The importance and use of digital primary sources in teaching and research

- Hugh Murphy, Head of Collections & Content, Maynooth University Library, Ireland
- Sarah Evans, Research and Collections Engagement Manager, Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)
- Kathryn Simpson, Lecturer in Information Studies, University of Glasgow
  - Poll Results
- Question and Answers

Please submit your questions for the Q&A panel throughout the presentations
Digital Primary sources in Maynooth University

Hugh Murphy
Head of Collections & Content
MU Library
@hughtweet
What is a primary source
Digital primary sources: Functionality
What does this mean for library collections?
While it is marvellous to be able to see digitised images of originals on screen, there is no substitute for getting to see or even handle the original letters. For those starting out on research in particular, that hands-on experience can be very important in igniting their enthusiasm for historical research as it conveys in a very powerful sensory way, the antiquity of the document (seal, handwriting, vellum/paper, signatures, corrections to mistakes made in drafting, etc.).

A good digitisation project needs to replicate all of that [drafts] material and not just the legible finessed letter as the very process of generating the source can reveal insights into how the writer’s views change or are changed for him. A good digitisation project also needs to acknowledge gaps in collections, explicitly explain methodological decisions regarding sequencing of material (e.g. stating clearly if the ordering of material has been changed/corrected in the digitised version).

Furthermore, the absence of the collections from our University library has been a significant factor in dissuading otherwise keen students from pursuing doctoral studies and postdoctoral research at Maynooth.

Lack of institutional access has imposed restrictions on the variety and depth of course and programme content at all teaching levels, from undergraduate level upwards, particularly our MA offering.

It would demonstrate the university's commitment to research excellence in the Arts and Humanities and would have a measurable impact in attracting funded research projects to the university.

Lack of access has been a serious brake to interdisciplinary research activity, imposing another hurdle of inconvenience to joint research proposals for funding.
Research

Robots Reading Vogue
Data Mining is in Fashion

Few magazines can boast being continuously published for over a century, familiar and interesting to almost everyone, full of iconic pictures — and also completely digitized and marked up as both text and images. What can you do with over 2,700 covers, 400,000 pages, 6 TB of data? Students, librarians, and faculty are excited about the possibilities of working with Vogue to explore questions in fields from gender studies to computer science. We highlight some early experiments below:

- Slice Histograms
  - Direct visualization of color patterns.
  - Explore »

- Cover Averages
  - Visual continuity and change across the decades.
  - Explore »

- n-gram Search
  - Search and compare word usage in 400,000+ pages within ads, articles, or all texts.
  - Explore »

- Topic Modeling
  - Self-organizing themes determined by word co-occurrence.
  - Explore »

- Advertisements
  - Explore »

- Statistics
  - Explore »

- Student Work
  - Explore »

- Colormetric Space
  - Explore »

https://dhlab.yale.edu/projects/vogue/
Commerce and bias
Thank you!
Go raibh maith agaibh!

Hugh Murphy
Head of Collections, Maynooth University Library

https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/library
The importance and use of digital primary sources in teaching and research

Unlocking the archives: supporting research and teaching with digitised materials

Dr Sarah L. Evans, RGS-IBG
Who we are – about the Society

- The UK’s learned society and professional body for geography, founded in 1830
- A world leader in advancing geography and supporting its practitioners in the UK and across the world
- Exists to advance geography and is actively involved in supporting and promoting geographical research, education, fieldwork and expeditions, policy, professional geographers, and public engagement
- >16.5k members; 400 events (now online); significant online footprint
About the Collections

Over two million items, spanning over 500 years of geographical research and knowledge

- Open to the public since 2004 in the purpose-built Foyle Reading Room

www.rgs.org/Collections
Collaborative Doctoral Programme
Unlocking the Archives
WDA Research Fellowships

• The Wiley Digital Archive Research Fellowships provide researchers with six months’ access to the Wiley Digital Archives to pursue a focused research project.
• Successful applicants are asked to keep a research diary, provide updates on their progress, and submit a short report at the end of the project.
• There will also be opportunities for sharing their findings with wider audiences.
Find out more and support our work

- Visit www.rgs.org
- Follow us @RGS_IBG
- Contact us – rhed@rgs.org
Hidden Voices: Using the digital archive to critically renegotiate histories.

Kate Simpson
@drkatesimpson


But Manenĩko was not to be circumvented in that way. She came forward, with her people and said her uncle would be angry if she did not carry forward the tusks and goods of Sekeletu,—seized the luggage and added she would carry it in spite of me—My men succumbed to this petticoat government sooner than I did so, leaving me no power, - and being unwilling to encounter her tongue I was moving off to the canoes; - but she gave me a kind explanation, and with her hand on my shoulder put on a motherly look saying, now my little man just do as the rest have done My feelings of annoyance of course vanished, and I went out to try and get some meat.

David Livingstone, Missionary Travels (Edinburgh: John Murray, 1857).
My work could not take place without the scholarship and research of the following people, to whom I give thanks

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Thank you!