

Call for Papers

The Root of Things: Grounding the Digital Humanities in an Increasingly Groundless World

Apartheid Heritages and [VRA Bulletin](#), the Visual Resource Association's journal, invite articles for a special issue on "The Root of Things: Grounding the Digital Humanities in an Increasingly Groundless World." This issue seeks to tackle how we, as digital humanists, archivists, librarians, and otherwise find solid ground to work from as we face an onslaught of precarity exacerbated by systemic injustice.

"The Root of Things" will feature contributions by invited scholars, including Dr. Faithe Day, Dr. Fiona Vernal, and others. This is a peer-reviewed issue, and we invite all genres and projects of academic writing, including standard journal articles, state-of-the-field essays, and metareflections on previous experiences. Scholars and practitioners at all career stages, including students, and those from different disciplines are encouraged to submit an abstract. Abstracts for articles co-authored with community collaborators/co-creators or abstracts from community engagement offices are not just welcomed, but encouraged.

This issue is planned to be published in Fall/Winter of 2024.

Data sets, algorithms, Artificial Intelligence, programming languages, quantification, and text scraping are often privileged in articles in the digital humanities in an effort to mirror the STEM fields- a result of the rumor of the 'death of the humanities.'

This collection of writings is uninterested in that.

Rather than privilege the technology, its workflows, and the final products that emphasize a digital project, "The Roots of Things" seeks scholarship on the humanist community roots that inspired projects, guides ethical choices, and grounds digital humanities work, archiving praxis, and librarianship ethos in the *human*. Essentially, what is your "why" and what stories do you want to tell?

Our inspiration is drawn from the work of scholars like Dr. Faithe Day; in [Black Living Data Booklet](#) Day explains that Black Living Data "lives for sharing," that it "is information that has been collected and/or curated for collaboration, community, and creativity." Data and the digital are repositioned as being *for*, rather than from, or about, BIPOC reclamation and empowerment. This emphasizes the importance of digital humanities as projects "homegrown and made by humans," where "AI and algorithms need not apply." This issue is about humans who can work with, and serve, other humans- the digital is simply the mechanism, not the center.

So, what are we interested in, then?

We are interested in all types of applications and methods, as well as case studies on the foundational “roots” of digital humanities work and projects that is related, but not restricted to, the following topic areas:

- **Collaboration // Co-creation**
- **Decolonized: Knowledge // Data // Information Sharing**
 - Afrocentric // Latincentric // Asiacentric // Diasporic
- **Multi-generational Scholarship**
- **Digital Humanities // Archives // Libraries**
 - Libraries as Third Spaces
 - Archiving Practice as Ethos
- **Language // Culture**
- **Pedagogy:**
 - Classroom // Community
- **Accessibility**

Timeline and deadlines: Please submit short abstracts of about 250-300 words by August 15, 2023. The editors will notify contributors by September 15, 2023. The articles are due for submission to February 15, 2024 and peer-review edits will be returned in June 2024. The publication of the special issue is planned for late Fall 2024.

Submission: Please submit your abstract (about 250-300 words) [here](#). *We are happy to provide feedback on abstracts submitted before July 15th, 2023 (one month prior to the deadline).* Email Alanna Prince at prince.a@northeastern.edu with your request for review.

Reviewed and revised abstracts are not a guarantee of later acceptance.

If your abstract is selected, you will submit your article directly to *VRA Journal's* OJS. Please be sure to follow *VRA Bulletin's* style and format guide, which can be found [here](#).

The *VRA Bulletin* is a fully open-access journal, ensuring sustained equity of access to all readers and wider circulation of work to authors and researchers.

Still trying to decide if you are the right fit? Our editors encourage you to reach out by email to schedule a short one-on-one meeting to discuss your ideas.

Please contact Dr. Ángel David Nieves @a.nieves@northeastern.edu (Northeastern University), Cassie Tanks @tanks.c@northeastern.edu, or Alanna Prince @prince.a@northeastern.edu (Northeastern University), with any questions.