

## **Historians, computer scientists and the digital revolution: why collaboration matters**

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Cross-disciplinary collaboration has long been a feature of historical research. Methodologies adopted and adapted from social and cultural anthropology, geography, sociology and literary criticism have transformed history as a field, and allowed scholars to expand their understanding of historical sources and patterns. Yet the digital revolution, while it has been embraced by historians in terms of digital catalogues and online books, has not been subjected to the same level of engagement and methodological debate within history. We argue in this paper for the need for exchange, debate and collaboration among computer scientists, librarians and archivists, and historians to address both the potential and the serious challenges and inequalities of digitization. Historians' work on the history of the book, on the uses of the archive and on information orders brings a necessary perspective to the construction of new kinds of digital archive. The Digitization of History project at the Centre for History and Economics has hosted a number of interdisciplinary meetings of computer scientists and historians which have highlighted the possibilities of collaboration, particularly for the digitization of archival versus printed matter, and for the digitization of non-Roman scripts. We will present a few short case studies to provide examples of the kinds of benefits such a collaboration might bring, and also the kinds of problems it might avoid.