Moderating Reading and Readers Online

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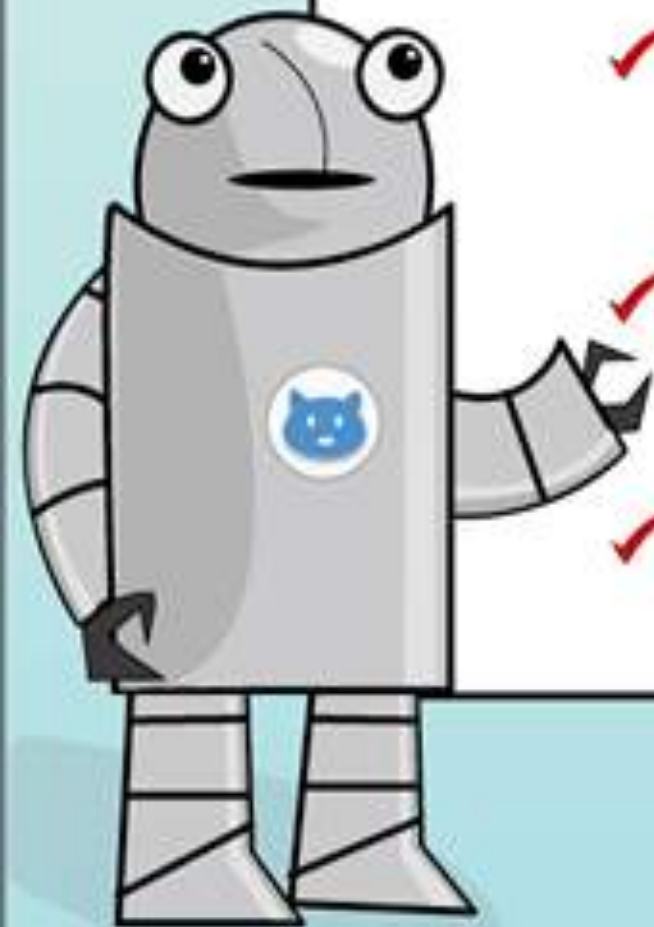
Role involves

- Curating
- Administration
- Leading/Providing Expertise (Goodreads)
- Energising
- Mediating
- Protecting

Scholarly Studies

Offline Book Groups

- Hartley (2001) - role of group leaders and authority figures in reading groups

- Collins (2010) lists means by which offline readers establish authority

- Boyarim (1993) – dominant members and 'informal processes of social control' (1993: 204)

- Allington and Benwell (2012) focus on 'social order' of book groups

Online communities/Fan studies

- Work on site management and rules e.g. Natasha Whiteman (2007) - mods maintain 'decorum'
- Barbara Fister (2005) - mods divide up tasks and share ownership
- Baym (1995) - adapting tech for their own purposes gives authority to endusers
- Wanner (2008) - endusers shape the site through purpose and content, vs mods who are largely invisible

Researching Readers Online (2012)

- Interviews with 4 mods
- 2 interviewed again in 2014 – Myretta Roberts (The Republic of Pemberley) and Sam Jordison (Guardian Online Reading Group)
- Network members contributed suggestions for questions

Power/Control

Encouraging Participation

Reading Spaces

- Concept of space may be defined by site design

- Sam - site has its own 'ecosystem' and is a 'cosy corner'

- Myretta referred to the site as 'cosy' and as 'home'

Online vs Offline

Issues raised

- Are online communities truly democratic?
- Mods help define online spaces and set tone for discussions
- But also have sense of moral/ethical responsibility
- Often financially and emotionally invested in sites
- Discussions and activities moving onto new platforms?

Methodological issues

DIGITAL DUALISM

online vs. offline
digital vs. analogue
virtual vs. physical

</dualism>
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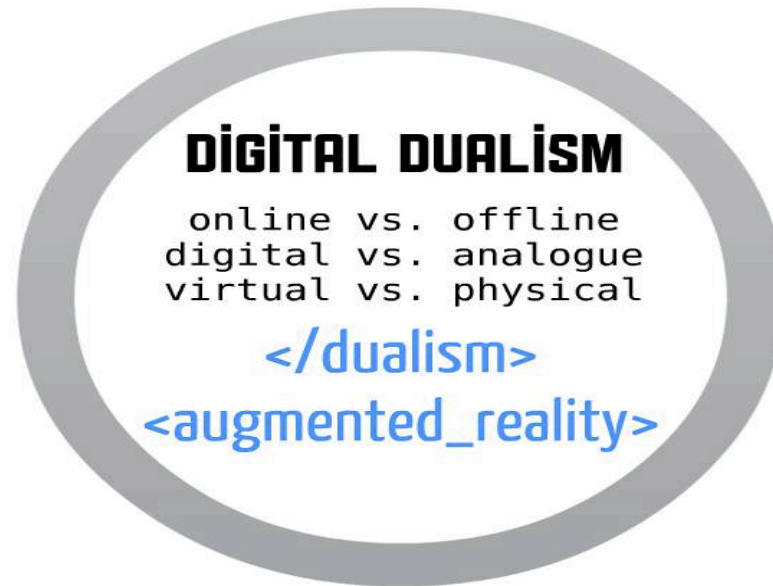
- But researchers also need to maintain distance and objectivity

References

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