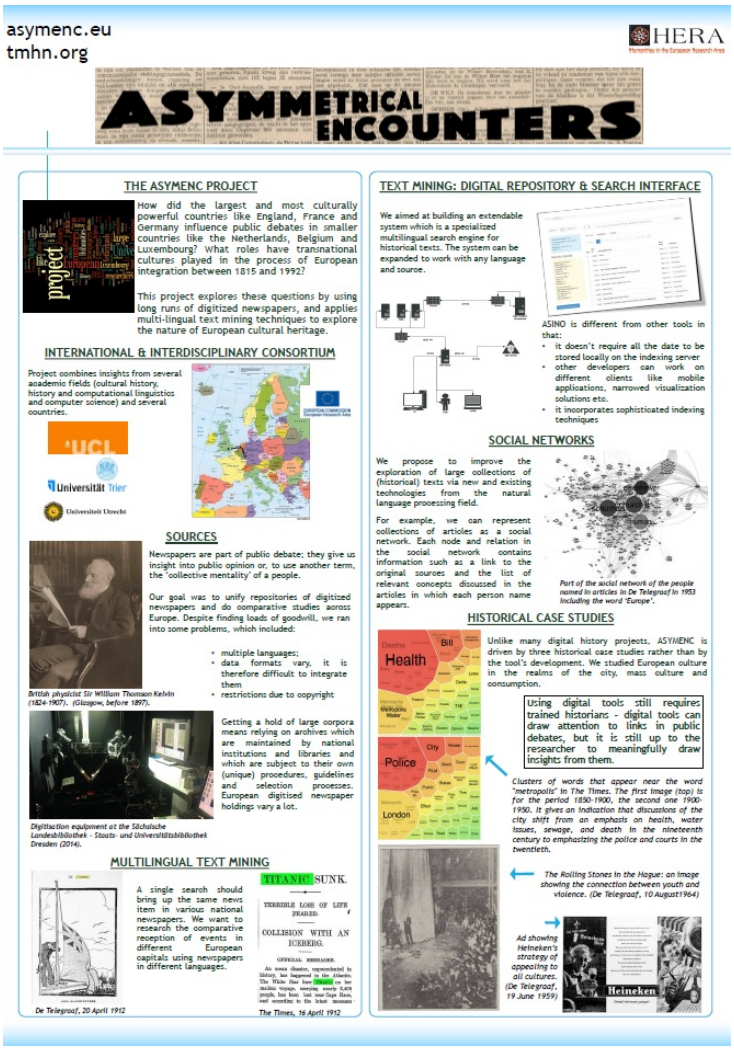
ASYMENC


asymenc.eu
tmhn.org
HERA
ASYMMETRICAL ENCOUNTERS
THE ASYMENC PROJECT
How did the largest and most culturally powerful countries like England, France and Germany influence public debates in smaller countries like the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg? What roles have transnational cultures played in the process of European integration between 1815 and 1992?
This project explores these questions by using long runs of digitized newspapers, and applies multi-lingual text mining techniques to explore the nature of European cultural heritage.
INTERNATIONAL & INTERDISCIPLINARY CONSORTIUM
Project combines insights from several academic fields (cultural history, history and computational linguistics and computer science) and several countries.
UCL
Universität Trier
Universiteit Utrecht
SOURCES
Newspapers are part of public debate; they give us insight into public opinion or, to use another term, the 'collective mentality' of a people.
Our goal was to unify repositories of digitized newspapers and do comparative studies across Europe. Despite finding loads of goodwill, we ran into some problems, which included:
multiple languages;
data formats vary, it is therefore difficult to integrate them
restrictions due to copyright
British physicist Sir William Thomson Kelvin (1824-1907). (Glasgow, before 1897).
Getting a hold of large corpora means relying on archives which are maintained by national institutions and libraries and which are subject to their own (unique) procedures, guidelines and selection processes. European digitized newspaper holdings vary a lot.
Digitisation equipment at the Sächsische Landesbibliothek - Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (2014).
MULTILINGUAL TEXT MINING
A single search should bring up the same news item in various national newspapers. We want to research the comparative reception of events in different European capitals using newspapers in different languages.
TITANIC SUNK.
TERRIBLE LOSS OF LIFE FEARED.
COLLISION WITH AN ICEBERG.
De Telegraaf, 20 April 1912
The Times, 16 April 1912
TEXT MINING: DIGITAL REPOSITORY & SEARCH INTERFACE
We aimed at building an extendable system which is a specialized multilingual search engine for historical texts. The system can be expanded to work with any language and source.
ASINO is different from other tools in that:
it doesn't require all the date to be stored locally on the indexing server
other developers can work on different clients like mobile applications, narrowed visualization solutions etc.
it incorporates sophistioated indexing techniques
SOCIAL NETWORKS
We propose to improve the exploration of large collections of (historical) texts via new and existing technologies from the natural language processing field.
For example, we can represent collections of articles as a social network. Each node and relation in the social network contains information such as a link to the original sources and the list of relevant concepts discussed in the articles in which each person name appears.
Part of the social network of the people named in articles in De Telegraaf in 1953 including the word 'Europe'.
HISTORICAL CASE STUDIES
Unlike many digital history projects, ASYMENC is driven by three historical case studies rather than by the tool's development. We studied European culture in the realms of the city, mass culture and consumption.
Using digital tools still requires trained historians - digital tools can draw attention to links in public debates, but it is still up to the researcher to meaningfully draw insights from them.
Health
Police
London
Clusters of words that appear near the word "metropolis" in The Times. The first image (top) is for the period 1850-1900, the second one 1900-1950. It gives an indication that discussions of the city shift from an emphasis on health, water issues, sewage, and death in the nineteenth century to emphasizing the police and courts in the twentieth.
The Rolling Stones in the Hague: an image showing the connection between youth and violence. (De Telegraaf, 10 August1964)
Ad showing Heineken's strategy of appealing to all cultures. (De Telegraaf, 19 June 1959)
Heineken