History *Can* Be Open Source: Democratic Dreams and the Rise of Digital History

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In an ongoing commitment to experimentation, the *AHR* invited an "open peer review" of a submitted manuscript, "History *Can* Be Open Source: Democratic Dreams and the Rise of Digital History," by Joseph L. Locke (University of Houston–Victoria) and Ben Wright (University of Texas at Dallas). Given that Locke and Wright argued for the coexistence of transparency alongside formal academic peer review, subjecting their submission to an open review made sense. The peer review process itself tested the propositions about the democratization of scholarship they put forth in their submission. The open peer review reports and previous versions can be found at ahropenreview.com.

In 2006, PIONEERING DIGITAL HISTORIAN Roy Rosenzweig published an article in the *Journal of American History* titled "Can History Be Open Source? *Wikipedia* and the Future of the Past." By then, Wikipedia had already become, he said, "perhaps the largest work of online historical writing, the most widely read work of digital history, and the most important free historical resource on the World Wide Web."[1] Rosenzweig declared that historians "have a responsibility to make better information sources available online" and called on the profession to "emulate the great democratic triumph of Wikipedia—its demonstration that people are eager for free and accessible information resources."[2]

Fifteen years after Rosenzweig's plea, technological innovation, institutional resources, professional norms, and shifting scholarly attitudes have converged to prove Rosenzweig right: history *can* be open source. Scores of digital projects now provide free, high-quality, peer-reviewed digital historical material, and with many historians embracing open licensing, Rosenzweig's dream seems nearer to reality than ever before. But is open access enough? Digital history's early practitioners promised more than that. They promised a broader democratization of history. It is therefore the goal of this piece to historicize digital history and the wider digital humanities by confronting their past and present claims to "democracy." Placing digital history's rise in a historical and

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[1] Roy Rosenzweig, "Can History Be Open Source? *Wikipedia* and the Future of the Past," *Journal of American History* 93, no. 1 (June 2006): 117–46, here 119.

[2] Rosenzweig, "Can History Be Open Source?," 137, 145.

institutional context, surveying the past and present landscape of digital projects, and evaluating such projects' inconsistent, often problematic, yet foundational democratic aspirations, this article moves beyond questions of technological innovation and digital access to engage more fundamental and intractable questions about inequality, community, and participatory historical inquiry.[3]

The dream of "democratization" fueled much of the rise of digital history and the larger digital humanities.[4] Early discussions of digital history—nearly all written by white men—lauded the democratic potential of new technology.[5] "In the 1990s, the animating spirit behind much of our work in the digital humanities was democratization," said William G. Thomas III, a digital historian and cofounder of digital humanities centers at the University of Virginia and the University of Nebraska. "Our ambitions then were only secondarily to experiment with new forms of scholarship. They were primarily to democratize history: to transform the way history was understood by changing the way it was produced and accessed."[6] Founded in 1994, the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University—later renamed for Rosenzweig—declared that it "used digital media and computer technology to democratize history—to incorporate multiple voices, reach diverse audiences, and encourage popular participation in presenting and preserving the past."[7] Such claims borrowed from the wider digital humanities. As Bridget Draxler and scholars of the Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology

[3] This paper largely restricts itself to processes in the United States. Ideologies surrounding the digital humanities, and particularly the rise of open access, have different contexts outside the United States. The United Kingdom, for example, now requires open-access publishing for many recipients of state research funding. See Margot Finn, "Plan S and the History Journal Landscape: Royal Historical Society Guidance Paper," Royal Historical Society, October 23, 2019, https://royalhistsoc.org/policy/publication-open-access/plan-s-and-history-journals/.

[4] See especially Drew VandeCreek, "'Webs of Significance': The Abraham Lincoln Historical Digitization Project, New Technology, and the Democratization of History," *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (2007), http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/1/1/000003/000003.html. These ideas within the digital humanities drew on wider trends in studies on technology and communication. Philip E. Agre argued that digital technologies would enable "the intellectual lives of academics to be democratized," thereby opening the "existing scholarly and library practices [that] reflect the wisdom of centuries." Yochai Benkler rejoiced in 2006 that "a radical change in the organization of information production" was leading to "better democratic participation." Philip E. Agre, "Supporting the Intellectual Life of a Democratic Society," *Ethics and Information Technology* 3, no. 4 (2001): 289–98, here 289; Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom* (New Haven, CT, 2006), 2.

[5] Sharon Leon has traced the contributions of women in the rise of digital history, noting that while women performed much of the labor, men's names dominated project mastheads. The founding essays on digital history were likewise nearly all written by white men. Gender often divided those who performed the work from those who were given platforms to articulate its significance. Sharon M. Leon, "Complicating a 'Great Man' Narrative of Digital History in the United States," in *Bodies of Information: Intersectional Feminism and Digital Humanities*, ed. Elizabeth Losh and Jacqueline Wernimont (Minneapolis, 2018), 344–66.

[6] William G. Thomas, "Trends in Digital Humanities: Remarks at the CIC Digital Humanities Summit," keynote address, CIC Digital Humanities Summit, April 19, 2012, http://railroads.unl.edu/blog/?p=794. Cameron Blevins similarly argues that digital history began with "an overriding ideology: to democratize access to the past." Cameron Blevins, "Digital History's Perpetual Future Tense," in *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, ed. Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein (Minneapolis, 2016), https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/65be1a40-6473-4d9e-ba75-6380e5a72138/section/4555da10-0561-42c1-9e34-112f0695f523#ch26. Writing in 1999, Ed Ayers trumpeted the historical profession's recovery of forgotten voices—of women, people of color, the poor—but said, "The great democratization of history over the past few decades has not been accompanied by a democratization of audience." The digital humanities, it was argued, would do just that. Edward L. Ayers, "The Pasts and Futures of Digital History," Virginia Center for Digital History, 1999, http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/PastsFutures.html.

[7] Stephen Robertson, "The Future of RRCHNM," Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, November 17, 2014, http://chnm.gmu.edu/about-rrchnm/the-future-of-rrchnm/.

Alliance and Collaboratory (HASTAC) explained, it was the fundamental mission of the digital humanities "to democratize knowledge to reach out to 'publics,' share academic discoveries, and invite an array of audiences to participate in knowledge production."[8] Optimistic calls for democratic digital work echoed throughout universities, museums, archives, and beyond.

As early digital humanists touted the democratic potential of digital technology, Silicon Valley's prophets preached the "theory of disruptive innovation" to eager university administrators with the promise of inevitable democratic revolutions. But "disruption" is not a synonym for "democracy." As Rosenzweig put it, "Neither the democratization or the commodification of higher education is inherent in the technology."[9] In fact, digital humanists such as Safiya Umoja Noble, Kim Gallon, Jessica Marie Johnson, and others, building on the work of intersectional feminists, demonstrate how persistent systematic injustices prevent participatory equality and expose patterns of marginalization lurking in supposedly value-neutral digital worlds.[10] What, then, does "democracy" mean in a world caught between evolving technology and intransigent structural barriers? And how have digital humanists confronted the insatiable conquest of market logics in American life—a rapacious neoliberalism that political theorist Wendy Brown argues has "inaugurate[d] democracy's conceptual unmooring and substantive disembowelment"?[11]

Grappling with the practice of digital history and analyzing its maturation, particularly in light of its contemporary critics, demands a critical engagement with the long quest for "democracy." "Democracy," of course, is a slippery term: vague, often unreflective ideas of "democracy" drove much of the development of the field of digital history. It is not the goal of this essay to arrive at a positive, substantive definition of "democracy"—centuries of writers, theorists, and activists have already tried and failed to mobilize popular consensus around the term.[12] Nevertheless, we identify and evaluate

[8] HASTAC Scholars, "Democratizing Knowledge," Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory, September 21, 2009, https://www.hastac.org/initiatives/hastac-scholars/scholars-forums/democratizing-knowledge.

[9] Roy Rosenzweig, "Live Free or Die? Death, Life, Survival, and Sobriety on the Information Superhighway," review of *The Death of Distance*, by Frances Cairncross; *Release 2.0*, by Esther Dyson; *Data Smog*, by David Shenk; and *Rewired*, by David Hudson, *American Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (March 1999): 160–74, here 172.

[10] Safiya Umoja Noble, "A Future for Intersectional Black Feminist Technology Studies," *Scholar and Feminist Online* 13, no. 3–14, no. 1 (2016): 1–8; Kim Gallon, "Making a Case for the Black Digital Humanities," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/fa10e2e1-0c3d-4519-a958-d823aac989eb#ch04; Jessica Marie Johnson and Mark Anthony Neal, "Introduction: Wild Seed in the Machine," *Black Scholar: Journal of Black Studies and Research* 47, no. 3 (2017): 1–2. See also Kaima L. Glover, Alex Gil, and Jessica Marie Johnson, eds., "Slavery in the Machine," special issue, *Archipelagos*, no. 3 (July 2019), http://archipelagosjournal.org/issue03.html; see especially Jessica Marie Johnson's contributions, "We Are Deathless (Slavery in the Machine)" and "Xroads Praxis: Black Diasporic Technologies for Remaking the New World."

[11] In Brown's estimation, neoliberalism has left democracy "gaunt, ghostly, its future increasingly hedged and improbable." Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 2015), 9. See also Wendy Brown, *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism: The Rise of Antidemocratic Politics in the West* (New York, 2019); Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics* (Durham, NC, 2009); Henry A. Giroux, *The Terror of Neoliberalism* (Boulder, 2004); Mark Olssen, *Liberalism, Neoliberalism, Social Democracy: Thin Communitarian Perspectives on Political Philosophy and Education* (New York, 2010); and Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston, 2003).

[12] In his 2016 exploration of "the struggle for self-rule" in the Atlantic world, *Toward Democracy*, historian James T. Kloppenberg argued that democracy has been less a unified set of institutions and more an

the three major strains of "democratization" that digital historians have deployed over the past several decades: the first emphasized expanded access by championing digitization and open online distribution of historical material to new users; the second hoped for democratization at the level of production, inviting greater participation and collaboration in the conception and construction of digital projects; and the third, inspired especially by the scholarship of intersectional feminists and critical race theorists, sought to identify long-standing inequalities and level perceived structural injustices within the digital humanities and academia more broadly.

To evaluate these democratic dreams, this essay first roots digital history and the digital humanities in a postwar university landscape torn between New Left idealism and neoliberal transformation. It then tracks the digital history boom of the 1990s and early 2000s, examining a generation of digital humanists, lured by the promises of the early internet, who extended access to information and fostered collaboration to widen participation in knowledge production. Believing that digitization could tear down barriers to the world's knowledge, they increasingly introduced the open-access movement to academics. But "democratization" is not so simple, and this essay grapples with the contradictions and complexities of a historical moment when not only digital historians but public historians, archivists, and publishers all struggled to balance self-professed democratic commitments against powerful neoliberal impulses inside and outside academia. Then this essay explores a more recent generation of digital humanists, who, frustrated especially with the political economy of academia, are especially cognizant of stubborn structural barriers—the neoliberal university and deep-seated divides along the lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, and colonialism. Like Alexis Lothian and Amanda Phillips, they "wonder how digital practices and projects might participate in more radical processes of transformation—might rattle the poles of the big tent rather than slip seamlessly into it."[13] Finally, surveying recent digital history projects, especially in light of contemporary criticism, this essay considers the myopia of much "democratic" rhetoric in digital history, arguing that while much of history can indeed be open source, democracy itself remains elusive.

For the sake of clarity, definitional precision demands our outlining of terms such as "digital history," "digital humanities," "open access," and "open educational resources." We consider, for the purposes of this essay, digital history as the component of the digital humanities rooted in the methods and discipline of history. While digital history has a genealogy distinct from that of the broader digital humanities, and even as many practitioners are invested in drawing its disciplinary boundaries—some, notably, by empha-

unattainable goal after which we must forever strive. James T. Kloppenberg, *Toward Democracy: The Struggle for Self-Rule in European and American Thought* (New York, 2016). As John Dewey wrote in 1926, "Democracy has to be born anew every generation." John Dewey, "The Need of an Industrial Education in an Industrial Democracy," *Manual Training and Vocational Education*, February 1916, 410. From Alexis de Tocqueville to Jane Addams to Alain Locke, positive definitions of "democracy" have fueled both investigations and interventions into American life. For a sampling of additional recent work detailing historical contests over "democracy," see, for instance, Manisha Sinha and Penny Von Eschen, eds., *Contested Democracy: Freedom, Race, and Power in American History* (New York, 2007); W. Caleb McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery: Garrisonian Abolitionists and Transatlantic Reform* (Baton Rouge, 2013); and Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York, 2005).

[13] Alexis Lothian and Amanda Phillips, "Can Digital Humanities Mean Transformative Critique?" *Journal of e-Media Studies* 3, no. 1 (2013): 4, https://dx.doi.org/10.1349/PS1.1938-6060.A.425.

sizing history's particular capacity for public engagement—digital history nevertheless overlaps deeply with the institutions, technology, and debates occurring within the broader digital humanities.[14] While digital history is the focus of this essay, we also consider the larger landscape of digital humanities as essential context for our evaluation of democratization. Of course, definitions of "digital humanities" abound: "What is DH?" has long been a punch line.[15] Nevertheless, we draw on Kathleen Fitzpatrick's capacious definition of the "digital humanities" as "a nexus of fields" both employing digital tools to conduct humanities scholarship and using humanities methods to make sense of the digital world.[16] Likewise, when we discuss "open access" and "open education resources," we borrow from established definitions, such as that resulting from the 2001 Budapest Open Access Initiative. We therefore use "open access" to refer to materials not only freely accessible online but also licensed in such a way as to permit users to freely retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute them. "Open education resources" are simply open-access materials used primarily for educational purposes.[17] And yet, before these terms could mean anything at all, democracy-seeking academics were busy building their foundations on college campuses across the country.

Democratic dreams inspired many of the earliest digital humanities initiatives. While historically minded computing in the 1960s and 1970s was often confined to a core of cliometrics historians, the participatory democracy of the New Left would shape an emerging digital history. "We seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation, governed by two central aims," Tom Hayden and members of the Students for a Democratic Society wrote in their iconic 1962 Port Huron Statement, "that the individual

[14] Stephen Robertson, former director of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, credits the rise of digital history to "radical historians committed to democratizing the creation of the past and to collaborating with teachers." It is this democratic commitment, he argues, that distinguishes digital history from digital humanities. Stephen Robertson, "The Differences between Digital Humanities and Digital History," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/ed4a1145-7044-42e9-a898-5ff8691b6628#ch25. See also Tom Scheinfeldt, "The Dividends of Difference: Recognizing Digital Humanities' Diverse Family Tree/s," *Found History* (blog), April 7, 2014, https://foundhistory.org/2014/04/the-dividends-of-difference-recognizing-digital-humanities-diverse-family-trees/, and Susan Hockey, "The History of Humanities Computing," in *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, ed. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth (Malden, MA, 2004), 3–19.

[15] For a humorous representation of the scores of definitions, see Jason Heppler's "What Is Digital Humanities?," whatisdigitalhumanities.com, a project that aggregated 817 descriptions of "digital humanities" produced between 2009 and 2014.

[16] Kathleen Fitzpatrick, "The Humanities, Done Digitally," in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, ed. Matthew K. Gold (Minneapolis, 2012), https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-88c11800-9446-469b-a3be-3fdb36bfbd1e/section/65e208fc-a5e6-479f-9a47-d51cd9c35e84. For an even broader definition, see Jessica Marie Johnson's scheme of four digital humanities: "digital humanities as articulated by global academic institutions," "humanistic inquiry using digital tools," "digital media as material and messaging," and "digital practice as using the digital to live in the world." Jessica Marie Johnson, "4DH + 1 Black Code / Black Femme Forms of Knowledge and Practice," *American Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (September 2018): 665–70, here 666.

[17] "Budapest Open Access Initiative Statement," Budapest Open Access Initiative (website), February 14, 2002, https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/read; Patrick O. Brown, Diane Cabell, Aravinda Chakravarti, Barbara Cohen, Tony Delamothe, Michael Eisen, Les Grivell, et al., "Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing," Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard, June 20, 2003, http://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/4725199; David Wiley, "Defining the 'Open' in Open Content and Open Educational Resources," accessed September 20, 2021, OpenContent.org, http://opencontent.org/definition/; Peter Suber, "A Field Guide to Misunderstandings about Open Access," *SPARC Open Access Newsletter*, April 2, 2009, http://legacy.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/04-02-09.htm; "Open Education," William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, accessed September 20, 2021, https://hewlett.org/strategy/open-education/.

share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life [and] that society be organized to encourage independence in men and provide the media for their common participation."[18] Roy Rosenzweig's pioneering work would grow directly out of such ideals. As a former student and colleague, Elena Razlogova, explained, "Roy applied his unreconstructed 'new left' radicalism to new digital realities."[19] As protests rocked campuses across the West, computer programmers, software engineers, and hackers embraced the notion of shared knowledge and pioneered the principles that would later undergird digital history's push for "democratization."[20] Richard Stallman, for instance, a freshman at Harvard University in 1970, became active in the nearby hacker community at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and, believing "free software" to be a social and ethical imperative, later founded the GNU project and launched the GNU General Public License to allow for the free use, modification, and distribution of software.[21]

The tech utopians of the New Left, however, worked in universities increasingly captive to the political economy of Cold War America.[22] What is often cited as the first digital humanities project, Roberto Busa's Index Thomisticus, depended on the financial support of IBM, for instance.[23] Corporate funds tentacled themselves into every corner of academia. Neoliberal logics, as historian Johann Neem and others have demonstrated, further eroded higher education's capacity to foster democracy through education by slashing public funding, replicating corporate administration, and incentivizing profit-seeking research.[24] The neoliberal university was born.

[18] See James Miller, *"Democracy Is in the Streets": From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (New York, 1987); Maurice Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer—: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left* (New York, 1987); Irwin Unger, *The Movement: A History of the American New Left, 1959–1972* (New York, 1974); Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York, 1979); Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962–1968: The Great Refusal* (New York, 1982); and Rebecca E. Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley, 1999).

[19] Bonnie Goodman, "In Memory of Roy Rosenzweig (1950–2007)," History News Network, January 18, 2008, http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/43739.

[20] See, for instance, Steven Levy, *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution* (New York, 1984).

[21] Stallman would champion "free software" over "open source" software. Richard Stallman, "Why Open Source Misses the Point of Free Software," GNU, accessed September 20, 2021, http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/open-source-misses-the-point.html.

[22] Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira note, for instance, that an early draft of Eisenhower's "military-industrial complex" used instead "military-industrial-academic complex." Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira, eds., introduction to *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent* (Minneapolis, 2014), 17. See also Wendy Brown, "The End of Educated Democracy," in "The Humanities and the Crisis of the Public University," special issue, *Representations* 116, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 19–41. For how neoliberalism poisons pedagogy, see especially Enrique Dussel, *The Pedagogics of Liberation: A Latin American Philosophy of Education*, trans. David I. Backer and Cecilia Diego (Santa Barbara, CA, 2019); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Donald Macedo (New York, 2005); and Linda Martín Alcoff, "Educating with a (De)Colonial Consciousness," *Lápiz*, no. 1 (2014): 78–92.

[23] Susan Hockey most prominently identifies Busa's project as the first digital humanities project. Hockey, "The History of Humanities Computing." Busa's project, notably, obscured the labor of the women who turned the project into reality and drew rebukes from humanists who feared the dehumanization of quantitative-based scholarship. Melissa Terras and Julianne Nyhan, "Father Busa's Female Punch Card Operatives," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/1e57217b-f262-4f25-806b-4fcf1548beb5#ch06; Meredith Hindley, "The Rise of the Machines," *Humanities* 34, no. 4 (July/August 2013), https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2013/julyaugust/feature/the-rise-the-machines.

[24] According to Wendy Brown, the twentieth century was, "for all its ghastly episodes" and "the cruel exclusions of Western humanism," still "something of a golden age for public higher education." Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 180. Neem likewise argues that Americans have long expected higher education to

Over the following decades, the scramble to adopt new technologies only further blurred the academic pursuit of "democratization." At the same time that academics championed digital tools as a means to bring education to the masses, notions of world-flattening technology offered moral cover for the decidedly antidemocratic ends of business inside and outside academia. Technolibertarians in Silicon Valley, for instance, drew on the celebratory individualism of hacker culture and countercultural institutions such as Stewart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalog* to nurture their own digital utopianism.[25] The digital humanities, meanwhile, emerged alongside relentless cost cutting, the adjunctification of instruction, and diminished public support for humanities education. Digital history would rely more heavily on librarians and support staff, not tenured professors; would be housed in centers, not departments; and would depend on outside grants, not institutional funding.[26] The field's democratic potential was constricted before it had even begun, limiting its capacity to fulfill the promises of the New Left. A survey of early digital projects therefore reveals both the accomplishments and limits of early work in digital history and the broader digital humanities.

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serve society, but the needs of society have increasingly become indistinguishable from the needs of the market. Neem shows how, for instance, the evolution of the Common Core demonstrates that "the importance of knowledge for personal growth or effective citizenship is relegated to the sidelines." Johann N. Neem, *What's the Point of College? Seeking Purpose in an Age of Reform* (Baltimore, 2019), 64–65. Public funding for universities has plummeted since the 1970s. From 1976 to 2001, appropriations, as a percent of state revenue, for higher education fell nationally from 6.7 percent to 4.5 percent. Thomas J. Kane and Peter R. Orszag, "Use of State General Revenue for Higher Education Declines," Tax Policy Center, the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution, October 14, 2002, https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/59871/1000462-Use-of-State-General-Revenue-for-Higher-Education-Declines.PDF; Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Cambridge, MA, 2008), 1; Colleen Lye, Christopher Newfield, and James Vernon, "Humanists and the Public University," in "The Humanities and the Crisis of the Public University," special issue, *Representations* 116, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 1–18, especially 3. During those same years, the number of faculty grew by 75.8 percent; the number of nonfaculty professionals grew by 239.2 percent. Jack H. Schuster and Martin J. Finkelstein, *The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers* (Baltimore, 2006), 269. On the growth of corporate accounting practices in higher education, see Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University*, 127–29. For a critical assessment of new administrative methods, see the work of Charles Schwartz, a retired physicist at the University of California, Berkeley, who made a hobby out of fact-checking the university's financing. Charles Schwartz, "Financing the University," Open Computing Facility, last modified December 13, 2020, https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~schwrtz/. For more on the neoliberalization of the university, see also Ellen Schrecker, *The Lost Soul of Higher Education: Corporatization, the Assault on Academic Freedom, and the End of the American University* (New York, 2010), and Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters* (New York, 2011).

[25] Steve Jobs would later describe the catalog as "one of the bibles of my generation." See Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago, 2006), and Andrew G. Kirk, *Counterculture Green: The Whole Earth Catalog and American Environmentalism* (Lawrence, KS, 2007).

[26] In a 2011 exploration of the new career trajectories created by the digital humanities, for instance, Tom Scheinfeldt, the managing director of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, reported that 90 percent of the center's budget was supported by grants and, "with a very few exceptions, staff positions at CHNM are contingent on continued grant funding." Tom Scheinfeldt, "Center for History and New Media, George Mason University," in *Off the Tracks: Laying New Lines for Digital Humanities Scholars*, 2011, http://mcpress.media-commons.org/offthetracks/part-two-position-descriptions-at-established-and-emerging-digital-humanities-centers/center-for-history-and-new-media-george-mason-university/. The University of Virginia's Scholars' Lab was, administratively, under the University of Virginia Library and staffed by "library faculty" and "staff." Bethany Nowviskie, "The Scholars' Lab (Digital Research & Scholarship Department), University of Virginia Library," in *Off the Tracks*. On the overall prominence of staff in the digital humanities, see especially Leon, "Complicating a 'Great Man' Narrative of Digital History in the United States."

In the 1990s, the digital revolution—particularly the advent of widespread personal computing and the World Wide Web—inspired numerous historians and other humanists, eager to make knowledge more accessible, to embrace digital technology. In 1995, the American Studies Crossroads Project, one of the earliest websites of any humanities organization, led English scholar Randy Bass to partner with historian Bret Eynon to lead the Visible Knowledge Project. Bass and his collaborators privileged pedagogical innovation and student participation.[27] Other would-be democratizers equated democratization with expanded accessibility. While discussing the Text Encoding Initiative—an effort to establish digital standards of textual presentation—at the 1994 meeting of the Modern Language Association, C. M. Sperberg-McQueen identified three fundamental requirements for scholarly editions of electronic text: "accessibility without needless technical barriers to use; longevity; and intellectual integrity."[28] Early digital humanities projects followed suit. In 1995, two scholars launched the Walt Whitman Hypertext Archive, a collection of digital manuscript facsimiles and hypertext editions of Whitman's poems that aimed to make all of Whitman's public and private work available to everyone.[29] The William Blake Archive similarly launched free and online in 1996 to "provide unified access to major works of visual and literary art."[30] The Women's Writers Project, launched in 1999, used Text Encoding Initiative standards "to overcome the problems of inaccessibility and scarcity which had rendered women's writing invisible for so long."[31] The "digital humanities"—a phrase not yet widely used—was busy being born.

American historians likewise strove to expand access to scholarly work through digital technology. In 1993, Edward Ayers and a large rotating team at the University of Virginia launched the Valley of the Shadow as "an applied experiment in digital scholarship." The project was a digital archive: it allowed users to freely compare letters, newspapers, maps, official records, and a wealth of other digitized sources from two counties—Franklin County, Pennsylvania, and Augusta County, Virginia (one Union and one Confederate)—before, during, and after the Civil War. It was also, wrote Michael O'Malley and Roy Rosenzweig, "probably the most sophisticated historical site on the Web."[32] Gary Kornblith wrote in the *Journal of American History* that the project "represents the logical outcome of major trends in late-twentieth-century American academic life: computerization, interdisciplinary collaboration, the postmodern complica-

[27] Randy Bass, American Studies Crossroads Project (website), http://crossroads.georgetown.edu/. For more on Crossroads and its innovations see John Carlos Rowe, ed., *A Concise Companion to American Studies* (Malden, MA, 2010), 335–36; Matthias Oppermann, *American Studies in Dialogue: Radical Reconstructions between Curriculum and Cultural Critique* (Frankfurt, 2010), 167–68; and Ann Kovalchick and Kara Dawson, eds., *Education and Technology: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA, 2004), 182.

[28] C. M. Sperberg-McQueen, "Textual Criticism and the Text Encoding Initiative" (paper presentation, annual meeting for the Modern Language Association, San Diego, California, December 1994). Available online at http://www.tei-c.org/Vault/XX/mla94.html. See also Hockey, "The History of Humanities Computing."

[29] Matt Cohen, Ed Folsom, and Kenneth M. Price, eds., Walt Whitman Archive (website), http://whitmanarchive.org/.

[30] Morris Eaves, Robert Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, eds., William Blake Archive (website), http://www.blakearchive.org/staticpage/archiveataglance.

[31] Despite significant support from various foundations, the project requires subscriptions that continue to hamper access. Only one of the two authors of this piece, for instance, has access through his university to the excellent database.

[32] Michael O'Malley and Roy Rosenzweig, "Brave New World or Blind Alley? American History on the World Wide Web," *Journal of American History* 84, no. 1 (June 1997): 135–55, here 146.

tion of traditional narrative, and the democratic search for ways to recognize, even celebrate, the role of ordinary people in making history and culture."[33]

In 1994, Roy Rosenzweig, then a pioneering social historian at George Mason University, founded the Center for History and New Media to "incorporate multiple voices, reach diverse audiences, and encourage popular participation in presenting and preserving the past."[34] Rosenzweig worked with the American Social History Project to produce pedagogical CD-ROMs.[35] In 1998, Edward Ayers and William Thomas formed the Virginia Center for Digital History at the University of Virginia.[36] At the University of Houston, Steven Mintz and Sara McNeil pioneered a free (though not yet open) digital history text, Digital History: Using New Technologies to Enhance Teaching and Research, providing an enduring example of a practical student-centered project that also explored—in its case, through "hyperlink history"—the new possibilities afforded by its digital platform.[37] In 1998, the Center for History and New Media launched History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web, a vast collection of primary sources, pedagogical essays, syllabi, reference material, and other teaching tools that that brought academic historians and high school teachers and students into collaboration.[38] Such projects demonstrated that expanding access and participation motivated emerging digital scholarship.

Lisa Spiro, in her essay "'This Is Why We Fight': Defining the Values of the Digital Humanities," argued that a set of core values, rather than traditional disciplinary boundaries, demarcated "digital humanities." Surveying digital humanities manifestos and combing the rhetoric of the young field, she proposed "openness" as the first of five values governing the field.[39] "Many scholars hope and anticipate that open practices," two digital humanists, George Veletsianos and Royce Kimmons, wrote, "will broaden access to education and knowledge, reduce costs, enhance the impact and reach of scholarship and education, and foster the development of more equitable, effective, efficient, and transparent scholarly and educational processes."[40]

Proponents of digital technology also embraced a participatory ethos. In addition to openness, Spiro, for instance, also touted "collaboration," "collegiality and connectedness," and "diversity" as foundational values.[41] Democratization interpreted as the expansion of access and participation was integral to the digital humanities from the very

[33] Gary J. Kornblith, "Venturing into the Civil War, Virtually: A Review," *Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (June 2001): 145–51, here 146.

[34] See, for instance, "About," Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (website), accessed September 21, 2021, http://chnm.gmu.edu/about/.

[35] "Our Story," Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (website), accessed September 21, 2021, http://rrchnm.org/our-story/history/.

[36] "About," Virginia Center for Digital History, accessed September 21, 2021, http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/index.php?page=About.

[37] Steven Mintz and Sara McNeil, Digital History: Using New Technologies to Enhance Teaching and Research (website), accessed September 22, 2021, www.digitalhistory.uh.edu.

[38] History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web (website), last updated March 22, 2018, http://historymatters.gmu.edu/.

[39] Lisa Spiro, "'This Is Why We Fight': Defining the Values of the Digital Humanities," in Gold, *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-88c11800-9446-469b-a3be-3fdb36bfbd1e/section/9e014167-c688-43ab-8b12-0f6746095335.

[40] George Veletsianos and Royce Kimmons, "Assumptions and Challenges of Open Scholarship," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 13, no. 4 (2012): 166–89, here 167, quoted in Martin Paul Eve, *Open Access and the Humanities: Contexts, Controversies, and the Future* (New York, 2014), 3.

[41] Spiro, "'This Is Why We Fight.'"

beginning. Andrea Hunter, writing in the *Canadian Journal of Communication* in 2015, argued that such a democratization was the best answer to the chronic definitional question "What is the digital humanities?" Hunter reframed the question away from technology by emphasizing gains in "access and participation." Only through such a democratization, she argued, could the digital humanities realize its disciplinary promise.[42] To illustrate her argument, Hunter specifically cited two projects: (1) the Orlando Project, a self-described "new kind of electronic textbase for research and discovery" produced by the University of Alberta and the University of Guelph that revolves around "women's writing in the British Isles from the beginnings to the present," and (2) the Center for History and New Media's Omeka, a digital platform designed to allow users to curate and share their own historical archives.[43] The first project was designed to bring obscure sources online and out of the archive, the second to allow users to become historians themselves. Both aimed to make the humanities accessible to a wider audience.

Such projects illustrate the common desires of digital historians and digital humanists to disseminate knowledge beyond the walls of particular colleges and universities. "The notion of the university as ivory tower no longer makes sense, if it ever did," argued Anne Burdick, Johanna Drucker, Peter Lunenfeld, Todd Presner, and Jeffrey Schnapp in their 2012 book *Digital Humanities*. "Since the Digital Humanities studies and explicates what it means to be human in the networked information age, it expands the reach and relevance of the humanities far beyond small groups of specialists locked in hermetically sealed conversation." By connecting specialists across fields, they argued, the digital humanities would "open up the prospect of a conversation extending far beyond the walls of the ivory tower that connects universities to cultural institutions, libraries, museums, and community organizations."[44]

The open-access movement grew alongside the digital humanities. As Martin Paul Eve put it in his recent survey of open access in the humanities, "The overwhelming assumption from the literature on open scholarship is that it has co-evolved with broader technological developments."[45] The digital revolution brought open licensing into the mainstream with the establishment of Creative Commons in 2001.[46] The following year, a UNESCO forum championed what they called "a universal educational resource available for the whole of humanity, to be referred to henceforth as Open Educational Resources."[47] Open educational resources—resources that are not simply freely avail-

[42] Andrea Hunter, "The Digital Humanities and Democracy," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 40, no. 3 (2015): 407–23.

[43] Orlando Project (website), accessed September 22, 2021, http://orlando.cambridge.org/; Omeka (website), accessed September 22, 2021, https://omeka.org/.

[44] Anne Burdick, Johanna Drucker, Peter Lunenfeld, Todd Presner, and Jeffrey Schnapp, *Digital Humanities* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 82.

[45] Eve, *Open Access and the Humanities*, 16.

[46] Creative Commons licenses built on the earlier work of David Wiley and his Open Publication License. In 2002, Wiley dissolved his license and formally joined Creative Commons. David Wiley, "OpenContent Is Officially Closed. And That's Just Fine," OpenContent, June 30, 2003, https://web.archive.org/web/20030802222546/http://opencontent.org/. Early critics, however, accused Creative Commons of failing "to confront and look beyond the logic and power asymmetries of the present." See David Berry, "On the 'Creative Commons': A Critique of the Commons without Commonalty," *Free Software Magazine*, July 15, 2005.

[47] UNESCO, "Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries," July 1–3, 2002, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001285/128515e.pdf. See also Sally M. Johnstone, "Open Educational Resources Serve the World," *Educause Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (2005): 15–18, and T. J. Bliss and M. Smith, "A Brief History of Open Educational Resources," in *Open: The Philosophy*

able online but released into the public domain, or with an open license that allows users to copy, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute them—had been born. When the Public Library of Science (PLOS) began publishing open-access journals in science and medicine, open access established a foothold in the academy.[48]

"Open access," however, remains a relatively new idea for many historians outside the digital humanities.[49] In a notice appended to their 2014 open monograph, *The History Manifesto*, historians Jo Guldi and David Armitage wrote, "Even two or three years ago, most academics in the humanities, and certainly most members of the non-academic public, had not heard much if anything about the Open Access movement."[50] But already, as advocate Martin Weller put it, "openness is now such a part of everyday life that it seems unworthy of comment."[51] Creative Commons' open licenses are now ubiquitous parts not only of academics' general internet browsing but increasingly of their scholarship as well: a number of pioneering publications in the humanities are now following the sciences into open-access publishing, and grant money is appearing for such projects. In fact, according to Eve, "it is now more often the practicalities of achieving such a goal that are the focus of disagreement."[52] And this is where many projects have stalled—until recently.

In just a few short years, barriers to participation in digital humanities have fallen and institutional supports have risen. New publishing venues for open-source scholarship and pedagogy; streamlined digital platforms and lowered technological barriers; injections of public and private grant money; the institutionalization of digital humanities in research universities; the development of scholarly guidelines and best practices; and the growing acceptance of open-source scholarship and pedagogy among the academic community have all created the conditions for a digitized history.

Funding seeded the digital humanities across American universities. The National Endowment for the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation planted many institutional bedrocks and continue to fund initiatives reshaping the digital humanities landscape, digital public history projects in particular.[53] The National Endowment for the Humanities, for instance, whose charter declares that "the humanities belong to the people of the United States," spun off a new Office of Digital Humanities in 2008. In 2015, citing an "urgent and compelling" need to pioneer digital publishing, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded several million-dollar grants to university presses for

and Practices That Are Revolutionizing Education and Science, ed. Rajiv S. Jhangiani and Robert Biswas-Diener (London, 2017), 9–27.

[48] For a timeline of the Public Library of Science, see https://www.plos.org/history.

[49] "The term 'open access,'" according to Martin Paul Eve, refers to the removal of price and permission barriers to scholarly research." Eve, *Open Access and the Humanities*, 3.

[50] Jo Guldi and David Armitage, "Why Open Access Publication for *The History Manifesto*?," Cambridge Open, 2014, http://historymanifesto.cambridge.org/blog/2014/09/why-open-access-publication-history-manifesto#sthash.FYCNEiH9.dpuf. "This is a new era for all of us," said Harriette Hemmasi, university librarian at Brown University, upon receiving funds to explore digital publishing. Carl Straumsheim, "Piecing Together Publishing," *Inside Higher Ed*, February 25, 2015, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/02/25/researchers-university-press-directors-emboldened-mellon-foundation-interest.

[51] Martin Weller, *The Battle for Open: How Openness Won and Why It Doesn't Feel like Victory* (London, 2014), 2.

[52] Eve, *Open Access and the Humanities*, 7.

[53] Sharon Leon, surveying the National Endowment for the Humanities' grant-winning digital history projects, found that "the Divisions of Preservation and Access, Public Programs, and Education Programs" funded the majority of projects. Leon, "Complicating a 'Great Man' Narrative of Digital History in the United States."

the exploration of digital publishing models.[54] Other wealthy foundations have focused on digital publications. Yale University Library, for instance, received a $3 million grant in 2014 from the Goizueta Foundation to launch the Digital Humanities Lab.[55] It is just one of many new ventures that have smashed barriers to online "publication" with appeals for expanded access.

Historian Daniel Cohen, in the same year that Rosenzweig penned his plea for open-source history, said, "Resources that are free to use in any way, even if they are imperfect, are more valuable than those that are gated or use-restricted, even if those resources are qualitatively better."[56] Recent polls have shown that provided they can be reassured that they are using a rigorous product, academics are not fundamentally opposed to open projects.[57] But without the guarantee of peer review, how can digital humanities projects win over hesitant academics? As Martin Paul Eve writes, "Any transition to open access must necessarily interact with the value systems of the academy and its publishing mechanisms."[58] Those very publishing mechanisms have begun to embrace open access, hearkening a shift in academia's prestige economy: scholars can now remain within existing academic structures even as they push the boundaries of access and audience.

University presses, libraries, and academics have spent more than a decade experimenting with and innovating new publishing platforms for open scholarship. University presses have been particularly vigorous in their experiments with open-access and open-source publications. The University of Michigan Library and the University of Michigan Press launched the digitalculturebooks imprint in 2006 with the goal of "developing open platforms that make openness part of the scholarly peer review process" and publishes work under an Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Creative Commons license.[59] Under Mark Saunders, the University of Virginia Press received substantial institutional and Mellon grant funding in 2006 and 2007 to seed the publication of online texts under its Rotunda imprint, bringing *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* and *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution* online.

But if open licensing and digital publishing platforms are relatively straightforward, a financial model to sustain the infrastructure of academic publishing is not.[60] "If there ever was a time for a university press to go into open access," Neil B. Christensen, the director of digital business development for the University of California Press, said in 2015, "this is the time." That year, the press launched dual platforms for publishing

[54] Straumsheim, "Piecing Together Publishing."

[55] Amanda Patrick, "The Goizueta Foundation Supports Creation of a Digital Humanities Laboratory at Yale," *Yale News*, December 11, 2014, http://news.yale.edu/2014/12/11/goizueta-foundation-supports-creation-digital-humanities-laboratory-yale.

[56] Daniel J. Cohen, "From Babel to Knowledge: Data Mining Large Digital Collections," *D-Lib Magazine* 12, no. 3 (March 2006), http://www.dlib.org/dlib/march06/cohen/03cohen.html.

[57] Eve, *Open Access and the Humanities*, 3. "When presented with the concept of OER, most faculty say that they are willing to give it a try," concluded one report. I. Elaine Allen and Jeff Seaman, *Opening the Curriculum: Open Educational Resources in U.S. Higher Education* (Wellesley, MA, 2014), 2.

[58] Eve, *Open Access and the Humanities*, 4.

[59] "About Us," digitalculturebooks (website), accessed September 22, 2021, http://www.digitalculture.org/about/.

[60] On the question of funding and the sustainability of open-access publishing, see Martin Paul Eve, Paula Clemente Vega, and Caroline Edwards, "Lessons from the Open Library of Humanities," *Liber Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (2020): 1–18.

open-access journals and monographs, Collabra and Luminos.[61] Striving for long-term sustainability, the press's open-access business model revolves around authors' fees and paid reviewers. Collabra, for instance, charges authors a $825 publication fee. Such a model borrows from the sciences, where fee-based publication undergirds open-access standbys such as *PLOS ONE* (which charges $1,700 to publish a research article) and Elsevier's suite of science journals (which typically charge between $1,500 and $4,000 to publish a research article). A pay-to-publish open-access model, foreign to academic historians, would democratize access at the expense of participation: by opening up research, it would close off routes to publication—the currency of academia—for all but a few. Under such a model, open access risks becoming, in the words of information scientist Ulrich Herb, "an instrument that creates exclusivity, exclusion, distinction and prestige."[62]

Much of the financial dilemma confronting the institutionalization of open access owes to larger changes in the financing of higher education. While the postwar university maintained an awkward relationship with the corporate world, the mania for deregulation in the 1980s accelerated the neoliberalization of higher education.[63] As public funding stalled and then slowly collapsed, universities began to see research and grant funding as profit centers.[64] The ongoing adjunctification of teaching labor further accelerated as increasingly bloated administrative regimes imposed new managerial methods designed to recover costs and improve efficiency.[65] Lacking public funding but unwilling to pass costs on to practicing historians and other academic humanists, humanities publishers have largely relied on public and private grants. In 2012, for instance, the University of Minnesota, through the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, launched the Open Textbook Initiative, a catalog of online open-license textbooks. In 2018, the Graduate Center Digital Scholarship Lab at the City University of New York received a nearly $1 million grant from the Andrew

[61] Carl Straumsheim, "'Paying It Forward' Publishing," *Inside Higher Ed*, February 10, 2015, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/02/10/u-california-press-builds-open-access-publishing-model-around-paying-it-forward.

[62] Ulrich Herb, "Open Access and Symbolic Gift Giving," in *Open Divide: Critical Studies on Open Access*, ed. Ulrich Herb and Joachim Schöpfel (Sacramento, CA, 2018), 69–81. See also Samuel Moore, "Common Struggles: Policy-Based vs. Scholar-Led Approaches to Open Access in the Humanities" (unpublished doctoral thesis, King's College London, 2019), https://hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:24135/, and Ryan Burns, "New Frontiers of Philanthro-capitalism: Digital Technologies and Humanitarianism," *Antipode* 51, no. 4 (September 2019): 1101–22.

[63] The 1980 Bayh-Dole Act, for instance, allowed universities to profit from even publicly funded research, redirecting research toward commercial potential.

[64] In the late 1990s, the University of Chicago redesigned its core curriculum based on the advice of management consultants. David L. Kirp, *Shakespeare, Einstein, and the Bottom Line: The Marketing of Higher Education* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), 33–51. According to former Harvard president Derek Bok, researchers using corporate funds are twice as likely "to be influenced by commercial considerations in choosing their research topics." Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace*, 61. BB&T bank has funded grants at more than sixty colleges, requiring courses to assign Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*. S. Douglas Beets, "BB&T, *Atlas Shrugged*, and the Ethics of Corporation Influence on College Curricula," *Journal of Academic Ethics* 13 (2015): 311–44. See also Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 270–71..

[65] Between 1976 and 2001, the number of faculty grew by 75.8 percent compared to 239.2 percent growth for nonfaculty professionals. Schuster and Finkelstein, *The American Faculty*, 269. On new accounting practices, see Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University*, 127–29, Neil Fligstein, *The Transformation of Corporate Control* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), and Schwartz, "Financing the University." See also Schrecker, *The Lost Soul of Higher Education*, and Ginsberg, *The Fall of the Faculty*.

W. Mellon Foundation to develop Manifold, an open-source web-based publishing platform.[66]

Advocates of open educational resources have continued to experiment with alternative models of sustainable open-access publishing. "Access to the work that we produce must be opened up as a site of conversation not just among scholars but also between scholars and the broader culture," wrote Kathleen Fitzpatrick in *Planned Obsolescence*, her exploration into the future of technology and academic publishing.[67] In 2015, with grant money from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and partnerships with university libraries, Caroline Edwards and Martin Paul Eve launched the Open Library of Humanities to provide a new sustainable open-access publishing platform for the humanities.[68] University libraries, meanwhile, continue to experiment with publishing models. "If making scholarly research publicly accessible on the Web could go some way toward enlightening the general public about the importance and the skill of scholarly work," Brown University's faculty dean, Kevin McLaughlin, said, "that would be fantastic."[69]

The gold standard of academic scholarship remains the university press, and over the past years, many have incorporated open publishing into their regular imprints. In 2006, the Orlando Project turned to a traditional press, Cambridge, to "publish" the project. Cambridge's agreement marked a turning point in academic legitimation of open-source publishing. "They are the name," a producer of the project said. "They have standards."[70] Cambridge in particular has continued to experiment with open access. Their 2014 publication of *The History Manifesto*, a book-length essay by historians Jo Guldi and David Armitage, marked a new high point of academic respectability for open-access publication in the history profession.[71]

Cambridge is not alone. The University of Virginia Press has long published projects online, if not necessarily with formal open access. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press has published multiple influential books online through both open review and open licensing. The University of Michigan, from 2011 to 2013, oversaw the open peer review and eventual dual publishing of *Writing History in the Digital Age* at the same time the University of Minnesota similarly published *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. Beginning in 2019, the Public Library of Science began to allow authors to participate in their version of an open review, where readers' reports, editorial decisions, and author responses are all made publicly available.[72]

These developments offered prototypes for how open-access platforms can extend traditional notions of "publication." And such efforts continue to multiply. The boundaries of "publication" are expanding. Stanford University Press, for instance, recently received a large Mellon grant to bring peer review to digital-native projects. With such efforts pro-

[66] For more on Manifold, see https://manifoldapp.org/. For examples of projects built through the platform, see "All Projects," Manifold (website), accessed September 22, 2021, https://cuny.manifoldapp.org/projects/all.

[67] Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* (New York, 2011), 174.

[68] See, for instance, "About," Open Library of Humanities (website), accessed September 22, 2021, https://www.openlibhums.org/site/about/.

[69] Straumsheim, "Piecing Together Publishing."

[70] Hunter, "The Digital Humanities and Democracy," 418.

[71] Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge, 2014).

[72] The Public Library of Science refers to their process as a transparent peer review history. For more, see "Publishing FAQs," PLOS (website), accessed September 22, 2021, https://www.plos.org/faq#loc-Peer-review-history.

liferating across the university press landscape, academic credibility can hardly be considered any longer an obstacle to democratized access. And yet academic credibility is not the only remaining obstacle to the flourishing of a democratized digital humanities. In fact, the very mechanisms that triggered its expansion—grant funding, institutional backing, easy traffic in earnest rhetoric rooted in "democratization"—have raised legitimate alarms. "Access," it seems, is not the only barrier to a more democratic humanities.

Digitization by itself did not guarantee the broad-based notion of "democracy" so ardently touted by early champions of the digital humanities. Robert Darnton, historian and librarian at Harvard University, examined Google's massive book digitization project and argued, "Yes, we must digitize. But more important, we must democratize. We must open access to our cultural heritage. How? By rewriting the rules of the game, by subordinating private interests to the public good, and by taking inspiration from the early republic in order to create a Digital Republic of Learning."[73] Such language has done important work, and great strides have been made in expanding access under the banner of democratization. At its worst, the digital humanities can seem an esoteric world, one more concerned with the code that goes into projects than with the utility of the projects themselves. New endeavors can seem designed to win grants but not users.[74] The digital humanities have expanded rapidly over the intervening decades, and yet, William Thomas lamented in 2012, "we are in danger of losing that animating spirit, and we need to recover the democratization at the heart of the Digital Humanities movement."[75]

The collision of technology and the humanities incites hyperbole: utopians dream of technological revolutions in research and a democratized world of free learning; skeptics warn of a predatory neoliberalism and privatized, profit-driven scholarship and pedagogy that privilege shallow instruction from deskilled educators. As early as 1999, Rosenzweig himself, writing in a review essay for the *American Quarterly*, lamented the "bifurcated tendency toward visions of utopia and dystopia" in discussions surrounding digital humanities.[76]

For decades, the disruption-minded, messianic rhetoric of Silicon Valley overlaid digital history with the moral appeal of democratized scholarship and pedagogy. In 2006, Siva Vaidhyanathan encouraged digital humanists to challenge technofundamentalism, "the misguided faith in technology and progress."[77] Critics note that the self-important utopian rhetoric surrounding the digital humanities often mirrors the language and reflects the libertarian social values of Silicon Valley.[78] The rhetorical similarities between digital humanities and Silicon Valley are stark. A typical claim made by a com-

[73] Robert Darnton, *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future* (New York, 2009), 13.

[74] William Pannapacker, "Stop Calling It 'Digital Humanities,'" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 18, 2013, http://chronicle.com/article/Stop-Calling-It-Digital/137325/.

[75] Thomas, "Trends in Digital Humanities."

[76] Rosenzweig, "Live Free or Die?," 161.

[77] Siva Vaidhyanathan, "Introduction: Rewiring the 'Nation': The Place of Technology in American Studies," *American Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (September 2006): 555–67, here 557.

[78] Safiya Noble identifies digital utopianism as a neoliberal ideology and credits critical theorists with complicating triumphalist digital humanities narratives. Noble, "A Future for Intersectional Black Feminist Technology Studies." Brian Greenspan, however, argues that utopian ideas are necessary for radical ends. Brian Greenspan, "Are Digital Humanists Utopian?," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/1b2b9243-265d-49a3-9024-abf948edbab9#ch33. See also Ruth Levitas, "For Utopia: The (Limits of the) Utopian Function in Late Capitalist Society," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 3, nos. 2–3 (2000): 25–43; Louis Marin, *Utopics: The Semiological Play of Textual Spaces* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1984); and Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture*.

mentator in 2010 is indicative: "The digital humanities should not be about the digital at all. It's all about innovation and disruption. The digital humanities is really an insurgent humanities."[79] It is a necessary criticism that much of the rhetoric justifying academic and educational "disruptions" can conceal ulterior motives.[80]

Market logics—corporate restructuring, adjunctification, and relentless financialization—have infected American higher education. While student radicals dreamed of democratizing the production and dissemination of knowledge, policy makers and administrators increasingly embraced corporate models of governance, reimagining the mission of the postwar university and what scholars of higher education have called an "academic capitalism."[81] Since at least the 1970s, policy makers have slashed funding to universities, and administrators have not only decimated the ranks of tenure-track faculty but incentivized profit-seeking research, consistently raised tuition, and embraced corporate bloat. Surrendering to the imperatives of the market, universities emphasize the production of marketable skills over the inculcation of democratic values or informed citizenship. STEM programs reign, and humanities programs decline. This is the academic context in which the digital humanities came of age.[82]

The potential deskilling of education—manifested most obviously in the shrinking of the ranks of full-time academic faculty—and the relentless chasing of patronage from billionaire philanthropists and endowment bureaucracies, while touting "innovation," "disruption," and "democratization," haunts the digital humanities. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, Richard Grusin, Patrick Jagoda, and Rita Raley warned in 2016 of the "the dark side of the digital humanities," arguing that "the same neoliberal logic that informs the ongoing destruction of the mainstream humanities has encouraged" the growth of digital humanities as an institution in higher education.[83] That same summer, three academics writing in the *Los Angeles Review of Books* blamed digital humanities for abetting the neoliberalization of the American university. "Despite the aggressive promotion of Digital Humanities as a radical insurgency," they wrote, "its institutional success has for the most part involved the displacement of politically progressive humanities scholarship and activism in favor of the manufacture of digital tools and archives."[84] Singling

[79] Mark Sample, comment on Chris Forster, "I'm Chris. Where Am I Wrong?," HASTAC (blog), September 8, 2010, https://www.hastac.org/blogs/cforster/2010/09/08/im-chris-where-am-i-wrong.

[80] See, for instance, Pannapacker, "Stop Calling It 'Digital Humanities.'"

[81] Gary Rhoades and Sheila Slaughter, "Academic Capitalism, Managed Professionals, and Supply-Side Higher Education," *Social Text*, no. 51 (Summer 1997): 9–38; Sheila Slaughter and Larry L. Leslie, *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University* (Baltimore, 1997); Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades, *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy: Markets, State, and Higher Education* (Baltimore, 2004); Robert Nisbet, *The Degradation of the Academic Dogma: The University in America, 1945–1970* (New York, 1971).

[82] Schrecker, *The Lost Soul of Higher Education*; Neem, *What's the Point of College?*; Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University*; Larry G. Gerber, *The Rise and Decline of Faculty Governance: Professionalization and the Modern American University* (Baltimore, 2014); Gaye Tuchman, *Wannabe U: Inside the Corporate University* (Chicago, 2009); Frank Donoghue, *The Last Professors: The Twilight of the Humanities in the Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities* (New York, 2008); Herb Childress, *The Adjunct Underclass: How America's Colleges Betrayed Their Faculty, Their Students, and Their Mission* (Chicago, 2019).

[83] Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, Richard Grusin, Patrick Jagoda, and Rita Raley, "The Dark Side of the Digital Humanities," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/ca35736b-0020-4ac6-9ce7-88c6e9ff1bba#ch38.

[84] Daniel Allington, Sarah Brouillette, David Golumbia, "Neoliberal Tools (and Archives): A Political History of Digital Humanities," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, May 1, 2016, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/neoliberal-tools-archives-political-history-digital-humanities/. For one of many rejoinders, see Juliana

out the digital humanities turn in English—they did not engage the field of digital history—they characterized digital humanists' utopian rhetoric as a self-serving veil concealing the move toward computation over interpretation, external funding over institutional support, and general administration-supported corporatism over traditional academic labor. The authors placed much of the impetus for the digital humanities on the labor of what they saw as a conservative core of literary scholars who operated at the University of Virginia between 1999 and 2002.[85] The Trojan horse of "disruption" can certainly overshadow the promise of a democratized history.

The specter of exploited labor, for instance, can and should haunt open-access projects. In the neoliberal academy, scholars are expected to offer more of their labor without due compensation or recognition. Few beyond a small circle of prominently situated scholars receive significant compensation for writing traditional articles, books, or textbooks. Despite a lack of remuneration, as Stevan Harnad pointed out in his groundbreaking 1995 "subversive proposal," open access is possible because academics—whose salaries are already paid by universities—produce what he calls "esoteric" work: work grounded in an internal economy driven by readership and impact, not profits.[86] A copyright designed to protect an author's personal profits hardly makes sense for the bulk of academics, who receive no profits to protect. As Martin Paul Eve put it, "Why should academics retain the economic protections of copyright if they are not dependent upon the system of remuneration that this is supposed to uphold?"[87] In a digital world in which the marginal cost of reproduction is nil, open-access advocates such as John Willinsky and Creative Commons' Cable Green argue that academics have an ethical obligation as humanists to share their work and their knowledge with the public and with their students.[88] And given the gravity of the current cost crisis in higher education, such work seems increasingly imperative.

Academic writing is, of course, only one component in a larger publishing ecosystem. While digital platforms may eliminate the cost of physical publication, what about the work of peer review, editing, copyediting, and the other intellectual labor that goes into publishing academic work? Who, for instance, will pay for the labor it took to publish this piece in the *AHR*? This article received a traditional solicited peer review, as well as a separate open review in which seventeen separate academics offered feedback

Spahr, Richard So, and Andrew Piper, "Beyond Resistance: Towards a Future History of Digital Humanities," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, May 11, 2016, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/beyond-resistance-towards-future-history-digital-humanities/.

[85] Here, we could also address the massive open online course frenzy, but that bubble has begun to pop and the passion has calmed, whether or not the pernicious logic behind its disruption-minded indictment of education remains.

[86] Stevan Harnad, "Overture: A Subversive Proposal," in *Scholarly Journals at the Crossroads: A Subversive Proposal for Electronic Publishing*, ed. Ann Okerson and James J. O'Donnell (Washington, DC, 1995), 11–12. The adjunctification of academic labor admittedly complicates presuppositions of gainful compensation.

[87] Eve, *Open Access and the Humanities*, 18. See also Peter Suber, *Open Access* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 9–15.

[88] John Willinsky, *The Access Principle: The Case for Open Access to Research and Scholarship* (Cambridge, MA, 2006). As Cable Green, Creative Commons' director of global learning, put it, "When the marginal cost of sharing is $0, educators have an ethical obligation to share." Cable Green, "Open Education: The Moral, Business & Policy Case for OER," keynote address, Affordable Learning Georgia conference, December 11, 2014, http://www.affordablelearninggeorgia.org/documents/Cable_EveningPlenaryKeynote.pdf.

in eighty-eight individual comments that ranged from full readers' reports to discreet points of fact. "Since my job is to summarize the reports and incorporate them into a letter offering some direction for revisions," wrote Alex Lichtenstein, former editor of the *AHR*, in his open response letter to the authors. "I find this far too labor intensive to be a regular editorial practice. I simply would not have the time to manage this with every single article. I suppose that if the AHA could hire multiple editors to do this kind of work on open peer review, it might be possible. In an open access world, I must say, that would take very hefty author processing fees!"[89] Journals, of course, require more than authors and editors. Like many other commentators, Lichtenstein recognizes that "fact-checking, copy-editing, and proofreading" are also time-intensive labor practices that require compensation.[90] Without wider public investment in the production of knowledge, even a reconfiguration of what qualifies as academic labor under tenure and promotion guidelines—an already tenuous proposition for the masses of contingent faculty—suggests open access may be able to meet the needs of consumers only by exploiting producers.

Despite the proliferation of digital history and positive shifts in professional norms, was William Thomas right to argue in 2012 that "we are in danger of losing that animating spirit" of democratization?[91] Certainly grants and conspicuous institutional backing should be for naught if the digital humanities drifted further from its democratic promise. Digital history betrays its core principles if it fails to engage users—privileging professional advancement, grant winning, and innovation for innovation's sake over the pursuit of readership, ease of use, public participation, pedagogical utility, and the pursuit of a multifaceted "democratization."

Digitization does not mean "democracy." But in the pursuit of new projects and new grants, for instance, scholars have long been content to dump information online and call it "democracy."[92] Instead, as historian Patricia Limerick noted in 1997, "we are in much greater need of methods and strategies for filtering, sorting, managing, synthesizing" than we are of new ways to access information that will never really be consumed.[93]

Archivists have recognized this challenge. "The digital world challenges our notion of preservation," the Society of American Archivists declared in 1997. It claimed that "in the digital world access is the central distinguishing quality of preservation." Archivists have digitized untold amounts of archival materials over the past two decades. The work of regular archivists, interns, outsourced labor, and crowdsourced labor—more than

[89] Alex J. Lichtenstein, "Editor's Comments," *AHR* Open Review, April 19, 2020, https://ahropenreview.com/HistoryCanBeOpenSource/editors-comments/. See also Karin Wulf, "Guest Post: Karin Wulf on Open Access and Historical Scholarship," *The Scholarly Kitchen* (blog), March 25, 2015, https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2015/03/25/guest-post-karin-wulf-on-open-access-and-historical-scholarship/, and Eric Slauter and Karin Wulf's working paper, "Open Access for the Humanities: A View from the *William and Mary Quarterly*," February 21, 2014, https://oieahc.wm.edu/wp-content/uploads/Slauter_Wulf_OA_MCEAS.pdf.

[90] Alex J. Lichtenstein, "Editor's Decision," *AHR* Open Review, November 27, 2020, https://ahropenreview.com/HistoryCanBeOpenSource/editors-decision/.

[91] Thomas, "Trends in Digital Humanities."

[92] Online access, of course, does not even necessarily guarantee greater access. See David Parry, "Be Online or Be Irrelevant," originally published on Academhack, January 11, 2020. Now available at https://outsidethetext.com/posts/be-online-or-be-irrelevant/.

[93] Patricia Nelson Limerick, "Insiders and Outsiders: The Borders of the USA and the Limits of the ASA: Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, 31 October 1996," *American Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (September 1997): 449–69, here 453.

twenty thousand volunteers participated in the Smithsonian Digital Volunteer program, for instance—has opened up archives to the world. Copyright has limited more recent materials—"the management of intellectual property is potentially the greatest challenge to the development of digital collections," according to archival scientist Lorna Hughes—but even innovations such as the "digital reading room" at the Special Collections and Archives at the University of California, Irvine, offer work-arounds.[94] Archivists have, meanwhile, emphasized the importance of metadata schemes for achieving interoperability, although a proliferation of competing schemes—Dublin Core, MARC, MODS, METS, EAD, and more—have rendered "the dream of integrated access to diverse information resources," as Murtha Baca put it, "still just that—a dream."[95] Still, as Limerick argued, "access" cannot be achieved simply through digitization. It is therefore the work of digital humanists to curate such raw materials and render them into usable forms.

Textbooks stand at the intersection of curation, access, and pedagogy. The lack of sophisticated, professionally curated textbooks, in fact, partly inspired Rosenzweig's call for open-source history. Traditional rather than disruptive, pedagogical rather than research based, eye glazing rather than grant winning, textbooks are nevertheless the most widely used tool in humanities classrooms. Mintz and McNeil recognized this as early as the 1990s, with their Digital History survey text, but few academics followed them.[96] Textbooks should have been ripe targets for the open-access movement.[97] Nowhere else are current costs and potential savings quite so clear, and many outside academia have long recognized the democratic and cost-annihilating potential of open texts. A closer look at textbooks in history and literature is revealing. For decades, scholars have allowed responsibility for textbook creation to fall on for-profit education companies, unwieldy nonprofit bureaucracies, underresourced lone wolves, and unregulated open wikis. Perhaps Wikipedia, despite Rosenzweig's plea, poisoned historians' attitudes toward open texts. A 2014 "Textbooks and Teaching" roundtable in the *Journal of American History* cited only the unreliability of open texts, rather than their promise.[98] For years, the construction of an open-licensed collaborative textbook fell to the educational industrial complex and its network of funder-disrupters.

In 2014, we proposed a new model for history textbooks. After a yearlong collaboration, more than 350 historians produced the first edition of *The American Yawp*, an open US history textbook project. We launched the project as a radical experiment in mass collaboration and institution-free pedagogy—an experiment that hundreds of thousands of users now benefit from each year.[99] But *The American Yawp* was only a logical

[94] Lorna M. Hughes, *Digitizing Collections: Strategic Issues for the Information Manager* (London, 2004), 286; Jean Dryden, "The Role of Copyright in Selection for Digitization," *American Archivist* 77, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2014), 64–95.

[95] Murtha Baca, "Practical Issues in Applying Metadata Schemas and Controlled Vocabularies to Cultural Heritage Information," *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly* 36, nos. 3–4 (October 2003): 47–55, here 54.

[96] Mintz and McNeil, *Digital History*.

[97] Weller, *The Battle for Open*, 76. For evidence that open educational resources improve learning outcomes, see Lane Fischer, John Hilton III, T. Jared Robinson, and David A. Wiley, "A Multi-institutional Study of the Impact of Open Textbook Adoption on the Learning Outcomes of Post-secondary Students," *Journal of Computing in Higher Education* 27, no. 3 (December 2015): 159–72.

[98] Scott E. Casper, ed., "Textbooks Today and Tomorrow: A Conversation about History, Pedagogy, and Economics," *Journal of American History* 100, no. 4 (March 2014): 1139–69.

[99] *The American Yawp*: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook (website), accessed September 23, 2021, http://americanyawp.com. For more on *The American Yawp*, see Daniel Story and Alex Lichtenstein, "Ben Wright and Joseph Locke on *The American Yawp*," November 19, 2019, in AHR

extension of the democratic promise inherent not just in the rise of digital history but in a moment when technological innovation, institutional resources, professional norms, and shifting scholarly attitudes have converged to prove Rosenzweig right: history *can* be open source. But can it be democratic?

Ours is not the only project to explore the possibilities of massive collaboration. According to Roy Rosenzweig's 2006 plea for open-source history in the *Journal of American History*, Wikipedia is democratic in two senses: it is a free, widely accessible resource, and it is a massively participatory project.[100] Applying the principles of democracy to classrooms increasingly means involving students in the production of knowledge. With the support of a five-year, $50 million digital media and learning initiative, Henry Jenkins explored the impacts of participatory culture, specifically the opportunity for digital technology to enable the popular production rather than simply the consumption of culture. Jenkins and his fellow travelers work to transform education around technological opportunities to develop cultural competencies and encourage student involvement in not just consuming but also producing and disseminating knowledge. The democratizing tactics of these educators have included student blogging, video making, podcasting, and even gaming and social networking. According to Jenkins, academics, educators, and policy makers need to "shift the focus of the conversation about the digital divide from questions of technological access to those of opportunities to participate and to develop the cultural competencies and social skills."[101] For some, the expansions in participatory culture promise to shatter nearly all hierarchies and replace them with egalitarian, collaborative relationships.[102]

Still, even a broad emphasis on participation can elide structural inequalities. Issues of gender, racial, and sexual representation, for instance, dominate humanistic inquiry but continue to plague the practice and production of the digital humanities. Miriam Posner argued in 2016 that we must confront these questions but added that "to truly engage in this kind of critical work . . . would require dismantling and rebuilding much of the organizing logic that underlies our work."[103] Similar essays by Tara McPherson ("Why Are the Digital Humanities So White?"), Bethany Nowviskie ("What Do Girls Dig?"), and host of other critics hint at foundational problems that cannot be solved

Interview, podcast, https://directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/show/ahrinterview/id/12089015; Joseph Locke and Ben Wright, "A Free and Open Alternative to Traditional History Textbooks," *Perspectives on History*, March 1, 2015, https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/march-2015/a-free-and-open-alternative-to-traditional-history-textbooks; "Compiling an Open History Textbook: An Interview with *American Yawp* Editors Joseph Locke and Ben Wright," *Perspectives on History*, April 20, 2015, https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/april-2015/compiling-an-open-history-textbook-an-interview-with-american-yawp-editors-joseph-locke-and-ben-wright; and Rachel Beltzhoover and M. Omar Siddiqi, "A Conversation with Ben Wright and Joseph Locke, Editors of *The American Yawp*," *American Historian*, accessed September 23, 2021, https://tah.oah.org/content/conversation-ben-wright/.

[100] Rosenzweig, "Can History Be Open Source?"

[101] Henry Jenkins, "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century," the MacArthur Foundation, accessed September 23, 2021, https://www.macfound.org/media/article_pdfs/JENKINS_WHITE_PAPER.PDF.

[102] See, for example, Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams, *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything* (New York, 2006).

[103] Miriam Posner, "What's Next: The Radical, Unrealized Potential of Digital Humanities," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/a22aca14-0eb0-4cc6-a622-6fee9428a357#ch03.

through modest organizational statements or more equitable faculty appointments and grant disbursements.[104]

According to Sharon Leon, the very act of historicizing digital history has often reinforced inequality. Leon, for instance, argues that women, particularly women of color, have been especially eager to connect digital work to community needs but that the emphasis on published research in digital history has obscured their contributions.[105] Critics therefore argue that digital humanists, far from ushering in democratic triumphs, have often only further marginalized already marginalized voices.[106] As digital humanists institutionalize themselves further into the landscape of higher education, they must recognize that they are often no longer insurgent underdogs but, increasingly, the very gatekeepers they have so successfully positioned themselves against.[107]

The digital humanities, of course, do not have a monopoly on democratic yearnings. In fact, some of the most active engagement in democratic discourse comes from outside the digital humanities. The Democratizing Knowledge Project at Syracuse University, for example, draws from an impressively interdisciplinary core faculty and eschews digital practice in favor of analog forms of scholarship and activism. Through an annual summer institute, campus forums, creative pedagogy, and connections beyond the walls of the academy, the project pursues its goal of "confronting white privilege, hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity, and colonial heritages."[108]

Digital history is not the only subdiscipline of history that has struggled to realize democratic commitments in an increasingly digital world. Public history, for instance, has long emphasized public engagement and civic participation as core tenets.[109] Suzanne Fischer defines the field's mission as "cracking open history as a democratic project, and doing it transparently, in public."[110] Andrew Hurley likewise argues that "the attempt to leverage historical knowledge on behalf of social change has absorbed a significant segment of the field since the 1970s." Over the past decades, public historians have therefore also championed, as Hurley puts it, the "uncensored, open-access realm of cyberspace . . . as an exemplary venue for democratic civic engagement."[111] But what does a democratic digital public history look like? Sheila Brennan rightly

[104] Tara McPherson, "Why Are the Digital Humanities So White? or Thinking the Histories of Race and Computation," in Gold, *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-88c11800-9446-469b-a3be-3fdb36bfbd1e/section/20df8acd-9ab9-4f35-8a5d-e91aa5f4a0ea#ch09; Bethany Nowviskie, "What Do Girls Dig?," *Bethany Nowviskie* (blog), April 7, 2011, http://nowviskie.org/2011/what-do-girls-dig/.

[105] See especially Leon, "Complicating a 'Great Man' Narrative of Digital History in the United States."

[106] See also Henry Jenkins, "Bringing Critical Perspectives to the Digital Humanities: An Interview with Tara McPherson (Part Three)," *Confessions of an Aca-Fan* (blog), March 20, 2015, http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2015/03/bringing-critical-perspectives-to-the-digital-humanities-an-interview-with-tara-mcpherson-part-three.html; David Kim, "Archives, Models, and Methods for Critical Approaches to Identities: Representing Race and Ethnicity in the Digital Humanities" (PhD diss., UCLA, 2015).

[107] Oral historians Julianne Nyhan and Andrew Flinn identified "revolutionary" and "underdog" as the recurring motifs with which digital humanists described themselves. Julianne Nyhan and Andrew Flinn, *Computation and the Humanities: Towards an Oral History of Digital Humanities* (London, 2016).

[108] Democratizing Knowledge Project (website), accessed September 23, 2021, https://democratizingknowledge.syr.edu/.

[109] "Public history is not only history for a large audience," Thomas Cauvin explains, "but involves public participation as well." Thomas Cauvin, *Public History: A Textbook of Practice* (New York, 2016), 179.

[110] Suzanne Fischer, "On the Vocation of Public History," #alt-academy, May 8, 2011, http://mediacommons.org/alt-ac/pieces/vocation-public-history.

[111] Andrew Hurley, "Chasing the Frontiers of Digital Technology: Public History Meets the Digital Divide," *Public Historian* 38, no. 1 (February 2016): 69–88, here 70.

warns that "projects and research may be available online, but that status does not inherently make the work digital public humanities or public digital humanities."[112] Digital tools can in fact prove decidedly undemocratic.

Technological sophistication and community needs do not always align. Hurley, who created the Virtual City Project, an initiative to create 3D models of historic landscapes, worried that the innovative technology that would win him funding would lose him his audience: "Technology that was supposed to democratize knowledge and bring people together was having the opposite effect."[113] Lara Kelland's Parkland History digital project, built to capture the neighborhood's importance to Black life in Louisville, similarly struggled to win community engagement. While laboring to incorporate local voices, she wrote, "Our hopes for engaged and sustained dialogue about the neighborhood's past, present, and future have yet to materialize." Suspecting that "the digital divide in its many forms has contributed to this silence," Kelland redoubled her face-to-face work in the community and created new local in-person programming.[114] Like Laurenellen McCann, she argues that digital projects must work *with* communities, not *for* them.[115] Sharon Leon, for instance, in her presentation of "digital public history" work, has emphasized the idea of a digital "user-centered history."[116] These are lessons that digital humanists have had to learn. Only by annihilating the distance between the production and consumption of knowledge, the authors of *Digital Humanities* argue, are digital humanists "able to revitalize the cultural record in ways that involve citizens in the academic enterprise and bring the academy into the expanded public sphere."[117]

A digital history that views users as passive consumers overlooks the democratizing possibilities of participatory practices. And if we further define "democracy" as necessitating challenges to inequalities, then even participatory projects may fail to measure up. Over the past several years, however, digital humanists have offered compelling projects cognizant of such potential shortcomings. The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, the Colored Conventions Project, and the Refusing to Forget project, for example, all capture a democracy of access, collaboration, and activism. After providing maps and other material on "the dispossession and resistance by San Francisco Bay area residents," the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project allowed users to "help stop evictions" by donating to the "not-for-profit collective," reporting illegal vacation rentals, supporting local unions, avoiding calling police on neighbors, and pledging not to rent from unscrupulous landlords. Similarly, the Colored Conventions Project, an exploration of

[112] Sheila A. Brennan, "Public, First," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/11b9805a-a8e0-42e3-9a1c-fad46e4b78e5#ch32.

[113] Hurley, "Chasing the Frontiers of Digital Technology, 80. See also David Hochfelder, "Meeting Our Audiences Where They Are in the Digital Age," *History@Work* (blog), March 30, 2016, https://ncph.org/history-at-work/meeting-our-audiences-where-they-are-in-the-digital-age/, and Lara Kelland, "Digital Community Engagement across the Divides," *History@Work* (blog), April 20, 2016, https://ncph.org/history-at-work/digital-community-engagement-across-the-divides/.

[114] Kelland, "Digital Community Engagement across the Divides."

[115] Laurenellen McCann, "Building Technology with, Not for Communities: An Engagement Guide for Civic Tech," Medium, March 30, 2015, https://medium.com/@elle_mccann/building-technology-with-not-for-communities-an-engagement-guide-for-civic-tech-b8880982e65a. See also Wendy F. Hsu, "Lessons on Public Humanities from the Civic Sphere," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/0c337efc-8ed6-4af0-b997-5bdae84ce0d8#ch24.

[116] See Sharon M. Leon, "About," User-Centered Digital History, accessed September 23, 2021, https://digitalpublichistory.org/about.

[117] Burdick, Drucker, Lunenfeld, Presner, and Schnapp, *Digital Humanities*, 93.

nineteenth-century Black organizing, offers educational tools—exhibits and lesson plans—and archival materials to encourage both learning and research. But it also encourages visitors to "mobilize NOW for a future where Black Lives Matter" through voter registration and census participation. The project's dozens of teaching partners assented to a "memo of understanding" that includes a promise to "commit to confronting the under-representation of women" by incorporating the voices of women alongside formal male delegates in teaching assignments to capture those "largely written out of the minutes" of formal conventions. The Refusing to Forget project, a digital collaboration dedicated to raising awareness of the spate of state-sanctioned anti-Mexican violence in the early twentieth-century Texas-Mexico borderlands, similarly combines collaborative scholarship, educational tools, and public engagement. In addition to sharing primary documents and lesson plans, the project organizes historical marker campaigns, sponsors museum exhibits, and holds teaching workshops.[118] Like the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project and the Colored Conventions Project, Refusing to Forget shows that digital work, scholarship, and real-world issues are not so easily disentangled.

Most immediately, projects like these show that technology cannot be the only defining feature of digital history or of the broader digital humanities. Critical race and gender studies have offered the most pointed criticisms of the digital humanities and remind practitioners that democratization demands a reckoning with deeper structural inequalities.[119] The work of Audre Lorde and others reminds us that broken systems won't fix themselves.[120] Lisa Nakamura argues that race and racism suffuse our digital lives.[121] Whiteness, critics argue, dominates the institutions and logics of digital space.[122] Even coding—once a feminine activity—has been thoroughly gendered as masculine.[123] Scholars such as Safiya Umoja Noble—who urges the digital humanities

[118] Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (website), accessed September 23, 2021, http://www.antievictionmap.com/; Colored Conventions Project (website), accessed September 23, 2021, https://coloredconventions.org/; Refusing to Forget (website), accessed September 23, 2021, http://refusingtoforget.org/. See also Million Dollar Hoods, a project "working to decarcerate California," https://milliondollarhoods.pre.ss.ucla.edu/about-us/, and Million Dollar Blocks, the project that inspired Million Dollar Hoods, https://c4sr.columbia.edu/projects/million-dollar-blocks. Other examples of activist digital history include Torn Apart / Separados, an exploration of the detention of immigrant children and its financial infrastructure, http://xpmethod.columbia.edu/torn-apart/volume/2/index; Project ToxicDocs, a curated archive of previously classified documents related to industrial poisons https://www.toxicdocs.org/; Mapping Islamophobia, created by faculty, staff, and students at Grinnell College—and released early—to combat "the incredible rise in Islamophobic events," https://mappingislamophobia.org/; and the suite of projects from the University of Michigan's Carceral State Project, especially their activism around the murder of Cynthia Scott and collaboration with the Michigan Center for Youth Justice, https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/dcc-project/.

[119] See, for instance, Jessie Daniels, "Race and Racism in Internet Studies: A Review and Critique," *New Media and Society* 15, no. 5 (2012): 695–719.

[120] Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, 4th ed., ed. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (Albany, NY, 2015), 94–101.

[121] Lisa Nakamura, *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet* (New York, 2002). Legal scholar Jerry Kang was among the earliest to consider how race and representation function on the web. Jerry Kang, "Cyber-Race," *Harvard Law Review* 113, no. 5 (2000): 1130–1208. See also Johnson and Neal, "Introduction."

[122] See, for instance, Moya Z. Bailey, "All the Digital Humanists Are White, All the Nerds Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave," *Journal of Digital Humanities* 1, no. 1 (Winter 2011), http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-1/all-the-digital-humanists-are-white-all-the-nerds-are-men-but-some-of-us-are-brave-by-moya-z-bailey/, and McPherson, "Why Are the Digital Humanities So White?"

[123] Janet Abbate chronicled how the representation of coding evolved from a feminine activity in the mid-twentieth century to a masculine one at the dawn of the twenty-first. Janet Abbate, *Recoding Gender: Women's Changing Participation in Computing* (Cambridge, MA, 2012). For gender and digital humanities, see also

to "consider the degree to which our very reliance on digital tools . . . exacerbates existing patterns of exploitation and at times even creates new ones"—argue that, as Noble puts it, "the political, social and economic dimensions of technologies" are all "co-constituted in racialized and gendered ways that involve power and often foster and maintain systematic discrimination and oppression."[124] Miriam Posner, for instance, has warned against the fetishization of code among digital humanists, arguing that passive calls encouraging women and persons of color to learn to code fail to confront long-standing structural inequalities and therefore actively perpetuate structural racial and gender inequalities.[125] And even code, some critics argue, is not valueless. "There is no such thing as a 'merely technical' design decision," wrote Julia Flanders. "Our technical systems are meaning systems and ideological systems."[126] Fiona Barnett, Zach Blas, Micha Cárdenas, Jacob Gaboury, Jessica Marie Johnson, and Margaret Rhee, drawing on the work of queer theorist Kara Keeling, even created QueerOS to confront what they argue are foundational inequalities embedded in our digital tools.[127]

History-minded digital humanists have likewise proposed alternative practices. Kim Gallon calls for "'a technology of recovery,' characterized by efforts to bring forth the full humanity of marginalized peoples through the use of digital platforms and tools." She specifically champions the "black digital humanities"—the intellectual space created by the collision of Black studies and the digital humanities—which, she argues, "troubles the very core of what we have come to know as the *humanities* by recovering alternate constructions of humanity that have been historically excluded from that

Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," chap. 8 in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York, 1991); Deb Verhoeven, "Has Anyone Seen a Woman?," Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations speech, 2015, debverhoeven.com/anyone-seen-a-woman. On intersectionality, see especially Roopika Risam, "Beyond the Margins: Intersectionality and the Digital Humanities," *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (2015), http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/9/2/000208/000208.html, and Safiya Umoja Noble and Brendesha M. Tynes, eds., *The Intersectional Internet: Race, Sex, Class, and Culture Online* (New York, 2015).

[124] Noble, "A Future for Intersectional Black Feminist Technology Studies"; Safiya Umoja Noble, "Toward a Critical Black Digital Humanities," in *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2019*, ed. Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein (Minneapolis, 2019), https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-f2acf72c-a469-49d8-be35-67f9ac1e3a60/section/5aafe7fe-db7e-4ec1-935f-09d8028a2687#ch02.

[125] Miriam Posner, "Some Things to Think about before You Exhort Everyone to Code," *Miriam Posner's Blog: Digital Humanities, Data, Labor, and Information*, February 29, 2012, https://miriamposner.com/blog/some-things-to-think-about-before-you-exhort-everyone-to-code/. Safiya Noble likewise has identified the push to get Black girls to code as "an individualized, privatized approach to thinking about Black women's empowerment, in neoliberal fashion." Noble, "A Future for Intersectional Black Feminist Technology Studies."

[126] Losh and Wernimont, *Bodies of Information*, xvii. For the relationship of digital humanities' digital tools and broader values, see Natalia Cecire, "Introduction: Theory and the Virtues of Digital Humanities," *Journal of Digital Humanities* 1, no. 1 (Winter 2011), http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-1/introduction-theory-and-the-virtues-of-digital-humanities-by-natalia-cecire/; Stephen Ramsay, "On Building," in *Defining Digital Humanities: A Reader*, ed. Melissa Terras, Julianne Nyhan, Edward Vanhoutte (Burlington, VT, 2013), 243–45; Tom Scheinfeldt, "'Where's the Beef?' Does Digital Humanities Have to Answer Questions?," in Gold, *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/18; Roopika Risam, "Navigating the Global Digital Humanities: Insights from Black Feminism," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/4316ff92-bad0-45e8-8f09-90f493c6f564; and Siva Vaidhyanathan, "Afterword: Critical Information Studies," *Cultural Studies* 20, nos. 2–3 (2006): 292–315.

[127] Fiona Barnett, Zach Blas, Micha Cárdenas, Jacob Gaboury, Jessica Marie Johnson, and Margaret Rhee, "QueerOS: A User's Manual," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/e246e073-9e27-4bb2-88b2-af1676cb4a94.

concept."[128] Jessica Marie Johnson, a scholar of transatlantic slavery, has criticized digital historians for replicating the very dehumanization they so demonize. "From blogs and journals built on fourth-generation hypertext markup language (HTML) guided by cascading style sheets (CSS) to databases using extensible markup language (XML) and standard query language (SQL)," Johnson argues, "scholars using digital tools mark up the bodies and requantify the lives of people of African descent." Like Gallon, she champions a Black digital practice to counter the "presumed neutrality of the digital."[129] Digital historians, such work suggests, must recover not just lost voices but paradigms of imagination occluded by long-standing power inequalities.

Pedagogically minded digital humanities projects have especially taken these criticisms to heart. William Thomas and Elizabeth Lorang, for instance, advocated "an alternative modality of engagement with the digital on our campuses—one built around reciprocity, openness, local community, and particularity."[130] Amy E. Earhart of Texas A&M, a large public land-grant university, and Toniesha L. Taylor of Prairie View A&M, a nearby historically Black land-grant university, turned these ideas into practice. Their White Violence, Black Resistance project sought not only to "bring to light timely historical documents" but also, employing students from both institutions, to "expose power differentials in our own institutional settings."[131] Such projects remind us that, however well funded and well defined it becomes, the digital humanities betrays its founding principles if it remains confined to an esoteric community of coders and tech utopians. It must be practiced with fundamental ends in mind. It must be designed to be used. It must privilege accessibility. It must seek out readers and reach actual users. And it must draw on the insights of humanities scholarship to push the boundaries of what democracy means by exposing and confronting the inequalities that suffuse our objects of study, as well as our professional structures.

Digital history is certainly capable of refashioning professional paradigms. Its much-touted emphasis on collaboration, for instance, cannot be underestimated. In 2011, AHA president Anthony Grafton urged historians to reject the myth of the solitary scholar. Arguing against Wilhelm von Humboldt's idealization of "loneliness and freedom" as the hallmarks of academic life, Grafton wrote, "There is much to be gained by recognizing, and promoting, collaboration . . . and, with it, the elements of joy and creative fantasy that can too easily be lost as we go about our traditionally lonely craft."[132] If academic historians typically toil under a professional paradigm designed for the isolated scholar, the so-called digital turn and the rise of digital history have generated new collaborative energy that spills across traditional research opportunities: new technologies and emerging paradigms are facilitating academic collaboration. And it

[128] Kim Gallon, "Making a Case for the Black Digital Humanities," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/fa10e2e1-0c3d-4519-a958-d823aac989eb.

[129] Jessica Marie Johnson, "Markup Bodies: Black [Life] Studies and Slavery [Death] Studies at the Digital Crossroads," *Social Text* 36, no. 4 (December 2018): 57–79, here 59.

[130] William G. Thomas and Elizabeth Lorang, "The Other End of the Scale: Rethinking the Digital Experience in Higher Education," *Educause Review*, September 15, 2014, https://er.educause.edu/articles/2014/9/the-other-end-of-the-scale-rethinking-the-digital-experience-in-higher-education.

[131] Amy E. Earhart and Toniesha L. Taylor, "Pedagogies of Race: Digital Humanities in the Age of Ferguson," in Gold and Klein, *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/58ca5d2e-da4b-41cf-abd2-d8f2a68d2914.

[132] Anthony Grafton, "Loneliness and Freedom," *Perspectives on History*, March 1, 2011, https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/march-2011/loneliness-and-freedom.

need not even be institutionalized. Andrew Torget, reflecting on his early work at the University of Virginia and arguing that "digital projects by necessity require collaboration," nevertheless believed collaboration could be flexible and informal. "I see," he said, "a movement towards collaborative teams built around projects and problems that will last for as long as the project or problem does. You may have a home department, but you will also have collaborative teams that form and dissolve over time depending on what you're working on."[133] But is collaboration enough?

More than two decades of work in digital history and digital humanities have opened access to new resources. Universities and grant-giving institutions have provided homes for practitioners. University presses have embraced open scholarship, and professional norms are shifting accordingly. In the meantime, digital humanities scholars have built proper platforms for new projects: vast worlds of knowledge are within reach of any average web user. A textbook project can begin with a WordPress installation. Inviting mass collaboration is as easy as adding a CommentPress plug-in. Encouraging students to communicate with a text—and with one another—is as easy as a one-click Hypothes.is integration. A personally curated exhibit is as easy as a visit to a digital humanities librarian and an installation of Omeka. But it takes work too. As one digital historian wrote during this article's open review, "Turning such accessibility into something meaningful is where the hard work comes in."[134] Democratization doesn't happen on its own. Democracy isn't some fortunate by-product of technological advancement. We may be able to save our students from exploitative textbook companies, for instance, but the pursuit of a truly democratized digital history requires more substantive change than individual academics, and perhaps even administrators, can achieve. History *can* be open source, in other words, but the pursuit of democracy requires throwing off shackles more burdensome than copyright restrictions.

The New Left's radical democratic visions inspired much early work in digital history. Contemporary practitioners—buffeted not only by a popular neoliberal mania for "disruption" and libertarian notions of technofuturism but also by higher education's decaying public mission and intransigent structural inequalities—still share those dreams. Spanning the rise and maturation of digital history and the digital humanities, invocations of democracy have transcended their original context and could become just another tool for digital humanists to carve out greater and greater academic space for their work and for themselves. But such invocations have allowed practitioners to challenge traditional academic boundaries surrounding the production and distribution of knowledge. "Democracy" is, and always has been, at root a discourse about power—about agency and access and equality. "Democratization," therefore, cannot rely on institutions, philanthropy, or even technology alone but must emerge consciously

[133] Scott Nesbit, Andrew J. Torget, and Robert K. Nelson, "A Conversation with Digital Historians," *Southern Spaces*, January 31, 2012, https://southernspaces.org/2012/conversation-digital-historians.

[134] Jordan Taylor, comment on "Revised Manuscript," *AHR* Open Review, September 10, 2020, https://ahropenreview.com/HistoryCanBeOpenSource/revised-manuscript/.

alongside critical self-reflection in the conception and execution of the work. And even then, democracy may prove unobtainable. An endless, hopeless, necessary dream.

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