Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-72069-4 — Old Books and Digital Publishing: Eighteenth-Century
Collections Online
Stephen H. Gregg
Frontmatter
More Information

Cambridge Elements ≡

Elements in Publishing and Book Culture

edited by

Samantha Rayner

University College London

OLD BOOKS AND DIGITAL PUBLISHING: EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COLLECTIONS ONLINE

Stephen H. Gregg

Bath Spa University

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

Collections Online
Cambridge University Press
Stephen H. Gregg
978-1-108-72069-4 — Old Books and Digital Publishing: Eighteenth-Century
Frontmatter
More Information

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

© Stephen H. Gregg 2020

First published 2020

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Old Books and Digital Publishing: Eighteenth-Century Collections Online

Elements in Publishing and Book Culture

Stephen H. Gregg

Bath Spa University

Author for correspondence: Stephen H. Gregg, s.gregg@bathspa.ac.uk

ABSTRACT: This is a history of Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), a database of more than 180,000 titles. Published by Gale in 2003, it has had an enormous impact on the study of the eighteenth century. Like many commercial digital archives, ECCO's continuing development obscures its precedents. This Element examines its prehistory as first a computer catalogue of eighteenth-century print, and then as a commercial microfilm collection, before moving to the digitisation and development of the interfaces to ECCO, as well as Gale's various partnerships and licensing deals. An essential aspect of this Element is how it explores the sociocultural and technological debates around access to old books from the 1930s to the present: Stephen Gregg demonstrates how these contexts powerfully shape the way ECCO works to this day. This Element's aim is to make us better users and readers of digital archives.

© Stephen H. Gregg 2020

Contents

Timeline

1976	Proposal for an eighteenth-century short title catalogue. Cataloguing on the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue (18thC STC) begins in earnest from around 1978.
1981	British Library signs contract with Research Publications (RPI) to microfilm its eighteenth-century books based on the 18thC STC. Microfilming and production on the collection, called The Eighteenth Century, begins in 1982.
1987	18thC STC cataloguing expanded to include pre-1700 material.
1987–8	Microfilming operation expanded.
1994	The 18thC STC renamed the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC).
1995	RPI becomes Primary Source Media (PSM).
1996	Thomson Learning decides to begin digitising its collections.
1998	PSM, Information Access Company, and Gale Research merge to form Gale Group, part of Thomson Learning.
1998	ProQuest launches Early English Books Online (EEBO).
1999	Text Creation Partnership (TCP) formed.
2000	ECCO digitisation begins.
2001–2	Gale Group becomes Thomson-Gale.
2003–4	Eighteenth Century Collections Online published.
2004–10	TCP schedule for transcribing and publishing ECCO-TCP texts.
2006–9	UK organisation Jisc purchases ECCO files under license.
2007	Thomson Group sells Thomson Learning to private equity firms and it is renamed Cengage Learning. Gale becomes an imprint of Cengage.
2007	Cross-search with EEBO added to interface.

2009	ECCO II publishes more than 46,000 extra titles from scans done between 2003 and 2009. Subject field added. Optical character recognition (OCR) software replaced. ESTC and ECCO metadata enhanced by adding Library of Congress subject headings.
2010	End of microfilming programme.
2010	BiblioLife produces print-on-demand copies of ECCO titles.
2010	18thConnect website launched.
2011	Jisc Historic Books platform launched.
2011	TCP releases *c*.2,200 ECCO-TCP texts.
2014	Jisc Historic Books redesigned and relaunched as Historical Texts.
2014	Gale launches 'Textual Data Analysis' hard drives.
2015	Gale offers an additional ECCO interface option called Artemis.
2016	Artemis renamed Gale Primary Sources.
2019	Gale Digital Scholar Lab (beta) platform launched.
2020	Gale begins digitising a further *c*.90,000 books for future publication as ECCO III.
2020	Original 'stand-alone' ECCO interface scheduled to be turned off.