

Searching our sample texts with Search Visualiser: A quick overview

By Gordon Rugg

Background: This article gives a quick overview of how to perform a search with Search Visualiser on the texts on the Search Visualiser website. The sample texts include plays by Shakespeare, archives from the American Civil War official war records, and the first five books of the King James Bible. They're useful for learning how to get the most out of SV for textual analysis and for searching large texts.

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We've put soft copies of several books of the Bible, plus several Shakespeare plays, and some archival material from the American Civil War, onto the SV site.

They're useful for learning how to use Search Visualiser to search for information in large documents – one of the documents on the site is over half a million words long – and to perform textual analysis.

To search this material:

- Go to the main SV site (www.searchvisualiser.com)
- Go to the window that says "Entire web" and select the "Sample texts" option
- Click on "Choose texts" and then select the texts that you want to search.
- Click "Close" (top right corner) to close the text selection window
- Click "More options" so you can tweak the settings to make the images the best size (for big texts, it's usually better to use the "Smaller squares" option and the "Two results per screen" option; for very big texts, the "Tiny squares" and "One result per screen" options work best)
- Enter your keywords
- Press "Search"

(Note: SV lets you treat words as synonyms by separating them with commas (without spaces) and also lets you search for phrases; there's also an option for searching on parts of words, or on complete words.)

When you see something interesting in your results, you can click once on the visualisation to bring up an interactive version, where you can hover over a keyword and see the surrounding text. You can close the interactive document by clicking "Close" in the top right.

If you're having problems working out what you're seeing, imagine that you're seeing a text where someone has gone through with highlighter, highlighting each of your keywords with colour-coding.

You can also search the entire Web, or a specific site on the Web, by going to the "Entire web" option. The "specific site" option is sensitive to the precise phrasing of the url, so you may need to trim off the last part of a url to make it work.

SV can search in a fair range of languages, including Greek and Hebrew, though we haven't finished testing other languages, and we don't make any guarantees about what will happen if you search in other languages or scripts.

Notes

The Search Visualiser is available for online use, free, at:
www.searchvisualiser.com