

## **Steven Burg—Case Statement for Teaching Digital History and New Media Working Group**

My name is Steven Burg, and I teach and practice public history at Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania. I was hired me in 1999 as the university's first public historian. I helped to develop our department's undergraduate concentration in public history in 2000, and helped to launch our Applied History program in 2001. For almost a decade I served as the department's graduate director until I was elected chair by my department in 2011. I continue to teach our Introduction to Applied History course and our undergraduate Introduction to Public History, as well as graduate courses in archives, historic preservation, and research in local and regional history.

My interest in digital history began in the late 1990s when I was working in the Division of Public History at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (SHSW) (now the Wisconsin Historical Society) while also attending graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The SHSW was an early pioneer among state historical societies in the development of its website, and the Division of Public History was particularly interested in tapping the potential of new internet technology. Just before my graduation from the University of Wisconsin, and my departure from the SHSW in 1999, the staff of the SHSW's Public History Division was exploring a collaborative project with the local public television station to create television documentaries linked to online internet content. It was an exciting look into the future of digital television and history.

During my first decade as a public history educator at Shippensburg University, I regularly encouraged my students to consider ways of creating and using websites to share their research interests with the public. I followed the literature of the field, and offered opportunities for students who arrived with the requisite technical skills to experiment with web-based projects. With the rise of Web 2.0 technologies and expanded WYSIWYG programs over the last several years, I have felt greater comfort exploring the use of technology in my courses. I expanded my own technical expertise through workshops, trainings at conferences, and a fair amount of self-initiated exploration. As my knowledge grew, I gradually increased the amount of digital content in my courses—particularly my Introduction to Applied History graduate classes and my undergraduate Introduction to Public History class.

For my classes, I have relied heavily on Web 2.0 applications, such as Blogger, Wordpress, Google maps, Lulu, Wikispace, Wikipedia, Movie Maker, Audacity, YouTube, Google Docs, Zotero, Flickr and social media sites. My courses tend to be what [Jeff McClurken](#) of the University of Mary Washington at THATCamp AHA 2013 described as “digitally inflected” rather than “digitally centered.” Though my students may not fully master any particular technology, I hope they will leave our program

with a familiarity of a wide range of technologies that they can take as a “digital toolbox” to use as required in their public history careers. Ideally, they will feel comfortable using a range of technologies, know where to turn for advice and assistance, and have a clear grasp of the ways that digital history alters historical practice, research, communications, and understanding.

In the spring of 2011, I attended a THATcamp at George Mason University that had a tremendous impact on my thoughts about digital history. It was at that gathering that I fully grasped the implications of digital humanities/digital history as a movement rather than a methodology, and one that intentionally sought to transform the nature of academia. I was deeply impressed by the spirit of the meeting, the boldness of the vision, and the technical skills of the people around me. It was intellectually thrilling, but also unnerving at the same time. It convinced me of the importance of digital history, and the scope of its potential impact on academia and the historical profession. I wondered how the faculty of Shippensburg University could best serve our students to operate in a world where digital resources would be transforming history and public history practice.

As part of our department’s effort to review our curriculum, I undertook a survey of graduate public history programs in March 2012, and one of the questions I asked public history program directors was to comment on the place of digital history in their curriculum. I summarized the results in a blog post I wrote for History@Work entitled, [“The Future is Here: Public History Education and the Rise of Digital History”](#):

Almost two-thirds (64.5%) of the responding program directors reported that graduates of their programs would be leaving with competency in digital history and new media. Fifty-nine percent of public history program directors indicated that content on digital history and new media had been integrated into existing courses, and fully 46.2% stated that their programs had added one or more new courses on the study of new media or digital history. The directors also reported that more than one-third of public history programs are preparing their students to create or author digital history or new media resources (35.9%).

These results confirmed for me that our public history programs needed to do more to expose our students to digital history, but the question that remained unanswered in my own mind was precisely how technical that training needed to be. What does competency in digital history really mean? What constitutes an appropriate and valuable level of technological training for most public history students? And to what extent could a lack of digital history expertise that does not extend beyond the skillful and thoughtful use of Web 2.0 resources impede the job prospects and careers of our students? Should we training public historians who can also fully manage the technical end of complex and sophisticated

digital projects, or should we be conceptualizing public historians as history professionals who are comfortable working in digital realms, but who then collaborate with technicians who have the computer skills to execute the technological aspects of digital projects? If public historians must do both, then I wonder: Is it really possible within the credit and time constraints of a terminal Master's program to expect that students will gain a mastery of historical content, historiography, and research methods; public history theory and methodology; and the computer and information technology skills?

These are some of the questions that are on my mind about digital history and teaching right now, so I am delighted to have the opportunity to explore these issues further. I look forward to a most interesting and fruitful discussion!

Jon Berndt Olsen  
Assistant Professor  
University of Massachusetts at Amherst

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I am an historian of modern Germany by training, but I was hired as our digital historian within the UMass Public History program and teach courses in digital history, public history, collective memory, and German history. Before coming to the UMass, I spent two years as a Post-Doc Fellow at George Mason's Center for History and New Media as the editor for the project Teaching the History of 1989 (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989>). I am currently working on a new project with my colleague Brian Bunk on Soccer History USA (<http://digital.history.umass.edu/soccer>) and on another project about Historic Dress (<http://historicdress.org/wordpress/>) with my colleague Marla Miller and others from Smith College. I have also worked with my students to develop a smartphone based walking tour of Amherst during the time of the Civil War (<http://digitalamherst.org/civilwar>). We have also worked on smaller projects, like an educational site about W.E.B. DuBois (<http://discoveringdubois.weebly.com>). You can see links to all of our digital history projects at <http://digital.history.umass.edu>.

Over the past four years I have taught my graduate course on Digital History three times – each time tweaking not only the readings, but also the structure and purpose of the course. I try to emphasize with each group of students that there are two sides to doing Digital History – input and output. The input side deals with exploring how digital technologies (data visualization, data mining, big data, high resolution (gigapixel) photography, digital mapping, and the like) have changed how we as historians approach “research” in the field. The “output” side of digital history focuses on how digital technologies (in particular the Internet, but also digital audio and video production) has changed how historians present their work to the public and how this has both opened new doors of opportunity, but also new challenges.

The first two times that I taught this course the students' semester-long project revolved around drafting a grant proposal for a digital history project or tool. As a component of their application, each student was expected to build a project website and a wire-frame for the extended project. The ideas that each student came up with were all very good, but their ability to build the accompanying website ranged from rudimentary to outstanding. This range of quality was directly related to two things – the amount of digital “chops” that a student had when they started the course and their ability to teach themselves new skills. The best students went out of their way to read online tutorials, look at the code underneath their favorite websites, and experiment with new ways of building a website. Others, however, were either intimidated by the technology or unwilling to take the necessary time to acquire such skills. I think that this is one of the biggest hurdles for mainstreaming digital history is the vast range of skills that our students have when they enter the program. On the other hand, this same observation could also speak to a need to integrate digital history into all of our courses so that it seems normal.

This last year, however, I significantly changed the semester-long project into a more hands-on project that ended up being very successful for both the students and our community. I partnered with our town's archivist at the public library and together we came up with a project for creating a walking tour of downtown Amherst drawing on materials from the archives. I had a very small class – just four students – so they all worked together on the one project. If I had a larger class, I would have had multiple projects for teams of three-four students. The city archivist had already created a wonderful site (<http://digitalamherst.org>) using the Omeka platform. Our first idea was to simply use this same format and build a new component. However, the students had become very interested in the application of mobile devices during our discussions and so we decided to make sure that our project had both a regular Internet component, but also a Smartphone version. (<http://digitalamherst.org/civilwar>). The outcome was quite good – a walking tour that can be viewed on a PC, downloaded as a PDF and MP3 podcast, or used interactively on a smartphone. Not only did the students learn about implementing such a digital project – working in Omeka, learning about JQuery and HTML, editing audio files, etc., but also many very useful public history skills – working with a community partner, negotiating a final deliverable product, and building something of use for the local community. Additionally, my students now have a digital history project that they can add to their portfolio when they go on the job market.

Working with graduate students on such a digital public history project took much more of my time than having each student work individually on their own proposals. There was a lot of just-in-time teaching of programming that I had to do so that they could move on to the next stage in the project. However, I think that each student got more out of the project and felt a much higher level of success when it was all over.

One idea I would like to discuss is how do we make sure that what we call “digital history” is not simply digitizing history. I stress this quite a bit in my class in order to push students to think more creatively about how digital technology might allow us to do something new and different, rather than simply moving statically from an analogue to a digital platform, but with not new real added value. To this end, I am contemplating a new component or assignment for the next time I teach the course – hacking history. Each student would need to take an existing technology and find a new use for it within the realm of digital history. An example of this might be taking a high resolution photograph (like those generated by a GigaPan set up) and applying it not to panoramic vistas, but rather to high-resolution images of an historic textile so that you can see the decaying of the fibers.

I would love to hear from others what the blend is for you regarding teaching digital history theory and digital tools or actual programming skills. I have tended to try and push off the hands-on training to the students – either taking workshops sponsored by our IT department, learning these skills on their own through books and tutorials, or by experimentation. The results, however, have been mixed. Each year I tend to spend more and more time on also teaching some basic skills – HTML and PHP as well as how to work with WordPress, Omeka, and other off-the-shelf solutions. I usually say that the minimum level of understanding they need to master is to be able to speak coherently about their needs to a programmer. If they can do more than that, great! When our students move into

the workplace, I do not expect them to apply for positions in a museum's IT department. However, if they can confidently state that they have enough knowledge to work successfully with a programmer to accomplish their goals, I think they will be well positioned for today's workplace.

Anita Lucchesi  
January 17, 2013  
2013 NCPH Annual Meeting  
Working Group: Teaching Digital History and New Media

### Case Statement

My name is Anita Lucchesi. I am a second-year MA candidate in a Comparative History Program at the “Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro”, a publicly funded university in Rio de Janeiro-Brazil. I feel that I am in a special situation as a participant of this inspiring discussion we are about to start. I am not a public history formal educator, and I am not a graduate student from a Digital or Public History Program. Although I am studying Digital History since 2008, and it’s been the main subject to all my articles and researches since then.

My participation in this Working Group is going to be my first chance to talk with and hear from people that are interested in the same subject as I am. This is due to the fact that, unfortunately, in Brazil we are still lagging behind in Digital and Public History (We have no Graduate Programs on it here until now). However, we are beginning to think about the use of digital technologies for historical research and its introduction in institutions and universities in Brazil. I believe that my participation in this group will offer my point of view about what I have learned from this lack of graduate instruction versus the real experiences and practical use of Digital History and New Media, from which I hope to learn in the whole conference.

I got into this digital medium (in lacking another term and uncertain in calling it a “field” or a “method”) since my undergraduate studies by myself, clicking from link to link with no end in sight after I was presented to the CHNM by [Serge Noiret \(EUI/IFPH\)](#) – to whom I owe my foray into the theme. In 2011, I concluded my BA research about using the Internet as a tool for historians, in which I reflected on theoretical and methodological issues for the process of writing history in a Digital Age. Currently, in my MA thesis, I am comparing the understanding of what Digital History is supposed to be for historians in both the United States and Italy.

To be honest, the reading of the previously sent statements was already an instructive and thrilling exercise for me. It emphasizes my status as a foreign “freshman” in the group, but also show me in a clear manner how I might contribute to our conversation in face of my distinct background mentioned above. Assuming the perspective of a potential student earnest to become a public and digital historian, the main goals of training on digital history I would expect from my educators must pass by these unavoidable features:

(1) Educators should prepare their students to grapple with the abundance of the digital avenue anticipated by Roy Rosenzweig and, thereby, stimulate them to consider it and be ready to dribble its dispersibility. I guess it is fundamental to push students to think about the paradoxical Harald Weinrich’s quote: “Stored, in other words, forgotten”.

(2) Another question that needs careful handling is the impermanence of the digital in general. It may require some accurate interpretation skills to deal with dilemmas brought out to our craft by the fluidity of writing digital history. Differently of historical printed works, digital projects must be analyzed as a work-in-progress all the time. As

History, digital history works are never done. One can continuously edit, add, annotate or delete things on the Web. Besides, this changeability can also mean struggles to deal with the referring troubles.

I await that paying attention at these points educators could combine digital and “traditional” history concerns, preparing students to be able to use digital history as a method in their major works and/or to become digital historians aware of such problems that can affect the whole field of History, despite of its sub-areas.

Some points we went through in our statements may seem obvious, (of course, mine even more for you all). However, I find it profitable to start teaching students to denaturalize some behaviors already taken as common in their daily work with digital History. We are facing a new way of writing, collecting, present and referring pieces of the past on the Web. Students should problematize their routine in doing history in this fresh and quite unconventional way, by reflecting which implications and new specific knowledge set this innovation can bring to their entire performance a more holistic outlook – from procedures to responsibilities: e.g. to get familiar with an untrained reading system; to develop further ability of web-friendly writing; to deal with a different relationship between author-text-reader; to learn how to run a search engine disingenuously; how to evaluate digital born documents; to communicate with new types and possibilities of audiences; what means the wider range of public history discourses and its accountability for historians, etc.

Gain programming and tech skills, in addition to learn other practical aspects of the creation and management, in collaborative shapes, of digital history projects are undoubted benefits of a good training. It is indeed crucial because it enables students to adopt a hands-on attitude in whatever projects they should be hired for. Nevertheless, a deep questioning on theoretical aspects is necessary. In one hand, we already know that it is not simply a replacement of analogical initiatives. On the other, it seems that we also understood that this is not the case for fetishize the technology. Considering that, I wholeheartedly agree with the idea of balancing theory and practice and I also fall in with the most integrative perspectives that avoid the insular effect of designing stand-alone digital history courses.

Maybe the biggest challenge is to find suitable answers for all our core questions and make it happen out of our own minds and departments. I am really looking forward to hearing and learning from you all! If someone has any ideas to make something happen in Brazil, I would be glad and love to hear from.



Folks,

Hello, I am Dan Kerr (@drdankerr), the associate director of the public history program. My introduction to digital history comes through my work with oral history. I have worked in digital audio production on the radio, have experience with video editing, and have created a website for the [Shenandoah Valley Oral History Project](#). I am currently teaching the [History and New Media course](#) at American University. It's my first time teaching the class.

I have had the benefit of reading of few of the early statements (not all of them yet) and I have found them to be compelling. Rather than repeat what has already been said about the importance of collaborative and practical work, I would like to add that I think courses in digital history should seek to defetishize technology. Students should be able to realistically appraise the possibilities and limitations of various new media platforms. I argue that it is in some ways more important to know what various tools cannot do then what they can do. By understanding these limitis, students are better prepared to participate in the process of innovation.

I also think students need to learn how to critically evaluate digitized and born digital source material in a sophisticated and critical way. While the plethora of materials that are now at our fingertips is truly astounding, my sense is that this growth has been coupled with a positivist ideal that the web represents reality. My questions are: What isn't represented on the web? Who isn't represented on the web? What are, what we might call in oral history, the silences? How does that change over time? For example, this recent billion-pixel [image](#) of Mt. Everest promises to let you "soar thousands of feet above a glacier and view it in its entirety, or zoom down to the ground and explore pebbles embedded in the ice." Presumably, it captures everything. A [Flickr search](#) of Mt. Everest reveals nearly 19,000 more photos. Of those images, there are only 273 that use the tag porter (the people who do all the labor bring goods, food, etc. to the trekkers) and only a fraction of that number shows images of porters engaged in their work. Only 17 images are tagged toilet and only two of those are actually photos of toilets. Only seven are tagged with the term garbage and none of the images that appears are actually of garbage. My sense is that both the billion-pixel image and the combined 19,000 photos on Flickr of Mt. Everest do a very poor job representing the very real social and environmental conditions in the region. So how do we interpret all these pixels and photos. What do they say about the era in which they were produced? Related questions could be, how do we know who is taking what photos? Are men and women photographing different things? What about locals versus tourists? How can we mine the data to get at more sophisticated levels of understanding on this new mass cultural framing of a place?

I am also very interested in having my students understand that the issues of ownership on the web are very much in debate – as evidenced by the [recent suicide](#) of Aaron Swartz and its [aftermath](#).

I look forward to meeting and learning from you all!

All my best,  
Dan

My name is Jordan Grant. I'm a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate at American University in Washington, D.C. At American, I combine my research on antebellum slavery and capitalism with my work as a researcher and de facto "web master" for the National Museum of American History's upcoming exhibition, [American Enterprise](#). I was fortunate enough to take an introductory digital history course (taught by the talented [Jeremy Boggs](#)) a year into my degree, and I have been educating myself in the digital humanities [DH] ever since. Although I've worked on a number of digital history projects and attended my fair share of THATCamps and other institutes, I still see myself as a novice in this field, and I apologize in advance if any of my statements sound parochial or short-sighted.

I write from the perspective that the primary goal of public history educators training their students in DH should be a job – more specifically, a productive career dealing with the past, inside or outside academia. Although treating our graduate training as simply a form of job-training may go against the spirit of the humanities, I do it here because it tightens our focus, pushing us to grapple with the very real –and often stark– conditions degree-seekers will face when they leave our public history programs and begin making careers out in the world.

What kinds of DH-inflected jobs are out there? Most of my work has revolved around DC-based museums. Within that ecological niche of cultural institutions, I've come across three varieties of DH-workers. The first are social media gurus, people highly trained in creating new media and sharing it strategically with their institutions' networks of stakeholders. Virtually every department needs this kind of person, even if social media is just one aspect of their many duties. The second group contains both web designers and web developers. Located outside the actual IT department of the museum, these men and women can sling code and work in Adobe; they actually build the websites, apps, and tools that increasingly serve as the front-line of our institutions' outreach. The final group, collections managers, supplement the very well-established practices of archival science and folksonomy with a clear-eyed understanding of APIs and Open Linked Data, preparing their institutions for new kinds of interactions with the public on the open web.

While these three positions are just a brief sample of the kinds of jobs DH-trained public historians could aspire to, they're a useful starting point for a discussion of what should be taught in graduate schools. All of these positions will be vital to the future of our cultural institutions, but they all call for knowledge and skills that, at the moment, most public history programs are ill-suited to provide. In my experience, the average program's digital history course is a twelve-to-fourteen week tour through DH's greatest hits. Although students often finish the class with a better handle on the history of the field and some new skills, they have little time to develop the technical proficiencies they need to actually do innovative work. How many universities have a DH center, or even a resident digital humanist, who could explain how to build a website using Ruby on Rails or Twitter's Bootstrap? How many have someone who has led a targeted publicity campaign using Facebook, or has cleaned up collection data using Google Refine? Although DH may be currently

"trendy" in our professional organizations, there's still a prohibitively small number of trained practitioners who can give students the training they need. Based on my experiences, aspiring DHers [need intensive guidance from experienced professionals](#) to serve as a foundation for later self-directed learning.

Fortunately, public history programs have dealt with this problem before. Many programs already send their students to other institutions for training in a specific subfield: exhibition design and fabrication, grant-writing, nonprofit management. Internships provide another form of on-the-job training. I believe we could improve graduate training immensely by pushing these practices even further. Program directors interested in DH would do well to reach out to other schools and departments within their universities that already offer the kinds of education digital humanists require; computer science, communications, and information science immediately come to mind. Although it might be possible to build new, cross-disciplinary courses with faculty from other departments (many universities aggressively fund these kinds of experimental courses, especially if "digital" is in the title), the more practical path may be to just create room in students' schedules for experimentation. Once again, this is an old battle for public historians, but one that needs to be fought every time we ask students to pursue coursework that differs from the traditional expectations of their departments.

Moving forward, I believe it would be very useful for teachers and program directors to begin honest discussions with employers about the kinds of DH skills they desperately need in their workplaces. I also think we could learn a great deal by analyzing that data that's already out there surrounding DH practitioners; for instance, I would like to see where non-academic and history-oriented professionals popped up in last year's "Day of DH" survey.

## **NCPH Working Group on Teaching Digital History and New Media**

Ian Milligan

University of Waterloo

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My name is Ian Milligan and I'm an assistant professor of Canadian history at the University of Waterloo. I was hired as a digital public historian, and am currently teaching a second-year digital history class (which will hopefully be a third-year offering next year - it just began last week but will be done by the time we meet at NCPH). My main goal for this group is to learn from everybody about their successes and failures, and share some of my own.

My background in digital history and new media comes from a combination of my outreach and research activities. With respects to the former, I co-founded *ActiveHistory.ca* in 2009 with a group of fellow graduate students at York University, and continue to actively edit the blog. We've helped a lot of fellow faculty, students, researchers, and even community members step out onto the web and maintain a pretty decent contributor and user base. Research wise, I work in the twin areas of textual analysis and how historians can harness web archives for their work (a bit of this is up on my blog at <http://ianmilligan.ca/posts/>). My PhD was from York University (in Toronto), which offers essentially no digital support or training for students, although I had a brief postdoc at Western University (in London, Ontario) where I picked up quite a bit.

The first two core questions consume my attention as I set up and run my digital history course. My goals for my undergraduate students are three-fold: firstly, giving them skills that will help them in their other history courses, from learning about online resources to citation management skills; secondly, letting them build a digital portfolio and learn how to engage with the web; and thirdly, giving them some marketable skills for either further academic work or, more likely, non-academic work. The last one raises some eyebrows, but I genuinely think we can send our humanities students out into the labour market relatively unprepared. We do a good job of giving them critical thinking skills, but not so good a job of making sure they can express ideas and process content on the web. When I ask students what they want to get out of the class (in survey form), many want to learn about blogging (mentioning its importance in a lot of jobs now) as well as different tools to make their lives as students easier. They know these things are important, but aren't yet sure how to step out and learn them.

As for what is to be taught, I include the following topics, all unfortunately brief as we operate on a semester system: the basics of going digital, the history web (from Wordpress to a brief primer on Omeka), evaluating web sources, podcasting introduction, a 3D printing demonstration, textual analysis, digitization and the role of archives, spatial history, and a brief stepping into humanities programming. It's ambitious, perhaps too much so, but as an introduction gets them thinking about the variety of resources out there - and the language that they need to ask the right questions going forward. They pick one of these areas and expand upon it in their final project. We all collaborate together to our class blog, which I hope will build community, let people see what others are doing, and learn how to step out on the web.

We have a few significant challenges. The first is that our students often have rote expectations of what a history class will offer. Once we deviate from the basic structure (book review, term paper, etc.) we can encounter some push back. Similarly, and compounding the evaluatory problem, how do we manage differing levels of digital literacy? Some of my students have a few years in the University of Waterloo's rigorous computer science program. Others have difficulty using their web browser. Making sure that we don't go too quickly for the latter and too slowly for the former is an important one, as we have a wider range of competencies than we would in a traditional classroom.

I'm really looking forward to hearing about what other specific projects, assignments, and approaches my colleagues in the NCPH group have come up with. My idea of an ideal outcome would be a central repository of what others are doing. It would be neat to bring different classes together somehow, so undergraduate students can experience the sense of community that many of us do.

## **Case Statement: Teaching Digital History and New Media**

**By: Teresa Iacobelli**

My name is Teresa Iacobelli and I hold a Ph.D. in history and have over twelve years of experience in the field of public history. In 2007 I began working in the field of digital history and have since served as a historian on *Canada and the First World War* created for the Canadian War Museum (launched in 2008) and *100 Years: The Rockefeller Foundation* created for the Rockefeller Archive Center (launching in 2013). As a participant in "Teaching Digital History and New Media" I hope to contribute my unique experience as a historian on digital history sites while also benefitting from the experience of those who teach in the fields of digital history and new media. As I move forward in my career I hope to teach courses in public history and I anticipate that any future course will have a large component dealing specifically with digital history. For this reason, I am most interested in hearing about how digital history has been taught in the classroom and the type of assignments that have been created to explore the topic. In addition to giving me ideas for future lectures and assignments, this session will also help me to better understand how teachers use digital history sites in the classroom. I'm sure this will be enlightening for me as I continue to work on projects in digital history. The views of teachers will provide invaluable feedback as I continue to think about how to write in the digital medium, what type of material to digitize, how to contextualize digital objects and how to conceive of digital lesson plans for students.

In regards to the question of what should be taught to a student in a digital history course, students should come away with an understanding of how digital media can be used to enhance the traditional scholarly experience. Students should also be challenged to think of the broad questions that are present at the outset of any major digital history project. Among the most important of these questions is audience. Who is the site for? This basic question can be overlooked, but it is fundamental in determining the design, scope, goals, tone and writing on a site. I believe that any student should also come away from the course with a working knowledge of effective project management and the existing platforms currently used in creating sites for museums, archives and other cultural institutions. For example, students should develop a familiarity with Omeka and Wordpress. Students can also be given assignments that help them to understand how existing sites like Flickr and Gowalla can be used to create curated exhibitions or visitor experiences. Students should also be taught to write in web-friendly style and be aware of how this style differs from academic writing. Writing skills should also focus on the captions, which are needed to succinctly describe digitized items, including artifacts, photographs and film clips.

One of the greatest challenges for teachers of digital history and new media is to create projects that help students see digital initiatives as a means to enhance traditional scholarship rather than act as a replacement for it. Educators must balance teaching methods of rigorous scholarship and research with a more project driven environment that prepares students for future employment in the field of public history. Balancing theory and practice is a great challenge for educators. It is this balance, and the project-driven environment, that distinguishes courses in digital history and new media from other courses for historians. Courses in digital history and new media should also be distinguished by a collaborative environment. While courses for historians typically emphasize the individual pursuits of research and writing, digital history courses must emphasize collaboration

and teamwork. Creating websites has been among the most collaborative experiences that I've engaged in, and it is the dynamic among the team that will help determine the success of a project. Digital initiatives require a team of individuals with different skillsets working together to create a product. The historian must find the means to communicate with a web developer and vice-versa, even when at times we appear to be speaking different languages. Effective communication of project goals and a basic working knowledge of another team member's role will move the project forward. Collaboration continues long after the basic elements of a project are complete, for example, usability testing from a diverse audience improves a website in its final stages. Digital products cannot be created alone, and therefore the ability to work in a team environment must be reinforced in any successful course in digital history and new media.



Ella Howard, Assistant Professor of History  
Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah, Georgia

I work at a teaching-focused university, and am quite interested in finding ways to incorporate digital history projects at all levels of instruction. My public history background comes from my (old-fashioned in many ways) M.A. in the History of the Decorative Arts, training in Material Culture, and work on museum exhibitions. My university offers an M.A. with a concentration in Public History, which gives me the chance to teach an undergraduate/graduate course in American Material Culture. I have also taught Introduction to Public History, and Topics in Urban History—I am now working on integrating digital humanities projects into these courses.

My current large project is a website on local history that I am developing with our campus website administrators and the university library archivist. I have been able to secure an undergraduate student research assistant to work with me on this project, and funding to acquire rudimentary oral history recording equipment and a digital camera. My goal is to have students in various courses produce web content featuring the highlights of their research into the history of Savannah. I began this project last term with students in a first-year seminar, having them work in groups to study a figure from the history of the university, draft a short narrative, and record the audio for use online.

I am becoming interested in questions of sourcing, citation, and legitimization as I work with students on these projects. For some projects, I have assigned a “traditional” footnoted research paper as well as a distinct, separately conceived digital version of the project, in order to ensure that both my students and my colleagues understand that these types of assignments are just as rigorous and scholarly as any others.

Another challenge that I feel strongly is that of budget, especially in these tough times for American public universities. In designing projects, I must be mindful not only of the limited resources available to my students, but also the parameters of my own work. For my current website project, I have partnered with my university’s web design team, in order to try to utilize existing infrastructure and staff knowledge. This obviously entails compromise—they will have a great deal of say in how the site is designed and what it contains. (I proposed using Omeka, and they declined, citing it as a security risk to our university system.) I am taking this cautious approach because I have seen similar initiatives at this university (and others) abandoned when funds are no longer available. As a result, I am trying to develop projects that can survive without funding and thrive when it is available.

My university has been focusing a great deal on information literacy, in an effort to guide our students in becoming wiser and more discerning consumers of knowledge. I am hopeful that working with them in the production of digital content may have the added benefit of heightening their awareness of the constructed nature of not just digital material, but all material, whether published or unpublished. Watching groups of first-year students, especially, as they debate which facts to include or omit from a narrative is very heartening.

At the other end of the teaching spectrum, one of our advanced graduate students was able to attend the Southern Foodways Alliance Oral History Workshop last year, and has begun a series of oral history

projects based on that model with area restaurateurs. Working with her, I have focused more on the technical skills (as she is teaching me what she learned in Mississippi!), because she has a strong talent for oral history and editing. I am excited by the potential these types of low-tech, low-cost techniques have for providing students with valuable skills, but also professionalization and enhanced confidence in themselves as public historians.

Working with graduate students, I also want to teach them how to communicate their ideas effectively with the general public. I want students to learn to be mindful of jargon, sloppy writing, and the dreaded murky agency of the passive voice. I believe that teaching them to write for the public as we are also teaching them to write for an audience of scholars will help them to advance professionally as well as intellectually.

I am very excited to participate in this group, and look forward to meeting you all!

Best,

Ella

Case Statement – Teaching Digital History and New Media

I joined the university of Amsterdam as Assistant Professor of Public History in June 2012 and in September 2013 will teach a new 16-week course on Digital History that I have just added to the MA as a required course (along with the Intro to Public History). For the previous ten years I worked as a curator of gallery, traveling, and online exhibitions at the National Library of Medicine on the outskirts of Washington, DC. During that time I worked on a wide range of web projects, from large multimedia exhibitions with budgets of several hundred thousand dollars (developed with well-known digital history firms including Second Story Interactive Studios) to smaller sites developed in-house or using templates provided by exhibition designers. For the new course I am developing, I would like to set up a public-private partnership with a web design company to create a virtual museum. In the first year of the course, the students will help conceptualize and plan the online museum environment, and in subsequent years, students will develop the content.

I am interested in two strands of challenges in teaching digital history – the practical constraints of class-based work and keeping up with the fast-moving pace of change in cutting-edge technological work. For this reason, I am proposing working with a web company as that will give the students access to a more sophisticated range of tools for the project than working in-house on wordpress/omeka/joomla, for example. This will also give students experience working with a contractor so they can learn about conveying aims and delivering content to another organization in a team, as well as how to give constructive feedback on draft ideas. I want the opportunity for the class to pursue any of their creative leads, unconstrained by the technical limits of myself or the university ICT team, and I also want to develop an innovative project that does more than just add another online exhibition to the growing number on the web.

For a previous gallery exhibition I set up a partnership with a Digital History class to develop the exhibition website, but the project was unsuccessful. Problems arose from the short duration of the course, the greater interest of the students in developing content rather than working with existing content in new ways, reluctance within the exhibition team to share rough ideas or draft materials with an outside group, poor communication between the exhibition team and the class, and lack of leadership buy-in to see the project through to completion. To address some of these issues, this time I am proposing “owning” the project within the class, and having a much longer development period (with time for theoretical reflection as well as project-based work). Challenges include the need to raise funding to pay for the collaboration – or to establish a public-private collaboration that is not based on funds, as well as difficulties structuring the course to allow the students to engage in a real-time development process.

I am currently in the last week of a 4 week web exhibition project with the students and have also found it difficult to organize the class for group-based work towards one final product. We have been working so far with a script team, an asset team, a web team, and a multimedia team, but this framework has left some students completely unconnected to the content of the exhibition and others ignorant of some of the core skills needed to research and secure assets/copyright permissions, for example. While many students already blog or build websites, and many more have an easy affinity to work with content management tools, few understand copyright law, strategies for asset research, and the complexities of developing storylines that connect with assets as more

than simply illustrations for the text. With the virtual museum project, I am looking for a better way to integrate these skills into the project.

I also found that despite initial enthusiasm to “do” public history instead of just reading about it, the students were quite reluctant to jump in and do things on their own initiative. I am wondering if this transition from student to practitioner needs to be handled differently so that students can develop their practical work in a few smaller steps – beginning with a Wikipedia entry, blog post, or similar and gradually moving up to a larger project?

Finally, in the theoretical framework of the course, I want to nurture a more critical evaluation of the accomplishments of digital history and encourage the students to analyze other projects more carefully. In general they have tended to focus on the design of a site (either love it or hate it), without more nuanced attention to the strategies used and the implications for the user. Although digital history is seen sometimes as a democratizing, affordable, empowering, and accessible realm, in practice it is sometimes the dumping ground for everything that didn't fit in the physical exhibition, can be full of boring old strategies of presentation (text-image-text-image), and interaction for interaction's sake without any real purpose or payoff. I want to equip students to sift out the great from the mediocre, and as a real project group to create something innovative with a long-lasting impact.

Greetings,

I look forward to being a part of this digital history and new media working group. I received my Ph.D. in History from the University of Minnesota in 2008; currently, I am an assistant professor of public history at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. My primary research interests focus on issues of African American history, urban history, and their intersection with public history. My teaching interests, however, are quite varied—and this is one of the reasons that I applied to be part of this working group.

More and more of my students becoming interested in digital history and new media, and digital literacy is becoming, in varying degrees, a core necessity for many public history careers—regardless if that career takes place in a museum, a living history site, or a National Park. In order to teach public history, I realize that I must have practical experience in creating (and not just passively using) digital history/new media. As such, in September 2011, I joined an interdisciplinary digital media research group at ASU. We decided, as part of our internal grant proposal, to develop a proposal for a digital exhibition (using Omeka software) related to Appalachian history and culture.

ASU once had a museum of Appalachian history on campus; however, the museum closed down several years ago due to a variety of monetary and political issues. It's very unfortunate that my students do not have a "laboratory" on campus to practice their public history skills. We currently have a great art museum on campus, and there is a history/art museum located in the neighboring town—but none of these are replacements for a campus museum. Boone is a relatively small town, and we don't have many options as far as established museums for collaborative projects. For all of these reasons, I hoped that our digital media research proposal would spark the interest of the grant reviewers. Unfortunately, however, the grant reviewers turned down our proposal, citing a lack of understanding as to how this 'museum' could actually function online, how it could be **self-sustaining**, and how it would be beneficial for ASU students and the community. We haven't given up, however; currently, our research group is preparing a grant application to the NEH for a similar digital project.

Here, briefly, is my perspective on question 2: 'What should be taught? Are there specific knowledge, tech skills, theory, or perspectives that should be considered essential to a public historian's training in digital history'?

I hope that at least a portion of this working group will provide a practical session on using some of the open-source software, such as Omeka. It might be a great working group project to continue **after** the NCPH conference ends. Given that so many public history organizations and universities are struggling to provide funding for projects, being able to creatively and skillfully use open source software seems crucial for both seasoned public historians and new professionals and students. In order for me to assign such a project to my students, however, I need to be able to fully understand the practical aspects of how such a project might work—and the limitations, strengths, and challenges that such a project will present. I would also be very interested in learning about creating digital projects other than "online exhibitions," or the apparently trendy QR codes. What opportunities for community-student partnerships does digital history present? To what extent do we need to consider the limitations of digital history,

particularly when it comes to partnering with members of the community who may have a difficult time accessing or helping to create these projects? (While it's true that more and more people have personal smartphones, laptops, etc., it is very clear—given the exceptionally heavy use of electronic resources offered by public libraries—that not everyone does, and it's not always easy for people to access this technology on a consistent basis). In other words, I am wary of digital history being created and consumed only by people with the means to do so.

I look forward to meeting all of you in Ottawa!

Andrea Burns

Appalachian State University

[burnsaa@appstate.edu](mailto:burnsaa@appstate.edu)

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**From:** [Johnny Alam](#)  
**To:** [Léon Robichaud](#); [Burg, Steven](#)  
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**Subject:** Re: NCPH 2013 Working Group Introduction and Case Statements  
**Date:** Saturday, January 19, 2013 3:26:01 PM

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Good afternoon everyone, I will be quite brief,

I am a second year PhD student in Cultural Mediations - Visual Culture at Carleton University Ottawa. I have a diverse educational background with a B.A in History, M.F.A in Applied Arts, and a M.A. in Art History. My parallel career path started in graphic and web design and culminated in a senior digital imaging specialist position at Adobe between 2007-2009. I have been teaching computer graphic software (such as Adobe products) for a while as well as theoretical courses such as "Animation and Society". My interest in Digital History, from a theoretical standpoint, is fairly new. Therefore, I look forward to learn from the more experienced members of the group and share whatever experience I may have accumulated through the years.

Having read the informative statements of the previous members I have very little to add to the conversation. One thing I have learned in my long experience in Information Technology is that change in the IT world is the norm and it is a pretty rapid one; sometimes without proper justification. Hence, asking students to keep up to speed in the IT domain and develop critical thinking skills which are the core of History writing (in any medium that may be), would be a bit of an unfair challenge. Nevertheless, their knowledge of the latest technologies is a must from a "methodology of research" perspective. A student, for instance, does not need to be the programmer but she/he needs to know what a programmer can do and how to collaborate with programmers. Another example is being informed about new multimedia technologies which have the potential of enhancing the field of sensory history. Based on all this, I feel that a digital history course could showcase past and current successful adaptations of technology to serve historiographical purposes (be it text analysis to multisensory museum displays...etc.) From a practical side, the course may invite students to critically examine the benefits and shortcomings of a forthcoming technology, or think of new ways to use an already existing one. Taming new technologies is what I find, here and now, as the most beneficial skill in a rapidly changing society.

Looking forward to meeting you in person at the conference.

Sincerely,  
Johnny (EI) Alam  
PhD student,  
ICSLAC, Carleton University

-----Original Message-----

From: Léon Robichaud  
Sent: Saturday, January 19, 2013 12:36 PM  
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Subject: Re: NCPH 2013 Working Group Introduction and Case Statements

Hello all,

I am Léon Robichaud, professor of pre-industrial Canadian history and of digital history and new media at the Université de Sherbrooke. I started my academic career after almost a decade of work in public history. I worked as a researcher in a museum setting and as a consultant on both heritage and digital issues for provincial and municipal governments. My main project was probably designing Old Montreal's heritage inventory [<http://www.vieux.montreal.qc.ca/inventaire/hall.htm>], more specifically the database, navigation system and queries.

In my undergraduate course in digital history, after trying to cover all aspects of digital history, I now focus on a regional history project in partnership with two archive centres aimed at creating virtual tours on the HistoryPin platform. Given that this is a compulsory course, my objective is to focus on accessible tools so that anyone can contribute. Students who are new to computing can do basic work. Students with a stronger digital background can go further and help me with the layout, theme, etc.

1. What are the goals of educators? How do differing goals shape the way digital history will be approached?

The current generation, the so-called digital natives, are much more familiar with the use of computers than when I started teaching such courses 12 years ago. I no longer have students who are afraid to turn a computer on. However, they need to gain a better understanding of how the systems work. I hope that in this way, they will gain more confidence and take control of their digital lives. While I would not try to teach programming in a compulsory history undergraduate class, I believe that they need to understand Douglas Rushkoff's "Ten commands for a Digital Age", as laid out in Program or be programmed. By focusing on one project, I hope that the students will feel confident enough to use the expertise gained to venture into other digital areas. Through a public history project (creating virtual tours with HistoryPin), I hope that the students will achieve enhanced digital literacy skills.

At the graduate level, I focus on providing the students with tools that can help them in their research. I introduce students to quantitative analysis, text analysis, network analysis, spatial analysis and sometimes 3d modeling (if there are interested students). While using online tools such as VoyeurTools for text analysis, I also introduce them to programming using "The programming historian" tutorials which lets them see what happens behind the scenes.

2. What should be taught?

An integrated project, virtual history and heritage tours means that students will be exposed to digitisation and the use of digitised materials as well as metadata, storyboarding, selecting materials, research, writing for the general public, using social media to make their project known to friends, family, and more, etc. Students who are still leery of digital tools will improve some basic skills, while advanced students will develop new ones. After having created a online



project, the students will also be more critical with regards to the tools that they have used and towards other platforms which they will encounter.

3. What approaches have educators found to be most effective?

I have found that my original intuition 12 years ago, to focus on an integrated project, tends to mobilise students much better. It also provides a greater satisfaction, achieving something other than just another replacement for a term paper. I can't remember why I felt obliged to cover all aspects of digital history through a series of small assignments for a few years. These ended up being made mechanically as a checklist. Maybe I just structure them wrong. This year's undergrad project will, for the first time, also have a public presentation in front of the archives partners, tourism agency, media, etc. Given that it will take place the week after the NCPH, I will not have full results yet, but I will be able to share with you how things have progressed and how confident I feel in their work. I have also incorporated a 5% portion of the grade for their social media strategy so that some less technical but more social students can integrate this strength and help make the project better known.

The greatest challenges are, in my experience, to

- a) motivate students who are in the humanities because they did not want to do a lot of math or computing
- b) get the students to grow from being users to being creators and to use computing as a tool for empowerment

With regards to the difference between dh courses and traditional courses, for me, the main difference is that my regular history courses (History of Canada before 1840, History of New France, History of justice under the French Regime) don't require students to create a digital project. However, I still use many digital resources such as the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History, online archives and so on.

I tend to avoid Powerpoint, because it forces me into a very linear progression. I prefer conceptual maps, which make it easier to show linkages between different phenomena. However, I do recognise that students are more comfortable with the linear narrative of the slide show. If I really need to turn their world upside down, I will include a slide show type presentation to give them at least something familiar to fall back on.

In the end, the difference is probably greater between how I teach any form of history and how my colleagues (even younger ones given that I just turned 50) teach history.

Léon Robichaud, Ph.D.  
Professeur agrégé  
Département d'histoire  
Université de Sherbrooke

## Case Statement

### NCPH Working Group on “Teaching Digital History & New Media,” 2013

Anne Mitchell Whisnant, UNC-Chapel Hill

January 21, 2013

I’m participating in this working group at the 2013 NCPH meeting in hopes of getting help in thinking creatively about how to improve my current [Introduction to Public History course](#) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Since 2009, I have incorporated significant digital component into this class by having students work on a digital history project for which I have been the scholarly advisor since 2009: [Driving Through Time: The Digital Blue Ridge Parkway](#). This project, supported initially by funding from a two-year grant from the State Library of North Carolina under the Library Services and Technology Act and hosted at the UNC-Chapel Hill Libraries, has digitized and put online hundreds of historic photographs, maps, documents, newspaper clippings, oral histories, and other materials pertaining to the history of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina (1933-present).

The central project for students in my course has been to develop [illustrated interpretive essays for the collection](#), some of which—in the longer term—have been edited and published on the live *Driving Through Time* site. Because digital skills and awarenesses are now vital to *all* historians, I have urged them to employ digital tools at every stage of their work—from research materials management (Zotero), to development of interpretive visualizations (Google Earth), to final presentation of their essays (WordPress). They have also conducted site usability reviews and have also, on two occasions, mined our raw digitized materials to create descriptive metadata to be entered into the site’s Django-enabled back-end database or (later) in a Google Doc form that, in turn, was used by the site planning team to work on the live site. The course is designed so that students see and experience how digital tools are now braided into all stages of historical scholarship: from research to final presentation and use.

Yet, sometimes, squeezing digital history into a course that has other primary goals (namely, introducing them to the field of public history more generally) makes the students (and me) feel as though we are doing two courses at once, especially as the technical aspects of working with metadata, Zotero, Google Earth, and WordPress can quickly become overwhelming. Many of the students are surprisingly lacking in proficiency and self-sufficiency in using their computers. Many do not read instructions carefully. Even though this is a senior- and graduate-level course, I find I cannot assume even a basic level of technical capability on the part of most of my students.

Additionally, I struggle with bringing the students sufficiently up to speed on the content (Blue Ridge Parkway history) and, frankly, on the basics of doing quality historical research (with digital and analog sources) and interpretation, and often end up frustrated with the poor quality of the final essays—which also, rarely go

much beyond text, links, and some inserted images to make use of any innovative visual approaches like map tours or overlays.

Additionally, sometimes I feel that we are not able to give enough attention to considering how a digital project like this is “public history.” I would welcome the opportunity to talk with others about how to bring public history and digital history into more synergistic alignment. Is all “digital history” inherently “public history” by virtue of its wide availability? Should working on this digital project in a self-consciously “public history” context make the project different somehow? Are there perspectives long held by public historians that can become more widely useful now that more historians may be publishing in the digital realm?

**While all of these larger questions interest me, at the moment, what I need most are practical ideas for how more effectively to pace and scaffold student assignments so that they support my aim of braiding digital approaches into doing publicly useful historical research, writing, and presentation.** Although I’ve taught this course in this general fashion three times now, I am still not satisfied that the project structure works well for the students or for me and *Driving Through Time*. So, I would ask for your thoughts about:

- What, specifically, should I have students do, when, and how?
- How can I introduce them into the processes (both digital and research) gradually, and how can I provide more effective support for them without having to put in three times as much time as I now do? (I’ve tried various forms of hired graduate student assistance—so far none entirely satisfactorily. I’ve had good luck with allocating class time to hands-on work, but simply have not had enough time for this while attending to other class goals.)
- What kinds of staging is effective for projects like this? I know that I’m putting too much weight on a final product at the end of the semester without enough building blocks along the way, but students are simply often not immersed enough in content earlier in the semester to begin producing drafts or other partial products. Are there ways I might fold some of the needed skills into non-project-related assignments (for instance, they have to lead class discussion on the readings) so that they are building those along the way?
- How can I encourage and reward self- or peer-teaching?
- How can I evaluate their work in ways that encourage and reward *process* (a willingness to experiment and learn) as much as final product, especially when I want high-quality final products?
- How can I set reasonable expectations for the final product? Should the final projects be truly “public” in some way so as to raise the stakes? Are their FERPA or other issues with this, and how have people addressed those? What do I do about the fact that I would not want to be associated with putting poor content about the Blue Ridge Parkway on the web?

I really look forward to this conversation with all of you!

**NCPH Ottawa 2013**  
**J. M. McCutcheon,**  
**University of Ottawa/History to Knowledge (H2K)**

Hi there, my name is Jo McCutcheon and I am a part-time professor at the University of Ottawa. I completed my PhD in history at the University of Ottawa in 2001, "Clothing children and the construction of gender in English Speaking Canada, 1870s to 1930s". I have been working in both academia and the private sector for more than 15 years.

I currently work as a public historian and own History to Knowledge (H2K) in Ottawa, Ontario. As a public historian and professional researcher, I have worked on large scale digitization projects used to contextualize and document First Nations, Inuit and Métis history and their relations with the Crown in affairs related to land, treaties and education. Documentation has mostly been obtained from archival sources from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This work has included overseeing and managing the digitization, coding and electronic branding of projects that have as few as 500 pages of material to 1 million pages linked to 185 000 coded records used mostly by non-historians. Over a ten-year period, I worked with diverse teams of researchers, primarily drawing upon history department graduates because of the analytical nature of the work and the archival component required to collect records.

An important skill and goal that I have had when teaching students about digital history and resources has been using databases, designing databases (FileMakerPro) and systematizing research. This has been a skill important in an academic and a professional, public history context. Using a contained number of primary sources, students have responded well to the challenges and opportunities of database design and the challenges of coding and analysing primary documents. Defining terms and review data entry has prepared them for work at museums and in professional research firms that require data entry and document analysis.

I have also learned more and more that students also need to be able to navigate, evaluate and effectively use digital resources. As students increasingly rely on digital history, they need to develop the same critical evaluation tools used for monologue sources to determine their potential value and imitations.

Since 2001, I have been using a digital history website in a diversity of Canadian history courses that has provided the opportunity to teach using primary sources. At first, the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History (GUMCH) offered one mystery for students to solve, but it now offers twelve mysteries and more shall be available over the next few years. In a specific microhistory methodology course, in addition to the GUMCH website, I have also used "The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War", "History Matters" and "The Great Chicago Fire" to form the basis of learning and evaluation.

A significant challenge for me personally as an educator and public historian has been managing change in tools and digital history methods. Over the past few years in particular, I have been working to adapt to new teaching tools and to integrate them into the classroom. I am working on building my knowledge and experience with Zotero, WordPress, and most recently, Top Hat Monocle, an interactive classroom tool.

Over the past year, I have been exploring Twitter, Facebook, Pintrest, and other blogging formats to communicate with students and also to develop learning assignments. In my most recent teaching experience, students were tasked with evaluating two digital history websites related to American Colonial history. It was the first time students had been asked to undertake this kind of work. Students were also provided with the opportunity to develop their research using Twitter, a blog or another new media format. Three of 58 students selected this option.

This term, I am again using GUMCH, Twitter and digital resources to interact with students and look forward to sharing my experiences, challenges and engaging in this important dialogue as I continue to learn more about digital tools and resources. I would also like to consider the ways that these tools prepare students for jobs in public history, professional research and more advanced research projects.

<http://canadianmysteries.ca/en/index.php>

<http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/>

<http://greatchicagofire.org/>

Looking very forward to this session, Jo

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<http://historytoknowledge.wordpress.com>

Phillip Payne  
Department of History  
St. Bonaventure University

I am in my 15<sup>th</sup> year at St. Bonaventure University (SBU) where I teach United States and Public History. My teaching is exclusively undergraduate courses. My public history teaching consists of three courses: History 206: Introduction to Public History, History 419: Computer and Archival Skills for Historians, and History 495: History Internship. Over the years I have developed a close working relationship with the university archivist specifically and the library staff in general. This has proven to be a fruitful partnership, especially for digital history.

Prior to joining the SBU faculty I worked for the Ohio Historical Society and another local museum. At the Ohio Historical Society I managed the Warren G. Harding Site. My graduate work was at Ohio State focusing on modern US history and local history writing a history of Ironton, Ohio. I've done extensive public history work with the Teaching American History program, both working with a local school district and as a grant reviewer, and with the Study of the United States for Student Leaders program through the Department of State.

One of my big goals for undergraduates taking public history course is to introduce them to the career options available to them and to have them think broadly and critically about the production and consumption of history. This has to include digital history. I typically have a digital or digitally augmented assignment in Intro to Public History and other history courses but focus on digital history in History 419. When I first began teaching the class, about 12 years ago, students were almost completely unprepared; building a web page was a big deal. Today students who take the course are often adept at using their smart phones and surfing the web, but often have not thought about using new media professionally and are not familiar with software to aid them such as Omeka, wordpress, zotero, and Excel. Undergraduate history majors often approach digital history with some skepticism, not sure what it has to do with history. They also often assume that as members of the digital generation there isn't much for them to learn.

In teaching digital history we adopt a few themes. The basic structure of the class involves reading and discussion regarding digital history (theory), learning how to use the software and other technologies, and working with archival materials. We often include materials on the history of the internet and its structure. It is sometimes disturbing how little thought they have given to what the internet is and how it has changed society. In this course students need to learn how to create digital media from primary documents. To this end, we ask students to adopt the correct technology and use it professionally; design web pages, learn

to write for different mediums beyond the traditional research paper; to think about the connections between design, imagery, and message; to think about how social media and web 2.0 technologies can be used in educational and cultural contexts; appropriately adopt new technologies.

Early in the semester we have some traditional lectures and readings on archives and digital history, but as the semester progresses the students take on increasing responsibility for projects and presentations. Some students really enjoy the challenge and freedom of pursuing their own projects and working with me and the university archivist on projects that will become part of the university's web page.

The first theme is that the students need to explore and adapt the appropriate digital tools. Students are familiar with a wide variety software, but have not given thought to how they might be applied to history combined with a general lack of awareness of tools specifically designed for history (or related areas). Sometimes this is a question of jargon. For example, in one class we were talking about "web 2.0" only to find that many of students didn't know what that meant. They used web 2.0 technologies but did not know they were called "web 2.0." We emphasize that the software will change so the important task is to think about how to apply the tool realizing that change is inevitable. We also help the students use tools like Zotero to do research rather than relying on pen and paper.

A second theme is the use of archival materials to create a "live" digital history project. If their work is good enough, it will be used by the archives and be available to the public. Students are forced to work collaboratively and publically with an emphasis on problem solving. History 419 is team-taught by the university archivist providing a focus and grounding in work familiar to history majors. Students pick from a list of archival collections and digital projects. In some instances students have collaborated by doing part of one large project and in other instances their projects are not connected. For example, a few years ago an alum who had recently retired from Congress donated his papers. Students were responsible for organizing a portion of the collection and building a web page and data base that contributed to a whole. Obviously, we don't have this opportunity every time we teach the class.

The primary challenge for teaching the digital history course is to (1) find good student projects, (2) convince history majors that this really is something they should do (3) stay abreast of changing technologies and find the resources to bring it to the classroom.

NCPH Working Group: Teaching Digital History and New Media  
Heather Munro Prescott, Ph.D.

I'm a Professor of History at Central Connecticut State University. I have taught here for over twenty years. I've become interested in teaching digital history as a result of a workshop I took at the Center for History and New Media about eight years ago. I have taught a graduate level Digital History course as a special topics seminar in our public history masters program three times; and an undergraduate course for our undergraduate minor in public history.

Since my graduate course is aimed primarily at public history graduate students, my goals are to give them an introduction to digital history methods used by heritage institutions; and practical skills that they can use for their capstone projects and future careers. The final project for this course is a digital exhibit on a topic of their choice using the exhibit platform Omeka. In general the students find these projects manageable and are usually able to complete them within the time frame of the course. The undergraduate course was less successful because most of the students who registered had no experience with public history. Worse, some had little interest in public history and just took the course because it fit their schedule. So, I found myself having to scale back the goals of the course on the fly. I'd be interested in hearing about models for undergraduate courses that have been successful.

Last summer I attended THATCamp at the CHMU where I organized a session on "More Disruptive Pedagogy: Thoughts on Teaching an UnCourse." The idea for this session stemmed from my experiences and challenges teaching a graduate public history course on the theory and practice of digital history. The first challenge I face has to do with coverage: what are the most important things that students should know to get a reasonable introduction to the field? The second challenge regards levels of experience: some students have little or no experience with anything beyond word processing and using an online catalog; others are far more advanced in their skill level (the last time I taught the course I had a student with an undergraduate degree in computer science. Talk about a humbling experience). The third challenge is keeping up with the field and making sure that the course stays fresh and up to date.

So, one question I'm interesting in discussing is: would the un-conference model, in which students decide on at least some of the themes and topics of the course, work for a graduate level course?



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**Subject:** Re: NCPH 2013 Working Group Introduction and Case Statements  
**Date:** Saturday, January 19, 2013 12:37:18 PM

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Hello all,

I am Léon Robichaud, professor of pre-industrial Canadian history and of digital history and new media at the Université de Sherbrooke. I started my academic career after almost a decade of work in public history. I worked as a researcher in a museum setting and as a consultant on both heritage and digital issues for provincial and municipal governments. My main project was probably designing Old Montreal's heritage inventory [<http://www.vieux.montreal.qc.ca/inventaire/hall.htm>], more specifically the database, navigation system and queries.

In my undergraduate course in digital history, after trying to cover all aspects of digital history, I now focus on a regional history project in partnership with two archive centres aimed at creating virtual tours on the HistoryPin platform. Given that this is a compulsory course, my objective is to focus on accessible tools so that anyone can contribute. Students who are new to computing can do basic work. Students with a stronger digital background can go further and help me with the layout, theme, etc.

1. What are the goals of educators? How do differing goals shape the way digital history will be approached?

The current generation, the so-called digital natives, are much more familiar with the use of computers than when I started teaching such courses 12 years ago. I no longer have students who are afraid to turn a computer on. However, they need to gain a better understanding of how the systems work. I hope that in this way, they will gain more confidence and take control of their digital lives. While I would not try to teach programming in a compulsory history undergraduate class, I believe that they need to understand Douglas Rushkoff's "Ten commands for a Digital Age", as laid out in Program or be programmed. By focusing on one project, I hope that the students will feel confident enough to use the expertise gained to venture into other digital areas. Through a public history project (creating virtual tours with HistoryPin), I hope that the students will achieve enhanced digital literacy skills.

At the graduate level, I focus on providing the students with tools that can help them in their research. I introduce students to quantitative analysis, text analysis, network analysis, spatial analysis and sometimes 3d modeling (if there are interested students). While using online tools such as VoyeurTools for text analysis, I also introduce them to programming using "The programming historian" tutorials which lets them see what happens behind the scenes.

2. What should be taught?

An integrated project, virtual history and heritage tours means that students will be exposed to digitisation and the use of digitised materials as well as metadata, storyboarding, selecting materials, research, writing for the general public, using social media to make

their project known to friends, family, and more, etc. Students who are still leery of digital tools will improve some basic skills, while advanced students will develop new ones. After having created a online project, the students will also be more critical with regards to the tools that they have used and towards other platforms which they will encounter.

3. What approaches have educators found to be most effective?

I have found that my original intuition 12 years ago, to focus on an integrated project, tends to mobilise students much better. It also provides a greater satisfaction, achieving something other than just another replacement for a term paper. I can't remember why I felt obliged to cover all aspects of digital history through a series of small assignments for a few years. These ended up being made mechanically as a checklist. Maybe I just structure them wrong. This year's undergrad project will, for the first time, also have a public presentation in front of the archives partners, tourism agency, media, etc. Given that it will take place the week after the NCPH, I will not have full results yet, but I will be able to share with you how things have progressed and how confident I feel in their work. I have also incorporated a 5% portion of the grade for their social media strategy so that some less technical but more social students can integrate this strength and help make the project better known.

The greatest challenges are, in my experience, to

- a) motivate students who are in the humanities because they did not want to do a lot of math or computing
- b) get the students to grow from being users to being creators and to use computing as a tool for empowerment

With regards to the difference between dh courses and traditional courses, for me, the main difference is that my regular history courses (History of Canada before 1840, History of New France, History of justice under the French Regime) don't require students to create a digital project. However, I still use many digital resources such as the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History, online archives and so on.

I tend to avoid Powerpoint, because it forces me into a very linear progression. I prefer conceptual maps, which make it easier to show linkages between different phenomenons. However, I do recognise that students are more comfortable with the linear narrative of the slide show. If I really need to turn their world upside down, I will include a slide show type presentation to give them at least something familiar to fall back on.

In the end, the difference is probably greater between how I teach any form of history and how my colleagues (even younger ones given that I just turned 50) teach history.

Léon Robichaud, Ph.D.  
Professeur agrégé  
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**Aaron Shapiro**  
**Assistant Professor**  
**Auburn University**

I am an assistant professor of history at Auburn University, where I direct our public history program. I previously served as national historian for the [US Forest Service](#), where I was involved with a variety of public history projects, including film and oral history. One such effort, the [U.S. Forest Products Lab Centennial Oral History Project](#), focused on training students to collect oral histories and make them available digitally. As a teacher, I push my students to think beyond collecting, emphasizing the collaborative nature of digital history, the potential to ask different questions of the digital archive, and the possibilities of presenting historical analysis in multiple formats, all while focusing on key aspects of project management with multiple collaborators.

Having recently taught my department's first graduate seminar in [Digital History and New Media](#), I hope to explore digital history's place in the curriculum with working group participants. The seminar focused on theories of new media and using new media in historical scholarship and public engagement. Students examined new media in historical practice and were responsible for evaluating a variety of existing digital tools and projects in written and oral presentations. I encouraged students to use our Omeka platform if they were not comfortable with web design, since we would not cover the latter in seminar. Each student completed their own digital history project and in small groups, they developed tools and projects for use in a statewide public history symposium we hosted later in the year. One student presented her work at the symposium on a panel devoted to using digital history and new media to cultivate community. Library support has been crucial for carrying out digital projects in several of my classes but building campus-wide support for a digital humanities center have proven more difficult. I would be interested in hearing from colleagues how their digital history teaching connects with other digital humanities efforts on their campuses.

I am struck by the need not only to include digital history in public history courses but also am focused on integrating it into all graduate history courses. The challenge, as I see it, is to effectively train current students in digital history theory and methods so that they can ask different research questions that open up new lines of historical inquiry and present historical information in new ways. That being said, I remain concerned that if digital history is offered as a stand-alone course within the curriculum—whether required or optional—that it sends a message that the field is somehow separate from the broader historical discipline. In this sense, it becomes something that supplements what our students see as their main field of study, rather than integrated into their research and writing. To avoid putting digital history in a silo, I have engaged colleagues about how best to integrate digital history theory and methods into their courses. I've done the same with our public history curriculum—so our standard graduate seminar in early American history, for example, includes a public history project component as well as a traditional research and/or historiographical essay. In all this, I recognize a need for current faculty to have opportunities to learn more about digital history so that they can feel comfortable integrating it into their teaching.

One question asked about effective approaches for teaching digital history. I find it useful to provide students a clear framework for a project and emphasize collaboration, while providing space for creativity. This past fall I integrated a grant-funded project into my Fundamentals of Public History course. Students conducted oral histories exploring the history of the Forest Service in the Southeast. In addition to receiving training in oral history methods, students created blogs that reflected on their experience and captured key themes from the interviews, developed short video documentaries that drew on the oral histories and archival footage, and proposed website designs for the project team. Each group decided how to present their materials digitally, but they had a basic set of guidelines when it came to collecting oral histories, transcribing, preparing field notes, and readying materials for dissemination. They communicated with external partners, but I worked with agency officials to establish guidelines for the project and recruit participants. Currently one student is working with the project team to develop additional content and bring the project online.

Along these lines, I believe in providing opportunities for students to participate in digital projects. I currently manage the Auburn University Digital War Memorial Project, which aims to identify and honor all Auburn students and alumni who gave their lives in service to their country during wartime. A graduate student developed a research plan that addressed how her work engages multiple audiences in digital form and she has worked as part of a project team that includes representatives from the Library, Archives, Multicultural Affairs, Student Veterans, ROTC, Campus Architect, and Development.

Finally, I see opportunities for using digital history to further globalize the graduate curriculum. I recently traveled to South Korea with ten University colleagues. One of my goals is to develop projects connecting students, faculty, and communities in Korea and the Southeast. The trip opened up potential collaborations with campus colleagues so that tourism management program students could work with history graduate students on digital heritage tourism initiatives in a global context. I am currently developing a project that will involve students from Auburn and South Korea conducting oral histories on the history and development of the South Korean automotive industry. With nearby Hyundai and Kia plants and smaller automotive suppliers in communities across the state, it will explore the industry's growing regional presence while highlighting the global historical context associated with its post World War II development. As Korean firms reshape small Alabama towns, the automotive history project aims to foster cross-cultural dialogue and deeper cultural and historical understanding. Digital history—and the tools it provides—offers a crucial avenue to explore these questions.

Will Tchakirides  
January 16, 2013  
NCPH 2013

### **“Teaching Digital History and New Media” Case Statement**

Greetings fellow working-group participants, my name is Will Tchakirides. I am an Urban History Ph.D. student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee exploring race, crime, and the origins of America’s carceral state at the community level. In 2011, I earned a Public History M.A. from American University. There, I received instruction in digital history methods and completed a variety of web-based projects for DC area museums that utilize content management systems like [WordPress](#) and [Omeka](#) to catalog, organize, and display historical information and promote user engagement. As a result of these experiences, I am one of the few history graduate students at UWM trained to think and act digitally when approaching their craft.

To help integrate digital history methods and practices into its graduate and undergraduate curricula, UWM’s history department hired me in 2011 as a consultant for its “Digital Futures” initiative. Next year, UWM will offer two “digital history and new media” courses designed to train graduate and undergraduate students to research, collaborate, and create in digital spaces. Therefore, my interest in this working group is twofold: to report back to my department the best practices gleaned from our discussion on teaching digital history, but also to better prepare myself as an educator eager to raise the digital literacy of future history students.

To begin, training in digital history varies from institution-to-institution based on the expertise of instructors, specific departmental objectives, and the availability of new media resources. Still, I believe the main goal of any digital history teacher should be to

encourage students to think critically about how historical scholarship is produced online and to furnish them with the tools and theoretical training necessary to complete quality work in a digital environment. However, determining broader learning goals and outcomes might include asking the following set of “who, what, where, when, why” questions: Who is producing and consuming digital history content? What types of web projects, forms, and genres constitute digital history? Where are these approaches taking place? When did historians start thinking seriously about doing history digitally? Why is it important for historians, and public historians in particular, to develop well-rounded digital history skill-sets?

First, educators need to clarify for students that any scholar can become a digital historian with a little patience, effort, and humility. This includes those with limited technological skill-sets (like myself) who may serve more as project managers that utilize the talents of other tech-professionals, such as graphic designers and web developers, to complete their work. By nature, digital history is collaborative, interdisciplinary, and relies on shared authority to succeed. Therefore, history departments located outside of “digital-rich” campuses, like George Mason or CUNY, should encourage students to partner with other programs tracking similar digital outcomes. Moreover, educators must communicate the significance of “knowing one’s audience” before assigning projects that incorporate multiple stages of production. Like most public history endeavors, one’s target audience will determine the size, shape, and scope of their work.

Second, educators ought to convey what actually constitutes digital historical work. This includes everything from the building of electronic databases and online museum exhibitions to the creation of open-source web applications used by historians and other

scholars to research or visualize information, such as the open-source research tool, Zotero, or the “geo-temporal exhibit builder,” Neatline. Third, students should get a sense of both where historians produce digital content and where scholars engage with each other and their work online. Digital scholarship is created in museums and archives; digital humanities centers, like The Center for History and New Media, The Scholars’ Lab, or The Center for Public History and Digital Humanities; public and private libraries; and everyday history classrooms. Discussions surrounding digital history largely take place in the blogosphere, on Twitter, and in web-based journals, like American History Now, The Journal of Digital Humanities, and Global Perspectives on Digital History.

Fourth, educators must, to some extent, trace the development of digital history as a field, methodology, and/or approach. For example, how have historians moved from visualizing content through Web 1.0 interfaces, like the esteemed Valley of the Shadows project, to developing IOS and Android applications that allow scholars to curate the physical landscape using location-based technologies, such as Mobile Historical? This not only instills a sense of how doing history online has changed over time, but also how the open web and new media tools have evolved as research, writing, and interpretive resources. Educators should also promote web-based services and applications as significant tools/modes of research, production, and community engagement that enhance traditional scholarly practices.

Finally, today’s uncertain job market requires new historians to remain at the forefront of the digital turn in academia and public history venues. Educators should have a frank discussion with students about the types of technical skills museums, archives, and history departments are looking for when interviewing job candidates. Furthermore,

teachers must ensure that their students acquire as much, what Mills Kelly terms, “procedural knowledge” as they do “content knowledge.” In other words, we should cultivate engaging and lively classroom experiences that advance new forms of digital content production, new modes of data/text mining, some introduction to coding, and new ways of “mashing up” and presenting historical evidence, whether audio, video, images, maps, or text. As Kelly argues in his recent series of [blog posts](#), “There is more to success in the economy our students will live in than being able to write a really good five-page paper based on primary sources.”

Although most history courses follow a traditional lecture, seminar, or colloquium format, digital history courses need to be hands-on, collaborative, and simultaneously blend theory with practice. I believe the latter point represents one of the biggest challenges facing instructors, especially when a steep learning curve exists between students and professors in less technologically adept history departments. One method of putting digital history into practice is assigning final group projects that teach students how to perform as a team, draw on each other’s unique skill-sets, and manage time more effectively. This process should mirror real-life challenges posed by digital history projects at museums, universities, government institutions, and DH centers. For instance, the assignment might involve some exercise in grant writing, emphasizing the role of funding organizations like the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) and its Digital Humanities [Start-Up](#) and [Implementation](#) Grants in realizing large-scale works of digital history.



My name is LaDale Winling and I am an assistant professor of history at Virginia Tech where I teach digital and public history at the graduate and undergraduate levels. With a colleague at VT, I created a graduate certificate in public history. At Temple University and Loyola University Chicago I also taught digital history at the graduate level. There does not yet seem to be a consensus or key set of ideas about how digital media should be taught to public historians, so I am interested in learning about and sharing ideas and practices with other faculty and helping shape these goals and practices to help guide students and faculty who are increasingly coming to digital history. In 2004 I began blogging and have continued to the present at [www.urbanoasis.org](http://www.urbanoasis.org). Upon entering a PhD program in a school of architecture and urban planning, I realized how little I knew about the many other forms of communication I was seeing and started to learn about them and incorporate them into my work as a historian. I am now a board member of the Urban History Association and member of the subcommittee on digital issues.

1. In my experience with graduate students, the key goals of teaching digital history are three.

(1) To help students overcome their fears and bewilderment surrounding digital technology – the hardware, the software, and the fear that they are hopelessly lagging the rest of the world in their ability to understand and use digital technology. Graduate students (whether public history or otherwise) for the most part have emphasized the traditional knowledge and research priorities in their undergraduate training, which has left them without much in the way of digital skills. Even those who have had some exposure to digital history research as undergraduates seem to have had limited reflection on the nature of digital research and tools.

(2) To introduce students to some of the key digital tools and products used by historians, and to prompt them to think about how these tools and modes of communication enable new types of inquiry and communication. Fairly early in the course we work to start building some practical knowledge. This is to give students a sense of competence and address the issues in #1 while beginning or intensifying a process of reflection on the relationship between skill-based knowledge and conceptual knowledge in digital/history. The 2008 JAH Interchange on the promise of digital history, which we read early on in the course, juxtaposes two images of digital historians. One participant asserts digital historians should be like architects rather than plumbers -- should have a full vision of a project, even though he or she might not have any specific skills to do the work. Another disagrees and defends knowledge based on doing -- that skills inform the overarching vision of projects and digital history more generally. Building this practical knowledge at the outset helps students consider these debate positions more clearly.

(3) To enable students to build a sense of possibility, contingency, criticality, and their own agency in the emerging world of digital history. After achieving or making progress on the first two goals we return to the more typical activities of historians – analyzing, interpreting, and critiquing human activity and the historical record. By the end of the

course I expect that students will think about the possibilities for inquiry and expression quite differently. Rather than indulging the rhetoric of rupture – that digital history is a whole new world or changes everything -- we often end up having broadened the modes of research and communication from the printed text to a wider variety of media and think about the relationship -- even continuum -- between digital and analog sources and methods.

2. Using visual media and understanding digital imaging is absolutely essential for public historians, who engage the visual to such a great degree. Thus, I teach a bit of photographic history and visual culture, photography, and Photoshop. I am coming to think that some form of programming or scripting ability is essential because it gives students the ability to create their own tools or make much better use of existing tools, but I have not yet built this into my teaching yet to see how it works.

3. A key framework I use to start students thinking about the changes we are seeing in digital technology is beginning with the investigation of older periods of media transformation. I call it, "When Old Media Was New." While students have found changes in digital technology often bewildering, I emphasize that these epistemological upheavals are not new. Photographic documentation, the recorded and broadcast human voice, and the motion picture were all quite decentering and disruptive media that were eventually incorporated into a broader media landscape and into the work of historians. Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* has been a useful resource for this and gives students some conceptual comfort as well as giving them some background of the media that they will be working with later in the course.

I have also found course blogs to be useful for starting discussion, introducing students to HTML vs. CSS, and building their understanding of relational databases. It's been a useful addition (in all of my teaching now) that I heartily recommend.

I would like to hear a bit from group members on their experiences teaching digital history to undergraduates. Despite some classic digital history projects, the discipline as a whole has been slow to engage the digital (the AHA's recent frenzy on the digital hardly makes up for this lost time). In part this is because digital skills are so rarely taught to undergraduates -- the undergraduate curriculum seems to be a place for education on disciplinary consensus rather than experimentation. The debunking of the "digital native" idea has illustrated to me that history undergrads are fabulously badly served in their education on digital technology -- they don't pick up high-level, reflective skills by being "native" to digital culture and the undergraduate curriculum does not make up for this. My hope and expectation is that digital training at the undergraduate level will improve graduate students' abilities and will eventually work its way up to the faculty and researchers, but this is a long, slow process.

## Working Group: Teaching Digital History and New Media

Statement by Becky Bailey and Steve Oldfield/ Northern Kentucky University

### *Self Introduction:*

- A. Becky Bailey: I'm an associate professor in history at Northern Kentucky University; founder of Northern's Masters in Public History program, and I earned a public history Masters at West Virginia University. I've been teaching public history courses since 2001.
- B. Steve Oldfield: I'm a student, soon to graduate from Northern's public history MA program. I have a communications degree from Northwestern University and over two decades experience in television journalism and video production.

### *Interest in issues of teaching digital history and new media:*

- A. Becky: soon after arriving at Northern in 2006 my public history classes became involved in a variety of projects in which interpretation of history was enhanced through some form of digital or web enhancement. The success of these projects led us, once the graduate program was founded, to explore the possibility of offering a course or courses that would help our students enhance their employability in the public history digital and technology enhanced arenas. The arrival of Steve Oldfield inspired us to recruit from within and ask him, following graduation to teach our first course utilizing these new media techniques.
- B. Steve: what first excited me in the study of public history was its focus on storytelling; this really helped me bridge my years of experience as a journalist and my avocational interest in history. Having watched the "cost" of recording equipment and editing programs decline over the last 30 years I was thrilled to explore the potential of historical interpretation through these media I was familiar with but not as a public historian.

### *Our perspective on:*

*What are the goals ...* We think that the goals of teaching digital history and new media are fundamentally what the teaching of public history has always been about: 1) teaching students how to be good storytellers and 2) teaching public history students how to be the jack of all trades or the ambassador when people from a variety of disciplines gather together to work on a project. For example, in Steve's upcoming class one of his objectives will be to teach his students about what, they as future professionals can produce "in-house" and what would require bringing in a professional design or technology team.

*How do differing goals ...* We don't think that the goals of teaching digital history or new media are fundamentally that different from the way in which public history teaching goals vary from teaching traditional history.

### *What should be taught?*

Reiterating the example cited above we think the first thing public history students should be taught is respect for the other discipline that they are being taught about so that they can differentiate between what they know and can do versus what they may need to hire an expert to

do. 25 years ago when I started learning about public history one of the things that frightened and then excited me was the way that Dr. Howe taught us that we would have to learn to speak the language of many disciplines because we could not expect them or rely on them to interpret history. I think this is a classic lesson that stands the test of time.

*Are there specific knowledge, technological skills, theory, or perspectives that...?*

We think that public history training in digital history and new media must remain current, especially with a focus on software and programs that are open source and newbie friendly. Public historians should be educated about where to go on the Internet and through professional organizations to find out about new sources for skills and tools. As we build a body of literature about this field we need to identify if any articles or books that can join the canon that began with Tilden. Students need to know about Roy Rosenzweig and his work at George Mason. Students should also be educated about the new ethical concerns that have accompanied the digital and technological age.

*What approaches have educators found to be the most effective for teaching digital history to their students?*

*Are there specific projects, assignments, or approaches that have been particularly effective in helping students to gain competence or expertise in digital history methods?*

Becky:

In the past, what has helped me organize successful class projects is to divide the class project and its assignments into a phase-based calendar. For example, phase 1 would entail research and learning about the technology tools to be used; phase 2 would be the experimentation and rough editing of the project work; and phase 3 would be the concluding, revising, and polishing phase of the project. This has required overtime the scaling back of the scope of the project and the communication to the sponsoring partner that the completed project should still be only considered a "prototype." I have also found it useful since beginning to scale back the project scope to include work tasks that allow for individual grading this is helped manage student anxiety significantly.

*Insights into what you see as the greatest challenges facing educators seeking to teach students about digital history and new media. Also, how a digital history course might or should differ from other courses for historians.*

I think hands-down the greatest challenge facing history educators across the board for the next several decades will be overcoming the deficit in our students' knowledge of history and their ability to research and analyze history. 21st-century students have more information at their fingertips than previous generations could even imagine but too few of them know how to think analytically and write critically about history. Without those fundamental skills, history presented digitally or through the new media will still probably be bad history. That said, with the right kind of pedagogical scaffolding, history presented using the tools made available through digital and new media sources, could help teach students the skills I was just moaning that they did not have. I don't think a digital history course has to differ all that much from other history courses unless you mean to imply or impose a strict thematic or time focus.

V. Suggestion about other topics . . .

One issue that we are dealing with and are curious if others are has to do with trying to collaborate with our communications and technology colleagues in another college; essentially, there is an unfortunate silo

effect here at Northern. It particularly works to our detriment because 1) the arts and humanities do not receive as much funding support internally; 2) our clients do not have deep pockets; 3) our efforts to secure grant funding also have not gone well (and we're not quite sure why).