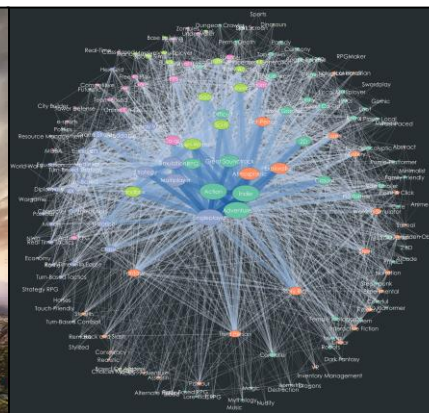


# Digital Approaches to Historical Inquiries

## 2nd Class

Angus A.A. Mol



# Assignment 1

## Google Ngram as a tool.



- Explore and then create a tool overview of Google Ngram Viewer:  
<https://books.google.com/ngrams>
- Template can be found at  
<https://tinyurl.com/dighist-ngram>
- 50-200 words/section
- Post to Slack dighist\_ngram channel
- If you have meta-commentary on the this assignment/form, reply to your uploaded file in Slack.

### Google Ngram Viewer

Guideline: 50-200 words/section. Use footnotes to show references.

General Principle

[your text here]

Description

[your text here]

Critique

[your text here]

How to Use It

[your text here]

How to Analyze the Results

[your text here]

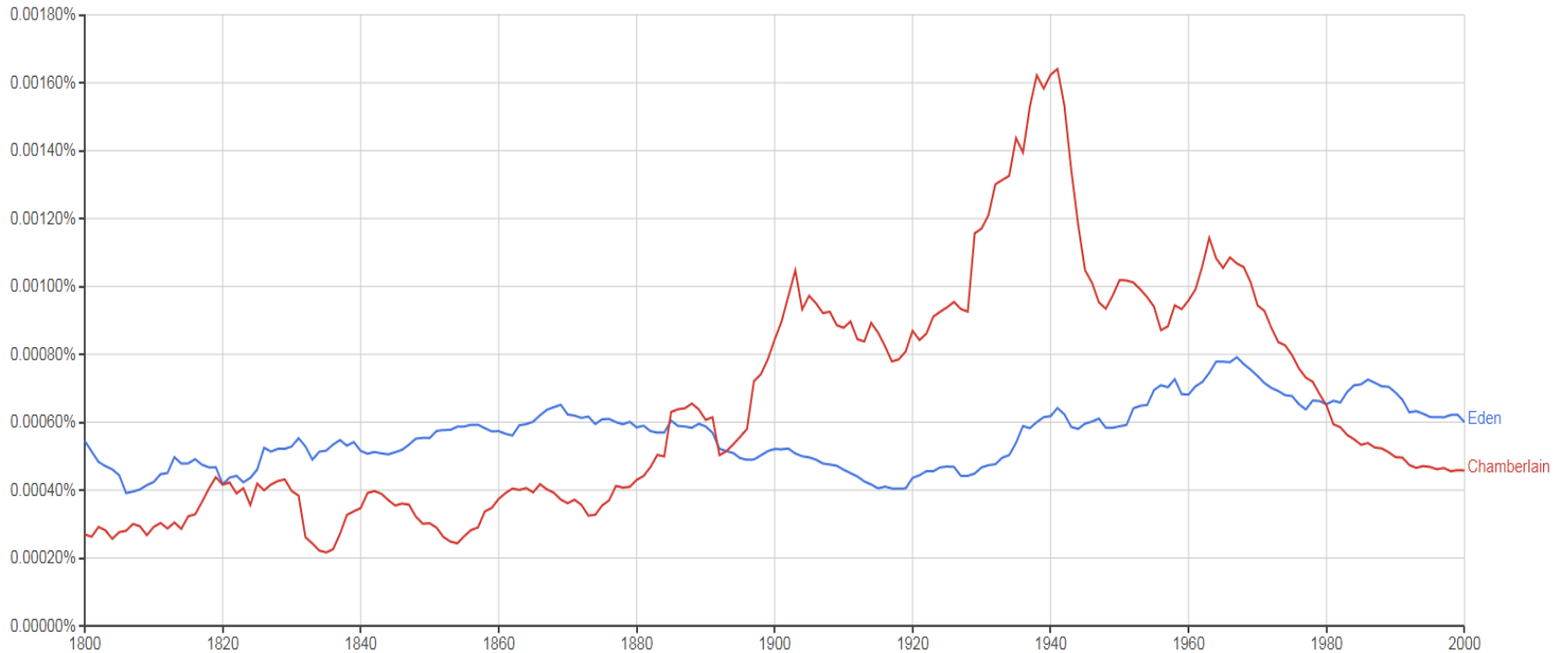
Useful texts, videos, or other material

[links and references here]

!

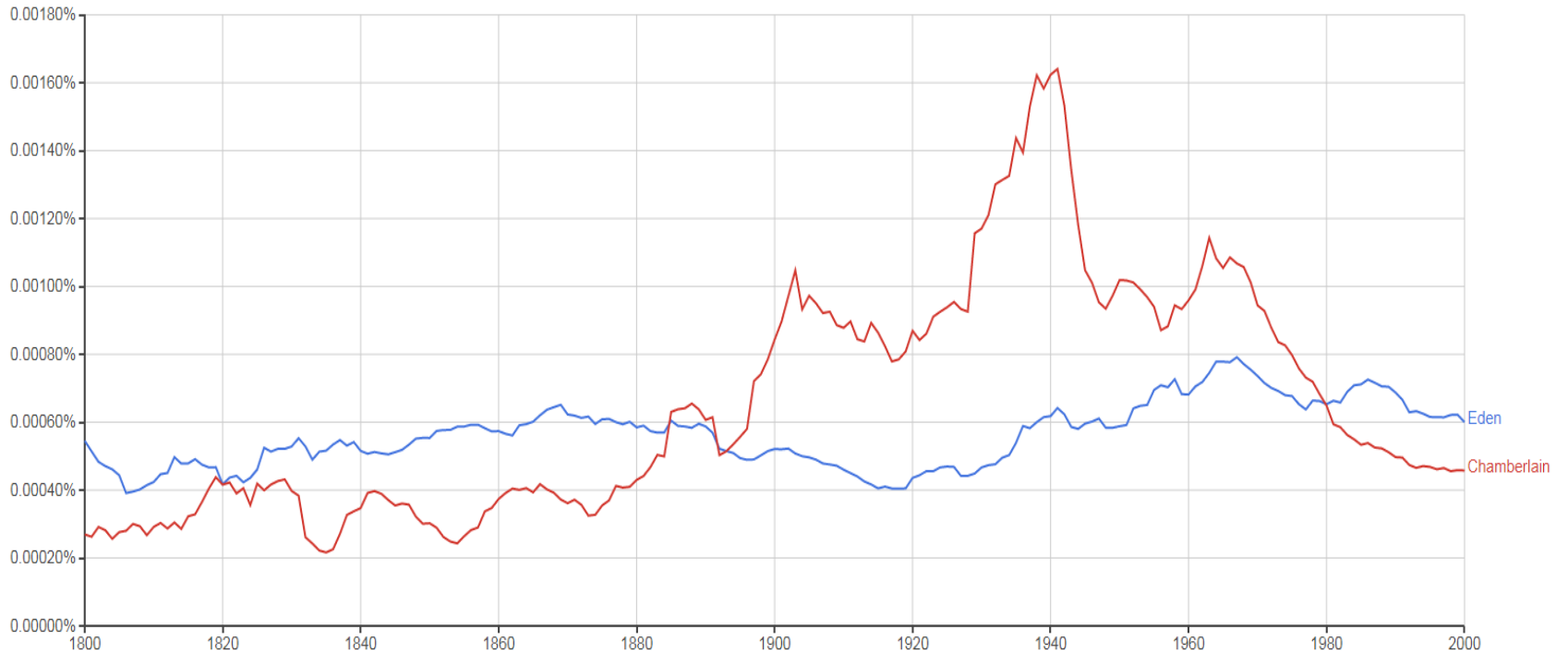
# Pepijn

- General principle
- How to Use it
- Analysis/Example
- Useful texts?



# Max

- General principle
- How to Use it
- Analysis, what would you want to use this on?
- Useful texts?



# Martine

- Description
- Critique
- Analysis/Example
- Useful texts?





# Other things? Assignment feedback?

- Tool overview taken from Exploring Big Historical Data, by Graham, Milligan, and Weingart (2015)
- I also adapted the [hypothes.is](https://electricarchaeology.ca) tool from his syllabus!
- [https://electricarchaeology.ca/](https://electricarchaeology.ca)
- @electricarchaeo on Twitter

**The Google Ngram Viewer** — <https://books.google.com/ngrams>

Throughout the book you'll see boxes like this, introducing you to some of the major issues surrounding a tool!

#### *General Principles*

The Google Ngram Viewer allows users to see the *relative frequency* of a given term within a corpus of some five million books digitized by the Google Books project. This lets you see what percentage of all words your search term made up and to compare them to each other. We can learn, for example, when the *Great War* gave way to *World War I* in common usage.

#### *Description*

It is a simple viewer, run in your web browser. You type in your terms, separated by commas, and a line chart appears below.

#### *Critique*

It is limited to only the books that are digitized. It suffers from some issues of poor optical character recognition, which means a computer program has tried to turn the letter shapes into plain text files. It may only capture elite culture before the advent of accessible popular publishing.

#### *How to Use It*

It is very easy to use! Simply navigate to <http://books.google.com/ngrams> and enter your terms. More advanced options can be found in the "help" page.

#### *How to Analyze the Results*

Remember that they're presenting normalized frequency! Run your mouse over each year to see a pop-up window with data.

# *Never Alone/Kisima Injitchuḡa*

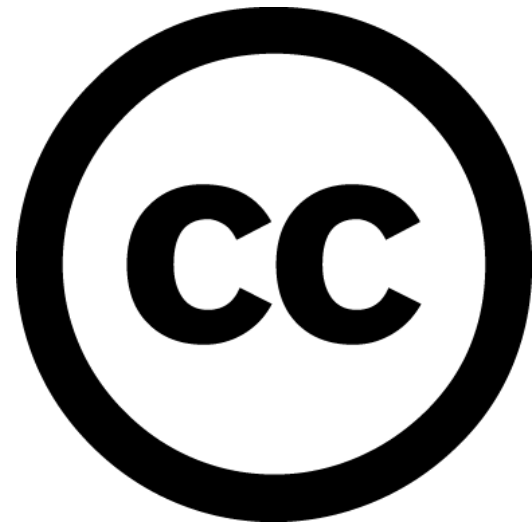


# Democratizing access to the past

- Why?
  - Collective learning (extelligence)
  - Stewardship of the past
  - Dialogue
  - “Feels good”
  - Knowledge of the past is a basic need
- Digital approaches
  - Data
  - New media, new opportunities
  - Fast
  - Reach
  - Ease of use



# Open Access and the Creative Commons



# Wikimedia Foundation's Wikipedia



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valentine%27s\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valentine%27s_Day)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Selected\\_anniversaries#\"On this day\"\\_guidelines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Selected_anniversaries#\)

# The “Crowd”



**INDIEGOGO.**

**KICKSTARTER**



**PATREON**

# Multi-Vocality: Everything goes?



**Binyamin Appelbaum** ✓  
@BCAppelbaum



Compare the crowds: 2009 inauguration at left, 2017 inauguration at right. #Inauguration

5:20 PM - Jan 20, 2017

♥ 58.4K 💬 51.5K people are talking about this



Source: CNN

# Investigative Report of Questionable Actions Allegedly Taken by NPS Officials During the 2017 Presidential Inauguration

**Create Date:**

Monday, June 26, 2017

**Report Date:**

Monday, June 26, 2017

We initiated an investigation after receiving a complaint concerning questionable actions allegedly taken by National Park Service (NPS) officials and employees during and after the 58th presidential inauguration ceremony at the National Mall on January 20, 2017. The complainant alleged the following:

- That an NPS National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA) official instructed NPS employees to alter records related to crowd size estimates for the inauguration ceremony
- That two NPS public affairs employees released information to the press, without authorization, about a January 21, 2017 phone call from President Donald Trump to Acting NPS Director Michael Reynolds
- That one of the public affairs employees circumvented the NPS chain of command for the inauguration when responding to a request from Reynolds (although the complainant did not know what Reynolds requested, we determined that Reynolds asked the public affairs employee to help obtain inauguration photographs after the President requested them during the January 21 phone call)
- That a NAMA employee assigned to the inauguration engaged in personal activities at work that interfered with the performance of his duties

We did not find evidence to substantiate any of these allegations. All of the witnesses we interviewed denied that the NAMA official instructed staff to alter records for the inauguration or to remove crowd size information. We also found no evidence that the public affairs employees released any information to the media about the President's phone call, or that the employee who responded to Reynolds' request for photos was required to go through the chain of command. Regarding the final allegation, the NAMA employee's supervisor and an official who oversaw operations at the inauguration both said that the NAMA employee fulfilled his responsibilities as assigned during the event.

We provided our report on this investigation to the Acting NPS Director.

# Politics of the Past

“History as it was formerly conceived was pictured as a group of parallel chronological tables, between which certain transverse accidentals were sometimes marked here and there. [...] But melodic history is no longer possible. **All political themes are now intermingled, and each event as it occurs immediately takes on a number of simultaneous and inseparable meanings.**”

~Paul Valery, *On History* (1931), describing Twitter *avant la lettre*?

# What can we do about this?

- Data is a solid *and* comfortable basis
- Have knowledge ready at hand
- Be able to take on multiple perspectives, but not be an ontological chameleon.
- Know your rhetorical dos and don'ts
- Be active, but don't fight every battle
- Don't post anonymously
- Allow for the public's imagination.
- Present knowledge that you think is important in a way that is accessible.



THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

# Twine



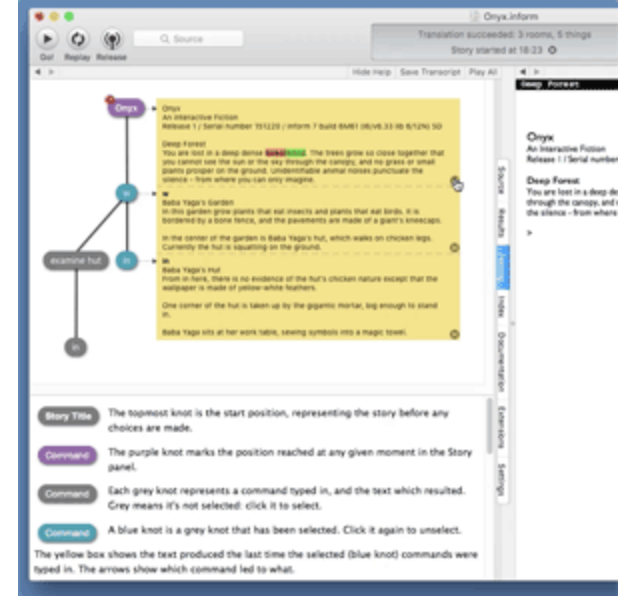
- Open-source tool for telling interactive, non-linear stories
- Created by Chris Klimas in 2009
  - Now maintained by a lot of different people
  - <https://www.patreon.com/klembot>
- A lot of great Twines out there!
  - <https://itch.io/games/tag-twine>
  - <http://twinehub.weebly.com/>
- Twine games were at the roots of the Gamergate controversy
  - Zoe Quin's Depression Quest
- Great at allowing independent exploration and multiple viewpoints of the past
- Great as a tool to think with!





# Interactive Historytelling

- Twine creates hyperlinked stories.
- Technically not the same as interactive fiction:
  - Inform7: <http://inform7.com/>
  - Roots in early text-based games
- Lots of high-production value games out there:
  - Around the World in 80 Days
  - Fallen London
  - Herald



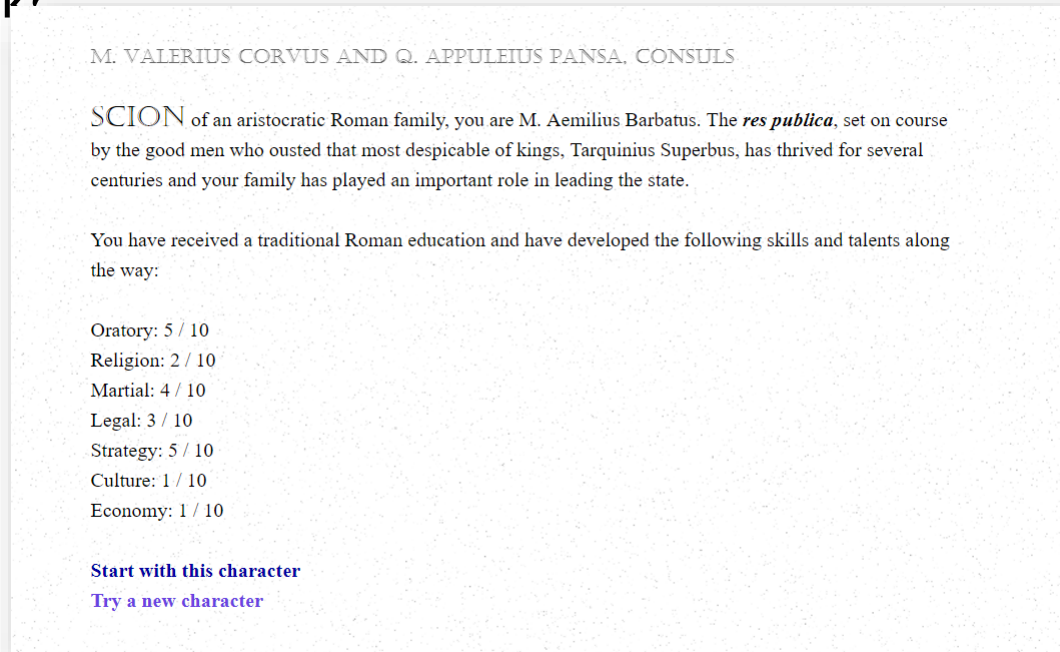
```
HAMURABI, I BEG TO REPORT THAT IN YEAR 1 :
0 PEOPLE STARVED, AND 5 PEOPLE CAME TO THE CITY.
THE POPULATION IS NOW 100 .
WE HARVESTED 3000 BUSHELS AT 3 BUSHELS PER ACRE.
RATS DESTROYED 200 BUSHELS, LEAVING 2800 BUSHELS IN STORAGE.
THE CITY OWNS 1000 ACRES OF LAND.
LAND IS WORTH 20 BUSHELS PER ACRE.

HAMURABI . . .
BUY HOW MANY ACRES?
```

Hamurabi (1968)

# Path of Honors

- McCall: “What kind of interactive history can a historian make with the choice-based text design tool, [Twine](#)?”
- What do you think?



# Let's write our own historical game!

- Go to [http://www.shoresoftime.com/Twine\\_intro.html](http://www.shoresoftime.com/Twine_intro.html)

## Assignment (due February 26)

- Write your own Twine, based on a (fictionalized) historical theme, process, actor, or event.
  - If you use historical data or sources, don't forget to reference.
- Submit to Slack and, if you like, to [philomena.la](http://philomena.la)
- Provide review of the games of two of your peers (on the 27<sup>th</sup>).
- We will play some of them in class on the 28<sup>th</sup>
- After class you can post a max. 300 words commentary for your own game (optional)

See you next week!