

EDITORIAL

Where have we been?

JWHI appeared with Volume 1, No. 1 in June 2013, but has had a two-year lapse. Here we are again and we now have strengthened our basis for publishing regularly, with two issues per year. The journal is closely linked to the efforts of the CHIA project—the Collaborative for Historical Information and Analysis, creating a world-historical data resource. The work on the project itself occupied so much time that our limited staff did not succeed in maintaining our schedule. As we reappear, we have much more to say in two main categories of publications: more to say about social-science and information-science analysis and development on world-historical topics; more to say about diverse elements of the CHIA project.

Our lead articles are two studies that project historical populations of African and African-descended peoples: one from Heitor Moura, a Brazilian social historian; the other from Patrick Manning, a member of our own group. These studies involve developing innovative techniques for filling in missing data, with results that expand the possibility of including, in global studies of population, fuller information on populations of Africa and the African diaspora. Our program of publishing critical reviews of major historical datasets continues with reviews of two prominent datasets, each important in both contemporary and historical affairs—one on health statistics for the long twentieth century and the other on financial fluctuations and crashes for the past two centuries and more. As another innovation, we offer a set of six concise articles on dataset design by graduate students in History at the University of Pittsburgh. These studies exemplify the collaborative and interdisciplinary patterns of social-science analysis that

can be expected among historical scholars of the next generation. The brief essays, encompassed by an introduction and a conclusion, reveal how these early-career scholars are able to strengthen diverse projects, especially through attention to techniques of digital humanities.

For the CHIA project, five main categories of advances have been achieved during the past two years of work among groups based at the University of Pittsburgh, University of California – Merced, Michigan State University, Harvard University, Boston University, University of Portsmouth, and at the International Institute of Social History. Details on all of these issues are available through the CHIA website, <http://chia.pitt.edu>. The five categories of advances in CHIA are listed here; interspersed within the listing are references to the four research reports in this issue that address some key aspects of recent work.

First is *Data Hoover*, a research and data-acquisition project that is surveying data owners and data users to learn their preferences and patterns, in order to facilitate their participation in large-scale data projects. Based on this information, as shown in the research report by Marieka Arksey and Ruth Mostern, Data Hoover provides framework and outreach for building the collection of data for CHIA.

Second is the *submission system* for incorporating datasets. With access on the CHIA home page, it functions as a part of the Data Hoover, sweeping up historical datasets. As datasets are incorporated through it, their processing includes documenting them with a consistent system for relatively detailed documentation of datasets (Level 1 metadata), developed within the past year.

Third is the archive in which submitted datasets are displayed: the *World-Historical Dataverse*, through which the growing CHIA data collection is archived on the Harvard Dataverse repository. All of the datasets are available to the public without registration; all have a full page of metadata (Level 1) describing the origins, content, and dimensions of the data.

A fourth major area of development has been the *Human System Data Resource*, the work-space for CHIA. This is the home of Col*Fusion, the infrastructure for linking datasets developed at the University of Pittsburgh. Col*Fusion version 2 has now been released, and is beginning the work of adding Level 2 documentation and linking datasets. The research report by Evgeny Karataev and Vladimir Zadorozhny presents the current advances in the Col*Fusion infrastructure in the context of a vision of its long-term potential.

Fifth, work is proceeding on three ontologies to permit consistent categorization of worldwide data. Work has advanced considerably on a world-historical gazetteer, as indicated in the research report by Patrick Manning. Initial development has begun on a topical ontology, as shown in the research report by Tonia Sutherland; a temporal ontology has been given basic conceptualization. These ontologies will be implemented within Col*Fusion to yield more thorough documentation (Level 2) of datasets.

The Editorial Board of JWHI has expanded: Tonia Sutherland of the University of Alabama, Ahmet Izmirliglu of the University of Utah, and David Ruvolo have joined the founding editors, Patrick Manning (University of Pittsburgh), Ruth Mostern (University of California – Merced), and Vladimir Zadorozhny (University of Pittsburgh). David Ruvolo is Managing Editor of the journal and Ahmet Izmirliglu is Dataset Review Editor. With expanded strength and a clear division of labor, JWHI will now be appearing twice yearly as planned.

The advances within the CHIA project are but one dimension of rapid advance in data resources for world history and social science analysis more generally. The Harvard Dataverse (<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/>), a major data archive, has recently upgraded its operating system to Version 4.0, enabling enhanced capabilities in search,

retrieval, and analysis. The International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam (<http://socialhistory.org/en>) has engaged Prof. Leo Lucassen as its research director and has announced an ambitious and comprehensive program for research in historical social science. This expansion includes closer ties between IISH and CLIO-INFRA, the economic-historical research hub, directed by Prof. Jan Luiten van Zanden. New research groups are forming in addition to these established groups. For instance, an international group of researchers on digital data on the African Diaspora is forming, coordinated by Prof. Jane Landers of Vanderbilt University.

This is our mix—delays in publication because of the complexity of digital historical research and development, but accomplishment of major development advances nonetheless. The articles and dataset reviews in this issue of JWHI convey some of the recent achievements and some of the promising beginnings.

The Editors



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