

RESEARCHING INDIVIDUAL RELIGIOSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERNET¹

GERNOT MEIER

The exploration of (new) religious movements on the Internet is creating some tricky problems for Internet researchers. These problems concern to non-reactive and reactive² methods in data-retrieval systems, both in front of and beyond the screen. At the present time (IE 6X / Safari 1.2 / php5 / Flash 7.0.19, and so on), Internet researchers are continuing to design within these limits on both sides of the screen and they offer interesting and satisfactory results³. Nicola Döring demonstrates modern Internet research methods and a detailed analysis of new forms of design engineering. In this context, data mining⁴ and knowledge information obtained from databases are important, but copy research is still one of the most powerful tools:

Text analysis as a research and analysis procedure takes on a particular significance in online research since computer generated communication can be documented automatically and completely (word for word) and researchers can access the corresponding texts easily. Log file analysis, which is based on an automatic logging and evaluation of man-machine interaction (for example, calling up pages from the WWW), also becomes more important. Only relatively few net-specific *data evaluation methods* really exist, such as online mapping [...].⁵

In this context, Google-related methods can hopefully be of assistance.⁶ But there are some areas where collecting data is not the only problem. You can find processes of synchronization between Web sites in the way varied individual religiosity is displayed on the Internet, as well as the assimilation and incorporation of global events and some catalytic converter feedback effects on Web sites and movements.

¹ Sincere thanks are given to S. Trahasch, Research Assistant at the chair Algorithms & Datastructures at the University of Freiburg i. B. (<http://ad.informatik.uni-freiburg.de/~trahasch/>).

² See Bortz & Döring 2002, 325-326.

³ See Hu & Meng 2005, 491-498.

⁴ See Bortz & Döring 2002, 385-385.

⁵ Döring 2003, 243. Translation done by Carol Grugeon. "Der Textanalyse als Erhebungs- und Auswertungsverfahren kommt in der Online Forschung besondere Bedeutung zu, da computervermittelte Kommunikation automatisch und vollständig (wortwörtlich) dokumentierbar ist und entsprechende Texte für die Forschung leicht zugänglich sind. Daneben gewinnt die *Log-File-Analyse* an Bedeutung, die auf einer automatisierten Protokollierung und Auswertung von Mensch-Maschine-Interaktion basiert (z.B. Abruf von Seiten aus dem WWW). Tatsächlich existieren auch nur relativ wenige netzspezifische *Datenauswertungsmethoden*, wie etwa die Online-Kartographie [...]." To the recent field of research called „Internetkartographie“ (Internet cartography / Web cartography / Internet mapping) see Heinze 2004, 41-43.

⁶ See websites of TheBrain at <http://www.thebrain.com> and of TouchGraph LLC at <http://www.touchgraph.com/>.

It is difficult to deal with these problems and develop some sort of semantic dens network.⁷ Dynamic Web sites that are based in the Web and Deep Web RDF(S)⁸ increase this problem. In this case, the dynamic Web sites are one of the major problems. Way back in 2001, Patrick Rössler and Werner Wirth highlighted both the vital importance and the problems associated with dynamic Web sites:

In theory, there is a question as to whether the database behind Web presentations can still be understood as media provision. Because there is no longer a provision without concrete user interaction it is perhaps more accurate to speak about provision options. Whether these ever come to fruition, depends on whether at least one inquiry is made. In terms of pure communication the constructs of provision and use both come together here. It is probably not possible to achieve an all-encompassing solution to the dilemma but rather, in the future, we will have to define and conceptualize the provision idea for individual projects much more specifically than we have up to now⁹

It is now necessary to establish research methods that go beyond simple data collection and exploration. I would like to deal with these issues based on the Web sites of the “Freie Interessengemeinschaft für Grenz- und Geisteswissenschaften“(Free Community of Interests in Fringe and Spiritual Sciences and Ufological Studies) and the so-called “Ashtar Command” or rather “Ashtar-Command-Movement”.¹⁰

Both movements are part of special groups¹¹ that claim direct contact with extraterrestrials, where aliens play different roles. Some of the groups imagine that the aliens are instrumentally involved in the creation of mankind and the universe or that they are continuing to work toward this. Many of these groups interpret the aliens as messengers or signs of a new time. In some cases these messengers are characterized as demons or bringers of salvation. Others hope for a new creation of mankind in which aliens are significantly involved.¹² This progression or degression of mankind is possible as a transit, reproductive cloning or as a new world in which a new mankind takes place. In this field you often find the concept of the ‘Homo Novus’ – a term coined by A. Grünshloß¹³ – that describes a person

⁷ See Bernes-Lee 2004; Berendt & Hoto 2003, 1 – 22.

⁸ See Berend & Hotho 2003, 4.

⁹ Rössler & Wirth 2001, 283-284. Translation done by Carol Grugeon. “Theoretisch erhebt sich die Frage, ob hinter den Webpräsentationen stehenden Datenbanken überhaupt noch als mediales Angebot verstanden werden sollen. Da ein Angebot ohne konkrete Nutzerinteraktion überhaupt nicht mehr zustande kommt, sollte man vielleicht besser von Angebotsoptionen sprechen. Ob diese jemals realisiert werden, hängt davon ab, ob wenigstens eine einmalige Nachfrage gestellt wird. Kommunikationswissenschaftlich gesehen fallen hier die beiden Konstrukte Angebot und Nutzung zusammen. Eine prinzipielle Lösung des Dilemmas ist wohl nicht erreichbar; vielmehr wird man künftig projektspezifisch den Angebotsbegriff genauer als bisher definieren und konzeptionell berücksichtigen müssen.”

¹⁰ See Schmid 1998, 2001.

¹¹ Wharf 1997.

¹² Grünshloß 2000.

¹³ Grünshloß 2000, 14-18.

with new paranormal skills. Many of these groups have a „similar“ message: Aliens and people on earth have the same roots but differ in their evolution. Particular events on earth – such as the first nuclear explosion – caused aliens to want to get in contact with us to help us with the ascension.

Aliens, ascension, nuclear explosions, evolutionary scenarios, and many other factors build the Web background of groups and movements like the Ashtar Command and the FIGU Community.

The FIGU Community

The founder of the FIGU Community is Eduart Meier, known as Billy Meier¹⁴. He claims to communicate at regular intervals with aliens; they contacted him indirectly in his childhood and youth and later in a direct way. He has been travelling in different star ships over the past few years and has had individual courses of instruction from the aliens. He has therefore attained special powers and achieved extrasensory perception of his environment.

Billy Meier tells us, that the end is coming and that he is the last real and truthful prophet of this world, before the third burning of the world (*3. Weltenbrand*¹⁵) occurs. The only way to get out of this apocalypse is strict obedience of his instructions. These instructions impact every aspect of the community and the community itself is an example of the real way of life that exists on other planets. Some members of the community live in meat space near Zürich, Switzerland.

The FIGU Community's distribution of information, ideas and word-of-mouth advertising was very limited in its initial years. Literature was often typewritten and separately tacked. It had a potential world-wide distribution area through the postal service but this was often limited in reality to northern Switzerland and southern Germany. Billy Meier's publications are written in German and contain the special words and syntax of a specific local dialect.¹⁶ He claims that a code of evolution is integrated in his writings.¹⁷

Through the Internet and its potential, distribution channels have changed dramatically – and that goes for Billy Meier. The Web site contains links to different continents, including Japan. Whether people exist behind these links or not is a moot point, but it is more

¹⁴ See website of FIGU at http://www.figu.org/de/figu/billy_meier/billy_meier.htm, retrieved on: 08/25/05.

¹⁵ See Meier 2004.

¹⁶ See website of FIGU at <http://www.figu.org/de/figu/index.htm>, retrieved on: 03/26/05.

¹⁷ See Meier 1978.

interesting to consider the possibilities of digital data processing.¹⁸ These processes refer back to the affairs and normative statements of the community itself. Previous ways of legitimating were orientated on Billy Meier's original text and his written statements. Billy's normative statements could be legitimized on the basis of his forecasts for the near and distant future. According to Billy Meier's account, these forecasts are possible through "alien technology" and "mental alien education".

It is possible to observe a change after the Web sites appeared: the way the Internet and other Web sites with connections to extraterrestrials are structured cause an effect that radically changes the presentation methods. The first Web sites looked like advanced texts. But now pictures, sounds and videos¹⁹ form the basic elements. This multimedia information is a major attraction for users and is now reflected by the community. Hans Georg Lanzendorfer, a member of this community, characterizes this process as changing the audience it attracts:

Just a few years ago, visitors used to come to the center in Hinterschmidrüti on Sundays to ask questions, discuss issues and express their opinions. Hinterschmidrüti is quite isolated so then, as now, people only really took the trouble to come to the center if they were really interested in tackling the issues. That went for critics and supporters – and unfortunately also for group members, etc.

The Internet has fundamentally changed this. Internet visitors have become more impersonal. They hide themselves behind anonymity, IP numbers, synonyms, facelessness and lack of commitment. For many people it has become much easier to voice loud and prejudiced criticism in a covert, nameless and anonymous manner.

The Internet is all about consumption. It offers a glut of information that no one basically needs. It also opens the door to many surfers on topics that they have barely considered before. It often seems to me that «Billy» Meier (BEAM) and his contacts to the "*plejarischen Föderation*" have become nothing more than a sensation for many surfing the Internet. It often just seems to a case of satisfying a sensationalist need that lasts a few mouse clicks. The Internet statistics from our Homepage show that clearly. It is mostly the UFO pictures that are viewed and downloaded. The spiritual teaching or background information is of little if any interest.²⁰

¹⁸ See website of FIGU at <http://www.figu.org/de/figu/index.htm>, access: 26.03.05.

¹⁹ See website of FIGU at <http://www.figu.org/de/ufologie/index.htm>, dated on 01/2004, retrieved on 03/21/05.

²⁰ See Lanzendorfer 2003. Translation done by Carol Grugeon. „Noch vor wenigen Jahren kamen die Besucher am Sonntag ins Center nach Hinterschmidrüti, um ihre Fragen zu stellen, vor Ort zu diskutieren und ihre Meinung zu äußern. Hinterschmidrüti liegt ziemlich abgelegen und daher bemühten oder bemühen sich in der Regel auch nur Menschen ins Center, die sich in irgendeiner Form wirklich mit der Sache befassten und auseinandersetzten – so auch Kritiker/-innen wie auch Befürworter/-innen, und leider auch Sektenangehörige usw. Dies hat sich durch das Internet grundlegend geändert. Die Besucherinnen und Besucher im Internet sind unpersönlicher geworden. Sie verbergen sich hinter Anonymität, IP-Nummern, Synonymen, Gesichtslosigkeit und Unverbindlichkeit. Für viele ist es im Verborgenen, im Namenlosen und Unerkannten sehr viel einfacher geworden, lauthals und voreingenommen zu kritisieren. Das Internet ist Konsum, bietet eine Überfülle von Informationen, die im Grunde genommen niemand braucht. Es öffnet vielen ‚Surferinnen‘ und ‚Surfern‘ auch Tür und Tor zu Themen, worüber sie sich früher kaum Gedanken machten. ‚Billy‘ Meier (BEAM) und seine Kontakte zur plejarischen Föderation – so scheint es mir oft – ist für viele im Internet lediglich zur reinen ‚Surfsensation‘ geworden. Vielfach geht es scheinbar einfach nur darum, für die Dauer einiger Mausclicks die eigene Sensationsgier zu befriedigen. Die Internet-Statistik unserer Homepage zeigt es deutlich. Es werden vor

This statement shows the interdependency between the community and nearly medial-autonomous Web sites. Intrasystem we can also see some sort of criticism at the Internet.

In researching new religious movements on the Internet the FIGU-Community is a good example for a community in the Internet with a good contour, hierarchical web presentation and excellent possibilities for offline and online research. Inside a Google-related detached representation of the key structure of the Web sites, we can establish that this community is active within the World Wide Web – in all probability initiated by its users – as a rather singular community. But in the case of Billy Meier it is possible to see also three evident problems:

1. There is no official Internet database from previous Websites – it is not possible to compare previous information and websites.²¹
2. The copyright information on the website prohibits specifically any use of information – also the use of text or the html-code.
3. This means that some types of scientific traceability are not possible.

These problems are major constraints to general Internet research²² – but there are some data sources that are specific to one special group. In addition to these problems, the way movements like the Ashtar Command are presented on the Internet pose another host of difficulties.

The Ashtar Command Movement

The Ashtar Command believe in extrasensory perception but here is not restricted to one person – it is available to the whole world. This is one of the most important differences between the FIGU Community and the Ashtar Command Movement. Some Ashtar Command members believe that the earth will gradually develop. In the course of time, when many people have joined the “movement of light workers”, the earth will take a jump to the next level.²³

The Ashtar Command Movement itself cannot be qualified in conventional ways by an important book or a founder. There have been some attempts try to specify the Ashtar

allem die UFO-Bilder angeschaut und heruntergeladen. Die Geisteslehre oder die Hintergrundinformationen interessieren kaum bis wenig.“

²¹ The services of <http://www.archive.org> give only rudimentarily hints and is good but a single rereader.

²² See Beck 2003.

²³ See <http://www.ashtar.de/> it is not possible to verify exactly the author, in all likelihood: Ammon, E.-M. (see <http://www.sananda-net.de/impressum.htm>), retrieved on 03/16/05.

Command Movement in this “old way”.²⁴ But finally the dynamics of this movement and the Internet overtakes them.

Back in the early days of the Internet it was very easy to analyze Web site meta tags to see in which religious sphere the designer wanted the Web site to be found.²⁵ But the system has developed.²⁶ On the technical side, the construction of Ashtar Command web pages can be seen as a map of links, keywords and iconography. Hyperlinks and keywords provide an integrative net structure and function as lighthouses on the Internet ocean, offering guidance through the stormy seas of its roads and frameworks. Not only have search strategies and search machines changed: presentation methods have also developed. We can now see ongoing dynamic synchronization processes between the individually designed Web sites of the Ashtar Command Movement. These Web sites absorb and assimilate some structural characteristics – such as pictures, icons or links – in an active way. Some Web sites put them in new contexts, only for them to be snatched from there into even more up-to-date settings. The Ashtar Command Web sites produce processes of synchronization and assimilation. They also promote some sort of cohesion between very different Web sites. In this context – and as a result of the Web page design – pictures, iconography and keywords are extremely important.

The iconography on the Ashtar Command Movement Web sites²⁷ is directed toward active integration with other groups with aliens and UFOs. However, it is not just the iconography that provides typology. Some dynamic structure characteristics appear in many Web pages and these are reflected in the source code. In many web pages and their reflection in the source code some dynamic structure characteristics appear. A few elements appear more regularly²⁸ and these elements are often displayed in Web sites that are partly inside an authority system.²⁹

The websites integrate information on George Van Tassel, Kenneth Arnold, Orfeo M. Angelucci³⁰ or other “founders”,³¹ of the UFO-Contactee Movement, usually using both

²⁴ See Grünschloß 2000; Schmid 2001. Grünschloß supports a great mirror of some Ashtar Command Websites from 1997!

²⁵ See Reiser 2005; Nickol 2003.

²⁶ See Hochreutner 2005.

²⁷ A colourful web page with the topic in the headline (Ashtar Command Movement and Star Trek) is: <http://www.starchild.de/Medien/Kiener/211096k1.htm>. See Whittington 1997.

²⁸ See Rösseler & Wirth 2001, 291-293.

²⁹ On the discussion and the comparison of the term “authority system” compare such as: Collins 2004.

³⁰ See Angelucci 1983.

³¹ See Schaefer 2000, 549.

iconography³², texts³³ and links. To be a contactee³⁴ and to undertake channeling usually involves two elements:

1. Information from the aliens, the Ascendent Masters or other beings from outer space. This information is not only available for some special group but is in the public domain.
2. Channeling is a genetic term that appears in many individual religious Web sites. Channeling within the Ashtar Command sometimes includes special details (such as the form of address, name of the alien, sequence of the channeling, and end sequence). These characteristics, however, seem to be constitutive for the process of legitimization:

Integration and uptake in other Web sites only seems possible with this special structure. Some Web sites stress the importance of being a member of an “**outside team**” sometimes known as the light workers³⁵ – this occurs mostly when the members recognize themselves as an incarnated extraterrestrial or an Ascended Master. These Web sites mostly reject forms of **abduction**. They contend that the world will **develop**³⁶ and will reach an **ascension**.³⁷ The reception of the concept of progression seems to be an additional clue to the important connection between the Web site and the development of the Ashtar Command Movement.

By observing numerous Web sites, it becomes clear that a large number of people are influencing this development. As far as I can see, there is no data on single individuals who try to monopolize this central function of the community. These terms (outside team, ascension, etc.) stand in direct coherence with some pictures inside the Web sites.³⁸

However, the whole community is largely created by the common use of these structural elements. It seems possible that these structural characteristics really create a web community with a special group dynamic that follows completely new rules. Until now, such world-wide establishment of special structures was only said to be possible over very long time periods. But the structures of these new religious movements, especially on the basis of the fast-growing Internet, change rapidly today. I consider the Ashtar Command Movement a preliminary model for religious movements and their communication on the Internet.

But this example highlights some special problems in addition to those considered in connection with the FIGU Community: The Ashtar Command Movement has a fluid structure

³² See Tuella 1985.

³³ Many web pages pick these topics up e.g.: Hähnelt 2004.

³⁴ See *Die Meisterlehren* at website of the *Golden Light Fleet* at <http://www.goldenlightfleet.com/wordpress/index.php?p=84&page=1>.

³⁵ See Star 2003.

³⁶ See website of *Die Sananda-Connection* at <http://www.andreana.de/Sananda-Con1.htm>.

³⁷ See forum *Dreams of Light* at <http://www.dream-of-lights.de/modules.php?op=modload&name=eBoard&file=viewthread&tid=2619>, retrieved on 03/26/05.

³⁸ See for instance http://www.bethedream.net/AshtarCommand/you_might_ask.htm, http://www.luisprada.com/Protected/the_ashtar_command.htm, <http://users.sdccu.net/alahoy/ashtar.jpg>, <http://lumieresdelaudela.com/images/portraits/ashtar1.jpg>.

that is now evident on the Internet. Internet research let us assume that most religious communities and movements are fluid even if they are not only Internet based. It is not possible to draw exact borders or to collect data in a “normal way” and it is completely unexplored in which ways aforementioned authority systems are working. The fluctuation and sometimes the very short duration of Web sites often makes it impossible to gain little more than a temporary screenshot.

Furthermore, it is not possible to get any information from the author or the people in the background, because dynamic Web sites have “no” designer – only digital data processing. If we start with the diagnostic findings, the Ashtar Command Movement Web sites do not grab “all” forms, icons or information from the Web background of the UFO Cluster. For example, there is barely any mutual reception between the Ashtar Command Movement and the so-called “Raelians”.³⁹ That means that the researcher has a starting point. The afore-mentioned elements can be seen as **integrative characteristics**. It is now possible to describe and analyze new religious movements, like the Ashtar Command Movement, using the criteria of the integrative characteristics of the structure elements. With this first step it is possible to get a starting point to categorize the Web sites and their religious movements and even to analyse the detailed contexts. Separate aspects within these movements, like forecasting the future or the function of rituals, can be analyzed without neglecting the whole context of the movement and without having to refer to an insecure base of data.⁴⁰

In exploring the Web sites from the Ashtar Command Movement it is not unusual to encounter new multicollinearity elements but it is necessary to reduce data and redundancy to narrow the data down.

In addition to these problems, there are dynamic Web sites with sources in the (deep) deep web that make it possible for a particular Web site to be built only once as a result of the user and researcher interaction. Similarly this databases and sources like “crafted” Web sites use typical elements in a dynamic way and build them up. An impression of this dynamic and the use of typical elements can be shown with the above-named Google-related computer programs.

The numerous connections between the Web sites are not just part of the dynamic of absorbing data, icons and typology; other dynamic typologies are at play here. One example is the link structure, which is significant for the communication and the “**texture**” of the Ashtar

³⁹ See website of the Raelian Movement, <http://www.rael.org/>.

⁴⁰ But on the methodical side these configuration elements give only hints – it is not possible to say: Ok, I have classified “x” configuration elements – and if a website reaches 80% of them – then this website belongs now and ever to the Ashtar Command Movement. This is not possible, because the websites are in dynamic process and generate time and again new important topics.

Command Movement. As an amplification of the integrative characteristics towards a more open system the term “liquid threads” characterises the ongoing processes in the Ashtar Command Movement.⁴¹ Most of the web pages build “liquid threads” inside the movement and these are executed on the Internet. From my point of view, the term “liquid threads” has the advantage of describing the fusion of the structural identity of Web sites and a dynamic “typology”.⁴² This term can be a bridge to integrate the multicollinearity and the dynamic of Web sites.

Next Generations

Internet researchers are confronted with the problem that new technology sometimes calls for new research methods. Within the Internet it is necessary to reflect the methods in the space of the new communication and computer technology. Information and data retrieval⁴³ of authors and users (including automated systems) depend on “models of representation”. Modification and use create a development of these (religious) systems in addition to feedback converter effects. The next generation of methods to manage this confusion will be the spinning of semantic nets⁴⁴ over the word wired web. The ISO standard 13250 is a further step toward managing data:

The present day full-text search can provoke unbridled rage or deep resignation in expectant users, depending on their temperament. The first tool in eliminating this problem is undoubtedly XML, whose job it is to structure documents and confer particular significance to particular sections using individual and freely definable element names. The real problem, however, lies a lot deeper. XML is also not suitable for queries like "bring me all the biographies of artists who were friendly with Johann Sebastian Bach". The ISO standard 13250 on topic maps adopted in late fall 1999 could

⁴¹ The important article from Daniela Ahrens and her remarks on the term *relationales Raumverständnis* (relational understanding of space) and the Internet: “Contrary to the differentiation between virtual and real, a relational understanding of space emphasizes the relevance of the network without linking the network idea to technology alone. As a result, it is no longer possible to determine in advance whether the local port is the place from which abstract, distant space is understood and interpreted, or whether the Internet “discovers” the local port. This is only decided in relationing. Online and offline, here and there, lose their explicit anchoring in space and appear as independent marked areas. Outside is not thought of as the undetermined but as the outside through which the inside that one creates is generated. Creating references and links and defining and protecting specific space and perspectives requires a large amount of (communication) work. In contrast to the modern container space, space is no longer thought of as a basic requirement but as a construction that is closely interwoven with every type of interaction and communication.” Translation done by Carol Gruegon. Ahrens 2004, 175.

⁴² The term **liquid threads** enables as well the researchfield of the blogshere in a new way. Möller 2005, 115-158.

⁴³ See some new ways e.g. Byun & Choi & Lee 2005, 218-227.

⁴⁴ See concerning the Dynamic Semantic Web Kaehr 2004.

provide a solution to this. The idea is not to change existing Web sites and documents but rather to create an external view of these documents – the topic maps. A topic can be anything – every thing, every topic, every person, every word. And yet documents have to provide information on topics [...] The standard also provides the option of integrating a network of associations. "Toccatina was composed by Bach" would be an example of this. The option to search for associations like this and their characteristics and the navigation within these knowledge structures provides Internet users who are weary of full-text searches with a new tool: the intelligent search machine.⁴⁵

The next technical generation in the world wired web is likely to be the Semantic Web – and this will change everything again, not only on the technical side. . It will only be a short time until it is necessary for Internet researchers to generate intelligent search agents as one of their research tools. These tools will be necessary within the Internet to “characterise” movements like the Ashtar Command and they will need to be designed in a way that is not static and pre-determined. In this case, liquid threads can be an important building block for instance to show interdependencies between Blogs and Websites⁴⁶. The way these tools are designed and used must be reflected by a new range of duties. Analytical investigation and technical design will be closely related in the next generation of research into individual religiosity.

The major problem related to these methods and the semantic web is a problem we have already outlined, namely scientific traceability. For traceability, online publications with access to the explored databases is essential. Until then, it is not quite clear how these new methods displace “ancient” methods like quantitative and qualitative analysis, but in my view they will refer to each other to produce great new designs.

⁴⁵ Widhalm & Mück 2002, 2. Translation done by Carol Grugeon. “Die Volltext-Suche der Gegenwart mag erwartungsvolle Benutzer je nach Naturell in unbeherrschbare Wutanfälle oder tiefste Resignation treiben. Ein erstes Werkzeug zur Behebung dieser Problematik ist unzweifelhaft XML, dessen Aufgabe ist es, Dokumente zu strukturieren und einzelnen Abschnitten durch eigene, frei definierbare Elementnamen besondere Bedeutung zu verleihen. Das eigentliche Problem liegt jedoch wesentlich tiefer. Für Abfragen der Art „bringe mit alle Biographien von Künstlern, die mit Johann Sebastian Bach befreundet waren“ ist auch XML nicht geeignet. Der im Spätherbst 1999 verabschiedete ISO-Standard 13250 über Topic Maps könnte dazu eine Lösung anbieten. Die Idee dahinter ist, dass bestehende Web-Seiten und Dokumente nicht verändert werden, es wird vielmehr eine externe Sicht auf diese Dokumente, die Topic Maps, erstellt. Ein Topic kann an sich alles sein, jeder Gegenstand, jedes Thema, jede Person, jedes Wort. Dokumente haben dabei die Aufgabe, Informationen über Topics bereitzustellen. [...] Der Standard bietet auch die Möglichkeit, die Topics in einem Netz von Assoziationen einzubinden. ‘Toccatina wurde komponiert von Bach’ wäre ein Beispiel dafür. Durch die mögliche Suche nach solchen Assoziationen und ihren Eigenschaften und die Navigation innerhalb dieser Wissensstrukturen entsteht für volltextsuchgeschädigte Internet-Nutzer ein neues Instrument: die intelligenten Suchmaschine.”

⁴⁶ Karger & Quan 2005, 214 – 228.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahrens, Daniela (2004): "Internet, Nicht-Orte und die Mikrophysik des Ortes." In: Alexandra Budke & Detlev Kanwischer & Andreas Pott (Hrsg.): *Internetgeographien, Beobachtungen zum Verhältnis von Internet, Raum und Gesellschaft*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 163-177.
- Angelucci, Orfeo M. (²1983): *Geheimnis der Untertassen*. Wiesbaden: Ventla-Verlag.
- Beck, Klaus (2003): "Neue Medien – neue Theorien? Klassische Kommunikations- und Medienkonzepte im Umbruch." In: Martin Löffelholz & Thorsten Quandt (Hrsg.): *Die neue Kommunikationswissenschaft*. Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 71-87.
- Berendt, Bettina & Andreas Hotho & Dunja Mladenic (2003): "A Roadmap for Web Mining." In: Bettina Berendt, & Andreas Hotho & Dunja Mladenic et. al. (Eds.): *Web Mining: From Web to Semantic Web*. Berlin: Springer, 1 – 22.
- Bortz, Jürgen & Nicola Döring (³2002): *Forschungsmethoden und Evaluation für Human- und Sozialwissenschaftler*. Berlin: Springer.
- Byun, Young-Tae & Choi, Young-Ho & Lee, Kee-Cheol (2005): "Automatic Generation and Use of Negative Terms to Evaluate Topic-Related Web Pages." In: Shinji Shimono & Shingo Ichii & Tok Wang Ling & Kwan-Ho Song (Eds.): *Web Communication Technologies and Internet-Related Social Issues – HIS 2005*. Berlin: Springer, 218 – 227.
- Collins, Gord (2004): *Google Soon to Drop Yahoo and ODP Directories?* Retrieved from: <http://www.seoconsultants.com/articles/1383/google.asp>, retrieved on 03/26/05.
- Döring, Nicola (²2003): *Sozialpsychologie des Internet*. Göttingen: Hogreve.
- Frauenfelder, Mark (2004): „Das Unvollendete.“ In: *Technology* 11/2004. Retrieved from <http://www.heise.de/tr/artikel/52516>.
- Grünschloß, Andreas (2000): *Wenn die Götter landen ... , Religiöse Dimensionen des UFO-Glaubens*. (EZW-Texte 135). Berlin: EZW.
- Hähnelt, Andreas (2004): "Tassel, der Weise." Retrieved from: <http://www.fore4all.de/ufos/ufokontakte/tasselderweise.html>, retrieved on 03/22/05.
- Heinze, Inga (2004): "Methoden und Anwendungsgebiete der Internetkartographie." In: Alexandra Budke & Detlev Kanwischer & Andreas Pott (Hrsg.): *Internetgeographie., Beobachtungen zum Verhältnis von Internet, Raum und Gesellschaft*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 41 - 55.
- Hochreutner, Hanspeter (2005) (project director): "Suchstrategien im Internet." Retrieved from: http://oec-kompass.zhwin.ch/vorgehen/suchstrategien_Internet.htm, retrieved on: 03/26/05.
- Hu, Wenbin & Bo Meng (2005): "Design an Implementation of Web Mining System Based on Multi-agent." In: Xue Li & Shuliang Wang & Zhao Yang Dong (Eds.): *Advanced Data Mining and Applications*, Berlin: Springer, 491 - 498.
- Karger, David R. & Quan, Dennis (2004): "What Would It Mean to Blog on the Semantic Web?" In: Sheila A. McIlraith & Dimitris Plexousakis & Fank van Harmelen (Eds.): *The Semantic Web – ISWC 2004*, Berlin: Springer, 214 – 228.

- Lanzendorfer, Hans Georg (2003): „15 Jahre Mitgliedschaft im Verein FIGU oder Persönlicher Rückblick auf eine bewegte Zeit.“ Retrieved from: <http://www.figu.org/de/figu/bulletin/37/mitgliedschaft.htm>, retrieved on 03/16/05.
- Meier, Billy E. (1978): *Existententes Leben im Universum*. Hinterschmidrüti: Wassermannzeit-Verlag.
- Meier, Billy (2003): “Freie Interessengemeinschaft für Grenz- und Geisteswissenschaften und Ufologiestudien.” Semjase-Silver-Star-Center. Retrieved from: http://www.figu.org/de/figu/billy_meier/billy_meier.htm, retrieved on: 03/16/05.
- Meier, Billy (2004): “Weltkrieg – Weltenbrand.” Retrieved from: <http://www.figu.org/de/figu/bulletin/s13/weltenbrand.htm>, retrieved on 22.03.05.
- Möller, Erik (2005): *Die heimliche Medienrevolution – Wie Weblogs, Wikis und freie Software die Welt verändern*. Hannover: Heise.
- Nickol, Knut (2003): “Tipps für Autoren von Webseiten.” Retrieved from: http://www.kreativland.de/tipps/tag_info/tagtips5.htm, retrieved on 26.03.05.
- Reiser, David (2005): “Metatags.” Retrieved from: <http://suchmaschinenweb.de/index.php/Metatags>, retrieved on: 03/26/05.
- Rösseler, Patrick & Werner Wirth (2001): “Inhaltsanalysen im World Wide Web.” In: Wirth & Lauf 2001, 280 - 302.
- Schaefer, M. (2000): “UFO.”, In: Christoph Auffarth & Hubert Mohr, *Metzler Lexikon Religion*, Bd. 3. Stuttgart 2000, 549.
- Schmid, Georg (1998): “Ashtar Command Einführung.” Retrieved from: <http://www.relinfo.ch/ashtar/info.html>, retrieved on 03/16/05.
- Schmid, Georg (2001): “F.I.G.U. Billy Meier.” Retrieved from: <http://www.relinfo.ch/figu/info.html>, retrieved on 03/16/05.
- Star, August (2003): “Lightworkers: Update 2003 ‘What is my Mission?’” Retrieved from: <http://www.star-esseenia.org/articles/7%20Lightworkers%20Update%202003.html>, retrieved on 03/16/05.
- Tuella (1985): *Projekt Welt-Evakuierung gegeben vom Ashtar Kommando*. Saxeten: Utzinger.
- Wharf, Jodi, L. (1997): “UFO Cults.” Retrieved from: <http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/ufos.html>, Soc 257: New Religious Movements Spring Term, University of Virginia, date 1997, retrieved on 03/16/05.
- Whittington, Dave (1997): “Browser Survey at Clyde Virtual University.” Retrieved from: <http://cvu.strath.ac.uk/admin/cvudocs/browser-survey.html>, retrieved on 03/26/05.
- Widhalm, Richard & Mück, Thomas (2002): *Topic Maps*, Berlin: Springer.
- Wirth, Werner & Edmund Lauf (Hrsg.): *Inhaltsanalyse: Perspektiven, Probleme, Potentiale*, Köln: Halem.

REFERRED WEBSITES

Website of *Ashtar Command*. Retrieved on 03/28/05, from: <http://ashtar.galactic.to/>.

Website of *Ashtar.de* . Retrieved on 03/16/05, from <http://www.ashtar.de/>.

Brother Veritus' Website. Retrieved on 03/26/05, from:

http://www.luisprada.com/Protected/the_ashtar_command.htm .

Website of *Die Sananda Connection*. Domain Holder: Andreana deNero, Germany. Retrieved on 03/22/05, from: <http://www.andreana.de/Sananda-Con1.htm>.

Website of *Be the Dream*. Retrieved on 03/26/05, from:

http://www.bethedream.net/AshtarCommand/you_might_ask.htm .

Website of *FIGU*. Retrieved on 03/21/05, from: <http://www.figu.org/de/ufologie/index.htm> .

Website of *Golden Light Fleet*. Retrieved on 03/22/05, from:

<http://www.goldenlightfleet.com/wordpress/index.php?p=84&page=1> .

Website of *Raël*. Retrieved on 03/26/05, from: <http://www.rael.org/> .

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Dr. GERNOT MEIER is Assistant Professor for the Study of Religion at the Institute for the Study of Religion at Heidelberg University, Germany. His main areas of research and teaching are related to contemporary religion, pedagogy of religion and religion on the Internet. He is the author of “*Und die Götter landen immer ... “ Zukunftsprognostik in neureligiösen Ufo-Bewegungen im Medium Internet* (Heidelberg 2005).

Address: Dr. Gernot Meier
Institut für Religionswissenschaft
Universität Heidelberg
Akademiestr. 4-8
69117 Heidelberg
Germany

E-Mail: Gernot.Meier@urz.uni-heidelberg.de
Phone: 0049-6221-547682