

# Newspapers in *Living with Machines*

Congrès Médias 19 – Numapresse : Presses anciennes  
et modernes à l'ère du numérique  
La BnF, 3 juin. 2022

**Mia Ridge**, British Library @mia\_out  
**For the *Living with Machines* team**  
**@LivingWMachines**

Thanks to Dr Hannah Williams (@DrHanWill) for  
translation assistance

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UEA University of  
East Anglia



## Our Funders



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# About the British Library's newspaper collection

Over **34,000 titles** from the UK and overseas, **60 million individual issues**

Newspapers from 1603; collection more comprehensive from 1820s

Since 1869 - British and Irish newspaper publishers required to send one copy of each issue to the Library for 'legal deposit'

Currently collecting c1200 UK and Irish newspapers, c100 from overseas daily or weekly



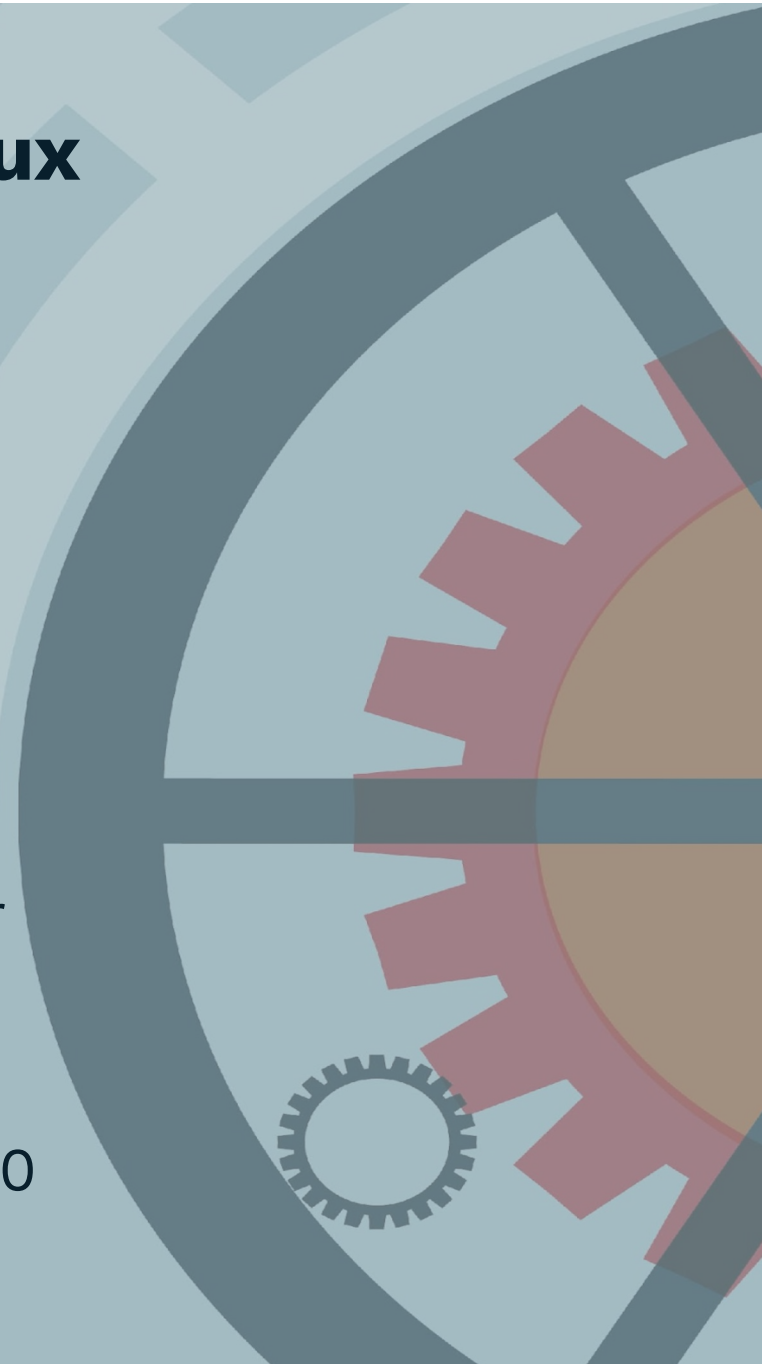
# À propos de la collection de journaux au British Library

Plus de **34,000 titres** du Royaume-Uni et d'outre-mer; **60 millions de numéros individuels**

Les journaux datent de 1603; la collection est plus complète à partir des années 1820

Depuis 1869 - éditeurs de journaux britanniques et irlandais sont tenus d'envoyer un exemplaire de chaque numéro au BL pour le "legal deposit"

Actuellement - le BL collectionne environ 1200 journaux britannique et irlandais, et environ 100 quotidiens ou hebdomadaires étrangers



# The British Newspaper Archive

Digitisation partnership between the BL and FindMyPast

Launched in 2011; renewed in 2021. 50 million+ pages.

Initially BNA aimed for wide geographic coverage; now topical coverage

From 2021, 1 million free-to-view pages; more to come

## ▼ ACCESS TYPE

☐ Free To View 165,887

☐ Subscriber Access 5,379,143

# Le British Newspaper Archive

Collaboration entre BL et FindMyPast pour la numérisation.

Lancé en 2011; renouvelé en 2021. Plus de 50 millions de pages.

Objectif initial: couverture géographique large. Maintenant: couverture thématique.

À partir de 2021, 1 million de pages en libre accès; d'autres à venir

## ▼ ACCESS TYPE

☐ Free To View 165,887

☐ Subscriber Access 5,379,143

# What can you do with 50 million pages?

## The *Living with Machines* project

How did the wider introduction of machines change ordinary lives in 19th century Britain?

*LWM* looks at mechanisation from 1780 - 1920 via digitised newspapers, books, maps and other historical sources.

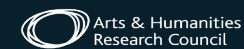
A 5 year collaboration between curators, data scientists, linguists, historians and other specialists - and the public

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# Que peut-on faire avec 50 millions de pages?

## Le projet *Living with Machines*

Comment l'introduction des machines a-t-elle changé la vie quotidienne dans la Grande Bretagne du XIXe siècle ?

*LwM* porte sur la mécanisation de 1780 à 1920, à partir des journaux numérisés, livres, plans, et autres sources historiques.

Une collaboration (5 ans) entre conservateurs, data scientists, linguistes, historiens, and autres spécialistes - et le public.

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UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

UEA University of  
East Anglia

UNIVERSITY OF  
EXETER



Queen Mary  
University of London

### Our Funders

Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

UK Research  
and Innovation

## Principal and Co-Investigators



**Ruth Ahnert**  
(QMUL)

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**David Beavan**  
(Turing)

[Read more](#)



**Emma Griffin**  
(UEA)

[Read more](#)



**Timothy Hobson**  
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**Maja Maricevic**  
(British Library)

[Read more](#)



**Barbara McGillivray**  
(Turing / Cambridge)



**Mia Ridge**  
(British Library)



**Alan Wilson**  
(Turing)

## Project team



**Claire Austin**  
Rights Assurance

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**Kaspar Beelen**  
Digital Humanities Research Associate

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**Mariona Coll Ardanuy**  
Computational Linguistics Research Associate

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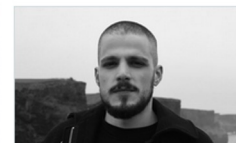
**Katie McDonough**  
History Research Associate

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**Federico Nanni**  
(Turing), Research Data Scientist

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**Nilo Pedrazzini**  
Corpus-Based Digital Humanities Research Assistant

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**André Piza**  
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Research Associate

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**Giorgia Tolfo**  
Data And Content Manager

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**Daniel Van Strien**



**Kalle Westerling**



**Daniel Wilson**

## Anciens collaborateurs

- Giovanni Colavizza
- Joel Dearden
- Adam Farquhar
- Rosa Filgueira
- Christina Last
- Sarah Gibson
- James Hetherington
- Kasra Hosseini
- Michael Jackson
- Yann Ryan
- Olivia Vane



# Working with digitised newspapers

From FindMyPast we get:

- Images of digitised pages
- Metadata (various formats)
- Automatically transcribed text (OCR) in various formats

Internal infrastructure for analysis:

- Azure storage and compute
- Metadata database
- 'Defoe' system for full text search
- ALTO -> plain text processing

Different researchers need different formats

- Crowdsourcing - images, text, metadata
- Text analysis - OCR, plain text, metadata



# Travailler avec les journaux numérisés

De FindMyPast, on obtient :

- Images de pages numérisées
- Metadata (divers formats)
- Texte transcrit automatiquement (OCR) idans différents formats

Infrastructure interne pour l'analyse :

- Azure storage and compute
- Metadata database
- 'Defoe' system pour la recherche en texte intégral
- ALTO -> plain text processing

Des chercheurs différents ont besoin de formats différents

- Crowdsourcing - images, texte, metadata
- Analyse de text - OCR, plain text, metadata



# Challenges in working with digitised newspapers

## Scale

- Millions of pages: hard to process, store
- 60 billion+ word tokens

## Copyright

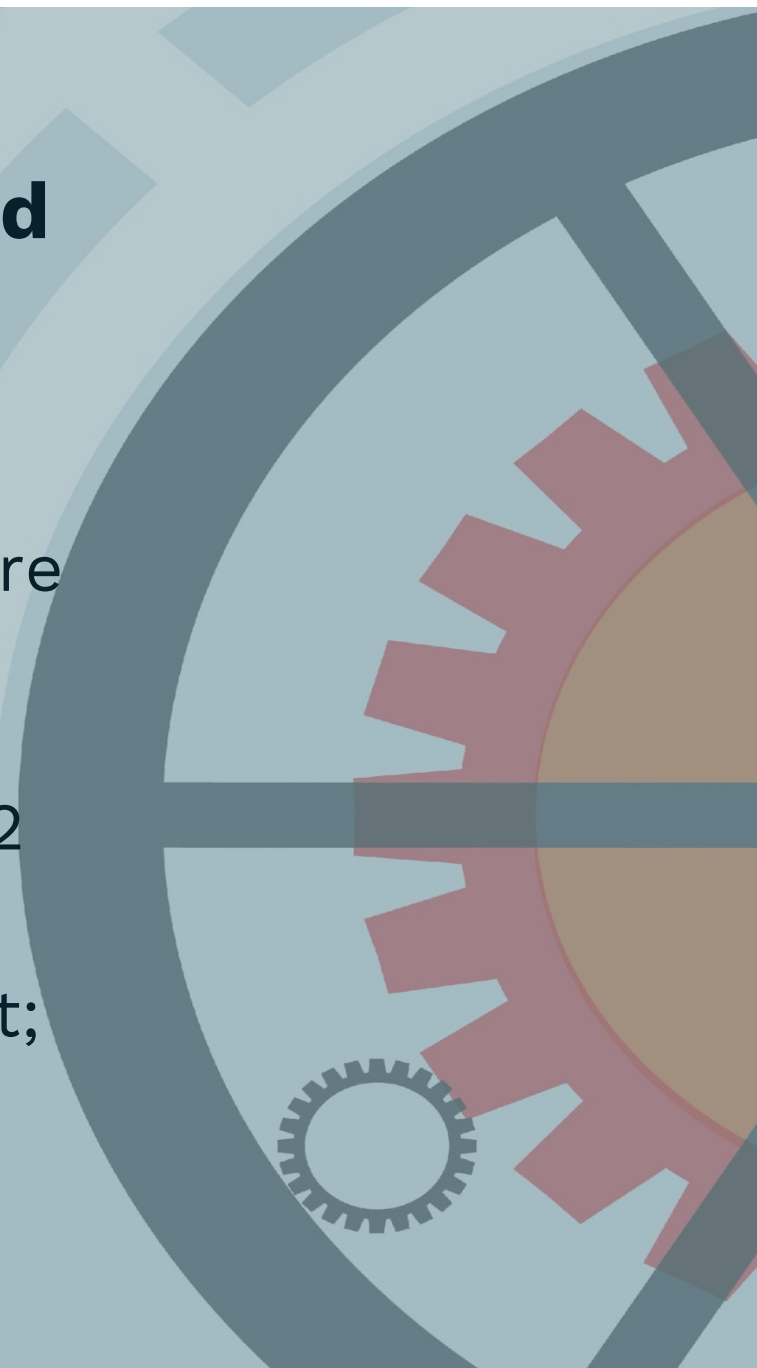
- Unknown status after 'safe date' c1882

## Licensing

- Project access provided by FindMyPast; not widely available

## Security requirements

- Access to full dataset is complex



# Les challenges pour travailler avec les journaux numérisés

## Échelle

- Des millions de pages: difficiles à traiter et à stocker
- Plus de 60 milliards de word tokens

## Copyright

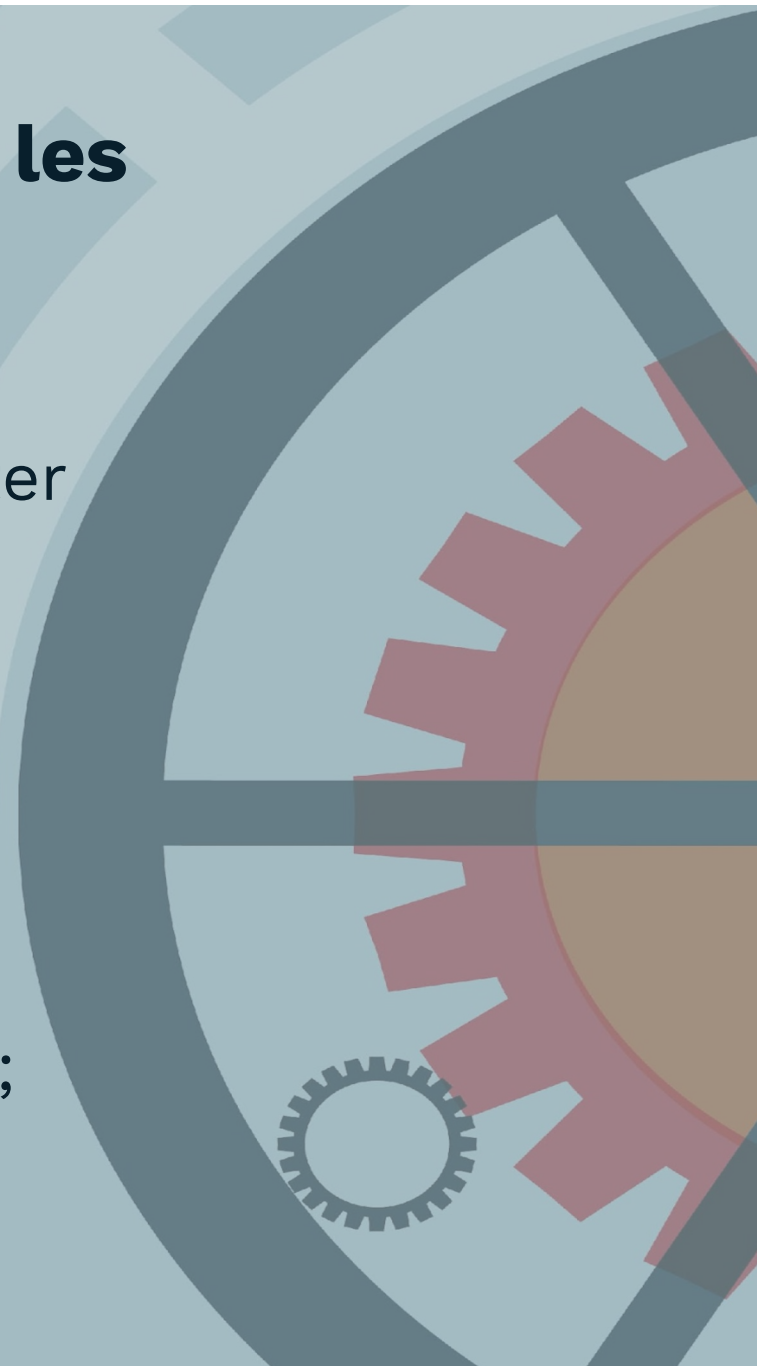
- Statut inconnu après la 'safe date' environ 1882

## Licences

- Accès au projet fourni par FindMyPast; non disponible à grande échelle

## Exigences de sécurité

- Accès au dataset est complexe



# 'Environmental scan'

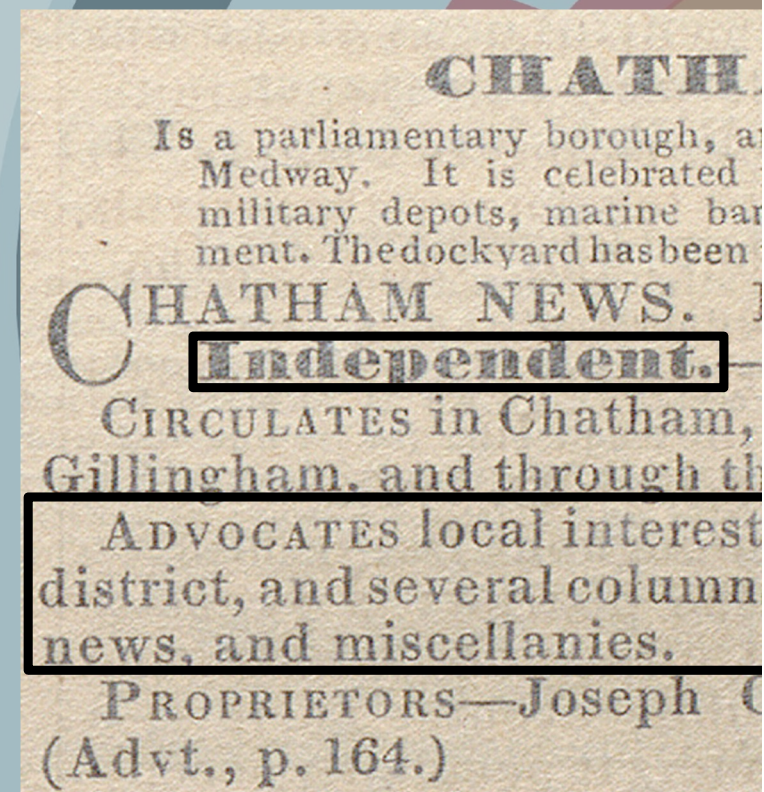
Kaspar Beelen

Situating the digitised press in the newspapers 'landscape'

- How representative is the digital 'sample' of the newspaper population? Where are imbalances or gaps?

Automatic metadata generation

- Extract metadata about newspapers from contextual resources (press directories)





# Scan de l'environnement

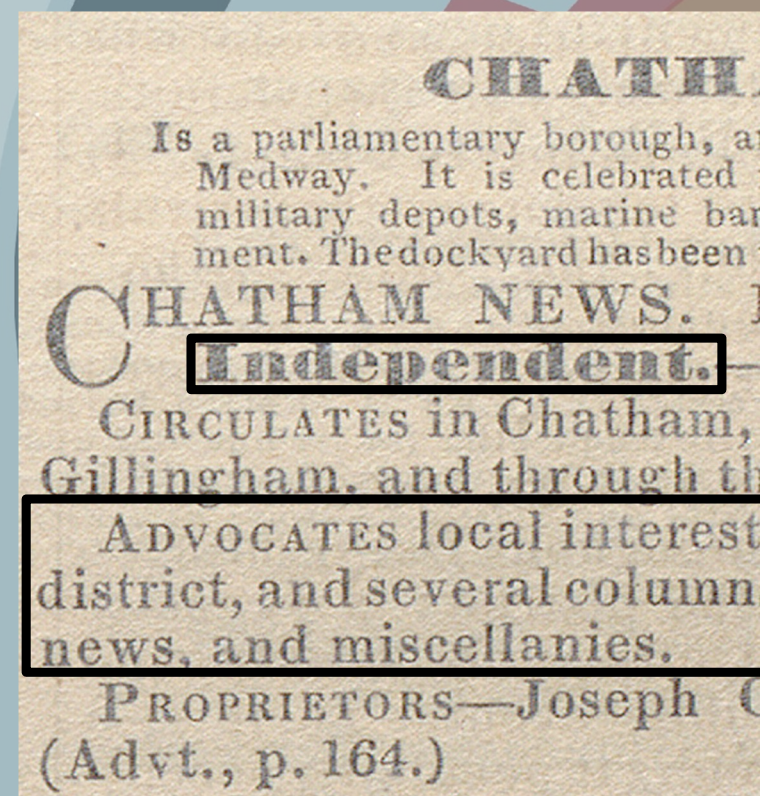
Kaspar Beelen

Situer la presse numérisée dans le contexte des journaux

- Quelle est la représentativité de l'échantillon numérique de journaux en général ? Où se trouve les déséquilibres ou les lacunes ?

Génération automatique de metadata

- Extraire le metadata sur les journaux à partir de ressources contextuelles (répertoires de presse)





# Newspapers and public participation

Proven public interest in digitised historical newspaper articles

Build on BL crowdsourcing as productive, public engagement

Designed crowdsourced tasks to classify and annotate articles

- Build datasets for research and analysis; exhibition
- See project themes and explore practical applications of AI / machine learning

Mia Ridge, Barbara McGillivray, Giorgia Tolfo, Kalle Westerling, Nilo Pedrazzini with contributions from Olivia Vane, Christina Last, Federico Nanni, Sarah Gibson, Kasra Hosseini

there have been fourteen casualties, arising from year persons accidentally getting into the water. Among them were three perambulator cases, in which boys and girls, having been intrusted with these vehicles containing little children securely strapped in, have run races on the banks of the lake, and in the final grand push to be first, the machine has been capsized in the water, turning bottom upwards, but in each case the children were providentially rescued. Two of the total of 14 were drowned through the swamping of a sailing boat in a sudden squall. Not a single death from suicide has occurred during the year—a very

# Journaux et participation du public

Intérêt avéré du public pour les articles de journaux historiques numérisés.

S'appuyer sur le crowdsourcing au BL pour l'engagement public productif.

Nouvelles activités de crowdsourcing pour classer et annoter les articles.

- Construire datasets pour la recherche et l'analyse; exposition
- Découvrir les thèmes des projets et les applications pratiques

Mia Ridge, Barbara McGillivray, Giorgia Tolfo, Kalle Westerling, Nilo Pedrazzini avec les contributions de Olivia Vane, Christina Last, Federico Nanni, Sarah Gibson, Kasra Hosseini

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# New question from 'accidents' task: what *was* a machine in the 19th century?

EXCITING SCENE.—A few days since, as a bricklayer and his labourer were at work on the chimney of a new foundry in course of erection at Heywood, near Manchester, the triangle on the top of the scaffolding gave way and fell over the side. A rope connected with the **machine** dragged the labourer off by the leg, but as the other end was fast to a support, he hung in mid air, head downwards, a few yards from the top, and about 50 feet from the ground. His leg was broken by the jerk. As no assistance could be rendered from below, his comrade contrived to hook him by the braces, but as he was drawing him up they **broke**, and he again fell the same distance. After about half an hour's suspension, he was rescued by his comrade throwing down the brickwork until he reached him. He was removed to Manchester Infirmary.

READY-MADE CLOTHING.—Wanted, a man accustomed to REPAIRING and FITTING in a machine room. Also good STOCK

TASK

TUTORIAL

## Classify the machine

Look for the outlined 'machine' phrase. Does the image contain readable and relevant text for you to classify a physical or metaphorical machine? Choose the best option below.

No - the image is too hard to read

No - the image doesn't contain enough information to classify the type or purpose of the 'machine', or it is not about a physical or metaphorical machine

No - the highlighted text is a reference to a place such as a workshop or office

Yes - the image includes enough information to describe or classify the machine

NEED SOME HELP WITH THIS TASK?

Done

FIELD GUIDE

# Nouvelle question de l'activité 'accidents' : qu'est-ce qu'une machine au XIXe siècle?

**EXCITING SCENE.**—A few days since, as a bricklayer and his labourer were at work on the chimney of a new foundry in course of erection at Heywood, near Manchester, the triangle on the top of the scaffolding gave way and fell over the side. A rope connected with the **machine** dragged the labourer off by the leg, but as the other end was fast to a support, he hung in mid air, head downwards, a few yards from the top, and about 50 feet from the ground. His leg was broken by the jerk. As no assistance could be rendered from below, his comrade contrived to hook him by the braces, but as he was drawing him up they **broke**, and he again fell the same distance. After about half an hour's suspension, he was rescued by his comrade throwing down the brickwork until he reached him. He was removed to Manchester Infirmary.

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NEED SOME HELP WITH THIS TASK?

Done

FIELD GUIDE



# OED *machine* entry analysis: 'Classify it!'

## machine, *n.*

**Pronunciation:** <sup>?</sup> Brit.  /məʃiːn/, U.S.  /məʃɪn/

**Forms:** 1500s *machyne*, 1500s–1700s *machin*, 1500s– *machine*, 1600s *macheen*.

**Frequency (in current use):** ●●●●●●●●●●

**Origin:** A borrowing from French. **Etymon:** French *machine*.

**Etymology:** < Middle French, French *machine* < classical Latin *māchina* (compare *MACIG* ancient Greek (Attic) *μηχανή*: see *MECHANIC adj. and n.*), probably related to *μηχος* 'means'. European base of *MAY v.*<sup>1</sup> Compare Spanish *máquina* (1444), Italian *macchina* (15th cent.): are all 17th-cent. borrowings from French.



Classifications for zoomiverse task	definition (FROM OED)	oed_reference	part_of_speech
Specific type of machine	= bathing-machine <i>n.</i> at bathing <i>n.</i> compounds . Obsolete.	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.5c	NN
Specific type of machine	Used contextually for the particular kind of machine which the speaker or writer intends, as: machine, <i>n.</i> , sense IV.6c	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense IV.6c	NN
Figurative: human body	A living body, esp. the human body considered in general or individually. Now chiefly figuratively machine, <i>n.</i> , sense I.2	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense I.2	NN
Specific type of machine	Theatre. A (usually movable) contrivance for the production of stage-effects; (in plural) stage machine, <i>n.</i> , sense II.4a	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense II.4a	NN
Figurative: plot device	Theatre. A (usually movable) contrivance for the production of stage-effects; (in plural) stage machine, <i>n.</i> , sense II.4a	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense II.4a	NN
Figurative: plot device	In literature, etc.: a contrivance for the sake of effect; a supernatural agency, personage, or in machine, <i>n.</i> , sense II.4b	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense II.4b	NN
Figurative: human or animal moving automatically	figurative in general use.	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense V.8a	NN
Figurative: human body	figurative. A living being considered to move or act automatically or mechanically, rather than machine, <i>n.</i> , sense V.8b	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense V.8b	NN
Other	slang. The penis; the female genitals (rare). Also: 'A condom (obsolete).	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense V.9	NN
Figurative: an immaterial structure	figurative.machine for living (in): a house or other habitation considered as a functional entity machine, <i>n.</i> , sense V.8c	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense V.8c	NN
Figurative: a material construction or edifice	A material or immaterial structure, esp. the fabric of the world or of the universe; a construct machine, <i>n.</i> , sense I.1a	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense I.1a	NN
Specific type of machine	In general use: an apparatus, device, instrument, or implement (now archaic and Canadian re machine, <i>n.</i> , sense IV.6a	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense IV.6a	NN
Simple mechanics	A complex device, consisting of a number of interrelated parts, each having a definite function machine, <i>n.</i> , sense IV.6b	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense IV.6b	NN
Specific type of machine	Mechanics. Anything that transmits force or directs its application.	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense IV.7	NN
Other	spec. A scheme or plot. Obsolete.	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense I.1b	NN
Figurative: an immaterial structure	U.S. colloquial. A fire engine. Obsolete.	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.5e	NN
Other	Originally U.S. The controlling organization of a political party or similar body; any organization machine, <i>n.</i> , sense V.10	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense V.10	NN
Specific type of machine	A box or case in which fresh fish are sold wholesale. Cf. trunk <i>n.</i> 8b. Obsolete.	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.5f	NN
Other	Australian and New Zealand colloquial. A totalizer.	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense IV.6d	NN
Figurative: an immaterial structure	Painting. A painting of large size, esp. one whose subject matter and composition are complex machine, <i>n.</i> , sense V.11	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense V.11	NN
Other	A conceptual, abstract, or theoretical mechanism or device; spec. a model or a mathematical machine, <i>n.</i> , sense IV.6e	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense IV.6e	NN
conceptual computing machine	A ship or other vessel. Now colloquial: a boat.	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.5a	NN
Form of transport	A (usually wheeled) vehicle or conveyance, esp. one drawn by a horse or horses, or other dra machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.5b	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.5b	NN
Form of transport	A bicycle or tricycle; a motorcycle. Formerly also: a dandy-horse or velocipede (now historical machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.5d	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.5d	NN
Form of transport	An aircraft or airship. Cf. sense 6b.	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.5g	NN
Form of transport	Originally and chiefly U.S. A motor vehicle, esp. a car.	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.5h	NN
Specific type of machine	A military engine or siege-tower. Cf. war machine <i>n.</i> (a) at war <i>n.</i> 1 compounds 4. Now historical machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.3	machine, <i>n.</i> , sense III.3	NN

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MARAVILLA COCOA.—No breakfast table is complete without this delicious beverage. — The *Globe* says: "Taylor

### TASK

Select the classification that best matches the highlighted 'machine'. If there are several relevant options, choose the most specific classification.

War and military - machines specialised for use in war

Figurative - descriptive, poetical or metaphorical uses; e.g. comparing machines and something else, or vice versa

Transport - includes ships, planes and wheeled vehicles whose primary purpose is transport

Mechanical apparatus - a complex device that performs a certain kind of work

Other

### TUTORIAL

# 'Classify it!' : Analyse du terme 'machine' dans les dictionnaires

## machine, n.

**Pronunciation:** <sup>?</sup> Brit.  /məʃiːn/, U.S.  /məʃin/

**Forms:** 1500s *machyne*, 1500s–1700s *machin*, 1500s– *machine*, 1600s *macheen*.

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Other

### TUTORIAL



# 'Describe it!' task

sted stream is sown. The rollers move along the  
ndles, so that the different grooves can be  
ought to act on the centre of the hoppers; and,  
en necessary to empty them, it is done by  
ply shifting the rollers from under the hoppers,  
the same time holding a bag under the delivery  
oe. This machine has three speeds, and can be  
rown out of gear at the headlands by a movcable  
tch. The advantages claimed for it are sim-  
city, strength, non-cutting of the seeds, and the  
gular and continuous delivery. Messrs. M'Kenzie  
owed a large number of ploughs of almost every  
aginable description, which all seemed of excel

TASK

TUTORIAL

Read the text and type in words that name or describe the highlighted 'machine'

unclear

NEED SOME HELP WITH THIS TASK?

Back

Done

needle making hair plaiting puddling potato planting trial field  
wool scouring hydro-electric card scutching  
tea mixing floating ball washing  
flax spinning doffing plate trasher feeding cask making  
ploughed weighing piecing brick cotton gin  
leaves wringer wheat dryer wool drying  
printing washing mill cloth fulling  
thrashing coal mining hay oil guns engine of war  
fuel economiser scribbler gun mangle  
guillotines knitting rag mower tentering tunneling  
guillotine file farming lights cheapest dynamo  
wringing turbine reaping lace sack lifting reaper only perfect  
meat cutting boiler large gun slot drilling  
wool combing revolving tea mixer tram lines  
carding wringing and mangling  
roving shearing simplest in motion  
double cylinder raising gig disc washing  
duplicate doubling frame corn reaper  
cropping drilling woollen spinner saw sharpening  
wool burring lawn mower steam joinery works

# 'Describe it!' : Activité de transcription

sted stream is sown. The rollers move along the  
ndles, so that the different grooves can be  
ought to act on the centre of the hoppers; and,  
en necessary to empty them, it is done by  
ply shifting the rollers from under the hoppers,  
the same time holding a bag under the delivery  
oe. **This machine** has three speeds, and can be  
rown out of gear at the headlands by a movcable  
tch. The advantages claimed for it are sim-  
city, strength, non-cutting of the seeds, and the  
gular and continuous delivery. Messrs. M'Kenzie  
owed a large number of ploughs of almost every  
aginable description, which all seemed of excel

TASK

TUTORIAL

Read the text and type in words that name or describe the highlighted 'machine'

unclear

NEED SOME HELP WITH THIS TASK?

Back

Done

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boot making roving shearing simplest in motion  
double cylinder raising gig disc washing  
duplicate doubling frame corn reaper  
wool burring cropping drilling woollen spinner lawn mower steam joinery works

# Case Study: Mapping Victorian Accidents

Kaspar Beelen, Mariona Coll Ardanuy, Federico Nanni

**Detect** and **disambiguate** place names through **toponym resolution** in articles that mention accidents e.g. :

“On Monday afternoon a dense fog prevailed , and a lamentable **accident** occurred at **{Thorpe: Q7796696}** , near **{Norwich: Q130191}** .”

They identified 75,000 place names (toponyms) close to the token 'accident' in five newspapers titles.

Result: visualise 'accidents' over time and space





# Étude de cas : Mapping les accidents du XIXe siècle

Kaspar Beelen, Mariona Coll Ardanuy, Federico Nanni

**Détecter** et **désambiguïser** les noms de lieux par **toponym resolution** dans les articles qui mentionnent des accidents. Par exemple :

“On Monday afternoon a dense fog prevailed , and a lamentable **accident** occurred at {Thorpe: **Q7796696**} , near {Norwich: **Q130191**} .”

Ils ont identifié 75,000 noms de lieux (toponyms) proches du token 'accident' dans 5 titres de journaux.

Resultat : visualisation des 'accidents' dans le temps et l'espace.



## Future work

Detecting ads (using crowdsourced 'ad or not' dataset, compound nouns)

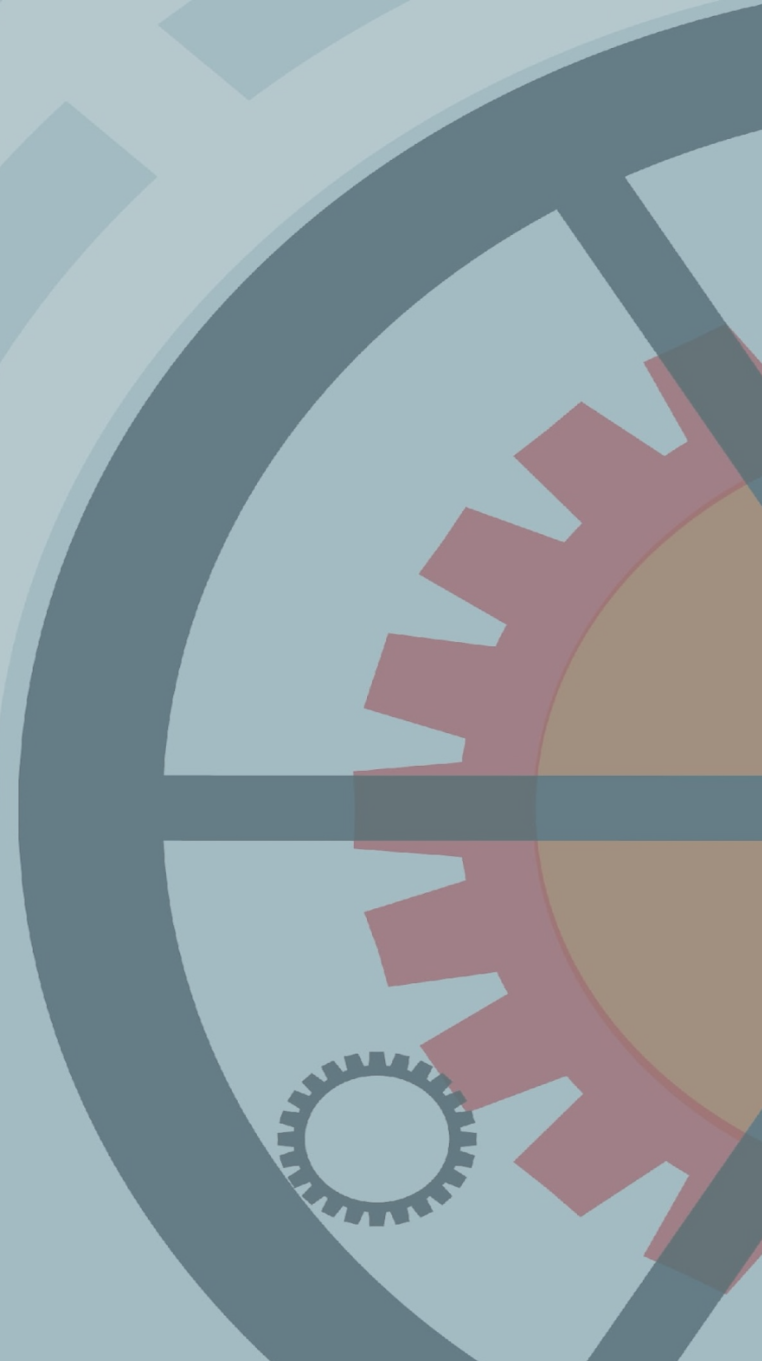
Identifying copyright-free 'unauthored' works

Publishing derived datasets for wider use

Visualisations in exhibition (Leeds; July 2022 - January 2023)

'Convergence' work to unite methods and sources across the project

Integration with BL systems, training



# Travail futur

Détection des pubs (avec un crowdsourced dataset - 'pub ou non'; noms composés)

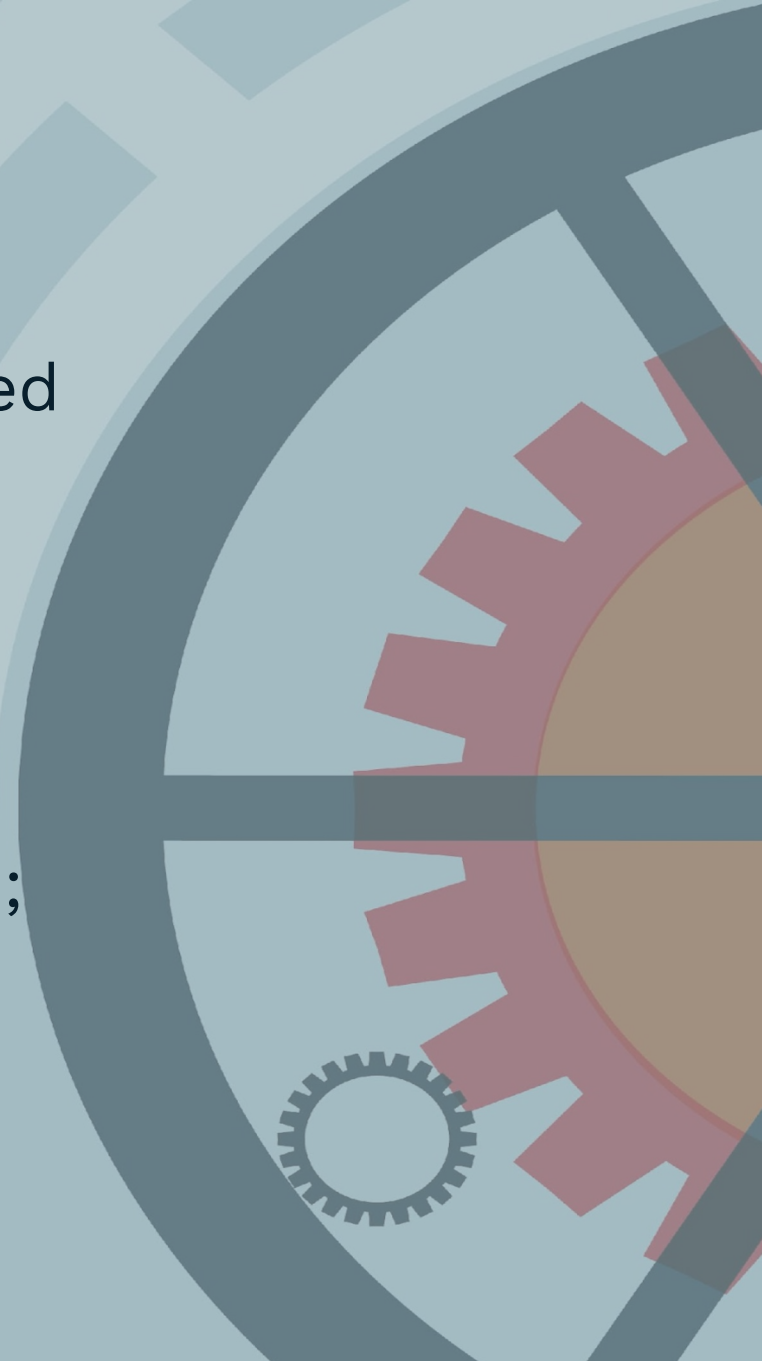
Identification d'œuvres 'sans auteur' et libre de copyright

Publication de derived datasets pour une utilisation plus large

Visualisations dans une exposition (Leeds; July 2022 - January 2023)

Travail de 'convergence' pour unir les méthodes et sources à travers le projet

Intégration avec les systèmes du BL; formation





# Thanks for listening!

Find out more:

<https://livingwithmachines.ac.uk>

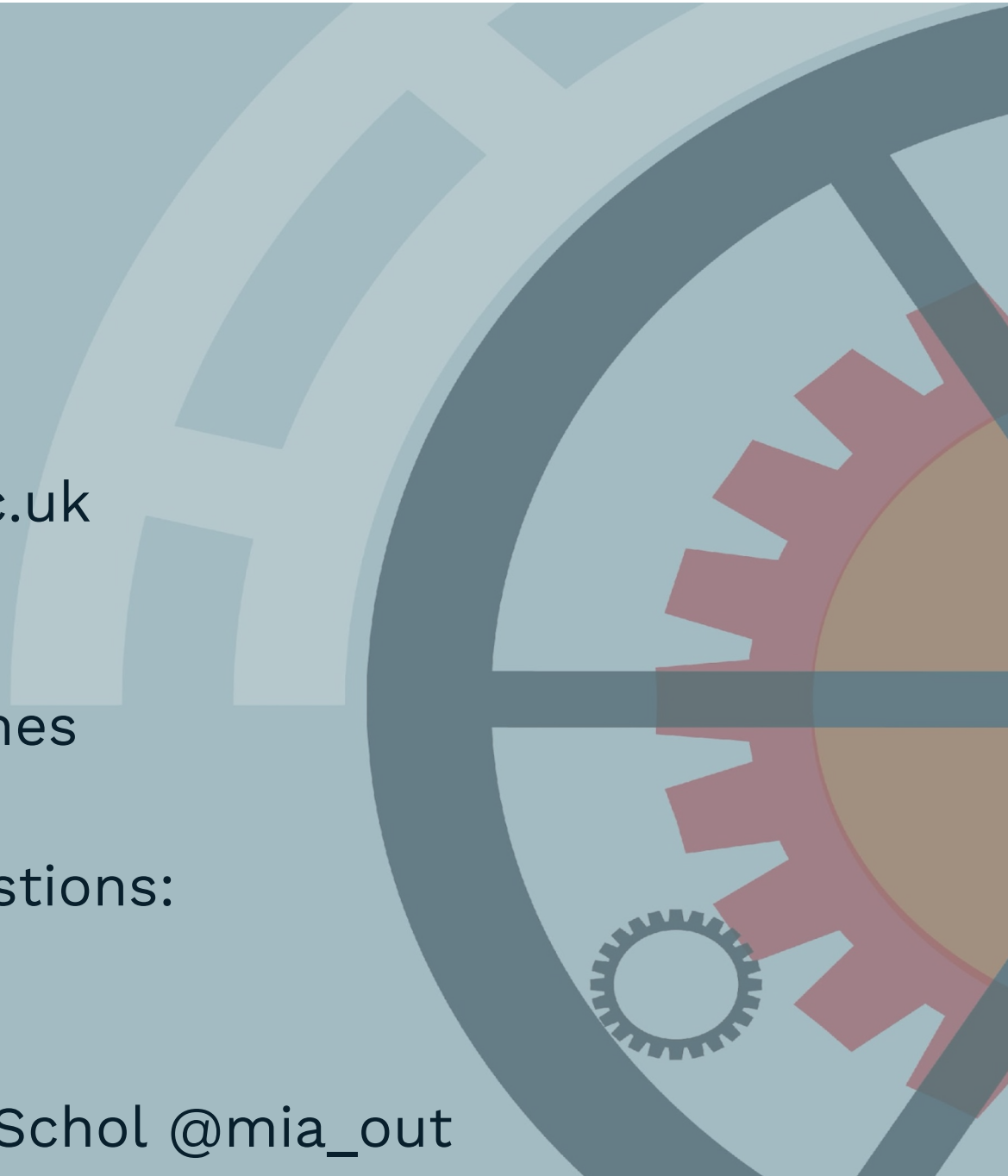
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<http://bit.ly/LivingWithMachines>

We look forward to your questions:

[digitalresearch@bl.uk](mailto:digitalresearch@bl.uk)

@LivingWMachines @BL\_DigiSchol @mia\_out



# **Merci de votre attention!**

Pour en savoir plus:

<https://livingwithmachines.ac.uk>

Essayez notre activité de crowdsourcing:

<http://bit.ly/LivingWithMachines>

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