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**Huynh, David François, project lead. SIMILE Widgets: Timeline.
Version 2.3. App.**

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bibliography struggles to accommodate the more oblique, yet nonetheless valid, connections to Shakespeare, eliding appropriative work that is not explicit in its deference to a work or the author. The result is an inconsistency whereby scholars may recognize the Shakespearean quality of a work, but the database is unable to accommodate the text under discussion. A search for Derek Walcott, for example, yields twenty-four critical works on Shakespeare's influence on Walcott, yet fails to include the poet's own work, such as "The Branch of the Blue Nile," a poem that is a direct adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra*. Presumably, the question of inclusion—particularly the issue of who gets to decide—is difficult, but nonetheless, it makes the process of finding material that exists outside of traditional definitions of Shakespeare production more challenging.

The *WSB* is not open access; both institutional and individual subscriptions are available. Institutional access facilitates a linking system that allows users to connect directly from the *WSB* to their library's database of full-text essays, or shelf listings for books. Individual access to the *WSB* costs (at the time of writing) \$88 per annum, and does not offer direct access to the archived texts. Overall, the *World Shakespeare Bibliography* is an invaluable resource for scholars of Shakespeare, but there is undoubtedly an emphasis on professional communities, both through its archived material and its intended users.

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Huynh, David François, project lead.
SIMILE Widgets: Timeline. Version 2.3. App.

Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006. Accessed 19 March 2018. simile-widgets.org/timeline.

First designed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology by David François Huynh, version 2.3 of the SIMILE Widgets: Timeline tool is a spin-off of the popular and widely-used widget that was one of many tools originally developed by the Semantic Interoperability of Metadata and Information in unLike Environments (SIMILE) project at MIT. The current version is maintained by a group of open-source programmers. The GitHub repository is maintained by Ted Benson, a programmer for Instabase, and David Karger,

professor of Computer Science and Engineering at MIT. Version 2.3 retains all the major features of the original widget: creating and embedding customized timelines into a digital project or web page, both click-and-drag and scrolling functionality for the timeline tool, editable pop-up bubbles for events, and the ability to batch load a massive number of events from various file formats such as JSON and XML.

The SIMILE Timeline tool is a web widget, an embeddable system that can be placed within a larger project or single web page; it provides developers with a cleanly structured codebase for creating either simple or complex visual representations of a chronological series of events. Because SIMILE Timeline is structured as an Application Programming Interface (API), it requires some familiarity with the basics of programming, particularly JavaScript, and some command line skills; it also requires a web server. Because the two provided themes for the tool are basic, a foundational to advanced knowledge of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) for theming is necessary to present an attractive finished timeline.

The documentation for the SIMILE Timeline has lived in various digital spaces over the past several years, but the most up-to-date documentation is on the SIMILE wiki, which was last updated in 2015. Used in combination with the README file in the GitHub repository and comments within the code, installation is fairly straightforward for those who know enough programming to access their file systems and applications via a command line interface (e.g., Terminal, for Mac users). Creating a simple, no-frills timeline requires the presence of a data file formatted as JSON or XML (as a warning: there is no existing documentation for loading RDF-triples or via a SPARQL query), with the following information structured for each individual timeline event: title, description, start, and end.

There are complex options for describing and displaying information about timeline events. The documentation describes these event attributes and points to examples contained in the source code. For example, to track the chronological publication of Shakespeare's plays alongside the publication of early modern prose romances, the built-in event properties would allow you to assign distinct icon colours for these "instantaneous events" on the timeline. Using either the default round icons or custom images, Shakespeare's plays could be represented with any hexadecimal colour, and prose romances such as Robert Greene's *Pandosto* could be represented by another colour. For events

with a date span, or longer “duration” in the source code, such as the reigns of Queen Elizabeth I and King James I, distinct colours could be used to display two bands spanning from 1558 to 1603, and 1603 to 1625, respectively. There are a handful of settings that should likely always be activated: for example, a timeline start and stop date can be set for each timeline, and therefore our theoretical timeline project could be set to display only the years 1558–1603 (and then be expanded easily in subsequent additions that, for example, could allow the project to track backwards to the medieval prose romances).

The Google Group for SIMILE Timeline sustains a fairly active community, though most of the posts since January 2017 are either inquiries regarding customization or conversations regarding existing and well-known bugs. In addition, the documentation contained in the wiki and commented out in the source code is difficult to navigate, and some of the articles and examples reference broken links. For the advanced programmer, these issues likely would not impede use of the tool, but a beginner will quickly get lost.

SIMILE Timeline is best used as a web widget, a timeline that is part of a larger academic or scholarly project, argument, or archive. The tool has had a history of being incorporated into other content management platforms, such as Drupal and WordPress. However, the WordPress plugin was abandoned three years ago and, as of this review, has not been tested with the most recent release of WordPress (4.9.2). By 2012, the Drupal 7 version of the module had already departed from the SIMILE Timeline codebase, and the Drupal module is now listed as unsupported and abandoned. With that said, Neatline, a mapping and exhibit builder, currently offers a SIMILE Timeline plugin that proves the codebase can be successfully and seamlessly incorporated into a tool and/or platform. This incorporation is both a testament to how useful and far-reaching in influence the SIMILE Timeline tool was (and still is), and an example of how the timeline tool can be incorporated in future projects and/or platforms.

While this tool could be used to create a singular timeline (or collection of timelines), members of the *Early Modern Digital Review* community may be more likely to use it to tell a chronological narrative of a specific historical moment, or to set the context for a digital archive. With that said, the choice of timeline tool depends on the needs of the project. SIMILE Widgets: Timeline will not serve those with short-term needs, those looking for a plug-and-play tool, or those looking to explore the world of data visualization for the first time. In addition, if the project involves representing a narrative while incorporating

archival images, TimelineJS or other options would likely be more appropriate, as they can incorporate images more easily and with visual flair. TimelineJS, and similar tools, will also be the choice for those with beginner programming skills, rapid project development deadlines, or limited access to computing resources (as a gentle reminder: all SIMILE tools require a web server). SIMILE Timeline, however, still remains a fair choice for platform development (see Neatline's success with the SIMILE plugin) or for advanced development teams seeking a well-structured codebase that can be easily extended or enhanced.

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Farmer, Alan B., and Zachary Lesser, creators.

Database of Early English Playbooks. Database.

Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania. Accessed 2 February 2019.
deep.sas.upenn.edu/.

DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks, created by Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, is designed to allow “scholars and students to investigate the publishing, printing, and marketing of English Renaissance drama in ways not possible using any other print or electronic resource.”¹ It is one of my favourite online tools. Unlike *Early English Books Online*, it is accessible anywhere in the world without a costly subscription, and unlike the *English Short Title Catalogue*, which began life as the *Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue*, the records have been corrected and standardized to address variations in spelling and bibliographic practice that are particularly troublesome for the systematic

This review article is dedicated to Peter W. M. Blayney, who encouraged the path it follows. The author wants to thank Stephen Wittek, for his comments, and Alan B. Farmer for dutifully answering questions in a very short time frame. Randa El Khatib went beyond the call of duty in the number of e-mails she wrote to encourage the article.

1. Launch Page, *DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks*, ed. Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, created 2007, deep.sas.upenn.edu. Unless otherwise stated, all electronic resources were last accessed on 2 February 2019.