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As Steven E. Jones indicates, "a text's -- any text's -- interpretive possibilities are always manifold…"[1] Whether a researcher is revealing how many times the word "love" is used in Shakespeare's sonnets or deciphering the context of the word "Pope" in the Vatican's infamous *Index of Prohibited Books*, one can spend hours experimenting with Voyant Tools (http://voyant-tools.org/), a text analysis tool through which the written word can be understood in new ways.

What is Voyant Tools?

Voyant Tools is a free, versatile suite of web-based, text analysis and visualization tools created by Stéfan Sinclair, Geoffrey Rockwell, and their project team (http://docs.voyant-tools.org/about/). Researchers can use Voyant Tools to analyze a variety of digital texts, which can be uploaded, retrieved from a website, or copied directly into the "Add Texts" field on the Voyant Tools homepage. Texts can be uploaded and analyzed individually or multiple texts, constituting a whole corpus, can be uploaded and analyzed simultaneously. Advanced upload options available on the homepage allow users to upload zip files and RSS feeds, XML, and TEI documents. Users can also begin experimenting with Voyant Tools by using the preloaded texts on its website.

Why Voyant Tools?

Jewell and Zillig write that, arguably, "most text analysis tools are not designed for average humanities scholars" and, typically, when these scholars use digital humanities tools, "they are confronted with something designed for specialists in linguists or digital humanities."[2] Fortunately, these complaints regarding ease of use are generally unfounded with Voyant Tools. The best feature of Voyant Tools is its user-friendliness, evidenced through its extensive documentation, simple user interface, and an ability to export data.

The Voyant Tools Documentation website (http://docs.voyant-tools.org/) contains a multimedia explanation of this resource for those seeking more information. Containing text, screenshots, and screencast tutorials (all under four minutes in length), the Documentation site makes configuring and using Voyant Tools even more streamlined for both the basic and more advanced user.

Of Voyant Tools' many features, the most attractive is the simple interface. This quality is exhibited in the single data-entry field on the homepage as well as the panels on the data analysis dashboard. Each panel contains a different tool useful for text analysis (eg. Cirrus, a word cloud generator) and which can be configured according to user preference. Information such as word frequencies and trends can be retrieved, allowing the user to explore statistical information.

Complementing the inherent user-friendliness of this dashboard is the ability to export data. Users can create a persistent link that they can use to retrieve the complete Voyant Tools dashboard and the corpus they are analyzing at a later time. In this way, no data is lost and the user is not required to upload the same text or customize their Voyant Tools dashboard repeatedly. Individual modules can also be exported and, in some modules, data can be exported as an image, tabular data in plain text, csv, or tab delimited formats. Some tools, like Cirrus, the word cloud generator, even allow the user to embed data in a webpage external to Voyant Tools.

The only limitations of Voyant Tools were the occasional prolonged text-loading time and the challenge of gathering information using some visualization tools (eg. Knots, Lava, and Mandala) configured in the Voyant Skin Builder. Users

wishing to experiment with these tools should do so independently and not while configuring a personalized dashboard with additional text tools in the Skin Builder.

In conclusion, Voyant Tools is a useful and powerful tool employable by both beginner and advanced user. This free and user-friendly resource is a recommended tool for any scholar's text analysis needs, especially when determining the frequency and context of specific words in relation to the larger text. The humanities community should look forward to how Voyant Tools and other text analysis and visualization resources evolve.

Endnotes

[1] Steven E. Jones, *The Emergence of the Digital Humanities* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 60.

[2] Andrew Jewell and Brian L. Pytlik Zillig, "'Counted Out at Last': Text Analysis on the *Willa Cather Archive*," in *The American Literature Scholar in the Digital Age*, ed. Amy E. Earhart and Andrew Jewell (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press and University of Michigan Library, 2011), 172.