

CDT Web Science Trip to Bangalore, India

By Lesia Tkacz



The Web Science for Development 2020 event was a valuable experience both on a research level as well as a personal level, thanks to our fantastic hosts at IIIT-Bangalore.

Learning about how Web Science is applied to the Indian web and social context was an invigorating experience with relevance to my own research.

After presenting my research on the emerging form of computer generated novels at the PhD colloquium, it was suggested that I consider possible parallels with oral literature. Oral literature as a form could better conceptualize how narratives emerge on social media, and how remix culture proliferates on the web. This has inspired me to consider my research from a fresh perspective.

Discussions with peers and professors at the IIIT-Bangalore Web Science Lab led me to begin to understand the importance of oral literature and collective cognition and memory in Indian culture. Some literary perspectives privilege the concept of there being a singular, original and authoritative source of an idea or narrative. But my understanding of the oral narrative form is that it accepts mutability and multiple versions of an idea or narrative - this is precisely what is seen in many generated novel projects. I also learnt that in oral form, narratives can be considered to be better protected because they cannot be erased by destroying original written records; they can exist in the minds of many people who transmit narratives across generations. This may have interesting parallels to how a story and its various versions might proliferate on the web.