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# UCC

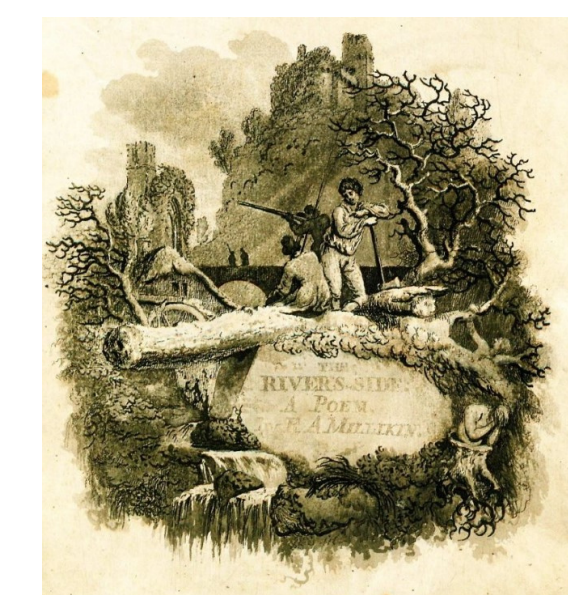
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Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh



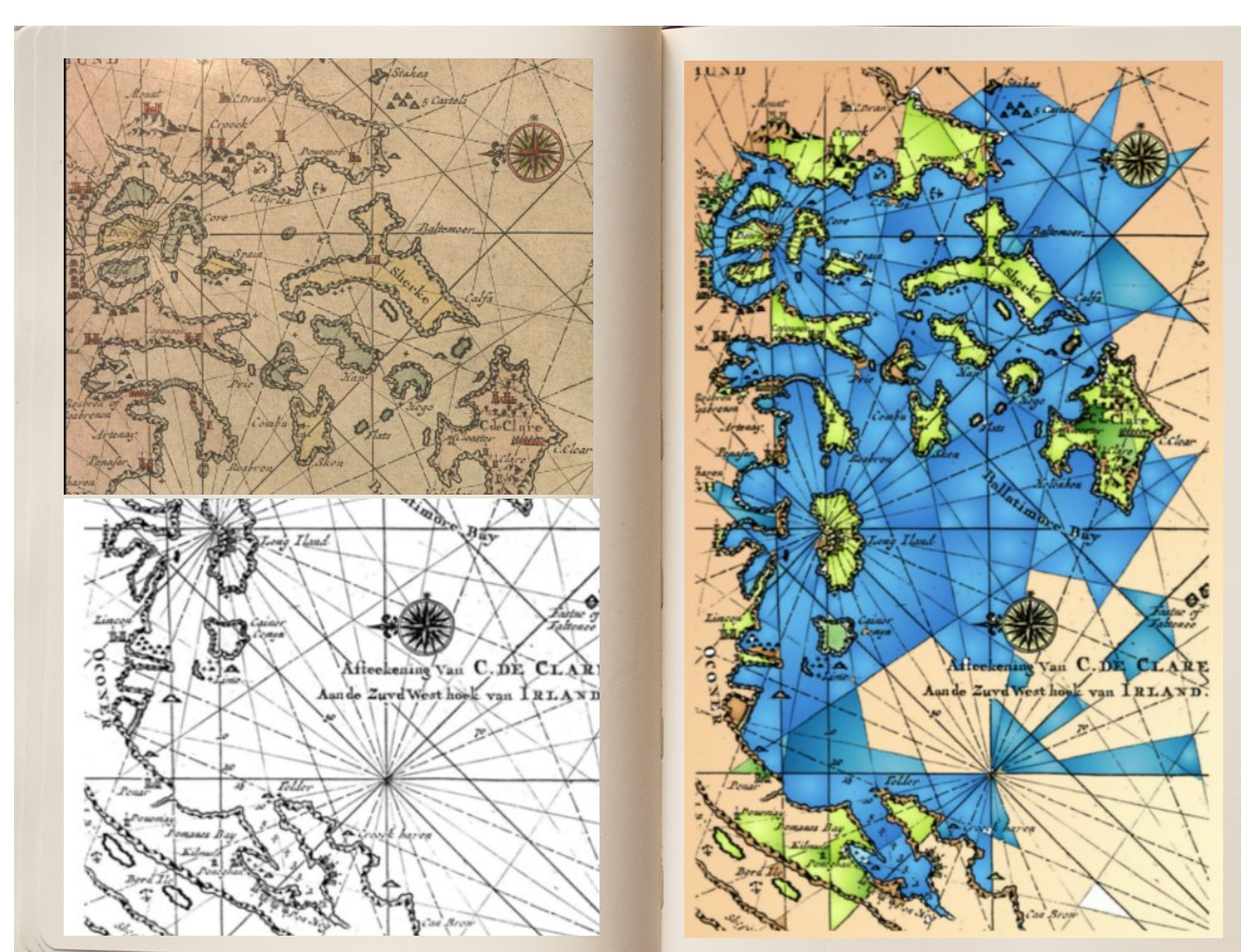
# From Books to Bytes: Transforming Access to the Printed Word in the Digital Age

Special Collections, UCC Library has a rich history of engaging with a wide community through its social media @theriversideUCC, via physical exhibitions, events, seasonal LibGuides & some digitised collections. Each appeals & communicates to different target audience groups research, teaching & learning information & opportunities for UCC Library's unique & distinctive collections (UDCs). However from 2020–2022 when access to physical spaces was not guaranteed & restricted, Special Collections sought both to continue & expand the means of access to its UDCs. This change acknowledges the 'digital first' principle: we approach new opportunities or problems with the assumption that the solution should be as digital as possible. The digital first principle was accelerated during the pandemic transforming access to the printed word in the digital age.

This poster describes & analyses a multi-technological & multi-platformed pilot approach where Special Collections used themed content to partner with other UCC Library sections & international organisations.



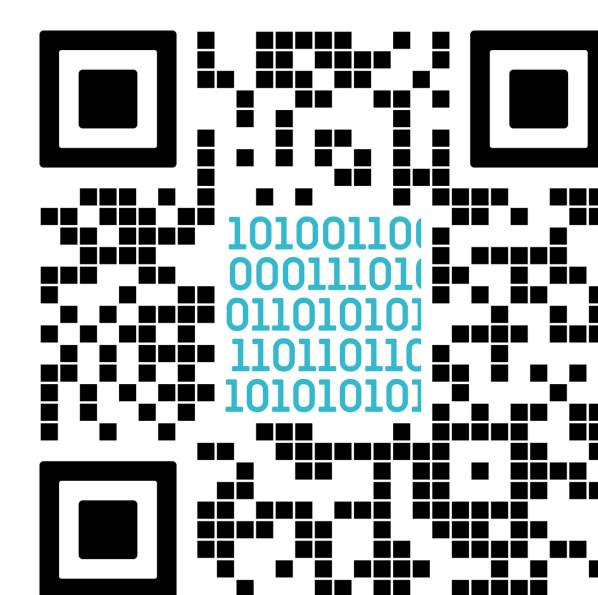
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## Well-being & Play

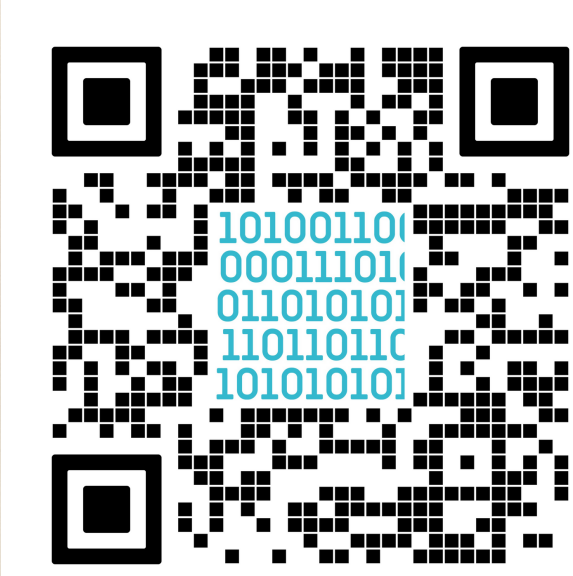
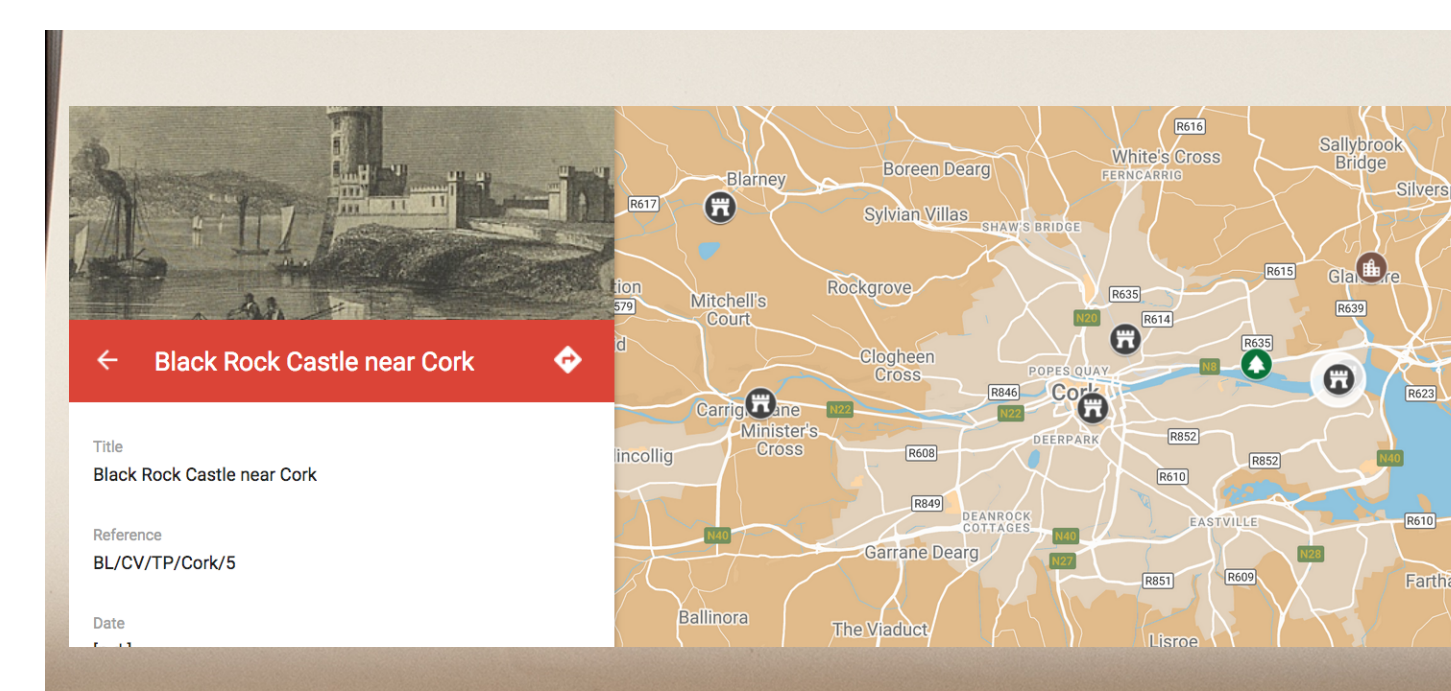
In April 2020 realising the impact of lack of social contact on well-being I developed *Play!* – a series of jigsaws & colouring sheets freely accessible via a device. This page was accessed 65 times the first month it launched and 197 times between April 2020 & April 2022. In February 2022 Special Collections & Archives shared content with #ColorOurCollections the international online colouring festival hosted by New York Academy of Medicine. The resulting colouring book was accessed 122 times in the first four months it was live. Maximising access to well-being resources by partnering with an internationally known provider is key.

Play with *Play!*



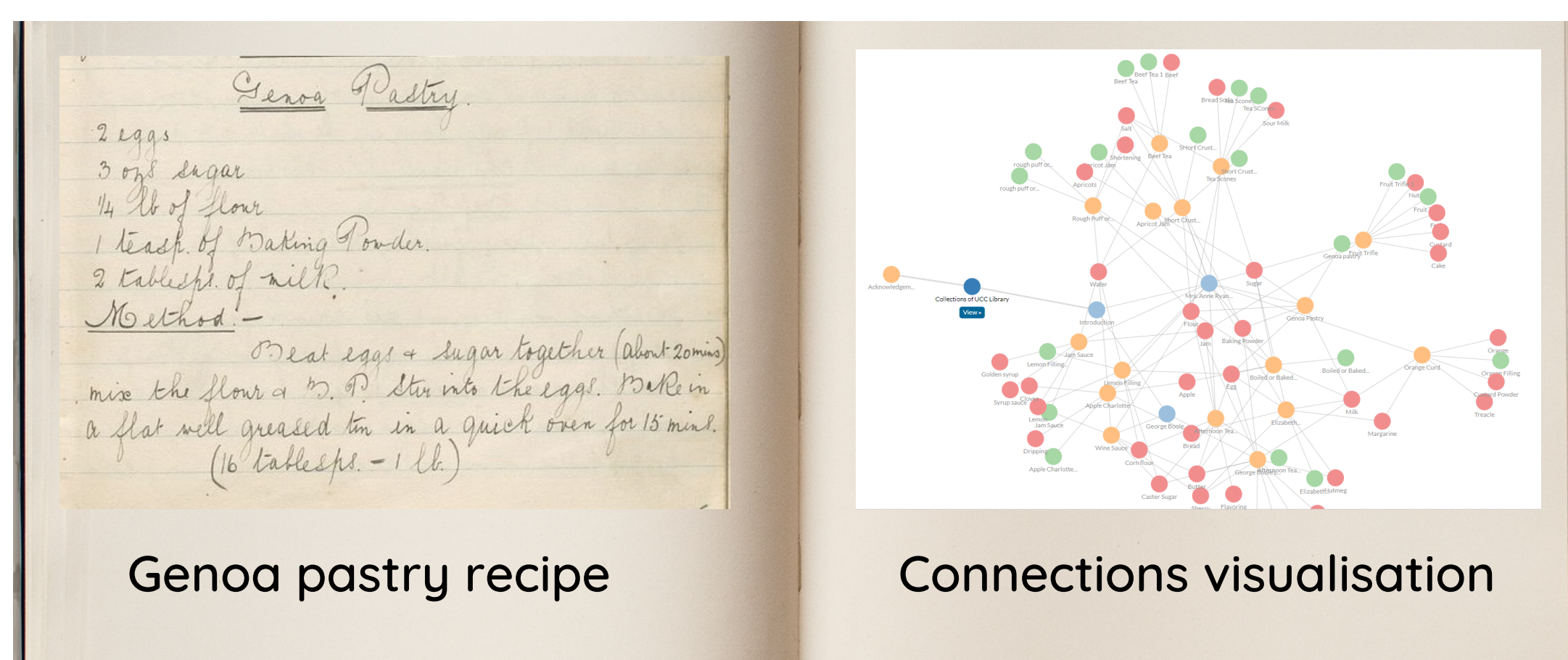
## Historic Prints & Newspapers

Special Collections' team transformed meaningful access to 346 Irish topographical prints from a PDF finding aid to a mapped visualisation. This required standardising descriptive data in one column per information point: reference, title, date, description as well as identifying co-ordinates for the view or building. This proved trickier as some locations had approximate not specific latitude and longitude. New additional data was also created: province, subject type and a link to the original listing. Furthermore specific icons were selected for the type of topographical print e.g harbour or building. Lastly a Google MyMap version drew all the content together and it was embedded in the original Topographical Prints LibGuide. Since published January 2021 the Google MyMap version has been viewed 1500+ times while some of the original prints have been viewed 3 times. The same team subsequently used a similar procedure to create a map of advertisements from 18th century Cork newspapers (1500+ views since December 2021) and used DataWrapper to visualise the content of those advertisements.



Travel  
through  
time!

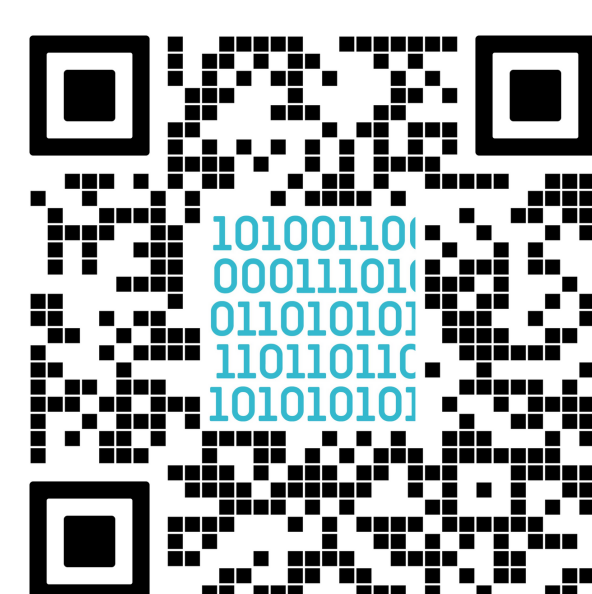
## Recipes



Genoa pastry recipe

Connections visualisation

Special Collections partnered with UCC Library's Digital Learning to use the online open source, web-based publishing platform Scalar to introduce and transcribe recipes in various 18th–19th century historic paper manuscript recipe books. Special Collections provided hands-on workshops to student workers and students on placement on the care, time and skills required to use these recipe books. Digital Learning introduced them to the digital tool. The students selected which recipes to transcribe based on readability and visualised connections that would not be so readily identifiable using the original artifact. While the learning curve for Scalar is steeper than other platforms the result is a digital potentially iterative interpretation of a paper recipe book: *Historical Recipes in the Digital Age*. Subsequently the students blogged reflectively about their learning experiences on *The River-side*: "Reflection on the Use of Scalar" and "Historical Research Skills in Action."



Food or music?  
You choose what  
to discover!

## Manipulating Fragments

Special Collections again partnered with UCC Library's Digital Learning and student workers to 3D scan a selection of objects including parchment fragments using a EinScan-SP desktop scanner. This collected data was used to construct digital 3D models. The resulting scans, though imperfect, serve as an example of what is possible. Not only is the text on the fragment visible so too is the topography of the parchment fragment. 3D scans of these fragile items mean less handling is required but not at the expense of new or ongoing research. This innovative technique gives insight into the creation of manuscripts irrespective of the language of the manuscript fragment.



In the absence of a digital asset management system for UCC Library's Special Collections, selecting these free or open source platforms & technologies has transformed access to the historical manuscript/printed word whether as map, prints, recipe book or fragment. Interaction with the now available resources means acquisition of a digital asset management system for UDC items can no longer be stalled for economic/capacity reasons. In addition, specifically resulting from these pilot projects are two interdisciplinary engagements: one a Digital Humanities' student uses a 17th century map as a primary source to construct a 3D model of early modern Cork for use with UCC's History Department, and the other is expertise gained by Digital Services' staff to 3D scan a medieval chalice for a UCC academic. These examples of digitalising Special Collections are only possible because we have moved beyond printed word alone to use technology or 'byte' to maximise access and transform use for research, teaching & learning within University College Cork and beyond our shores.