Masterclass in Library Impact:
Quantifying the Humanities Research Impact of Your Academic Library

Today's Presenter:

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Professor of Data Science in the School of Information, Journalism and Communication
University of Sheffield

More information about today's presentation

Download the impact studies:

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Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Part III
(Coming Soon!)

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Quantifying the Humanities Research Impact of Your Academic Library

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Thelwall, M. (2025). EIGHTEENTH CENTURY COLLECTIONS ONLINE: From Gardening Flowers to the International Balance of Power.
Thelwall, M. (2025). PAST ECHOES AND PRESENT NEWS: Academic citations to The Times 1785-1985.

Contents

1. A six-step method to trace the humanities impacts of diverse digital resources from your library
2. A case study of The Times 1775-1985
3. A case study of Eighteenth-Century Collections Online

Tracing the impacts of diverse digital resources from your library

- **Digital resource use** can be *counted* with download data, but this reveals nothing about use contexts.
- **Journal article use contexts** can be identified with citation analysis.
  - Databases supporting citation analysis searches include: Web of Science, Scopus, Dimensions.ai, OpenAlex,...
  - This could be applied to explore how a humanities journal is used.
- **Other digital resource use contexts** are harder to identify because citation databases are mostly not designed for them.
  - E.g., newspapers, digitised primary document sources, data repositories, government repositories, digital text collections
- This talk describes methods to identify use contexts for other digital resources from citation databases.

Step 1: Resource selection

This six-step method piggybacks on bibliometric citation databases with a citation-based search strategy to identify works citing the digital resources.

1. If possible, select the resources with *distinctive* titles or other identifiers (including URLs) that are likely to be included in academic citations.
   - E.g., *Cleave's Weekly Police Gazette* but not *The News*.

As part of this find out how the digital resources are commonly cited – by name, identifier, or something else?

Starting with or focusing on resources that are cited in a distinctive way, if possible, is a pragmatic way to speed the process.

Steps 2 & 3: Query creation

2. EITHER For periodical titles (e.g., *The Times*), find a database that indexes the name (e.g., Web of Science, OpenAlex, Dimensions) and query by cited reference title.
   - If a citation database indexes the periodical title, then they have done the hard (algorithmic) work of identifying the citations and a single query will get all the results you need.
   - If no citation database indexes the periodical title or there isn't one, try (3).
3. OR For distinctive periodical/document titles or document identifiers use a Scopus cited reference search REFSRCTITLE or REF, whichever works best.
   - REFSRCTITLE and REF search the reference sections of academic documents, including footnotes.
   - Use either one query per periodical or one query per cited document.
   - Use multiple queries per document/periodical if there are multiple citation styles.
   - Test for too many false matches or too few correct matches and revise queries if possible.
   - As a last resort if there are too many false matches, write a program to try to filter out the false matches from the results.

Steps 4, 5, & 6: Harvesting & reporting

4. If there are multiple queries, submit them manually – perhaps in batches – or automatically (Scopus, OpenAlex, Dimensions).
   - Get a data science librarian and/or ChatGPT to help with the API programming for this?
5. Check the results to filter out false matches.
6. Report the results, such as:
   - Lists of citations
   - Information about the citations (e.g., source countries, subjects, journals, authors)
   - Detailed citation contexts by tracking the citation within the source document (Warning! May be too much fun and drag you down wormholes)
   - Be humble in any claims: You may only find 1% of valid uses and perhaps 10% of valid citations due to non-standard or non-indexed citations, and citations from publications not indexed by the database used.

Case Study 1: The Times

- Objective: Find academic citations to stories in The Times published between 1775 and 1985 (Gale exclusive digital content).
- Problems:
  - Many old stories have no titles.
  - Citations are very ad-hoc.
  - “The Times” is too general to search for.
- Solution:
  - The Times is indexed as a Cited Work in the Web of Science, so use its Cited Work search.

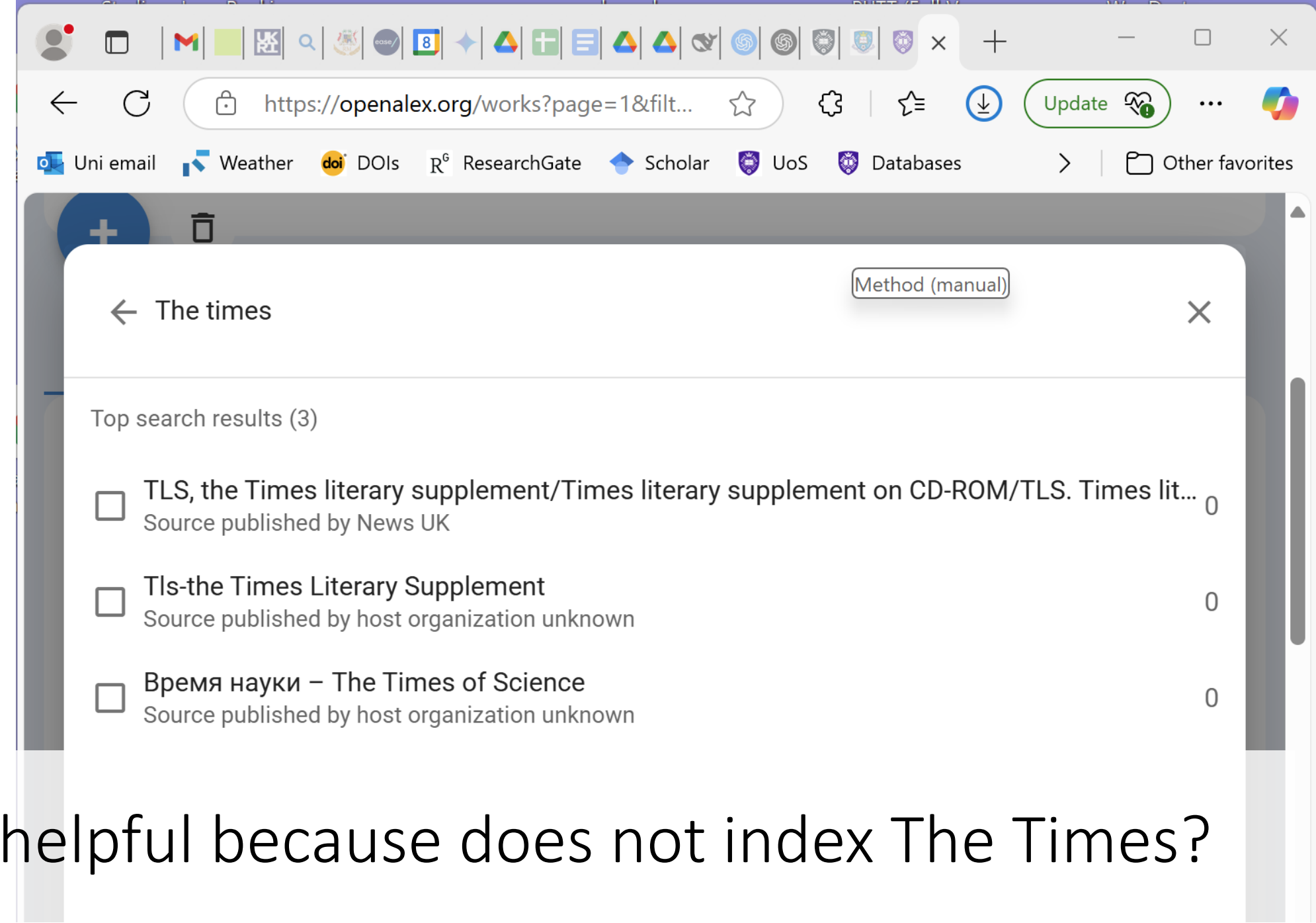
A short early Times story with no title

The ROTHERHITHE *British Convention* has been very properly routed by the Police; but the ſnake we fear is not killed. Let the Lord MAYOR keep a wary eye on the *Three Kings*, in the Minories, where lectures of a moſt dangerous and ſeditious tendency are every other night delivered to the gaping multitude by Mr. THELWALL, with various aſſiſtants. How often muſt we ſay to the HOPPING ſhoemaker— "*ſutor ultra crepidam.*" This democratic ſon of *Criſpin* is one of the choiceſt feathers in the wing of treaſon.

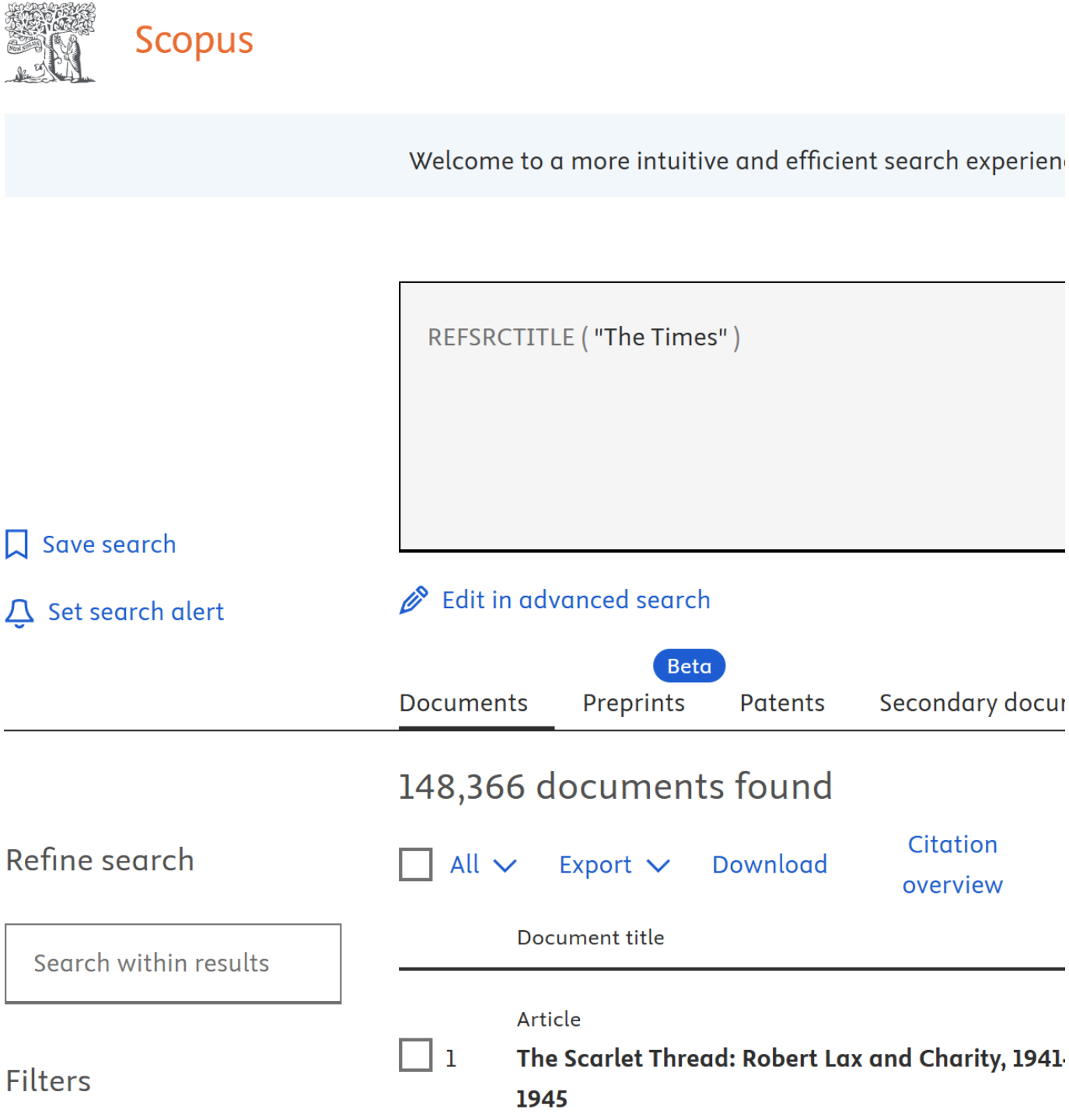
More recent newspaper stories have titles.

SURVEILLANCE AND CLUBS FOR GIRLS.

While all engaged in social work in military centres agree that there has been a great improvement in the last two or three months, complaints are still received from some parts of the trouble caused by the thoughtless conduct of numbers of young girls whose open admiration for the recruits has been finding expression in undesirable ways. In some centres, it is stated, the excitement has caused numbers of girls to lose their heads, and in one district where many girls were employed the nuisance became so great that the military authorities had to consider the alternatives of moving the troops or taking them on route marches from 8 o'clock until midnight.



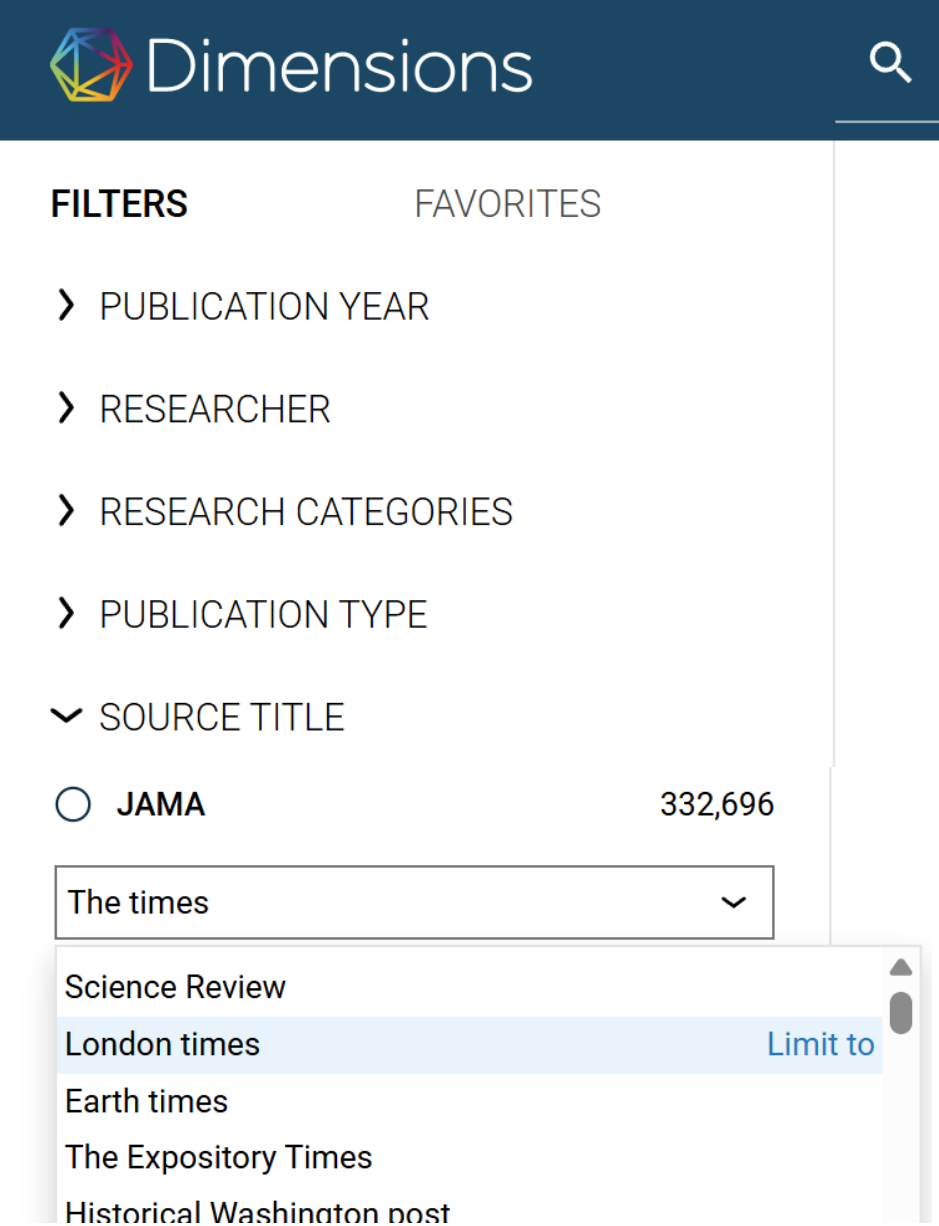
OpenAlex unhelpful because does not index The Times?

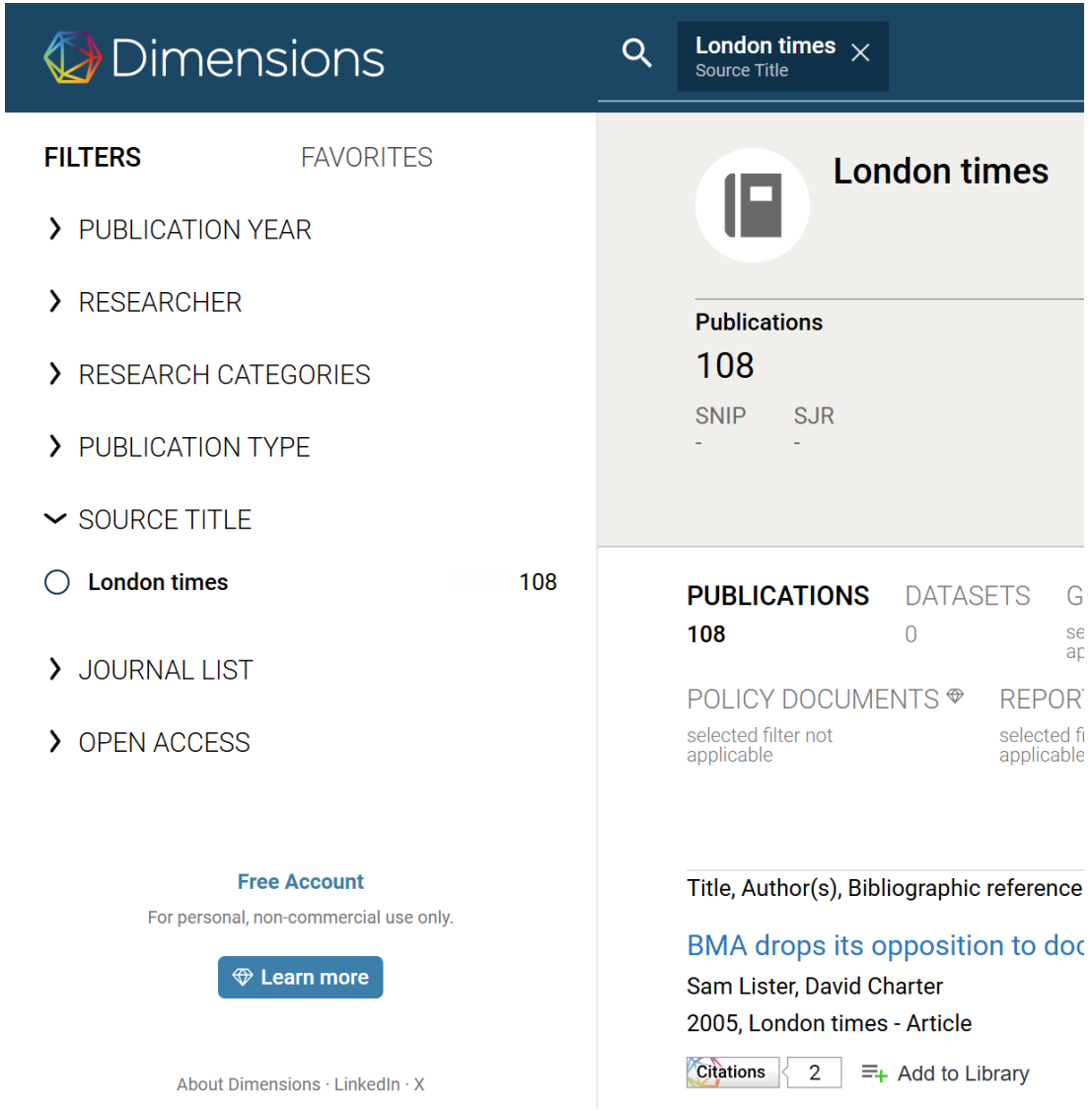


Scopus unhelpful – reference source title match REFSRCTITLE is too broad and likely to get too many false matches?

References

- Reference (REF)
- Reference Article Number (REFARTNUM)
- Reference Author (REFAUTH)
- Reference First Page (REFPAGEFIRST)
- Reference Page Numbers (REFPAGE)
- Reference Publication Year (REFPUBYEAR)
- Reference Source Title (REFSRCTITLE)
- Reference Title (REFTITLE)
- Reference Website (WEBSITE)

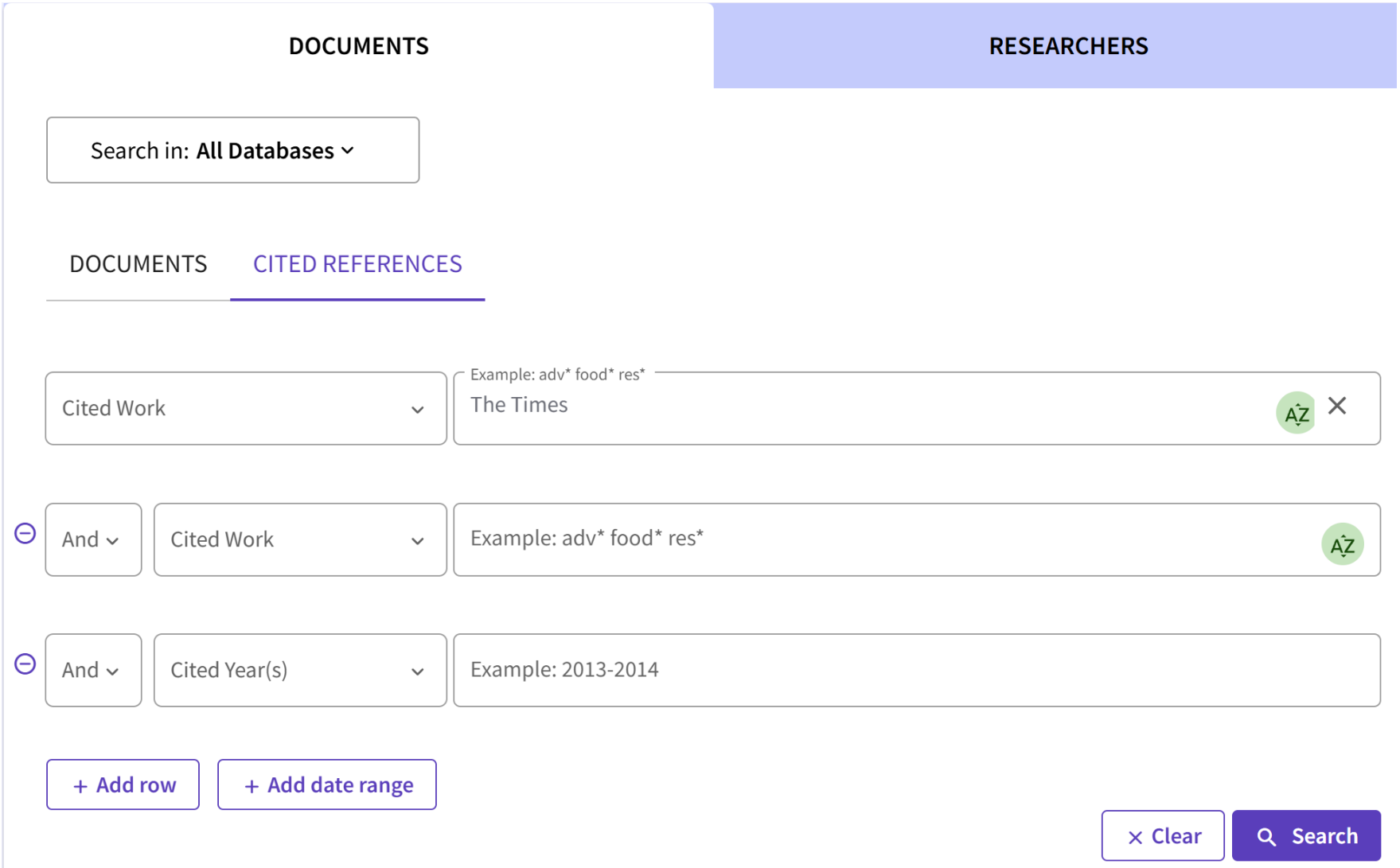




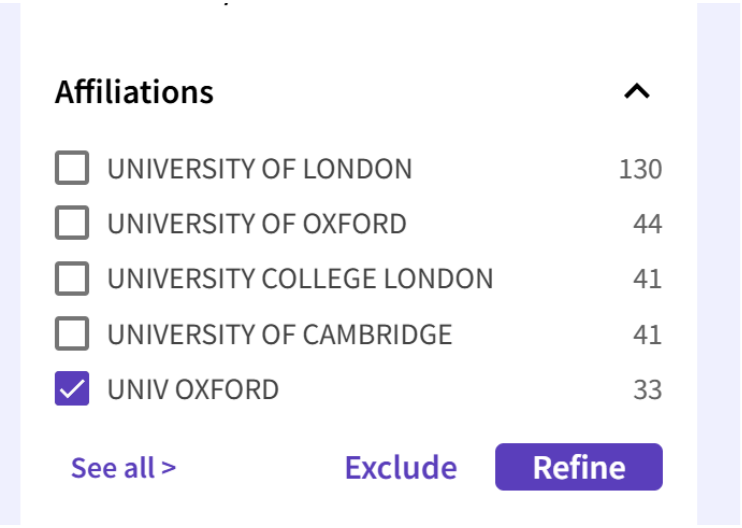
- Dimensions does not work in this case – selecting The Times as a Source Title gives only 108 articles.

Step 2 (Web of Science)

- The Web of Science does index The Times effectively.
- Go to the Web of Science CITED REFERENCES section and enter *The Times* as the Cited Work and click Search.
- [Can filter by Affiliations to restrict the results to the the desired university.]



Step 2: Filtering by affiliation (optional)



5

Paradigm shift in the European Union's space policy: institutional restructuring and its possible consequences for the CEE region

Bartóki-Gönczy, B and Malinowska, K

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Developing capabilities in outer space has become crucial as the space segment becomes an increasingly important pillar of the economy and defence capabilities of states. Despite the growing global competition in and for outer space, in recent decades the EU and the ESA have focused their strategy on the civil aspects of space exploration. However, the c ... Show more

Step 4 (manual, with the Web of Science)

- To find cited references, select as many as possible (up to 1000) and click Export (to analyse offline) or See Results (to analyse online).
- If there are >1000 hits, run multiple searches for different year ranges to get result sets with <1000 records each.

22,396 Cited References

Step 2: Select the cited references in this list that match the author(s) or work(s) you are interested in, then See Results.

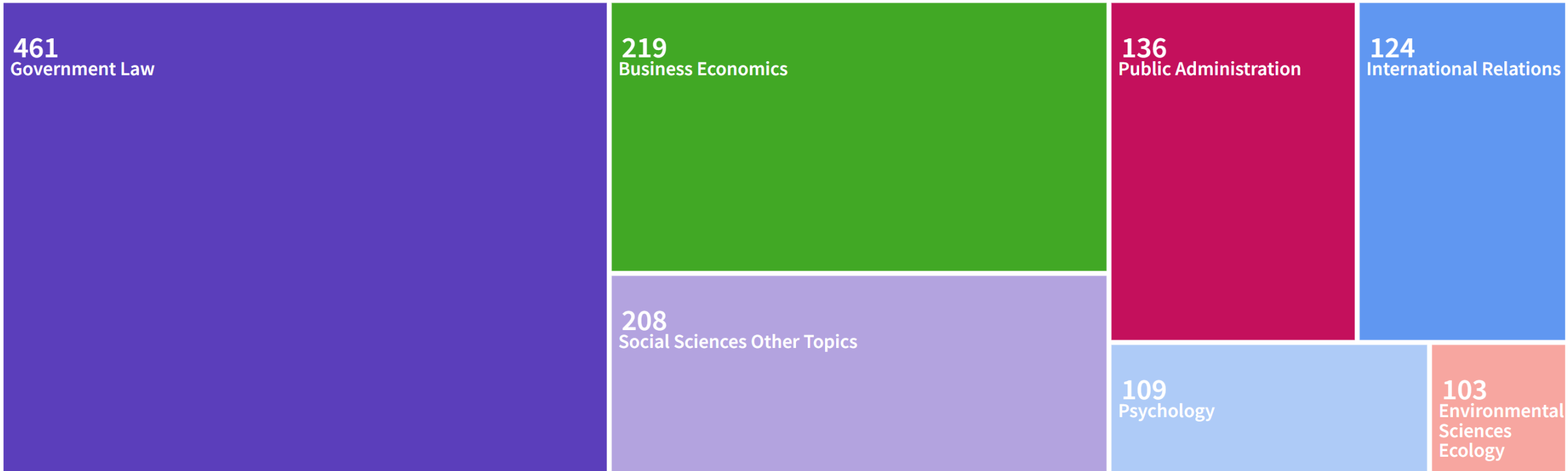
Customize table settings

1,000/22,396 Export See Results 1 of 448

Cited Author	Cited Work	Title	Year	Volume	Issue	Page	Identifier	Citing Articles
157HKPRO	TIMES 0614	HKRS 70-2-439, 'Strike cuts Hong Kong food'	1967					1
A.C.E.	TIMES	Mr. K. B. Quinan, C.H.	1948			6		1
A Childrens Museum: Dolls and Toys of All Ages	The Times		1916			9		1

Step 6: Analysing results

- Then click Analyse Results to get an overview.
- Or read/list individual citing records.
- Offline can analyse the citing records in Excel or with a program or bibliometric software like VoSViewer.



The Times analysis

- Eight broad different types of reason were found for citing old Times stories.
- Sources of citations were also investigated.

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Citing *The Times* theme 2: Legal and social changes

***Times* story**	**Year**	**Academic citation context**
Laundress advert	1817	Evidence of the services offered by laundresses to attract business. Cited in: **Georgian Washerwomen: tales of the tub from the long eighteenth century**.
Poor law for Ireland	1847	Evidence of a petition in support of Ireland from Glasgow after the potato famine. Cited in: **'Irish fever' in Britain during the Great Famine: immigration, disease and the legacy of 'Black '47'**.
British Engineers at Constantinople	1873	Evidence of the existence of and prevalence of British engineers in Istanbul. Cited in: **British Workers and Ottoman Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Istanbul**.
The Enemy Alien. Internment of Suspects	1914	Evidence of spy mania in 1914 during WW1. Cited in: **Fictional German governesses in Edwardian popular culture: English responses to German militarism and modernity**.
Women patrols	1914	The emergence of women patrols near military bases to safeguard all concerned from the "flighty conduct" of women. Cited in: **'Giddy Girls', 'Scandalous Statements' and a 'Burst Bubble': the war babies panic of 1914-1915**.

Citing *The Times* theme 3: Health

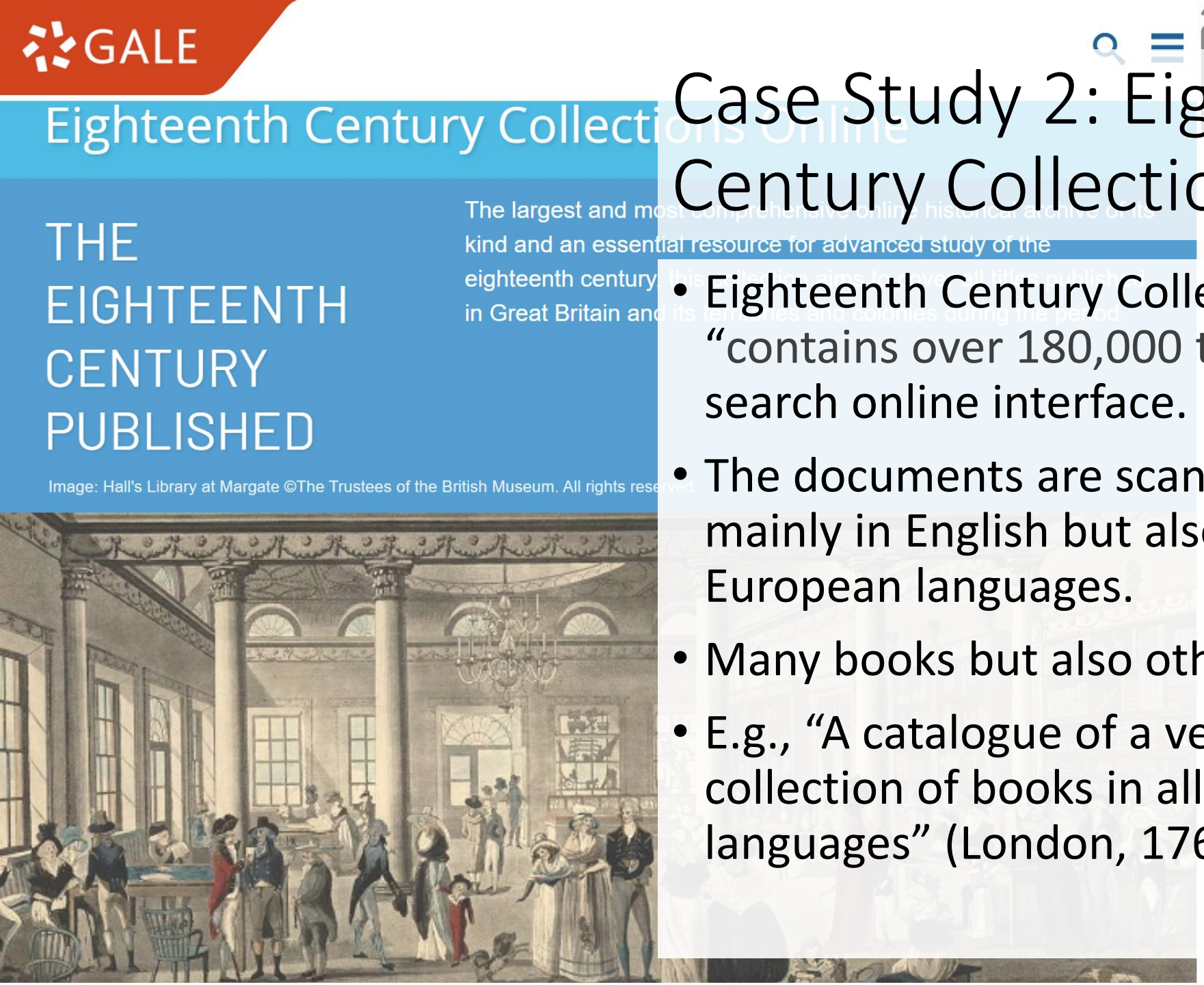
***Times* story**	**Year**	**Academic citation context**
No penicillin for the public	1942	Evidence about government policy on penicillin distribution. Cited in: **The role of the media in influencing public attitudes to penicillin during World War II**.
Letter, 'Health Policy: Claims of Social Medicine'	1942	Evidence of the attitudes of a prominent letter writer. Cited in: **The 'new era in medicine': John Ryle and the promotion of social medicine**.
Influenza and Its Causes	1918	*The Times* emphasising the need to research common diseases like flu during a pandemic. Cited in: **Putting pandemics in perspective: England and the flu, 1889–1919**.
The Metropolitan Railway	1868	Evidence of public concerns (letter to the editor) that it is difficult to avoid tobacco smoke on trains. Cited in: **Minding the Gap: Uncovering the Underground's Role in the Formation of Modern London, 1855-1945**.
Advance in Study of Common Cold: Viruses Propagated in Tissue Culture	1960	Evidence that journalists viewed tissue culture technology development as an unproblematic, important advance. Cited in: **A Troubled Past? Reassessing Ethics in the History of Tissue Culture**.

However, once smoking had been allowed in one train, the officials were unable or unwilling to police it on the Metropolitan Railway and the company relented and allowed smoking carriages by 1870.[454] Each railway line that carried more than one carriage per class was required to have a smoking compartment for each class and, depending on the railway company operating the line, these smoking carriages were often reserved exclusively for men.[455]

[454] John Bull, "The Metropolitan Railway: To the Editor of *the Times*," *Times* (London, England), Friday, 16 October 1868. In the letter, "John Bull" complained about the Metropolitan line's resistance, asserting that smoking "is now openly practiced in every train and on every platform."

Citing *The Times* theme 7: Global Affairs (The Americas)

***Times* story**	**Year**	**Academic citation context**
Development in Brazil	1973	Evidence that deforestation was ignored, and development praised internationally. Cited in: **The materiality of data transparency and the (re)configuration of environmental activism in the Brazilian Amazon**.
Democracy in Chile	1952	A *Times* claim that 'Chile was "an oasis of freedom" in South America'. Cited in: **Western Europe and Chilean development 1945-1973**.
The Other Spains. Spanish America and the War	1937	Evidence of the influence of the Spanish Civil War in Latin America. Cited in: **Mexico and the Spanish Republic. 1931-1939**.
The Gold Diggings on the Fraser River	1858	Romanticization of the "manly" white gold prospector. Cited in: **White Power, Yellow Gold: Colonialism and Identity in the California and British Columbia Gold Rushes, 1848-1871**.
Obituary. Professor Gayley. English Scholar and Humanist	1932	A biographical sketch of a US literary professor. Cited in: **Plautus goes USA: the adaptation of *Rudens* by the Ladies' Literary Society of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1884**.



Case Study 2: Eighteenth-Century Collections Online

- Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) "contains over 180,000 titles" with a full text search online interface.
- The documents are scanned printed works, mainly in English but also in some other European languages.
- Many books but also other printed works.
- E.g., "A catalogue of a very choice and curious collection of books in all arts, sciences, and languages" (London, 1762).

Finding citations to ECCO documents: The challenge

- The main challenges in identifying citations to ECCO documents, as for many online collections, are that:
  - ECCO is not indexed as a source title in any major database so there isn’t a systematic way to find all their citations with a single search (so Step 2 will not work).
  - There are too many to manually search one-by-one for citations (so Step 3 needs to be automated).
- So we developed a semi-automatic way to identify these citations.

Finding citations to individual ECCO documents

1. Convert the title of an ECCO document into a Scopus cited reference search, with added quotes. This queries references for the exact phrase.
    1. E.g., REF("A poem in praise of tea")
    2. Or for a single university, REF("A poem in praise of tea") AND AF-ID("Baylor University" 60011278)
2. Submit to Scopus in the advanced search interface.

Scopus

Advanced query

REF ("A poem in praise of tea")

Show less

Save search

Set search alert

Edit in advanced search

Beta

Documents | Preprints | Patents | Secondary documents | Research data

2 documents found

Refine search

All | Export | Download | Citation overview | MoreShow all abstracts | Sort by Date (newe

Search within results

	Document title	Authors	Source
1	Book **The Tale of Tea: A Comprehensive History of Tea from Prehistoric Times to the Present Day**	van Driem, G.	The Tale of Tea: A Comprehensive

Filters

Citations to multiple documents, manual process

1. STEP 1: Get a list of all ECCO document titles and filter out generic titles (e.g., “Letter”).
2. STEP 3: Combine multiple Scopus cited reference searches, as in the previous slide.
    1. E.g., REF("A poem in praise of tea") OR REF("The Ballad Singer, a New Song")
    2. Or, (REF("A poem in praise of tea") OR REF("The Ballad Singer, a New Song")) AND AF-ID("Baylor University" 60011278)
    3. The queries could be combined with Excel to speed the process.
3. STEP 4: Submit to Scopus in the advanced search interface.

Scopus

Welcome to a more intuitive and efficient search experience. See what is new

Advanced query

REF ("A poem in praise of tea") OR REF ("The Ballad Singer, a New Song")

Show less

Save search

Set search alert

Edit in advanced search

Beta

Documents | Preprints | Patents | Secondary documents | Research data

3 documents found

Analyze res

Refine search

Search within results

Filters

All | Export | Download | Citation overview | MoreShow all abstracts | Sort by Date (newest)

	Document title	Authors	Source	Year	Cita
1	Book **The Tale of Tea: A Comprehensive History of Tea from Prehistoric Times to the Present Day**	van Driem, G.	The Tale of Tea: A Comprehensive History of Tea from	2019	

Citations to multiple ECCO documents, automatic process (Step 4)

- Scopus has an Applications Programming Interface that allows you to submit multiple queries through a program, so:
- Sign up to use the Scopus API https://dev.elsevier.com/
- Build the REF queries for all titles as in the previous examples.
- Save the queries to a plain text file.
- Write a program to submit the queries to Scopus and download the citation matches.
- ChatGPT advice makes this coding faster if you are a programmer.

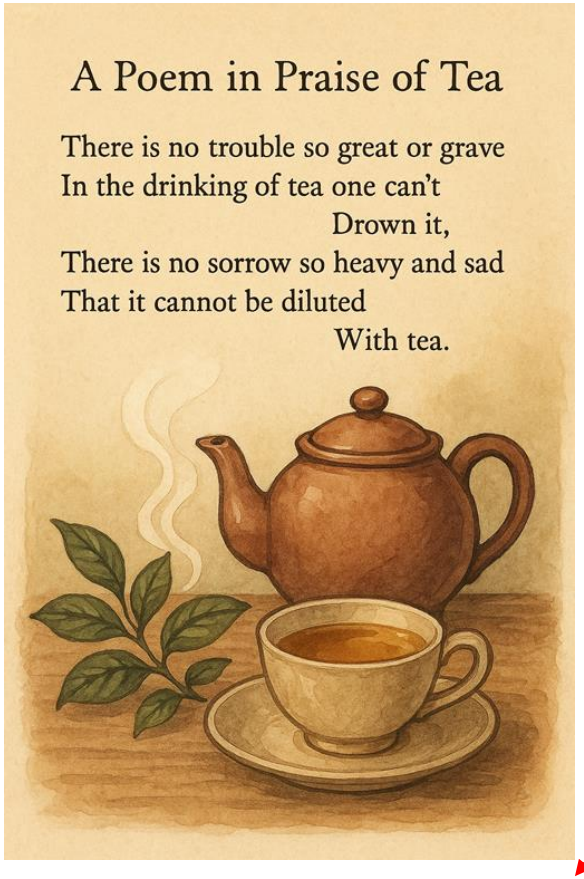
Step 5: Manually check the results

- False matches are to be expected from:
  - Short or common titles
  - Titles that are phrases in longer works
  - Wrong editions
- Missed matches are to be expected from:
  - Non-standard spellings or abbreviations
  - Alternative titles
  - Citing without the document title.
- Manual filtering was needed to deal with false matches – such as removing titles with suspiciously high hit counts and many false matches.

Step 6: Summarizing the results and finding the context (optional but fun)

- Copy all results to Excel and use Pivot Tables to summarize sources of citations, by citing journal, author country, author affiliation, year.
- Download a selection of citing sources and find the citation.
- Read the context of the citation to identify how the resource has been useful.
- Analysing a large enough sample should give insights into the value of the resource for academics.

Context example: REF("A poem in praise of tea")



- Citing source from Scopus:
  - Blood-stained sugar: Gender, commerce and the British slave-trade debates
- Download the article and search it for the citation:

The feminine architect of this harmonious scene is unidentified yet understood as essential to its creation. Shutters and curtains enclose the scene, shutting out 'The grand debate, / The popular harangue, the tart reply' of the public sphere though the man and the material culture of the tea ritual were reminders 'of a noisy world'.[11] Cowper's poem emphasized the dual benefits of tea consumption. The tea ritual simultaneously civilized Britons and expanded the British economy through the consumption of tea and its accoutrements.

[11] Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, 22; Peter Motteux, *A Poem in Praise of Tea* (London: Printed for J. Tonson, 1712), in Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, available from http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2488&tabID=T001&docId=CW112994649&type=

ECCO analysis

- Sixteen broad different types of reason were found for citing rare ECCO documents.
- Sources of citations were also investigated.

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Example unexpected theme: Geography/travel

Citing document	ECCO document	Academic citation context
City-ports in the **Eastern and Central Mediterranean** from the mid-sixteenth to the nineteenth century: Urban and social aspects	Tournefort, M., A Voyage into the **Levant**: Perform'd by Command of the Late French King. Containing The Antient and Modern State of the **Islands of the Archipelago**; as also of **Constantinople**, the Coasts of the **Black Sea**, **Armenia**, **Georgia**, the Frontiers of **Persia**, and **Asia Minor**..., vol. II, London 1718 (trans. from French).	Praise for the city of Smyrna, **Turkey**.
Reserved abundance: State granaries of early modern **Istanbul**	A Compendium of the Travels of Frederick Lewis Norden through **Egypt** and **Nubia** (Dublin).	The architecture of storehouses in **Damascus**.
Name and scale matter: Clarifying the geography of **Tibetan Plateau** and adjacent mountain regions	Chevreau, 1703 U. Chevreau D. Brown, T. Benskin, J. Walthoe, J. Hartley, F. Coggan (Eds.), The history of the world, ecclesiastical and civil: from the creation to this present time. With chronological remarks (1703) London, UK.	The coining of the term "**High Asia**" for high areas around **Tibet**.
Liberty Dreamt in Stone: The (Neo)Medieval City of **San Marino**	Joseph Addison, Remarks on Several Parts of **Italy**, &c. in the Years 1701, 1702, 1703 (London, 1705).	Interest in **San Marino** in **Italy**.

Example theme 2: Interpersonal relationships

Citing document	ECCO document	Academic citation context
Pamela's wedding night	The history of the gay Bellario, and the fair Isabella, founded on facts, and illustrated with adventures in real life (London, 1763).	Novels hinting at wedding-night activities.
Did soldiers really enlist to desert their wives? Revisiting the martial character of marital desertion in eighteenth-century London	Agar, William, Military devotion: or, the soldier's duty to God, his prince and his country. Containing fourteen sermons preached at the camps near Blandford (London, 1758).	Wives no longer accompanied soldiers on campaign.
Marital conflict, ethnicity, and legal hybridity in postconquest **Quebec**	An old bachelor's reflection on matrimony, 1780.	Marital affection celebrated by some in **Quebec**, **Canada**.
'Losing him in a labyrinth of his own cloth': Beau Feilding's 1706 bigamy trial reprints and the politics of male fashion criticism	The poor beau's petition for a new suit, to his mistress that had lately cast him off (London, 1709).	Men cast off by rich wives/ mistresses sometimes could not afford nice clothes.
Academic Collaboration in the Early Enlightenment: Daniel Waterland (1683–1740) and his Cambridge Tyros	John Chapman, Remarks on a book intitled, Christianity as old as the creation, with regard to ecclesiastical antiquity (Cambridge, 1732).	Some humanities scholars coordinated their work in the early 18th century.

Solution Recap

1. If possible, select the resources with distinctive titles or other identifiers (including URLs) that are likely to be included in citations.
2. EITHER For periodical titles (e.g., *The Times*), find a database that indexes the name (e.g., Web of Science, OpenAlex, Dimensions) and query by cited reference title.
3. OR For distinctive titles or identifiers use a Scopus cited reference search REFSRCTITLE or REF, whichever works best.
4. Either submit the queries manually – perhaps in batches – or automatically (Scopus, OpenAlex, Dimensions).
5. Check the results to filter out false matches.
6. Report lists of citations, summary information (e.g., citing subjects) and/or content analyses of citations.

Random Times citations

Times story	Year	Academic citation context
Women Doctors for the Wounded	1915	**News report of women war doctors internationally cited as evidence of the international spread of the idea**. Cited in: Caroline Matthews's Experiences of a Woman Doctor in Serbia: Advocacy for Women Doctors in Early Twentieth Century War Writing
At a Meeting of the Members of the Jockey Club	1836	**High fees charged for entry into certain clubs cited as evidence of their social exclusiveness**. Cited in: The Demimonde as a Female Dandy: Masks, Masquerade, and the Making of the Dandy's Personae in Nineteenth-Century British Culture.

SPORTING INTELLIGENCE.

At a meeting of the members of the Jockey Club, held at the New Rooms, Newmarket, in the Craven meeting, it was resolved—

"That any member of White's, Brookes's, and Boodle's (not being a member of the New Rooms) may be admitted to the New Rooms and coffee-room, for any one meeting, without any other charge than the payment of one half-year's subscription to each. In the event of such person attending any other meeting in the course of the same year, he is to be considered as a member of the New Rooms, and liable to all the usual charges.

"That the subscription of the New Rooms and Coffee-room, and all other charges, except the subscription to the Jockey Club, be paid half-yearly; the July meeting to be included in either half-year.

"That if any foreigner shall be proposed at any time as a candidate for the New Rooms and Coffee-room, an immediate ballot may take place for such election.

"That the charge for weights and scales be reduced to one-half of the present amount for all plates and sweepstakes, and that nothing be paid for matches."

These regulations to commence with the present year.

References

- Thelwall, M. (2025). EIGHTEENTH CENTURY COLLECTIONS ONLINE: From Gardening Flowers to the International Balance of Power. https://www.gale.com/binaries/content/assets/gale-ja/primary-sources/eighteenth-century-collections-online/eighteenth-century-collections-online-impact-study---2025.pdf
- Thelwall, M. (2025). PAST ECHOES AND PRESENT NEWS: Academic citations to The Times 1785-1985. https://www.gale.com/binaries/content/assets/gale-ja/primary-sources/historical-newspapers/times/times-digital-archive-impact-study---2025.pdf

More information about today's presentation

Download the impact studies:

www.gale.com/researchimpact

Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Part III
(Coming Soon!)

www.gale.com/ECCO-III

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