

“Remember me to all”: Transcribing the Alice Millidge fonds in Zooniverse

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Introduction

What is Zooniverse?

- “Zooniverse is the world’s largest and most popular platform for people-powered research.”

Why transcription?

- Many researchers have difficulty reading cursive, and this often deters them from accessing archival records in cursive. Transcription projects like this can make interesting collections more accessible and available for wider use.

Why UML staff in 2020?

- Due to COVID-19, this provided us with a unique experience to create a work-from-home project for libraries’ staff and experiment with the software.

Outcomes

- 1 archivist and 21 volunteers
- 62 pages transcribed = 341 transcription classifications
- Project was completed in 12 working days from November – December 2020, for an average of 28 pages per day
- 1,248 total lines transcribed and reviewed

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Sam Blickhan, Zooniverse; Heather Bidzinski and Mary Horodyski, University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections; Reegan Stoyko; and the wonderful University of Manitoba Libraries’ staff who assisted on this project!

Image 1: Zooniverse Back-End

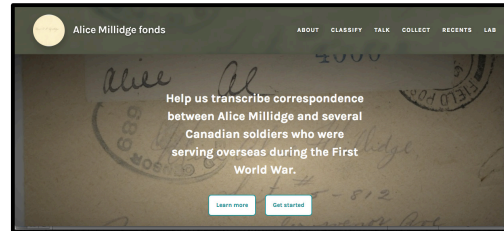
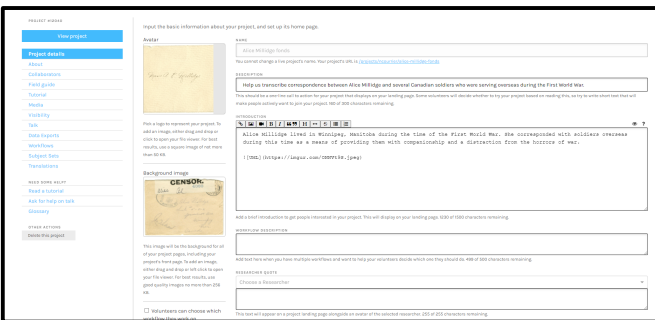


Image 2: Alice Millidge Project Homepage

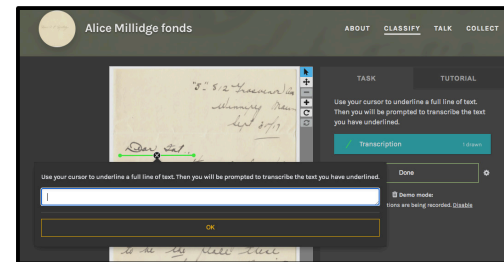


Image 3: Zooniverse Transcription Task

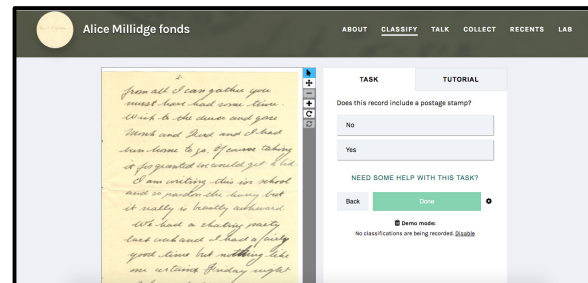


Image 4: Zooniverse Question Task

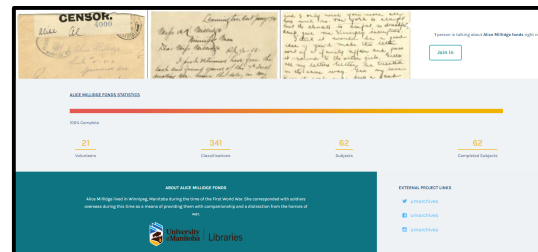


Image 5: Alice Millidge Project Statistics

Conclusions

Zooniverse – Transcription Project

- Zooniverse was found to be user friendly on the front-end for the transcribers and the back-end for the archivist
- If users drew transcription lines that did not line up with the other users, it created a different consensus and took more time to review. It would be useful if the software could populate the lines for the users, and then they just had to transcribe
- It was manageable for one lead researcher with a smaller number of volunteers and pages, but a project would need more support in the back-end if it was a larger and/or public project

Zooniverse – ALICE Software

- Currently, you must submit the metadata manifest to Zooniverse for them to set the project up with ALICE before you start any transcriptions.
- The “retirement” of 5 volunteers per page allowed for most of the lines to have a high consensus
- Difficulty with consensus was due to U.K. town names or WWI terminology that users were not familiar with

Crowdsourcing Transcription Project

- Fast and efficient way to transcribe archival documents
- Users finished very quickly (even with a retirement of 5 transcriptions per page) so find a collection that reflects your users
- Great option for community/university outreach or a work-from-home project

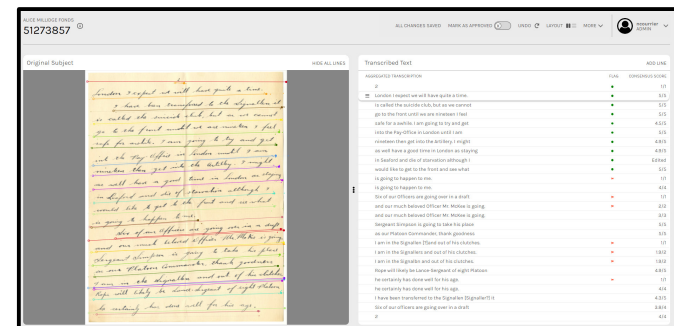


Image 6: ALICE Software