

Meg Morrison
Medieval Lit.
Web Evaluation Project

Georgetown University's *Labyrinth*

The website I chose to evaluate was maintained by Georgetown University up until 2002. It is called The Labyrinth (www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth) and is no longer an active website (although there is a link that directs you to an updated search engine for medieval studies). I will be focusing on the original website, keeping in mind that it has not been updated for what seems like two full years now.

The homepage for The Labyrinth is straightforward and clean with a lucid mission-statement/philosophy being the first thing listed. A superfluous link leading to a mythical interpretation of the philosophy is listed next. The page itself does not contain very much information, but the simplistic characteristics are somewhat misleading. Once you begin to click on links it becomes clear that there is an immense amount of information connected to this website. The Labyrinth covers many subjects of medieval literature through mostly all links associated to other valid university sites (which are usually maintained by specialty professors and professional web creators).

Two individuals established the site itself. One: a specialist in web design. The other: a professor at Georgetown University. The web designer's biography gave useful information about her credibility but the professor's link led only to his professional website (which gave no real evidence that he knew anything about medieval studies). There was contact information for both and their names/relevant dates of publication were on every page.

The purpose of this page is purely scholarly in nature. It is a university website, hence the “edu,” and it represents an attempt to provide a central web meeting-place for medieval scholars. The information given is very unique in that it does not seem to follow a particular pattern or theme. Some of the links I found irrelevant and not in use anymore (this may have to do with the website no longer being maintained). But most of the links led to purely factual and informational sites that have vast arrays of large-scale medieval works.

Although the grammar and spelling were flawless, the initial homepage design is scattered (and not necessarily appealing or exciting). None of the subjects seem to correlate with one another and there was no flow between the lists of links. This site was not meant to entertain viewers or motivate new thought. It is an online library of medieval works, a networking between prestigious universities and medieval scholars.

There is a link leading to a lone search engine that is actively maintained and promotes new and updated information. It provides a way to internally navigate the online world of scholarly medieval study. The fact that the university optioned to abandon the labyrinth project and set up this ulterior search engine (that provides essentially the same information) is incentive to believe that this site performs better as an online directory than an existing web page.