

Digital History: Project Analysis

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Digital History

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Introduction

Using visualization, you can determine topics that are present over large periods of time. To show this within the project the newspapers by The Equity, were collected from their database. The period examined in this project was 1883-1953, using the first issue of the paper from every month during the year. This was done to save on space and time while collecting the data. Using this information, I cleaned up the data and created word clouds with the text. I walk through the process of what I was doing in my [GitHub](#) and it well document there. Instead in this document I will be focusing on the implications of the results.

Implications

Germany

Germany had several words in the cloud I found interesting. Two words that stood out to me and, happened to be beside each other were: long, war. This is significant as over the period this project looked at, both World Wars happened. Also, another two words that appeared on the word cloud were: air and raid. During world war two this was a common occurrence and it appears the The Equity reported on them often (Canadian War Museum, n.d.). What surprised me was the name Hitler does not appear at all. As he was the leader during World War Two I was expecting his name to appear somewhere in it. This shows shortcoming of both word clouds and how the data can be misrepresented when it is collected. Although visualization of big data is a very helpful tool, lots of information can be lost in the noise when cleaning up the data.

Korea

Korea's word cloud was also interesting as the major words were: secure, range, power and cotton. However, comparing the size of the set used for Korea to the others, there was little

information provided. This lack of data could be the reason why these words had such a large presence in the word cloud. As the papers from Shawville didn't start mentioning Korea until the very end of the search period. In total, there were 62 lines that mentioned Korea out of thousands. The increase of mention between the years 1950-1953 is most likely due to the start and finish of the Korean War. What was interesting is in those few lines, the mention of military terms was present but not the word war itself. Especially since Canada had sent over thousands to assist (Historic Canada, n.d.). This shows how it is important to use visualization with other sources as it has its limitations.

Britain

The most impactful word cloud that I created was Britain's. As the word map populated the two largest themes that appeared were: Britain, mourns. It was interesting to see these as the most recurring words with Britain. It made sense as the period of 1883-1953 covered both World Wars. However, as this was a local newspaper in Canada it was fascinating seeing this word so heavily associated with Britain and no other country that I looked at. This association would be interesting to further explore, by looking at other sources from countries as well as Britain to see if the theme is recurring.

Canada

Canada's word cloud was not interesting in comparison to the other word clouds. However, I expected this since it is a local newspaper, and anticipated it to write about many things happening across Canada. It made sense for there to be a large spread of recurring words or themes rather than a few large ones. If there was a certain word that had been largely present in the data it would have been more surprising.

Conclusion

Using visualization, we can see recurring themes through the period of 1883-1953. When presenting the data, it is important to note the biases within the data collected. As all the information was gathered from one company's rough data, it may miss represent the information due to many factors. However, we still see major themes appear when using a visualization of the data that we may have missed otherwise. By using visualization, we can take a large source of information and narrow it down to a more concrete topic. Then with that topic you can further explore the subject.

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