Arguing with Digital History: A Workshop on Using Digital History to Make Arguments for Academic Audiences

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Summary

This workshop aims to encourage argument-driven digital history that contributes to disciplinary conversations. History is an argument about the past; that argument can take a variety of forms, each of which reaches different audiences. More than twenty years after the first work in digital history, there are still only a handful of projects that make explicit arguments in conversation with the scholarly literature for an academic audience, even as researchers in digital literary studies have published a body of such scholarship. We will bring together scholars working on digital history projects to discuss the conceptual and structural issues involved in argumentation for academic audiences, thereby focusing otherwise diffuse efforts to connect digital tools to disciplinary habits of mind. The product of this workshop will be a group-authored white paper on general principles for integrating digital tools and methods with the arguments and historical interpretations at the core of academic history. The white paper will also give scholars examples of how to apply those principles using specific digital history methods in specific historical periods.

Background

The academic discipline of history is centered on argumentation and interpretation. The most basic act of a historian is to select materials from sources, and then arrange them into a coherent pattern. Selection and arrangement is common to all kinds of historians. So for instance, a public historian might choose materials for an exhibit and order them into a narrative, while a history teacher might pick facts and arrange them into a lecture. When historians select and arrange materials, they are making an argument about what material is important and how different sources are related to each other. That argument remains implicit unless the historian offers an explanation of her choices.

Selection and arrangement is necessary but not sufficient for the work of academic history. Academic history is explicitly argumentative because it is informed by a dual engagement: historians engage with the sources for studying the past, as well as with other historians and their interpretations of the past. The argument becomes explicit when the historian explains

her contribution to the ongoing scholarly conversation, describing the points of agreement and disagreement; when she gives reasons for examining certain sources and not others, and justifies her choice of methods; and above all when she structures the work of history to build an interpretation from evidence in a way which other scholars can then later engage with in the same way.

Whether a historian's argument is implicit or explicit depends upon the form in which she makes it and the audience to which it is addressed. The established forms for arguments addressed to academic historians have been the monograph and the peer-reviewed journal article. Both require explicit statements about the selection and arrangement of sources and an articulation of an interpretation of those sources that addresses other scholars' interpretations. They also expect an explicit statement of why the argument is significant by demonstrating what it adds to the scholarly conversation. In those forms, argument is a linear series of interpretations of the past supported by examples from sources and claims about how those interpretations relate to other scholarship. Academic readers follow the linear argument to a conclusion.

By contrast, in exhibits and other forms of public history, which address various non-academic audiences, argument is implicit. For example, the award-winning *Histories of the National Mall*, created by a team of our colleagues at RRCHNM, translated "sources and historical scholarship into a form and voice that meets the needs of the public users accessing the material within the space of the Mall." That form was "a website that allows users to engage in the self-guided exploration of over 440 items, including people, sites, past events, and primary sources, with 40 inquiry-based explorations." Each exploration begins with a question—"Were slaves bought and sold on the Mall?"—and offers an answer based on historical scholarship and linked to selected sources. However, that scholarship is not explicitly referenced, nor is there any explanation of how different interpretations were weighed against each other or how the displayed sources were selected. Instead, the site presents "surprising and compelling stories and primary sources that together build a textured historical context for the space and the ways that it has changed over time."[1]

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[1] Sharon Leon, "*Histories of the National Mall*: Place-Based Public History," *AHA Today* (March 30, 2015), http://blog.historians.org/2015/03/histories-national-mall-place-based-public-history/.

Digital history to date has overwhelmingly taken the form of public history. This scholarship does involve argument, but implicit argument that does not directly address academic conversations about interpretations of the past. The first wave of digital history came in response to the development of the world wide web. That new medium allowed the dissemination of digitized material to a large audience. Historians, librarians, and archivists responded by selecting and digitizing collections of primary source documents and putting them online. They created online versions of existing archives, but also selected materials from different collections and brought them together into thematic digital archives. In many cases the audience for those collections were teachers; other online collections were intended for the wider public, with the goal of democratizing history. With the rise of Web 2.0 (i.e., user-generated content and social media), this public history work expanded to collecting sources from users, and to providing tools that allowed users to create their own historical websites.[2] The discipline (encouraged in part by the American Historical Association [AHA] guidelines for evaluating digital scholarship) has recently taken steps to broaden the definition of scholarship to include digital projects in forms other than the academic arguments made in monographs and articles.[3]

Yet what is currently missing is digital history that makes explicit arguments in conversation with the scholarly literature for an academic audience.[4] Developing that form of digital history is key to building bridges from digital humanities back to the discipline and encouraging historians to engage more extensively with the new possibilities for analysis and for argument offered by digital tools. While digital history has won some acceptance within the historical profession, it is generally understood as a means of presenting the past to students and to non-academic audiences. The AHA's recently published "Guidelines for the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship by Historians" define digital history as "scholarship that is either produced using computational tools or methods or presented using digital

2 Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving and Presenting the Past on the Web* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); "Interchange: The Promise of Digital History," Journal of American History, 95, 2 (2008): 452-491.
3 American Historical Association, Guidelines for the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship by Historians (2015), https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/digital-history-resources/evaluation-of-digital-scholarship-in-history/guidelines-for-the-professional-evaluation-of-digital-scholarship-by-historians.
4 Our proposed effort to encourage that form of digital history is not a claim that it is somehow more important or deserves more professional recognition than other forms of digital history and historical scholarship. Scholarship in the digital age is not a zero-sum game; we have proliferating forms in which to present arguments, which offer a means of reaching a variety of audiences. However, as digital public history thrives, there remains a need to develop academic digital history

technologies."[5] Insofar as the document offers more specific examples of digital history, its focus is on means of communicating history, and on the development of analytical tools as a form of scholarship. That framing reflects the lack of examples of digital history that makes explicit arguments addressed to academic audiences, and leaves unclear the value of digital history for the many members of the profession whose scholarship is directed to that audience. Because the discipline values explicit argument above all, treating digital history only as a means of presentation or a set of methods acts as a disincentive to take on the task of developing digital skills or incorporating them in teaching and in the training of graduate students. And it reflects the extent to which academic history remains apart from the wider transformations in the production and circulation of knowledge brought by the digital age.

From the early days of digital history, work in the new field elicited calls to offer explicit arguments that engaged with historical scholarship. In responding to those calls, digital historians initially focused on the form in which academic arguments were presented and sought to create scholarship that took advantage of the medium of the web. The web offers a number of affordances useful for presenting explicit arguments: freedom from the constraints of length; the ability to include images, videos, and other form of multimedia integrated with text; interactivity with visualizations; personalization based on the user accessing the material; hyperlinking to enable immediate access to primary source evidence and secondary source interpretations, as well as to enable the non-linear presentations of arguments or narratives.[6]

5 American Historical Association, 2015.
6 The most sophisticated users of these affordances to date have been newspapers such as the *New York Times*, which have embraced the full potential of the web despite their long legacy of print. For instance, the *Times* made a major impact with its 2012 story "Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek," which brought narrative text together with photographs, maps, video, three-dimensional models, and textual sources. The design of the story, especially its use of hyperlinks, permitted readers to follow a linear narrative or to branch off into an examination of the sources of the story or to interact with visualizations explaining the sources. "Snow Fall" won a Pulitzer Prize, but what was exceptional in 2012 is now routine for publications like the *New York Times*, *FiveThirtyEight*, *The Atlantic*, or *The Washington Post*. An item on any of those websites might include a news story, but also downloads of data, links to the full text of relevant documents, interactive visualizations or 3D models, and video or audio clips. These sites have also pioneered features which make an argument by inviting users to walk through a procedure and change underlying assumptions in order to understand how complex processes work. For example, where a newspaper might previously have published a story opining about a political candidate's chances, or a sports team's likelihood of reaching the playoffs, it now will publish an interactive statistical model and allow the reader to change assumptions about, say, the performance of the economy, the turnout of certain classes of voters, or the results of a matchup between two teams. See for example *The Upshot*, http://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot, and its NFL simulator, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/upshot/new-england-patriots-nfl-playoff-picture.html; *FiveThirtyEight* and its election simulator, http://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2016-election-forecast/.

The web also permits the explication of complex procedures by allowing users to step through a process and alter its assumptions.[7] The key to most of these affordances, as they pertain to scholarship, is the tight integration of argument and evidence, whether that evidence takes the form of primary sources reproduced in full or in part or the form of interactive visualizations and other forms of multimedia.

Experiments in web-based historical arguments were a feature of the first decade of digital history. In 1999, *American Quarterly* published a special issue online edited by Roy Rosenzweig. It featured articles that experimented with using hyperlinks to construct non-linear arguments and to connect argument and evidence.[8] Beginning in 2000, the *American Historical Review* also published articles experimenting with presenting arguments using the medium of the web. Edward Ayers and William Thomas went the furthest in experimenting by using digital technology not just for the presentation of the argument but also for analysis in their 2003 article, "The Differences Slavery Made: A Close Analysis of Two American Communities."[9] They sought to "to use the digital article to expose the work of the historian, to make our interpretive decisions and the evidence open for others to investigate, test, or arrange in different ways." Maps created with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) provided a means "to understand the way social structures were arranged spatially," and XML was used to structure the argument and provide "sequential and interrelated nodes of analysis, evidence, and their relationship to previous scholarship."[10] Reviewers for the journal pushed back against the form of their argument; they wanted to be able to find and follow the argument in the same way they did when reading linear, print-based historical scholarship. The result was a compromise that some readers still found difficult to read while being uncertain it

7 See for example these two interactive explanations of concepts in machine learning: Daniel Smilkov and Shan Carter, "Tensorflow — Neural Network Playground," http://playground.tensorflow.org/; Stephanie Yee and Tony Chu, "A Visual Introduction to Machine Learning," http://www.r2d3.us/visual-intro-to-machine-learning-part-1/.

8 *Hypertext Scholarship in American Studies*, http://chnm.gmu.edu/aq/; "Forum on Hypertext Scholarship: AQ as Web-Zine: Responses to AQ's Experimental Online Issue," *American Quarterly* 51, 2 (June 1999): 237-282.

9 William G. Thomas III and Edward Ayers, "The Differences Slavery Made: A Close Analysis of Two American Communities," http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/AHR/; and William G. Thomas III and Edward Ayers, "An Overview: The Differences Slavery Made: A Close Analysis of Two American Communities," *American Historical Review* 108, 5 (December 2003): 1299-1307.

10 Ayers and Thomas, "Presentation," http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/xslt/servlet/XSLTServlet?xml=/xml_docs/ahr/article.xml&xsl=/xml_docs/ahr/article.xsl&section=text&area=intro&piece=presentation&list=&item=; William G. Thomas III, "Writing A Digital History Journal Article from Scratch: An Account," (December 2007), http://digitalhistory.unl.edu/essays/thomasessay.php.

offered anything more than the traditional print form, and that fell short of the authors' desire to fuse content and form. Following these experiments, publishers of historical journals made no move to accommodate web-based historical arguments, remaining committed to the printed (and digitized) page as the form for scholarship.

At the same time, beginning in the mid-2000s, many digital historians shifted their focus from creating websites to using computational tools for mapping, network analysis, and text analysis.[11] Where the web offers a medium for presenting history, these tools provide a means of exploring historical sources by discovering patterns and relationships that raise interpretative questions. As such, they offer a foundation for argument-driven digital history based on methodology rather than form. In other words, while digital historians did not continue the experiments with using digital technology to present arguments undertaken by Ayers and Thomas, they took up using digital tools for analysis, as Ayers and Thomas had in employing GIS to examine the spatial dimensions of the two communities they compared.

Yet examples of historical scholarship that makes arguments addressed to academic audiences that are based on analysis using digital tools remain rare. In recent years, leading digital historians such as Edward Ayers, Cameron Blevins, and William Thomas issued such calls for computational history that produces arguments recognized by other historians.[12] However, in three recent historiographical surveys, we found only a few instances of argumentative digital historical work compared to the many online projects that offer collections or tools for exploration without an explicit argument.[13] One example of such argument-driven work using a text-analysis methodology is the combination of *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey* and an

11 Stephen Robertson, "The Differences between Digital Humanities and Digital History," in *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, ed. Matt Gold and Lauren Klein (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/76; William G. Thomas II, "Computing and the Historical Imagination," in *A Companion to the Digital Humanities*, ed. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, John Unsworth (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004): http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/.
12 Edward Ayers, "Does Digital Scholarship Have a Future?" *Educase Review* (August 5, 2013), http://er.educause.edu/articles/2013/8/does-digital-scholarship-have-a-future; Cameron Blevins, "Digital History's Perpetual Future Tense," in *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, ed. Matt Gold and Lauren Klein (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/77; William G. Thomas III, "The Promise of the Digital Humanities and the Contested Nature of Digital Scholarship," in *A New Companion to Digital Humanities*, ed Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 603-617.
13 Thomas, "The Promise of the Digital Humanities and the Contested Nature of Digital Scholarship;" Robertson, "The Differences between Digital Humanities and Digital History;" Stephen Robertson, "Searching for Anglo-American Digital Legal History, *Law and History Review* 34, 4 (November 2016): 1047-69.

article making use of that collection by Tim Hitchcock and William Turkel. The Old Bailey website, which gathers the text of nearly 200,000 criminal trials in London, is an example of a project that digitizes primary sources to make them available for many purposes. The site does not include any interpretation of the trials, only historical background. In an article titled "The Old Bailey Proceedings, 1674–1913: Text Mining for Evidence of Court Behavior," Hitchcock and Turkel used computational text analysis to reassess the character of the *Proceedings* as a source, and the validity of the narrative of change in court practice derived from them. Contrary to arguments based on statistical sampling and selected close reading, comprehensively counting words and charting trial lengths and guilty pleas and verdicts for the whole corpus revealed that the Old Bailey *Proceedings* after 1800 "represent a much more accurate reflection of courtroom practice and behavior than was the case in the preceding century." That finding calls into question arguments that the major moments of transition in the evolution of the trial occurred in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when the *Proceedings* cannot be relied upon as a source. Instead, computational text analysis uncovered a "dramatic evolution of court practice between 1800 and 1860" due to the rise of plea bargaining and a declining number of trials.[14] Hitchcock and Turkel's article is one of many that use the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey* as a source, but their article is unusual for offering an argument based on an analysis of those sources using digital tools.

Yet the lack of argument-driven scholarship in the discipline of history is not inevitable. Digital history may be compared to other disciplines in the digital humanities, such as literary studies, which have begun to produce a body of argument-driven digital scholarship. Perhaps the best known examples are Franco Moretti's *Distant Reading* and Matt Jockers's *Macroanalysis*, both of which practice a large-scale criticism of literary works. In addition to those monographs, a number of literary scholars have written argumentative articles, such as Ted Underwood's work on genre and Ryan Cordell's work on the reprinting of texts in American newspapers. All of these works use enlarged sets of sources to place texts in a wider literary context, and text analysis algorithms that identify features such as text reuse, and patterns in vocabulary and linguistic variety to give new argumentative answers to literary historical questions.[15]

14 Tim Hitchcock and William J. Turkel, "The Old Bailey Proceedings, 1674–1913: Text Mining for Evidence of Court Behavior," *Law and History Review* 34, no. 4 (August 2016): 954–55, doi:10.1017/S0738248016000304; *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, http://www.oldbaileyonline.org.
15 Among a number of examples, see Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (Verso, 2013); Matthew L. Jockers, *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History* (University of Illinois Press, 2013); Ted Underwood, "The Literary Uses of High-Dimensional Space," in *Assumptions of Sociality: A Colloquium of Social and Cultural Scientists*, a special issue of *Big Data and Society*, edited by John W. Mohr, Ronald L.

Historians have recently made three different types of efforts towards argumentative digital scholarship, but these efforts have run into obstacles that prevent the full fruition of such scholarship. First, digital historians have tended to couple computational tools with digital archives, or have created interactive visualizations of their datasets or corpora. In both cases the aim is exploration rather than argumentation.[16] While coupling computational tools with digital collections is worthwhile, it is at best preliminary to the work of historical interpretation, and in many cases that final step appears not to be taken, perhaps because of the intense effort necessary to accomplish just this first step

Second, because computational methods are unfamiliar to most historians, many scholars who employ them must write articles explaining those methods rather than, or prior to, developing arguments based on them.[17] Yet in the broader historical profession discussion of method is a sideline concern, with next to no scope provided for it by the norms of scholarship and publication. Digital historians' concern with method thus places them outside disciplinary conversations and conventions. Again, the preliminary step has prevented the full accomplishment of argumentation.

Another third option that digital historians have attempted is to fit arguments based on digital tools into traditional print articles. Conventional print articles have few of the affordances needed by computational tools for mapping, network analysis, and text analysis, which are often inherently visual and interactive. That limitation does not entirely preclude making an argument that draws on work with digital tools; journal articles can include illustrative images and hyperlinks to digital evidence, as does the article by Hitchcock and Turkel discussed earlier. But the form of the print article cannot effectively accommodate the visualizations generated by digital tools, and does not enable readers to interact with digital tools and explore the

Breiger, and Robin Wagner-Pacifici (2015); Ryan Cordell, "Reprinting, Circulation, and the Network Author in Antebellum Newspapers," *American Literary History* 27, no. 3 (September 1, 2015): 417–45, doi:10.1093/alh/ajv028.

16 For example, Jason Heppler, *Machines in the Valley: Growth, Conflict, and Environmental Politics in Silicon Valley* (2015): http://dissertation.jasonheppler.org/; Cameron Blevins and Jason Heppler, *The Geography of the Post* (2015): http://cameronblevins.org/gotp/; *Digital Harlem: Everyday Life, 1915-1930,* http://digitalharlem.org. These projects are all online interactive projects whose argument is expressed in other venues.

17 For example, see Christopher Warren, Daniel Shore, Jessica Otis, Lawrence Wang, Mike Finegold, and Cosma Shalizi, "Six Degrees of Francis Bacon: A Statistical Method for Reconstructing Large historical Social Networks," *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 10, 3 (2016), http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/10/3/000244/000244.html.

connection between digital tools and sources from which the argument is derived. As an example, take Edward Ayers and Scott Nesbit's article "Seeing Emancipation: Scale and Freedom in the American South." The print article makes an argument in prose, supported by only six figures (none of which, of course, are interactive). One figure shows "select, documented escapes from slavery in Virginia, June 1864." The *Visualizing Emancipation* website, on the other hand, shows hundreds of escapes from slavery from across the American South, and it can set those data points in motion to show change over time. Users can click on each data point to see the sources from which it was derived.[18] The format of a print journal article necessarily decouples the argument from the evidence which supports it, which is a particularly pressing concern for an article whose argument is about visualization and scale. In general when the argument and evidence are separated, readers cannot completely follow and critically appraise the argument. Some print journals have accommodated limited additional digital dimensions by supporting online supplements to print articles, as venues for interactive visualizations and extended discussions of method.[19] Here, the digital remains apart from the argument and from the print article. One of the primary reasons for doing digital work is the enlarged scope of sources which can be seen at large scale in the aggregate, yet which can be explored in detail through interactivity. However, decoupling the argument from its evidentiary base necessarily constrains engagement with those sources. Publishers have not offered venues for more extended arguments, on the scale of print monographs, although several university presses are now experimenting with such platforms with the support of the Mellon Foundation.

Given the persistence of these obstacles, a new approach is needed if digital historians are to produce argument-driven scholarship. The need for digital history to make such arguments has been the theme of individual presentations at conferences and other venues but not the subject of an extended and focused discussion intended to chart a path forward. The field of art history recently saw a similar event, "Art History in Digital Dimensions," intended "to unite

18 For example, see Edward L. Ayers & Scott Nesbit, "Seeing Emancipation: Scale and Freedom in the American South," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1, 1 (March 2011): 3-24; and Cf. Stephen Robertson, Shane White, and Stephen Garton, "Harlem in Black and White: Mapping Race and Place in the 1920s," Journal of Urban History 39, 5 (September 2013): 864-880.
19 For example, see Cameron Blevins, "Space, Nation, and the Triumph of Region: A View of the World from Houston," *Journal of American History* 101, 1 (June 2014): 122–147; and Cameron Blevins, "Mining and Mapping the Production of Space: A View of the World from Houston," (2014), http://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=93.

diverse audiences and practitioners in a critical intervention for the digital humanities and digital art history, providing a cogent and inclusive road map for the future.[20]

The workshop we propose draws on RRCHNM's extensive experience in developing events and forums to advance digital history, develop knowledge, and build community. In the twenty-two years of its existence, the Center has organized workshops for teachers and scholars to develop resources and curricula, provided hands-on training and professional development in the use of digital tools, and developed and supported THATCamp, a participant-driven unconference to introduce humanists to digital technology. These events have been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Getty Foundation, and the Mellon Foundation. The PIs are both leading scholars in the field of digital history, whose own research engages with the problem of making disciplinary arguments, and who have experience in organizing and leading workshops.

Expected Outcomes and Benefits

The workshop will create a white paper that describes the obstacles to digital history that makes explicit arguments addressed to academic audiences, examines successful models of such history, and investigates how the discipline can create such scholarship. The white paper will lay out general principles for this form of digital history, while describing specific applications to different periods and topics in history and to different kinds of digital history methodology. Drawing on the experience and perspectives of a diverse group of participants will be essential to creating a document that can gain consensus among digital historians. Here we describe how we will structure the workshop to create the white paper, as well as describe the questions that the white paper will address.

Workshop

The workshop will take place over two days, Friday September 15 and Saturday September 16, 2017. The timing late in the week and early in the semester is intended to facilitate attendance. The event will be held at the Arlington campus of George Mason University.

Before the workshop

Before the workshop, the organizers will circulate a list of questions to participants. Each participant will be asked to draft a two-page position paper responding to the questions as

20 *Art History in Digital Dimensions*, (October 19-21, 2016), http://dah-dimensions.org.

the participant sees fit. We will circulate these position papers among all attendees in advance of the workshop in order to prime them for the discussion and to make them aware of participants' initial perspectives.

The questions posed in advance to participants will include the following:

- How is argumentation in digital history different from other forms of history, and how is it the same?
- Should DH argumentation be inherently disciplinary, or should it be interdisciplinary?
- Why is there not more digital history that makes explicit arguments in conversation with the scholarly literature, for an academic audience? What are the barriers to making arguments in digital history? If possible, include examples from your projects.
- What successful models have you found for making explicit arguments in conversation with the scholarly literature for an academic audience? In those models, what is the relationship between traditional venues for publication and digital projects?
- If applicable, how have you used digital history to make explicit arguments in conversation with the scholarly literature, for an academic audience? What is the relationship between the arguments you have made and the digital part of your project?

Day 1
Session 1 (plenary). The first day will begin with introductions. In the first session, the workshop organizers will set the stage by laying out the questions to be asked and answered, and explaining the process of drafting the white paper.

During the first session we will invite the leaders of six digital history projects to explain in 10 minutes how they conceive of the role of argumentation in their projects. These will include both projects which have made historical arguments and projects which have not, but could. We will select the presenters on the basis of the pre-circulated position papers and our prior knowledge of their projects.

Break.

Session 2 (small groups). For the second session of the day, we will break the participants into four different groups. These groups will be determined by topical affinities between the

different projects. Using their reading of the position papers and the presentations, we will ask the participants to consider the overarching problems for the workshop and to begin drafting responses for the white paper. Specifically, we will ask them these questions: to explain what makes argument-driven digital history different from traditional historical argumentation, to make a list of obstacles and opportunities for making explicit arguments addressed to academic audiences, and to craft a set of general principles for this form of digital history.

Lunch.

Session 3 (plenary). In the third session, we will reconvene all the participants to report back from their session drafting general principles for the white paper. As a group we will look for a consensus on the main principles for making explicit arguments addressed to academic audiences and ask the participants to indicate which elements of the reports from the groups should be included in the white paper.

Break.

Session 4 (small groups). For the fourth session, we will divide the participants into groups based on the kinds of digital methodologies that they use. There will be groups on mapping, network analysis, 3D modeling, collecting sources, and computational analysis of texts. These groups will address the question of how arguments that can speak to the broader discipline can be made using specific DH methodologies. We will ask the groups to pay special attention to the problem of the form for digital history that makes explicit arguments addressed to academic audiences as well as the problem of how historians working in one methodology can integrate sources and analysis from other methods.

Day 2
Session 5 (plenary). In this session the organizers will recap the previous days' work. This will include going over the findings of the small groups on application of methods, as well as taking stock of the questions still to be answered in the workshop.

Break.

Session 6 (small groups). In this session we will divide the participants into small groups based on their historical period or topic of study. The groups will work on identifying specific questions in their fields that can be answered with digital methods, as well as barriers to digital history that makes explicit arguments addressed to academic audiences within those fields. We will ask them to draft examples of how such arguments can be made within their fields for the white paper.

Lunch.

Session 7 (plenary). This session will include reports from the small groups working on specific historical periods and topics. By this point in the process all of the main portions of the white paper will have been drafted by one or another of the groups. We will ask the participants for final comments and suggestions to guide us in completing the white paper. In particular, we will ask participants about future steps towards encouraging digital history that makes explicit arguments addressed to academic audiences.

White paper

The white paper to be created by this workshop will be collaboratively drafted during the course of the workshop. In order to make the most of our time, the workshop organizers will outline the structure of the white paper in advance. However, the participants will be free to take a different direction should there be a consensus for doing so. The participants will have opportunity to draft statements on the general principles of making explicit arguments addressed to academic audiences in digital history. Subsets of the group will be asked to contribute sections of the white paper on field-specific and methodology-specific applications of those principles. We will rely on workshop participants to give concrete examples from their own projects. For example, one project might identify the difficulty of creating interactive interfaces that integrate arguments and sources as a challenge in producing this form of digital history, while another project might explain difficulties in finding a venue or obtaining peer review.

The workshop organizers will revise the white paper following the workshop, using the position papers and reports from the smaller groups. These revisions will bring coherence to the points articulated during the workshop, and we will reach out to the leaders of the various projects for clarification or further examples as necessary. We will circulate a completed draft

among workshop participants, giving them time and opportunity to revise it. This process will produce a document which can speak generally to the problems facing many different kinds of DH projects, offer specific advice within a strong disciplinary context as well as in the context of different tools and chronological and geographical fields, and achieve a consensus which will make the document useful within the historical profession as it seeks to meld digital and other methods and to elaborate standards for the evaluation of digital scholarship.

We anticipate that the white paper will have the following sections:

- A statement of how argumentation in digital history is different from, and the same as, traditional history, with a summary of current examples and genres of argument driven digital history.
- The obstacles to making explicit arguments addressed to academic audiences in digital history.
- General principles of such argumentation in digital history (such as forming questions, fitting within disciplinary and field-specific arguments, the role of explicit statements of methodology, etc.).
- Specific principles of such argumentation in digital history by historical topic, chronology, and geography. The aim is not to be comprehensive, but to provide examples of how general principles are applied within specific fields.
- Specific principles of such argumentation in digital history by methodology (mapping, networks, text analysis, 3d modeling).
- Integration of argumentation and sources. This section will address the problem of integrating digital historical work with scholarship for academic audiences, and integrating different kinds of sources and methods within digital history.
- How such argument-driven digital scholarship can be evaluated and peer-reviewed.
- A description of future work necessary to advance making explicit arguments addressed to academic audiences in digital history.

We will host the completed white paper on the RRCHNM website, ensuring its continuing availability. To circulate the white paper, we will use the Center's profile and network of contacts within the historical profession, and its wide social media reach. We will ask the American Historical Association via Seth Denbo, the AHA Director of Scholarly Communication and Digital Initiatives, to publicize the white paper on its widely read blog and in the AHA

Perspectives. Finally, we will propose a roundtable session at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association to promote and discuss the white paper.