The Digital Notebook: a method for the rapid processing of elicited data

Richard T. Griscom, rgriscom@uoregon.edu
Manuel A. Otero, motero@uoregon.edu
University of Oregon

Background

The Digital Notebook Method streamlines the linguistic elicitation session, employing automated and semi-automated processing without the need of high-level programming skills. Through this method, the data are entered digitally, not in a physical notebook, and the output can be immediately incorporated into a database and is ready for archiving.

4 Stages of the Digital Notebook Method

1. Preparation

- Make a plan for your elicitation session and the type of data you hope to collect
- Create a session folder and session-specific elicitation spreadsheet.

2. Elicitation

- Work with a speaker to create transcriptions and add metadata into the elicitation spreadsheet.

3. Recording

- Using the elicitation spreadsheet as a foundation, create a recording spreadsheet that is designed specifically for the recording session.
- Ask the speaker to practice repeating elicited items multiple times and/or pausing between elicited items.
- Create a recording of the speaker producing all of the items in the recording spreadsheet in the same order in which they appear in the spreadsheet, with no discussion or other metalinguistic information in the recording.

4. Processing

- Backup your recordings on multiple storage devices and optionally cloud storage.
- Using Praat, open your recording and automatically segment the audio by using Annotate → To TextGrid (silences)…
- Run the Digital Notebook Data Merger program to create time-aligned annotations in .EAF, .TextGrid, and .TXT formats.

How does it work?

- **Text data is digital from start to finish** - There is no need to digitize your notes, because they are already digital to begin with!

- **Recording sessions are structured -** By training the speaker and recording only elicited data, you make a recording that is consistent and accessible.

- **Software is utilized for automated processing** - Using Praat and the Digital Notebook Data Merger, you don't need to manually segment your audio or reformat your data - let the computer do it for you!

Resources

- **Digital Notebook Method Wiki:** https://tinyurl.com/DigitalNotebookWiki
  The Wiki contains links to all documentation and resources for the method.

- **Video demonstration:** https://youtu.be/NzCEfEZK4fw
  A video demonstration of the data processing stage of the method.

- **Digital Notebook Data Merger:** https://tinyurl.com/DigitalNotebookDataMerger
  The program used in the Digital Notebook Method to combine text and timecode data and output in .EAF, .TextGrid, and .TXT formats.