Covid 19: Digitizing the Pandemic

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Remember Rebuild SK

Introduction

COVID-19 has altered the world in ways that we will be studying and analyzing for years to come. In order to capture these unique and important records, the plethora of information must be stored, categorized, and organized into readily available and accessible data sets.

Zotero is a powerful tool to create these data sets. It can organize, store, and assist in quantifying data. By creating a consistent methodology and cataloging the inventory of data, we can link sources to one another according to topics, concepts, or key words.

Creating a qualitative dataset will enable future researchers to measure the diverse social, political, and cultural impacts of this critical point in our provincial history.

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Objectives

Saskatchewan's COVID-19 ARCHIVE was created to ensure that the historical record of this pandemic will include a wide variety of voices from across civil society. The current archive is a collection of digital and traditional records, ranging from photos, art pieces, interviews and records from community organizations.

We used Zotero to create a searchable database that catalogued over 3000 unique news stories related to the pandemic in Saskatchewan. This involved the creation of a coherent set of tags that was subsequently applied to a large set of primary sources generated by the Saskatoon Inter-Agency Response to Covid-19 (SIRC) from 2020 to 2022

COVID-19 Community Archive

Materials and Methods

Finding, speed reading and skimming thousands of sources:

- Newspaper Articles
- Social Media
- Primary Sources
- Secondary Sources
- Media Releases
- Reports
- Policies/Mandates
- Government Documents
- Grey Literature
- Interviews
- Statistics

APTN   CTV   CBC   Government of Saskatchewan   Facebook   Twitter

Elaboration of a comprehensive set of tags that highlighted important topics included in the news articles, such as:

- Organizations (SUN, PHR, SIRC, etc.)
- Covid-19 terms
- Health terms
- Frontline workers

SASKATOON FOOD BANK & LEARNING CENTRE   PHR PRAIRIE HARM REDUCTION   sun SASKATCHEWAN UNION OF NURSES

Creation of an excel spreadsheet to meticulously avoid repetition amongst tags. It was imperative to keep a well-organized record of the tags to prevent any misclassification of more than 3000 articles.
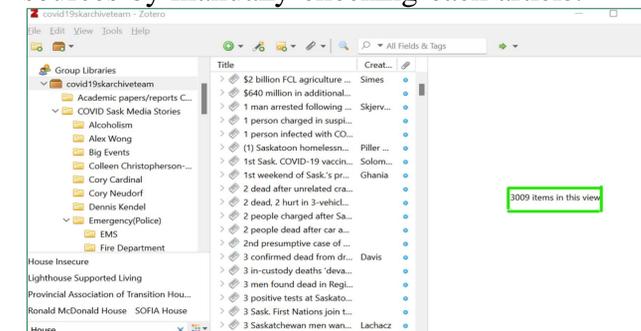
Canadian Union of Public Employees	Capacity		
College of Nursing	Community	Crime	Crisis	Crystal meth
demand	Demoralized	Depression	Distress	Dr. Alex Wong
Dr. Barb Konstanynowicz	Dr. John Pesenti	Dr. Kyle Anderson
Dr. Peter Stoicheff	Dr. Rashaad Hansia	Dr. Saqib Shahab
Emergencies Act	Emergency practice licences
Financially burdened	Full capacity	Graduate Nurses
Hand Sanitizer	Healthcare workers	Hospitalizations	ICU
Inmates for Human Conditions	Jim Reiter	Karen Barber
Labour Shortage	Lockdown	Lori Johb	Mask

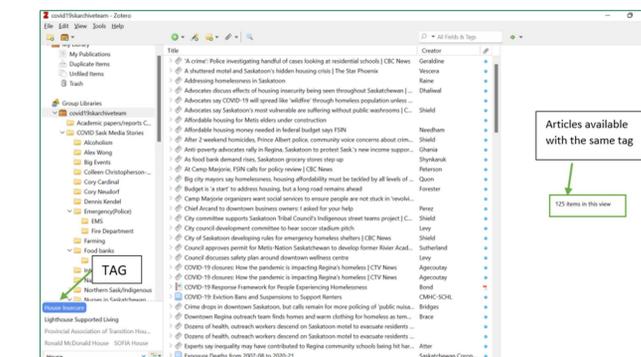### Review and revision of sources catalogued:

- Scraping meta data
- Linking themes
- Correlating information
- Finding trends
- Following narratives
- Coordinating data
- Presenting data
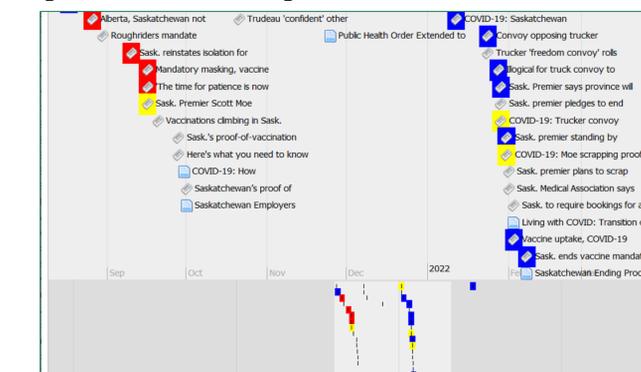- Correcting errors

Results

We collected over 3000 items for the database, including unique experiences and documents from the pandemic in Saskatchewan. We avoided duplicating information that appeared in multiple sources by manually checking each article.

Each tag shows all the stories and documents that feature a key word and we can highlight unexpected connections between different actors and locations, helping to correlate the data.

This pool of data can be visualized as a timeline; showing hotspots when certain events occurred and identifies the government and community responses across the province.

Conclusion

The database we created includes more than 3000 items that show a wide variety of information related to the pandemic from oral experiences to primary sources by the SIRC. The database covers different topics like food security, housing, substance use, emergency response, etc.

The comprehensive set of tags highlight important terms mentioned in the dataset. This allows us to search across themes using keywords.

The Covid-19 archive will use these articles and tagging process to develop automated related content from the much larger 2 terabit web archives collection.

Acknowledgements

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SASKATOON INTER-AGENCY RESPONSE TO COVID-19