ResearchSpace Project

● Thank you!
● About us
● Andrew W. Mellon Funded
● Open Source but commercially supported
● Ten years - Not technology led
● Possibility of Cloud Service next year
● Demo system available
RS Objectives

- Contextualise to reflect real world complexity.
- Encourage knowledge production through psychological tools.
- Improve effectiveness of research through collaboration.
- Support changing knowledge.
- Be accessible to a wide range of people.
Networks of Facts or Knowledge

The dissatisfaction with, and disruption of, facts

Facts are simple and facts are straight
Facts are lazy and facts are late
Facts all come with points of view
Facts don't do what I want them to
Facts just twist the truth around
Facts are living turned inside out
Facts are getting the best of them
Facts are nothing on the face of things
Victorian Parlour Game

Animal, Vegetable and Mineral
Background
"Those abandoning narrative will have to do more than meet those abandoning structure at mid-field. The way forward is not primarily a question of compromise and reconciliation. Rather, the task before both historians and social scientists is to reformulate their understandings of both structures and events. Structure, in the sense of society as a reified totality, needs to give way to an understanding of the multiplicity of structures in all their intersections and interactions."

Why History?

- History helps us understand people and societies
- History helps us understand change and how the society we live in came to be
- The importance of history in our own lives
- History contributes to moral understanding
- History provides identity
- Studying history is essential for good citizenship.
- History is useful in the world of work.

- Politicians will continue to rewrite history for their personal benefit
- Essential for critical citizenship and informed democracy
- History should be part of ongoing social and economic policy.

From a Curatorial Perspective

We have a number of spaces for contemporary art. The thing that I think is missing, and this might be a funny thing for a contemporary curator to say, is that I think we have a shallow understanding of history, and I always worry that there is always a tendency to concentrate on the contemporary, abandoning the historical. If you don't look to the past then your contemporary work will look vapid.

Juliana Engberg
Confusing times...

Vote to leave EU would 'condemn Britain to irrelevance', say historians

Letter signed by more than 300 prominent historians says voters can ‘stiffen cohesion of our continent in a dangerous world’

More than 300 prominent historians, including Simon Schama and Niall Ferguson, are warning voters that if they choose to leave the European Union on 23 June they will condemn Britain to irrelevance.


As historians of Britain and of Europe, we believe that Britain has had its past, and will have in the future, an irreplaceable role to face a choice: to cast ourselves adrift, condemning ourselves to irrelevance and Europe to division and weakness; or to reaffirm our stiffen the cohesion of our continent in a dangerous world.

http://historiansforbritainineurope.org/
"We have seen the dawn and the early morning hours of a new age in the writing of history, and the morning is now broadening about us into day. When the day is full we shall see that minute research and broad synthesis are not hostile but friendly methods, cooperating toward a common end which neither can reach alone. No piece of history is true when set apart to itself, divorced and isolated. It is part of an intricately various whole, and must needs be put in its place in the netted scheme of events to receive its true color and estimation; and yet it must be itself individually studied and contrived if the whole is not to be weakened by its imperfection. Whole and part are of one warp and woof."
Language and Vocabulary

On social scientists

“verbal juggling and esoteric language” - Lawrence Stone

...I suspect that Trevor-Roper and I disagree about labels rather than facts - Eric Hobsbawm

...that materialism and idealism, reason and emotion, interests and morals, are constantly confused, first one and then the other rising to the surface. There is no final solution to this problem, and every historian must work according to his private judgement. - Lawrence Stone
Specialisation & Fragmentation
Cultural Heritage Integration

- Each Institution has its own language and vocabulary.
- It’s own perspective, based on its history, type and selection of objects, location, disciplines.
- They have different world views and approach the material world differently.
Methods (and politics)
Concerns of Stone (scientism)

The Vulgar Marxists - deterministic

The Cliometricians - artificial and unintelligible

The French Annales - ignored cultural change

Quantitative methodology has proved a fairly weak reed which can only answer a limited set of problems. Forced into a choice between a priori statistical models of human behaviour, and understanding based on observation, experience, judgement and intuition, some of the "new historians" are now tending to drift back towards the latter mode of interpreting the past.
Question: How do you write History?

- **Descriptive Narrative** - The framework revolves around a description of people and linear events which focus on the particular and the specific.
- **Analytical Narrative** - The framework revolves around a collective and statistical analysis.
- **Thick Descriptions** - All relevant context - a bit of everything.
- **Pregnant Principle** - A descriptive narrative but which has an underlying theme and argument.
- None of the above.
- Equally all of the above.
A Web of History - Dealing with Data

An Analytical approach

- Intensive study of something leads to a better generalisation.
- It’s not the cult of the fragment.
- Leads to further questions and provisional generalisations
- A way of dealing with the mass of data

*I take culture to be those webs and the analysis of it to be ... not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.*
Back to the longue durée
David Armitage & Jo Guldi

Through Big Data and digitisation?

The data and the techniques are not available

Back to Problems of quality data and transparency
Neoliberal Tools (and Archives): A Political History of Digital Humanities

By Daniel Allington, Sarah Brouillette, David Columbia
The Paradox for Stone

- Total history only seems possible if one takes a microcosm and applies it upwards (see Ginzburg and Wilson)

- But in reality our academic and institutional structures don’t support a total history of a society, ...and settles for the story of a single cell - Lawrence Stone
A Case Study - Keith Thomas

“It never helps historians to say too much about their working methods. For just as the conjuror’s magic disappears if the audience knows how the trick is done, so the credibility of scholars can be sharply diminished if readers learn everything about how exactly their books came to be written.”
Summary of messages

1. Complexity and accessibility
2. Friction between agency and structure
3. Transparency of both data and narrative.
5. The integration of different methods of histories.
7. How do we deal with data?
Interdisciplinary Knowledge for Writing History
Core Competencies for History

American History Association History Tuning Project: 2013 History Discipline Core

1. Engage in historical inquiry, research, and analysis.
2. Practice historical empathy.
3. Understand the complex nature of the historical record.
4. Generate significant, open-ended questions about the past and devise research strategies to answer them.
5. Craft historical narrative and argument.
6. Practice historical thinking as central to engaged citizenship.

American History Association History Tuning Project: 2016 History Discipline Core

1. Build historical knowledge.
2. Develop historical methods.
3. Recognize the provisional nature of knowledge, the disciplinary preference for complexity, and the comfort with ambiguity that history requires.
4. Apply the range of skills it takes to decode the historical record because of its incomplete, complex, and contradictory nature.
5. Create historical arguments and narratives.
6. Use historical perspective as central to active citizenship.
Knowledge & Cognition

Generic Space

Input 1

Input 2

Blend
What is an Ontology?

**In Philosophy**

“The science or study of being; that branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature or essence of being or existence.”

**In Computer Science**

In computer science and information science, an ontology defines categories, properties, and relations between the concepts, data, and entities that substantiate one, many, or all domains.
What is Production?

Ontological Definition

This class comprises activities that are designed to, and succeed in, creating one or more new items. It specializes the notion of modification into production. The decision as to whether or not an object is regarded as new is context sensitive. Normally, items are considered “new” if there is no obvious overall similarity between them and the consumed items and material used in their production. In other cases, an item is considered “new” because it becomes relevant to documentation by a modification.
"...is the conscious act to understand the doing, the making of a thing...some production you see, some of it is completely hidden" - Clare Twomey

- Getting something ready for someone.
- Inputs made into outputs.
- Working with others - coming together to create.
- Humans? Machines?
- Understanding what is needed from someone else.
- Learning through making, energy, time, mistakes.
- Talk and debate and thinking through important ideas.
Causality, Process & Change
Internal and External Relations

Ollman - The most important question in Philosophy

Broadly philosophies can be divided into two:

1. **External Relations** -
   a. Talks about independent entities that are external related.
   b. Changes can occur between them but it does affect their individual characteristic.
   c. This means that analysts can live with paradox and can select.

2. **Internal Relations** -
   a. Takes about processes that are mutually dependent, they are internally related.
   b. Changes to one affect the nature of the another.
   c. This means that apparent paradox must be resolved. Rather than select, the reason for a contradiction must be investigated and the reason for it understood.
Demonstration