

Life Narrative and the Digital: An Interdisciplinary Conference and Workshop

26-27 September 2023

Austrian Centre for Digital Humanities and Cultural Heritage (ACDH-CH)

Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna

CfP open until: 26 May 2023

<https://digital-bio-2023.acdh.oeaw.ac.at>

Digital methods, technologies, and formats have increasingly gained traction in the study of life narratives and biographical data, as well as in the presentation of historical lives.

Auto/biographical research and practice are aided significantly by biographical research databases and platforms, biographical online dictionaries, digital editions of historical life documents as well as community- and institutionally driven online archives and web-based collaborative Wiki formats, which are characterised by accessibility, searchability, and user-orientedness. In addition, they often encourage interactive participation, and generally open up new quantitative and qualitative pathways / approaches to biographical research.

Notwithstanding their vast potential, digital tools and platforms and their uses often reveal a tension between research, on the one hand, and the communication of this research to a broader public and multiple audience groups, on the other. We are keen on stimulating an interdisciplinary dialogue between life writing theories and digital methodologies.

This two-day conference-plus-workshop brings together scholars and practitioners from different disciplines, communities, and career stages to explore the possibilities, uses, and challenges of digital methods and technologies for auto/biographical research and practice.

We are particularly interested in the following questions:

- In what ways can digital methods and technologies aid the study and analysis of biographical data?
- How can the digital help us devise innovative pathways to the representation of historical individuals' lives? (e.g. digital platforms)
- To what extent do digital formats of life narration tie in with new trends in auto/biographical scholarship and practice? (e.g. metabiography, relational biography, persona studies, group biography, object biography, etc.)
- How do we deal with uncertainty and the issue of data quality in the digital representation of biographical data?

We invite contributions that touch upon these and/or the following aspects or subject areas/themes:

- historical individuals' lives: 'hidden' figures and marginal lives vs well-known historical individuals
- narrating lives across countries, cultures, and languages
- networks, relations, and 'group' biographies
- participation of diverse audience and user groups
- identity politics in digital representations and mediations

- constructive synthesis of close- and distant-reading methods as well as digital and traditional humanities methods in biography scholarship
- linked open data and norm data (biographical, geographical, historical, object data)
- online vs physical archives: limitations and opportunities
- visualising biographical and prosopographical data
- biographical data and network analysis
- crowdsourced collaborative biography
- biographical online dictionaries
- biographical data and/in game studies

The event will feature both a workshop and a conference track. The workshop (26 September) will be dedicated to short presentations of work-in-progress, with a strong focus on tools, technologies, software, and methods, and with an emphasis on feedback and exchange. The conference (27 September) follows a conventional format, with a mix of research papers and panel discussions, and will be open to the public. Participation in both formats is free of charge.

We invite proposals of max. 500 words via OpenReview (<https://bit.ly/digital-bio-2023>) for 15-minute (workshop) OR 20-minute (conference) contributions by 26 May 2023. We aim for notification of acceptance by 23 June 2023.

We plan to publish selected contributions from both the conference and the workshop tracks in a special cluster of *European Journal of Life Writing*.

