Issue Mapping for an Ageing Europe

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Glossary of tools used

‘Clouding’ tools. Clouding refers to counting occurrences of keywords, issues or sources, resizing them according to frequency of mentions and arraying them for particular reader effects. The clouded keywords may be arrayed alphabetically, where the reader would be expected already to be familiar with some of the terms and seek particular ones. The clouded keywords or sources may ordered by frequency, with the most frequent terms appearing in the center, for a core/periphery effect, or left to right, top to bottom, where in the Western writing system (broadly put) the most frequently occurring is where one begins reading. Other arrays, such as random or unordered ones, also may be of interest if there are no expectations on the part of the reader, or there are multiple audiences. For example, wordle.net, the ‘toy for generating “word clouds”’, has by default its layout as ‘any which way’, and also allows vertical, horizontal, mostly vertical or mostly horizontal, together with an alphabetical option. Among the clouding tools put to use are the Digital Methods Initiative’s Raw Text to Tag Cloud Engine (which invites text dumps and then counts words) and the Tag Cloud Generator (for inputs of terms with numbered values). As the name indicates the Tag Cloud Combinator clouds multiple clouds, so to speak, meaning one enters more than one cloud and they are summed, and a single, mother cloud is outputted.

Gephi. Appropriately termed the ‘Photoshop for networks’, Gephi is an all-purpose network analysis software tool which we use in combination with data collection tools (such as the Googlescraper for search engine results, Navicrawler and Issuecrawler for website in- and outlinks, Netvizz for Facebook and TCAT for Twitter). Data in tabular form may be converted to a relational input format accepted by Gephi with the tool, Table 2 Net, developed by the Médialab at Sciences-Po, which is the base for the developers of Gephi as well as Navicrawler (and its successor). With Gephi, at a basic level, lists of nodes and edges are visualized as an interactive network. The layouts of the network graphs in this book were generated using its ForceAtlas 2, the default algorithm that produces spring maps or a so-called force-directed layout, meaning ‘nodes repulse each other (like magnets) while edges attract the nodes they connect (like springs)’ (Jacomy et al., 2014). One particular innovation in Gephi for network visualization users is that ForceAtlas 2 runs continuously, spatializing (or placing nodes and their edges) until it stops. Incorporating a learning by interaction (and exploration) ethic, Gephi invites one to view but also use the graphing
features (both interaction as well as settings) during and upon completion of the layout.

**GeoIP and the Issuegeographer.** The Digital Methods GeoIP tool sits atop the Geocity Lite database by Mindmax, and allows one to retrieve or resolve location coordinates from URLs or IP (Internet Protocol) addresses. It outputs a table with individual columns listing URL, host, IP address, city, country, country code, latitude and longitude. It is often employed for analysis of the places of issues, that is, where people or organizations are engaged with which issues. It is also useful for geolocating significant sets of organizations, where one would ask, for example, among the human rights organizations invited to the summit meeting, are there global south actors among them? Here the Geo IP tool looked up the locations of the ageing NGOs and other actors which were linked to by their U.K. counterparts. The question raised is the extent to which they are outward-looking and recognizing or referencing actors in places affected by the ageing issue in the U.K., such as countries experiencing a care drain. In a footnote to the project we note the use of the Issuegeographer by the Digital Methods Initiative, which employs aggregate WHOIS services and looks up the registration addresses of websites (their billing addresses, so to speak), not the locations of their hosting companies.

**Googlescraper and Lippmannian Device.** The Googlescraper (aka Lippmannian Device) runs on top of Google, making queries that enable one to learn how many times a website mentions a keyword, according to the leading search engine. One can query multiple sites and keywords, too, so as to show whether issues resonate among particular sets of sources. To what extent do leading Fukushima NGOs recognize the effects of the nuclear disaster on particular species? The tool outputs issue clouds as well as source clouds. Issue clouds are resized keywords, and source clouds are resized domain names, such as greenpeace.org or amnesty.org. The Googlescraper was originally developed for so-called source distance work. How far from the top of Google results is a particular issue or source? Thus if one queries Google for [9/11] at which ranking is the 911 Commission’s website, the official source, and 911truth.org, the conspiracy theory site? (From 2009 to the present 911truth.org often has been ranked much higher.) Thus the Googlescraper performs research about how Google, and by extension, the web, furnish hierarchies of source credibility – in a form of web epistemological research. The Lippmannian Device, on the other hand, is named after Walter Lippmann, the American journalist and author, whose influential
books, *Public Opinion* (1922) and especially *The Phantom Public* (1925), called for a coarse means to detect source bias. With the Lippmannian Device one queries sources in order to find out whether they mention particular words, and not others, thereby indicating a leaning or commitment to particular issue language over other's. Thus it is more of a social research tool compared to the Googlescraper’s web epistemological work. However named, the tool scrapes Google results, from [site:] queries, and outputs Google’s estimated result count, number of keyword mentions on the inputted pages or sites, and the descriptor text associated with the result, together with data on date and time of query, the formulated query itself and Google results page URL. Results are displayed as issue or source clouds (where one is able to array the clouds as deemed appropriate for the expected reader), an html table and a text file. The Googlescraper (aka Lippmannian Device) is at https://tools.digitalmethods.net/beta/scrapeGoogle. It works in Firefox in tandem with the DMI toolbar add-on, https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/FirefoxToolBar.

**Link Ripper.** The Link Ripper rips or extracts hyperlinks from a webpage. It is often used when links are not visible but rather embedded in the code of the page (/hrefs). One may enter multiple pages into the Link Ripper, and extract the links, forming a list. There is an option to capture outlinks only, thereby excluding internal links. The Link Ripper is at https://tools.digitalmethods.net/beta/linkRipper.

**Mindomo.** Mind mapping is a technique by which a thought and its associations are linked in a visualization. Mind mapping software, in this case Mindomo, has been put to use in the mapping of associations between protagonists, matters of concern, statements and things, in the risk cartography approach to mapping ageing. Our particular application of the tool organized the issue space, and also allowed us to show the most central protagonists and matters of concern (the AGE Platform Europe secretary general and ageing’s effects on employment and the welfare state), as well as particular marginal and isolated ones, such as elder discrimination. Described by its creators as a tool that helps users ‘see the big picture’, Mindomo is at http://www.mindomo.com.

**Navicrawler.** Navicrawler is a website corpus building tool that captures links between websites, allowing one to map interlinking. Because the user manually confirms which linked websites to include in the corpus, Navicrawler also leaves out links deemed irrelevant by the researcher.
(which is in contrast to the Issuecrawler, which retains the links no matter their perceived topicality). Whilst no longer maintained, owing to the development of its successor, it may still be used with a separate instance of Firefox (version 3.6) and the Navicrawler add-on installed. In the risk cartography exercise, Navicrawler was used to map the outlinks from U.K. ageing organizations ultimately so as to ascertain their location by running the sites through the Geo IP tool. Navicrawler is available at http://webatlas.fr/wp/navicrawler/.

**Pallozio.** Pallozio is a script for creating stream graphs using Adobe Illustrator CS5 with Scriptographer installed. Michelle Mauri from the Density Design Lab in Milan developed the script and it can be downloaded at https://github.com/mikima/pallozio. See also Density Design Lab’s RAW tool, which is the successor, described at http://raw.densitydesign.org, as ‘the missing link between spreadsheets and vector graphics’.