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What is *Manuscripts Online*?

Manuscripts Online will enable users to search an enormous body of online primary resources relating to written and early printed culture in Britain during the period 1000 to 1500.

A single search engine will enable users to undertake sophisticated full-text searching of literary manuscripts, historical documents and early printed books which are located on websites owned by libraries, archives, universities and publishers. Users will be able to search the resources by keyword, but also by specific keyword types, such as person and place name, date, author, scribe, manuscript feature and illumination terminology, thanks to techniques which we are using called *automated entity recognition*. Additionally, users will be able to visualise search results using maps of medieval Britain and add their own annotations to the data for public consumption, thereby building a knowledge base around this critical mass of primary source materials.

Automated entity recognition is a Natural Language Processing technique within information science whereby algorithms are able to intelligently identify the occurrences of specific types of words, such as names, concepts and terminology, using three methods: dictionaries (such as a historical gazetteer of place names), lexical pattern matching and syntactic context.

Manuscripts Online will be of interest to researchers and students in the fields of medieval English language, literature and history and it will become a sister site to the JISC-funded Connected Histories website (<http://www.connectedhistories.org>) which already provides similar search services for the period 1500-1900.

The full list of the resources we plan to include in the first launch of *Manuscripts Online* in January 2013:

- [Middle English Dictionary](#) – the authoritative reference work for Middle English from 1100-1500; over 15,000 entries with citations.
- [Manuscripts of the West Midlands](#) – catalogue of vernacular manuscript books of the English West Midlands, c. 1300-1475; detailed descriptions of more than 150 manuscripts
- [Production and Use of English Manuscripts: 1060 to 1220](#) – catalogue of manuscripts, especially those containing literary materials, written principally in English from c. 1060 to 1220
- [Imagining History: Perspectives on Late Medieval Vernacular Historiography](#) – a database of descriptions of the Middle English Prose Brut
- [Geographies of Orthodoxy: Mapping Pseudo-Bonaventuran Lives of Christ, 1350-1550](#) – a new account of English vernacular lives of Christ derived from the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes vitae Christi*.
- [Middle English Grammar Project](#) – the Middle English Grammar Corpus (MEG-C); Middle English texts transcribed from manuscript or facsimile reproduction

- [Late Medieval English Scribes](#) – catalogue of all scribal hands in the manuscripts of the English writings of five major Middle English authors
- [The Norman Blake Editions of the Canterbury Tales](#) – a series of online editions which present full diplomatic transcriptions of seven manuscripts of Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales
- [The Auchinleck Manuscript](#) – digital edition of the Auchinleck Manuscript (NLS Adv MS 19.2.1)
- [Europa Inventa](#) – descriptive catalogue of medieval manuscripts held within Australian institutions
- [The Cause Papers of the Church Courts of the diocese of York](#) – descriptive catalogue with accompanying images
- [The Taxatio](#) – detailed records of the assessment of English and Welsh ecclesiastical wealth undertaken in 1291-2
- [British History Online](#) – transcriptions and databases, ranging from administrative and ecclesiastical history to economic and intellectual history
- [British Literary Manuscripts Online: Medieval & Renaissance](#) – c.500,000 pages of searchable metadata with accompanying digital facsimile images
- [Early English Books Online](#) – metadata and digital facsimile images of 782 printed volumes between the year 1473 to 1500.
- [EEBO Text Creation Partnership](#) (subscription) – approx. 136 full-text transcriptions of the Early English Books Online volumes
- [Parker on the Web](#) – high resolution images and detailed cataloguing of 559 manuscripts
- [The National Archives](#) – Descriptive catalogues for all documents dating between 1000 and 1500 from collections such as the State Papers, records of the Admiralty, Chancery and Exchequer, the Court of the King's Bench and Petitions and Seals
- [Online Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts](#) – British Library's descriptive catalogue of 2,000 illuminated manuscripts originating in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland
- [Compendium of Middle English Prose and Verse](#) – c. 150 full-text transcriptions of literary and administrative works
- [TEAMS Middle English Texts](#) – more than 400 annotated editions of key literary works for teaching and research

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More information about *Manuscripts Online* can be found at <http://www.manuscriptsonline.org>.