

## セミナー 2

### Digital Humanities and the Future of Renaissance Studies

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#### **Background:**

The “Early English Books Online - Text Creation Partnership” (EEBO-TCP hereafter) was launched in 1999. It is a partnership between ProQuest LLC, the University of Michigan, and the University of Oxford to create fully-searchable structured texts in the Early English Books Online database (EEBO hereafter), created originally by ProQuest.

EEBO is itself extremely useful in that it consists of bibliographic data and digitized images of more than 125,000 early English books<sup>1</sup>, but with EEBO-TCP we can not only read a modern-type transcription of the text but can also search the full text. While EEBO is a commercial product of ProQuest, EEBO-TCP is a project based at the University of Michigan and Oxford. With the support of more than 150 libraries worldwide, it aims to make the entire collection freely available to the public in the future.

The EEBO-TCP team set an initial goal of encoding 25,000 selected works from the EEBO collection, and this goal was achieved in 2009. The team calls this set of texts “Phase I” and it is currently only available from ProQuest. The good news for scholars and students is that, on January 1, 2015, the “Phase I” texts will all become freely available to the public as the “exclusive period” will end. In the meantime, since 2009, the EEBO-TCP team has been working on what they call “Phase II”, which will consist of around 45,000 texts when complete.

This online database allows us to examine materials ranging from the greatest

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<sup>1</sup> EEBO consists of Pollard & Redgrave's Short-Title Catalogue (1475-1640) and Wing's Short-Title Catalogue (1641-1700) and their revised editions, as well as the Thomason Tracts (1640-1661) collection and the Early English Books Tract Supplement.

literary works (such as the earliest editions of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*) to less well-known pieces, often by anonymous authors. The collection also goes beyond literature: it covers historical documents, including the original printed version of royal statutes and proclamations, Parliamentary documents, and other documents concerning military or legal matters. Popular pamphlets, broadsides, early English songs, sermons and *The Book of Common Prayer* (1549) are other items that many scholars may feel an interest in. Given this wide variety of materials, it is obviously useful to scholars in many different fields: scholars of literature, historians, bibliographers, philosophers, linguists, Classicists, theologians, musicologists and scientists. And it can of course meet the research requirements of students as well as of scholars.

As a graduate student at Oxford, I (Angela Davenport) not only benefited enormously from this database but also witnessed how much and how widely it was used by all kinds of scholars and students. Among people studying or researching the Early Modern period it was a must-have tool and often one of the very first things that people would turn to. In Japan, I was taught to look at the *OED* for the first use of a word, but now I look at EEBO-TCP to better understand the uses of a word or the concept, and it is sometimes also possible to predate the *OED*: the earliest example in the *OED* for the word "prostitute", for instance, is 1607 but an EEBO-TCP search produces results from the 1540s.

On my return to Japan, I noticed that the benefits of this database are not equally available to Japanese scholars and students due to its high cost. As far as I know, only a handful of Japanese universities and libraries own EEBO and I felt the inevitable scholarly gap between those who have access and those who don't. After attending the EEBO-TCP conferences in 2012 and 2013, however, I realised that there could be a solution to this scholarly inequality.

Also after attending some conferences in the UK, I came to notice a new scholarly trend emerging on the database front. I was fascinated by the fact that scholars themselves are now embarking on creating new databases in collaboration with librarians, archivists and software engineers. Inspired by this fascinating trend, I am also trying to find a way to create a program to transcribe Elizabethan hand-written legal documents automatically (with a JSPS grant).

As far as such online databases are concerned, I have to say that Japan seems very much behind, with scholars and students often neither having heard of them nor using them on a regular basis. There also appear to be few scholars engaged in creating new databases based on or linked to their research. By holding a digital humanities seminar at the Shakespeare Conference, I was hoping to increase awareness of the value

and significance of the use of such tools.

### **The Seminar:**

We divided the three-hour seminar into three parts: Professor John Yamamoto-Wilson, Professor Thomas Dabbs and Ms. Momoko Morishima gave a PowerPoint lecture in each part, followed by a 10-minute Q&A session and a 5-minute break. The seminar coordinator Angela Davenport acted as MC.

In the first part of the seminar, in order to familiarise the audience with the EEBO-TCP database, John introduced us to the basic mechanics of EEBO and EEBO-TCP. He took us through the depth of the database and we all obtained useful new information through his detailed description.

He then showed us the method he uses to incorporate EEBO-TCP searches into his own research. He pointed out that a search of the EEBO-TCP database and statistical analysis using the TCP database could prove one of John Staines' arguments about the notion of "compassion" in Catholic and Protestant writings wrong.

John also introduced us to the pros and cons of the use of the database and emphasised the need for careful use of the results. Nevertheless, he concluded his talk by stressing the great importance of the use of the EEBO-TCP database in our research. (John's EEBO-TCP demo and talk have both been uploaded on YouTube, which you can also see on the seminar webpage.)

The second speaker at the seminar was Tom and he introduced his method of using online resources in conjunction with hard-copy materials in his research. Especially through using EEBO-TCP and the Virtual Paul's Cross Project, he placed some Shakespearean scenes within the context of popular consciousness in London and specifically in Paul's Cross Churchyard during the Early Modern period. (Paul's Cross Churchyard was located on the northeast side of St Paul's in London and was the commercial centre of the bookselling industry.)

In his talk, Tom examined the digital technology on two levels: firstly he showed us how to connect the existing hard copy research with digital reconstruction. Then he examined the Virtual Paul's Cross Project and other digital resources to show how they could be used in Shakespearean research, especially in *As You Like It*. Tom gave us a small sample through digital reconstruction of how themes and individual lines from the play echo the popular print environment of Paul's Cross Churchyard during the years just prior to the performance of the play.

In the third part, Momoko took us behind the scenes of the university libraries where librarians are making an ongoing effort to tackle the issues surrounding online

databases. Firstly, she talked about the difficult situation they are generally in in purchasing online resources especially when the prices of e-resources are constantly increasing.

She next introduced some possible solutions to deal with this problematic situation. One is through the Library consortium, which is a collaborative acquisition of access rights to electronic databases and journals. In Japan, JUSTICE (Japan Alliance of University Library Consortia for E-Resources) is the biggest consortium (established in 2011), and at present over 500 university libraries are members. In addition to this, there is the national licensing system. In Japan, the National Institute of Informatics Repository of Electronic Journals and Online Publications (NII-REO) provides scholarly content to JUSTICE members and, thanks to a huge subsidy, prices have gone down to a level where libraries can afford the originally expensive databases. (This year Eighteenth Century Collections Online has been selected and is included in the NII-REO collection.) According to Momoko, there are still some problems to this system, but for many university libraries this may be the only way to obtain some important online databases.

Finally, Momoko showed us how the librarians at Keio University Library have been promoting online databases to students: through a database navigation system, through connecting the OPAC system directly to the databases, and through holding library instruction sessions. Thanks to their hard work, the use of EEBO seems to be increasing, but she did emphasise the importance of scholars' awareness and regular use of such databases and of disseminating their benefits to students and colleagues.

There were about 20 people in the audience and we received some very constructive comments both during and after the seminar. Among the audience were Dr. Kiyonori Nagasaki from the International Institute for Digital Humanities and Dr. Sae Kitamura from Musashino University. They are both already involved in digital humanities studies and such an encounter was most valuable to all present. We were also impressed by the enthusiastic reactions from the audience.

### **The Future:**

We hope that the seminar was informative and raised awareness about the topic of digital humanities, and that we aroused enough interest that there will be more conference papers, seminars and projects on related subjects in the future. We, as a group, have decided to have a monthly meeting to start with. As mentioned above, Angela already has a running digital-humanities project and now both Tom and John are also planning to embark on further digital projects. Aside from these, we are planning to

do a questionnaire-based survey, a demo-event of EEBO, another seminar introducing new digital projects, and so forth. See our seminar webpage, Facebook page, and Twitter for more information.

### Seminar-related links:

<http://dhfrs.webs.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/dhfrsj>

<https://twitter.com/dhfrsj>

### References:

<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/marketing/about.htm>

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/eebotcp/>

<http://proquest.libguides.com/eebo>

<http://www.textcreationpartnership.org/tcp-eebo/>



