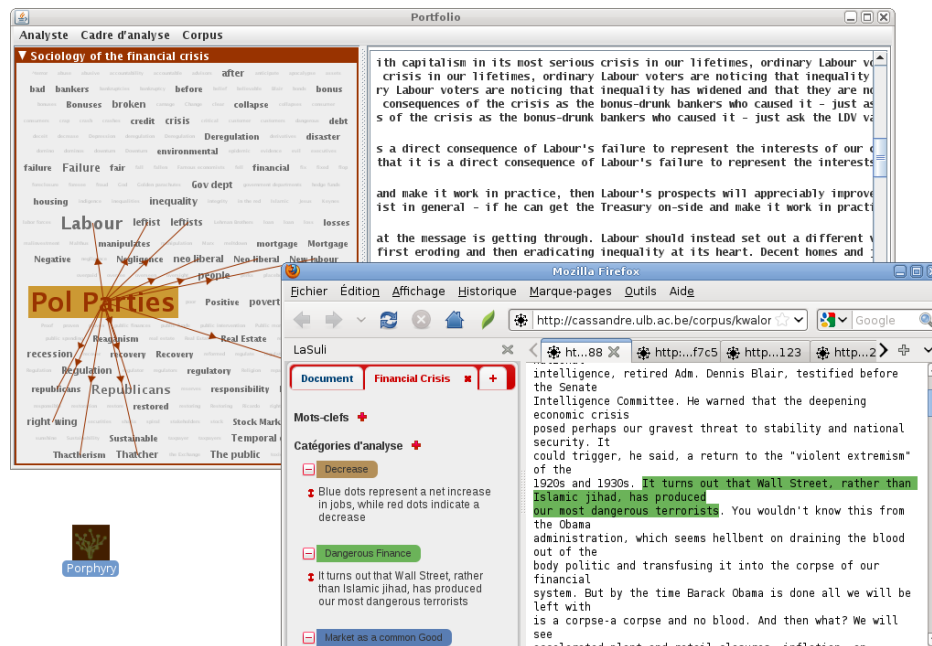


Cassandra's approach

This contribution highlights the kind of results the Cassandra software is likely to provide to social research. As a contribution to the Kwalon experiment, it is based on an empirical investigation of a text corpus about the financial crisis.

Cassandra is part of the Hypertopic platform for collaborative analysis of qualitative data. This platform is designed by Aurélien Béné, Christophe Lejeune and Chao Zhou. As a collaborative platform, it includes servers and clients software. There are 2 servers and 2 clients :

1. Argos server is dedicated to the “manual” coding of texts and images (in a classical CAQDAS-like fashion)
2. Cassandra is a server providing “auto-coding” features.
3. LaSuli is the client that assists the user in coding texts.
4. Porphyry is a client that helps browse and combine codes.



On the previous screenshot, Porphyry (above) features Cassandra's notional families while, combined with Argos, LaSuli Firefox add-ons (beneath) provides a simple CAQDAS environment.

Classical CAQDAS coding

Combined with Argos, LaSuli provides a simple CAQDAS environment. Argos and LaSuli provide thus a classical framework for qualitative analysis. For instance, in the Kwalon experiment, we were interested in positive and negative judgements about the role of various stakeholders. The coding reveals some actors' positive assumptions about the role of corporates, for instance : “Corporates [...] have to be seen to be serving the community”. By contrast with alternate CAQDAS packages, various researchers are allowed to remotely code shared texts.

Notional families auto-coding

As a complement to classical CAQDAS approach, Cassandra provides semi-automatic coding. While reading the text, the researcher identifies, in the text, the keywords relevant for his/her research. Prolonging the same research interest, we picked keywords that refers to negative or positive statements. We thus gather keywords such as “bad”, “dangerous”, “toxic”, “stupid”, “evil” in the *notional family* (Luhn 1957 : 314) of negative statements. Various families (with all matching phrases) can then be compared or combined. For instance, once the conceptual family of the market is constructed, it can be combined with negative and positive assumptions to gather (and read) texts fragments mentioning negative or positive elements about the market. This functionality helps, for instance, to locate a statement where Wall Street is compared to... terrorism (!). Compared to the previous example (mentioning the social role of corporates), these empirical elements illustrate the complexity of the arguments developed by various stakeholders about the market.