DIGITAL PUBLIC HISTORY IN A DIVIDED WORLD: STORIES, COLLABORATIONS, COMPLEXITIES, FUTURES
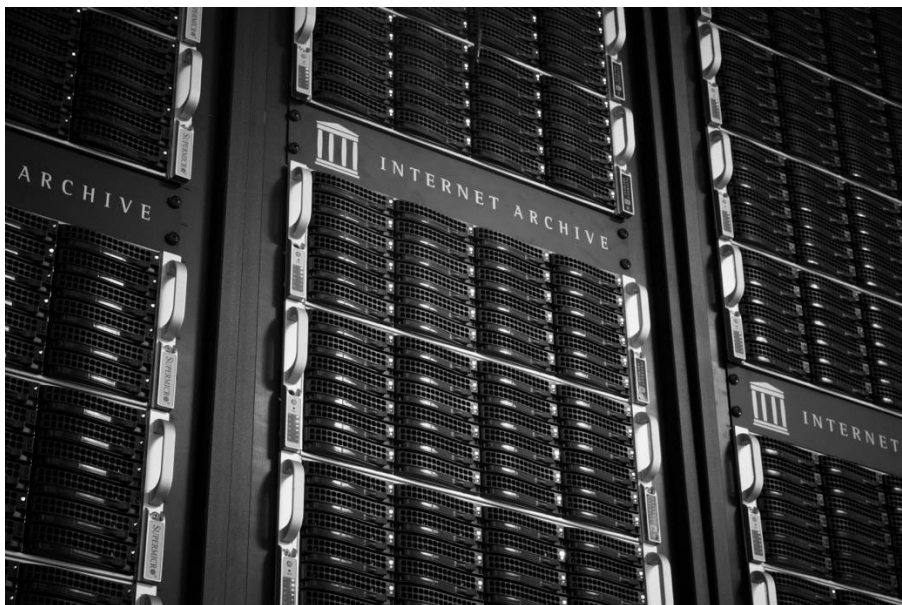
Centre for Public History, Queen's University Belfast
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024
https://go.qub.ac.uk/cph2024

with the Digital Scholarship Hub and MediaLab at QUB

12-13 September 2024

New technologies always shape how historians and the public encounter the past. But today, these technologies are not only transforming *how* and *by whom* history is understood and shared; they are also changing our understanding of what history *is.* Digitised sources have transformed how research is done and opened new pathways. Researchers use digital to collaborate, communicate and share work. Museums and heritage sites are using digital storytelling. And millions access virtual playgrounds of history created in video game engines.

How is digital technology shaping history in public contexts? How do innovations in fields such as AI and immersive technologies shape how the public and researchers interact with history? What are the opportunities, challenges and risks in digital public history – and for historians using these technologies? Which stories – whose stories – are we telling in a digital history world, and which are being pushed out? What is the (digital) future for public history? Does an AI want to take your job? Will human historians one day be replaced by machines?

This multi-day conference in Belfast in September 2024 welcomes proposals from researchers, students, practitioners and creatives about digital public history. Proposals might explore how digital

shapes storytelling, the collaborations across disciplines and communities it can foster, the challenges we face in harnessing technology for public history, and how digital is helping to include people in public history – or to exclude them from it. Queen's University Belfast is a leading centre for the study of contested, 'difficult' and traumatic public histories. We particularly welcome proposals which address the complexities of digital public history in the context of social, political, economic and other divisions.

Proposals can be for a traditional 20-minute academic paper, for a poster or digital 'poster' (digital or physical exhibit for the conference), or for alternative formats – please contact the organising committee to discuss. Proposals should generally be for in-person attendance to maximise opportunities for presenters to meet and exchange ideas. Digital-only contributions will be considered where this is necessary or optimal, preferably in a format tailored to digital participation. Proposals to deliver a traditional paper remotely will be considered only if the presenter is unable to travel.

Proposals may connect with one or more of the following themes:
- Authority and authenticity within contexts of wider societal divisions and information warfare
- Digital storytelling: possibilities and pitfalls
- Access, equity and justice
- Identities and memory
- Reshaping of space and time in digital realms (connections across time and distance)
- The changing meaning of 'past' in digital space
- Crowdsourcing, collaboration and user-generated content
- The opportunities and risks of AI
- Big data and data visualisation, including text mining, mapping / GIS
- Digital reproductions of archives, objects, collections and sources
- Institutions, champions and gatekeepers, old and new: from universities and museums to big tech
- Social media, memes and new media as both location and subject of digital public history
- Immersive technologies, extended reality, gaming and multimedia production

Please send proposals along with the name/s and affiliation (if any) and 100-word biography of presenter/s to **cph2024@qub.ac.uk** by **31 March 2024**