Sharing databases in the age of the digital anthropology: problems and perspectives

The concept of knowledge is tightly related to that of information, being the former a product resulting from the processing of the latter. And, consequently, the control of the information has always been a major achievement, from economics to politics, from religion to science. The digital tools developed in the last years have deeply affected the worldwide flow of information, increasing exponentially the amount of information available and the way to exchange and store it. The management of the personal data has rapidly become an increasingly fruitful market, opening to a large debate on the ethical and moral framework, and on the future legal supports necessary to preserve correct levels of personal privacy. Anthropology follows the times, sometimes even preceding other scientific disciplines. Anatomy, morphology, paleontology, archaeology, genetics, surgery, have been dramatically reorganised by the introduction of digital sampling and "information capture". As already experimented in past times, incorrect uses and abuses of novel tools use to precede a more healthy, legal, and civic control of the applications. For example, when tools largely depend upon technology, the unequal distribution of facilities between different Countries open to well-known exploitations of natural resources, or unidirectional flows of "energies" (including the information itself). The simplest way to promote a quick optimisation of the new tools is of course starting and supporting an open-wide and inter-disciplinary debate.

This forum is aimed at presenting comments and observations from people with a direct experience on these fields, moving beyond the technical framework or the theoretical background, right into the problem associated with the actual management of these tools.

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