



Current Research in Digital History:
An annual digital history conference and publication

The Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media is pleased to announce an annual one-day conference at George Mason University with an accompanying publication, both of which will be called *Current Research in Digital History*. The first conference will be held on Saturday, March 17, 2018. This initiative aims to provide a venue for historians to explore what digital humanities means for their discipline, in keeping with the shift to “practicing DH at a field-specific level” that Matt Gold and Lauren Klein note in the introduction to *Debates in Digital Humanities 2016*. The conference presentations will be published in an online, peer-reviewed conference proceedings, which will provide a publication venue that accommodates dynamic visualizations and narrative unavailable in print-focused historical journals. The primary aim of the conference and proceedings is to encourage and publish scholarship in digital history that offers discipline-specific arguments and interpretations. We hope that accomplishing this primary aim will help build mechanisms for the peer review of digital historical scholarship, as well as increase the scholarly recognition accorded to short-form articles within the discipline.

THE EVENT:

Schedule

9.00-9.45	State of Digital History Roundtable		
9.45-10.00	Break		
10.00-11.00	Session: pre-selected topic	Session: open topics	Session: open topics
11.00-11.10	Break		
11.10-12.10	Session: pre-selected topic	Session: open topics	Session: open topics
12.10-1.30	Lunch		
1.30-2.30	Session: pre-selected topic	Session: open topics	Session: open topics
2.30-3.15	Break and unconference planning		
3.15-4.15	Unconference session	Unconference session	Unconference session

1. *A state of digital history roundtable:* This roundtable will include four leading scholars in the field chosen to reflect the diversity of digital historians. Each panelist will be asked to reflect on developments in digital history in the preceding year in a moderated Q&A period.

2. *Sessions:* Presentations and panels will be selected from competitive applications open to the field. The primary criterion by which these presentations and panels will be judged is whether they advance historical argumentation. In other words, while digital methods will be common to all the presentations, we will expect that these presentations will show how those methods have advanced specific interpretations of history. The program committee will be charged with creating panels that include people of color, female, queer, and

independent scholars, junior scholars, and graduate students.

One track of sessions will be devoted to a particular historical topic, chosen annually. Our goal in giving each iteration of the event a particular focus is to attract scholars working in that field whose primary field is not digital history, and bring them into discussions about the place of digital approaches in historical practice. For the first event, that topic will be the history of slavery, which is a subject attracting heightened interest among both digital and traditional historians at present. In future years, the topic will be chosen by the program committee, which will seek advice from the scholarly community on a range of options.

While the call for papers will emphasize the common track, submissions will be welcome from any topic or time period. The common track and the open tracks are a way of balancing the coherence of the event with the variety of subject matter that digital historians pursue.

There will be three sessions throughout the day. Each session will run for one hour, and include two 10-minute presentations, a 10-minute comment, and 30 minutes for discussion. We have selected 10 minutes as a length that will permit substantial, yet concise, argument and provide time for interaction between the audience and the presenters to be a significant part of the session. Short presentations are also a good fit for the iterative nature of much digital scholarship. We anticipate that the presentations will make arguments on the basis of ongoing research in larger projects.

3. Unconference sessions: The final timeslot will be devoted to sessions proposed on the day by participants at the event. Participants will propose topics for informal discussion based on the presentations earlier in the day, and they will vote on which topics should be discussed. Ending the event in this way will provide an opportunity to bring into focus the discussions stimulated by the sessions, and to address questions that span sessions.

THE PUBLICATION

Presentations will be published in a peer-reviewed online open access volume, also titled *Current Research in Digital History*. This publication format, derived from the conference proceedings widespread in the sciences, is well suited to digital history. It offers a means of capturing the short form work presented at conferences, giving it academic standing by having it peer reviewed, and making it available far more quickly than any other historical journal. This publication venue will enable scholars to publish early findings rather than being unable to share and receive feedback on them until the completion of a larger project.

Linking the publication to conference presentations also provides the opportunity to build on the peer review intrinsic to the organization and format of historical conferences. Peer review will be provided by the program committee of digital historians as part of the acceptance of submitted papers, and then by the session commentator at the event.

Publishing online accommodates the dynamic visualizations and narratives that are an

increasingly core element of digital scholarship but which cannot be included in historical journals due to their continued focus on print publication. We will create the proceedings website using a static site generator, which will permit us a wide latitude for including different kinds of interactive content. The publication will be licensed under a CC Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives license.

THE LOGISTICS

Each year, two event coordinators from RRCHNM, initially Lincoln Mullen and Stephen Robertson, after seeking advice from the scholarly community will assemble a committee comprised of a diverse group of four other digital historians to help them review submissions and create the program. Historians recruited to serve on the program committees will receive an honorarium of \$350. This payment obviously will not compensate program committee members for the time they spend on this work; it is intended as an acknowledgement of the time required for peer review, and thereby a means of securing and sustaining community support for the event and publication in the context of ever-increasing workloads. Similarly, the scholars invited to be part of the state of the field roundtable will receive an honorarium of \$100, and have their registration fee waived.

Papers submitted for consideration will be due in early fall. On the model of conferences in the sciences rather than the humanities, proposals must include the full text and accompanying visualizations or websites to be presented. Proposals will be encouraged either as single or panel presentations. And papers can include multiple authors. The program committee will decide which presentations to accept and assign peer reviewers from its members. The peer reviews of accepted submissions will be completed before the end of semester. Revised submissions will be due no later than one month prior to the conference, which will be held on a Saturday in mid-March. The session commentators providing the second round of peer review will receive an honorarium of \$100, and have their registration fee waived, in acknowledgement of the time involved in that work.

Timetable for *Current Research in Digital History 2018*

Deadline to submit full papers for consideration	Friday, September 29, 2017
Accepted and reviewed papers returned	Friday, December 15, 2017
Revised papers due to conference commentator	Saturday, February 17, 2018
Conference	Saturday, March 17, 2018
Revised papers due	Saturday, May 25, 2018
Proceedings published	Monday, August 27, 2018

Holding the event at George Mason University will allow us to make use of freely available facilities. A registration fee of \$40 for faculty/employed and \$20 for graduate

students/unemployed will help support the costs of the event and publication. As noted earlier, the fee will be waived for session commentators and participants in the roundtable. We will also make available by application four \$200 stipends to support the participation of presenters who have to travel to the event.

Presentations revised for publication will be due at the beginning of summer. A GMU graduate student will be employed during the summer to work with the two coordinators to edit the submissions and produce the online publication. The publication will appear at the beginning of the fall semester, and be hosted and sustained by the Rosenzweig Center.

The platform for *Current Research in Digital History* will be a static site that offers the ability to publish a range of forms of scholarship, while remaining lightweight. These will include embedded content, such as visualizations, graphics, or narratives. When possible that content will be hosted on our website; when it is not possible, we will embed or link to sites hosted elsewhere, with an agreement that the author will maintain the site for a minimum of three years. Authors will be able to include any necessary supplements to the article, such as datasets. For preservation, we will generate a PDF of each article with static images of visualizations as appropriate, along with a ZIP file of all supplementary content. Each article will have a DOI. The publication will be promoted on social media and through outreach to professional organizations, and we will seek to have it indexed by Google Scholar and EBSCO.

Current Research in Digital History will be funded by an ongoing annual donation to the Rosenzweig Center's Director's Fund, an initial three-year commitment of support from the Department of History & Art History at George Mason University, and a nominal registration fee. It is not related to the Rosenzweig Center's *Journal of Digital Humanities*, funded from 2011–2014 by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.