

The dialectology of the future

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New data sources and new analysis methods promise astonishing opportunities for linguistic research at all levels of analysis. We can often now do in hours what would have taken decades for scholars and scientists of earlier times. But these methodological innovations are still far from reaching their potential: We need several additional technical and cultural steps in order to turn the promise into (more than a partial and occasional) reality.

This talk will focus on two key innovations that will have an especially big impact on the dialectology of the future. One is technical: Universal phonetic analysis and pronunciation modeling. The other is cultural: The Open Data movement, combined with new kinds of crowd-sourcing. In both cases, there are hopeful early developments, and momentum in positive directions. These trends will transform the dialectology of the future, in ways that we should be preparing for today.