

On-line Collections of Digital Audio as a Research Resource for the History of Economics

Researchers:

- D Donald, Principal Investigator (UK) for Spoken Word Services, Glasgow Caledonian University, Senior Research Fellow of SCEME
- A Hutton, Glasgow Caledonian Business School; Senior Research Fellow of SCEME
- M Klaes, School of Economic and Management Studies, Keele University, Senior Research Fellow of SCEME
- Professor A C Dow, Glasgow Caledonian Business School; Senior Research Fellow of SCEME
- Professor S C Dow, Department of Economics, University of Stirling; Director of SCEME

Developments in web-based technology can now enable easy access for researchers to a rich vein of audio materials which in the past have been little exploited. This project is designed to undertake the initial research necessary for the establishment of a web-based collection of audio resources of relevance to scholars in the history of economics. This research will also establish the basis of a plan for the longer-term development and maintenance of such a collection, a project which will require further substantial funding. The work draws significantly upon the experience of The Spoken Word Project. Part of the jointly funded Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) National Science Foundation programme, Digital Libraries in the Classroom. That project aims to transform higher education through the integration of digitised audio into learning and teaching. At Glasgow Caledonian University, a substantial portion of the BBC's radio archive is being made accessible online for educational use (over 500 hours so far).

As well as making digitized audio accessible, the Spoken Word Project aim is enhancing the usability of streamed audio resources. In collaboration with partners, Michigan State University and Northwestern University, a set of software tools are being developed that will allow students and teachers to locate, segment, annotate and organise audio - and share and discuss their findings with a community of users. This model can be modified and directed towards use in research and scholarship and our project will allow us to begin to apply the approach in one field of scholarship.

Thus, in the context of growing debates over the future of 'scholarly communication', and of the need for more immediate sharing of research data amongst scholars, this project will offer the possibility of a readily accessible resource for scholars working on the history of economics, as well as a model for the sharing of 'research data' in the form of broadcast or other audio materials.

The work will not only give scholars in the history of economics entry to a community of practice in the use of audio resources, but will, more generally, provide a demonstration of approaches and tools which might be transferable into other fields of scholarship.