

Tori Vinson and
Dr. Elizabeth Coggeshall
Department of Modern
Languages and Linguistics

Dante Today: Revamping a Digital Archive for Increased Accessibility

INTRODUCTION

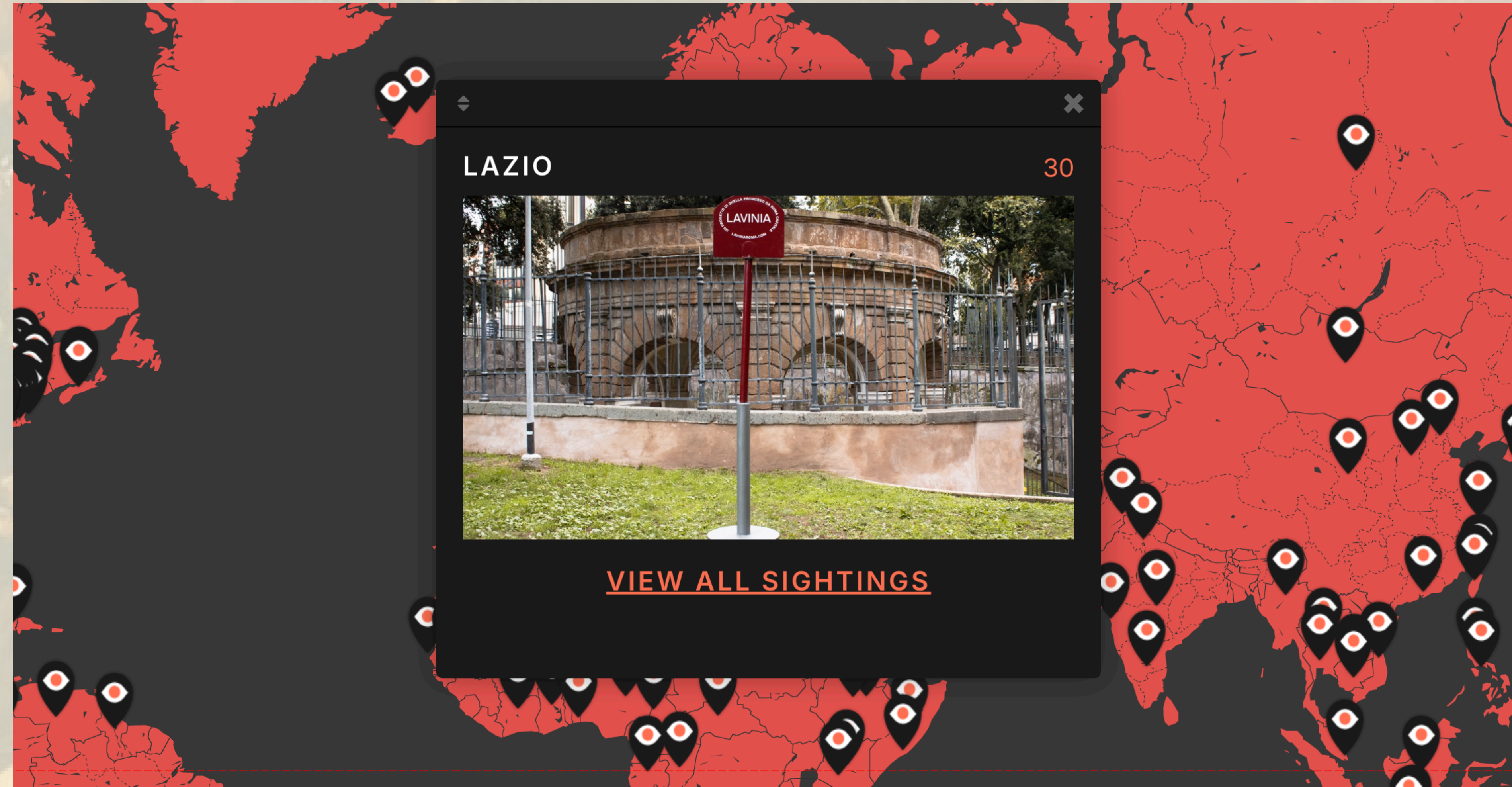
This presentation explains the work of moving over the digital archive website, *Dante Today*, to a new website, and related findings in the process of doing so. The goal of the *Dante Today* website is to create a comprehensive and accessible digital collection of global references to Dante Alighieri and his works, primarily his *Divine Comedy*, across media and time. The significance of Dante Alighieri's work and the reason why a digital archive is important lies in the enduring cultural relevance of his work; for example, the idea of Hell having "circles," or tiers of punishment, comes from Dante's *Inferno*, and this idea is referenced constantly in film, television, and literature. Therefore, the website is meant to store other research, media, or images that reference Dante's work as a source for further research on connections between Dante's work and other issues.

METHODS

The primary goal of this research was moving data from the old *Dante Today* website to the new one while also implementing a new organization system to make the new website more accessible. In order to transfer the data, the researcher:

1. First, the researcher goes to a section of the old website (i.e. "Written Word") and finds a "sighting."
2. The researcher then checks to see if the links are all still working; for example, if the sighting references a blog, the researcher checks if that blog is still up and running. If not, the researcher looks for an alternative website to link, and state its date of retrieval, or notes in the new description that the blog is no longer accessible.
3. The researcher then moves the details of the "sighting" from the old website to an upload form, which allows them to not only enter the original data, but organize where the sighting will be on the new website; for example, where on the map can the sighting be traced to? What is the medium of the sighting (i.e. digital media, visual arts, performance)? What themes of Dante's work does the sighting pertain to? All of these tags will make it easier for visitors of the *Dante Today* website to find sources pertinent to their research.
4. The uploads submitted by the researcher are then reviewed by another researcher to ensure the information is correct, and then published to the new website.

The new *Dante Today* website's "sightings" map.



Screenshot of the previous website's search engine.

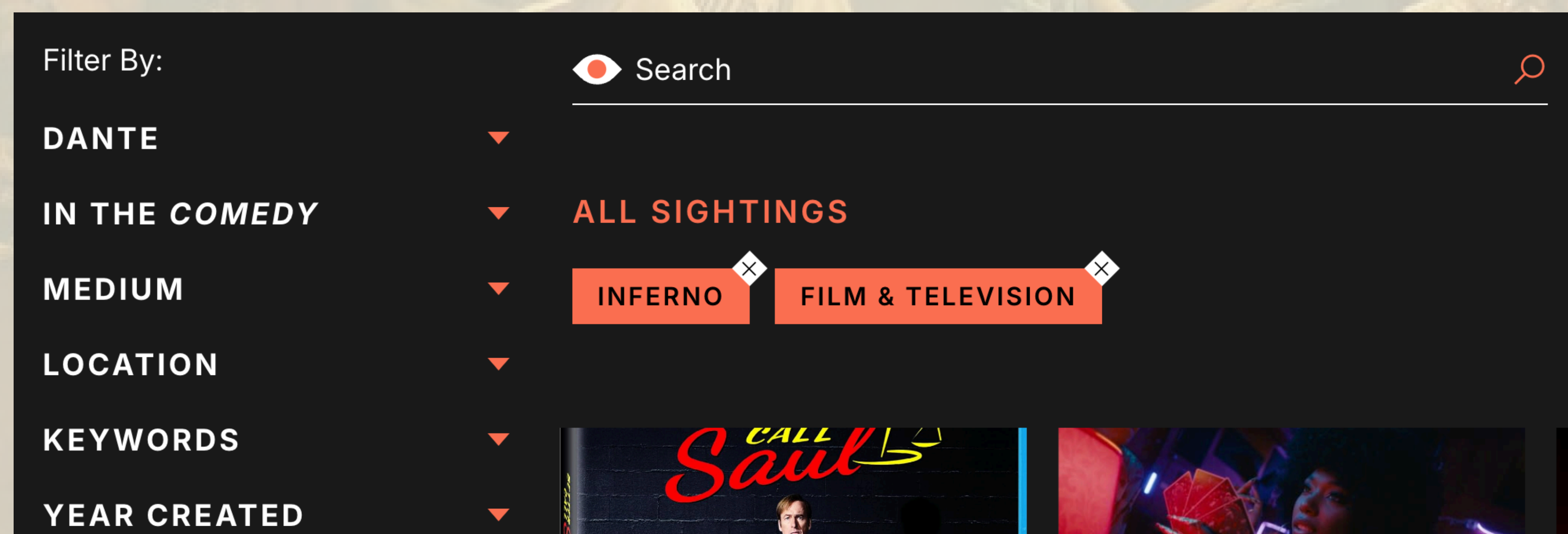
Comparison of the old and new search engines reveals one of the most significant improvements in the transfer process: the new search engine allows visitors to add multiple tags to their search, which brings them to results more specific to their research.

Search this website

Frequent Tags

[2006](#) [2007](#) [2008](#) [2009](#) [2010](#) [2011](#) [2012](#) [2013](#) [2014](#)

Screenshot of the current website's search engine.



RESULTS

The purpose of transferring the data from the old website to the new *Dante Today* website is to improve the efficiency of the website's organization and ensure that visitors to the website are able to find intersections of interest in reference to Dante's works. The success of the data transfer between the two websites has been demonstrated through the publishing of roughly 700 references. Below are some of the preliminary results.

- Entries were tagged with their location, allowing them to be findable on the website's "map," which is visually appealing and comprehensive.
- Entries were also tagged with their medium, key words, and specific connections to the poem.
- Tagging now allows visitors of the site to choose multiple tags in their search of entries, in addition to any key words not listed in tags, to find connections pertinent to their personal research.
- The team of researchers met biweekly to discuss uploading and tagging to ensure that methodology was consistent across individual researchers.

DISCUSSION

The data transfer is still ongoing, with researchers currently working on transferring entries tagged in the medium "Written Word." Furthermore, personal findings through research connected to the website have prompted an interest in finding more connections between Dante's works and children's media. Some preliminary findings have led to examples including:

- *Over the Garden Wall*
- *Adventure Time*
- *The Simpsons*

REFERENCES

