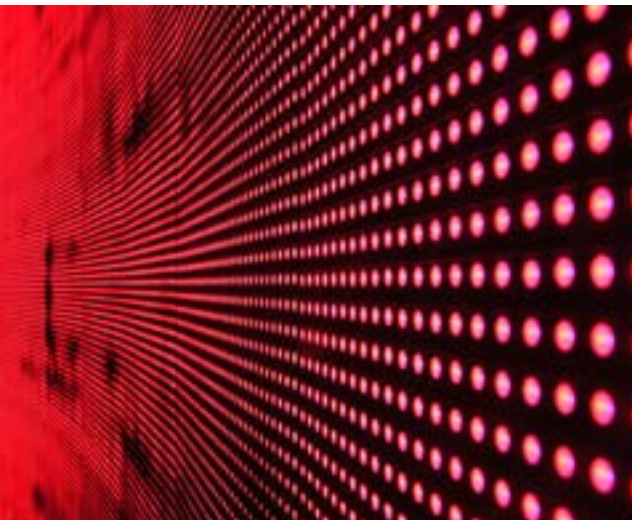
Background of Project:

The Research Unit builds upon the success and accomplishments of the previous projects, “3.11 as Crisis and Opportunity” and “Political Activism in Japan.” For these two projects we have accumulated more than 600 hours of digital oral narrative surrounding the triple disasters of 2011. While we are securing other funds to continue the data collection phase (see below), the ICC Research Unit funding has been vital to further the methodological understanding of this innovative approach into other fields of social sciences.

Goals and Purpose of the Research Unit:

Because we have already gathered a number of different types of data, from 3.11 survivors to Fukushima activists, from youth laborers to homeless older men, this proposal is designed to focus attention on the developing aspects of the method of digital social science as a generalized practice, with an emphasis on oral narrative.

This project thus focuses on three aspects.





1. The nature of the medium itself. Oral narrative is a relative older field, developed in folklore, history and community studies. Yet, this focus on the use of these methods to apply to contemporary ethnographic context is still very underdeveloped in any principled theoretical way. In the same way, while “digital humanities” is well known, digital social science is still a new and developing field. This focus here is both on the digital-enabled collection of data, but also on the ways that digitality has transformed the way we share, curate and represent our data through electronic means.



2. The use of these methods in the context of post 3.11 disaster. The range of projects of different types and different foci in the post 3.11 period has been impressive. While there has not been many efforts to bring these various efforts together, we will use this year to begin the dialogue.

3. Finally, we will seek to collaborate with the different “digital humanities” efforts, attempting to share the insights from these projects as we develop the more ethnographic trajectories.

Events and Activities from 2018

1. Outside funding:

- a. Sophia Joint research grant: Refugee Oral Narrative Research
- b. Kaken C Grant: Supporting Organization for Refugees in Japan
- c. Abe Foundation Grant: Comparative Research on Refugees: NYC and Tokyo

2. ICC Lecture series talks

- a. Cook and Cook, “The Ongoing History of ‘Japan at War: An Oral History’”
- b. Symposium on Intersections: Fan Studies in Conversation in Japan

3. Outside presentations

- a. Slater, Fulco and O’Day, “Voices of Tohoku: Service Learning” presented at the Digital Humanities Conference Japan
- b. O’Day and Fulco, “Oral Narrative as a Research Ethics,” presented at Hokkaido University
- c. Slater, Daiwa Foundation, London, UK, “Circuitous Path of Refugees to Tokyo”
- d. Slater, SOAS, London, UK, “Refugee Support in Japan”
- e. Slater, University of Sheffield, UK, “Digital Oral Narratives of Refugees”



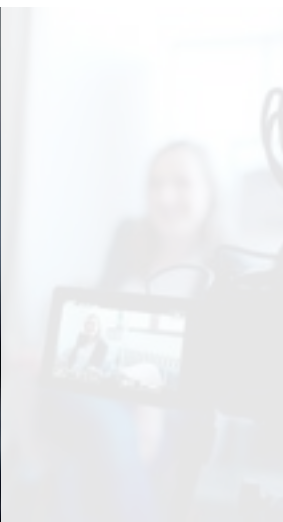


4. Publications,

- a. O'Day, Fulco and Slater, "Oral Narratives of Disaster" at the Journal of Digital Humanities (accepted for publication)
- b. Slater, O'Day and Fulco, "Oral Narrative Archive and Service Learning" in 23号巻頭特集「デジタルスカラーシップとデータの新しい形(仮)」.
- c. Slater, "Refugee Voices" accepted by Japan Focus, currently in rewrite.

5. Archival Work Completed

- a. Developed new website: Voices of Protest Japan (voicesofprotestjapan.org)
- b. Begin Oral Narratives of Homelessness in Japan project; 55 hours of recordings to date.
- c. Collected 150 hours of refugee interviews for "Refugee Voices Japan." Data collection in process.
- d. Refined the Voices from Tohoku (tohokukaranokoe.org)



Refugee boy in a green outfit image by Ahmed akacha via Pexels
(https://www.pexels.com/ja-jp/@ahmed-akacha-3313934?utm_content=attributionCopyText&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=pexels)

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