Digital histories: week 6: images

Prior to this session, please download Irfanview from: http://www.irfanview.com/ and explore some of the basic features – particular in the bottom half of the pull-down menu entitled 'Image'.

The British Library have just released thousands of images scanned from their books.

http://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary

http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/digital-scholarship/2013/12/a-million-first-steps.html

https://imagesonline.bl.uk/?service=page&action=show_home_page&language=en

The British Museum have had this facility for some years now:

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database.aspx

All images are made up of pixels (points of colour), which are turned to code and then turned in to a stream of 'data' called a Bitmap. The most common file formats are the following:

TIFF: Tagged Image File Format

PNG: Portable Network Graphics

JPEG: which stands for Jpeg

But there are a 100 other formats for images.

Common acronyms and jargon associated with image files includes:

File Compression

Image Resolution

DPI

Grey Scale

Histogram

RGB

CMYK

There is actually a huge amount of historical illustration available. These are just a few – mainly because they are free, and have few restrictions on copyright:

The Database of Mid-Victorian Illustration: http://www.dmvi.org.uk/index.php

The Lewis Walpole Library: http://lwlimages.library.yale.edu/walpoleweb/default.asp

Wellcome Images: http://images.wellcome.ac.uk/

British Printed Images to 1700: http://www.bpi1700.org.uk/jsp/

Flickr: the Commons: http://www.flickr.com/commons/

Cartoons: http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/

The only problem with all of this is that it is almost impossible to search for images. What you are normally actually searching is the metadata associated with each image – and that is incredibly variable.

Finding Images and then analysing them.

The real problem is finding the things. Some innovative search methodologies for images include:

Multicolor Search Lab: http://labs.ideeinc.com/multicolr/

TinEye: http://www.tineye.com/

PicSearch: http://www.picsearch.co.uk/

Google Search by Drawing: http://search-by-drawing.franz-enzenhofer.com/

Google Advanced Image Search: http://images.google.com/advanced_image_search?hl=en

And for history specific images:

The National Archives Historic Photo finder: http://lwlimages.library.yale.edu/walpoleweb/default.asp

And then, analysing them. Here is a nice blog that attempts to use bitmap characteristics for analysis:

http://lab.softwarestudies.com/2011/08/style-space-how-to-compare-image-sets.html

Using a Google Image Search, find this image – to be supplied on the day - in the best version available on the web and save it either to your own computer or a public storage facility such as DropBox. You also need to locate the fullest body of metadata about the image. I would start (and perhaps end with):

Google Advanced Image Search:
http://images.google.com/advanced_image_search?hl=en