

Annual Report 2024

BærUt! Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network and Skills Hub

Activities

Seminars

Seminars are activities where network members engage in academic discussions about a specific topic of interest. They usually include long and short paper presentations followed by moderated discussions. Abstracts must be submitted for review, and the seminar organisers review and provide feedback on them. The target audience for seminars is primarily network members, but they are also open to external participants. Registration is required for presenters and participants.

Date	Title	Nodes	Organisers	Participants*
2024-02-01	Launch Seminar	All	BærUt! team	22
2024-04-09	404 Not Found. Approaches to Sustainable Editions	Digital Editions and Philology	BærUt! team	20

Keynotes

Keynotes are alone-standing talks by invited experts. They are usually 45 minutes, followed by 15 minutes for questions and discussion. The target audience for keynotes is generally broader than the network. Keynotes are always public, and registration is not required to participate.

Date	Title	Nodes	Organisers	Participants*
2024-09-23	Recognising Astrid Lindgren's Shorthand Manuscripts	Automatic Text Recognition	BærUt! team	15
2024-11-18	SAMLA –digitalisering og masstranskribering av håndskrevet arkivmateriale	Automatic Text Recognition	BærUt! team	20

Workshops

Workshops are generally hands-on activities to develop, expand and share specific skills. They are centred around a specific tool, software, programming language, data modelling technique or encoding practice. They are technical in nature; however, they are aimed mainly at academics with some technical skills. At the same time, they are useful for technical staff, academic and administrative staff working in research support and methods partnerships. The target audience for workshops is the network and research support units at the IT Department, HumIT, and the University Library's Dept. for Digital Services, including the Digital Scholarship Center and the Digital Research Methods team at the Sections for Research Support.

Date	Title	Nodes	Organisers	Participants*
2024-01-09	Automatic Text Recognition for Historical Documents	Automatic Text Recognition	DSC BærUt! team	31
2024-05-13	CIDOC CRM Workshop	Databases	Elisabeth Maria Magin/KHM BærUt! team	9
2024-09-24	Ditching Transkribus: Local Automatic Text Recognition with Loghi	Automatic Text Recognition	Raphaela Heil/University of Uppsala BærUt! team	4
2024-09-24	Getting Started with Handwritten Text Recognition in PyTorch (Python)	Automatic Text Recognition	Raphaela Heil/University of Uppsala BærUt! team	10
2024-12-20	Getting Started with XSLT	XML	Alessandro Palumbo/Federico Aurora	13 + 3 course leaders

*Participation

For 2024, we have only tracked *registered* participants. That means the number of participants recorded is only the number who registered for each activity. It does not reflect deregistrations, no-shows, or participants who showed up without registration.

For the next year, we will conduct a headcount for every activity to determine its actual reach.

A general observation for events, particularly workshops, is a 10-15% no-show/deregistration rate. We have observed the same phenomenon with other activities, e.g., those by the Digital Scholarship Center and the Carpentry@UiO network.

Networking

Since March 2024, BærUt! hosts monthly network meetings. These meetings are low-threshold activities over lunchtime (11:00-12:30), where network members meet each other and the BærUt! team. From September onwards, we have a short, informal talk by a network member as a point of departure for discussion. At the beginning of each meeting, PL Annika Rockenberger gives a brief overview of the network activities and other relevant information.

Network meetings and most other activities are held in the Humanities and Social Sciences Library. We use the room “DSC Oasen”, designated for activities by and for digital methods and skills training and research support. DSC Oasen is the physical “Hub” of the BærUt! network.

Registration for network meetings is optional; we want members and other interested persons to be able to join us ad hoc. Usually, 5–10 participants are present. We hope to increase the number of participants by adding a short, informal talk and simultaneously stimulating discussion. This has so far been a successful initiative.

Unlike our other activities, invitations to network meetings are sent via Outlook well in advance. This practical measure has increased participation.

Date	Short Presentation
2024-12-03	Katherine Boss (NB): Preserving Digital Projects with ReproZip-Web
2024-11-12	Jens Erlend Braarvig (NFI/IKOS): Critical Editions and the Bibliotheca Polyglotta
2024-10-08	Mina Monier (MF): MF Lab for Virtual Manuscript Studies
2024-09-10	Annika Rockenberger (UB): Survey on Digital Scholarly Editions
2024-06-17	Network Meeting
2024-05-15	Network Meeting
2024-04-15	Network Meeting
2024-03-11	Federico Aurora (UB): DAMOS (Database of Mycenaean at Oslo)

Digital Tools for Preparing Digital Scholarly Editions

Transkribus

Together with the HumSam Library, BærUt! is in the process of getting the widely used and well-established handwritten text recognition service Transkribus accredited for use at the University of Oslo. The process of accreditation is cumbersome and

time-consuming. Initiated at the end of 2023 by Annika Rockenberger, a formal application to the IT Department was initiated in August 2024 by Kristian Roberto Salcedo (University of Oslo Library, Dept. of Digital Services). We are still awaiting the outcome.

Transkribus will be crucial for research support in the Humanities and beyond and for the library's special collections. With its easy-to-use user interface and the support of an international community, Transkribus can be a low-threshold HTR tool that most researchers can run on their computers. It will be possible to use Transkribus for "green" and "yellow" data when approved.

Oxygen XML Editor

For textual scholars working with XML/TEI encoding, the de facto standard for digital scholarly editions across disciplines, the Oxygen XML Editor software application is a tool thoroughly tested and recommended by the research community. Oxygen can be downloaded and run directly from the PC. It works across operating systems. It requires a purchased license: a single-user academic license costs \$137, and a multi-user, floating license costs \$411. Seeing the need by network members and others working with XML in research and research support, we recommend purchasing a floating license for BærUt!, which can be used by the BærUt! team and UiO Users who do not have funds to pay for a single-user license.

Organisation of the Skills Hub and Network

BærUt! Team

The BærUt! team consists of project and academic leader Annika Rockenberger (50%), research assistant Johanne Emilie Christensen (50%) and project co-lead Federico Aurora. All are employed at the University Library.

Node Leaders and Ambassadors

BærUt! skills hub has six thematic nodes, each headed by a network member. The structure was proposed to the newly established network during the Launch Seminar in February. Since then, each node has a network member responsible for it. However, we haven't met our goal of making the nodes self-driven enough: the BærUt! team will review and revise the node structure and propose changes where necessary at the beginning of 2025.

Digital Editions and Philology: Annika Rockenberger (UB)

Materiality: Hugo Lundhaug (TF)

Automatic Text Recognition: Annika Rockenberger (UB)

XML/TEI Encoding: Federico Aurora (UB)

Databases: Elisabeth Maria Magin (KHM)

Interfaces: N.N.

We want to reach as many people as possible with our skills hub and network. Therefore, we have Ambassadors at each Department, Unit, Section, etc., who will actively inform their colleagues about the skills hub and network, share and forward newsletters and event announcements and invite potential new members to network meetings and other activities. So far, we have Ambassadors for:

Dept. of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages (Jacob Thaisen)

Dept. of Musicology (Judith I. Haug)

Dept. of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (Albrecht Hofheinz)

National Library (Ellen N. Wiger).

We will review and revise the Ambassador system at the beginning of 2025 and make another effort to recruit ambassadors for other departments and institutions, especially the IT department and HumIT.

Communications: Outreach and Dissemination

Website

The University Library hosts the BærUt! skills hub and network. Our website is under the UB domain and structurally under the Digital Scholarship Center.

<https://www.ub.uio.no/bibliotekene/dsc/berut/>

The website is bilingual, Norwegian and English, with English being the primary language.

Our website contains information about the aims, goals and framework of BærUt!. It is set up in Vortex as a “project”, which allows adding members from UiO to be displayed on the website directly and links back from our members’ web pages. Subordinated to the main website are lists of events and subpages for “Nodes”, “Survey”, and “News”.

In addition, the website streams an RSS feed from our external academic blog at Hypotheses.org.

<https://dsenetwork.hypotheses.org/>

The main website and the events subpages are meticulously updated. However, we are planning a design sprint in 2025 to improve our website and communications.

Bibliography and Documentation

BærUt! created a public Zotero group. Members gather relevant literature and share it with each other. Zotero also serves as a documentation tool for all hub publications. It allows users to collaboratively read, excerpt, comment on, and discuss academic articles and other publications.

<https://www.zotero.org/groups/5164276/baerut>

Weblog

Our medium for dissemination is the academic weblog “Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network” on the academic blogging platform Hypotheses.org. Hypotheses.org is a platform by OpenEdition for humanities and social sciences research blogs. It hosts several thousand social sciences and humanities academic blogs in numerous languages and is carried by a French national research infrastructure. This gives us the following advantages: Our blog is part of a large international platform with thousands of daily readers. The Hypotheses servers are located in France, in the [In2P3 computing centre](#), a CNRS Support and Research Unit that ensures backup and general technical support and maintenance. In addition, blogs are indexed in many international catalogues, and each post is assigned a DOI. OpenEdition guarantees the perennality of our blog content published on Hypotheses to a certain extent. We are actively working on archiving our blog in the Norwegian Web Archive.

<https://dsenetwork.hypotheses.org/>

Ten blog posts were published in 2024. Another one is being prepared for publication by the end of 2024, and three more are scheduled for publication in early 2025.

The weblog's Editorial Board consists of Annika Rockenberger and Johanne Emilie Christensen. We have guests and network members as authors.

Christensen, Johanne Emilie. “DS Days: Transkribus Workshop.” Weblog. *Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network* (blog), January 16, 2024.

<https://doi.org/10.58079/12rm3>.

———. “Survey Launched! The Landscape of (Digital) Scholarly Editions at the University of Oslo and Beyond.” Weblog. *Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network* (blog), June 10, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.58079/12rm5>.

———. “Volcanoes, Data, and Digital Adventures: The Action-Packed 2024 DHNB Conference in Reykjavik.” Weblog. *Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network* (blog), June 3, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.58079/12ujq>.

Christensen, Johanne Emilie, Annika Rockenberger, and Federico Aurora. “‘404 Not Found’ Approaches to Sustainable Editions.” Weblog. *Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network* (blog), April 20, 2024.

<https://dsenetwork.hypotheses.org/146>.

Foldvik, Therese. “Searchable Norwegian Tradition Archives – The SAMLA Project.” Weblog. *Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network* (blog), November 20, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.58079/12rm8>.

Magin, Elisabeth Maria. "Launched: Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network at the University of Oslo!" Weblog. *Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network* (blog), February 26, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.58079/12rm4>.

Rockenberger, Annika. "Bibliotheca Polyglotta – Minimal Encoding Revisited." Weblog. *Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network* (blog), November 14, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.58079/12rm7>.

———. "DIY Automatic Text Recognition – Two Workshops and a Keynote on Astrid Lindgren's Shorthand Manuscripts." Weblog. *Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network* (blog), September 25, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.58079/12rm6>.

———. "Hello World!" Weblog. *Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network* (blog), November 17, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.58079/12rm2>.

Wiger, Ellen. "From XML to XHTML. XSL Transformations as a Tool for Text Publishing – Pt.1." Weblog. *Sustainable Digital Scholarly Editions Network* (blog), December 10, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.58079/12vyj>.

Dissemination

The network and skills hub were presented at two international conferences in 2024.

In late May, during the DHNB2024 conference in Reykjavík/Iceland, a poster was presented by Johanne Emilie Christensen and co-authored by Annika Rockenberger and Federico Aurora.

In early July, during the LIBER2024 conference in Limassol/Cyprus, Federico Aurora presented a poster co-authored by Annika Rockenberger and Johanne Emilie Christensen.

A long paper was accepted for the Norwegian Ph.D. Network's annual network meeting of the Norwegian PhD Network in April 2024; however, due to illness, a presentation was impossible.

Another long paper was accepted for the Nordic Network of Textual Scholars biannual conference (NNE2024) in November 2024 but had to be cancelled due to illness.

Research

Surveying Digital Scholarly Editions at the University of Oslo and Beyond

An essential part of the BærUt! project is an extensive survey of Digital Scholarly Editions developed, executed and published by Norwegian scholars. With the survey, we want to systematically map out existing and planned DSEs, focusing on data types and structures, systems, technical infrastructure, and documentation.

With the survey, we aim to understand how digital scholarly editions are produced, published, and archived at the University of Oslo. The goal of the project is to map the expertise and knowledge at the university to identify institutional, situational and subject-specific challenges that lead to issues related to long-term archiving, accessibility, maintenance, data and software integrity. We would like to gain insights and experiences from researchers, developers and software engineers who have created digital scholarly editions or prepared printed editions digitally.

The survey period runs from June 2024 to Spring 2025 and will be conducted via interviews.

This research project, led by Annika Rockenberger, Johanne Emilie Christensen, and Federico Aurora, will be a foundation for further grant applications and inform local and national e-infrastructure strategies. It is supported by a work group of technical and administrative staff at the IT Department, HumIT, and the University Library. The project is overseen by an international Scholarly Advisory Board consisting of leading researchers in the field of Digital Scholarly Editions.

The survey was initially designed as an online form. After launching it right before the summer of 2024, participation could have been higher. Feedback from network members and textual scholars led us to review the content and structure of the survey and change the format to interview-based. Since the change was announced, we have had five 90-minute interviews with scholars from the University of Oslo and the National Archives. We have scheduled several interviews for the new year and expect to have gathered enough information for a preliminary report by the end of June 2025.

SIKT approved the survey in its original online and the new interview format. An open data management plan is published on DMPtool:

<https://dmphub.uc3prd.cdlib.net/dmps/10.48321/D1B2CDc991>.

Interviews started in October. Five informants have been interviewed, and several more are scheduled for January 2025. The interviews will be coded and analysed using NVivo. We aim to discuss and publish the results as conference papers and/or articles in an international journal.

Concluding remarks

Overall, we exceeded our goals and expectations for the first year of the BærUt! skills hub and network. We successfully gathered researchers from all across the university and other Oslo-based institutions of higher education and cultural heritage in our network. We have established a regular meeting venue for our community. We have registered the current needs of our members and provided training opportunities in the form of workshops and documentation of digital tools, methods, and practical guides.

We have started our mapping survey, which will serve as the foundation for further work and grant applications and inform the establishment of an infrastructure for the preservation (and long-term archiving) of digital scholarly editions.

The major drawback we faced in the first year was the unexpected, long-term sick leave of project leader Annika Rockenberger. The project had prepared a contingency plan for such events, with Federico Aurora stepping in as co-lead and research assistant Johanne

Emilie Christensen taking over more leading tasks—all processes, procedures and tasks outlined and scheduled as well as thorough documentation and guidelines for communication. Thus, we managed to reduce the delay in launching the survey significantly (initial launch of the survey: April 2024, moved to June 2024). The delayed start affects the feasibility study, which was planned to start at the end of 2024 and will now be postponed until after summer 2025, which is still within our project's time frame.

We have already scheduled several events for the next year, 2025. We will continue the successful network meetings with short presentations. We will offer skill-up and digital research methods workshops to our network members and beyond. We will continue with invited talks that address issues and challenges regarding the sustainability of digital scholarly editions. We are working on continuing our seminar with a conference-style event in the fall of 2025.

The focus of 2025 will be on supporting and expanding the community by gathering new members, especially from Faculties and Departments we have yet to reach, like the Department of Media and Communication, the Museum of University History, and the Faculty of Education. We are also increasing our collaboration with the University Library's team for special collections.

We will review and revise the Nodes structure and Ambassador system to improve our outreach and community building, including fine-tuning our website and online presence. We will work closely with the University Library's communications team for press releases and our presence in relevant media.

With regards,

Annika Rockenberger