Rediscovering Renaissance Recipes: Digital Presentation for a 16th Century Text

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Background
In cooperation with Dr. Timothy Tomasik, Professor of World Languages and Cultures, the project team seeks to create a web-based system for displaying and indexing a French recipe book from 1509, *Platine en francoys*, which has been transcribed into an XML (Extensible Markup Language)-based file format using the conventions of TEI. The tool would allow users to read, compare, and search recipes digitally rather than relying on a lengthy, unorganized physical book.

Transcription
Our project was made possible by the efforts of French students Anna Corner, Ellie Benz, Maddie Bohlin, and Annika Brown, in collaboration with Dr. Tomasik, who have worked to digitally transcribe the text from the original book and format it as XML documents for our group to display in our web interface.

Development
The system was developed using an Agile environment; this allows the team to gradually design, implement, and test new features in short sprints, rather than trying to develop the entire program on one lengthy schedule. This allows for dynamic prioritization of which features are most important for the client, as well as ensuring that the team always has a working version of the software, regardless of delays, unforeseen bugs, or changes in the needs of the client.

Our team expanded on a pre-existing code base, which included XSLT files used to convert the digitized text into the format we needed.

Web-Based Display
The application implements a webpage that allows users to select up to two properly formatted XML-based files to view in their browser. The application can display a single file, or two files in a side-by-side view for multitasking, comparing recipes, or displaying different revisions or translations of the same recipe at once. The web view also includes links on the side to page numbers, which take the place of page breaks in the original text; users can click these links to view scans of each page of the original text, allowing them to view the style and formatting of the physical book while accessing the easier-to-read transcribed version in their browser.

The HTML formatting converts the original, ornately written text into a format easily read by both humans and computers.

Implementation
The project uses XML-based transcriptions of the original text with TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) formatting standards. The web client is written in JavaScript using NodeJS and the XMLDOM parsing library, with HTML/CSS for the display.

Future Work
Planned additional functionality includes searching for specific recipes, including searching by relevant tags and ingredients, and a facsimile-focused view enabling easy side-by-side viewing of the digital transcriptions of a recipe and scans of the original text. The interface will also feature a complete table of contents that allows for quick navigation through the contents of *Platine en francoys*.

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