



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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Walkabout app puts city's literary highlights on map

A free interactive app has been launched so that people worldwide can explore Edinburgh's literary history.

The free app will guide users to a choice of 1,600 locations in the city made famous by writers from Robert Louis Stevenson to Irvine Welsh – and highlights what they wrote.

The resource, called LitLong, contains around 50,000 excerpts from classic and contemporary – and even forgotten – texts so users can experience the UNESCO City of Literature's attractions.

It includes extracts from celebrated authors such as Walter Scott, and Muriel Spark as well as present-day fiction writers such as James Robertson and Alexander McCall Smith.

Literary experts and computer scientists at the University of Edinburgh and Napier University used text mining technology to source references to the city and pin them to an interactive map.

The app is being launched at two University of Edinburgh events which are part of Being Human – the AHRC's nationwide festival which seeks to engage the public with innovative research taking place across the humanities.

An event on Saturday, November 18, in 50 George Square will give people a chance to explore LitLong and join author Kaite Welsh on a tour of Edinburgh featured in her crime novel *Wages of Sin*.

On Friday, November 24, a Lost literary Edinburgh Wikipedia 'editathon' in 50 George Square will let guests create and improve Wikipedia pages for overlooked authors.

Project Director Professor James Loxley says LitLong is a resource that could readily be adopted by other cities with a rich literary heritage.

The project has been funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as part of its investment in Big Data – the collecting, organising and interpreting of large sets of digital information.

Ranked among the top universities in the world

It is supported by The Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust and the Edinburgh International Book Festival.

Literary experts worked with software developers, designers and publishers. They accessed digital collections from all over the world for the project – including works held by the British Library, the National Library of Scotland, and Project Gutenberg – an archive of digital and cultural works.

Professor Loxley, of the University of Edinburgh’s School of Literatures, Languages, and Cultures, said: “Edinburgh has a unique literary heritage. Its streets echo with the voices of countless authors and their characters. This exploration of the possibilities offered by Big Data for digital literary research means writers’ references to locations throughout the city can be found at the tap of a screen, or the click of a mouse.”

The app ‘LitLong’ is available soon on Google Play or in the App Store.

The online resource can be accessed at: <https://litlong.org/welcome>

Being Human Festival: <https://beinghumanfestival.org/>

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