



ODIS: developing structured archival authority data in a contextual database

RelReS School: Use and Study of Special Documents
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Workshop

Goal of this workshop is to get acquainted with the global structure and main functionalities of the ODIS database. The focus will be put on the biographical module.

1. Browsing to ODIS and logging in

- Open your browser and go to the ODIS website: <https://www.odis.eu>.
- Once you've opened the ODIS website, make sure that in the menu 'Language' / 'Taal' (top right) English ('en') is selected.
- Click on 'Log in' and insert your user name and password.
- Then click the button 'Log in'.

2. Creating a new biographical record

- Choose a person. Make sure that the person is not yet described in ODIS, by doing a simple search on the family name (type the family name in the search box top left and click on 'Simple').
- Click the button 'Person' in the menu 'Create new records' on the left. The screen to create a new biographical record appears.
- Insert a reference surname and at least a reference first name or a date of birth or a date of death (the year is sufficient). You can also insert other data, but that is not mandatory.
- Choose 'Yes' in the menu 'Intermediary' and 'ODIS' in the menu 'Data control'.
- Click the 'Add' button. Your record will be inserted into the database and will get a unique ID.
- After you've inserted your record, you will automatically access the complete input environment for a biographical record. You can open and close the

different field groups by clicking on the titles. You can also easily navigate by using the menu on the left.

3. Completing the biographical record

- You can now browse through the input environment and fill in the data you want. For this exercise, make sure that you use at least a free text field, a repeatable field group and a relational field group. Also try to use one of the multicontextual thesauri. More information can be found below. Detailed instructions on the use of ODIS are available via the button 'Help pages input environment' in the database (menu on the left).

It's important to realise that ODIS is a **flexible instrument**: every user chooses the focus, scope and profundity of his or her data input. Except some authority entries, there are no mandatory field groups.

- Besides the authority entries ('Identification' and 'Names'), there are **different types of fields / field groups**:
 - **Free text fields**:
 - = 'Profile', 'Biographical outline', 'Sources', 'Working notes' and 'Working notes input group'.
 - Here, you can type a text and click on 'Commit'. The free text fields are equipped with layout options.
 - **Repeatable field groups**:
 - = 'Domicile and places of residence', 'Languages', 'Titles', 'Decorations', 'Education', 'Diplomas', 'Occupations', 'Political mandates', 'Additional political positions', 'Keywords', 'Geographical keywords' and 'Authors'.
 - Here, you choose a term from the list of choices / thesaurus and you click on 'Add'. In most cases, you can also periodise your input and include remarks (this is not mandatory). You can also update or remove inserted data (buttons 'Update' and 'Remove').
 - Some special field groups:
 - ❖ 'External catalogues': here you can create relations with a set of external library catalogues.
 - ❖ 'Remarks' and 'Online annexes': here you type a remark or a URL and you click on 'Add'.
 - ❖ 'Illustrations': here you can upload up to five illustrations (PNG, JPG or GIF; maximum 70 kB).
 - **Relational field groups**
 - = 'Relations with organisations / persons / publications / archival units / families / events / buildings'.

- By defining a type of relation and a related entity, you can create a link between two ODIS records. So, information clusters can be built. If the related entity doesn't have an ODIS record yet, you can immediately create it by using the button 'New'.
- An important feature of the ODIS database is its **multicontextuality**:
 - Some thesauri ('Decorations', 'Levels of education', 'Political positions / bodies / competences') are available for different contexts / countries.
 - On top of the record, you can find a menu 'Context'. Standard, 'ALL' is selected. You can at any moment change this into a particular context / country.
 - The basic terms in the multicontextual thesauri are in the 'original' languages (e.g. French for France, Italian for Italy, ...). Nonetheless, when you put your cursor on a term, a tooltip with an English translation will appear. When you do a search, the translations are also searched.
 - The **geographical thesaurus** (see 'Place of birth / death', 'Domicile and places of residence', 'Geographical keywords') covers nearly all European countries.
- To check the export format of your record, click the button 'Export format' on top.

4. Looking up an existing record

- Insert a search term (e.g. the name of an organisation, the surname of a person, ...) into the field 'Search' (top left) and click on 'Simple' (search on name or title) or 'Full text'.
- A list of search results appears. Click the name of the record you were looking for. The output format of the record appears.
- When you have the necessary rights, you can click the button 'Update' on top of the record and access the input environment again.

If you have questions or suggestions, you can always contact us:

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