

Call for Submissions for the *AHR* Prize for the Best Digital Article

The *American Historical Review* seeks to promote the regular production of works in online digital format that are original works of interpretive scholarship, roughly comparable in scope and scale to a journal article. The *AHR* also seeks to promote scholarship that leverages digital tools and modalities to ask new questions about the past, and to enable new interpretations of the past, rather than merely adorning a presentation with multimedia features or materials.

To this end, the *American Historical Review* invites submissions of online works of digital historical scholarship to be considered for the newly established *AHR* Prize in Digital Historical Scholarship. The winning submission will be published online by Oxford University Press in April 2014 as a fully peer-reviewed, fully citable work of original scholarship and as an integral part of the *AHR*. It will, therefore, be included in the table of contents, along with a short abstract, in the April 2014 issue of the *AHR*. The deadline for submission is March 1, 2013. All entries will be considered by the editor of the *AHR* and reviewed and refereed by the editorial board of the *AHR* and by external referees. Submissions of sufficient quality and merit that do not win the prize may also be invited to publish in the *AHR* during the ongoing production cycle. Entries accepted for publication will enjoy the full editorial and production attention given to print manuscripts. The winning entry each year will be recognized during the awards ceremony at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association (starting with the 2014 meeting to be held in January in Washington, D.C.).

To compete for the prize, submissions must meet the following criteria:

(1) The primary purpose of the work must be to present an original interpretation of historical evidence, or to present an original theoretical or methodological approach to the interpretation of the past, or both. Works must not be primarily archival or pedagogical in purpose.

(2) The "digital" tools and modalities of the work must contribute substantially to the argument presented by the author. If the core textual elements could present the same argument in a static print genre with the typical handful of illustrations, then the work falls short of the definition of "digital historical scholarship" used in this competition. Digital historical scholarship is distinguished from print historical scholarship by certain qualities that are impossible in print. Some (but not all) of these qualities must be integral to the work, and must contribute to the argument. Because the digital revolution regularly generates new such modalities, a complete list cannot be provided. Among the most established of these qualities are the following:

(A) Interactivity, which enables a reader to engage creatively with the work, such that the structure and experience of the work is malleable.

(B) Multimodality, or the use of multiple modes of communication, in addition to typography. Still and moving images, interactive maps, audio, and other media must be integrated with one another, and especially with the core of textual argumentation. In short, graphic, video, audio, and other non-typographical genres must be used argumentatively, such that the textual argumentation cannot be sustained without them.

(C) Database and network connectivity, accessing primary sources directly either from within the site or via an externally accessed repository.

(3) The scope and scale of the digital work must approximate that of a print-format *AHR* article: the "short form" of historical argumentation. While the time that a reader spends reading and considering a digital work may vary greatly depending on the various possible uses of images, video, and other interactive elements, the energy and effort required to grasp the core argument and the evidence on which it is based should be limited in the same way that an article is comparable to a chapter of a book. While simple measures of the "short form" in the Digital Age cannot be reduced simply to word length, submissions should contain text that ranges from 6,000–8,000 words, exclusive of citations. This is long enough to establish the case for a serious argument, but not longer than a typical print article.

(4) The textual argumentation of the work can be structured in nonlinear, interactive ways, and the textual elements may be broken up and hyperlinked in whatever form the author chooses, but the argument of the work, and its empirical basis, must be clearly visible and identifiable by any reader, without requiring the reader to navigate extensively into remote or obscure portions of the work in order to discover that argument. This requirement does not preclude multiple, alternative, and contingent interpretations or conclusions, but the authors must make the overall scheme and purpose of such choices clear and coherently integrated with the argument of the work as a whole.

(5) The argumentative text must be supported by citations to archival sources and to relevant secondary scholarship, meeting the standards for depth and breadth of citation established by the regular print articles in the *AHR*. Citations are also to meet all of the style standards required by the *AHR*, but they may also provide direct links to primary archival sources or secondary scholarship where appropriate and accessible. Any interpretive or evidentiary claims made in any portion of the work must also be fully supported through citation.

(6) All archival objects presented in the work, including but not limited to images, video, interactive maps, PDFs or images of original documents, and audio files, must be fully captioned and cited using established standards for archival citation, such that readers can easily locate the repository and collection within which those objects are held.

Additional Guidelines for Digital Submissions for the *AHR* Prize Competition

1) All archival objects must be cleared for permission to publish by the repository from which they are drawn, licensed for publication, or must be demonstrated to meet the standards of fair use established by Critical Commons.

2) The "digital" tools and modalities of the work must contribute substantially to the argument presented by the author. If the core textual elements could present the same argument a static print genre with the typical handful of illustrations, then the work falls short of the definition of "digital historical scholarship" used in this competition. Digital historical scholarship is distinguished from print historical scholarship by certain qualities that are impossible in print.

Some (but not all) of these qualities must be an integral part of the work, and must contribute to the argument. Because the digital revolution regularly generates new such modalities, a complete list cannot be provided. Among the most established of these qualities are the following: A) *Interactivity*, which enables a reader to engage creatively with the work, such that the structure and experience of the work is malleable. B) *Multimodality*, or the use of multiple modes of communication, in addition to typography. Still and moving images, interactive maps, audio, and other media must be integrated with one another, and especially with the core of textual argumentation. C) *Database and network connectivity*, accessing primary sources directly either from within the site or via an externally-accessed repository.

- 3) The work must be submitted and accessible via a single, stable URL link on the Internet. Everything necessary for the reader to encounter and comprehend the work, including introductory materials and credits, must be accessible via that link.
- 4) The work must be accessible and fully functional via the following web browsers: Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Apple Safari, and Microsoft Internet Explorer.
- 5) The work may require only free and easily downloadable “plug-ins” to the four named browsers in order to function properly. The work must not require users to purchase software nor to install software on their computers other than widely-used “plug-ins” to the browsers.
- 6) The work may only use software and platforms that are compatible with Oxford University Press’s servers and delivery systems. (To be specified).
- 7) The core elements of the work, including at least its index page, and the core argumentative text, must be contained within a single root directory that can be transferred to Oxford University Press servers upon acceptance of the final revised version. The published version will thereupon be accessible exclusively via the *AHR* and Oxford University Press.
- 8) All media elements, software code, and database queries that are external to the initial server containing the home directory must be hosted on servers that meet certain criteria for durability and backup that are acceptable to the *AHR* and to Oxford University Press. The publication of these works will be considered permanent, so all external elements must also be shown to be permanent by a statement on the durability of the external links, which must included in the work and easily accessible from a link or menu on the home page. As a rule, the *AHR* and Oxford University Press will only accept external links to servers hosted by major institutions with a track record and reputation for constant, fail-safe accessibility.
- 9) The work must be original and not published in whole or substantial part(s) in other venues prior to submission.
- 10) Works may be by single or multiple authors, provided that all contributors are given proper credit for their role in the creation of the work. The order of multiple authors is a matter for the authors to determine. Care should be taken to identify as “authors” only those who were responsible for the conception and design of the work as a whole, and for writing the core argumentative text. All others, including software and graphic designers, and technical

consultants, should be acknowledged for their roles separately under a “Credits” page that is easily accessible from a link or menu on the home page.

Further questions can be directed to the Editor at ahr@indiana.edu.