Visual Exploration of Edo Period Scrapbooks

Enhancing Discoverability through Information Visualization Application to Digitalized Heritage

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FROM "Devices for thinking about the Past" (Zwicker, 2009)

TOWARD "devices for thinking about the **Digital Archive**"

Saitō Gesshin, *Shinobugusa*, 1843

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Cambridge University Digital Library - (CC BY-NC 3.0)

How can we further scientific engagement with Edo Period Scrapbooks?

Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/ndljp_en/status/1359386626238021634

Interfaces enhance engagement with Digital Arhchives

2015 9.1 | XML | PDF | Print

Generous Interfaces for Digital Cultural Collections

Mitchell Whitelaw <mitchell_dot_whitelaw_at_canberra_dot_edu_dot_au>, University of Canberra, Australia

Abstract

Decades of digitisation have made a wealth of digital cultural material available online. Yet search — the dominant interface to these collections — is incapable of representing this abundance. Search is ungenerous: it withholds information, and demands a query. This paper argues for a more generous alternative: rich, browsable interfaces that reveal the scale and complexity of digital heritage collections. Drawing on related work and precedents from information retrieval and visualisation, as well as critical humanistic approaches to the interface, this paper documents and analyses practical experiments in generous interfaces developed in collaboration with Australian cultural institutions.

Introduction

Imagine yourself outside an art gallery in a far-off city, with a collection you don't know well. You enter the building to find a small, drab lobby with an attendant at a desk. The attendant asks you to enter your query on a small slip of paper. Not knowing the collection, and not seeking anything in particular, you write down something arbitrary, and pass it over. The attendant disappears for a moment before returning with a line of artworks sitting on trolleys. These are paraded, ten at a time, through the lobby. You can submit another query at any time, calling forth more trolleys, but there seems to be no way to explore the gallery beyond this small

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Presentation's Outline:

First Part: Engaging Complexity

1. Defining Edo Period Scrapbooks
2. Edo Period Scrapbooks as Personal Archives
3. The case of *Shinobugusa*

Presentation's Outline:

Second Part: Communicating Complexity

1. Generous interfaces and Information Visualization
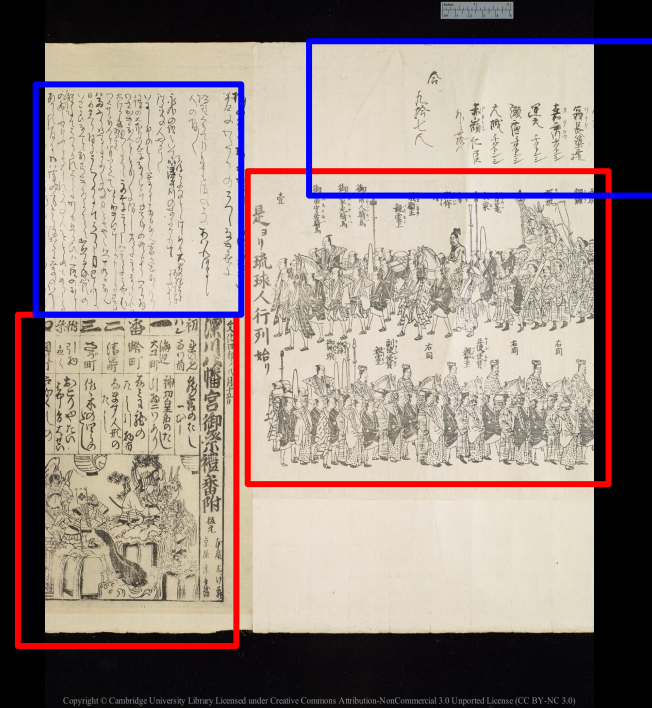2. Visual exploration of *Shinobugusa*: Thumbnails, Map, Timeline

1.1 Defining Scrapbooks: The Textual Production

Retrieved from: Carol Yepes/Moment/GettyImages

1.1 Defining Scrapbooks: The Textual Production

- Collage and assemblage of various materials

- Marginalia and notes

- Think visually

- Personal archives

- Collection of ephemera and the everyday

Saitō Gesshin, *Shinobugusa*, (p. 15), 1843 Images retrieved from: The University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Digital Library - (CC BY-NC 3.0) http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-FJ-01000-00016/1

1.2 Edo Period Scrapbook: A Golden Age of Epehemeras

- Advertising material
- Handbills
- Broadsheets
- Theatre Programmes
- Playbill
- Satirical pamphlet
- Ranking lists (番付)
- Talismanic prints
- Boardgames prints
- Maps

Advertisement of a candle shop, *Fumoto no Chiri,* (p.20), 1828.
Image retrieved from: The University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Digital Library - (CC BY-NC 3.0)
https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/PR-FJ-01000-00012/1

1.2 Edo Period Scrapbooks: Time Capsule form Edo

JONATHAN ZWICKER

Playbills, Ephemera, and the Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Japan

Abstract: In 1815, Shikitei Sanba wrote prefaces to two scrapbooks: one in which he had collected ephemera and broadsheets related to the history of Edo's raconteurs and the other a 16-album collection of playbills. As physical objects, both are deeply suggestive: each is a manuscript comprised entirely of printed matter, a unique object fashioned from mass-produced material. This essay uses these collections to explore the historical imagination in the early decades of the nineteenth century, a time when the theater loomed large as a metaphor for the broader social world and a time when that world came increasingly to be defined by print and commerce.

In 1815, satirist, collector, and theater enthusiast Shikitei Sanba set about putting in order his substantial collection of broadsheets and ephemera. The project would produce one scrapbook (*harikomichō*) devoted to the history of storytelling and a further 16 albums into which Sanba pasted illustrated theater programs. In his manuscript preface to "Otoshibanashi chūkō

1.2 Edo Period Scrapbooks: "The Fear of Effacement"

> Kyōden imagined a different kind of history written from a different archive, and in Kyōden's hands, these other materials of the past—the vulgar, the fictional, the decorative—become not only objects of historical inquiry in their own right to be collected, studied, and archived but more fundamentally become what he calls "evidence" (*shō*) for the construction of a broader and more detailed picture of the past than what was to be found in

1.2 Edo Period Scrapbooks: MATTER!

1. Useful materials to access daily life in Edo.

2. "Documents of the way culture was documented" (Zwicker, 2009)

3. Embodied Media

→ Rethinking ways to access complexity
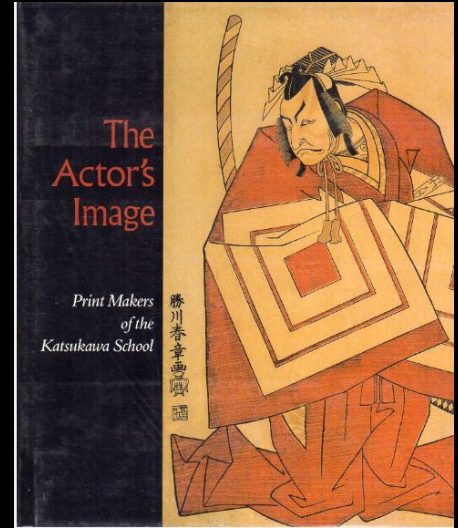
Timoty Clark ed. (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1994)

1.3 *Shinobugusa*: Engaging Complexity

Saitō Gesshin, Shinobugusa, 1843

1.3 *Shinobugusa*: Engaging Complexity

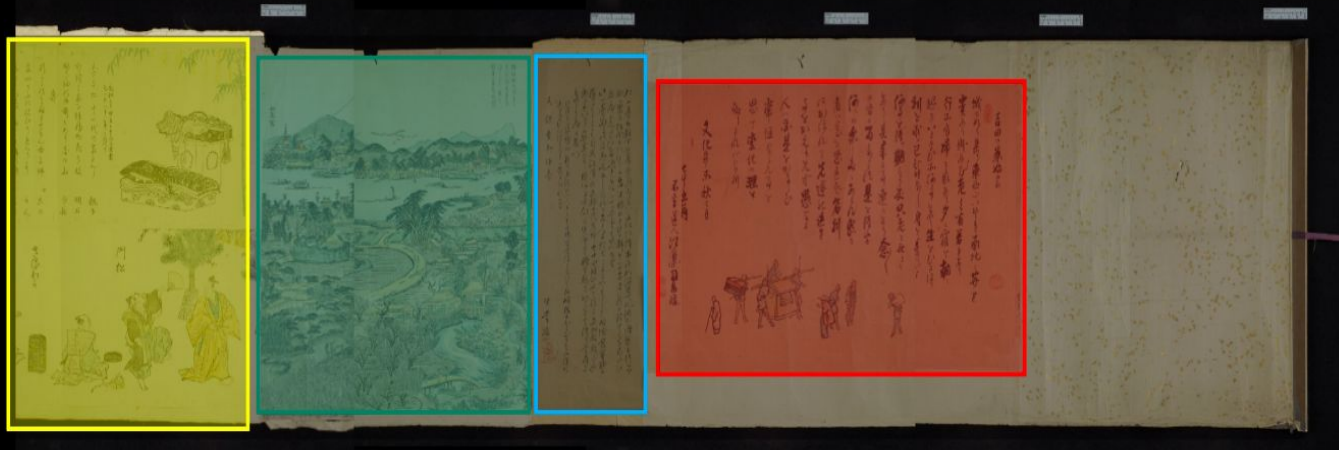**Author:** **Saitō Gesshin (1804-1878)**

Translated Titles: Materials which may help us remember past events
(literal translation: grass of memory)

Date of Creation: 1843 (天保14)

Extent: 1 jiku 軸 Leaf height: 290 mm, width: 5410 mm.

Binding: Kansu-bon 巻子本 (scroll)

1.3 *Shinobugusa*: Engaging Complexity

- 🔴 Shiba Kōkan. 1811. Tsurezure Gusa. 74th dan.
- 🔵 Saitō Gesshin. 1843. Preface of Shinobugusa.
- 🟢 Unknown Artist. Sumida Gawa Spring Landscape. Unkown date.
- 🟡 Nakamura Kanzaburō 11th. 1804. (illustrated by Torii Kyōnaga).
   Playbill and Prologue for the Nakamuraza Kotobuki Kyōgen (plays: Saruwaka, Kadomatsu). Edo: Maruyama.

1.3 *Shinobugusa*: Engaging Complexity

	ITEM	YEAR	TOPIC
1	Tsurezure Gusa - 74 dan	1811	Literature
2	Sumida Gawa Spring Landscape	X	Arts
3	Prologue for the Nakamuraza Kotobuki Kyōgen (plays: Saruwaka, Kadomatsu)	1804	Performing Arts
4	Panflet depicting the Ryūkyan Envoys Parade	1806	Foreingers
5	Playbill of the Fukagawa Hachimangu Matsuri	1807	Performing Arts
6	Prologue for the Morida Kanya Kotobuki Kyōgen (play: Sharira)	1813	Performing Arts
7	Map of the site of a Kanjin Nō by Kanze Ryū	X	Performing Arts
8	5 tickets for entratainments	X	Performing Arts
9	Nō Prolugue	X	Performing Arts
10	List of physicians in Edo	X	Medicine
11	Prologue of Kotobuki Miyako Nishiki	1818	Performing Arts
12	Prologue for the Nakamuraza Kotobuki Kyōgen (plays: Saruwaka, Kadomatsu)	1823	Performing Arts
13	Map and account of the Bunsei 12th Great Fire of Edo	1829	Disaster Account
14	Map and account of the Bunsei 12th Great Fire of Edo	1829	Disaster Account
15	Account of the Burnt places during the 1829 fire // Humorous Writing - about the ho	1829	Disaster Account
16	List of the benefactors of the Bunsei 12th Great Fire of Edo	1829	Disaster Account
17	Route of the portable shrine of Torie Myōjin	1833	Performing Arts
18	Map of the site of a Kanjin Nō by Kanze Ryū	1832	Performing Arts
19	Prologue for the Nakamuraza Kotobuki Kyōgen (plays: Saruwaka, Kadomatsu)	1833	Performing Arts
20	Panflet depicting the Ryūkyan Envoys Parade	1833	Foreingers

TOTAL: 33 Items

Known Publisher: 8

Performing Arts: 16
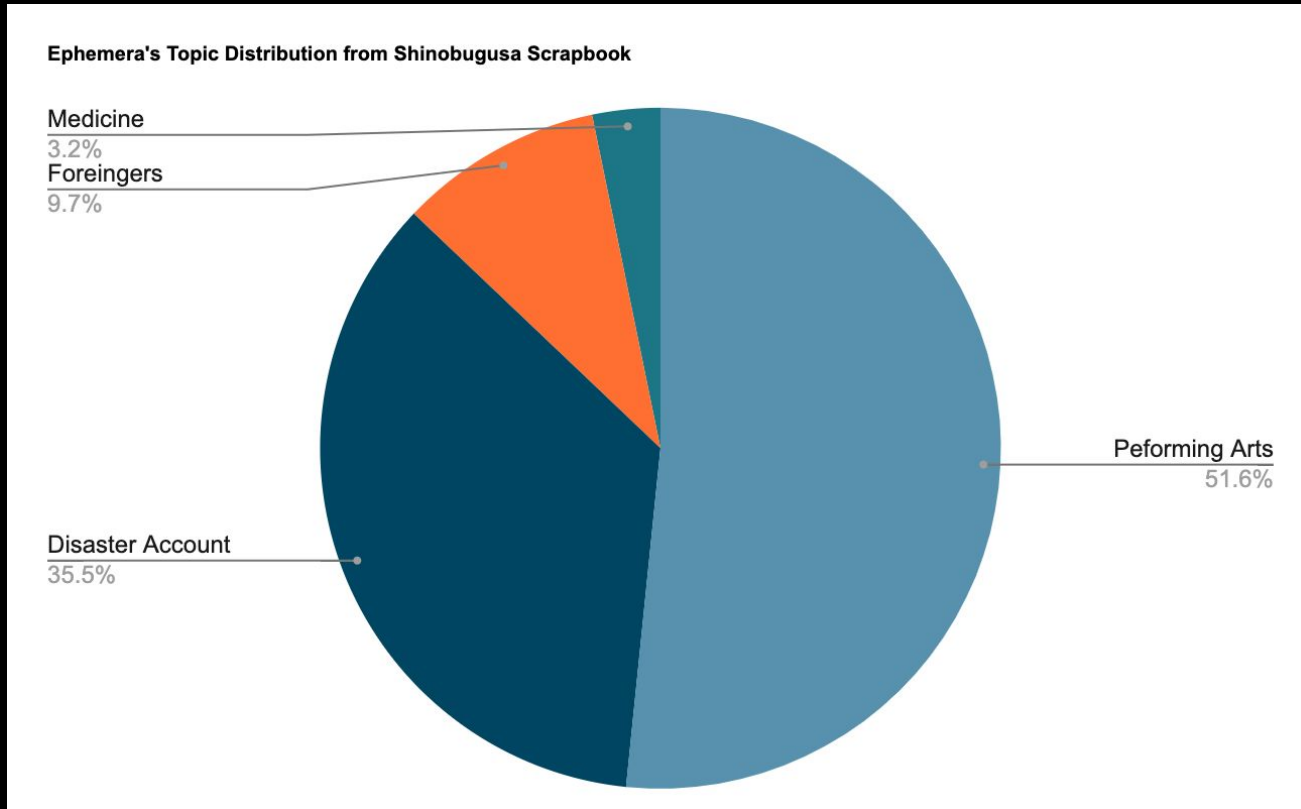Disaster Account: 11
Foreingers: 3
Medicine: 1
Literature: 1
Arts: 1

1.3 *Shinobugusa*: Engaging Complexity

21	Illustration of Various Ryukyuan musical instruments	1833	Foreingers
22	List of the benefactors of the Tenpō 4th year famine	1834	Disaster Account
23	Route of the portable shrine of Dairokuten Jingu	1834	Performing Arts
24	Route of the portable shrine of Kuramae Tennochō Shrine	1834	Performing Arts
25	Route of the portable shrine of Shitaya Inari Shrine	X	Performing Arts
26	Map and account of the Tenpō 5th Great Fire of Edo	1835	Disaster Account
27	Map and account of the Tenpō 5th Great Fire of Edo	1835	Disaster Account
28	List of the benefactors of the Tenpō 5th Great Fire	1835	Disaster Account
29	List of the benefactors of the Tenpō 5th Great Fire	1835	Disaster Account
30	List of Rescue hut's locations after the Tenpō 5th Great Fire	1835	Disaster Account
31	List of charity from the Ryokoku Sakuma Chō after theTenpō 5th Great Fire	1835	Disaster Account
32	Suguroku Board Advertisment of the New Play: "Hitori Tabi's 53 stations"	1840	Performing Arts
33	Celebratory poem for Ichikawa Danjurō 8th	X	Performing Arts

"The aforementioned items are included (Hayashi Nozomu & Peter Kornicki: Early Japanese Books in Cambridge University Library: a Catalogue of the Aston, Satow and Von Siebold Collections)"

Information retrieved: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-FJ-01000-00016/1

1.3 *Shinobugusa*: Engaging Complexity

Ephemera's Topic Distribution from Shinobugusa Scrapbook

Medicine
3.2%

Foreingers
9.7%

Peforming Arts
51.6%

Disaster Account
35.5%

1.3 *Shinobugusa*: Engaging Complexity

List of Rescue hut's locations after the Tenpō 5th Great Fire. 1835

1.3 *Shinobugusa*: Engaging Complexity

Suguroku Board Advertisment of the New Play: "Hitori Tabi's 53 stations" 1840

Saitō Gesshin, Shinobugusa, 1843

Images retrieved from: The University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Digital Library-
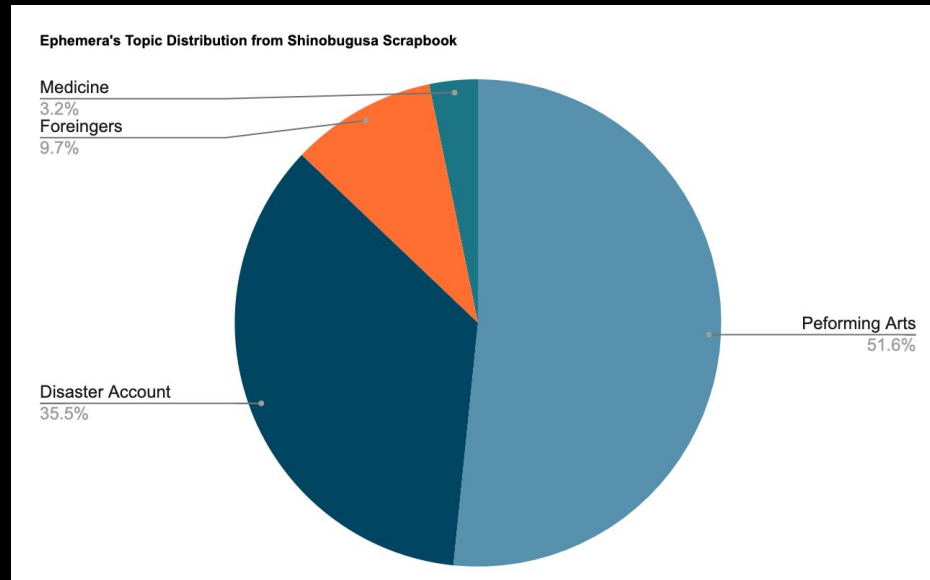
1.3 *Shinobugusa*: Engaging Complexity

Pamphlet depicting the Ryūkyan Envoys Parade. 1806

Saitō Gesshin, Shinobugusa, 1843

Images retrieved from: The University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Digital Library-

http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-FJ-01000-00016/1

1.3 *Shinobugusa*: Engaging Complexity

Tickets for entertainments in Edo.1814 ca.

2.1 *Shinobugusa*: Comunicating Complexity

How can we enhance discoverability of Edo Period Scrapbooks?

Ephemera's Topic Distribution from Shinobugusa Scrapbook

- Medicine 3.2%
- Foreingers 9.7%
- Peforming Arts 51.6%
- Disaster Account 35.5%

2.1 Digital Archives's Interfaces can enhance discoverability !

2015 9.1 | XML | PDF | Print

Generous Interfaces for Digital Cultural Collections

Mitchell Whitelaw <mitchell_dot_whitelaw_at_canberra_dot_edu_dot_au>, University of Canberra, Australia

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Retrieved from: http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/9/1/000205/000205.html

2.1 Generous Interfaces and Information Visualization:

- Digital Archives's interfaces should overcome the physical limits of access to informations.

- Overcoming punctual search engines! (Whitelaw, 2015)

- Provide browsing interfaces → exploratory search!

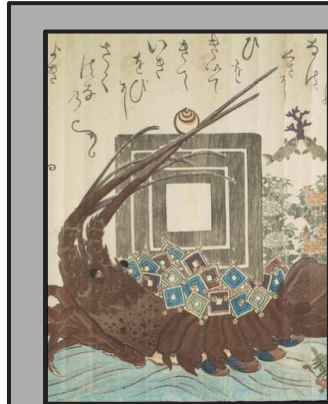- Contamination with Information Visualization! (Mauri & Ciuccarelli, 2015)

THUMBNAILS | MAP | TIMELINE

FILTER | THEATRE | ADD +

2

7

8
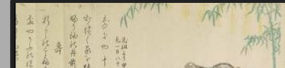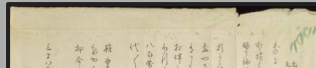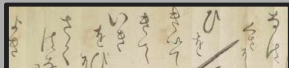
Saitō Gesshin, Shinobugusa, 1843

Images retrieved from: The University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Digital Library - (CC BY-NC 3.0)
http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-FJ-01000-00016/1

2.2 Visualizing *Shinobugusa*: Map - Provide Context

Saitō Gesshin, Shinobugusa, 1843

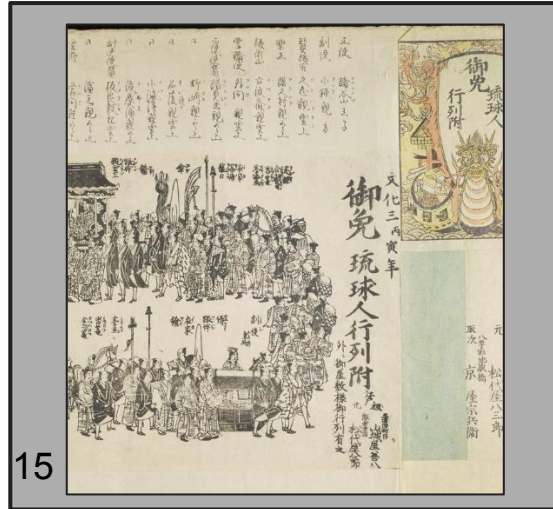Images retrieved from: The University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Digital Library - (CC BY-NC 3.0)
http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-FJ-01000-00016/1

2.3 Visualizing *Shinobugusa*: Timeline - Show Don't Ask

Pamphlet depicting the Ryūkyan Envoys Parade.

15

1806

Saitō Gesshin, Shinobugusa, 1843

Images retrieved from: The University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Digital Library - (CC BY-NC 3.0)
http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-FJ-01000-00016/1

Conclusions:

1. Edo Period Scrapbooks Matter!

2. Scrapbooks as devices for re-thinking to the Digital Archive's interfaces!

ご清聴ありがとうございました。
Thank you for your kind attention!

I am available for any inquire

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