



Linda Friday

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Challenges

- Limited supplies of nineteenth century newspapers and periodicals reduces student and researcher access to necessary materials.
- Without primary source materials students and researchers struggle to understand how newspapers influenced writers of well-known Victorian Gothic fiction.

Solutions

- *NewsVault's* Nineteenth Century Newspapers and Periodicals.

Results

- Digital Solution increases access to centuries-old newspaper archives that are instantly searchable and result in higher quality research.
- *NewsVault* empowers researchers to better illustrate how time period reportage influenced well-known works of literature.



Success Story

NewsVault Erases Research Restrictions Caused by Limited Supply of Nineteenth Century Newspapers

Do readers today understand works of Victorian fiction like *Dracula* the way readers in the nineteenth century did?

It's a question Linda Friday, a teaching assistant and sponsored Ph.D. candidate at England's Edgehill University, has spent much of her academic career trying to answer. "The contemporary reader's understanding of a novel such as *Dracula* would have been different from ours," Friday contends. "That perspective would have been influenced by the newspapers they were reading at the time, which is something lost to the modern reader who is unaware of the relationships between news items and the novel."

Besides the complexity of such research, the limited supply of nineteenth century newspapers and periodicals housed in many university libraries can make it extremely difficult to determine what role the Victorian press had on novelists and readers of those novels.

While Friday has been able to access some local archive material for her master's and Ph.D. research, she says library access to a wide variety of Victorian press materials is hard to come by. "The primary source material I really needed are limited in number through the University library," Friday says.

NewsVault Takes Researchers Back in Time by Increasing Access to Centuries-Old Newspapers

To improve access and better understand the influence Victorian news reports may have had on Gothic fiction of the nineteenth century, Edgehill University turned to Cengage Learning's *NewsVault*, a cloud-based compilation of primary sources that offers access to 400 years of newspapers and periodicals, including those of the nineteenth century. The database helps users discover resources they might not have known existed and identify patterns and perspectives previously impossible to compare.

"The use of the digital archives is fundamental to my research," Friday says. "It allows me to carry out an almost side-by-side reading of a novel and the digitized newsprint that examines location-specific contextual data that was available to the contemporary reader within the media."

In addition to greater access, *NewsVault* can also help researchers like Friday better organize the massive troves of material they're analyzing. Specifically, the database enables users to visualize materials in ways that allow them to make key connections they otherwise might not have made.

"The digitization of nineteenth century periodicals means I can view through OCR-generated textual transcripts what the contemporary reader read about specific locations that are contained within the fictional narrative," Friday says.



“Searching the archives can become addictive as you track down connections and uncover exciting articles and stories whose relevance and impact has been untapped.”

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NewsVault Improves Research Quality and Provides Greater Insight into Victorian Gothic Fiction

“Victorian gothic texts and newspaper archives can initially appear as disparate entities placed together in incongruent alliances,” Friday says. “But the database allows for a closer inspection, which reveals they actually intersect at locations and through the lived spaces and experiences of the urban environment.”

Turns out location is extremely influential on late Victorian Gothic fiction.

Without access to the source material included in *NewsVault*, Friday might never have identified how the pages of Victorian news reporting influenced novelists or why specific location descriptions were included in novels. “The Victorian newsprint vividly articulates readings of the urban space, a space with which an increasing Victorian readership readily identified,” Friday says.

Besides her own research, Friday recommends *NewsVault* to students interested in learning about the influence of the nineteenth century press. “It’s a rich and valuable source of data,” Friday says. “It facilitates an understanding of contemporary debates and provides a readily accessible source of primary material.”

NewsVault Unearths Secret Influences on Famous Literary Works of the Past

“It’s almost like you’re a detective following a trail through the archives,” Friday says. “You might find a snippet in an article about a particular location that is relevant to a novel.”

Discovering clues that may otherwise not be found without *NewsVault* helps researchers like Friday narrow search parameters, more quickly identify dead ends, or focus attention on previously unexplored areas of interest. Without access to the rare source material found in *NewsVault*, these nineteenth-century journalistic influences may go undiscovered and remain secret.

“The digitized archives offer such amazing possibilities,” Friday says. “Searching the archives can become addictive as you track down connections and uncover exciting articles and stories whose relevance and impact has been untapped.”

Not only can users search by title and date but they can also cross-browse all of the content published on a specific date. The myriad search options *NewsVault* provides ensures researchers find the information necessary to support or refute a hypothesis. “I would absolutely recommend it,” Friday says. “The effects of the nineteenth-century press cannot be underestimated.”



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