

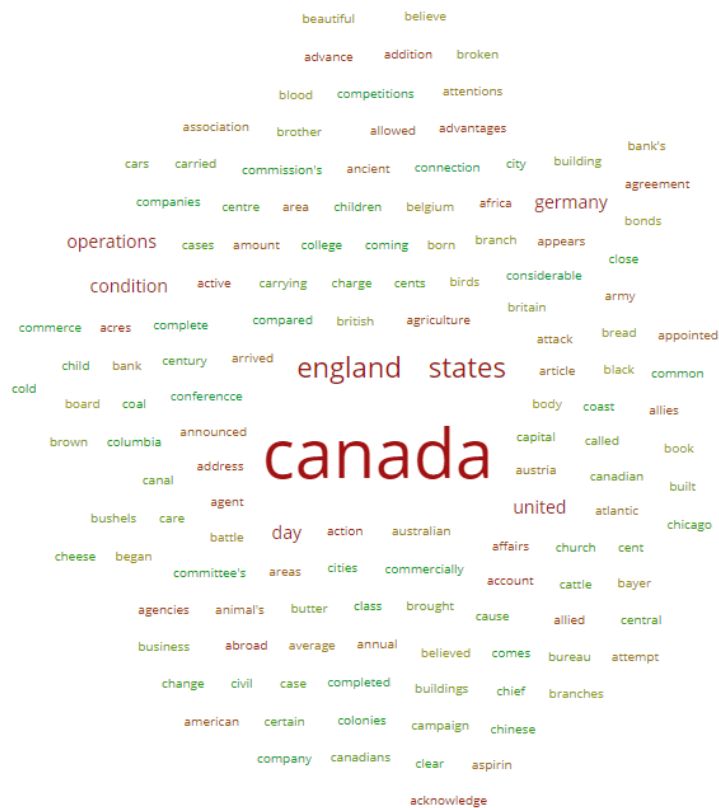
When I first started this class, I wasn't sure how much I would learn from it. Being in computer science I was in the mind set of: "It's just digital history how hard can it be?". However, I learned a lot as I was introduced to a new side of history. The first thing I learned was you don't always need to write formally for your work to be considered important. The second thing was the importance of cleaning up and presenting a visualization of your data.

Until this point, all the classes I had taken in history needed everything written formally. In this course though we created a blog talking about what we were doing and learning. Since I thought blogs were considered informal it contrasted in my mind the formal writing style I had been taught in history. It was easier for me to express things as I didn't need to think about if the statement was formal enough to put on the blog. Also, I found when I read formal history documents I struggled to really understand them. This was first class to really bring in source material I easily understood and enjoyed reading. Many of them were less formal which helped me better relate to them. Also, when reading them I was not falling asleep or skimming over it, just to say I read it. In fact, for these reasons the blog by [Cameron Blevins](#) was my favorite. I can safely say this was first class in university that I have had a favourite reading. Compared to other courses where I would jump back to the text only when writing a paper, this course I would go back and reread sections that I thought I missed something.

Getting into Exercise three and beyond is where this course took a turn for me and I felt I grew the most as a historian. Up until this point being in computer science really helped me through sections. The environment we were working in wasn't foreign to me, just not my favorite. Getting to use Wget in Linux was interesting as I had not really used it in computer science, as we get provided an environment that is pre-setup. It was nice learning more about it, as well as standards about accessing files from servers. Also, when working with the databases in section two it was fun, but I would not realise the importance of the work that went into it until section three to four. When cleaning up the data using Regrex and open refine on my project I struggled so many times. Also getting the files from

Shawville I noticed that sometime there naming convention was changed which is frustrating. As I had to go through the data looking for the anomalies in the file names and remove them.

The “eureka” moment for me though was the visual representation of history. Up until this point my opinion of visualization of data was: why use a word cloud can’t you just use a graph. That was until I



really tried representing the data I had gather from Shawville. Exploring papers over the course of 50 years a lot of things get talked about. I was trying to display what words were associated with different countries over the years. However, I couldn't display the information well and by the time I had filtered data I felt I had lost to much. I was getting frustrated and annoyed, with little progress being made.

When I listened to my wife I finally decided to try making a word cloud. After uploading my files to Overview it made sense as I saw the word cloud load on my screen. This was what wanted to show.

It was my Ah-Ha moment in this class, where now section 3-5 came together in one picture.

Having not done this specific exercise in chapter 4, thinking it was pointless, .]

Commented [BV2]: fix

In the end, this course left me farther ahead than I anticipated; leaving me with a better understanding of what could be considered history. I had learned about how much work it takes going through the documents at our disposal, and developed an appreciation of well organised documents. Then gained a better understanding of what can be done with this information. Lastly, I think the biggest breakthrough for me as a historian is the better understanding of the importance of visualisation of data, and the way it is presented.

Commented [BV3]: why is visualization important