

The BackBone Thesaurus (BBT):



Evolving a meta-thesaurus for the humanities through collaborative, distributed thesauri maintenance and development

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BBT in a nutshell

The BBT^[1] is the research outcome of work undertaken by the *DARIAH Thesaurus Maintenance* $WG^{[2]}$ in an effort to design and establish a coherent overarching thesaurus for the humanities, under which specialist thesauri and structured vocabularies used across scholarly communities can be aligned and form a thesaurus federation.

It aims at enabling cross-disciplinary resource discovery while ensuring compatibility with thesauri that cover highly specific scientific domains and areas of knowledge in development.

It is constructed and maintained collectively by a distributed group of DARIAH affiliated organizations (AA,[3] DAI,[4] FORTH,[5] FRANTIQ [6]).

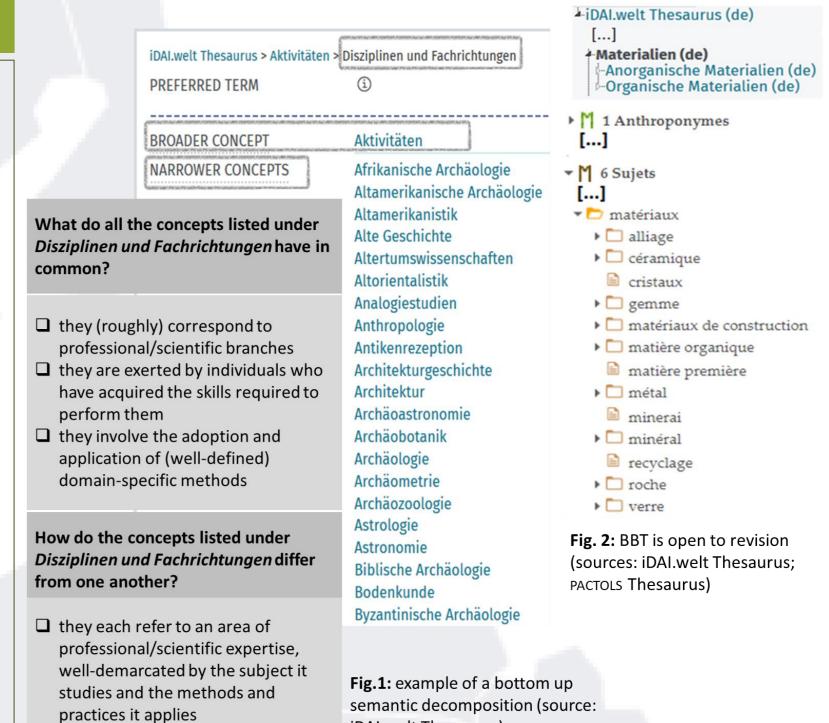
[1] www.backbonethesaurus.eu, [2] www.dariah.eu/activities/working-groups/thesaurus-maintenance, [3] www.academyofathens.gr, [4] www.dainst.org, [5] www.ics.forth.gr, [6] www.frantiq.fr

Methodological principles: The design of BBT

- ☐ BBT makes use of a small number of high-level concepts (facets & hierarchies).
- BBT facets and hierarchies were obtained through a bottom-up analysis of classificatory systems used by humanities researchers [Fig. 1].
 - □ Only the **intensional properties** of the specialist thesauri concepts were taken into consideration for the definition of BBT high-level concepts.
 - BBT concepts are completely disjoint from one another and are divided in: FACETS: mutually exclusive high-level concepts that appeal to general categories of human perception
 - are to some extent "objective" and valid from a cross-disciplinary perspective.

HIERARCHIES: stand in a hierarchical is A relation to their respective top terms

- are differentiated among them by at least one salient intensional feature.
- BBT assumes an open-world position: facets and hierarchies within them do not exhaust the domain they classify.
- **□ BBT** is deliberately open to revision [Fig. 2].



iDAI.welt Thesaurus)



Fig.5: discussing a proposed change

BBTalk: A tool for federated thesaurus management

- BBT aims to bring together a federation of vocabularies spanning the Arts and Humanities and to render them interoperable.
- BBTalk [7] is an online service for managing thesauri integration with the BBT and updating its content, when necessary.
- BBTalk offers a thesaurus alignment functionality allowing end users:
 - create links among specialist thesauri and the BBT [Fig. 3].
 - provide evidence confirming/disconfirming the high-level terms of the thesaurus itself.
- □ Clashes between BBT concepts and thesauri aligned to it can be resolved by updating the content and/or structure of the BBT [Fig. 4].
- Updating the BBT involves the introduction of new high-level terms plus the deletion/merging or splitting of existing ones.
 - □ BBTalk keeps track of such actions and allows for version control.
- ☐ Changes are implemented after careful consideration and discussion among the BBT managing team, until consensus is reached.
 - BBTalk supports discussions among end-users and its managing team [Fig.5].
- ☐ BBTalk supports multilingual content.
 - □ BBT content is now available in English, French, German and Greek.

[7] https://www.backbonethesaurus.eu/BBTalk/

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