

Ethics of Datafication:

Google Duplex as a Case Study

Geoffrey Rockwell

Kule Institute for Advanced Study

University of Alberta

geoffrey.rockwell@ualberta.ca

Neon Museum, Las Vegas



Presentation, May 8, 2018

Phone rings

Hair Salon Receptionist: Hello, how can I help you?

Google Duplex: Hi, I'm calling to book a woman's haircut for a client... Um ... I'm looking for something on May 3rd.

HSR: Sure, give me one second.

GD: Mm-hmm.

HSR: Sure, what time are you looking for around?

GD: At 12 pm. ...



zeynep tufekci  @zeynep · May 9, 2018



Google Assistant making calls pretending to be human not only without disclosing that it's a bot, but adding "ummm" and "aaah" to deceive the human on the other end with the room cheering it... horrifying. Silicon Valley is ethically lost, rudderless and has not learned a thing.



335



3.3K

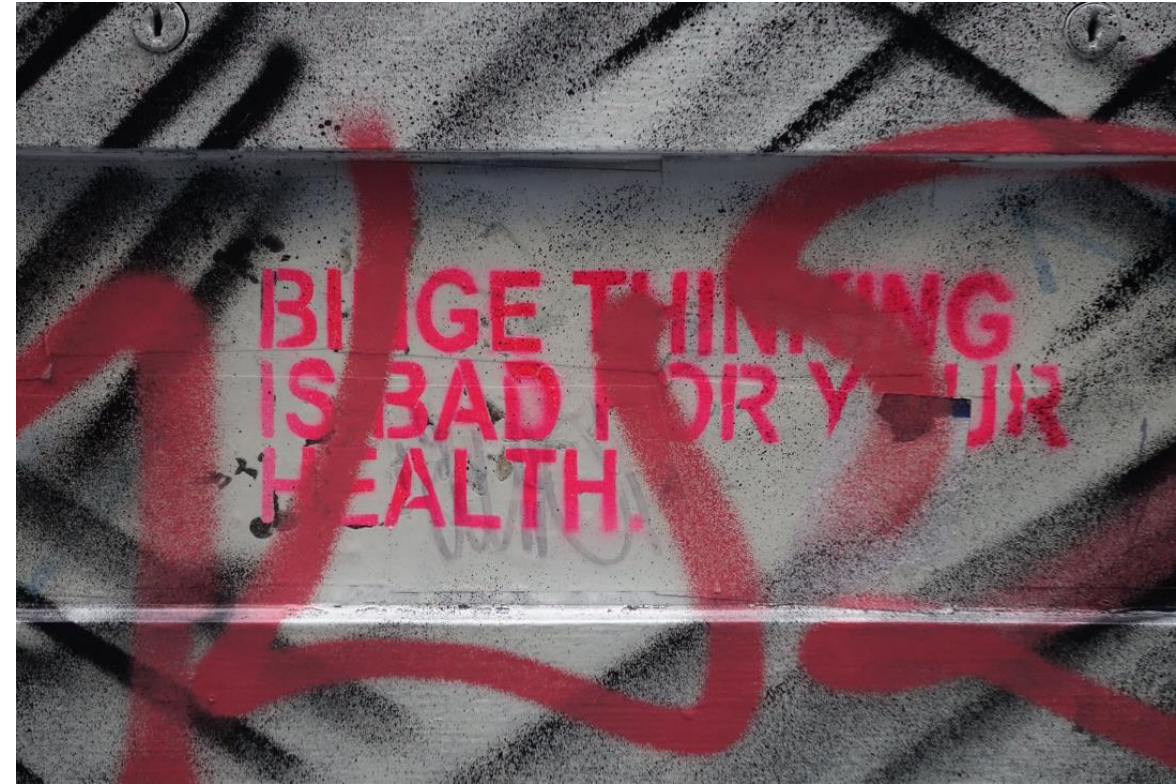


9.9K



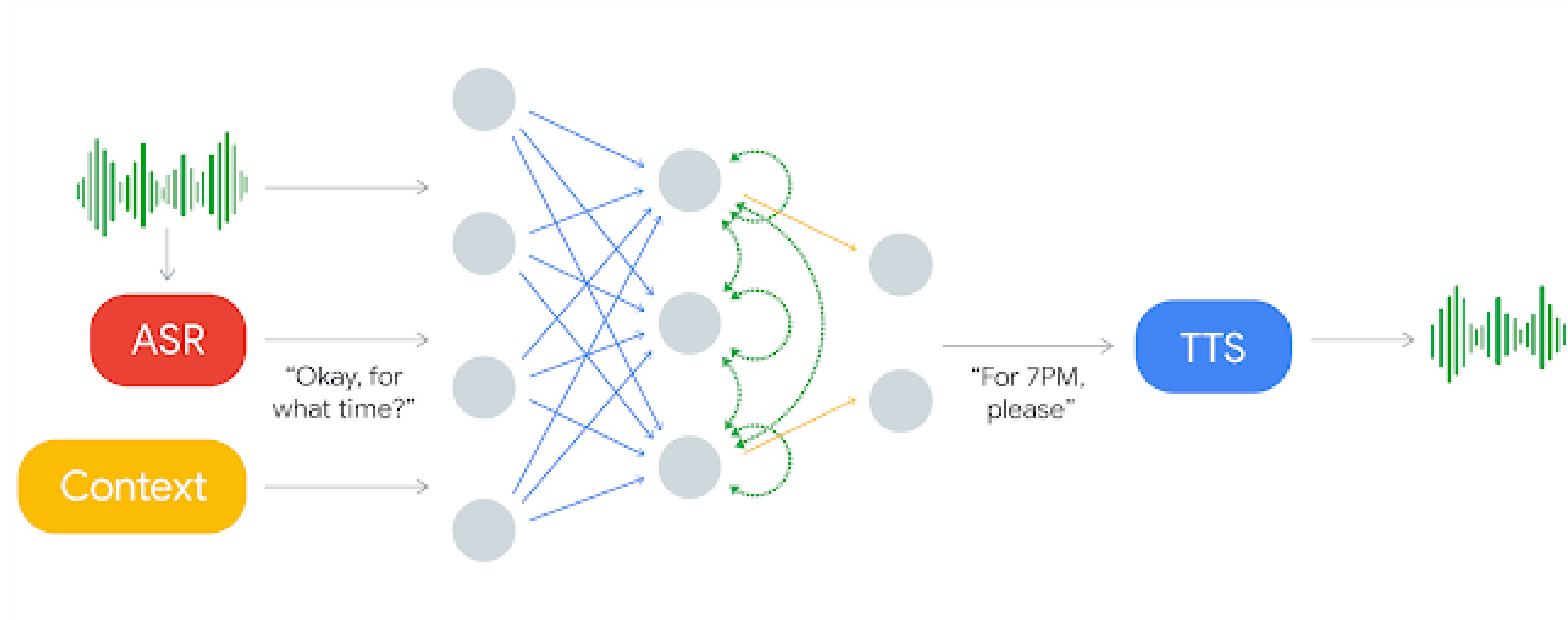
Outline

- Discuss how this issue is **relevant** to us
- Look at some of the **ethical issues** raised
- Ask about AI **principles**
- End with an **ethics of care**

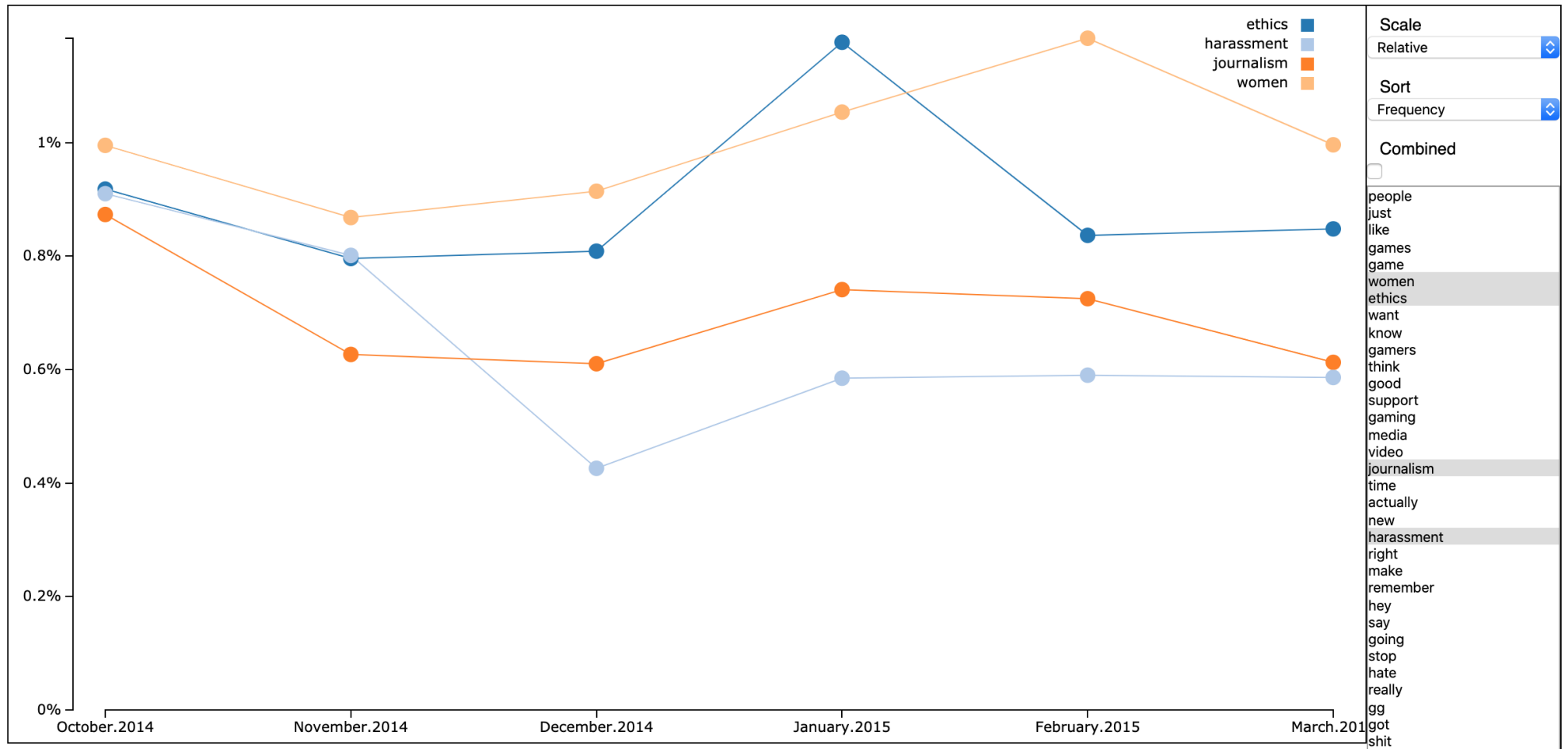


Training on large conversational text corpus

To obtain its high precision, we trained Duplex's RNN on a corpus of anonymized phone conversation data. (Leviathan et. al. May 8, 2018)



#Gamergate Reactions



<https://doi.org/10.7939/DVN/10253>

Information Wants to Be Free, Or Does It?: The Ethics of Datafication

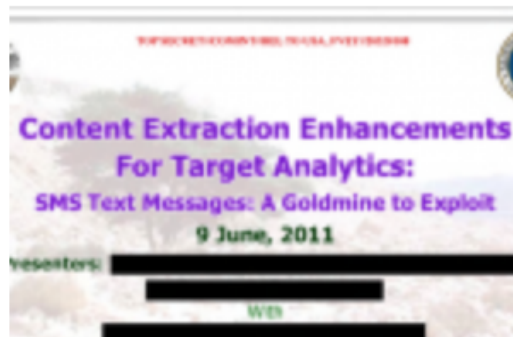
by Geoffrey Rockwell, Bettina Berendt

12-03-2017

PDF

<https://doi.org/10.7273/z1wx-w503>

This essay was peer-reviewed.



"More is not necessarily more. Faster is not necessarily better. Big data is not necessarily better." In the effort to capture and make available data about people, digital humanities scholars must now weigh the decisions of what and what not to share.

<https://doi.org/10.7273/z1wx-w503>

“Yaniv Leviathan, Google Duplex lead, and Matan Kalman, engineering manager on the project, enjoying a meal booked through a call from Duplex.” (Caption to photo on blog)



<https://ai.googleblog.com/2018/05/duplex-ai-system-for-natural-conversation.html>

Google Duplex: An AI System for Accomplishing Real-World Tasks Over the Phone

The Google Duplex technology is built to sound natural, to make the **conversation experience comfortable**. It's important to us that **users and businesses have a good experience with this service**, and **transparency is a key part** of that. We want to be clear about the intent of the call so businesses understand the context. We'll be experimenting with the right approach over the coming months. (Leviathan et al. May 8, 2018)

<https://ai.googleblog.com/2018/05/duplex-ai-system-for-natural-conversation.html>

Don't be evil

**THE AGE OF
SURVEILLANCE
CAPITALISM**

**THE FIGHT FOR A
HUMAN FUTURE
AT THE NEW
FRONTIER OF POWER**

**SHOSHANA
ZUBOFF**

Ethical Position 1: Utilitarianism

Lenses for analyzing situations that provide a context for discussing morality of possible

Bentham, "the greatest amount of good for the greatest number"

Issues:

- Problem of **what is "the good"**? Happiness?
- How is it **measured**?
- How can one develop a **formula** with which to **calculate**?

Ethical Position 2: Deontological Ethics

- Deon – **duty** (that which is binding) + **ology** (study of, discourse, theory)
- About the **rightness of actions** in and of themselves (not consequences)
 - **Principles** of AI
 - Human **rights**
- Can be an **absolutist** framework
- Kant's Categorical Imperative:



< >

Montréal Declaration
Responsible AI_

< / >

Act only in such a way that you would want your actions to become a universal law, applicable to everyone in a similar situation.

Jobin, “AI: The global landscape of ethics guidelines” (2019)

Global convergence

- Transparency
- Justice and Fairness
- Non-Maleficence
- Responsibility
- Privacy

Pierantoni principles for voice interaction robots

- Identity
- Privacy
- Consent
- Human Backup
- Task-Oriented Scope

Google Duplex fails at transparency, identity and consent

Mittelstadt, “Principles alone cannot guarantee ethical AI” (2019)

Compared to medicine, AI development lacks (1) common aims and fiduciary duties, (2) professional history and norms, (3) proven methods to translate principles into practice, and (4) robust legal and professional accountability mechanisms. These differences suggest we should not yet celebrate consensus around high-level principles that hide deep political and normative disagreement. (Mittelstadt 2019)

We can do better!

Why is ethics:

- Seen as way of **restricting development?**
- Treated like a **step in development process?**
- Seen as a **PR smokescreen?**

Why can't ethics:

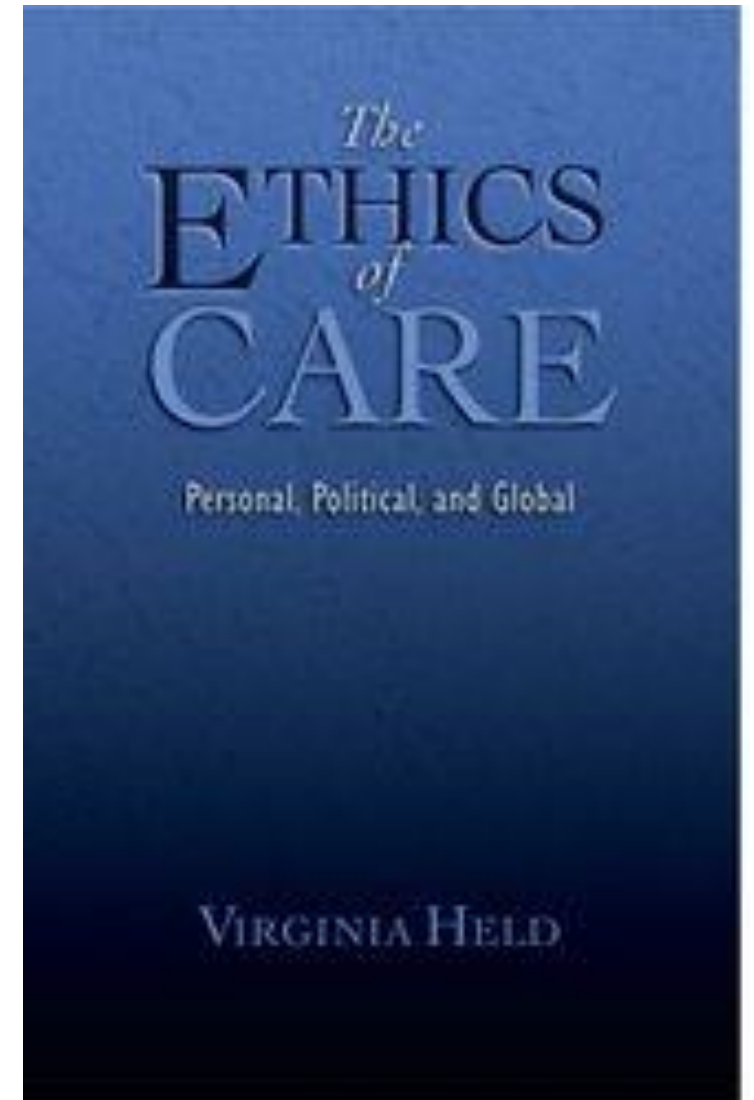
- **Generate** ideas
- Be a dialogue partner
- Make a **difference for good**

Checkbox guidelines must not be the only “instruments” of AI ethics. **A transition is required from a more deontologically oriented, action-restricting ethic based on universal abundance of principles and rules, to a situation-sensitive ethical approach based on virtues** and personality dispositions, knowledge expansions, responsible autonomy and freedom of action. (Hagendorff, “The Ethics of AI Ethics,” 2019, 10)

Ethics of Care

Ethics takes place in relationships

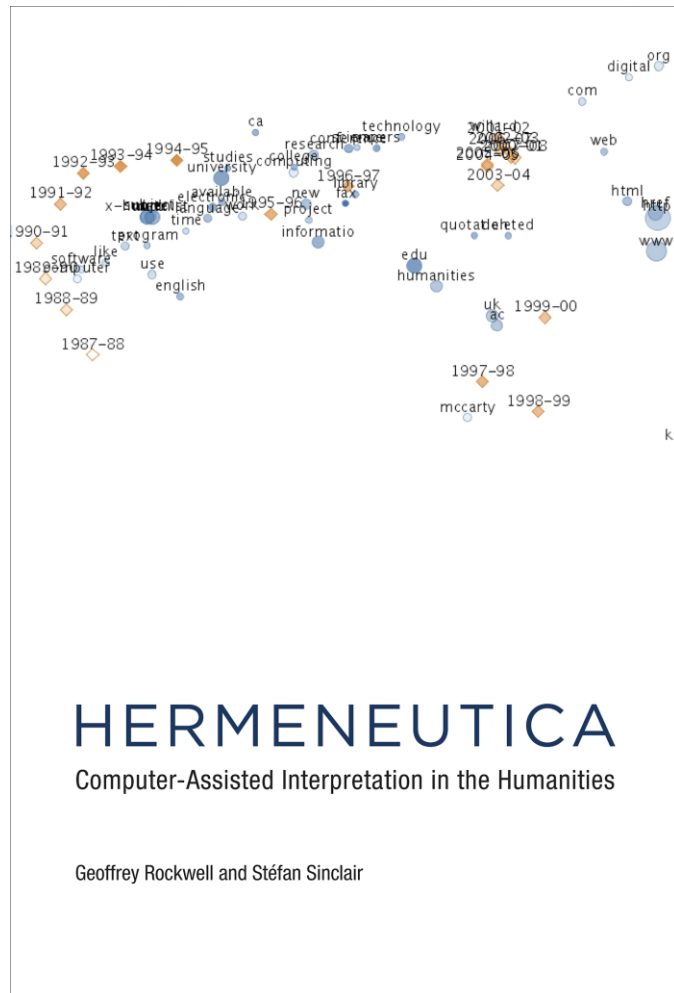
- Who are the **stakeholders**?
- How can we **care for them**?
- What **responsibility for ongoing caring**?



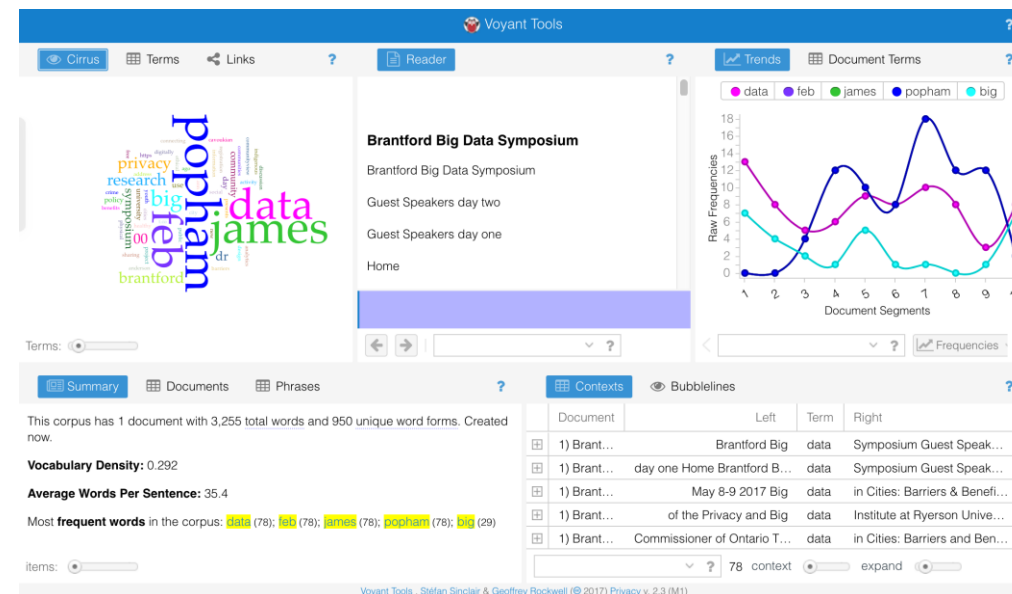
Frankenstein's Castle



Thanks
hermeneuti.ca



voyant-tools.org



Geoffrey Rockwell

geoffrey.rockwell@ualberta.ca

Stéfan Sinclair

stefan.sinclair@mcgill.ca

End