

# DRHA Brighton Conference: A workshop and forum proposal from the Clipper project

## Clipper Project Workshop

As part of our community co-design approach to software development we would like to provide a workshop and discussion forum where we demonstrate the latest version of the Clipper toolkit for researchers and practitioners in the digital arts and humanities. We will also provide a hands-on testing session for attendees in order to gather feedback and ideas for further development.

The Clipper project is developing innovative software tools to help researchers, educators, learners and citizens make better use of online time-based media. You can find out more about the project at this web link <http://blog.clippertube.com>. In Autumn 2016 we shall be releasing our first outputs of code and an online service and this workshop shall provide a preview.

## Conference Theme Connections

The project is currently working with a diverse range of institutions that all want to make better use of their online audio-visual content, including; National Library of Scotland, Royal Scottish Conservatoire, British Library, University of Edinburgh (Roslin Institute – bio sciences), Coventry University Disruptive Media, BUFVC, North West Film Archive, BBC and EUSCREEN. Our work on the toolkit has carried us across the boundaries of different disciplines from performing arts, through bio-sciences to digital cultural archives and, most recently, encounters with investigative journalist groups in the rapidly developing field of web annotation technologies and practices.

We are particularly excited about the possibilities for:

- Citizen research and critique,
- Collaborative research environments
- Deep access to digital archives for storytelling,
- Implications for creative practice,
- Changing roles of the author<sup>1</sup> and institutions ,especially in academia where ‘place’ becomes less spatially defined,
- Research data management and impact
- New publishing models.

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<sup>1</sup> Gary Hall from Coventry University provides a useful exploration of these themes in a recent book: <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/pirate-philosophy>

## What Clipper Does

The Clipper toolkit enables users to specify 'virtual' clips from online audio-visual resources and insert rich text annotations 'pinned' to points on the timeline of the clip, the annotations can contain web links, images etc. Clips can be collected together into 'Cliplists'. A simple but significant innovation in Clipper is the use of HTML as the native file format. This approach enables the use of URI's to enable the granular sharing of annotations, clips and cliplists. This also facilitates easy integration with existing institutional and social media web services, it also provides a good format for long-term archival of information together with the related media files. In this connection, we are working with the W3C to make our data model conform to the imminent release of the W3C standards for web annotations.

The ambition for Clipper is that it provides a powerful toolkit to "make video and audio as easy to work with as text" by providing tools to enable users to easily create their own clips and annotations and share them on the web – while respecting the content owner's rights and permissions policies. We anticipate that the toolkit will itself provide a platform for user innovation by overcoming some of the traditional constraints associated with audio-visual media.

## System description and User Scenarios

To help conceptualise using the Clipper toolkit – here is a summary:

- Control the play back of online audio / video
- Specify the start and end points of your custom 'virtual clips' within the source media
- Give Clips titles, descriptions and tags
- Add annotation notes to the clips at specific points in the timeline
- Combine clips together into cliplists
- Share annotations, clips and cliplists as web links

This 'user generated metadata' is stored in a database (MongoDB) and in HTML documents via JSON-LD (linked data / semantic web) that point to the source audio / video files and are viewable in any modern web browser. The end-user will only be able to play the original audio / video files if they have access permission, thereby complying with copyright and data protection requirements and making trustworthy collaboration possible. Although the Clipper documents are owned by the user, the original media stays where it is. Because the native file format of Clipper is HTML, Clipper documents are portable, reusable, social media friendly and easy to integrate into other systems.

We believe there are many potential opportunities and benefits connected with this approach, both in terms of the open design of the toolkit and the choice of HTML as the native format for storing and presenting data. The feedback we have received so far has confirmed the wide range of imaginative and creative applications that Clipper might be put to, including:

- Making it easy to cite, quote and comment audio-visual media and data in digital academic communications – putting it on an equal footing with text.
- Crowdsourcing metadata creation for audio-visual collections.
- Facilitating ‘deep-access’ to digital archives to facilitate citizen research.
- Providing storytelling and narrative tools to incorporate digital archive content.
- Analysing and marking up ethnographical recordings ‘in the field’ offline (as local media) prior to upload to a server for sharing and collaboration.
- Identifying key incidents in time-lapse recordings from scientific equipment.
- Exporting Clipper data in a range of different formats, such as CSV files to allow analysis and visualisation of the data.
- Using Clipper as a practice based research portfolio presentation tool to accompany academic REF submissions (UK) and supporting greater impact.

## Further Information about the Clipper Project and links to the online demos and prototypes

- About the Clipper project: <http://blog.clippertube.com>
- What is Clipper?: <http://blog.clippertube.com/index.php/what-is-clipper/>
- Clipper Brochure: <http://blog.clippertube.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/clipper-brochure-a4.pdf>
- Prototype demos <http://blog.clippertube.com/index.php/prototype-2/>
- Funders - Jisc Research Data Spring: <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/rd/projects/research-data-spring>