

Wednesday, 06.04.2022, 16:15 - 18:00 CEST

Paul Lovejoy, York University:

Digital Humanities and the Study of the History of Slavery

Abstract:

The lecture will discuss how the construction of open-source relational databases has altered the scholarly study of slavery. Once it was thought that there was a relatively limited number of primary sources for the reconstruction of African history and the formation of the African diaspora outside of Africa. The digital turn has enabled the introduction of vast quantities of primary source material into scholarly discourse, far beyond what was once thought possible. An examination of the websites associated with Walk With Web Inc. demonstrates what is being done, and the possibilities are for further development of digital tools that can organize large quantities of data for purposes of historical reconstruction.

Bio:

I am Distinguished Research Professor, Department of History, York University, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. I am Founding Director of the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on Africa and its Diasporas at York University, and I have held the Canada Research Chair in African Diaspora History (2000-2015). I was a member of the UNESCO "Slave Route" Project (1996-2012) and continue as General Editor of The Harriet Tubman Series on the African Diaspora (Africa World Press). I have been co-editor of the journal, *African Economic History* for 37 years and have published more than forty books, including *Jihad in West Africa during the Age of Revolutions (1775-1850)* (2016), *Slavery in the Global Diaspora of Africa* (2019), and most recently have co-edited with Ali Moussa Iye and Nelly Schmidt, *Slavery, Resistance and Abolitions: A Pluralist Perspective* (2019) and have co-edited with Dale Tomich, *The Atlantic and Africa: The Second Slavery and Beyond* (2021). I have received numerous grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, currently holding multiple year awards for a project, "Testimonies of Enslavement," which has as its website and portal www.freedomnarratives.org and "Islamic Terrorism in Africa" (www.iptsa.org). Most recently I have been awarded a grant from the Trans-Atlantic Platform for Social Innovation on Documenting Africans in Trans-Atlantic Slavery (www.datasproject.org). The various web-based projects also include digitization preservation associated with the British Library Endangered Archives Programme, currently involving the Sierra Leone Public Archives.