

Position Paper on the Usage of Artificial Intelligence in Historical Research

Since its inception, [CISI](#) was in the forefront of using innovative methods and technical breakthroughs in order to advance historical research and promote its results. We launched several projects of digitalization of historical sources, creating a portal to a searchable collection of our publications ([PISI](#)) as well of those available in public domain. We also created a thematic collection devoted to [Yugoslav Crisis](#), which we over time augmented with [vizualization](#) of historical sources and creation of an [interactive game](#) on a top of it. We [wrote extensively](#) about the challenges of a digital turn in historiography and have organized [trainings](#) in harvesting digital material.

However, even such considerable experience could not prepare us for a challenge of [generative artificial intelligence](#), which took the world by storm in the early 2020s. Both as engaged citizens and interested professionals we observed the global success of Open AI, moving from one version of ChatGPT to another, soon to be joined by Claude, Gemini and other AI linguistic models, as they became interlocutors to millions, and soon probably billions of human beings. We played with them, corrected them, got interesting outputs and shared them, until it dawned to us that we are at a genuine crossroad, which impacts every sphere of life, including our discipline.

Therefore, we did what historians do best. We waited and kept our ears open, in order to get properly informed about pros and cons of these and similar chatbots, before we start advising the colleagues about them. Yet the most important thing we learned until now is that we are dealing with a moving target. We observed that many colleagues, both [young](#) and [seasoned](#), struggle to integrate this new tool in their research practices. We saw first concerns being raised in the field of [public history](#) and [digital history](#). We even observed alarmist reports about the [AI putting historians out of business](#).

Those panicky reactions were premature, but they did highlight a genuine problem. All around the world, even top universities do not really have a solution for a challenge AI puts in front of higher education. Should the students be forbidden to use AI? Should they be

encouraged and trained in it? How to grade them? Whether to turn to pen-and-pencil approach or to invest into developing better software for detecting machine generated content? Opinions are divided between techno-optimists and downright luddites, with all sorts of in-between options.

Undoubtedly, these debates are all specific for different disciplines. One thing was certain, a challenge was posed to historiography, as warned by the [National Council on Public History](#). We were particularly interested to learn what our colleagues from global academic centers, like British [Royal Historical Society](#) have to say about it, or what are the recommendations of [American Historical Association](#). However, what we were really waiting for most eagerly were contributions from our fellow digitally-minded historians. It is no secret that solid research takes time, but after several years, a number of individuals and institutions caught up. Firstly [articles](#), then books appeared, such as [Artificial Historians](#) (2025), one of whose authors, Marnie Hughes-Warrington is also vocally [debating](#) this issue and writing about its [ethical](#) implications, even proposing a [code of ethics](#). Institutions specialized in digital history, such as Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History were also quick to reflect on this topic, offering a [comprehensive introduction](#). Not underestimating the challenge, but also not being intimidated, they also made an [AI Manifesto](#), calling for cooperation with likeminded institutions. We were among the first to reach out.

Why did we jump the wagon of this fast moving train? Firstly, because we believe that our discipline is at its crucial junction. The question is not will it survive or get extinct. Nobody knows that. The real question is - what can we do in this new situation to [transform](#), even to increase relevance and generate insights important for societies we live in? Can AI help us, or undermine such efforts? Naturally, both is possible, but without gaining up-to-date insights and sharing them with others, the future would indeed look bleak.

We don't pretend that we have all the answers. Actually, we know very little, as new information keep coming. Therefore we invite you to join us. This topic is in the center of attention. It dominates [current](#) and [future](#) conference circuits. As we all eagerly await the [announced special issue](#) of Journal of Digital History, devoted to AI and Historians, slated to get out in autumn 2026, we invite you all to stay tuned. Meanwhile, CISI is planning to

develop a certified training in using digital technologies for historians, inspired by the [Royal Society](#) reading list on using AI in historical education, but particularly by [Critical AI Literacy guide for historians](#). Our goal is to use these training to communicate with the colleagues, broaden our horizons and ultimately *create a protocol which would guide researchers through all stages of their work: from gathering information to creating interpretative model, from formulating research question to choosing an adequate mode of presentation of their research results*. AI can indeed help in many of these segments, but only if reflected upon and responsibly used, which is CISI's utmost commitment.