“The Page Is an Image Again:” Bleedmapping as an Analysis Technique for Historical Newspapers

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Article of interest:


Analysis of historical periodicals through digital tools is still a predominantly text-based field. This paper seeks to expand the toolbox of researchers of these sources, and addresses the observed capability gap, by proposing a new technique for the discovery of appearance patterns in historical newspaper collections. It calls this technique Bleedmapping after the effect it produces, making it seem as if a multitude of pages have “bled through” each other and showing the greatest concentration of articles matching a chosen search parameter visually in an intuitive and easy to interpret manner. This approach greatly extends the toolbox of scholars by providing them a method to explore the metatextual and spatial context of the texts they study. Using a case study on Reynolds' Newspaper this article shows the value of Bleedmapping when used alongside a text-based LDA analysis, showing the prevalence of the British Empire in the paper's “Notices to Correspondents”.

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