Abstract

Korea’s more than 13,000 cultural heritages hold great potential for research and education about Korea’s history and culture. However, much of the information about these heritages is collected in the form of interpretive texts, the kind most commonly encountered on information panels at cultural heritage sites or in informational pamphlets. With the intention of sharing this knowledge more broadly, the Cultural Heritage Administration, which oversees Korea’s cultural heritages, has provided these texts online. However, due to inconsistencies in content, structure, style, and translation, as well as a failure to utilize hyperlinks or other technologies made possible by computers, the interpretive texts fail to be useful to those embracing cultural heritages as a source of knowledge creation, curation, or dissemination.

This paper turns to digital humanities to find solutions for the systematic problems which are holding information about Korean cultural heritages from its potential. This paper suggests the utilization of a semantic web ontology, through which the building blocks of cultural heritage texts are turned into relational data. Such a relational database would be supported by a multimedia archive of old records and new recordings, and brought to users by an interface which allows input and output of data in potentially diverse forms including text, timelines, maps, augmented/virtual reality, wiki and more. This approach to Korean cultural heritage information embodies digital humanities’ philosophies of collaboration, open sharing, and connection, which will help improve discourse on and encourage new insights into Korea’s history and culture in the long term.

Key words: Korea, Korean studies, cultural heritage, digital humanities, semantic web, relational database, translation