

CASE STUDY

Gale Primary Sources

Using the raw data from *Gale Primary Sources*, students and researchers at the University of Helsinki develop tools to improve their research.

THE RESOURCES

Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) from global publisher Gale, a Cengage Company, is the world's premier online library of 18th century printed works; over 180,000 titles and editions (200,000 volumes), published between 1701 and 1800, and printed in English-speaking countries, or countries under British colonial rule. The majority of works in *ECCO* are in the English language but there are also works printed in Dutch, French, German, Italian, Latin, Spanish and Welsh.

Nineteenth Century Collections Online unites multiple, distinct archives into a single resource containing over one hundred types of primary source documents. The content is sourced from the world's preeminent libraries and archives and consists of monographs, newspapers, pamphlets, manuscripts, ephemera, maps, photographs, statistics, and other kinds of documents in both Western and non-Western languages.

Gale Historical Newspapers provides a unique view into more than 400 years of history, and supports in-depth scholarly research with a fully cross-searchable and cross-browseable portfolio of global historical newspapers and periodicals.

ABOUT

Professor Mikko Tolonen from the University of Helsinki, specialises in Digital Humanities, intellectual history and developing digital research. He is responsible for digital intellectual teaching and his research interests include data mining for which he uses Gale resources to aid his research.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

According to Professor Tolonen, *"having access to the Gale resources makes the students' lives easier, and we are able to direct them to original sources in history. Before they had to go to the library and look up physical resources, which was more time consuming."*

Professor Tolonen, went on to explain *"for the last 15 years, we have used digital resources, but prior to this we had to use the libraries for hard copy materials and microfilm. At the University of Helsinki, we mostly use Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale Historical*



Professor Mikko Tolonen





Newspapers as well as British Library Newspapers and The Economist Historical Archive. Having these resources provides our students with access to a lot of different foreign and Finnish material. The library has invested a lot in buying digital resources and the students are now able to conduct any type of historical research from the 18th century onwards.”

Professor Tolonen described how they conduct research using *Gale Primary Sources*, “Using the raw data from Gale, myself and the students are able to develop our own tools (xml code), which has improved the way we research.”

“Previously there was a limited range of material and accessing this was very time consuming, as we didn’t have access to the raw data and the use of interfaces was also limited. With Gale, we can now use the raw material and the Gale interface enables us to search faster and build our own code, providing us with the ability to access data from anywhere.”

IMPACT ON LECTURERS

Professor Tolonen shared his personal experience of using the Gale resources and how these aided his own research, “Whilst trialling Nineteenth Century Collections Online, I was teaching a seminar on History, and a lot of students were writing essays which focussed on the 19th century. Having this trial helped us explore the content we needed; which was the only tool we had on this subject!”

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Professor Tolonen went on to explain, “We have since acquired access to archives from the Nineteenth Century Collections Online, as it proved so beneficial to our research on this subject. Having the ability to cross-search more than one collection is useful, as for instance you can create overlapping results between Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Nineteenth Century Collections Online and the British Library Newspapers to make valuable comparisons.”

When asked about the overall impact of *Gale Primary Sources* at the University of Helsinki, Professor Tolonen concluded that, “Having user friendly tools and accessible raw data could help attract prospective students and academic researchers in the area of Digital Humanities, as they are able to use these resources to build their own code and with access to the raw data, scholarship in the field of digital humanities can advance further.”