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Darwin's work digitised and online

Project aims to have all of his writings online by 2009

by Amber Maitland published on 19 October 2006

The complete writings of Charles Darwin are now online and available to anyone thanks to a project run by Cambridge University.

The project's director, Dr John van Wyhe was inspired to start collecting Darwin's works and digitising them after being frustrated at the difficulty of finding his material while living in Asia.

At darwin-online.org.uk, anyone can view scans or read transcribed writings by Darwin, or even download audio files.

"The idea is to make these important works as accessible as possible", van Wyhe told the BBC. The collection features some very hard-to-find and, in some cases, never-before-published works, like Darwin's handwritten field notebooks from the voyage of the Beagle to the Galapagos. Van Wyhe said he has received positive reactions from people from whom he solicited texts, as they "liked the idea of there being one big collection".

There are also over 150 secondary texts about Darwin and his work on the site. As yet, only 50% of the material available to the project has been digitised, but it's hoped that by 2009, Darwin's 200th birthday, all of it will be online.

