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From Golden Age to 21ˢᵗ Century: the GRISOStrategies to Make Humanities Research Visible

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1. Introduction

THE PRESENT WORK deals with the current situation of research in the Humanities field and the need to make it available to a wider audience taking advantage of the possibilities brought by new technologies. In the past, studies in any sphere of knowledge were made from an individual perspective and the authors did not think about how to make their results available to the society; this case was peculiarly worrying when we talked about Humanities due to the short (most of the times, even non-existent) impact the publications may have had. For that reason, GRISO's (Grupo de Investigación del Siglo de Oro) team decided to start a new project in order to disseminate the work made by the group. They propose common ways such as Twitter or Facebook, but also an innovative tool called GRISOSFERA, where several blogs written by PhD students are put together. The flow of information showed by the figures demonstrate the increase of visitors and potential readers to the materials, therefore it was worth the effort to make it available to the open public, but it is necessary to continue with it because if we are in the correct direction, there is still a long way to go.

2. The State of the Art: the Necessity for Transference

Up to few years ago, research work was conceived as a closed process which ended in itself. The researcher focused the attention on a specific aspect and then, he/she gave shape to the text as a book, book chapter or journal article. Once the result has been published, it seemed as if the product became independent, in the sense that the author could cease to be concerned about it, in terms of its interpretation, consequences or feasible impact in other researchers work. In no case, the research considered to be in charge of those aspects related to visibility or transference of knowledge, excepting the case of conferences if we understand them as the occasion when that exchange can take place. This situation was specially pressing and necessary in the Humanities and Social Sciences fields of study, where the applicability of the research work is much longer in time than in the case of Experimental Sciences. While the validity of a research article in the sphere of Experimental Sciences is brief, in the case of Humanities and Social Sciences the result of the research must be understood from a long-term perspective. In this sense, humanists could not work to obtain an immediate impact within the scientific community they belong to; actually, their work was a contribution to the knowledge that could be let settle until it were examined again by another colleague from a different perspective or approach, both methodological or ideological. Therefore, publications regarding the Humanities sphere were pushed into the background, aimed just to the scientific community without paying attention to visibility, being it understood in terms of immediate impact.

From this same point of view, and paying attention to the case of Experimental Sciences, it is easy to find the way through which the product of research is transferred to the society as a whole. As an example, a patent or a scientific discovery possesses a measurable and detectable implementation within a process of production or the manufacturing of a new medicine; as well, it is essential to bear in mind that it carries out a relevant economic effect. That transference has more difficulties to be measured in the Humanities field, and regarding the economic aspect it is even impossible. Another specific characteristic of these studies is the fact that they require processes and efforts, individual the most of the times, at the time of making the knowledge appealing to the readers. On the contrary, in the case

of Experimental Sciences the scientific advances are not transferred directly to society, for the group to gain access to it, but there is a qualified intercession that turns the knowledge into a tangible benefit. Coming back to Humanities, in that sphere there is no mediation between the researcher and the potential public (or it is difficult to accomplish), therefore the researcher needs to rewrite the material in order to make it accessible and interesting for a broad public.

One of the most relevant changes that are taking place in the Humanities research is the fact that nowadays the work does not conclude when the author publishes the result of the research. The reason for that is precisely the impulse coming from the omnipresence of new technologies. Right after the publication of a scientific text, two necessary processes for the research work come into play (they are necessary for researchers belonging to all fields, but especially for humanists). In the first place, there is the need of some kind of «academic marketing». The researchers have to get involved actively in the process of making the work accessible and visible, to place it wherever it would be read and cited, to give it the value it requires and guaranteeing its consultation by our colleagues. We are the ones who can better place those workmates that may be interested in our texts. Therefore, in order to make them aware of our research, we would try to draw some kind of «knowledge dissemination map» that will function in a bidirectional way. Also, it should be based on the principles of cooperation and feedback, then, as a consequence, it would contribute to the diffusion of our results at the same time the research is uplifted. On the other hand, there is the task of transfer the knowledge to the society as a whole (called in the Anglo-Saxon culture the «Public Humanities»). In this respect, we are facing one of the most interesting challenges the society of information has launched to the humanists, the divulgation of the result of our research and the circulation of knowledge are precisely the crucial points of Humanities in the 21st century.

There is no doubt about the increasing in visibility, both in terms of space and time, thanks to Internet. Nevertheless, these benefits need to be worked at because the quality of being visible is not immediate, constant neither homogenous in every case.

The main effects of these changes in the sphere of communication (journalistic, political, etc.) are extremely evident and the new media require a continuous evolution and mutation in order to adapt themselves to the present tools, practices and habits. The academic work within the Humanities field is not external to this fact, so it is essential to think the diffusion task as a process which starts after publishing and that is looks for an effective visibility to make our research known, consulted, and lastly, to have an impact in our society. To achieve that, it is necessary to take into account the aforementioned aspects.

Several years ago, just a few if we think in analogue parameters but many more from a digital measure, the idea that «Who is not on the Internet does not exist»[132] was extended. Nowadays, it is possible to widen and detail that statement: who is not on the Internet, constantly adapting to the new technologies, does not exist (not even on the Internet).

Far from being a temporary fashion or an imposition to resist against, the digital revolution that is taking place within the Humanities field represents a great opportunity to work and progress in collaboration with related disciplines such as Communication, Library Science, content curation, cultural management or knowledge management among others, always applying the use of ICT as the key element. Thus, we cannot obviate the recognition of the importance acquired by Humanities, with full rights, in the 21st century research. The academic environment is every time more «liquid», following the sense given to the term by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2000 y 2005)[133]; in addition, the limits between the disciplines are kind of blurred, near to the way Rauschenberg showed De Kooning's paintings after they were removed and became empty but spotted

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[132] In Spain, the sentence has been used in different contexts by diverse people from the second half of the nineties. As an example, we can mention the article «Los poetas no quieren a Internet» written by Miguel García Posada and published in *El País* the 30th May of 1996:
http://elpais.com/diario/1996/05/30/cultura/833407213_850215.html
(2013/11/22).

[133] The conflict described by Bauman regarding to culture takes on new meanings from the perspective of the way in which the digital aspect shatters the traditional division of the knowledge fields (Bauman, 2005: 52-67).

sheets of paper, and accompanied by other drafts. In this sense, interdisciplinarity becomes more important and is constantly present in the university research work. This same interdisciplinarity or even transdisciplinarity stands out and demands a special attention in the field of Digital Humanities. When being humanist and part of the university life, we find ourselves obliged to be aware and handle those advances that are offering very interesting results. There is no doubt they constitute a key aspect of our future.

3. GRISO and collaborative work into a research group

The Golden Age Research Group (Grupo de Investigación del Siglo de Oro, GRISO) is an interdisciplinary team founded in 1990 by professor Ignacio Arellano, Chair in Spanish Literature. GRISO develops the «Línea de Investigación Prioritaria del Siglo de Oro» in the University of Navarre; this one is formed by a conglomeration of research projects oriented to the edition and study of the works written by the greatest authors of to the period, such as Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Tirso de Molina, Francisco de Quevedo, etc., but also it pays attention to the Golden Age burlesque comedies and Spanish Chronicles of the Indies, among others. GRISO gathers up fifteen professors and researchers from the University of Navarre; they constitute the central core of the project, but there are also two more groups that actively collaborate with GRISO. There is the figure of associated researcher, a professor or researcher who works in a different university but develops part of his/her work within the projects promoted by GRISO. Moreover, there is another group of researchers integrated by the PhD students from the University of Navarre, whose thesis are part of one of the projects mentioned before.

The own structure of the group and the organization of work is divided in several projects that are developed in a parallel way (some of the members participate on one of them, not all at the same time and at a different level and with variable intensity). This manner of distribution set us on an scenery where the collaborative work is actually a reality. Each researcher develops his/her work within the projects of the group related to the edition of the complete plays written by the best authors of Spanish Golden Age period (Pedro

Calderón de la Barca, Tirso de Molina, etc.) and publishes the result of the research through collections of books coordinated by the group. This reality as well allows the understanding of GRISO's research production as a whole, so like this it can be promoted its visibility on the Internet, being each project independent but also part of a group.

Thanks to that it has been possible to start-up and to improve some of the new initiatives as GRISONET (GRISO's structure of digital communication, including different services) along with GRISOFERA (the group's blogosphere). In other terms, it is an attempt to bring *blogging* and social networks to the academic work field, when it seems an arduous effort because many professors and researchers are still reluctant to their use. Simultaneously, we are trying to give more visibility to the results of our research among the scientific community and also to deal with the necessary task of transferring qualified studies regarding to the Golden Age to the present society.

4. Visibility of research in a digital world

In GRISO we have been working in projects inscribed into the Digital Humanities sphere for long. The last of them we have created has to do with the application of ITC to the visibility and circulation of the research results in relation to the open access of the scientific information in a free manner[134].

Before to go on talking about the project itself, it is necessary to point out that Internet offers us a favorable space for conversation. The information flows in a bidirectional way and it is not limited, or it should not be limited, to a series of monologues in which each researcher publishes his/her work without establishing a true dialogue with other workmates. It is advisable to remember that University is (or should be) mainly an opportunity for conversation and knowledge exchange (I have referred to it in several occasions). In the real life, the analogue one, every time it is more difficult to happen to meet with other people to gather in common our respective research. It is necessary to be in the same place, at a specific moment and having

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[134] An overview of the *Open Access* issue can be found in Abadal (2012).

time, disposition and attitude to establish a dialogue and a debate about our studies. At the precise moment, something like that comes to be complicated even when you are part of the same institution, then the situation worsens in terms of a global and international scientific and academic community. In the digital space, thanks to a webpage, a blog or the social networks, the conversation can happen constantly and allows avoiding intermittences. It is open (or at least can be) to the participation of more people and available to the contributions made from the community[135], and at last it is also open to a wider public, without the constrictions of the academic close sphere[136].

The open access to the scientific information takes on a special relevance at the time of dealing with the present situation of Humanities, and specifically, when we try to recognize its value to the scientific community, in particular terms, and society as a whole, in general ones[137].

From the perspective of University, the social networks and *blogging* represent an opportunity to reclaim its role in the new digital era. The transference to society, through the use of digital tools produced by the effort of university professors and researchers, is a task that we cannot obviate and that claims for our attention[138]. One of the future possibilities for Humanities is to bring University and the knowledge

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[135] About the idea of community regarding the blogs, we can consult Rettberg (2008: 57-83), and for the specific case of «nanobloggins», Cortés (2009: 20-21). An article that widely develops the context of community and conversation applied to GRISO is Baraibar and Cohen (2012).

[136] To the particular working of Twitter applied to the university community some ideas can be found in Orihuela (2011: 95-97).

[137] To the role that *Open Access* can operate in getting more visibility in the Humanities field, Ernest Abadal referred to in his talk «Las aportaciones del acceso abierto para la comunicación científica en las Humanidades» pronounced in the international conference «Humanidades digitales: visibilidad y difusión de la investigación» that took place in Pamplona the days 23 and 24th of May 2013.

[138] It is important to take into account also the opposite side: in order to make an effective transference from University, it is essential to have a society interested in «high culture», though a deeper analysis of this aspect cannot be made within the present work.

it generates closer to those spaces where the social and media conversation is taking place. It is a challenge, but also an opportunity.

These are some of the ideas from which we started-up the GRISO, along with the projects mentioned before as GRISONET y GRISOSFERA.

Figure 1. Diagram of information flow in GRISONET.
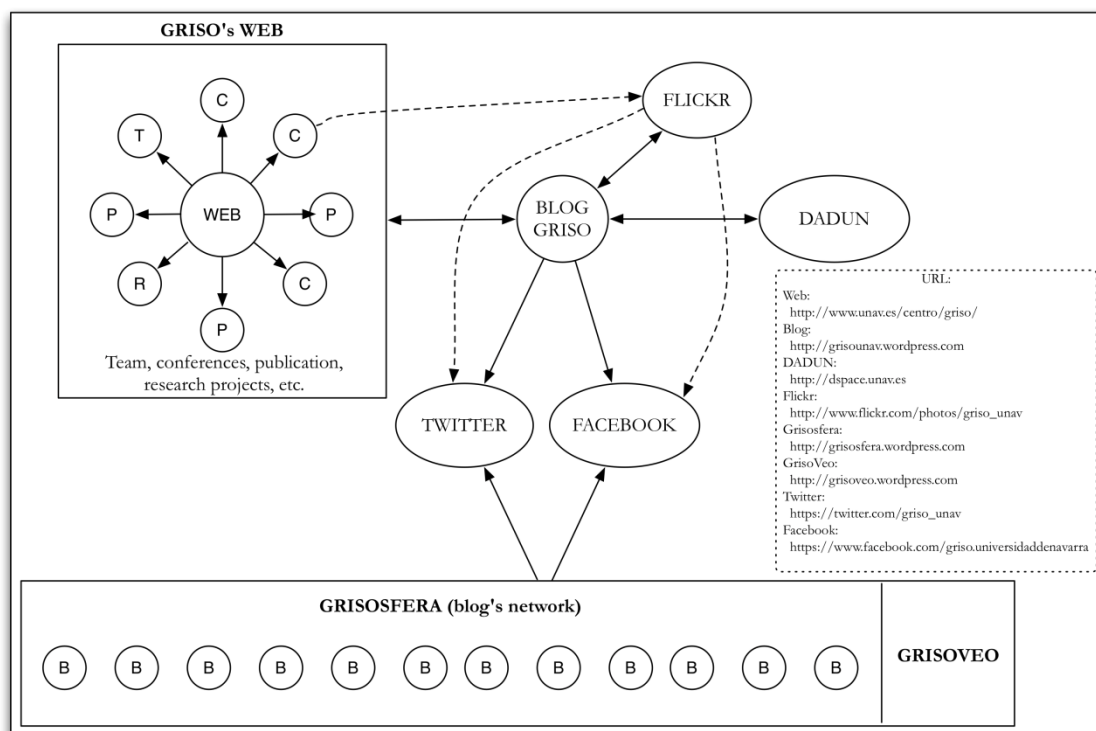
GRISONET was created due to the necessity of publishing and make known the different material that resulted from the activity made by an interdisciplinary group of research that gathers experts from literature, history and linguistics interested in the Spanish Golden Age. Each of the materials requires a specific and exclusive treatment, and on the Internet we find the tools to publish them all. This combination of applications forms a net that shows the different sides of the task and results achieved by the group in a more global and complete way. The system incorporates a *website*, a blog and an academic repository where the materials are published in a digital format, along with a dashboard intelligence platform (exactly *Netvibes*)

as the website to access the diverse services, catalogues of images, and of course, the presence in the social networks.

In relation to GRISOFERA, it is a net of blogs with an academic purpose; from the beginning, it was understood as a collaborative project in which PhD students, group researchers and associated researches would participate. They are more than twelve blogs dedicated to several aspects regarding literature and history from the Golden Age, and their aim is to offer qualified content not only to researchers interested in that period but also to the whole society[139].

After two years of work, we have the data enough to show the impact that GRISONET and GRISOSFERA have had in the visibility of the results of the research made by the group. In the period comprising June 2012 to May 2013 (both included), the number of page views received by GRISO's webpage, and the ones dedicated to the different projects, publications and conferences we have organized, raised up to 100,000, exactly 94,047. We need to take into account, moreover, the access to the GRISO's blog with around 21,000 visits during the same period, and GRISOSFERA, the PhD students and researchers'blogosphere, with more than 275,000 page views at the end of May, just less than a year since their launching. We cannot forget also that other webpages as for example GRISO's collection of images in Flickr has received more than 50,000 page views in two years.

To that information, we have to add the visibility through Facebook (730 friends) and Twitter (322 followers). Precisely, Twitter is one of the spheres where with more clarity we have grown: in just a year we have raised from 91 to 322 followers. The main reason for this is the fact that academic conversation is mainly taking place in this social network. A year ago in Valencia, during the ArteLope conference, we paid special attention to the way of distributing qualified contents and material to those places where they cannot be found. This is also our responsibility as humanists. All these movements are happening right now and the change during the last year has been really important. It

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[139] More details about GRISONET and GRISOSFERA can be found in Baraibar and Cohen (2012) and the different URLs of the operating web services.

is true that the path to walk is still long, thus the increase of followers in Twitter is remarkable.

But apart from the number of visits to GRISO's web pages and blogs, or the followers in Twitter and friends in Facebook, I think that the most striking aspect is to focus on the evolution of consults and downloads of articles, books and book chapters now in *Open Access* and available to the interested reader through DADUN, the Depósito Académico Digital de la Universidad de Navarra (Digital Academic Repository from the University of Navarre).

Table 1. Page views and downloads from GRISO collections in DADUN (Depósito Académico Digital de la Universidad de Navarra).

	Page views		Downloads	
	2011/12	2012/13	2011/12	2012/13
Anuario Calderoniano	1.615	5.619	751	3.918
GRISO's «Pliegos volanderos»	1.539	1.669	2.307	5.132
La Perinola	35.359	42.672	38.299	63.335
GRISO's Digital Publications	24.542	45.968	35.609	107.732
TOTAL	63.055	95.928	76.966	180.117

During the last three years, GRISO has been uploading in DADUN several materials product of the research. The main objective is to place in this repository all the production achieved in the research group on the condition that the copyright issues allow it. The number of documents uploaded by GRISO in DADUN goes up to 855 (180 of them in the last academic year)[140].

If we draw a review of the data included in the previous index we can confirm the evolution regarding to the page views and downloads of the documents uploaded by GRISO to DADUN (they are gathered

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[140] We manage the data referring the month of May; the annual period I talk about corresponds to the one comprising June to May of the following natural year, so the 2011-2012 period goes from 1st June 2011 to 31st May 2012 and 2012-2013 goes from 1st June 2012 to 31st May 2013.

by the collection they belong to). The increase that took place between the period going from June 2011 to May 2012 is really remarkable. Seen as a whole, this rising from one year to the other has supposed the 50% (63,055 page views in May 2012 to around 96,000 in May 2013) and the download the 130% (around 77,000 in May 2012 to more than 180,000 in May 2013).

If we focus now on the evolution in time of the page views and downloads in the collection of digital publications (the most important in numbers that GRISO has in DADUN) it is possible to see an upward tendency. It also shows some peaks when the blog has announced a new digital publication and decreasing of views during the holidays (I will talk more extensively about this later)[141].

Figure 2. Evolution of page views and downloads in the GRISO's collection of digital publications.


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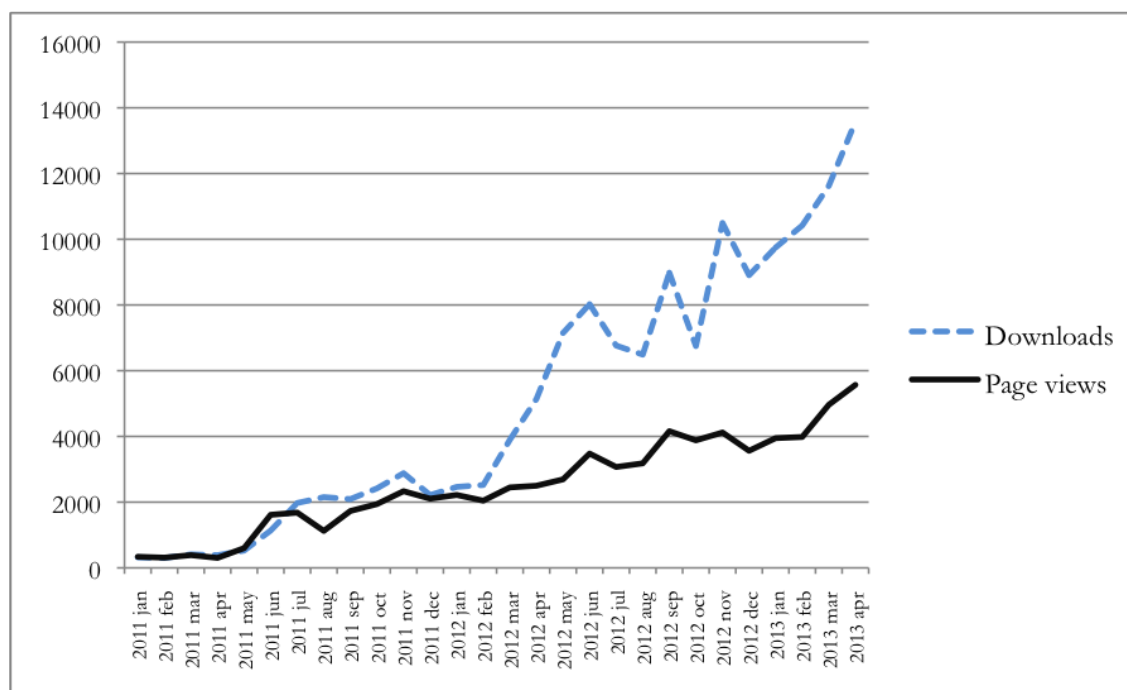
[141] Up to this point it is important to have in mind the launching dates of some of the GRISONET tools:
- June 2011, GRISO opens a profile in Facebook.
- 22nd July 2011, the first post in GRISO's blog is published.
- 1st September 2011, the new GRISO's web is inaugurated.
- February 212, GRISOSFERA is launched.
- March 2012, first GRISO's newsletter is sent.
- April 2012, GRISO's website is opened in *Netvibes*.

Another example is the case of *La Perinola*, where we can find a similar evolution.

Figure 3. Evolution of page views and downloads of *La Perinola*.
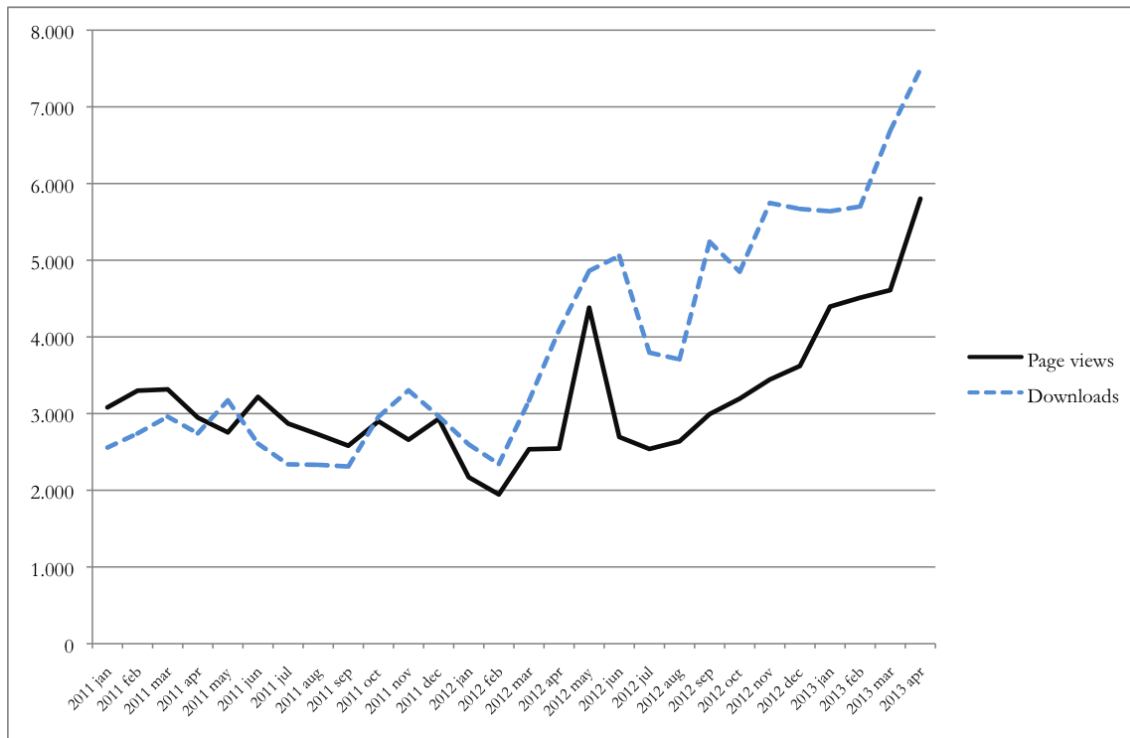
After examining the previous figures, it is viable to suppose that the increase of uploaded documents has an effect on the number of page views. In part it is like that, but if we analyze the data bearing in mind the average page views and downloads per document (taking into account the number of them they were available at the moment in DADUN) we will see that the resultant figure generates a very similar reality.

Figure 4. Evolution of page views and downloads per document in the GRISO'scollection of digital publications.
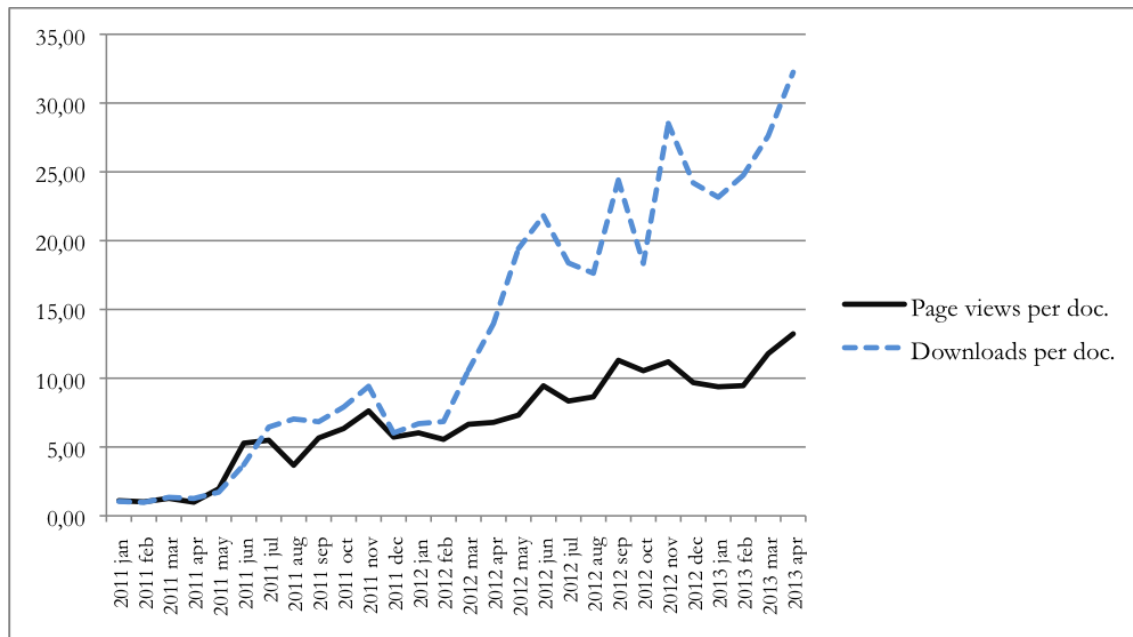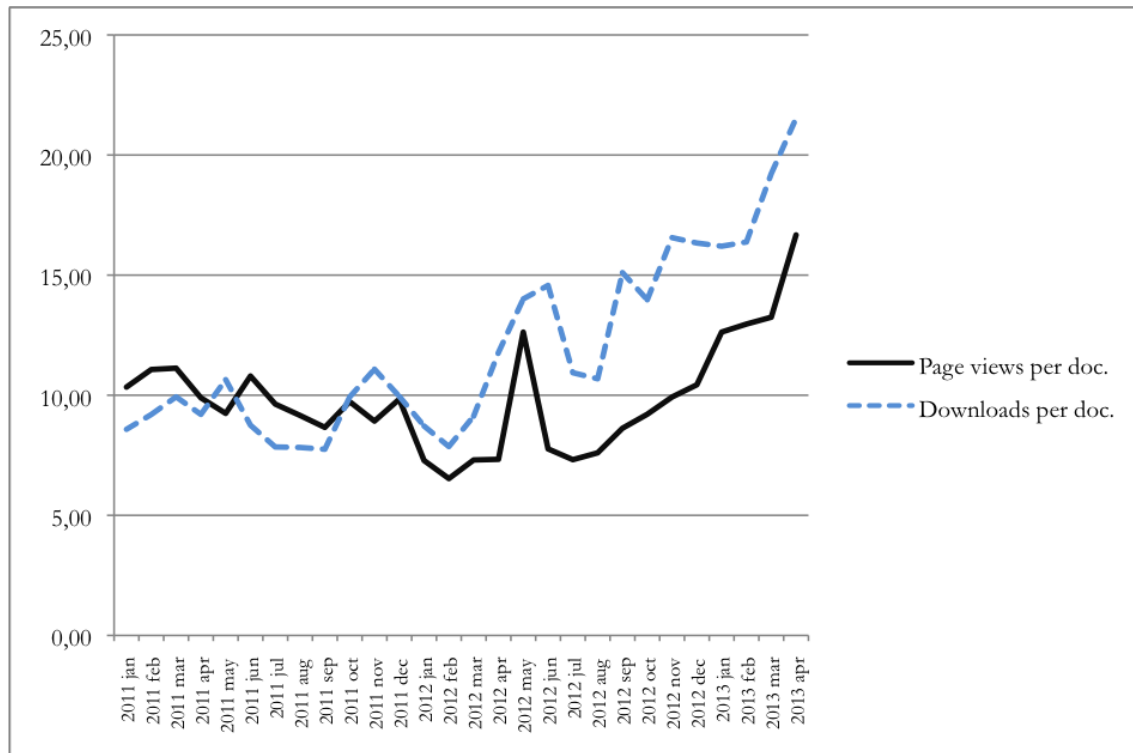

Figure 5. Evolution of page views and downloads per document of *La Perinola*.

So, what are the conclusions we can deduce from the evolution in the accesses to the GRISO's documents in DADUN? In first place, it points out the constant increase that is taking place since the documents were available to the potential reader. It is possible to confirm, thus, a rising movement in terms of visibility of the results achieved by the group.

Secondly, it attracts the attention the higher increase of downloads over the page views. As a download, the system counts the access to the document in the .pdf format, while as a page view, it captures the consultation of the bibliographic file of the document in the repository. Probably, the explanation for that circumstance owes to the fact that searches in Google connect to the .pdf documents without previously visiting the file in DADUN. The whole of documents uploaded in the different web services are the responsible for that GRISO documents into the repository have a considerably better position in search tools as Google, so therefore, they are more visible.

The third idea I considered important to emphasize is the adaptation of page views number to the academic year. The decrease in page views and downloads during holidays (summer, Christmas and Easter) is a fact. These data would make us suppose a basically academic user, being scholars or students the ones accessing the repository. In this respect, we can say we have achieved more visibility in the academic sphere, but we need to go on studying whether the transference of knowledge is reaching the wide public.

Facing the future, and thinking in the academic audience, it is a pending matter to examine the real impact it can have in the increase of the number of citations extracted from our work by our colleagues. It is difficult to measure this relationship, hence it is evident that a higher visibility has as a consequence the work is more known, read and then, finally, we contribute in a more direct and remarkable way to the main goal of a research group: both research and make available the results of the research.

5. Conclusions

The scenery available after the digital revolution in Humanities provokes, as every change, doubts, uncertainties and fears to the unknown. But the variations that we can sense regarding the humanist researcher task and the role of Humanities can assume in the society of information, thanks also to the digital tools, offer us also new possibilities to explore. This space of confluence among Humanities, Communication, Library Science and content curation in a digital world, turns out to be specially interesting and promising. We cannot deny the challenge and difficulties it carries out, but also we have to appreciate the opportunities offered by the new reality when it brings *blogging* and social networking closer to University, and as a consequence University comes closer to society.

Two years ago, GRISO launched a digital communication structure starting from the thinking about concepts and realities such as Digital Humanities, *Open Access*, *blogging*, collaborative work and visibility of the research results. In my opinion, the analyzed data allow us to assert that GRISO's visibility has remarkably increased as a consequence of the blogosphere implementation and the presence of the team in the social network.

As Joseba Moreno, from the University of Nebraska, recently said during his intervention in the conference «Humanidades Digitales: visibilidad y difusión de la investigación» («Digital Humanities: Visibility and Circulation of Research») celebrated in Pamplona the days 23th-24th May of 2013, one of the key characteristics of Digital Humanities is that more than a close and defined object they are a process themselves. We know the starting point of a project, on the contrary we ignore the finish line, and that quality of being an open process is essential to the Digital Humanities. It is a very accurate vision to an initiative like ours: a project in constant evolution that implements new services and adapts the existing ones to the new necessities we find in the way; this task of improving can be accomplished thanks to the feedback we get through the social networks and the daily contact with colleagues but also with people unconnected to the academic world. We know where we start-up, nonetheless the own reality would confirm us where we have to move forward to and where we can arrive at.

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