Kodikologie und Paläographie im digitalen Zeitalter / Codicology and Paleography in the Digital Age

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DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research

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DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – Index

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- **Effects on the students involved in the management of data with the above systems** >>>
- **The web site "Teaching Materials for Latin Paleography" and the problem of information retrieval** >>>
- **The Digistylus information system** >>>
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DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – M.I.S. for paleography research

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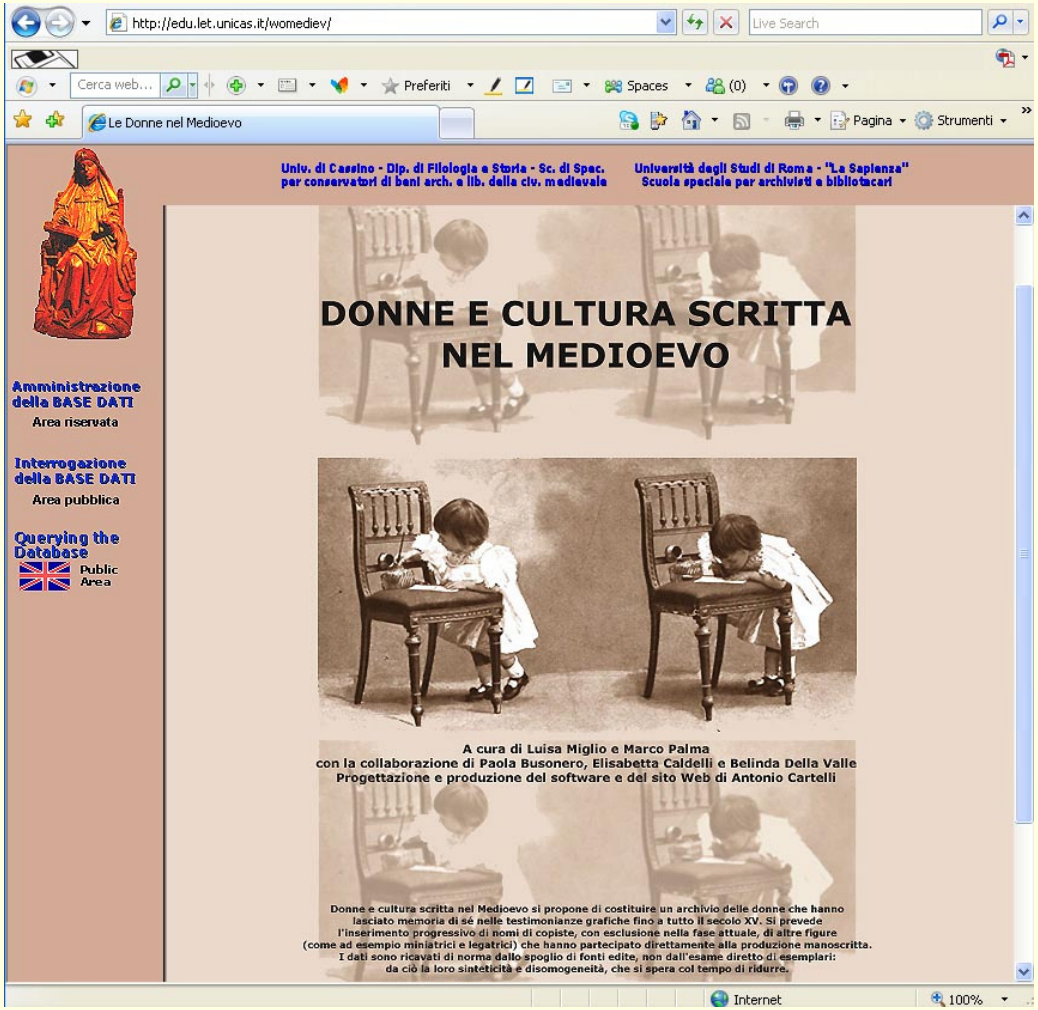
The site "Women and written culture in the Middle Ages"

It is an online information system with an underlying RDBMS which can manage information on manuscripts and women who wrote them.

Allowed people can access the restricted area to manage the data.

Different query pages (in Italian and English) are available

http://edu.let.unicas.it/womediev/



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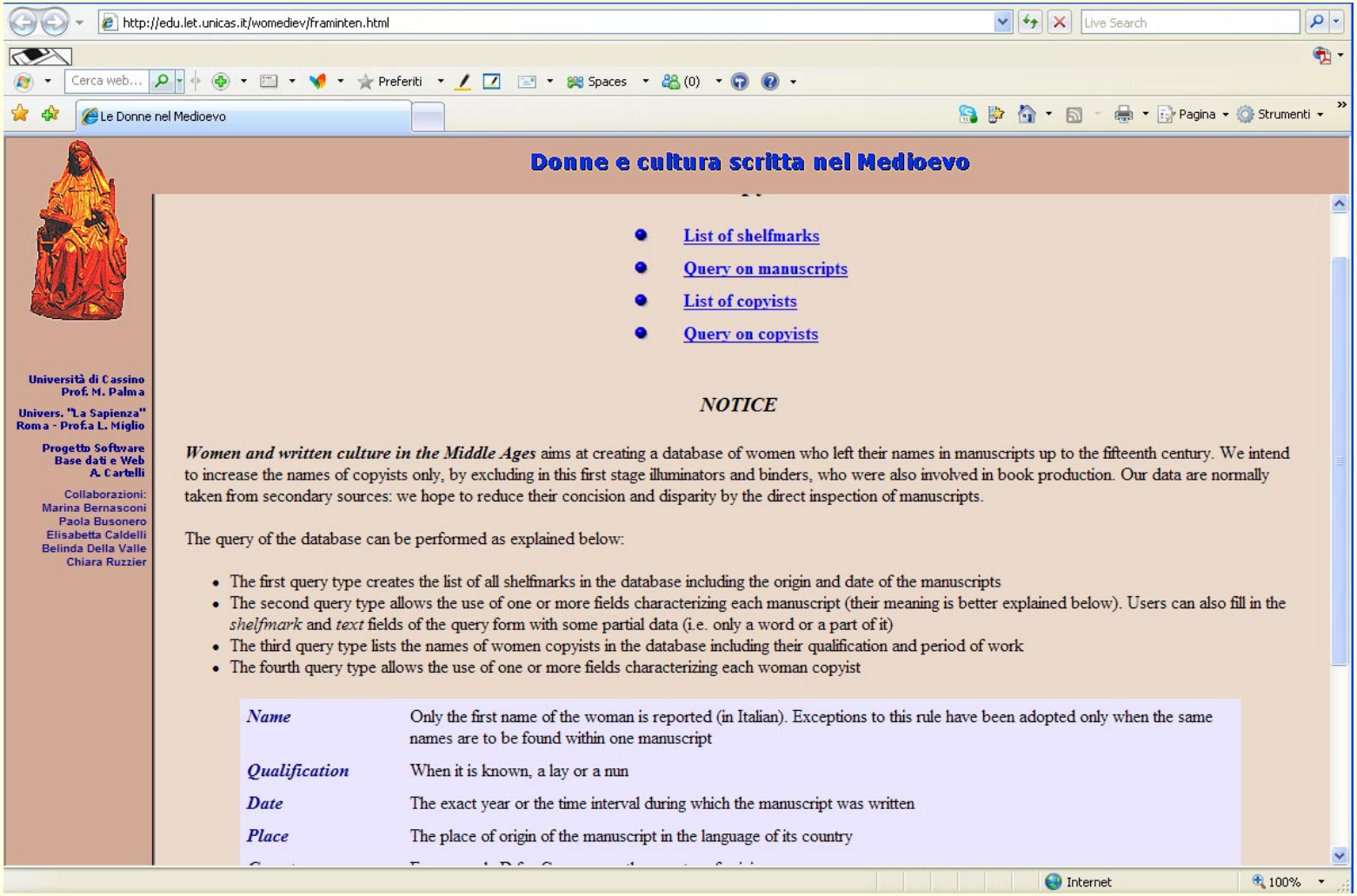

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The site "BMB online"

It is an online information system with an underlying RDBMS which can manage information on the bibliography of Beneventan manuscripts.

Allowed people can access the restricted area to manage the data.

Different query pages are available

http://edu.let.unicas.it/bmb/

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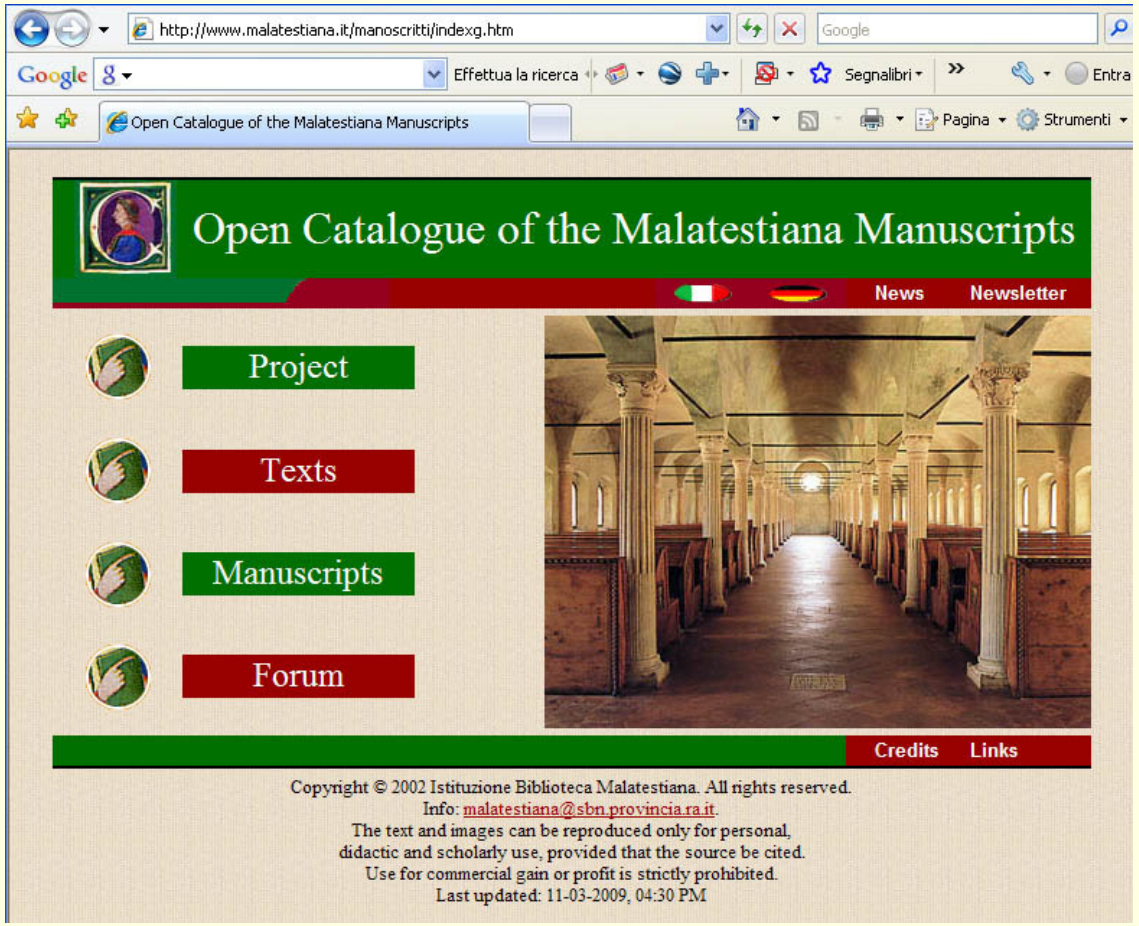
The ***Open Catalogue*** of the **Manuscripts of the Malatestiana Library**

By starting from the idea of the Open Catalogue discussed in 2003 the staff of the Malatestiana Library developed the system which is presented in another session of the conference.

http://www.malatestiana.it/manoscritti/



DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – Effects on students

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The web sites and the underlying information systems were used for research and teaching and induced the following effects:

- people working on a given information system (students, professors, researchers etc.) showed the features of **communities of practices**, because: they identified themselves in the community, they had a common and shared commitment, they shared signs, symbols and strategies (i.e., the repertoire of the knowledge instruments of the community),
- the systems were good examples of **constructivist learning environments,** and helped students develop cognitive apprenticeship strategies,
- the features of **communities of learners (CoLs)** and **fostered communities of learners (FCL)** were detected in the classes working on the described systems,
- **new skills** (the ability for team work, the management of complex tasks and the raising of the individual's skills within the community) and **transversal competences (**computing skills and meta-cognitive apprenticeship strategies) were developed by students.

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The ***web site*** of **Teaching Materials for Latin Paleo-graphy**

It is made of three sections:

- **Reproduction of manuscript pages with their transcriptions**
- **Texts/documents taken from paleographic literature**
- **Works in progress**

http://dida.let.unicas.it/links/didattica/palma/paldimat.html

DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – The "Teaching Materials" site and I.R. problem

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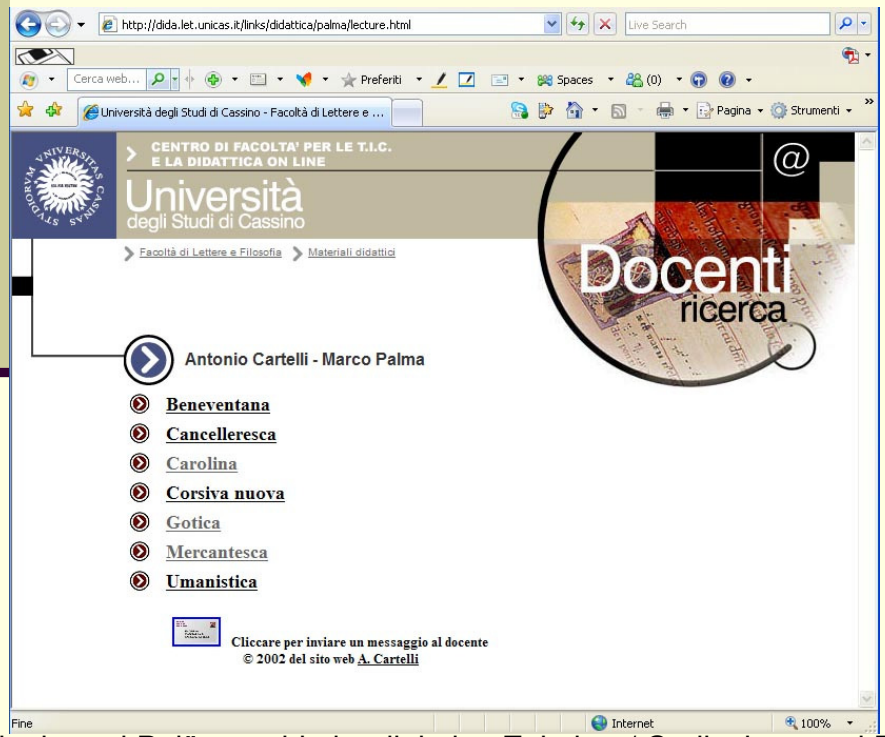
Scripts - Topics



Changes in students' behaviours

During last years the following phenomenon was observed:
the more the materials, the more the difficulties the students had in autonomously managing the study materials.

When only a few documents were available, the students read all the texts and autonomously transcribed almost all the plates; now (during the last course), the students mostly read only the texts the professor suggests in his lectures and limit themselves to the analysis of the plates they discuss in the class.

DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – The "Teaching Materials" site and I.R. problem

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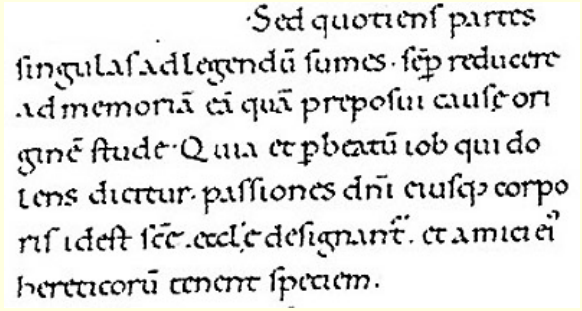
Question 1 – Some lines of folios in three manuscripts are reported below. Put them in the right chronological order and explain your choice.

A



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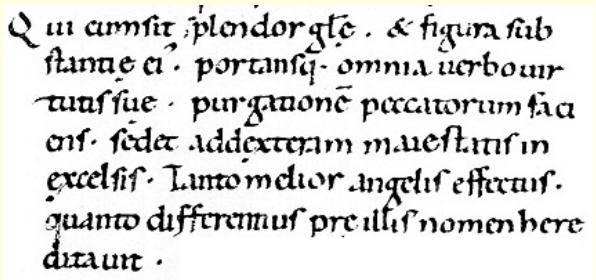

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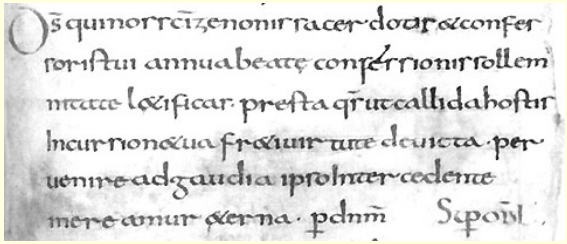

Out of 12 students attending the course only 8 answered the question (66,67%).

Their answers were as follows:
1 soon selected the right answer and gave a good explanation
3 more students first selected the right answer but no or a partial explanation followed
4 students made first a wrong choice, then selected the right answer (no explanation followed)

2 students opened the questionnaire but didn't answer

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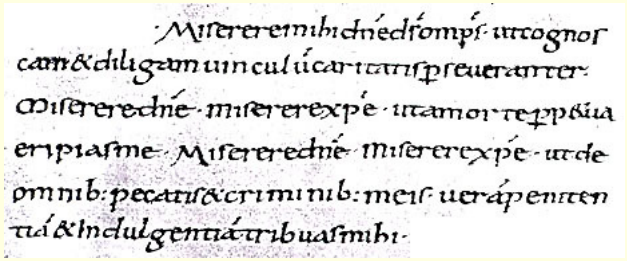
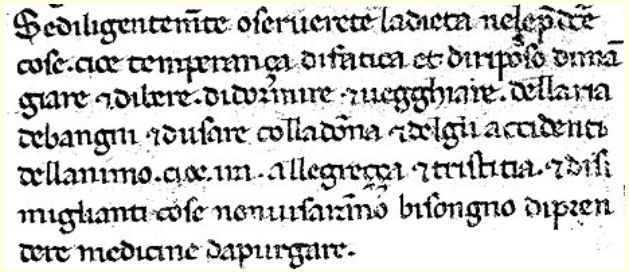
Question 2 – Some lines of folios in three manuscripts are reported below. Specify the writing style for each of them and explain your choice.

A



B



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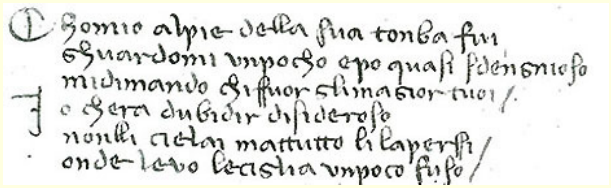

Out of 12 students attending the course only 3 answered to the question (25%).

Their answers were as follows:
1 soon selected the right answer and gave a good explanation
1 selected the right answer but gave only a partial explanation
1 made first a wrong choice then selected the right answer, but no explanation followed

1 student opened the questionnaire but didn't answer

Possible reasons for the changes in students' behaviour

- The increase in the quantity of materials in the site,
- The overestimation of the students' knowledge and skills when they are requested to find information,
- The generational differences and the approach younger students have to technology.

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Guidelines for the creation of the information system Digistylus

Students must be the creators of the information on the site (they must organize and input into the system all the data concerned with the documents in the site).
The information in the database must be available to everyone who may be interested in it (by means of the web).
Any information the students put into the system must be approved by one or more scientific coordinators before being available on the web.
Special indices must be implemented in the system to let people measure the difficulty in the transcription of the plates.
A closed forum within the information system is needed to let students communicate among themselves and with the professor.
The evaluation of the students' work and the final score they obtain at the final examination must consider most part of the above elements.

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Students are involved in the project at different levels.
Individually: by critically studying the basic topics of the discipline and writing the records in the database.
At a **community level** by adopting various strategies:
a) the legitimate peripheral participation, helping the management of the community and including the weakest subjects,
b) the implementation of practices with the ICT (Information Communication Technology), letting the system implement the processes people had to conform themselves to, and governing the management of the information acquisition, storing and validation,
c) team competency learning, inducing the professor to act as a coach and assign to every student the best role according to his basic knowledge and skills.
Socially: by considering the utility of the information they produce for people not necessarily expert in Latin palaeography or in any other discipline concerning the study of ancient manuscripts.

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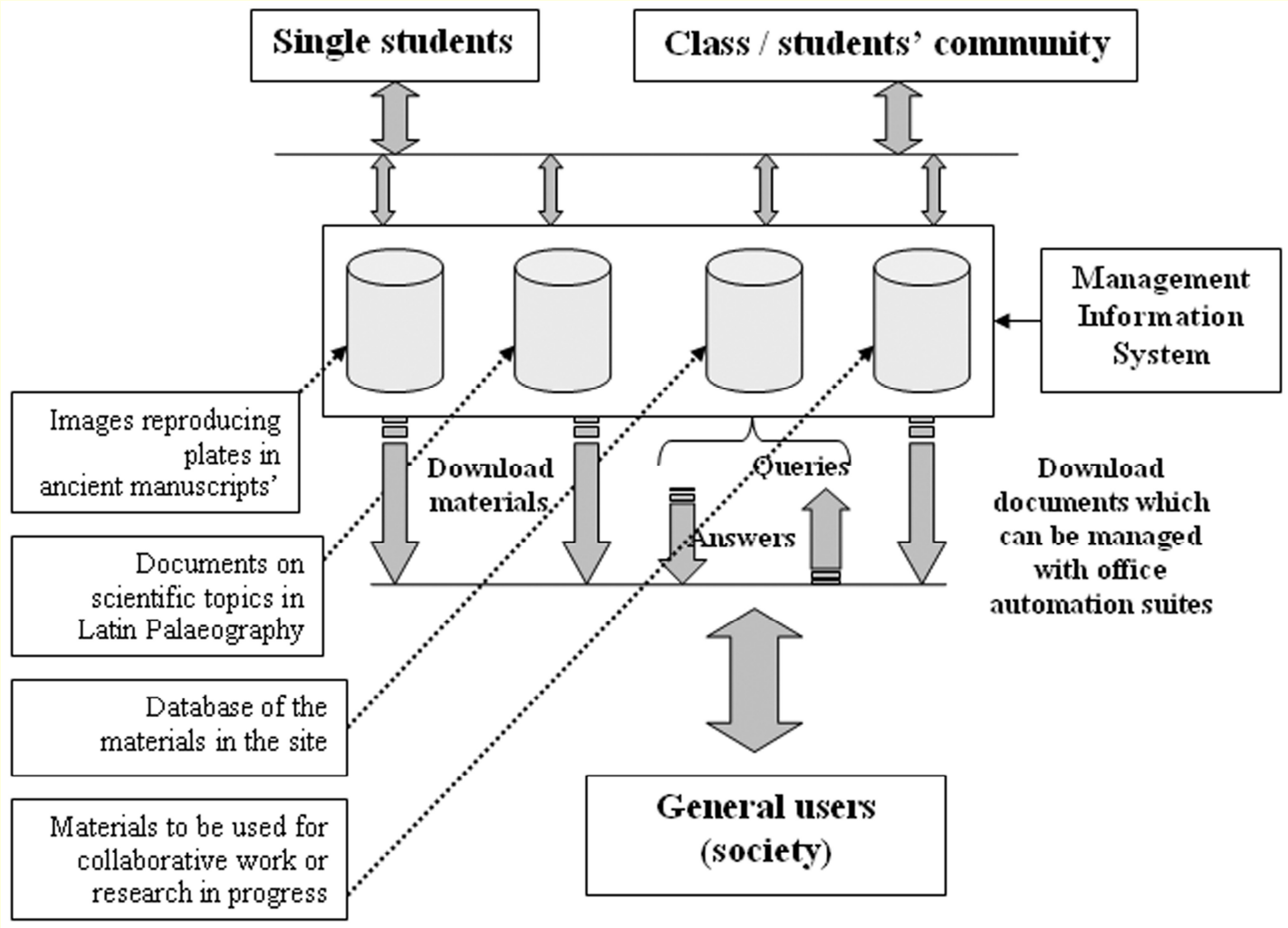

DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – New paradigms for paleography research

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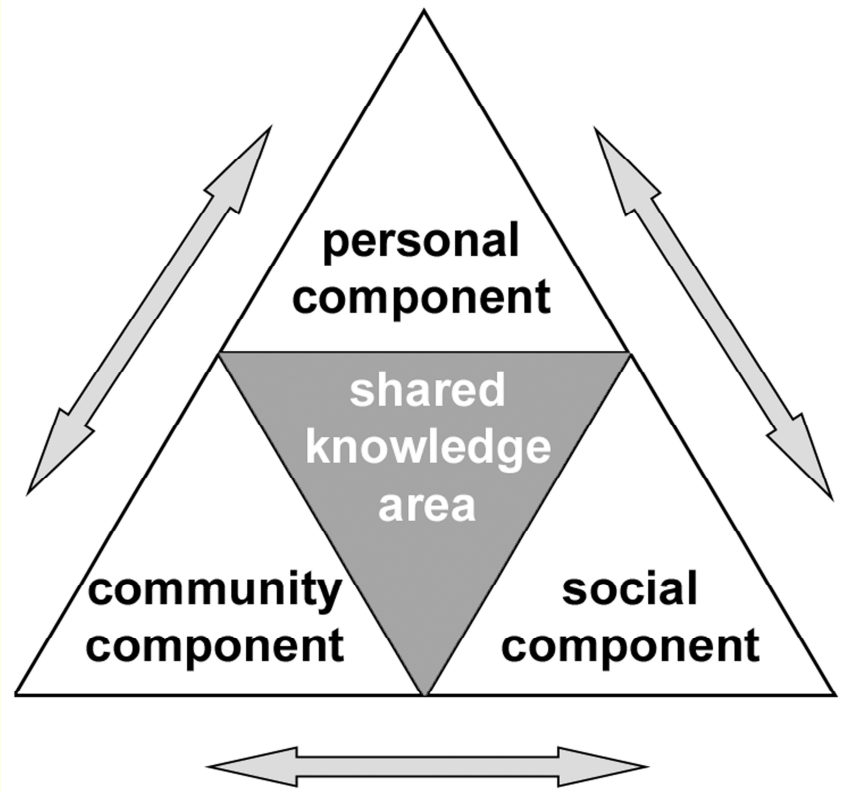
Viewpoints for knowledge construction with the ICT

By considering **individual strategies** knowledge is built in three different ways: a) by the autonomous interaction with real or virtual phenomena, b) by socially interacting with individuals in a community, c) by actively participating in the society they are immersed in.

From a **theoretical point of view** knowledge is an artifact of mankind and can still be thought of as made of three components: individual, community and social knowledge

Consequences for paleography research

Knowledge construction is the result of the influence of all three components: individual, community and social.
Planning and carrying out information systems for the management of information must consider all the components.
Implementation of the practices by means of MIS can be considered a new research paradigm because it forces students and general users to create information instead of finding it.