# Breakdowns in Machine Reading:

Attempting to De-privilege Modern English Print with the Power of Supercomputing and the DH Dashboard

# The State(s) of the OCR Problem

### Computer Science, circa 1990

• The OCR problem is solved! We can machine-read text with 99% accuracy.

### The Humanities, circa 2010

• Wait, what? We still can't reliably perform digital searches on texts printed before 1800! And what about OCR for languages other than modern English? (10)

little better herein, and tell he do it, the opinion of E. P. stands good, for all his pretended self authoritative affertion, and for the close of this Doctors fifth Section, E. P. is not so possibled with a Stoicall Apathy, as not to have a sence of his unsavory Jeare (a Character of the goodness of his cause) and therefore tells him in his "own words in another place, upon another occasion, That he will "be filent, rather then imitate that part of his Spirit, though there be in his vindication the advantages of many opposite retortions.

The third answer to the Doctors explanation of that place of Exod. 21. 6. That the lewish Servant did not give up himsfelf to Slave, an be a flave for ever; but his flavery did terminate in the yeare of Inbite, unfit expression to here the Doctor obstreperously vaunts over his opponent, yet he that takes ferioully the weight of this mans arguments, will finde ( I call the Jewish fer. prefume ) his virulency and malice poyzing more in the scale, then his reason : I must confess, that if a smooth dialect, and an exquisite texture of words could overcloud a truth, this Doctor can do as Guliel. Gibieuf. much as any towards it : He shall be a flave, &c. it were well the de libert. Doctor could afford the fervant lew ( whom the Chaldee renders a Dei & cre: fon of Ifrael )'a better tearme then flave ( this is a word well beaturel.1. coming them that would not out of neceffity, but out of choice, and with all their industry make themselves so ) it may be the p. 29.ca. 5. Sea.s.

(to) littleJ-Bffieiheteinf -a-tidtelliheij do'it'.the opinion of E. P;stands goods-lion-al.fhispretended feilds authoritative assertion'- and -for the JcloseWthiJs-Dojëtorijcistb SeHqun; E JI?, not,fopoffii:ffed Mch.a Sfoizcalliliphthy'dasffiot Jto ii:'ive a fence'of his unsavory Jeare(a Cha-rafler of the goodness of. hisciufe j and therefore tells himin his Jcc own words inanot.lier place. upon another occasion' That he will u besilenr' pitcher then imitate rh.-zr.part of his Q.spir?t' though there be Jinghis vindication che advantages of many opposite terortions. -The third anfwer.t.o Jth'e Doctorsexplanati'oh of that place of Mve:an 'Exod. 21.--6. That the Iewish.Servant did not give up himstlfto unfit ex- be a stavefor ever;'-but his slavery did terminate in the yeare oflubite, premonto hete rhe Do, flor obstreperously ,vaunts over his jopponen'r,

# The Early Modern OCR Project (eMOP)

- Funded by a Mellon grant in 2012
- Train extant, open-source OCR engines to read Early Modern printed documents
- OCR documents from Early English Books Online (EEBO) and Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), or roughly <u>45 million page images</u> in two years.





To make the wether thinne, and airelike faith Caref unto Where fre, with falt wavef meet, and what to betweene oth makes a oord or two III. So farre fron betweene of maker a bord or two III. So farre from owef them in bigger uantitief Then they are. Thuf c and not f or hunger a f ea Pie Spied through this traiter f eely where it dif puting lay, And tend her doubtf a eif, but to the exalterf good, Af are by great onef, to be the Raif erf inftrument and f ood. I. If any kind they neither doe, nor wi Fierf they kill not, nor with nor ftrive to make a prey f beaftf, nor their yong f o purfue not, nor do undertake To f poile the neftf in all thefe unkinde kindf feed upon, To kill them if a faftf. lentf f or their doftruion Af if twirt Airo and fastf, lentf for their destruion. Af if twixt Aire and love, and mens will ever bee. Breake of day. TIs tru thou therefore rise from me Why ould we rise, beca because twas night Love which in spight of darknes des pight of light keee us together. Light hath no tor as well as sie, This were the worst, that it could say



IDHMC TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

### eMOP Dashboard

#### Initiative for Digital Humanities, Media, and Culture

Results Filter			
Ground Truth: All	\$	Print Font: All	¢
Works: All	٥	OCR completed date:	
Data Set: All	٥	From: To:	
OCR Batch: All	\$	Reset Filter A	pply Filter

#### Select All Schedule Selected Schedule All Set Print Font for Selected Works Export

Status		Data Set	ID 🌢	TCP Number ♦	Title	Author 🔶	Font	OCR Date	OCR Engine	OCR Batch	Juxta	RETAS
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0-0-2-0	۶	EEBO	2	A24326	An Account of a horrid and barbarous murder committed on the body of a young person supposed to be of a good quality in the fields beyond Whitechappel-Church in the Parish of Stepny	Anon. EEBO w/GT		03/11/2015 16:04	Tesseract	3: EEBO with GT (SC8b-R8-D2b)	<u>0.694</u>	N/A
0-0-137-0	Q	EEBO	3		The way of the Spirit in bringing souls to Christ set forth in X sermons on John 16:7, 8, 9, 10 and chap 7:37 / by Mr. Thomas Allen, late pastor of a church in Norwich.	Allen, Thomas, 1608- 1673.		03/13/2015 17:30	Tesseract	4: EEBO w/o GT (SC8b-R8-D2b)	N/A	N/A
0-0-1-0	٦	EEBO	4	A47215	A contemplation on Bassets-down-Hill by the most sacred adorer of the Muses, Mrs. A.K.	A. K., Mrs.	all other EEBO w/GT	03/11/2015 16:04	Tesseract	3: EEBO with GT (SC8b-R8-D2b)	<u>0.046</u>	N/A
0-0-18- <mark>0</mark>	Q	EEBO	5	A29730	A dissuasive from popery sent in a letter from A.B. to C.D.	А. В.	all other EEBO w/GT	03/11/2015 16:04	Tesseract	3: EEBO with GT (SC8b-R8-D2b)	<u>0.752</u>	N/A
0-0-3-0	,,	EEBO	6	A24571	An Account of Oliver Hawley and John Condon who were executed at Tyburn on Friday the 2d of July 1686 for robing His Majesties male near liford in the county of Essex.	Anon.	all other EEBO w/GT	03/11/2015 16:04	Tesseract	3: EEBO with GT (SC8b-R8-D2b)	<u>0.279</u>	N/A

Job Queue Scheduled:

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In-Progress:

Failed:

Ingested: Ingest Failed:

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eMOP Project	OCR Accuracy	
EEBO	ECCO	
68%	86%	

# eMOP Assets (emop.tamu.edu)

### Database Schema

A MySQL database initially designed for EEBO and ECCO document metadata, then expanded to include ground truth and OCR results.

### Storage

Network Attached Storage designed to serve up many terabytes of data.

### eMOP Controller

A Python software package for the parallelized running of tasks on the Brazos Supercomputing Cluster.

### **Training Data**

High-res, cleaned manuscript images with each character meticulously delineated and identified for a multitude of fonts used by Early Modern printers.

### eMOP Dashboard OCR Workflow

A Ruby-on-Rails web app for queueing up OCR jobs and viewing results. The establishment of a step-by-step, automated process for OCR'ing page images and then improving that OCR via post-processing.

# Enter the PrimerosLibros project...

The IDHMC's first attempt to leverage eMOP assets toward a new endeavor  $\textcircled{\ensuremath{\Im}}$ 

Machine-reading in languages other than English (Spanish, Latin, Nahuatl, Huastec, Mixtec, Otomi, Tarascan, and Zapotec)

No more code written in older versions of Python (2.7) that did not readily support Unicode out of the box. All tools developed for the PrimerosLibros project use Python 3.5.

## Supporting a New Database Schema

A complete redesign of the original eMOP database which supports (but does not enforce) a FRBR (work, expression, manifestation, instance) hierarchical structure, and otherwise allows for the storing of key/value pairs at the corpus, document, and page level, providing for a "schemaless" approach.



## DH Dashboard Corpus Manager Job Manager

Hello, Bryan! Logout

### All Documents

Show 25 💠 out of 135 rows

Search

Document ID 🔺	FB ID 🔶	Title	Printer	Year 🔺	Training Set 🛛 🔺	View
1000	pl_blac_004	Doctrina cristiana para instrucción e informaci	J. Cromberger	1544	93	Pages Details
1113	pl_blac_001	Doctrina breve muy provechosa de las cosas q	J. Cromberger	1544	91	Pages Details
1114	pl_blac_002	Tripartito del cristianísimo y consolatorio docto	J. Cromberger	1544	158	Pages Details
1115	pl_blac_003	Este es un compendio breve que trata de la ma	J. Cromberger	1544	24	Pages Details
1124	pl_houg_001	Doctrina breve muy provechosa de las cosas q	J. Cromberger	1544	169	Pages Details
893	pl_jcbl_002	Cartilla para la enseñanza de la doctrina cristia	J. Pablos	1547	undefined	Pages Details
1020	pl_jcbl_001	Doctrina cristiana en lengua mexicana	J. Cromberger /	1547	40	Pages Details
1252	pl_blac_020	Regla cristiana breve para ordenar la vida y tie	undefined	1547	94	Pages Details
1250	pl_blac_018	Doctrina cristiana en lengua española y mexica	J. Pablos	1550	21	Pages Details
1251	pl_blac_019	Doctrina cristiana en lengua mexicana	J. Pablos	1553	22	Pages Details
901	pl_blac_005	Recognitio, summularum reverendi patris III dep	J. Pablos	1554	25	Pages Details
902	pl_blac_006	Dialectica resolutio cum textu Aristotelis	J. Pablos	1554	26	Pages Details
959	pl_uslp_001	Recognitio, summularum reverendi patris III dep	J. Pablos	1554	86	Pages Details

### DH Dashboard Corpus Manager Job Manager

#### Documents from Set 3 Engine Comparison Back to All Documents

Show : • out of 61 rows

Search

Doc ID 🔺	Title	GCV Score 🔺	Tess4 Score 🔺	eMOP Score	Source 🔺	View
40355	Pasquils passe, and passeth not Set downe in three pees. His passe, precession, and progn…	0.25	0.30	0.78	EEBO	Pages Details
40356	Much adoe about nothing As it hath been sundrie times publikely acted by the right honoura	0.50	0.29	0.81	EEBO	Pages Details
40357	The lettin[g] of humours blood in the head-vaine with a new morissco, daunced by seauen s	0.25	0.21	0.22	EEBO	Pages Details
40363	Inimicus amicus an excellent treatise, shewing, how a man may reape profit by his enemy.	0.33	0.22	0.64	EEBO	Pages Details
40364	The exaltation of the kingdome and priesthood of Christ In certaine sermons vpon the 110. P $_{\cdots}$	0.42	0.21	0.57	EEBO	Pages Details
40366	A treatise concerning the trinitie of persons in vnitie of the deitie Written to Thomas Manneri	0.21	0.24	0.68	EEBO	Pages Details
40367	Dialogicall discourses of spirits and divels declaring their proper essence, natures, dispositi	0.40	0.20	0.66	EEBO	Pages Details
40368	The mirror of diuine prouidence Containing a collection of Theodoret his arguments: declari	0.08	0.19	0.30	EEBO	Pages Details

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## Supporting Ocular (cont.)

Because Ocular is under active development, PrimerosLibros collaborators needed a way to pull the latest code down from their git repo, compile, and then install the new version for use.

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	150	pl_bjml_003-lin	e-extractor-test-8.4				
	54	pl_bjml_003_Tr	ainingSet_7.5				
	157	pl_bjml_003_Tr	ainingSet_8.21				
	90	pl_bjml_004-Tra	ainingSet_7.11				
	153	pl_bjml_004-Tra	ainingSet_8.20				

## Supporting a New OCR Engine (Ocular)

Unlike Tesseract, which requires a tedious, manual training process involving pre-processed images, etc., Ocular allows for the unsupervised training of its classifier given <u>a set of exemplary images</u> for each document.

D	ashboard	Corpus Manager Job Manager	Hello, Bryan! Logou				
l Pa	age Sets						
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	Set ID	Name	A				
	52	pl_bjml_001_trainingSet_7.5					
	53	pl_bjml_002_TrainingSet_7.5					
	150	pl_bjml_003-line-extractor-test-8.4					
	54	pl_bjml_003_TrainingSet_7.5					
	157	pl_bjml_003_TrainingSet_8.21					
	90	pl_bjml_004-TrainingSet_7.11					
	153	pl_bjml_004-TrainingSet_8.20					
	55	pl_bjml_005_TrainingSet_7.5					
	151	pl_bjml_005_TrainingSet_8.15					
	154	pl_bjml_005_TrainingSet_8.20					
	56	pl_bjml_006_TrainingSet_7.5	pl_bjml_006_TrainingSet_7.5				
	165	pl_bjml_006_TrainingSet_8.23					
	91	pl_blac_001-TrainingSet_7.11					
	2 pl blac 002-TrainingSet 7.11						

## Supporting Ocular (cont.)

Whereas the old eMOP Dashboard supported a single, fixed workflow for OCR'ing documents, Ocular requires a two-step process for reading each document (font training on exemplary page sets, transcription).

DH	Dashboard	Corpus Manag	er Job Manager				Hello, Bryan! Logout
Sho	W 25 \$ out of 135	rows	Run a Task		×		
	Document ID 🔶	FB ID	Job Name			Training Set 🔺	View
	1000	pl_blac_004	Create training set for Document 1020			93	Pages Details
0	1113	pl_blac_001	Job Site			91	Pages Details
	1114	pl_blac_002	Brazos Supercomputing Cluster		\$	158	Pages Details
0	1115	pl_blac_003			•	24	Pages Details
	1124	pl_houg_001	Task	169	Pages Details		
	893	pl_jcbl_002	<ul> <li>Create Ocular Training Set</li> </ul>	Create Ocular Training Set     OCR Document with Tesseract     OCR Document with Ocular			
	1020	pl_jcbl_001	OCR Document with Tesseract OCR Document with Ocular				
	1252	pl_blac_020	OCR Document with Tesseract 4			94	Pages Details
	1250	pl_blac_018	Tesseract 4 Post-Processing OCR Doc w Tess4 and PostProc			21	Pages Details
	1251	pl_blac_019	OCR Document with Google Cloud Vision			22	Pages Details
	901	pl_blac_005	Perform Juxta Comparison		_	25	Pages Details
	902	pl_blac_006	Dialectica resolutio cum textu Aristotelis	J. Pablos	1554	26	Pages Details
	959	pl_uslp_001	Recognitio, summularum reverendi patris IIIdep	J. Pablos	1554	86	Pages Details
	960	pl_uslp_002	Dialectica resolutio cum textu Aristotelis	J. Pablos	1554	87	Pages Details
	1255	pl_blac_023	Commentaria in Ludovici Vives Exercitationes li	J. Pablos	1554	39	Pages Details
	1001	pl_blac_007	Aquí comienza un vocabulario en la lengua cas	J. Pablos	1555	159	Pages Details

## DH Dashboard Corpus Manager Job Manager

Hello, Bryan! Logout

#### All Jobs

Show 25 💠 out of 339 rows

Search

ID	Job Name 🔷	Task Name 🛛 🔺	Target 🔶	Submitted A	Status	View
1542	pl_usal_005-ocr	OCR Document	Document: Vida	09-04-2017 11:3	Results processed (09-07-2017 18:45:55)	Logs
1541	pl_uiab_011-ocr	OCR Document	Document: Prem	09-04-2017 11:3	Results processed (09-07-2017 00:29:53)	Logs
1539	pl_houg_002-ocr	OCR Document	Document: Provi	09-04-2017 11:3	Results processed (09-07-2017 18:48:46)	Logs
1536	pl_bjml_002-ocr	OCR Document	Document: Tabul	09-04-2017 10:4	Results processed (09-05-2017 04:30:11)	Logs
1535	pl_plfx_007-ocr	OCR Document	Document: Trata	09-04-2017 10:4	Results processed (09-05-2017 04:31:42)	Logs
1531	pl_blac_039-ocr	OCR Document	Document: Psal	09-03-2017 11:0	Results processed (09-04-2017 06:50:48)	Logs
1530	pl_blac_032-ocr	OCR Document	Document: Arte	09-03-2017 11:0	Results processed (09-04-2017 01:47:32)	Logs
1529	pl_blac_023-ocr	OCR Document	Document: Com	09-03-2017 11:0	Results processed (09-04-2017 00:14:18)	Logs
1528	pl_blac_022-ocr	OCR Document	Document: Manu	09-03-2017 11:0	Results processed (09-03-2017 16:12:25)	Logs
1527	pl_blac_016-ocr	OCR Document	Document: Arte	09-03-2017 11:0	Results processed (09-03-2017 12:39:07)	Logs
1526	pl_uslp_002-train	Create Ocular Tr	Document: Diale	09-02-2017 01:3	Results processed (09-02-2017 09:07:32)	Logs
1525	pl_uslp_001-train	Create Ocular Tr	Document: Reco	09-02-2017 01:3	Results processed (09-02-2017 05:58:32)	Logs
1524	pl_usal_005-train	Create Ocular Tr	Document: Vida	09-02-2017 01:3	Results processed (09-02-2017 15:13:32)	Logs

DH	)ash	board Corpus	Manager Job Manager	Hello, Bryan! Logout
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	ID	Job Name 🔺	Task N. Name	A View
	1542	pl_usal_005-ocr	OCR Dr pl_uiab_011-train-9.1.17-mvf	) Logs
	1541	pl_uiab_011-ocr	OCR De	) Logs
	1539	pl_houg_002-ocr	OCR Do 56 - "document_pageset_key": {	) Logs
	1536	pl_bjml_002-ocr	OCR Dc     57     "type": "static",       1     58     "value": "training_set"	) Logs
	1535	pl_plfx_007-ocr	OCR Dc 59 }, 60 - "allow_overlapping_lines": {	) Logs
	1531	pl_blac_039-ocr	OCR De 61 "key": "allow_overlapping_lines",	) Logs
	1530	pl_blac_032-ocr	OCR Dc 63 "kvp_path": "target.corpus", 2	) Logs
	1529	pl_blac_023-ocr	OCR Dc   64   "label": "Allow Overlapping Lines",     0CR Dc   65   "value": "false"	) Logs
	1528	pl_blac_022-ocr	OCR Dc 66 }, 55	) Logs
	1527	pl_blac_016-ocr	OCR De 68 "type": "static", 7	) Logs
	1526	pl_uslp_002-train	Create 70 },	) Logs
	1525	pl_uslp_001-train	Create 72 "input_language_model_path": {     "key": "ocular_lms",	) Logs
	1524	pl_usal_005-train	Create 73 "type": "choice_from_kyp_list".	) Logs
	1523	pl_uiab_011-train	Create	) Logs
	1522	pl_tlal_008-train	Create	) Logs
	1521	pl_tlal_007-train	Create Ocular Tr Document: Voca 09-01-2017 17:3 Results processed (09-01-2017 23:35:04	) Logs
	1520	pl_tlal_006-train	Create Ocular Tr Document: Voca 09-01-2017 17:2 Results processed (09-01-2017 23:34:32	Logs

DH Dashboard Corpus Manager Job Manager	Hello, Bryan! Logout
	1000_transcription_normalized.txt Ocular Transcription: pl_blac_019_00011- 1000_transcription.txt
Page Num: 12 ID: 101890 Image: pl_blac_019_00012-1000.jpg fb_page_id: pl_blac_019_00012	pl_blac_019-ocr-7.19.17- mvf(1325) Ocular Comparison: pl_blac_019_00012- 1000_comparisons.txt Ocular DIPL XML: pl_blac_019_00012-1000_dipl.alto.xml Ocular NORM XML: pl_blac_019_00012-1000_norm.alto.xm Ocular Normalized Transcription: pl_blac_019_00012- 1000_transcription: pl_blac_019_00012- 1000_transcription: pl_blac_019_00012- 1000_transcription: pl_blac_019_00012-
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# In conclusion...

• In order to change the perception of the state of the OCR problem, humanists must be aware of and emphasize the poor state of machinereading for anything other than documents created using modern printing practices.

### • UNICODE.

• Tools like the DH Dashboard need to de-privilege specific OCR workflows by allowing for flexibility in terms of both processes and data.

# Thank you!

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