

English Dialect Dictionary Online

Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898–1905) is the most comprehensive English dialect dictionary ever written, documenting in detail every dialect of English in the British Isles and Ireland, as well as the USA, Canada, South Africa and other colonial regions. Over the past ten years, it has been brought to life digitally as a freely available database resource, *EDD Online*, which provides access to this rich collection of dialect data. This book is a comprehensive user guide to *EDD Online*, showing how to get the most out of this unparalleled resource with step-by-step instructions, illustrated with handy screenshots, and an appendix containing full-colour figures. It also considers dialectological issues from phonetics to pragmatics and how searches can be tailored to specific linguistic concerns, demonstrating the interface's enormous potential to contribute to research in a range of disciplines, from dialectology to fields such as historical linguistics, corpus linguistics, lexicography and sociolinguistics.

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English Dialect Dictionary Online

A New Departure in English Dialectology

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Preface

This book is, first, intended for a general readership invited to share an unrivalled source of information on non-standard English dialects. Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (*EDD*; 1898–1905) is the most comprehensive of its kind ever published. Its newly available digitised version, *EDD Online* (3.0), is a tremendous asset to our knowledge of English dialects if only for reasons of quantity. Yet the main strength of the online version is the unprecedented accessibility of dialect data due to *EDD Online*'s elaborate interface.

This is where, second, professional academics as target readers can especially benefit. Many of the menus, parameters and filters explained and illustrated in this book will enable users to find answers to very specific questions about English dialects.

Given this dual target readership, this book aims to strike a balance in its descriptions of dialectological issues, keeping the technical explanations in Chapters 2–6 as simple and practical as possible, while discussing more challenging considerations in the second half of the book (Chapters 7–9). This bridging of the gap between dialect speakers/amateurs and dialect scholars is, in fact, in line with the legacy that Joseph Wright (1850–1930), both as a person and a scholar, left behind. Having grown up in a lower-class, poverty-stricken family, he was fascinated by studying the language of 'the people' in his later academic work.

My own encounter with the *EDD* and its remarkable compiler was essentially a coincidence. One day in 2002, while working in the reading room of the university library in Innsbruck, I came across a copy of Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*. I had previously known of its existence, but I had never really used it. The six impressive volumes on the shelf awakened my immediate interest, as I had academically been involved in the historical varieties of English for a long time. On closer inspection, the idea started to grow in my mind that these comprehensive volumes had unfairly been neglected and ought to be digitised to be far more readily accessible. Earlier, I had studied some of the nineteenth-century dialect glossaries published by the *English Dialect*

Society. Having come across a large number of these glossaries in reprints stored in the library of the University of Augsburg, Germany, I had found them worth digitising.¹ But now I realised that Wright's *Dictionary* had incorporated many of those glossaries and was so much more substantial and, above all, systematic.

After this, it took some time until the first funded scholarly project on the *EDD* could be started, but at conferences, I frequently gave reports on the planned project and found that my concept fell on fertile ground with the international community of researchers in the field of corpus linguistics, though somewhat less so in the field of dialectology. The first *EDD* project, funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), was carried out from 2006 to 2010, with Alexander Onysko as its manager and myself as director. But the money applied for had been reduced to a problematic minimum. Moreover, I was still burdened with the normal day-to-day academic work as my department's professor of linguistics and medieval English literature. No wonder that this project only created a beta version of the digitised *EDD*, not to be compared with *EDD Online 3.0*, but still most helpful in comparison to the paper version of the *EDD* and obviously used by quite a number of scholars and institutions ever since its publication – for example, by Oxford University Press in their work on the *OED*.

After retiring in 2009, I applied for a new project, *EDD Online*, which, after initial difficulties, once again turned out to be successful. The project was granted a period of up to five years and was accordingly run from April 2011 to March 2016. Since the money granted by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) was again considerably less than what I had applied for, I decided to raise our working capacity by adding myself voluntarily, thus contributing twenty to thirty hours per week. In this way, I could also responsibly share daily decision-making.²

The project of 2011–2016 was, to be exact, a 'TR-project', which means a project pursuing aims and insights that can claim to be transferable in an interdisciplinary way to other fields of research. I trust that this claim has turned out to be justified. Some of the disciplines that may profit from *EDD Online* are dialectology, spoken language studies (orality), English historical linguistics (Late Modern English), lexicography and lexicology, corpus linguistics and computer philology.

Given that the second *EDD*-related Innsbruck project had not included the *Supplement* of the *EDD* and that, moreover, in its interface not all our dreams about an optimal query routine had come true, I applied for a second follow-up

¹ Cf. *English Dialect Society. Publications*. Nos. 1–80. 1873–1896. Kraus Reprint. An example of such reprints is Barnes (1886) (repr. Stevens-Cox 1970).

² The University of Innsbruck officially hired me for four hours per week.

project in 2016, which was granted and kept me and four team members busy for another eighteen months over 2017 and 2018, until October 2018. This third *EDD*-related project has not only enabled us to integrate the nearly 8,000 entries of the *Supplement* in our database but has also significantly enlarged and improved the potential of the interface, mainly in terms of correcting mistakes and quantifying query results. The details of what the *Supplement* has added will be discussed in their respective contexts below.

I am obliged to the Austrian Science Fund for the credit always given to my work and for having supported this project. My further thanks, being many, deserve acknowledgements in a section of their own.

Acknowledgements

Since *EDD Online 2.0* and *3.0* were follow-up projects, I am very much obliged to the work of the team of the previous Innsbruck project *SPEED* (*Spoken English in Early Dialects: 2006–2010*; *EDD Online 1.0*, for short), directed by myself and managed by Dr Alexander Onysko, supported by Dr Reinhard Heuberger, Mag. Christof Praxmarer, Mag. Christian Peer and the programmer Raphael Unterweger, who all did an excellent job. In hindsight, it is clear why the many problems involved could not all be solved. Now, with reference to *EDD Online 2.0* and *3.0* (2011–2018), it is more than routine for me, as both director and project manager, to express my thanks to all the collaborators of the first follow-up project for their help: Dr Emil Chamson, Stefan Giuliani and Christian Stenico as short-term members of the team, Daniela Jänsch, Anna-Maria Waldner and Regina Seiwald for their help over longer periods (more than a year). Mag. Andrea Krapf has been a team member over the project's full period of five years, and also in *EDD Online 3.0*. I am very much obliged to all of them, but particularly to Christian, Anna-Maria and Regina for their ever-industrious as well as intelligent and innovative cooperation. Andrea, as my 'right hand', has always been irreplaceable through the precision of her work and her sharp and critical mind. Whenever we tried to work out an optimal correction mode, improved our tagging system or wrote a new formula for XQuery, she was an ideally competent discussion partner, and in the final phase, she developed a particular expertise in creating complex XQuery formulas. Without her, the project would not have been finished in time.

Having participated in the daily routine myself, I cannot but sum up our teamwork with a feeling of deep contentment and gratitude. Somehow the project seems to have attracted only really good and pleasant juniors. In our practically daily tea and coffee breaks, we had wonderfully inspiring talks and I, as the senior member of the round, indulged in keeping in touch with what's going on in the minds of present-day 25- to 45-year-olds.

Raphael Unterweger of the DEA (Digitalisierung und elektronische Archivierung, University Library, Innsbruck), the programmer of our first

project *SPEED* (Spoken English in Early Dialects; now *EDD Online 1.0*), has, in *EDD Online 2.0*, been occasionally available as an adviser whenever we needed him. At Trier (Germany), Dr Thomas Burch, of the Centre of Excellence at the university, accompanied our initial work as a most important first coach, also encouraging the corrective second typing of the whole Dictionary by a Chinese firm (thanks also to Dr Tao in Trier). Dr Hans-Werner Bartz, first in Trier and later at the German Academy in Mainz, supervised our work during the first two years of the project by regularly sending memos of mistakes and inconsistencies/bugs in our data. A great many thanks go to all these colleagues and helpers for supporting our work in its initial phase.

In the project's second phase, when we were in need of a programmer *in situ* and 'of our own', we happily found him in the person of Joachim Masser, who has been with us since summer 2013, accompanying our work with the XML-texts and initiating XPATH/XQUERY as our new database management. I am particularly obliged to Joachim for his cooperative working style, his benevolent attitude towards the project and his patience when confronted with philological issues. Roughly for the last year of the (second) project (April 2015 to March 2016), we fortunately hired – in addition to Joachim – a second programmer, who was mainly responsible for our web design. This was Martin Köll, who was, by his absolute professionalism, alertness and competence, as well as by his friendliness and reliability, an enormous gain for the team. Thanks also go to Professor Emeritus Werner Wegstein of the University of Würzburg for his readiness to help in matters of TEI, the *Text Encoding Initiative*. Following his advice, we assimilated our tagging system to TEI, to align our XML-version to the now leading international standard.

I would also like to express my thanks to the administrative supporters of the University of Innsbruck, in particular, to Rector Professor Tilmann Märk, who allowed the project to have its necessary infrastructure, as well as to my wife, who often had to tolerate my absence from home at times (e.g. on weekends) when alluring mountains suggested 'something better to do'.

As regards the last (i.e. third) phase of the Innsbruck project work on the *EDD* (April 2017 to October 2018), my particular gratitude goes to Mag. Mirjam Hagen, our new team member, for her excellent work of tracing and correcting mistakes. She also kindly and competently helped me to format this book. Finally, I would like to express my thanks to my Innsbruck colleague Dr Leona Cordery, who has proofread the first draft.

Given my advanced age, I have managed to oblige three junior colleagues and friends to take care of *EDD Online (3.0)* in the future, particularly in view of the compatibility of our interface with browsers and the correction of major mistakes. The trio consists of my Innsbruck colleague Dr Reinhard Heuberger and my colleague at the University of Klagenfurt, Professor Alexander

xviii Acknowledgements

Onysko, who were both involved in the earliest phase of the *EDD* projects, as well as Dr Joseph Wang, employee of the Innsbruck University institute of *Digital Humanities*, who will be of help locally in technical matters. I am very grateful to all of them for their readiness to stand in.

MANFRED MARKUS, *February 2019*

Note on the Text

Important note for online users: for the table of contents to pop up in the margin, please click on the blue icon for text markers (in the Adobe PDF-browser).

Users' comments on the *EDD Online* interface are always welcome and will be carefully considered. Please contact manfred.markus@uibk.ac.at