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# Pairing E-Books & Rare Books To Improve Student Research

By: **Greta Browning**

## **Abstract**

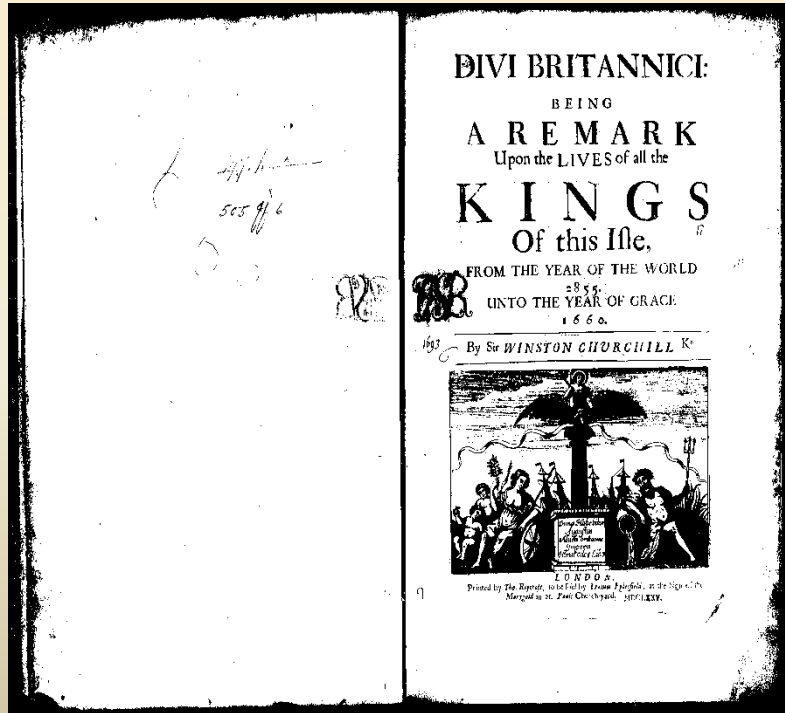
A poster and handout for Tech4Teach Fair, February 5, 2016. Resources include things to consider in Historical Book Research, what databases and e-books offer, and what physical books offer. Also included are suggestions for teaching about Complementary Study of E-books and Rare Books in courses, as well as selected Library Databases and Open-Access Online sources for Historical E-books.

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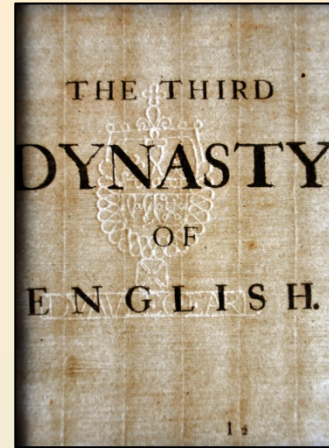
# Pairing E-Books & Rare Books to Improve Student Research

Greta Browning, Special Collections, Belk Library

## What are the differences between these two books?



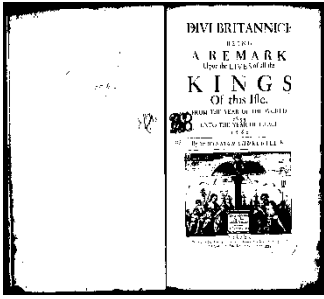
# Ownership Evidence



Paper Watermark  
& Handmade  
Paper Evidence



Relief &  
Intaglio  
Processes  
on the  
Same Page

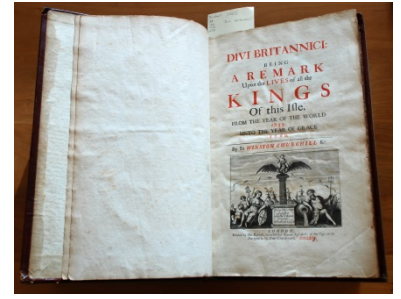


## Pairing E-Books and Rare Books to Improve Student Research

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Tech4Teach Fair, February 5, 2016

### What Databases & E-Books Offer

- Easy access to many texts--no need to leave home to study these
- Portability of texts--easily saved for handouts, presentations, further study
- Searchability of texts (with caution)
- Possibility to examine more than one copy of a text if it is available
- Eliminate wear and tear on originals

### What Physical Books Offer

- First-generation printing
- Paper watermarks, when present
- Provenance evidence (i.e., bookplates, ownership markings)
- Book production evidence in paper, binding, type, illustration
- Marginalia added by past readers or owners

### Things to Consider in Historical Book Research

- E-books offer easy searching, but the words are not always correctly recognized from the original type or printing
- Digital texts in databases such as Early English Books Online or Eighteenth Century Collections Online are third-generation images, so legibility of text is sometimes a problem; images may not have been captured with good detail, when included
- Books of the hand-press era (c. 1450-c. 1800), either as e-books or physical books, are products of their time, with inherent problems. Page order in one book may differ from another, a broken piece of type will skew automated searches, errors in printing may have been corrected later in a print run. These examples, and others of the non-mechanized book trade industry, will affect the source book in a digital database or a physical book available for examination.
- Checking more than one copy of a text is a wise decision!

## Suggestions for Teaching about Complementary Study of E-Books and Rare Books in Courses

1. Create specific assignments that introduce students to using both media. Discrete assignments work better than simply requiring students to use both types of sources in term papers. A smaller assignment exploring the use of e-books and rare books can be part of a scaffolded assignment leading to a term paper.
2. Schedule a Library instruction session in Special Collections to train students how to use historical books and learn what to look for when using this type of source for research. Contact Greta Browning.
3. Schedule a Library instruction session to train students how to use digital surrogate databases. Contact your discipline's Library Subject Specialist or request an instruction session through the Library website.

Subject Specialists <http://library.appstate.edu/about/personnel/subject-specialists>

Request an Instruction Session <http://library.appstate.edu/services/faculty/instruction>

## Selected Library Databases containing Historical E-Books

*Contact a Library Subject Specialist to Learn about More*

African-American Poetry, 1750-1900

America's Historical Imprints, 1639-1900

Early English Books Online, 1473-1700

Eighteenth Century Collections Online, 1700-1799

Making of the Modern World, 1450-1900

Nineteenth Century Collections Online, 1796-1910

Sabin Americana, 1500-1926

## Selected Open-Access Online Sources for Historical E-Books

Hathi Trust Digital Library (<https://www.hathitrust.org/>)

Google Books (<https://books.google.com/>)

Digital Public Library of America ([dp.la](http://dp.la))

Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>)

Rare Book Room ([rarebookroom.org](http://rarebookroom.org))

Biodiversity Heritage Library (<http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/>)

Europeana Collections (<http://www.europeana.eu/portal/>)

## Library Rare Book Collections in Special Collections

*Contact Greta Browning to learn rare book search strategies or for more information*

Appalachian Regional Rare Books (C18-C21) / <http://collections.library.appstate.edu/appalachian>

British Studies, including areas of history, literature, art, religion (C16-C19) / <http://collections.library.appstate.edu/rare/british>

Children's Literature (C19 and C20) / <http://collections.library.appstate.edu/rare/children>

American Literature, specifically Hawthorne and Beat poetry (C19-C21) / <http://collections.library.appstate.edu/rare/american>