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Crowdsourcing the Early Modern Blogosphere

The blog Anchora recently posted an image from a 1659 translation of *Orbis* to demonstrate "How to Read like a Renaissance Reader". As blogger Adam Hooks explains, the woodcut from a copy in the Folger Shakespeare Library Collections (previously in Wynken de Worde 10 December 2008) shows that "[i]n the Renaissance, reading always demanded writing." (Hooks 23 August 2012) By adding two observations to Hooks' gloss, the print can also help us conceptualize the early modern, and relate the early modern blogosphere to the term's historiography and the era itself. The woodcut features a male reader/writer bent over an inclined work space set on a simple table, sitting in a room surrounded by books and manuscripts and separated from the world outside the window (evidently ignoring a house burning). This image of solitary endeavor fits our modern image of the learned author (Grafton 2011 uses Durer's woodcut *Melancholia* to show the historian's lonely work). The character writes with scissors close at hand, while he fixes his eye elsewhere on an open book. The early modern production of knowledge, the woodcut implies, involved isolated men, copying and transcribing the work of others. This chapter examines recent Anglophone blogs about the early modern world, in order to challenge the first observation, while corroborating the second. It finds an interconnected world that complicates the stereotype of the historian as a great man secluded in his study. But this blogosphere follows the early modern process – what Dror Wahrman has called Print 2.0 – of men and women repeatedly summarizing, cribbing, even cut-and-pasting from one source and one context into another. (Wahrman 2012)

The early modern blogosphere can be defined historically. Blogging practice has roots which parallel the historical development of "the early modern." Conceptualizing both the internet (the roots of blogging) and the "early modern" exploded during the 1960s. ARPANET, the forerunner of the internet, was a project tasked to the Advance Resarch Project Agency (ARPA), which itself began in 1957 as a U.S. Defense Department response to Soviet Sputnik-era technological development. Several of the future internet's chief theoreticians noted the Cold War implications of decentralized communications centers allowed by packet-switching networks developed in the 1960s. (Rosenzweig 2011) In the same Cold War era economist W.W. Rostow laid out his influential "Non-Communist Manifesto" of historical development in 1956, and

published it in 1960. Rostow became the *doyen* of modernization, and he and his followers sought the transition or "take-off" "stage" between traditional and modern national economies. (Rostow 1960) Modernization tackled a slightly different Cold War problem than networked rebuilding after a nuclear conflagration; it asked what routes to development existed for underdeveloped nations which did not necessitate Marxian or Communist stage. And Rostow and others found that the pre-conditions for the "take-off" into self-sustained growth existed earliest in "early modern Europe," beginning with early modern England. While modernization (and its Marxian opponents) was an economic model, in that it centered the take-off itself on massive industrialization in any one country, it focused on the development of scientific thought and political systems as the preconditions.

The term early modern became ensconced in the Anglophone historiographical scene by 1970. Several works in the 1960s applied the term to a broad era after the Middle Ages and it graced numerous collections and texts from 1970. Where before one might name royal houses (the Tudor-Stuart era) or use dates of major wars and treaties (Europe before 1648), from the 1960s British and American texts increasingly turned to "early modern" to signify variously 1300–1700 or 1500–1800. (Starn 2002) Historian Phil Withington finds a road not taken in conceptualizing the 16th century as "early modern Europe" in an 1869 lecture by William Johnson (Cory). (Withington 2010) That the term continued to be otherwise employed sometimes to refer to the first age of humans, more often to refer to a stage in language development (early modern French, or early Modern English after Old English), can be seen in an American university course on "the early modern period," offered the same year as Johnson published his introductory lecture, "the text-book being Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire'"! (Cornell University Register 1869, p. 62) After noting the phrase's isolated Victorian antecedents, Withington shows how 20th-century Anglo-American historians drew from German social theory to conceptualize the early modern. He points to repeated uses of the phrase in *Economic History Review*, between those of J.H. Clapham in 1913 and of John U. Nef in 1942. These economic historians focused on changing modes of thought as on statistical evidence, and shared concerns of later social historians. That said, between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s the phrase increasingly graced textbook, essay collection, and even monograph title pages.

Outside the Anglophone world, the early modern was embraced less eagerly. German-language academics at first resisted adopting *frühe Neuzeit*, while the French- (and Spanish-) language ones remain committed to *histoire moderne* as a broad designation, and the *ancien régime* society of the earlier part of that broad periodization. *Frühe Neuzeit* has been adopted increasingly in the 1990s and 2000s (confusingly, *neuere Geschichte* can also refer to the era from the 16th

century onwards), while *début des temps modernes* has seen a steady increase in use since the 1880s (although the latter mainly refers to the end point of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the early modern). (Starn 2002)

But, in the Anglophone world, the early modern signaled the triumph of German social theory – Marxian, Weberian, and especially Tönniesian (Withington 2010 points to the influence of Werner Sombart). Karl Marx's stadial analysis sparked a 1950s debate that was collected and several times reprinted as *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* (Sweezy et al. 1976, etc.). This transition, from the Medieval to the Modern, emphasized the trajectory along what E.P. Thompson labels "the Great Arch": the bourgeois, capitalist, state-society, fully in place by the fourth decade of the 19th century. This narrative focused on material and social changes between the mid-14th and mid-19th centuries. (Rollison 2006; Corrigan and Sayer 1985) In 1974, Perry Anderson even apologized for focusing on the state and ignoring capitalism as *the* story of "the early modern epoch," only to announce that he would, of course, take up capitalism's triumph in another volume. (Anderson 1974, p. 10) Other works of the 1960s and 1970s employing the term include textbooks (Rowen 1960; Rule 1966; etc.) and slightly more theory-laden essay collections (Zemon Davis 1975; Forster and Greene 1970; etc.). The Weberian influence was less overt, but Talcott Parsons' 1930 translation of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904–5, 1920) had an impact beyond the corridors of American sociology departments (especially in its 1958 edition), sparking study of an early modern *Weltanschauung*. (Weber 1958; Tawney 1926; Nelson 1969) By the 1970s, Lawrence Stone and others were heeding the call for tracing the collective mentality of bureaucrats beyond their respective institutions in order to understand "the first modern society." (Stone 1971; Beier Cannadine and Rosenheim 1989) Finally, although Ferdinand Tönnies' first published his distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* in 1887, it was not translated into English until 1940, and only after a new translation and edition was published in 1957 did it become *de rigeur*. (Tönnies 1940, 1957; Nisbet 1966, p. 75; etc.) It influenced historians most dramatically and influentially through Keith Thomas's magisterial *Religion and Decline of Magic* (1971), which sought "knowledge of the mental climate of early modern England," and its relation to "the material environment more generally." (Thomas 1971, p. ix) Thomas's analysis of "decline" shifted from Tönnies' synchronic consideration of "community" and "society" to a diachronic story of *Gesellschaft* succeeding the *Gemeinschaft*. (see Shepard and Withington 2001, pp. 4–5)

How do the Cold War roots of the internet and periodization of stadial theories relate to early modern blogging? First, the internet began as an attempt to navigate and link powerful mainframes more easily. Individual posts are the currency of blogging, but there is a built-in tendency of internet (of search en-

gines, of the hyperlink) to understand them collectively. Second, modernization theorists sought (as did their Marxian counterparts) to show a path from traditional to modern society. Early modernists, particularly historians of early modern England, could trumpet the relevance of their object of study to contemporary passing of traditional society – whether in Turkey, Iran, or Southeast Asia.

Theory, however, quickly evaporated, leaving only the periodization residue. In 1976, Douglass North and Robert Thomas discuss historians' use of "the early modern period," bemoaning the readiness by which historians "widely recognized" 1500 "as the watershed between the medieval world and the modern world," but who blithely also wore "a fashionable tendency to spurn generalizations." (1976, p. 102) A decade later, James Sharpe denies his social history textbook title, *Early Modern England*, signifies anything more than "the decision to write over the period between the mid sixteenth and mid eighteenth centuries," with little overarching theoretical framing. But a breezy initial political narration of the first half of the chosen early modern period ends by proclaiming: "England was changing from a dynamic and unstable situation to an inherently stable one: the days of shaking were at an end." (1987, pp. ix, 31) That is, a revolutionary transition to modernity in the mid-17th century remains a key component of Sharpe's story. By 1999, Euan Cameron is more suspicious of change: "Early modern" is "a quite artificial term," one "born of hindsight." Cameron warns us not to assume "that European culture was travelling towards something called 'modernity.'" Yet, even his framework assumes an arc, a trajectory, during the period: "[a] consumer economy, a free exchange of ideas, toleration, and the rational, unitary state were *beginning* to emerge: it is in this sense that the centuries between 1500 and 1800 formed the 'early modern' period of Europe's history." (Cameron 1999, pp. xvii, xix) If 1500–1800 was *Europe's* early modern, the "early modern" evidently should be dated differently elsewhere; the early modern, then, becomes a stage that all regions go through, not a specific era. As such, this usage is not much different than Rostow's "take-off." Finally, in the 21st century, Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks questions her own title, *Early Modern Europe, 1450–1789*, by noting that historians are simply refining the old Renaissance tripartite schema of antiquity, Middle Ages, and modernity, by splitting the latter in two. Wiesner-Hanks questions modernity itself. She perhaps muddies others' clear trajectory both by adding "peasants workers, women, and various types of minority groups" to the story, as well as expanding the geographic scope to include both a larger Europe (expanding to the East and South) and one "more connected to the rest of the world." Such a move brings into question modernization's "great divergence," supposedly centered on European industry, centralized nation-states, and expansion of rights and toleration. But the term and the period continue to lure. Even while

Wiesner-Hanks ends her study by noting "the centuries covered … were not *just* a prelude to modernity," her phrasing admits that they were at least that. (2006, pp. 4–5, 477, my emphasis)

The past few decades, which saw the term early modern triumph even as its theoretical meaning withered, are also the pre-history of blogging. For decades after packet-switching allowed the internet to become a reality and after one theoretician hypothesized (and named) the hyperlink in 1965, a decentralized network of mainframe computers – of cloud computing, of blogging – remained a promise only. Instead, historians embraced not the network but the standalone computer. In the 1980s, each historian used his or her Apple, Kaypro, or IBM AT as a tool to write and store/organized large amounts of personal research. Only in the 1990s did historians become networked and linked first to discussion and then to research databases through search engines. By the end of the 1990s, weblogs (a term coined by 1997) or ezines had been created to provide commentary on the expanding world of online communication. In 1999, the commercial software, Blogger, offered the first, quick entrée into blog creation. By 2004, blogging had gone mainstream, and humanities specialists in history, literature, art, and philosophy took up the new form of communication. Just as much of the form and function of early print culture replicated manuscript or scribal culture, so too did blogging take on the form and function early listservs and usenets or those of even earlier print newsletters (CFPs, source comments, library research queries – even time sharing on 1970s mainframes was a form of "ancestral cloud computing"). (Poyntz 2010, p. 37; Kovarik 2011; McPhee 2013, p. 52) If some blogging functions have long existed, some characteristics of the technology are unique. A minimal definition embracing most blogs would include: dated, discrete postings; postings ordered by date with most recent on top (reverse); a way for readers to comment on postings; and, often, allowing both tagging and searching within the blog. Academic bloggers took up the practice, according to Sara Kjellberg's thoughtful study, for a variety of reasons: "disseminating content, expressing opinions, keeping up-to-date and remembering, writing, interacting, and creating relationships." (Kjellberg 2010; Riley 2005) The rest of this chapter plots the metes and bounds of early modern blogs, how they define their subject, and with whom they cross-reference, before returning to the question of how blogging affects our concept of the early modern.

What is an early modern history blog? Sharon Howard's Early Modern Commons, an aggregator for blogs covering 1500–1800, lists some 220 active blogs, of which "early modern" is part of the blog title for over twenty (including my own earlymodernengland). I sampled these blogs first by simply searching for blogs with "early modern" in the title or subtitle, and then adding to the list those that are referenced elsewhere. I separated out (based on links from other blogs and subject) the main blogs, from blogs mainly about the early modern,

blogs occasionally about early modern, semi-blogs, and moribund blogs. As I discovered more blogs and noted their respective blogrolls (lists of other blogs regularly consulted), I demoted some blogs and promoted others into the "main" category. Ultimately, I selected over fifty active (having posted in the last six months) early modern blogs (twenty main blogs, and thirty others, only a couple of which were not also listed on Howard's master blogroll). While this selection process is somewhat idiosyncratic (my own interests in English history predominate), it provides a reasonable cross-section of the main trends. Besides Early Modern Commons, there are two other meta-sites for early modern blogging. The Broadside tracks and aggregates the latest blogging and news about history shared by historians using Twitter. And Carnivalesque, began in September 2004 as a carnival of early modernists, and now alternates monthly between ancient/medieval and early modern. (Blog carnivals are posts masquerading as online magazines whereby a blogger in the field is given editorship to select, describe, and link posts from other blogs for that month's "issue.") I examined but did not include blogs only occasionally about early modern subjects, moribund blogs (with no posts for the past year), or semi-blogs – peer-reviewed journals or online newsletters (listing calls for papers, etc., with no commentary) in blog-format, that is to say, reverse chronological posting with some sort of archiving of old posts – in the sample. Excluding blogs which have ceased posting, while an obvious criteria for any cross-section of current early modern blogging, does skew the longitudinal history of the early modern blogosphere. (Blogging the Renaissance, for example, housed lively debates from its inception in 2006, but it has not posted since November 2011.) Yet the many existing blogs allow an outline of the early modern blogging narrative.

So, what is the history of the early modern blog? From a sample of fifty blogs, forty percent (20) were formed and began posting in the last two years, 2011–2012. Eighty percent (40) have been founded since 2007; while only eight percent (4) began 2004 and earlier, although Lara E. Eakins has been blogging at TudorHistory.org or its forerunners since 1997.

year	number of blogs
1997, 2001 & 2004	4
2006	6
2007	6
2008	7
2009	4
2010	3
2011	11
2012	9

Blogging about the early modern world, then, is a very recent phenomenon.

We can categorize early modern bloggers by residence, gender, or academic affiliation/employment. United Kingdom bloggers dominate Anglophone blogging. Of those early modern bloggers in my sample whose affiliation or location can be easily identified, roughly two-thirds (20) live in the UK. The rest (11) live in the USA, except for a couple in Australia and one who may reside in Russia. Further research and contact expands this geography of early modern blogging (see below), but the general distribution remains valid. Also, bloggers do not always name themselves. But, blogs which list the creator or maintainer split evenly between male and female. That is, if we assign gender based on the preponderance of men or women listed for those blogs with multiple authors, we find 21 blogs maintained largely by men, and 17 by women. One might speculate as to gendered difference in reasons for blogging and for subjects covered. But certainly the early modern history blogosphere allows us to agree with a recent study of all British bloggers that "women bloggers are alive and well." (Pedersen and Macafee 2007) And most bloggers, perhaps surprisingly, have some sort of academic affiliation. Of the 26 individuals closely associated with the top twenty early modern blogs, eight are English lecturers/professors, seven history readers/professors, four administrators of libraries, laboratories, student development, or digital projects, two independent researchers (and two others just completed history PhDs.), one self-employed writer, one possible undergraduate, and one employed well outside academia. Almost 75 % are employed currently in some way by universities. While this sample probably overstates the proportion of academic early modern bloggers, blogging post-dates post-secondary education expansion in the UK and USA. Thus, the number of bloggers with *no* university experience is probably very low. Current students comprise little of my sample, although many blogs are begun in graduate school. Several bloggers have commented on the uneasy relation between blogging and the demands of paid teaching and research. Relentless time constraints have some bloggers moving towards the Haiku-like compression of Twitter (used, for example, by Early Modern World and Wynken de Worde).

One way to define this early modern blogosphere is to note who follows whom (hyperlinks from one blog to another). If we examine which bloggers are watching which blogs, we see that the early modern blogosphere forms an interlinked group (who, of course, may well never have met each other or even know each other's names). How can we prove this? One might rank blogs based on "hits" or "followers": for example, the military history blog Anno Domini 1672 has 72 followers, the 17th-century historical fiction blog Hoydens & Firebrands has 112. And several blogs offer corresponding Facebook pages with several hundred "likes." But not all blogs allow or share lists of followers. One

very imperfect measure is through blogrolls. Using my sample of some 50 blogs and examining their blogrolls or list of blogs followed, I compiled a list for each of active, early modern blogs followed. These blogrolls are only one measure of who follows whom. Some blogrolls are not updated regularly, and one might follow even subscribe to a blog through an RSS feed without putting it on one's blogroll. Moreover, many top bloggers have abandoned blogrolls in favor of following others through Wordpress or Twitter. Still, blogroll linkage is arguably related to hits, and the result does help us understand a loosely bounded network. The following table ranks blogs by the number of times that they appear in the list or blogroll of other early modern blogs. Again, this does not indicate *all* of the blogs followed or occasionally examined, and, as noted, the top blogs tend not link to other blogs. But it suggests that this group is aware of others in the field, and it corroborates somewhat that this is a field although loosely bounded.

1. Mercurius Politicus 16 links back (# of early modern blogrolls noting site)
2. Wynken de Worde 15 links
3. Early Modern Notes 10 links
4. Early Modern Whale 9 links
5. Early Modern Commons 8 links
6. Renaissance Lit 8 links
7. A Cuppe of Newes 7 links
8. Early Modern Intelligencer 7 links
9. Collation 6 links
10. Early Modern Online Bibliography 5 links
11. Early Modern Post 5 links
12. Edward Vallance 5 links
13. Carnivalesque 4 links
14. Early Modern World 4 links
15. Everything Early Modern Women 4 links

16. Gilbert Mabbott 4 links
17. Investigations of a Dog 4 links
18. anchora 3 links
19. earlymodernengland 3 links
20. Early Modern News Networks 3 links
21. Georgian London 3 links
22. LOL Manuscripts! 3 links
23. "A Trumpet of Sedition" 3 links

Another way of thinking about this group as a network would be to present it spatially. But to portray all of the links between the blogs would be a messy image of overlapping connections. In an earlier draft of this chapter, I opted for an image showing which blogs link in their blogrolls *to a few top blogs*. Blogs were portrayed as circles whose size very roughly corresponded to the number of times they are linked back, and whose spacing was roughly related to their centrality to the network and their subject (with those more historically-centered on the lower left, and those more focused on literature to upper the right). I abandoned this image in part because I could not easily show blogs overlapping (Early Modern Notes should overlap Early Modern Commons and Carnivalesque, because Sharon Howard manages all three). But the web of links did reveal that the early modern blogosphere maps a network, and is a product of Web 2.0 social media less a creation of individuals working in isolation.

More recently, I have revised this sample, by searching for backlinks, using the search term link:[blog url or part of url]. Beginning with blogs most mentioned in blogrolls and then searching for backlinks to 35 of my early modern blog sample, I developed the following ranking. Again, some of the top blogs tend not to link back to others (or, rather, Google does not pick up all backlinks easily). And the following is only for blogs that are solely or mainly about the early modern period (a bibliophile blog that occasionally discusses early modern books and, thus, occasionally refers to one of the blogs below would not be mentioned nor count as a backlink). Some 63 partial or wholly early modern blogs active as of late 2012 are counted.

Ranking based on backlinks using link: (followed by ranking based on blogrolls)	Blog Name	total # links (followed by # links from blogroll top 23)
1. (5)	Early Modern Commons	12 (5)
2. (1)	Mercurius Politicus	10 (6)
3. (2)	Wynken de Worde	10 (5)
4. (6)	Renaissance Lit	9 (6)
5. (10)	Early Modern Online Biblio.	9 (5)
6. (11)	Early Modern Post	8 (6)
7. (3)	Early Modern Notes	8 (5)
8. (7)	A Cuppe of Newes	8 (5)
9. (n.a.)	Enfiliade	8 (2)
10. (4)	Early Modern Whale	7 (6)
11. (18)	Anchora	7 (4)
12. (9)	Collation	7 (3)
13. (n.a.)	Long Eighteenth	7 (2)
14. (12)	Edward Vallance	6 (4)
15. (8)	Early Modern Intelligencer	6 (3)
16. (14)	Early Modern World	6 (3)
17. (13)	Carnivalesque	5 (3)
18. (16)	Gilbert Mabbott	4 (3)
19. (17)	Investigations of a Dog	4 (3)
20. (n.a.)	European Conversion Narratives	4 (3)

This is not a measure of "hits"; it does not count multiple links from the same site; and it does not count the blog linking to itself. Even though this measure is incomplete, however, it corroborates our findings based on blogrolls. And again, this might be represented spatially, as, for example, a circle with 63 nodes along the circumference for the 63 blogs and lines between the linkers and linkees. Only three of the top linked blogs were not also on the top 20 based on blogrolls. That and the number of links to these top blogs from the previously identified top blogs (in brackets) suggests that this is a tightly integrated, if unbounded network. Judging from comments on sites from one blog to another, it is also a relatively virtual one, with little face-to-face contact implied.

Such social interactivity suggested by mapping the early modern blogs is also noted by Christopher Flynn, the creator of a blog edition of Daniel Defoe's *Review* (1704–1713) entry-by-entry. Flynn notes the similarities between the modern blogosphere and the "early bourgeois public sphere, as laid out by [Jürgen] Habermas." Of course, "social" media, and the blogosphere, is not the same as "live people meeting in public places." Even so, Flynn concludes "if anything

resembling the kind of public sphere that existed in London's coffee houses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is possible today, new media is the vehicle that makes it so." (Flynn 2009, pp. 18–19) Of course, both the early modern coffeehouse and newspaper were money-seeking ventures. Habermas is well-attuned to the cash-nexus associated with the public sphere both then and now. Publishers (and grant-funding bodies) now urge authors (and project managers) to engage in blogging as self-promotion, and the occasional early-modern site is unabashedly so. My own blog, earlymodernengland, might appear to have its origins in publisher's dictates, although I began it as a private blog to communicate images and text to my co-author for revisions of our text and sourcebook, and only later made it public, continuing it as a way of promoting use of the book both within my classes and beyond. Now it appears to have a life of its own, fed by my desire to stay current in a field broader than that defined solely by my published research. Few early modern blogs appear to be formed primarily to raise advertising revenue. A similarly named and otherwise useful website, Early Modern England, scours the web for freely available full-text articles to post as links. But it has closed comments, makes little attempt to add its own voice (and, thus, is not included in the blog sample), and seems to exist at least in part for traffic-generated advertising revenue.

Both early modern historians and literary critics blog in roughly equal numbers. And their interests overlap. The top-linked bloggers often discuss the history of the book. Thus, Sarah Werner, who is also associate editor of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, notes that a main focus of her Wynken de Worde blog is "early modern books and culture." Her recent post, "my syllabus is a quarto," which includes a template for turning a word document into a foldable quarto sheet, has been well-referenced and commented upon by both history and English professors. (Werner 10 August 2012) And independent researcher and now civil servant Nick Poyntz, who began Mercurius Politicus while pursuing an MA in early modern history, often posts on London pamphleteers and recently posted on Grub Street newsmen just before the Civil Wars. (Poyntz 28 August 2012) Likewise Early Modern Post blogger, Elizabeth Williamson, began her blog as an outgrowth of PhD research on "the gathering, transmission and preservation of political information, news and intelligence."

Within the network of early modern blogs are several which focus on … networks. Early Modern News Networks, a grant-funded blog, combines interests in both early modern print culture and the emergent public sphere formed by news and correspondence. For example, Early Modern News Network project director Joad Raymond posts on various visualization tools at the Mapping the Republic of Letters website, which defines itself at the center of a network of early modern intellectuals that was "simultaneously an imagined community …, an information network, and a dynamic platform" – a description which

may serve as a model of the post-modern early modern blogosphere. (Raymond 20 June 2012) Well-conceived, but currently less linked is Cultures of Knowledge: An Intellectual Geography of the Seventeenth-Century Republic of Letters, established in 2009 as another grant-funded blog and project seeking "to reconstruct the correspondence networks central to the revolutionary intellectual developments of the early modern period." (see Feola 2012) Likewise, Birkbeck College English instructor Adam Smyth, might be reflecting on his own experience of blogging under the title Renaissance Lit, in his review of a book on the *Stammbuch* or album amicorum of 16th and 17th-century Europe. His "Social networking, early modern style" notes that these friendship albums collected "likes," copied images, and encouraging comments which both inscribed a transnational social network and created textual space, "wherein [the album originator] will see himself as in the Socratic mirror." (Smyth 2012) The parallels of this early modern creation to the modern blogosphere should be obvious. Poyntz, for example, deliberately re-purposed the newsbook title *Mercurius Politicus* as his blog masthead to highlight how cheap and popular mid-17th century newsbooks and pamphlets paralleled current social media. (Poyntz 19 November 2012)

Early modern blogs actively share and discuss research tools and databases. Let me provide four examples. Two English literature professors created Early Modern Online Bibliography blog specifically to promote such discussion with regards to Early English Books Online (EEBO), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), and other online databases. A recent posting about the British Newspaper Archive online, not only test-drove the problems and possibilities of this subscription database, the ensuing discussion pointed to other issues, workarounds, and offered a citation or two. (Shevlin 6 July 2012) The bloggers at the many-headed monster note alternative uses which might be made of the huge Records of Early English Drama series (REED), and provide links where they can be downloaded legally. (Willis 14 August 2012). Jan Smith at Mistris Parliament has posted several descriptions and tests of various digital tools useful for early modern historians (mainly with regards to online catalogs and databases of early modern printed works). And Smyth at Renaissance Lit posted a call for papers, which seeks "contributions that go beyond describing the advantages and shortcomings of … EEBO, ECCO, and the ESTC [English Short Title Catalog] to contemplate how new forms of information produce new ways of thinking." (Smyth 16 August 2012) Of course, these exciting new tools can require enough study that they become the goal instead of the means. Some early modern blogs have veered off into digital humanities and their posts strictly on the historical period have declined. (The Long Eighteenth; etc.)

How does the early modern blogosphere interpret the concept of early modern and the issue of broad periodization? Mainly in the breach. Certainly the

definition of "early modernity" varies from 1450–1700 (Making Publics), to "From The Tudors To Victoria" or 1485–1837 (Early Modern England). While they are quite willing to use the terms early modern, Renaissance, or long 18th century in their blog titles, few posts consider broad periodization. Only a blogger like Keith Livesey, whose blog repeatedly returns to Marxist historians, often overtly considers century long changes. (Livesey 17 July 2011). Jonathan Dresner's excellent and long-running blog on Japanese, Chinese, and Korean history is one of the few to consider "epochal analogies" and the need for "a shorthand to talk about processes," in a post on Renaissance Japan. (Dresner 21 March 2005) One might consider that the pointillist tendency of blog post format works best when discussing the materiality of the past. For example, a post at Earlymodernjohn discusses a trilingual Irish Primer present to Elizabeth I. The image from the c. 1560s primer – with Iryshe on the left, Latten in the middle, and Englishe on the right – makes the use and understanding of this document much more immediate. Yet Michael Witmore's blog Wine Dark Sea, which tends to focus on "the statistical analysis of linguistic features in early modern literary texts," and "the value of counting things," brings us back to the sweeping consideration of epochal shifts in a recent post on a meeting in 2010, when vizualizations based on "categorizing all books from 1600 to 2010 according to Library of Congress subject headings," was shown to "humanities scholars and advocates." The answer to the question "What do people read during a revolution?," based on the years before 1642, 1776, and 1789, appears to be "Old World History." (Witmore and Valenza 11 July 2012) Tim Hitchcock takes on the "headache of big data" which has come to the early modern historian, in part by the millions of words and images now available to the research and blogger. Hitchcock himself has helped bring to our desk and laptops the trial accounts of Old Bailey Proceedings, the prosopographical microhistory possible with London Lives, and the minute geo-referenced comparisons possible with Locating London's Past. But, as he notes, mastering this material can overwhelm; and positivist impetus can lay competing theories a bit shopworn. (Hitchcock 30 January 2012) Moreover, unlike the academy's careful delineation between undergraduate apprentices, graduate journeymen, and the masters of the professoriate, the blogosphere is a meritocracy based on specialist interests ("16th century guide to gossip, fashion, and scandal"; "Costume & Stuff from the English Civil War"), which is apt to find an image more arresting than big data or epochal analysis. In any case, while blog posts might seem to favor the worm's eye rather than the bird's eye, the format – which encourages the hyperlinking/comparison of text and context, with images and even video – remains open to both.

Let's return to the initial image of the early modern writer or copyist. We might begin by noting that the contrast between the community of early modern blogging and more isolated forms of literary production is to some degree a

trope, a modern construction, and should not be overstated. Early modern authors – John Aubrey or even Anthony a Wood, for example – were at the center of their own network of borrowers, copyists, and correspondence. Still, this brief examination of early modern bloggers suggests that this collaborative Web 2.0 arena has been especially successful in contributing to the analysis of what Dror Wahrman has labeled Print 2.0, the era of the late 17th and early 18th centuries in which cheap pamphlets and newspapers made publishing current (especially between the first corantos of the 1620s and the first daily newspaper, *The Daily Courant*, from 1702) and disposable. Bloggers quickly copy ideas and images. But, perhaps the process of copying, adding to, and networking with or following others in the early modern blogosphere is shifting. Noting, following, and even commenting on others, is increasingly finding its way onto Twitter. Still, blogs continue to import ideas from one context to another. Therein lies the potential of blogging as craft. Perhaps an earlier historical culture which highlighted the lone researcher could best focus on the canon of a limited set of works by a limited number of authors or on the set number of national archives (Rankean focus on limited diplomatic exchanges). The emergent historical culture has turned to a vast network of online archives. And, perhaps, the challenges of "the headache of big data" have spawned individual experiments at crowdsourcing the answers. But it will be useful to continue to meditate on the theoretical (and stadial) origins of the early modern as well as the tension between networked community and individual production inherent in the blogging itself.

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Abstract

Was verbindet die Blogosphäre mit der Frühen Neuzeit? Sind beide Zeiten/Räume des „Cut and Paste", des Kopierens, des (Wieder)Lesens und (Wieder)Schreibens?

Mit diesen unorthodoxen Fragen beginnt Newton Key seine Analyse jener *historyblogosphere*, die sich mit der Epoche auseinandersetzt, die wir heute „Frühe Neuzeit" nennen. Er zeigt zunächst die mittlerweile schon wieder historisch gewordene Entstehungszeit frühneuzeitlichen Blogosphäre auf und macht erstaunliche Parallelen zwischen der Entwicklung der Blogosphäre und der Konzeptionalisierung des Begriffes „Frühen Neuzeit" sichtbar. Key differenziert außerdem die verschiedenen Formate und Ziele der von ihm untersuchten Blogs, die sich mit frühneuzeitlichen Themen beschäftigen, und entwirft eine umfassende Szenerie: Welche Blogs gibt es, wie definieren sie ihre Inhalte, wer sind ihre Autor/innen, welchen (akademischen) Hintergrund haben sie, auf wen nehmen sie Bezug, wer verlinkt auf wen? Schließlich kehrt der Autor zu der Frage zurück, wie diese Blogosphäre und das Bloggen überhaupt unser Konzept einer „Frühen Neuzeit" beeinflusst.

Keys Betrachtung von frühneuzeitlichen Blogger/innen suggeriert, dass die gemeinschaftliche Web-2.0-Arena besonders erfolgreich in der Analyse dessen war, was Dror Wahrman mit dem Begriff „Print 2.0" betitelt hat: der Ära des späten 17. und frühen 18. Jahrhunderts, in der billige Flugblätter und Zeitungen Veröffentlichungen breitenwirksam und frei verfügbar machten.