

oldWeather: crowdsourcing climate reconstructions

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To make long reanalyses of historic weather and climate, we need a large dataset of historical weather observations as input. Existing datasets (ICOADS and the ISPD) still possess substantial data gaps, particularly for early years and from sparsely-populated regions. The world's archives contain many millions of so-far-untapped weather observations, but to utilise them they need to be digitised, to be converted from paper to machine-readable form, and this process is very time-consuming and expensive. One possible way to recover these observations is to employ crowdsourcing, to encourage science-interested members of the public ('citizen scientists') to help with the digitisation. Such a crowdsourcing project has been started, initially working to recover records from World-War 1 Royal Navy ship's logbooks. I'm happy to do either or both of these - the first would have to be oral (it's mostly videos), the second would be best as an oral presentation, but could be a poster. We're launching the oldWeather project towards the end of October and hoping to get significant news coverage, so it might be very topical.