

HISTORICAL ARGUMENTS AND THE DIGITAL

University of Luxembourg
25th-27th June 2024

In 2016, Franco Moretti argued that “somehow digital humanities has managed to secure for itself this endless infancy, in which it is always a future promise.” In the years since, little has changed. Whilst there has been exponential growth in the number of resources, tools, and methodological discussions in the digital humanities, there remains limited contribution towards traditional historical narratives implementing these, increasing the apparent gap between DH and traditional history. Terminology in the digital humanities – networks, mapping, modelling – has long been used metaphorically to explore historical phenomenon; yet in digitalizing these ideas, we have gradually moved away from the analytical arguments these phrases were originally used for. The more digital methodologies are separated from traditional approaches – focusing on building without analysing and represented only on ‘digital humanities’ panels in historical conferences – the greater the risk is of becoming increasingly insular and closed-off, “an interdisciplinary silo in which we are only speaking to other displaced scholars.” As a result, the digital humanities are often still faced with the ‘so-what’ question: what impact can these new methods and approaches make on historical arguments and how can they advance scholarship?

This conference seeks to address the ‘so-what’, promoting conversation as to how new research processes and methodologies might build into and contribute to traditional narratives. Though the building of digital resources and tools are in themselves important analytical and interpretative acts – and are slowly beginning to be recognized as such within the wider humanities – they are also vital building blocks for historical arguments that can exist as exemplars of both digital and traditional scholarship. This conference offers a space to consider how this gap might be closed once more, encouraging historical case studies reflecting on the ways in which digital methodologies have offered a means of exploring historical sources and expanding historical narratives and fostering digital history research questions that push beyond merely the descriptive to the interpretative and analytical.

We invite abstracts of **300-500 words** for **20-minute papers** that demonstrate the argumentative practices of Digital History and the broader historical profession. These may employ any form of methodology or tool under the umbrella of ‘digital history’ examining any historical period across the globe, but must present findings and arguments engaging with and contributing to historical narratives. Papers will be arranged chronologically or by historical theme rather than methodological approach, reframing the focus on the historical contribution once more. Submissions from PhDs and ECRs are very welcome, as are ‘works in progress’, so long as they remain indicative of an historical argument, and are not project proposals or overviews.

ABSTRACT DEADLINE: DECEMBER 15th 2023

Submission Portal
<https://easychair.org/cfp/had2024>

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