

Working with EEBO and ECCO

Sarah Werner (<http://sarahwerner.net>); [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Researchers increasingly use digital facsimiles of primary sources to conduct their research. But how do these images shape, limit, and expand what we can do with the works we study? This workshop will focus on exploring the affordances of various digital facsimile resources (including subscription services and open access platforms), examining not only how digital representations of objects differ from their analog counterparts, but also how the structures of metadata and licensing affect their discoverability and usage. The workshop will use EEBO (Early English Books Online) and ECCO (Eighteenth Century Collections Online) as exemplars for this sort of work but that this general approach to working with digital facsimiles will be relevant for other periods as well.

Lesson 1: What EEBO and ECCO do you have?

EEBO and ECCO are accessible only through an institutional subscription. There are a couple of different providers to the databases. EEBO can be accessed through an interface created by Chadwyck-Healy (how most users in the United States use it) or through JISC's Historical Texts collection (how many UK users find it). ECCO similarly can be accessed through its native interface provided by Gale or through Historical Texts. The general functionality remains the same, regardless of access mode, but some of the specifics of searching and metadata availability differs.

If your institution subscribes to EEBO or ECCO, you should be able to find it in your library's list of databases. If you are usually logged into your institution via a proxy, you will probably be able to open up EEBO and ECCO and immediately begin using it. In other cases, you will be prompted to provide your credentials (usually after you click on the database link your library provides) in order to be able to start.

EEBO
EARLY ENGLISH BOOKS
ONLINE

SEARCH
BROWSE
ABOUT EEBO
INFORMATION RESOURCES
WHAT'S NEW?

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Last September 2016

Early English Books Online (EEBO) contains digital facsimile page images of virtually every work printed in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and British North America and works in English printed elsewhere from 1473-1700 - from the first book printed in English by William Caxton, through the age of Spenser and Shakespeare and the tumult of the English

One platform, over 400,000 late 15th to 19th century texts

Historical Texts brings together three historically significant collections for the first time: Early English Books Online (EEBO), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) and 65,000 texts from the British Library 19th Century collection.

The UK Medical Heritage Library collection is also available. This is an Open Access collection, currently hosted in a separate Labs area.

Historical Texts is available to UK HE and FE Institutions and Research Councils via subscription.

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Browse the collection by [Author](#) and [Publisher](#) or explore the editor's picks below

UKMHL
1800-1900's
UK Medical Heritage Library (UKMHL) contains the images and full text of over 66,000 19th Century European medical publications. The UKMHL collection is Open Access, on a separate platform.

EEBO
1473-1700
Early English Books Online (EEBO) contains the scanned images, and full-text digital versions where available, of over 125,000 books published in English up to 1700.

ECCO
1701-1800
Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) is a digital collection of more than 180,000 titles published in Great Britain and its

Instructions FOR THE Whole Year. PART I.

Lesson 2: Searching EEBO

The first thing to do in EEBO is find what you're looking for. The best way to learn how to navigate EEBO is just to play around with different searches. Try finding the works listed below:

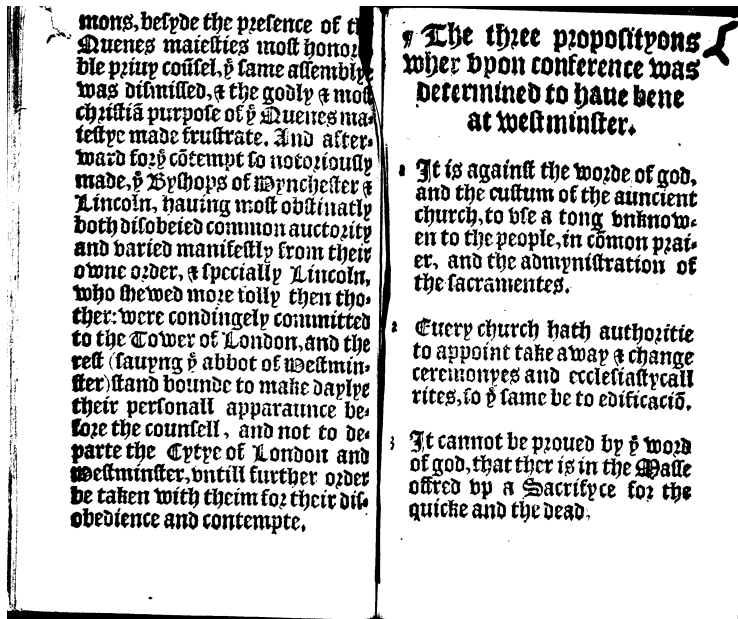
- *Astrophel and Stella*
 - Hint: use a title search
- Holinshed's *Chronicles*
 - Holinshed is the author so you could do an author search and then look for the *Chronicles*. If you try a title or keyword search for "chronicle" you'll get a lot of results you don't want, but you could combine searching for the author and the keyword or title.
- earliest edition of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*
 - The easiest method might be to search for Higden as an author, and then sort the results earliest to latest. The title has a lot of different spellings, so if you do a title search, you might want to use a wildcard and search for "pol*" and to search at the same time for "Higden" in the author field to avoid getting overwhelmed. Note that some of the results don't seem to have "Polychronicon" as their title, but if you look at the records, you'll see it there as an alternate title. (To look at the record of an item, click on the index card icon.)
- STC 22273
 - This is a bibliographic number; you'll often find references to STC or Wing numbers when working with early modern printed texts; those catalogs serve as a handy way to keep editions apart. In the EEBO interface, you can search in the bibliographic citation field for "STC and 22273" or for "22273." (It's easy to forget the "and" between "STC" and the number, but if you do, you won't get any results.) In Historical Texts, you can simply search the bibliographic number for "STC 22273."
- something imaged from Abbotsford Library
 - In the advanced search of the EEBO interface, there's an option to limit your results to a list of libraries who have provided images; if you scroll down that list to the library you want, select it, and then do a search, you'll get all the images from that library. The Historical Texts interface does not have this option.
- something written in Algonquin
 - In the EEBO advanced search, there's an option to limit your results to a list of languages; if you scroll down that list to the language you want, select it, and then do a search, you'll get all the texts in that language. The Historical Texts interface offers an option to search by language, but it doesn't seem to work for the EEBO collection. (Why are there languages other than English in this collection? If it was printed in Britain or North America, a text will be included regardless of what language it's in.)

Now that you've got the basics down, let's see how hard it can be to find things in EEBO. Can you find the following? The first work is given by the name by which we usually refer to it; the last is a format that books were often printed in.

- King James Bible (the first edition)
 - Searching for “King James Bible” won't bring this up because that isn't the title and James isn't the author (he commissioned it, so we associate it with him, but he didn't write it.) If you know when the Bible was first printed you could search for “bible” as a keyword with a publication date of 1611. You could also try searching for the keyword “authorised” and 1611. (This is the version of the bible that was authorized to be read.) The actual title of this book, as it was printed, is *The Holy Bible conteyning the Old Testament, and the New: newly translated out of the originall tongues: & with the former translations diligently compared and reuised, by his Maiesties speciall co[m]mandement. Appointed to be read in churches.* Catalogers have developed a system of uniform titles to more easily identify works that are published under a range of titles; for this work, the uniform title is “Bible. English. Authorised.” If all of that is too frustrating, you can find it by its bibliographic number: STC 2216.
- an octavo
 - Although there is not a search field for bibliographic format, you can find some octavo books by doing a keyword search for “octavo.” This method brings up any items that have “octavo” in their record, including as a date given in the title or imprint, and sometimes in a description in the note field. A better way of searching for a book in a specific format would be to search ESTC (the English Short-title Catalog; <http://estc.bl.uk>) and follow the links it provides to EEBO records. In ESTC's advanced search, you can search by “item format”; use OR to search for multiple terms, like “octavo OR 8*”. Generally format is recorded by its numerical notation (8° or sometimes 8vo) but occasionally the name will be written out in full (octavo). Using the wildcard * will bring up both 8° and 8vo.

Lesson 3: Copies, not editions

EEBO provides images of a single copy of a book. But early modern printed books often were changed during a print run (stop-press change) or had corrections inserted after (cancels). For these reasons, and others, it's not necessarily safe to assume that a copy of a book is a good stand-in for all copies of that book. The example that follows is a copy of a book that is in its earlier uncorrected state. Below is an opening from an account of the Westminster Conference in 1559, in which some key doctrinal questions were being hashed out (STC 25286, sigs [A]7v-[A]8r). The third proposition, as we can see, is "It cannot be proved by the word of god, that ther is in the Masse offred up a Sacrifyce for the quicke and the dead" (n.b. I have not modernized the spelling, but I have regularized i/j and u/v.)




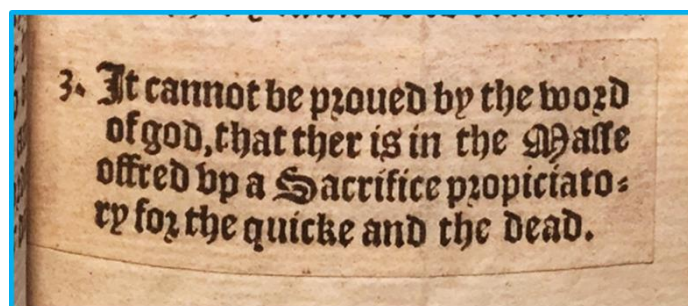
Although there is nothing in the EEBO image or the EEBO record to suggest that there are variant

Title:	The declaracyon of the procedynge of a conference, begon at Westminster the last of Marche, 1559 concerning certayne articles of religion and the breaking vp of the sayde conference by default and contempt of certayne bysshops, parties of the sayd conference.
Additional titles:	Thirty-nine Articles
Author:	Anon.
Imprint:	Imprynted at London : By Richarde Iugge and Iohn Cawood prynters to the quenes Maiestie, [1560?]
Date:	1560
Bib name / number:	STC (2nd ed.) / 25286
Physical description:	[16] p.
Notes:	Publication date from STC. Signatures: A. Some print blurred. Reproduction of the original in the Bodleian Library.
Copy from:	Bodleian Library
UMI Collection / reel number:	STC / 1614:03
Subject:	Church of England. -- Early works to 1800.

version of this, someone familiar with theological debates of the Reformation might notice that the phrase is usually "sacrifice propitiatory." And if you go to its record in the ESTC, you can see a note that the copy of the Folger has a cancel slip pasted in with a different text. As you can below from

the picture below of this page in the Folger copy, when corrected the proposition refers to a “sacrifice propitiatory.”

Full Record		Permalink
Format options: Standard format Summary MARC tags HOLDINGS DETAILS		
Record 1 out of 1		← Previous record Next record →
ESTC System No.	006175995	
ESTC Citation No.	S104298	
Title	The declaracyon of the procedynge of a conference, begon at Westminster the laste of Marche, 1559. concerning certayne articles of religion and the breaking vp of the sayde conference by default and contempt of certayne bysshops, parties of the sayd conference.	
Publisher/year	Imprynted at London : By Richarde Iugge and Iohn Cawood prynters to the quenes Maiestie. [1560?]	
Physical descr.	[16] p. ; 8°.	
General note	Publication date from STC. Signatures: [A]*.	
Uncontrolled note	Signatures from DFo. DFONOTE the slip cancel reads differently: It cannot be proued by the word / of god, that ther is in the Masse / offred vp a Sacrifice propiciato - / ry for the quicke and the dead FOREPLY DMS please compare to eebo. Is it present? DFONOTE edp title reads laste of Marche; there is a slip cancel on [A]8r	
Citation/references	STC (2nd ed.), 25286	
Surrogates	Microfilm. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1978. 1 microfilm reel; 35mm. (Early English books, 1475-1640; 1614:03).	
Loc. of filmed copy	O.	
Corporate subject	Church of England Thirty-nine articles -- Early works to 1800.	
Copies - Brit.Isles	British Library Cambridge University Corpus Christi College Cambridge University St. John's College Lambeth Palace Library Oxford University Bodleian Library (includes The Vicar's Library, ST. Mary's Church, Marlborough).	
Copies - N.America	Folger Shakespeare	
Electronic location	 Early English Books Online (EEBO) : { Reproduction of the original in the Bodleian Library }	



If you want to check whether the EEBO copy you’re working with has any textual variants, it’s best to look it up in the ESTC, which sometimes provides more information than EEBO. (EEBO draws on the bibliographic information in ESTC, but it is not regularly updated, nor are the two databases synced.)

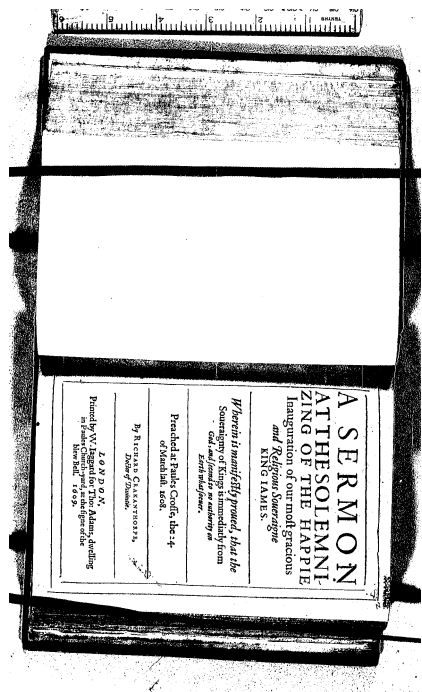
To find your book in the ESTC, it's usually easiest to look it up by citation number—the STC or Wing number provided in EEBO's records. Using the advanced search option, select “Citation note” from the dropdown list and type in your citation reference.

Advanced Search of ESTC
[Quick tips - for this page](#)

Search by	Type word or phrase	Exact phrase?	No. of records
Word(s) anywhere	STC 25286	<input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes	
Word(s) anywhere		<input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes	
Word(s) from author		<input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes	
Word(s) from title		<input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes	
Uniform title			
Place of publication			
Publisher			
Publication year			
Language code			
Subject			
Genre (subject)			
Notes	All		
Citation note			
Item format	yyyy (Use -> to limit to a range of years, e.g. 1780->1789)		
Shelfmark			
Copy-specific notes			
ESTC Nos.	All		
Library code			
Library name			

Click on the navigation buttons. To avoid unexpected results, please use these and not the "Back" and "Forward" buttons on your web browser.

Sometimes you might want further information about an item even aside from textual variants. For instance, the image below has some oddities both in terms of what the original is and how it was filmed.



Title:	A sermon at the solemnizing of the happie inauguration of our most gracious and religious soueraigne King James wherein is manifestly proued, that the soueraignty of kings is immediatly from God, and second to no authority on earth whatsoever : preached at Paules Crosse, the 24. of March last 1608 / by Richard Crakanthorpe ...
Author:	Crakanthorpe, Richard, 1567-1624.
Imprint:	London : Printed by VV. Iaggard for Tho. Adams, dwelling in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Blew Bell, 1609.
Date:	1609
Bib name / number:	STC (2nd ed.) / 5979
Physical description:	[54] p.
Notes:	Signatures: A4(-A1) B-G4. Reproduction of original in the Trinity College (Dublin, Ireland). Library. Trinity College (Dublin, Ireland) Library
Copy from:	STC / 1749:15
UMI Collection / reel number:	
Subject:	James I, King of England, 1566-1625 -- Coronation -- Sermons. Great Britain -- Kings and rulers -- Religious aspects -- Sermons. Bible. -- O.T. -- Chronicles, 2nd, IX, 5-9 -- Sermons. Sermons, English -- 17th century.

The first thing to note is that the book is filmed sideways—in landscape orientation rather than portrait. Why did that happen? Are other books imaged at the same time oriented that way? The second thing to note is that this text seems to be in the middle of the book—you can see the stack

of the fore-edges of the pages that came before it. It's probably part of a sammelband, a collection of different works that have been bound together into a single book.

To find out more, we might want to look for other books on the same reel: is the rest of the book there? are other items filmed sideways? Since the microfilms were shot and distributed as reels of photographic film, each item in a collection has a reel number and location number; that identifier is shared on the EEBO record in the "collection and reel number" field. For this book, the collection is STC and the reel number is 1749:15—it's on reel 1749 of the STC collection and the 15th item on that reel. The previous item would be 1749:14 and the subsequent 1749:16. In the advanced search, there is an option to search by reel location; searching for "1749" will bring up other items on that reel. None of those other books, however, are filmed sideways, nor are any of them also from Trinity Library, where this book was imaged (see the "notes" field in the EEBO record).

We might try to go to Trinity's catalog record to see if that provides more information about what's in the book. We can work out what the shelfmark number for this book is by going to ESTC and then we can go to Trinity's catalog to see if it provides more information there. EEBO identifies which library supplied the copy that they imaged in their records for each item; in the record above, the "copy from" field identifies the holding library as the Trinity. Although EEBO does not provide the shelfmark for the copy, you can often find that information in the "holdings" view in ESTC, which supplies information about all the copies they have recorded. From the standard view of a record, click on the "holdings details" link at the top (left) and then scroll through to find Trinity College (right):

Full Record [Permalink](#)

Format options: [Standard format](#) [Summary](#) [MARC tags](#) [HOLDINGS DETAILS](#)

Record 1 out of 1 [← Previous record](#) [Next record →](#)

ESTC System No. 006196497

ESTC Citation No. S308

Author - personal [Crakanthorpe, Richard, 1567-1624.](#)

Title [A sermon at the solemnizing of the happie inauguration of our most gracious and religious souveraigne King James. Wherein is manifestly proued, that the sovereignty of kings is immediatly from God, and second to no authority on earth whatsoever. Preached at Paules Crosse, the 24. of March last, 1608. By Richard Crakanthorpe, Doctor of Diuinitie.](#)

Variant title [Sermon at the solemnizing of the happie inauguration of our most gracious and religious souveraigne King James](#)
[Sermon preached at Paules Crosse](#)

Publisher/year [London : Printed by W. Iaggard for Tho: Adams, dwelling in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the blew Bell, 1609.](#)

Physical descr. [56] p. : 4°.

General note The year of the sermon is given according to Lady Day dating.
Signatures: A-G².
The first leaf is blank.
Running title reads: A sermon preached at Paules Crosse.

Citation/references STC (2nd ed.), 5979

Surrogates Microfilm. Ann Arbor, Mich. University Microfilms International, 1983. 1 microfilm reel : 3 mm. (Early English books, 1475-1640; 1749:15).

Person as subject [James I, King of England, 1566-1625 -- Sermons -- Early works to 1800.](#)

Subject [Sermons, English -- 17th century.](#)
[Great Britain -- Kings and rulers -- Religious aspects -- Sermons -- Early works to 1800.](#)

Copies - Brit Isles [British Library](#)
[Cambridge University St. John's College](#)
[Cambridge University Trinity College](#)
[Carlisle Cathedral](#)

John Carter Brown Library, Brown University Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.. Shelfmk: DA609 .C888s. Copynote:some leaves closely cropped at foredge, slightly affecting marginal notes.. Status: Verified

Lambeth Palace Library London, England (County Greater London), United Kingdom.. Shelfmk: 1609.15.01. Status: Verified

Middle Temple Library London, England, U.K.. Shelfmk: BAY L530. Status: Verified

Middle Temple Library London, England, U.K.. Shelfmk: BAY L549. Copynote:Spine title : Tracts 89.. Status: Verified

Oxford University Bodleian Library (includes The Vicar's Library, ST. Mary's Church, Marlborough) Oxford, England. Shelfmk: [Shelfmark not available]. Status: Verified

Peterborough Cathedral Library Peterborough, England. Shelfmk: [Shelfmark not available]. Copynote:imp. [CM]. Provinfo:Deposited at Cambridge University Library in 1970. Status: Verified

Sion College Library London, England (County Greater London), United Kingdom.. Shelfmk: A67.3a/C84. Status: Verified

Trinity College Library Dublin, Republic of Ireland. Shelfmk: GG.KK.56.no.2 Status: Verified

University of Bristol Arts and Social Sciences Library, Special Collections Bristol, England, United Kingdom.. Shelfmk: Restricted HNb. Status: Verified

University of Illinois Urbana, Illinois. Shelfmk: [Shelfmark not available]. Status: Verified

Westminster Abbey London, England. Shelfmk: [Shelfmark not available]. Provinfo:from the library of Nicholas Onley (d. 1724). Status: Verified


York Minster Library York, England. Shelfmk: XXXVII.E.38. Status: Verified

As you can see, some libraries provide more information than others about the copy, including shelfmark and physical details. In Trinity's case, it provides the shelfmark which we can use to locate the book in their catalog. (An important note about ESTC: they list many libraries that hold copies

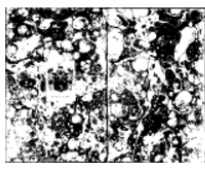
of a book, but those lists are only based on participating libraries and so cannot be assumed to be a complete list of extant copies.)

Unfortunately, when you search for “GG.KK.56.no.2” in Trinity’s online catalog (<https://library.catalogue.tcd.ie/>), there are no hits for it, although there are for adjacent shelfmarks. We’ve hit a dead-end, but it’s important to remember that not all books are cataloged online. In these cases, the next step could be to visit the holding library, if you’re able, or to contact the librarians there to see if they can provide assistance.

Sometimes you can run into the opposite problem: a library might hold more than one copy of a book, making it difficult to ascertain which one was filmed. Occasionally there are clues in the images that can help you trace the item.



1. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616.



Mr. Vvilliam Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies Published according to the true originall copies. , London : Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount [at the charges of W. Iaggard, Ed. Blount, I. Smithweeke, and W. Aspley], 1623.
Date: 1623
Bib name / number: STC (2nd ed.) / 22273
Bib name / number: Greg, III, p. 1109-12. /
Physical description: [18], 303, [1], 46, 49-100, [2], 69-232, [2], 79-80, [26], 98, [2], 109-156, 257-993 [i.e. 399], [1] p.
Copy from: Folger Shakespeare Library

In the case of Shakespeare’s First Folio (STC 22273), EEBO tells us that it’s a copy from the Folger Shakespeare Library (see above), but if you search for “STC 22273” in the Folger’s catalog (<http://hamnet.folger.edu>; use the “call number (left-anchored)” search option), you’ll see that the library owns many copies of the First Folio. Returning to EEBO’s images, however, you can see that the photographer has, unusually, included the pastedown and flyleaves, and that on the pastedown is a bookplate for “Syston Park.” Doing an advanced search in the Folger catalog for both the call number “STC 22273” and for “Syston Park” in the “Folger Copy Notes” field, you’ll get a hit for copy number 7, which in its record identifies it as the one filmed in EEBO.

Basic Search | **Advanced Search**

Search for: all of these ▼ Search in: ▼

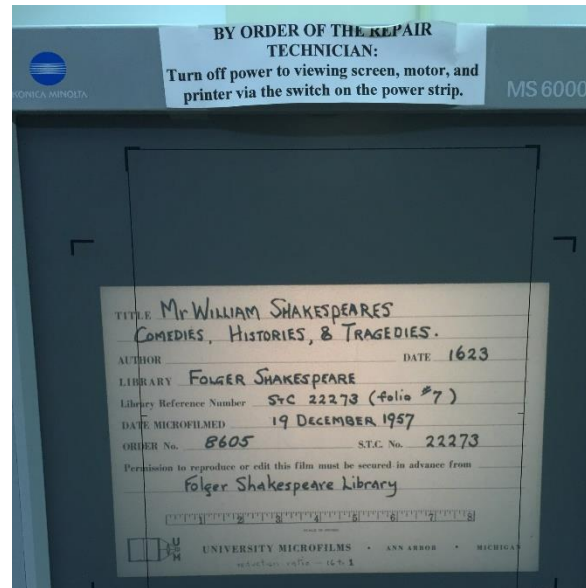
AND OR NOT

Search for: all of these ▼ Search in: ▼

AND OR NOT

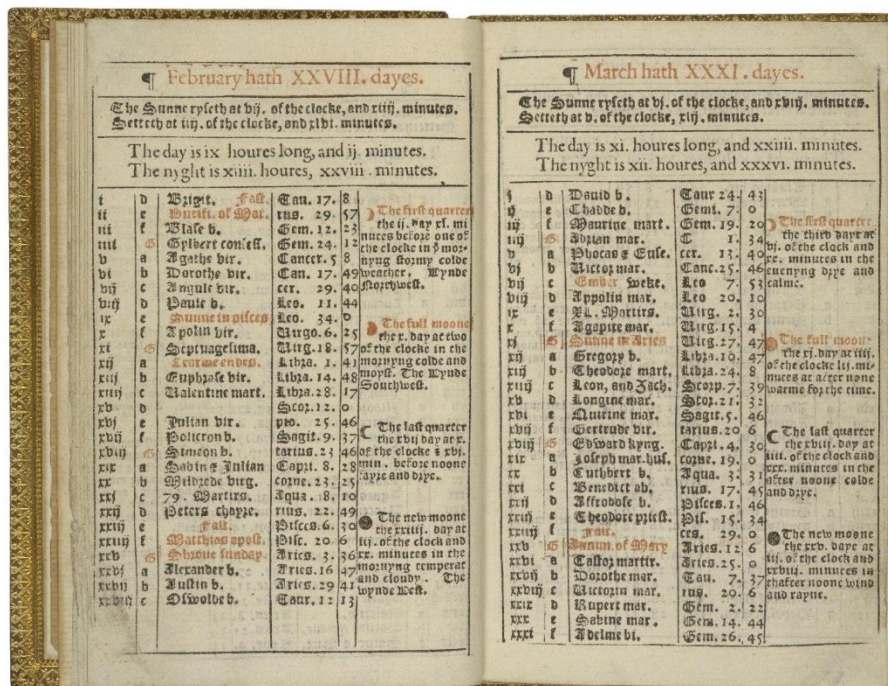
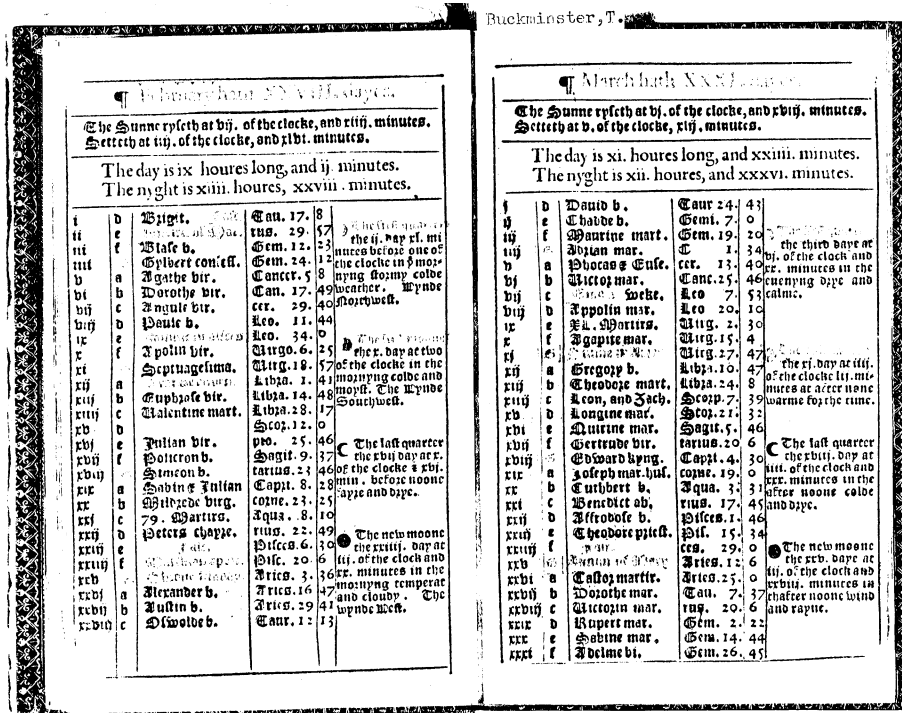
Search for: all of these ▼ Search in: ▼

Frustratingly, the information about which copy was filmed is recorded in the UMI microfilm reels on the target card which typically is the first image filmed of an item, providing information about what is being imaged. As you can see from the picture below of the microfilm reader, the target card provides the copy number and the date it was filmed, but EEBO strips out most of the target cards from the images it provides.



Lesson 4: What details get lost in an EEBO image?

Because EEBO is made up of digitized microfilm, some of which was done in the mid-twentieth century, details of the book can get lost in the high-contrast black and white tiffs. Red ink shows up as an unreadable grey. Comparing the EEBO images of this almanac (STC 422) with the Folger's images of that very copy reveals the details that get lost.



The process of digitizing the microfilm can also introduce changes to the images. In the case of the third edition of Josuah Sylvester's *Lachrymæ Lachrymarum* (STC 23578), the white-on-black title page was mistakenly reversed. On the left is the title page as it appears in EEBO; on the right is how another copy of this edition appears in the Folger's digitization.



Since the original microfilms show the book correctly, it seems likely that either human error or algorithmic confusion during digitization turned the weird-looking white-on-black title page into a more “correct” (but wrong) image of black-on-white. It’s a mistake that is noticeable to users familiar with the mourning book tradition, or to those who note that having an engraved black-on-white title page in that style is atypical for the early 1600s. But to other users, it’s not necessarily an error that signals its presence. If you look at some other EEBO images of mourning books with white-on-black title pages, you’ll see that some of them are done correctly (STC 23577, STC 2451) while others have been reversed (STC 23576, 6256).

It's worth noting that in JISC's Historical Texts interface, no information about the holding library is included. In ECCO's interface, that information is present, but the current incarnation of Historical Texts does not display that information. (A new version of Historical Texts is being planned that will, apparently, include the holding library field.)

Lesson 6: What's not in EEBO and ECCO?

EEBO and ECCO are built off the records that appear in the ESTC, which is itself made up of three earlier catalogs: the Short-Title Catalogue (STC, which covers the period of 1473-1640), Wing (covering 1641-1700), and the Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue. Each of those catalogs follow their own procedures for what is included and what is omitted. One result is that ephemera like printed bookplates appear in the STC, disappear from Wing, and then reappear in the 18th century. When you're using any of these resources, it's important to keep in mind what is excluded:

- STC does not include works without letterpress type; if a book includes both letterpress type and engravings, it is cataloged, but a solely engraved work is not. EEBO, however, does not include facsimiles of bookplates.
- Wing does not include periodicals, ephemera, or engravings (although some ephemera that wasn't in Wing has been subsequently added to ESTC).
- The Eighteenth Century STC does not include periodicals, engravings, music, or maps, but does include ephemera, like bookplates, which are included in ECCO.
- None of the catalogs that make up the ESTC include foreign books that are not in English, even if they were imported to England. There were a great number of continental books that were read and circulated in Britain, and any study of reading that is based on the ESTC is going to miss a crucial aspect of print culture.
- Bibliographic data is drawn from ESTC but is not synchronized or necessarily updated with EEBO and ECCO.

Further reading

- Gadd, Ian. "The Use and Misuse of Early English Books Online." *Literature Compass* 6, no. 3 (May 2009): 680–92. doi:10.1111/j.1741-4113.2009.00632.x.
- Kichuk, Diana. "Metamorphosis: Remediation in Early English Books Online (EEBO)." *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 22, no. 3 (May 2, 2007): 291–303. doi:10.1093/lc/fqm018.
- Mak, Bonnie. "Archaeology of a Digitization." *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 65, no. 8 (August 2014): 1515–26. doi:10.1002/asi.23061.