

[Call for Papers: Digital Humanities and the Future of Chronicling the African Past](#)

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African History / Studies, Area Studies, Digital Humanities, Historic Preservation, History Education

CALL FOR PAPERS:

DIGITAL HUMANITIES AND THE FUTURE OF CHRONICLING THE AFRICAN PAST

The incoming editors of *History in Africa* are inaugurating thematic issues as part of a new feature highlighting how Africanists are engaging with key trends in history and methods.

For our initial themed volume, *History in Africa* is seeking contributions on the intersection of the study of Africa and the burgeoning field of Digital Humanities. This open call will serve as a bridge to the special section on "Digital History in African Studies" featuring articles on digitizing archives and teaching in the 2020 volume of *History in Africa*.

Digital Humanities may be understood broadly as the use of computing technologies to examine and analyze history, culture, and the arts. However, scholars and activists have debated that definition and the politics of using Digital Humanities for digital archives, websites, on-line exhibits, published research, and teaching. As Digital Humanities Centers and projects have proliferated, scholars also have raised questions about how race, diversity, and inclusivity relate to the shaping, practice, and funding of this new field. Thus, we are interested in how Digital Humanities in African history affects methodological approaches, historiography, and public engagement with history.

In terms of historiography, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database which began as a CD-Rom in 1999 and became the Slave Voyages on-line resource in 2009, is an example of an innovative connection between history and technology which set off a long-standing debate in African history. Africanists have critiqued aspects of the approach of this project while recognizing that it has been fundamental to the study of the Atlantic slave trade. For example, in a recent volume of *History in Africa*, a team of researchers proposed new regional names that reflect the topography of the continent rather than European definitions of place. While the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database was groundbreaking, a generation of scholars is engaging with new technologies as a given rather than an optional extra, and this practice is transforming the field. Recent conferences which have attracted diverse and interdisciplinary groups of scholars have examined the threat of marginalization and expropriation of African Studies resources in the digital age (Michigan State University, 2014); have recognized digital projects centering black humanity (College of William & Mary, 2017 and University of Maryland, 2018); and have fostered collaboration with African scholars and researchers based on the continent (Lorentz Center in Leiden, the Netherlands, 2019).

We invite contributions that address African history and the Digital Humanities in relation to methods, source analysis, historiographical debate, audiences, and tools. We also will accept proposals for a new section on "Interview with an Archivist" as an update to our section on "Archival Reports."

As always, submissions that fall outside of the scope of the theme of Digital Humanities are welcome.

Possible topics related to our Digital Humanities theme include:

- Politics of digitizing archives
- The creation of new public histories
- Technology and the transformation of the profession
- Bridging African and African diaspora history (of particular interest are projects that move beyond slavery and the slave trade)
- Developing new modes and tools for research and writing
- Public engagement with African history in the age of social media
- Digitally chronicling the local
- Challenges of Digital Humanities in African institutions

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit a 500 word abstract and a 2-page CV to managingeditor@historyinafrica.org by December 15, 2019. By January 15th, authors will be notified whether to submit a full article for peer review by April 1, 2020. Please note that invitations to submit articles for peer review do not guarantee publication.

Articles selected for publication after peer review will be included in the 2021 volume of *History in Africa*. Articles may appear in advance of the publication date via FirstView once the copy editing process is completed. Any queries should be addressed to managingeditor@historyinafrica.org.

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