Risky Business User Manual

Quick Start: How to use the Risky Business Database

Please note: the interactive map and database work best on Google Chrome and MS Edge.

If things are unclear or if you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us:
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The Risky Business Database (RBDB) contains thousands of insurance contracts from the 14th until the 19th century. Because we work with a great variety of sources, in different languages and from different periods, we have chosen to include an insurance transaction if we have the following information: date, port of departure, port of arrival and the premium rate. This means that for all the contracts in the database, these data will always be available. Other information, like the name of the insured, of the underwriter or the insured objects is optional and therefore not always available.

How to start?

- A good way to get an impression is to view the short video on our website (https://riskybusiness.labs.vu.nl/)

- You can always have a look at the FAQs if you have other questions (https://riskybusiness.labs.vu.nl/quickstart/FAQ.pdf)

- Go to 'Interactive Map' in the Top Menu at the website (https://riskybusiness.labs.vu.nl/Map)
  The interactive map will open in a new tab.
  You will be asked to agree to the Disclaimer (or click on 'I want to know more')

- The map will show, for the selected period, the markets that are included in the database.
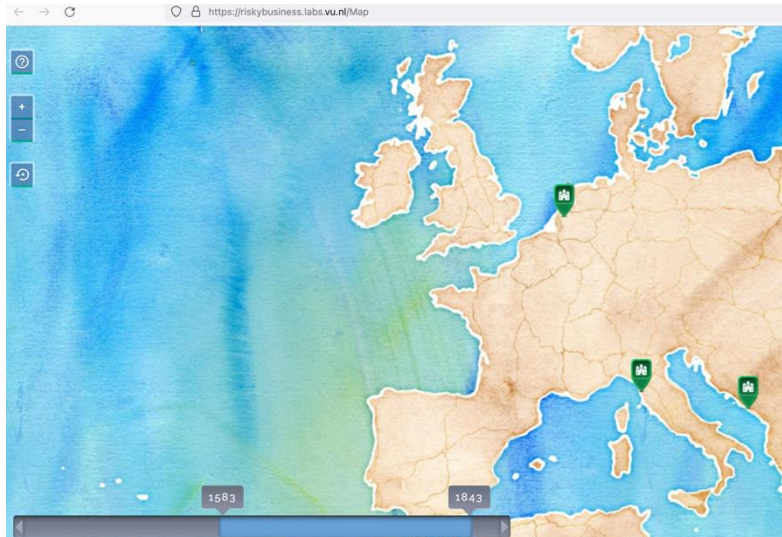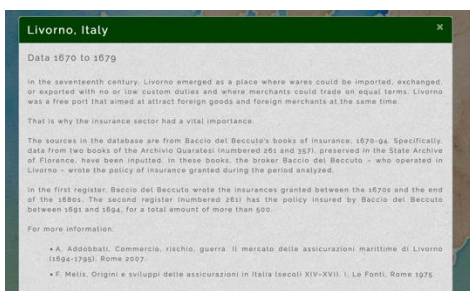

- Use the toggle bar at the bottom left, to select the period you are interested in.
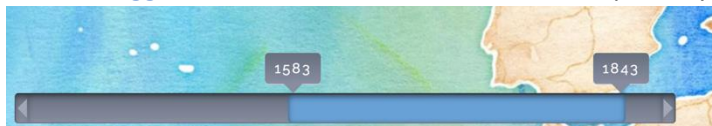
- Alternatively, go to a market and use your right mouse button to open a new menu with info/routes/ports/documents

Info: will display some basic information regarding the relevant market and suggested literature. Close this window with the X in the top right corner
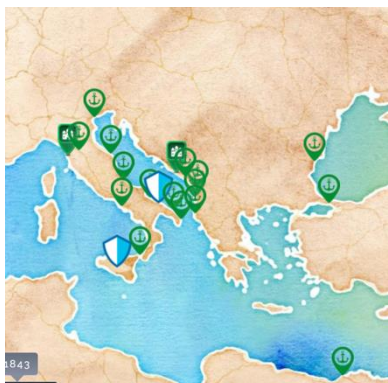

Routes: will show all the routes for which this market offered insurances.
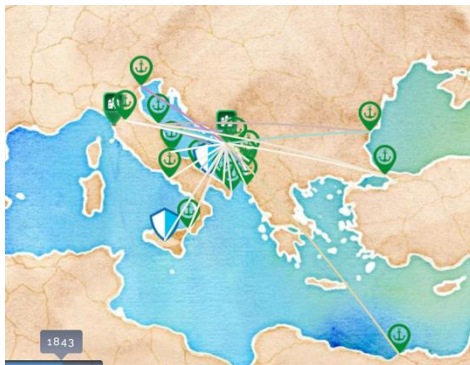
	For more information how to use the map
	Zoom in/out
	Reset the map

Ports: will display all the ports included in the transactions from this particular market.

     Represents an insurance market (for example, Venice, Rotterdam)

     Represents a specific port (for example Livorno, Riga)

     Represents a region (for example 'the coast of Holland' or 'North America'

Documents: this option will take you to the search option of the database.

- Select the relevant period (use the arrows or just type in the years)
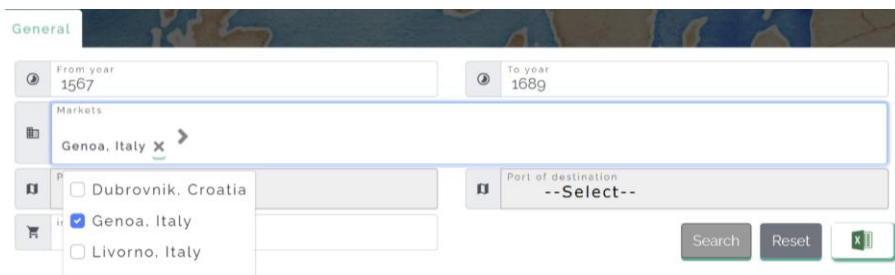
- Select the market

- Click 'Search'

You will see a table with the relevant insurance transactions that meet your criteria. There will be a link to the original source or to a scan of the original source.

Use the little arrow at the left side of a row to access a link or a scan to the original source.

Enlarge the scan by clicking on it.

Finally, it is possible to further refine the search by adding a specific 'insured object':

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