

Highbrow August 2011 Update

Highbrow will be used in two courses this semester. Here at Harvard, Jeffrey Schnapp will be using it in his course, "The Cosmos of the Comedy," RLL Italian/Comp Lit 131, to provide students with a navigable overview of the rich commentary tradition around Dante's Divine Comedy.

Screencast showing Highbrow in action on this large (over 270 thousand annotations) dataset

Augusta Rohrbach at Washington State will be using it in her course on Emerson for student generated annotations. Adding support for interactive edits has been a major thrust of this round of Highbrow development.

Emerson instance

In June, Highbrow was released under the MIT open source license and is available on github.

May 2011 Update

Highbrow now supports track aggregation, allowing multiple individual tracks of annotations to be combined and displayed as a single, aggregated track. This is useful for two reasons: first, because it makes datasets with large numbers of tracks less overwhelming (just 7 tracks - one per century - for the Dante data instead of over 50), and perhaps more importantly, because the aggregations are often interesting in themselves (how did 19th century commentators differ as a group from 14th century commentators?). Some interface development remains to be done around allowing the user to interactively define groups, but groups defined by the configuration code can be displayed now. Users may toggle the visibility of available tracks and groups using the "settings" dialog.

Other Highbrow developments since last month's update include: intuitive "grab drag" panning for navigation, regular expression search in addition to simple substring matching, and a primitive "highbrow for video" demo.

April 2011 Update

Highbrow "deep zoom pyramid" tiling now works, enabling Google maps style display of very large collections of scholarly references. A live demo showing 53 tracks of commentary (over 100 thousand annotations) on Dante's Divine Comedy is available at <http://osc.hul.harvard.edu/highbrow/demo/dante> (please note that Highbrow does not yet work on Internet Explorer)

Although much user interface tweaking and code packaging remain to be done, the main technical challenge of the project is now complete.

Continually updated Highbrow screenshots, documentation, and live demos are available at: <http://osc.hul.harvard.edu/highbrow/>