UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE
CERN

Contribution ID: **2**   Type: **not specified**

Tech Session: Naming on the Web: What scholars should want, and what they can have

Wednesday, 19 June 2013 14:25 (35 minutes)

It's alleged that when Zhou Enlai was asked what he thought of the French Revolution he replied: "It's too early to tell". The scholarly community could be forgiven for wishing they could say the same about the Web, but we don't have that luxury. The incentives for moving scholarship, *all* scholarship, onto the Web are enormous, and the penalties for failing to do so are rapidly increasing—for the current generation of students, it is increasingly true that "if it's not on the Web, it doesn't exist". Yet how can responsible scholarship depend on such a manifestly uncertain technology? My colleague Michael Sperberg-McQueen once said, in his role as technical advisor to the Model Editions Partnership: "[W]hen I advise people on building systems that will last for the time spans needed for cultural heritage data, I will advise them to build on some system whose design story holds up for more than a minute and a half before an inconsistency is introduced." In this talk I'll try to separate the *necessary* properties of *any* web-scale naming system from the *contigent* socio-technical realities of the Web as it is today. I'll close by attempting to make clear exactly what trade-offs confront us as we try to move scholarly discourse onto the Web in a responsible manner.

Presenter: Mr THOMPSON, Henry (U. Edinburgh)

Session Classification: Plenary 1