

Institution: Cardiff University
Unit of Assessment: 29
Title of case study: Creating a Searchable Database of Victorian Images for Multiple Use [Bold : text from REF guidelines; Bold italic/italic : emphasis; ^{Superscript} : refs in sections 3 and 5]
1. Summary of the impact.
<p>The <i>Database of Mid-Victorian Illustration</i> (DMVI, www.dmvi.cardiff.ac.uk) used research and technological innovation to bring illustrations of Victorian culture to multiple users. Before DMVI, illustrations accompanying nineteenth-century literary texts were largely forgotten, and there was no structured way of searching for them as images. Despite their cultural importance, illustrations are rarely reproduced in modern editions, and mass digitisation projects omit them or describe them inadequately for independent retrieval. DMVI's bespoke software tools harnessed literary research in a multifaceted mark-up system, to create a tagged 'image bank'. Its content and searchability have made it the resource of choice for designers, publishers, broadcasters, film-makers, and heritage organisations worldwide when presenting images of nineteenth-century life.</p>
2. Underpinning research
<p>The DMVI was inspired by and founded in research for an AHRC project in the Unit, 2001-4, http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/index.html,³⁻⁴ and subsequent AHRC funding enabled its development (2004-7)³⁻⁵ and enhancement (2010-11).³⁻⁶ The DMVI harnessed the literary research of David Skilton (joined as Professor 1988-04, then Emeritus) and Julia Thomas (Research Fellow 1997, Lecturer '99, SL '05, Reader '09, Professor '12) in four key areas:</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The nature, provenance, and historical, literary & cultural significance of nineteenth-century literary illustrations.</i> Thomas³⁻³ argues that Victorian illustrations are ideologically significant, their meanings bound up in the values of their historical moment. Skilton³⁻¹ examines the central place that illustrations occupy in Victorian visual and verbal culture. This research fed into DMVI in two main ways: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The images were analysed for their representation of Victorian culture, to identify themes and strands for the underlying keywording structure. b. Major Victorian concerns (e.g. domesticity, class, industrialisation, rural and urban) were foregrounded, with multiple cross-tagging capturing the polyvalent richness of the material. c. The pictures were codified for multiple relevancies not always obvious to the non-specialist, e.g. what constitutes 'charity' or 'fashionable'; how social status was signified. 2. <i>The role of illustration in the illustrated work.</i> Thomas³⁻² examines the interaction between word and image in illustration and the points at which they coincide and/or conflict. Skilton³⁻¹ explores the intertextuality of illustration, its references to multiple texts and images. Their respective specialist knowledge about the integration of the illustrations with the literary text in which they appeared meant that the DMVI images could be marked up on the basis of not only what was directly visible, but also details from the text, such as geographical location, historical context and the relationships between pictured characters. This was important in ensuring the DMVI material could sustain its original historical and illustrative function, rather than being purely free-standing and decontextualised. 3. <i>The technical and theoretical options for tagging the database to make it searchable in appropriate and effective ways.</i> Thomas³⁻³ examines some of the particular challenges associated with searchability. Each additional type of tag entails dedicated research. Thus, in addition to the iconographic tagging outlined above, additional work was done to construct the bibliographic metadata: the means by which DMVI users can retrieve images via the name of the author, artist, engraver, title of the work, etc. This element was imperative as a means of overcoming the absence of any standard way of describing an illustration bibliographically. 4. <i>The development of IT tools</i> to facilitate the creation of DMVI. The DMVI project was conceived in the context of existing specialisms in Digital Humanities within the Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research (CEIR). Since its foundation in 1997, CEIR has had the strategic objective of engaging at the interface of traditional scholarly methods and technological advances, to make literary and related material publicly accessible. The underlying database structures of DMVI were initially developed by Anthony Mandal (joined as PDRA 2001, Lecturer '04, SL '09, Reader '13) for the AHRC project (2001-2004).³⁻⁴ In addition to these text-based structures, developing DMVI involved the conception, in IT terms, of how images can be



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described iconographically.

The combined effect of these research elements was a database within which users can search for and retrieve relevant images in the same way as they would an image bank of contemporary photographs. This overall compatibility of access was important for ensuring that non-academic users could easily add DMVI to their resource list. Each picture is described and marked up in a way that is understandable to a range of user types, with the tagging organized to be intuitive to multiple users, without losing access to the rich layers of more hidden detail unique to this resource. That is, DMVI furnishes the user with the capacity to search across period, geography, settings, people, activities, objects, themes and, of course, literary work, author and artist.

The enhancement project³⁻⁶ updated DMVI on a sister site,⁵⁻¹ added a light box function so users can build up their own 'gallery' of images, and changed the software and infrastructure (converting to MySQL), to ensure DMVI's long-term sustainability. Through ICONCLASS coding it can now also be browsed in German, French and Italian as well as English. DMVI has joined Connected Histories (<http://www.connectedhistories.org/>), enabling cross-searching with other databases.

3. References to the research

1. Skilton, D. 2007. 'The Centrality of Illustration in Victorian Visual Culture: The Example of Millais and Trollope from 1860 to 1864', *Journal of Illustration Studies*, 1 (Dec). <http://bit.ly/gZgdyy>
2. Thomas, J. 2004. *Pictorial Victorians: The Inscription of Values in Word and Image*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, ix + 203pp. ISBN: 9780821415917
3. Thomas, J. 2007. 'Getting the Picture: Word and Image in the Digital Archive', *European Journal of English Studies* 11, 2: 193-206. DOI: 10.1080/13825570701452946

Item 1 is open access on line. Items 2 and 3 are available from the HEI

Research grants

4. AHRC, B/RG/AN5917/APN12346, 2001-4, £244,080, *British Fiction 1800-1829: A Database of Production, Circulation and Reception History*. PI: P.Garside, Co-I: D.Skilton, PDRA: A.Mandal
5. AHRC 2004-7 B/RE/AN10205/APN16438, £198,132, *A Web-Mounted Database of Mid-Victorian Wood-Engraved Illustrations*. PI: J.Thomas, Co-I: A.Mandal. Graded 'outstanding'.
6. AHRC 2010-11 AH/H037578/1, £96,396, *Enhancing the Database of Mid-Victorian Wood-Engraved Illustration*. PI: J.Thomas, Co-I: A.Mandal.

4. Details of the impact

Nature of the impact: The impact constitutes an **effect on culture beyond academia**, acting on **the practice of publishers, designers, broadcasters and others** (see list below) and thereby on **the awareness of a broad audience of consumers internationally**.

The illustrations assembled in DMVI⁵⁻¹ have given the general public and specialist users free access to insights into Victorian life, that speak to today's visual culture.⁵⁻² In their original locations, the illustrations were integral to the published conception of the text, and their removal from modern editions and even electronic versions of texts had made them barely known to modern readers and had marginalised their cultural significance.

Process: From its inception, DMVI was driven by an impact plan targeting three types of user:

- a. Readers of Victorian fiction wishing to re-connect with the illustrations originally integral to literary texts.
- b. General and specialised users (e.g. designers, historical fiction authors, amateur family historians) wanting visual information about nineteenth-century cultural and social life.
- c. Illustrators and designers (including for publishing, webpages, television programmes) requiring historical images not available in contemporary image banks.

As outlined in section 2, the transmission of research to impact was made possible through the careful design of the expert tags, which allow the database to be searched in a systematic and consistent way while generating a range of results, many of which would not be immediately obvious to or expected by the non-specialist searcher.

Reach and significance: The features described above have resulted in DMVI having an **international reach**.⁵⁻² As indicated below, database images have been used around the world, and have reached audiences of many millions through television broadcasts. The **significance** of DMVI lies in its unique capacity to furnish new audiences with cultural and social images from the past, without losing the information about their provenance and original connotation.

Evidence of impact: The evidence below has been primarily accrued as a function of how the images are accessed. Since DMVI is free to search and view on line,⁵⁻² it is not possible to evidence impact on users seeking the illustrations associated with their literary co-texts. However, anyone needing a high resolution file (e.g. for publication or broadcast) always needs to contact the team. This gives a sample snapshot of the range of usage (images are also used in low resolution, see below). Through email correspondence it is possible to find out about responses to the users' own product (e.g. viewing and sales figures), and hence gain some impression of the artistic and commercial impact of the database. It is therefore known that **DMVI has had a wide variety and range of users**, including individuals, community groups, institutions, businesses and industries around the world, and the onward audiences of materials produced by them, including:

Film and television companies: Images from DMVI were used in: a documentary about William and Catherine Booth by Radiant Films in 2009 (Salvation Army in Australia; distributed internationally, see <http://bit.ly/174R0uo>),⁵⁻¹⁰ *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway* (ITV, 2008; average audience: 6 million); the opening credits of *Byw yn ôl y Llyfr* (S4C, 2010). *The One Show* (BBC; average audience: 5 million)⁵⁻⁶ has used images from DMVI in three separate programmes (2011-12). They helped in "making visually exciting, yet educational and informative films to our varied prime time audience of approximately five million viewers". Furthermore, "the literary research underpinning the tagging is essential in helping us use the illustrations appropriately."⁵⁻⁶

Print media (magazines, newspapers and books): Publishers' designers have sourced images from the DMVI to illustrate new texts, including book covers. Images from DMVI appeared in the *New York Times Book Review* (01.09.11, <http://nyti.ms/1aDOMck>) and in *Kurungabaa*, a surfing magazine based in Australia (2011). DMVI images were published in Rose Garrard's *Donkeys' Years on the Malvern Hills* (Aspect Publishing, 2008); on the cover of the paperback version of Timothy Larsen's *Crisis of Doubt* (Oxford University Press, 2008)^{5-3,5-8}; on the covers of Lesa Scholl's *Translation, Authorship and the Victorian Professional Woman* (Ashgate, 2011)⁵⁻⁹ and Judith Johnston's *Victorian Women and the Economies of Travel, Translation and Culture, 1830-1870* (Ashgate, 2012); in Teresa Mangum's *A Cultural History of Women in the Age of Empire* (Bloomsbury, 2013); and in *Stowaway*, an online travel magazine published at Brigham Young University, USA, targeted at a national audience of young adults, ages 18 to 29.

Heritage organisations: Dundurn National Historic Site, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, used images from DMVI to accompany a booklet of historic recipes (2008).

Graphic designers: A graphic designer in Southern California used images from the database in a journal for teenagers affected by cancer (2008). A graphic designer used images from DMVI in a booklet associated with a production by the Austin Shakespeare Theatre, Texas (2011).⁵⁻⁵

Agencies and private companies: Print and digital formats of images were used by a rental agency in Ohio in 2008.

Communities: Images from DMVI have been used on community websites relating to the town of Needham Market in Suffolk (2008) and the Malverns (2008) and by the Friends of Prestwich Forest Park on a Heritage Lottery funded project (2013).

The following list demonstrates how **the images have contributed to modern cultural life:**

Education: *The One Show* used images in documentary features on Christmas carols and their roots in Methodism, the history of eating strawberries, and the campaigner, Caroline Norton. In other contexts, the images themselves are an integral part of the story (e.g. illustrations of the Malvern donkeys featured in Rose Garrard's 'forgotten history' of these donkeys). A history teacher in Germany requested an image for use in class. One English teacher⁵⁻⁴ comments: "the illustrations that the database contains have been essential in helping my A-level students understand the context in which the texts that they have to study were produced. The comprehensive organisation of the illustrations makes it easy to access the images best suited to our purpose ... My students are now starting to cite the DMVI in their written work as they too appreciate how quickly a reference to visual stimuli can articulate a point or illustrate their thinking." Feedback after a workshop in 2011 for three local schools included, "What really left an impression was the way the illustrations from the database can be used to enhance understanding of a difficult text."

Restoring a lost resource: The researcher for the Booth documentary remarked on how beneficial it was "to have all these 'lost' pictures available."⁵⁻¹⁰ A posting on the Victorian Poetry Network praises the "the ability to search specifically for the [407] illustrations to poems in the database"

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which enables teachers of poetry to link back to the original wood-engravings and view them in detail.⁵⁻⁷

Historicity: The Historic Kitchen Coordinator at Dundurn National Historic Site, Hamilton, Ontario, commented that the pictures used in their printed leaflets “enhance[d] the historical accuracy of our research.” Likewise, images were used in the publicity for a UK heritage-funded project because they were “very evocative of the period and the local scenery”.

Design: The graphic designer responsible for the publication on cancer described how she used images from DMVI to add a different dimension to the layout of the book. Another graphic designer described it as a “really wonderful resource ... of illustration design.” A figurative painter based in Florence is using the images as “inspiration” for his work.

Conservation: An AHRC-funded network seminar series, *Literary Illustration: Conservation, Access, Use* (2007-8), run by CEIR in collaboration with the Victoria and Albert Museum, raised awareness of the value and vulnerability of illustration resources held in institutions. The seminars were attended by over forty professionals: curators and conservators, representatives of commercial publishing, and IT consultants.

The accounts above are representative but only illustrative of the full range of uses of DMVI. In particular, visitors to the site may examine images, search for sets of them, and even copy and use them at the lower resolution, without registering their use. This free, untracked access to DMVI is core to its purpose in making the images available to everyone. Indicative of this usage are figures from the Cardiff site www.dmvi.cardiff.ac.uk (thus not including figures from the sister site www.dmvi.org.uk): 01.08.11 to 31.07.13 saw 18,092 unique visitors, 23,447 total visits, 205,733 page views, with a 3.3:1 ratio of new to returning visitors. 71.54% of viewers were in the USA.⁵⁻²

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. The DMVI database itself: www.dmvi.cardiff.ac.uk (and a sister site at www.dmvi.org.uk). Using the database provides the clearest evidence of how the research has enabled users to search for images in multiple ways that are intuitive and productive.
 2. Visitor statistics for www.dmvi.cardiff.ac.uk taken on 31.07.13, excluding visits before 01.08.13 and visitors to www.dmvi.org.uk. They confirm the visitor figures quoted in section 4.
 3. E-mail from the Assistant Commissioning Editor, Oxford University Press, (17/04/08). She describes DMVI as “a brilliant resource for Victorian studies” and explains that it will be used on the cover of Timothy Larsen’s ‘Crisis of Doubt’.
 4. E-mail from an A-level English teacher at Merthyr Tydfil College (10/07/13). This email confirms the value to students of the illustrations’ rich cross-indexing in “helping [them] understand the context in which the texts ... were produced”
 5. Pdf of the booklet accompanying a production of *Man and Superman* at the Austin Shakespeare Theatre, Texas (17/02-06/03/11) distributed to audiences and local schools. The text is Shaw’s appendix to the play, ‘Revolutionist’s Handbook and Pocket Companion’ by John Tanner. Gordon’s edition uses nine DMVI images.
 6. Testimonial from the researcher for The One Show, BBC Wales (09/07/13). She confirms using DMVI images in several short factual films.
 7. Posting on the Victorian Poetry Network, May 31 2011, <http://bit.ly/iE318b>. The author praises the multi-faceted search facility and the capacity to look for the illustrations associated with particular poems and examine the illustrations in detail.
 8. Timothy Larsen’s book, *Crisis of Doubt* (Oxford University Press, 2008, paperback version), demonstrating the use of an image. The Amazon listing enables ‘Look inside’, where the credit on the back cover can be viewed. <http://amzn.to/128upuV>.
 9. Lesa Scholl’s book, *Translation, Authorship and the Victorian Professional Woman* (Ashgate, 2011) <http://bit.ly/11pa21t>. The link offers a Google preview, demonstrating that a DMVI image was used on the title page and acknowledging the Unit on the acknowledgements page.
 10. Email from the executive producer of the Salvation Army film on the Booths (23/03/09). He comments on the value of the database and requests the use of three images in the film.
- The HEI can provide 2-10. Item 1 is for use on line, but pdfs of a search procedure are available.