

# Preliminary Findings from AskHistorians Workshop

Conducted on April. 22nd with 3 AskHistorians Members

## Activity 1: What values are important to the broader AskHistorians community?

We asked members to discuss and rank values present in the AskHistorians community by importance.

Members felt values central to the community were those that set it apart from other online spaces and subreddits. Below, we characterize three key community values ranked by importance:

1. **Shared Knowledge:** First and foremost, the AskHistorians community is a place for people of all professional backgrounds to have access to *Accurate* and *Rigorous* information. Members value *well-written* answers that are *accessible* to a broad audience.
2. **Rigid Community Standards:** This central value supports the community's goals for *Shared Knowledge*, but also exists as a defining characteristic of the community. All members hold one another to firm standards for *Respect & Civility*, *Shared Knowledge Production*, and *Professional Moderator Practices*.
3. **Community Engagement:** Guided by the community's goals for *Shared Knowledge Production* and in the boundaries of its *Rigid Community Standards*, the community values the discussions that come from other's questions and answers. It's important that all discussions, including but not limited to questions and answers, are in *Good Faith*.

## Activity 2.1: What benefits/harms should future research strive for/avoid on AskHistorians?

We asked members about ways future research can benefit and harm the community.

When thinking about benefits, the community is most interested in how research results turn into action. Generally, members have positive outlooks on how research can benefit the community.

Examples include:

1. Maximizing members' and moderators' time.
2. Improving the visibility of posts users have expertise in.
3. Increasing the quality of community content.

For AskHistorians, the act of research and research outcomes can lead to community-level harms. Generally, the community is concerned with research that can potentially drive down participation and use (e.g., increasing the workload of already overburdened members).

Additionally, automation that replaces the human aspects of the community should be avoided—effort is central to preserving the quality of interaction in the community. Finally, members highlight that research without diverse participants is harmful because it can introduce or perpetuate biases in the community.

## Activity 2.2: How should people make decisions about future research on AskHistorians?

We asked members to discuss how different stakeholders should be involved in making decisions about what research is conducted with the AskHistorians community.

1. **Moderators** should have the final say about what research takes place on AskHistorians. They should consider the health of the community when making decisions and be open to change. It's important that moderators have a place to hold meta-discussions about the AskHistorians community with the community. Because of the risk of sock-puppeting with alternative accounts, community polls should be avoided when making community decisions.
2. **Researchers** should be transparent with their research objectives when proposing future research on AskHistorians. In doing so, they should prioritize user agency, follow Reddit and AskHistorians policies, and consult with the community's moderation team for all research activity.