

**ICoN2014 - 1<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Humanities.**

**The role of Humanities in Contemporary Society.  
Semiotics, Culture, Technologies.**

# **The semiotic expertise in cross-cultural communication and digital archives**

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Two issues:

- 1) **(Public) awareness** of the **centrality** of **meaning** in contemporaneous society.
- 2) The fact that this awareness looks for a specific know-how we call the **semiotic expertise** - a know-how which is of central relevancy for a global meaning economy and market.

Issues

Topics of this lecture:

- 1) Some general remarks on the **centrality of meaning** in the to-days communication society and knowledge economy.
- 2) A first concrete example from **cross-cultural communication (advertising)**.
- 3) A second concrete example (for topic 2) from the field of **digital media and digital (audiovisual) archives**

=> This conference presentation can be downloaded on the [Research Gate web site of Peter Stockinger](#).

Topics

**About the progressive (public) awareness of the central  
importance of meaning**

Since the last 25 or 30 years - **two** major processes:

1. the first one is the process of **omnipresent globalization** and hence ...
  - ⇒ ... a more and more commonly shared **awareness** of *cultural diversity*, of **diverse and diverging** cultural traditions, life styles and trends;
2. the second one is the process of the **progressive pervasiveness of digital technology and media** ...
  - ⇒ in our life
  - ⇒ and in our physical environment

Public awareness  
of meaning



□ Both of these processes put forward ...

⇒ ... the **progressive public** (political, economical, ...) **awareness** of the central (critical) status of **meaning** in **all** of our personal and professional activities ...:

Public awareness  
of meaning



= **(Public) awareness of meaning – what does this mean ??**

1. Importance of the **(regulative, normative) status of** collectively shared **topics or themes** in the life and activities of a social actor

=> "Representations", visions, "ideas", doctrines, groupthinks, know-hows, ...

2. Importance of the **axiological status** of (collectively shared) **topics** or themes

⇒ "**value**" discussion: epistemic, pragmatic, emotional, esthetic, ...

3. Importance of the **use**, the **exploitation** of (collectively shared) **topics**, ...

1. ... in form of actor-specific **discourses**

2. and by the means of **signs**, sign systems, **signifying multimedia codes**

⇒ ***In a nutshell: the program of a semiotics of culture(s)***

**Public awareness  
of meaning**

**Public awareness  
of meaning**

⇒ Meaning is ....

⇒ ... not only an « academic » problem ....

⇒ ... but is, to-day, present in all **major social discourses:**

- Political discourse
- Public administration discourse
- Urban discourse
- Economic and commercial discourse



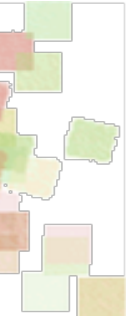
**Short case studies for illustrating this process of (public)  
awareness rising of meaning**



Two short show cases:

- 1) **cross-cultural (global) communication** (cross-cultural advertising);
- 2) **digital media and (audiovisual) archives**

**Case Studies**





## First show case : cross-cultural advertising



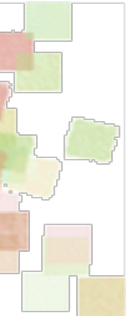
In cross-cultural marketing, an obvious issue for a social organization (company, institution, NGO ...) is ...

⇒ ... to deal “correctly” with the (supposed) specificities of the **cultural codes** and **expectations** of a target public.

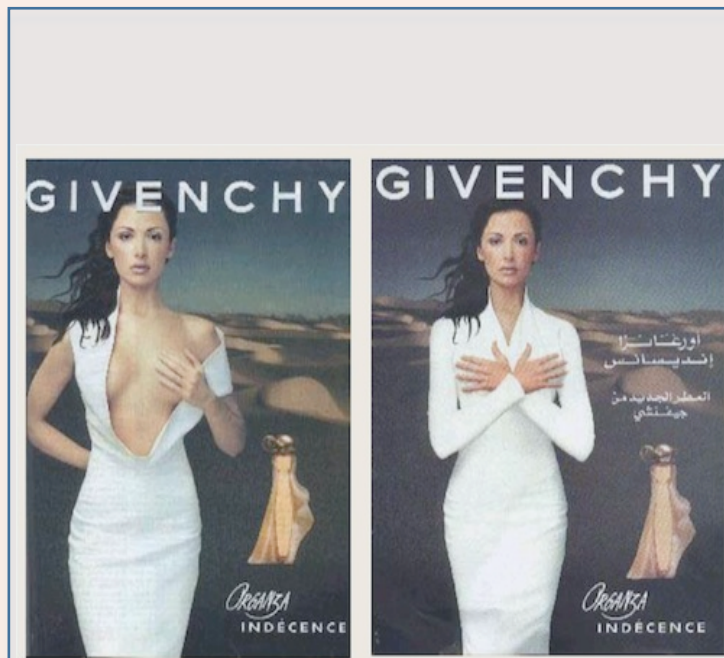
### Case Study 1

Three short examples:

1. The **Givenchy** campaign for the perfume Indécence diffused in Europe and in the Arabic world (specially Arabic peninsula) (2001);
2. The **Mademoiselle Coco** campaign of Chanel with Keira Knightley as the muse diffused in France and in the USA (in 2008);
3. Two versions of the **IKEA catalogue** of 2007 – one for the European market and one for the the Arabic peninsula.



**1<sup>st</sup> Example:** The Givenchy ad for the perfume *Indécence* – the left one diffused in France and Europe, the second one in Saudia Arabia and the Arabic peninsula (in 2001);



<b>Iconic code</b>	Covered/uncovered breast/arms Sleeveless cloth vs cloth with sleeves (+ slogan)
<b>Plastic codes</b>	Gestural (postural) code
	Chromatic code (bleaching of the cloth, ...)
	Framing; (camera) angle; for/back-grounding
<b>Topic</b>	<b>The (cultural) status of the woman with respect to sexuality</b>

Source: Benjamin Pelletier; [Gestion des risques interculturels](#)

Case Study 1

2<sup>nd</sup>) The Mademoiselle Coco campaign in France (upper picture) and in USA/Canada with Keira Knightely (2008)

Case Study 1



<b>Iconic code</b>	Breast and transparent blouse  (+ packshot)
<b>Plastic codes</b>	Topography of the female body (breast)
	Chromatic code (bleaching of K.K. and contrasting)
<b>Topics</b>	1) <b>Decency/indecency;</b> 2) <b>Desirability</b> 3) <b>Truth and advertising</b>


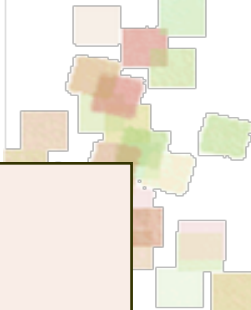
Source: André Gunthert (EHESS), Totem – [Bloc-notes visuel](#) (2009)

3<sup>rd</sup> example) The IKEA catalogue of 2007 for the European market and for a destine from the Arabic peninsula.

Case Study 1



Source: Benjamin Pelletier; [Gestion des risques interculturels](#)



## Some (practical) consequences



📁 Some (theoretical and practical) **consequences**

These examples illustrate very approximately, very generally a possible ...

⇒ ... **(semiotic) expertise** in *cross-cultural communication* ...

- composed of **corpus analyses, field work, desk – information watch** activities, ...

📁 What is needed for building a “semiotic expertise” ... ?

- 1) a theory of the **structural organization** of the textual object (here visual 2D objets).
- 2) An appropriate **work environment** for “producing” a semiotic expertise in the field of cross-cultural/intercultural communication.

**Practical  
consequences**

## 1) Theory of the **structural organization** of the textual object

### 1.1) Why ? - Issues :

- Controlling of the **criteria** we are using in our corpus **descriptions**;
- The specification ("design") of the "**field work**";
- Controlling of "**desk research**" (information watch; benchmarking, ...)
- Controlling of the **experimentations** with possible variants of an ad, ...

### 1.2) Aspects:

1. **Compositional nature** of the textual object (part/whole; functional composition; collections; "textscapes", ...);
2. **Layers of meaning** of a textual object (topical/thematic; narrative; rhetorical; expression modalities; ...)
3. **Functional role of a text in a social practice** (campaign, ...)
4. **Mediatizing of a textual object** (media support, media environment, ...)

Practical  
consequences



2) An **appropriate work environment** for semiotic expertise recovers many things – more particularly :

1. **Work methodology** (“workflow” of a semiotic expertise: phases, tasks, ...);
2. **Technical tools** (analysis, information watch, experimentation with textual objects, ...);
3. Intended **results** and **outcomes**.
4. **Digital archiving** of all the objects of the expertise and of the expertise itself (capitalizing on previous results, fostering innovation, new services for clients, ...).

**Practical  
consequences**

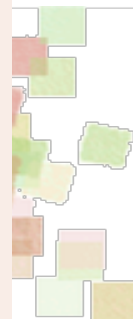




## Second show case: digital media and digital archives

- ❑ Since the last ten to fifteen years: *massive production and circulation on the web* of any kind of *digital media objects*: texts, images, audiovisual records, sound records, etc.
- ❑ To-day: **platforms** govern, organize the “**digital life and culture**” of the world
  - Platform, basically, are **repositories** + **services** for the users
- ❑ Examples of platforms:
  - “**world platforms**”: YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Facebook, Google+, Yahoo, One Drive (Microsoft), ...
  - **Institutional, national and transnational repositories** and service **platforms**: Europeana, European Film Gateway, ...; HAL (France), ...
  - **CMS** (Content Management Systems) **platforms**: Word Press, Joomla, Umbraco, ...

## Case Study 2



## Case Study 2

- Example: The official *statistics* of **You Tube** ...
  - augmentation of almost *100 hours of online video per minute*;
  - about *1 billion of regular users* of the platform;
  - *every month* people regard videos on the platform during *6 billion of hours* (= one hour per month for the *whole world population* ...);
- Similar statistics for other "digital platforms": *Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, Twitter, ....*

⇒ **Principal activities on/with platforms ...**

1. **Storage** of digital data
2. **Classification, description/indexing, commenting** of those data
3. **Publishing** of those data: **web sites** and **portals**, digital documents, **remediatized editorial projects**, ...
4. **Communication, sharing**, ... (social media)

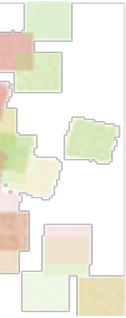
Case Study 2



To-day : **tremendous number** diverse digital archives or libraries ....

1. **Personal archives**
2. **Archives** produced by **informal social groups** of friends or colleagues
3. **Archives of virtual communities of practice** sharing a *common interest* in a behavior, a style of life, artefacts, practices ...
4. **Archives of "ethnic" communities, diasporas, descendants of ancient communities....**
5. **Archives** from **institutional actors**:
  - ... companies, political parties, territorial collectivities, transnational entities (UNESCO, EU, ...)
  - ... and finally educational and research institutions ....

Case Study 2







## What is a digital archive, basically speaking ?

3 central dimensions:

1. **Repositories** of selected, pre-processed and recorded **data**

=> Selected data = **documents** !of a (cultural, historical, ...) **heritage** of a social actor

2. **Repositories** of the **metadata**, i.e. information identifying and describing the data

- a) Metadata identify the "**profile**" (the provenience) of a data.
- b) Metadata describe **form, content** and, eventually, **uses** of a data.
- c) Metadata describe **legal rules** and the **archival history** of a data

3. **Publications** in form of web portals, catalogues, ... and **repurposed (re-mediatized, ...)** data ...

### Case Study 2

⇒ **Impact of digital archives on (digital) humanities ?**

⇒ Digital archives = to-day one of **the major challenges** in **(digital) humanities** in general and **digital communication** in particular ...

⇒ **Central topics and issues:**

1. (cultural, scientific, professional, ...) **heritage preservation & exploitation**;

2. **digital resource centers** for ...

- ... vocational learning, informal learning, community learning, ...;
- ... digital cultural industry and mediation;
- ... professional communication; ...

3. **open data**, access to open data and use of open data for research and education;

4. use of **linked data** (connection between different data) in historical, cultural and social research ...

Case Study 2



**An example of a digital (audiovisual) archive:  
the ARA (Audiovisual Research Archive) program**

ARA: a French R&D (research and development) program, based in Paris, at the "Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme" (appr.: Institut of Human and Social Sciences).

- Since **2002** - 3 main missions

**1. Digital scientific and cultural heritage** in the humanities: production (collection) of data (videos), processing, description/indexing, publication, translation, enrichment, long term preservation, valorization, ....

=> audiovisual (video) library (6500 hours) + **ARA web portals** and online publications

**2. Work environment:** workflow (methodology + procedures); software tools + metalinguistic resources (ontologies, processing models, ...)

=> **Studio ASA** (Audiovisual Semiotic Workshop)

**3. Community platform:** offer the whole work environment to especially "academic" stakeholders"

=> French ANR project [Campus AAR](#) (**Semioscape platform**)

## 1) The general ARA video portal (French version): <http://www.archivesaudiovisuelles.fr>

- Multilingual version of ARA portal: English, German, Spanish, Chinese, ...

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Audiovisual Research Archives (ARA). At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Meet ARA, Team, Scientific Committee, Documents, Giving to ARA, Your Opinions, Contact, and Links. A search bar with a Google Custom Search button and an OK button is also present. Below the navigation bar, the main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a sidebar with links to the ARA Video Library, ARA Publishing House, and ARA Encyclopedias. The main content area features a welcome message, a section for video highlights of the week, and a newsletter sign-up form. The video highlights section includes three items: a poem by Li Bo, a video by Rémy GASTAMBIDE, and a video by Quang Hai TRAN. The newsletter sign-up form includes a text input for the email address and an OK button. The video highlights section also includes a section for news and events, with a link to the new ARA magazine.

**ARA Video Library**  
[Topic Catalogue](#)  
[Collections](#)  
[Videos in Original Version](#)  
[Authors](#)  
[Entire Audiovisual Collection](#)

**ARA Publishing House**  
**Hypermedia Folders**  
[All Folders](#)  
[Folders by Discipline](#)  
[Profile and Knowledge Level](#)

**Bilingual Folders**

**ARA Encyclopedias**  
[People and Cultures of the World](#)  
[Linguistic and Cultural Diversity](#)

The Audiovisual Research Archives Program (ARA) of ESCoM welcomes you to its portal devoted to scientific and cultural heritage. ARA's material covers all the human and social sciences and has an international focus on research, education, development, and intercultural dialogue.

**|| Video highlights of the week ||**

Un poème de Li Bo, vu en chinois et français et entendu en chinois et russe

Rémy GASTAMBIDE : Les images dans la peau

Quang Hai TRAN : Âm nhạc Việt Nam từ những ngày đầu đến nay

Quang Hai TRAN : La musique vietnamienne depuis ses origines jusqu'à nos jours

**Newsletter**  
Your email  
.....  
OK  
[Forgot Password?](#)  
[Register](#)

**|| News & Events ||**  
The new ARA magazine is out ! To consult on your smartphones, tablets & computers

Archives Audiovisuelles de la Recherche - Audiovisual Research Archives  
1 lecteur  
19 articles  
2 flaps de pages

The ARA program

The ARA portal

**2<sup>nd</sup> example of republishing/repurposing** a sub-part of the video archive fonds of ARA in form of ...

## Specialized web portals

Example: **SCC** – [Semiotica, Cultura, Comunicazione](#) (cooperation between university La Sapienza of Rom and FMSH)

The ARA program

Le site SCC

The screenshot displays the SCC website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Presentazione', 'Sostieni SCC', 'Cooperare', 'I vostri consigli', 'Contatti', and 'Link'. Below this, the main content area features a header with the title 'Semiotica Cultura Comunicazione' and logos for Sapienza Università di Roma, ESCOM, and FMSH. A search bar is present with the text 'Google® Custom Search' and an 'OK' button. The main content is divided into several sections:

- La videoteca**: Includes links for 'Catalogo tematico', 'Le collezioni', 'Video in versione originale', 'Gli autori', and 'Tutti i contenuti audiovisivi'.
- L'enciclopedia ipermedia (work in progress)**: Includes links for 'Introduzione alla Semiotica', 'Il video-glossario', and 'L'équipe di realizzazione'.
- I documenti ipermedia**: Includes links for 'Lista completa dei contenuti multimediali', 'Documenti per disciplina', and 'Profilo e livello di conoscenza'.

In the center, there is a video player titled 'Un video dall'archivio' showing a scene with a person on stage. To the right of the video player, there is a section titled 'Selezione dei documenti ipermedia' with a grid of video thumbnails. Below the video player, there is a text block: 'La spettacolarizzazione del corpo, tra sacro e profano'. To the right of this text, there is a section titled 'Selezione video' with a grid of video thumbnails. At the bottom right, there is a sidebar with a search filter menu:

- Com'è nata e che cos'è la semiotica (22)
  - Storia/storie della semiotica (10)
  - Le definizioni di semiotica (14)
  - Riferimenti classici (9)
- Campi di indagine (28)
  - Arti, culture e società (18)
  - Comunicazione, media e tecnologie (12)
  - Dinamiche dell'interpretazione e dei processi cognitivi (7)
- Costruzione teorica (30)
  - Teorie, metodi, concetti (22)
  - Questioni epistemologiche (14)
  - Interdisciplinarietà (10)
- Studiosi e centri di ricerca (15)
  - Who is who (7)
  - Luoghi di ricerca e di formazione (7)
  - Storie professionali (3)
- Le sfide e i punti sensibili (8)
  - Prospettive e avvenire della semiotica (6)
  - Etica e ricerca semiotica (2)
  - La semiotica in azione (1)

At the bottom of the sidebar, there is a search bar with the text 'Ricerca avanzata' and a link for 'Aiuto'.

**3<sup>rd</sup> example of republishing/repurposing** a sub-part of the video archive fonds of ARA in form of ...

**Dynamic subjects corpora** (example – the “encomienda” in Argentina during the 18<sup>th</sup> century portal: AMSUR)

The screenshot shows the AMSUR website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with categories: Dossiers, Langues et civilisations, Histoire et archéologie, Arts et spiritualités, Environnement et écologie, Les pays d'Amérique latine, and Español. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with: Vidéothèque, Sujets, Lexique, Map, Contributeurs, Institutions, Paroles et propos, and Collections filmiques. A search bar with a magnifying glass icon and a 'Retour' button is also present.

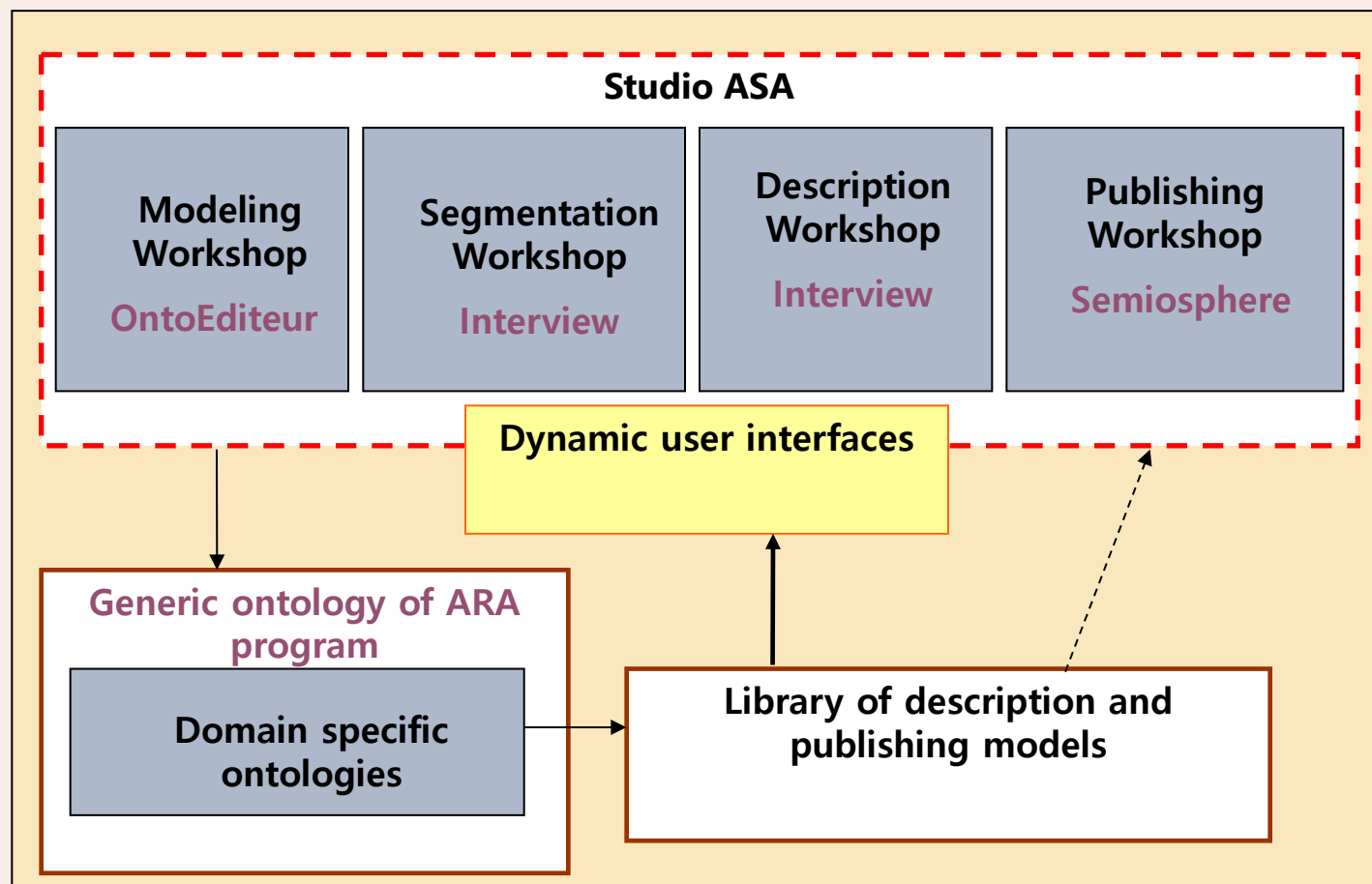
The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column displays a subject list under the heading 'Sujet: Immigration et colonisation'. The list includes various topics such as 'Colonisation espagnole des Amériques (1)', 'Colonisations européennes en Argentine (XVIIIe-XIXe-XXe) (1)', and 'Encomienda (4)'. The 'Encomienda (Argentine) (3)' item is highlighted in blue.

The right column shows a list of video results. The first result is a chapter titled 'L'ancienne lagune huarpe du piémont de Mendoza et l'adaptation des populations, de la faune et de la flore à la transformation venue des différentes colonisations et immigrations' by Gregorio MANZUR, dated 09/05/2006. The second result is a video titled 'Poblaciones indígenas de Mendoza en los siglos XVI y XVII' by Dirección General de Escuelas Gobierno de Mendoza, dated 01/05/2004. The third result is a video titled 'Indios, españoles y mestizos en la Mendoza colonial' by Dirección General de Escuelas Gobierno de Mendoza, dated 26/02/2013.

The ARA  
program

Le portail  
AMSUR

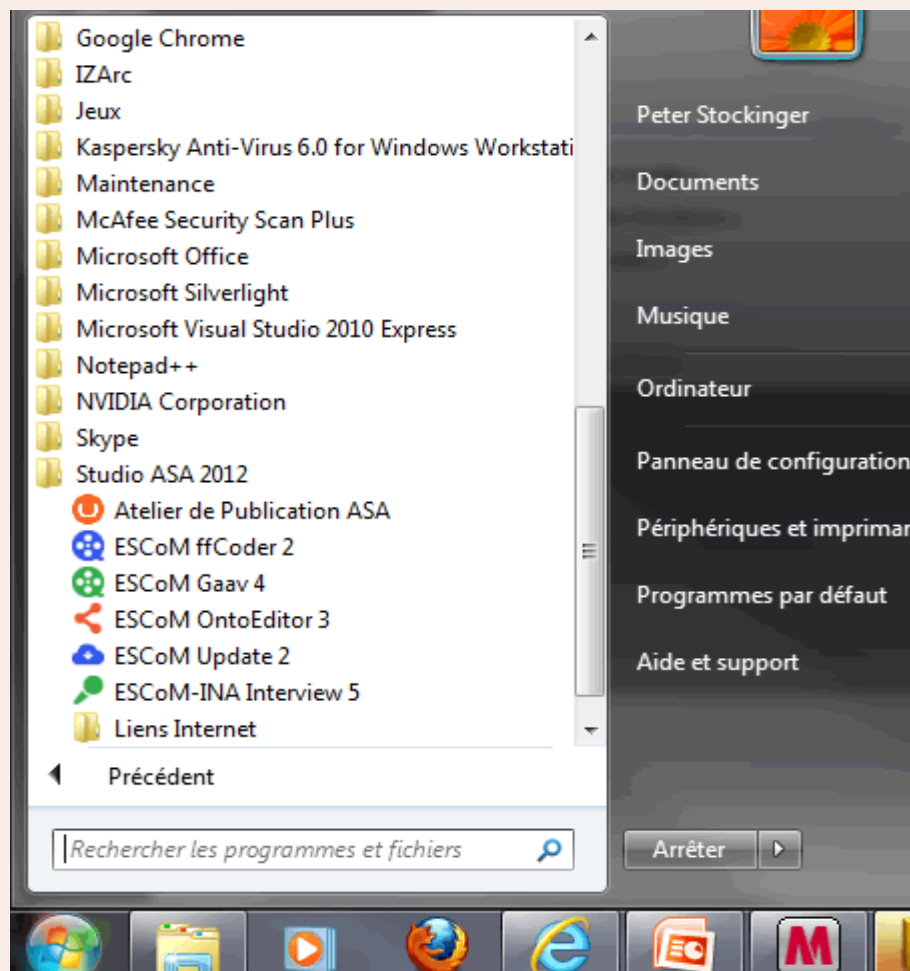
- The working environment for building archives, analyzing and publishing video corpora – The **Studio ASA** (Atelier de Sémiotique Audiovisuelle)




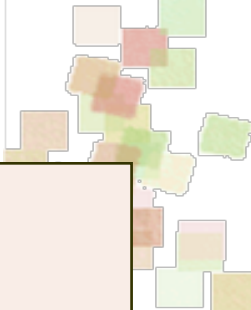
The Studio ASA



- ❑ Le **Studio ASA** – a set of software tools which can be downloaded on a PC ...



The Studio ASA



## Some (practical) consequences

### Some consequences:

- Semiotic expertise is – potentially – central here but requires however, a **good technical culture**, a very good knowledge of this extremely dynamic sector ...
- It also requires the **capacity to cooperate with technical teams** (developers, knowledge engineers, librarians, archivists, ...)

Consequences

□ **Semiotic expertise** is concerned with (roughly speaking):

- 1) The specification – design – of the **workflow** of an **archival project** and the **procedures (instructions)** to follow.
- 2) The production of the **conceptual environment for analyzing** (describing, indexing, classifying, commenting, ...) digital data:

**descriptive meta-language** for analyzing the universe of discourse of a digital archive –

ontologies, and models of description,  
thesaurus, ...

- 3) The definition of the **conceptual environment of the publishing/ republishing** of described and indexed corpora of digital data

=> **Publishing models (scenarios)**

Consequences