

Call for Papers – *Archival Science*

TITLE OF SPECIAL ISSUE –

Challenges and Prospects of Born-digital and Digitized Archives in the Digital Humanities

EDITORS

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SYNOPSIS

Digital archives are transforming the humanities. Digitized collections of newspapers and books have pushed scholars to develop new, data-rich methods. Born-digital archives are now better preserved and managed thanks to the development of open-access and commercial software. Digital Humanities have moved from the fringe to the centre of academia. Yet, the path from the production of digital records to their analysis is far from smooth.

This special issue will explore the current challenges and prospects of digital and born-digital archives for Digital Humanities, focusing particularly on the topic of access. It will bring together experts from archival science and the humanities, with experts and practitioners from cultural heritage institutions.

The main focus will be on issues of access to digitized and born-digital archives in the Digital Humanities both from the infrastructural and users' perspectives. Simply allowing access is not enough; it needs to be complemented with innovative methodologies (including data science methodologies, such as AI), systems and software capable of supporting research, and partnerships between digital humanists and cultural heritage professionals to fully explore these data. Questions which will be explored in this special issue include: How can we increase utilization by digital humanities scholars of born-digital and digitized archives? How can we give greater access to collections important to digital humanists that are currently restricted? Are these infrastructure problems, educational problems, economic problems, or other types of problems?

Rather than descriptions of practice, we encourage submissions that address these research questions using a range of research methods (both qualitative and quantitative). Collectively, the articles in the special issue will problematise the challenges and prospects of digital and born-digital Archives. They will offer new theoretical interpretations, apply research methodologies to new case studies, and offer new perspectives on present and future archival digital collections.

The proposed special issue is a key research output of the AURA network (Archives in the UK/Republic of Ireland & AI), funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in the UK, and the Irish Research Council. Our Project Partners include the British Library; the National Library of Scotland; the National Library of Ireland; and the Irish Traditional Music Archive.

The AURA network is designed to unlock cultural assets that are preserved in digital archives closed to the public or difficult to access. The digital revolution has had a huge impact on archival collections: emails have largely replaced letters, government reports are now written in digital format. Yet, the vast majority of these born-digital records are inaccessible due to privacy, copyright or technical issues. By bringing together digital humanists, computer scientists and stakeholders

(including policy makers), the network will design solutions to the problem of inaccessible records in digital archives.

Key dates

Submission deadline: June 30, 2021

Review and editorial window: July-December 2021

Submission Instructions

Articles for inclusion in the special issue will go through a rigorous peer review process. Submissions should be made online via the [Archival Science editorial manager system](#). Please select article type “SI: Digital Humanities” upon submission of the manuscript. Authors are encouraged to follow the journal suggestion for papers not to exceed 7,000-8,000 words and are expected to conform to the [Archival Science publication guidelines](#).