Digital Libraries and Federated Searching: The Manuscripts Online Project

Orietta Da Rold
odr1@leicester.ac.uk
About the Project

Project Partners and Funders
Technical Methods
Access to Subscription Sources
Future Sources to be Included
Project Staff
Acknowledgements

Project Partners and Funders

Manuscripts Online was created by a partnership between the Universities of Sheffield, Leicester, Birmingham, York, Glasgow and Queen's University Belfast. Natural language processing, indexing, the development of the search engine and implementation of the website front end were carried out by the Humanities Research Institute (University of Sheffield). The website front end was implemented using designs provided by Mickey and Mallory. See below for Project Staff.

The project was made possible by a generous grant from the JISC e-Content Capital Programme.

The project is a sister site to the JISC-funded Connected Histories which provides integrated access to online historical resources for the period 1500 to 1900. A great deal of Manuscripts Online builds upon the methods and expertise developed by the developers of Connected Histories: the University of Sheffield, the Institute of Historical Research and the University of Hertfordshire.

Technical Methods

Manuscripts Online has not created any new digital content. Instead, it provides integrated access to electronic content already available on distributed websites. Our search engine does not search these resources directly. Instead, it searches indexes we have created from the full content of each resource. Our approach to indexing depends on the nature of the electronic resource available:

1. Databases, such as the Cause Papers, and semi-structured sources where the text is marked up with XML tags, such as the Production and Use of English Manuscripts, were processed by extracting identified information on names, places, dates, document references and languages into indexes.
2. Text which is largely unstructured, such as The Norman Blake Editions of The Canterbury Tales, was processed using natural language processing in order to identify names, places, dates, document references and languages in the original texts. ANNIE, an open source information extraction system, was used, in conjunction with custom-scripted pattern action rules, to apply named entity recognition to the texts. Gazetteers were constructed from a range of sources, including the Cause Papers. Taxatio and Gaughe Map.

This methodology is subject to a degree of error.

Spelling variation during the medieval period makes keyword searching an imprecise activity. We have attempted to improve this by providing an 'Include variant spellings' option. If this is selected then any search for a keyword will simultaneously search a range of spelling variants. The spelling variants are calculated in two
Welcome to Manuscripts Online

Manuscripts Online enables you to search a diverse body of online primary resources relating to written and early printed culture in Britain during the period 1000 to 1500. The resources include literary manuscripts, historical documents and early printed books which are located on websites owned by libraries, archives, universities and publishers.

Search

- Include variant spellings
- Query Type: Keyword, Place, Person, Reference
- Source date range: From: 1000 To: 1500

Popular Searches
- Richard of York
- Northallerton
- blue habit
- John
- food
- smoke
- corn
- Quires
- york
- dogs
- timeus
- castell of Emaus
- pig
- end of sheep
- church
- chaucer

Announcements
Contribute Your Own Resource

Manuscripts Online is nearing the completion of its JISC-funded phase, with all resources and functionally available by the end of January. We are now seeking expressions of interest from other, relevant content providers and resource developers. Please refer to our guidance for further information about this.

Current resources are as follows:
- Anglo-Norman dictionary
- The Auchinleck Manuscript
- British History Online
- British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts
- British Literary Manuscripts Online, Medieval and Renaissance
- Cause Papers in the Diocesan Courts of the Archbishopric of York, 1300-1858
- Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership
- Europa Inventa
- Geographies of Orthodoxy: Mapping Pseudo-Bonaventurian Lives of Christ, 1350-1650
Custom Search

Use this page to combine **Keyword**, **Place**, **Person** and **Date** searches. You can also restrict your search to specific **Resources**, **Categories**, **Formats** and **Access Types**.

**Keyword:**
- Include variant spellings
  - Any language
  - English
  - French
  - Latin

**Place:**
- Include variant spellings

**Person:**
- Include variant spellings

**Reference:**
- Include variant spellings

**Cited date:**
- From: 1000
- To: 1500

**Source date range:**
- From: 1000
- To: 1500

---

**Search Tips**

Searching is case-sensitive.

A search for two keywords, such as **canterbury tales** will be treated as **canterbury OR tales**.

You can search for an exact phrase using quote marks, such as "**canterbury tales**".

A search with the variant spellings box ticked will include alternative spellings, determined using the Middle English Dictionary and common character substitutions. For example, a search for **though** will include **bough**, **thou3** and **bough** whilst a search for **canterbury** will include **canterburey, caunterbury** etc. You can then search for specific variants using the wordlists which appear on the left of the results.

Use the special character keyboard if you want to search for words which contain the characters thorn, yogh and eth.

Use the wildcard character * as a substitute for zero or more characters at the end of a word or in the middle of a word, such as **queen**, **qu*n** and **qu*n**.
Workspace

This is your own workspace in which you can view your recent search paths as well as your past search paths. You can also view any public and private comments which you have made. You need to be registered and logged in to use this feature.

Comments are added by undertaking a search and then clicking the 'Comments' link which appear underneath each search result. You also have the option to decide whether your comment should remain private or publicly visible.

Your recent Saved Searches

January 18th at 12:15 - Keyword: Quires
January 18th at 12:05 - Keyword: York
January 18th at 12:01 - Keyword: paper

View all Saved Searches

Your recent Searches Paths

January 18th at 12:22 - Keyword: Quires
January 18th at 12:22 - Keyword: Quires
January 18th at 12:22 - Keyword: Quires
January 18th at 12:22 - Keyword: Quires
January 18th at 12:17 - Keyword: hatton 116

View all Search Paths

Your recent Comments

Homilies
mostly quire of 12

Homilies
some quires of 12
http://www.ie.ac.uk/english/em1060b1220/mss/EM.Lamb.487.htm at January 18th 2013 at 12:15 Private

Old English Glosses, Names and Charms
Soom quires of 12
http://www.ie.ac.uk/english/em1060b1220/mss/EM.Ox.SJ.17.htm at January 16th 2013 at 12:12 Private

Textus Roffensis
Resources

The following pages provide an introduction to each of the resources included in Manuscripts Online. Not all of the resources are currently available for searching just yet, but they will become available at the end of the project on January 31st.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Source Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-Norman dictionary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Auchinleck Manuscript</td>
<td>The Auchinleck Manuscript provides a unique insight into the English language and literature that Chaucer and his generation grew up with and were influenced by</td>
<td>Literary Manuscripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British History Online</td>
<td>The digital library of primary and secondary sources for the history of Britain, from the Middle Ages to c.1900.</td>
<td>Official Documents, Literary Manuscripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts</td>
<td>Descriptions and images of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts in the British Library, one of the richest collections in the world</td>
<td>Literary Manuscripts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You searched for: Keyword: paper
Your search found 1063 results in 9 resources

The Middle English Dictionary
443 results from this resource. Displaying 1 to 5
View more | View all
peper, pepir(e), pepur, peppe, pepper, peppir, piper, paper(e), papire, papur, paupere, pipor
Chaucer CT.CY. Manly-Rickett C.762 In an ethen pot how put is el And salt yout in and also pape(r [var. paper], papere, papire, papare, rapeire; time: hear]. (a1359) Form Cury Add 5016 p.20 Take rede wyne, suger, with powdour of pepere and
Comments (0) [+]

Manuscripts of the West Midlands
84 results from this resource. Displaying 1 to 5
View more | View all
Southwell, Southwell Minster, VII
yong age, 'wherefor god quyte hem per meede in the blisse of heven. Amen'. Cf. Horstmann 1887, pp. 83-86. Codex Paper 284 204 mm 1-9 12; 10 12 (wants 11, 12); 11 12; 12-13 10; 14 12
Comments (0) [+]

The Norman Blake Editions of The Canterbury Tales
6 results from this resource. Displaying 1 to 5
View more | View all
The Canon's Yeoman's Tale, folio 160v In the Cp Manuscript
If he continue I holde his breth ye do So help me god ber by schai he not wynne. But empte his purs and make his wites jinne And whan he porosh his madnesse and folde Help lost his
Comments (0) [+]
What these resources offer is an ability to quantify data and to consider additional theoretical and socio-historical possibilities. Often qualitative assessments of manuscript production are not always based on quantitative analysis of the data.

Orietta Da Rold, 'Manuscript Production before Chaucer: Some Preliminary Observations' in Textual Culture, Cultural Texts, 1000-2010, edited by Orietta Da Rold and Elaine Treharne, special issue of Essays and Studies (Boydell&Brewer, 2010), pp. 43-58.
Workspace

This is your own workspace in which you can view your recent search paths as well as your past search paths. You can also view any public and private comments which you have made. You need to be registered and logged in to use this feature.

Comments are added by undertaking a search and then clicking the 'Comments' link which appear underneath each search result. You also have the option to decide whether your comment should remain private or publicly visible.

Your recent Saved Searches
January 18th at 12:16 - Keyword: Quires
January 18th at 12:05 - Keyword: York
January 16th at 12:01 - Keyword: paper

View all Saved Searches

Your recent Searches Paths
January 18th at 12:22 - Keyword: Quires
January 16th at 12:22 - Keyword: Quires
January 16th at 12:22 - Keyword: Quires
January 18th at 12:22 - Keyword: Quires
January 18th at 12:17 - Keyword: hatton 116

View all Search Paths

Your recent Comments
Homilies
mostly quire of 12

Homilies
some quire of 12
http://www.io.ac.uk/english/em1660to1220/mss/EM.Lamb.487.htm at January 16th 2013 at 12:15 Private

Old English Glosses, Names and Charms
Some quire of 12
http://www.io.ac.uk/english/em1660to1220/mss/EM.Ox.SJ.17.htm at January 16th 2013 at 12:12 Private

Textus Roffensis