

Mapping Print, Connecting Cultures: Engaging Oral Societies with Digital History Methodologies

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Abstract

Globally, societies have relied on oral history and oral traditions as a significant source of information to document the history of their societies as well as assist them in the mission of remembering events. Oral societies have a splendidly fascinating vast heritage of oral traditions of remembering their lived experiences for ages. These oral sources exist in the folklores, myths, legends, curative chants, ritual texts, folk songs and musical genre, and historical narratives that survive in memories of the people is significant. The paper contends that the superiority of writing over memory as a repository of knowledge and global awareness is chasing the suitability of oral sources by the advent of new technologies triggering changes in ways oral histories are being documented, a popular paradigm shift for effective dissemination of oral traditions and cultures of these societies. This is because the new media and digital technologies have made varied cultures across the globe more visible, vocal and global, even private events. Today's mediatized history, cyberspace has considerable parallels scope to document the vibrant cultures and oral traditions, bringing them into the realm of public history; a form of knowledge making. Oral cultural heritage, the paper posits, if propagated through virtual new media, possess the potential to make people culturally aware of their lived traditions, in ways not possible in the past. Thus, the paper seeks to highlight the prospects of digitized oral history documentations through digital history methodologies to evoke consciousness among the masses from one generation to the next.

Keywords: *Culture, Oral Societies, Oral Tradition, Oral History, Digital History, New Media, Digitization, Technologies.*

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Background to the Study

The remarkable emergence of technological revolution taking place is changing the way historical scholarship and teaching at a very alarming speed. The birth of the World Wide Web and other browsers like Mosaic Netscape and Netscape Navigator in the 1990s changed the landscape, as people engaged the web with their histories and to create sites dedicated to their favorite subjects. Many organizations such as the National Park Services and the Library of Congress took initiative to put up web sites on major historical places (Seefeldt & Thomas, 2009:1). Eventually, new tools, such as JSTOR, Pro-Quest, Google Books, Google Scholar, World Cat, the Online Library of Congress Catalog, among several other search engines, opened up full text facsimiles of journal articles and major newspapers, have increased opportunities and access by the day. Research libraries flow with the tide in developing their catalogs and collections for online access, making historical scholarship more dynamic and student-centered. These opportunities have continued to open up increasing academic culture and eroding the barriers of knowledge production. The primary sources of the past were democratized in ways unimaginable and historical research techniques and tools were being transformed by the new media. Because digitization presents opportunities for societies with rich oral heritage to document traditional knowledge, especially oral traditions, in more unique and standardize ways. This is a major break away from the old ways of transmitting knowledge with its vitality in a digitized sense.

This is even more important in the context of changing needs of the “digital natives” and “digital nomads”, who have grown up with digital technologies, are surrounded by and immerse in digital traditions in their daily activities. This paradigm shifts in learning habits, skills, how they access information, learning needs and expectation of young tech-savvy scholars, to constantly strive to understand what learners think, behavior as well as how they perceive things in everyday life (Lai, 2011). This is as they struggle to find the balance and synergy to navigate the two worlds (traditional and technological) experiences they live in. The expression is that the growing dependence of society upon digital information will change the fabric of source material available to researchers. As Turkel (2008, 454-55) stressed further that “the use of digital sources... completely changes the landscape of information and transaction costs that historians have traditionally faced”, documenting history.

The new technologies are essentially the means of today's scholarship as a number of websites, blogs, and You Tube channels are dedicated to document and share information about varied cultures and communities in the digital space. This is a veritable mine of histories of people from all over the globe to witness the different oral traditions particular to a region (Misra, 2020:90). As such, digitized media a sure way to popularize the oral traditions and establish a direct touch with the global audience. This paper, therefore, attempts to quarry how multimedia technologies can popularize oral societies in a digitize world.

Doing Digital Oral History

Oral traditions have its own richness in terms of culture and intellectual diversification where every society has their own heritage of oral cultural traditions, folklores, customs, beliefs, and norms. These oral cultural traditions have immensely contributed to enrich the literature and

culture, especially among the oral societies of Africa as a whole. The oral cultural traditions are tied to religion, rituals, death, drama, songs and many more. A resource of the societal value and culture, different forms of oral traditions have existed and lived despite odds. Enriched with wisdom and knowledge, the folk tales are the magnum opus of many communities. These traditional narratives are narrated by elders, priests, and kings of the various communities to the younger generation. Oral literature of these societies also includes riddles, proverbs, rhymes, and others, which are the embodiment of the community's heritage (Misra, 2020:91). The most popular form of oral literature is folk songs. There are fishermen songs, love and war songs, and religious songs and so forth.

Likewise, the lively folk dances represent different aspects of the people's life which are performed in communities with everyone's participation. Poems and lullabies are the fixed form of traditions that are transmitted orally to the next generation. Numerous proverbs and riddles are still present in the memories of the people of Africa which provide them the essence of emotional, moral and cultural sustenance (Choudhury, 2015). The proverbs are like the moral lessons which are passed on from one generation to another with the purpose to spread wisdom, knowledge and universal facts. The vast oral literature of oral societies is connected with every aspect of life which further provides knowledge of the lived traditions. Oral cultural traditions, reflecting the lived experiences play a significant role in constructing the history of communities in this clime.

They become the indispensable source materials to understand and appreciate the history and culture of a place meaningfully. In addition, the telling traditions represent what people think about the social environment of their past. Oral sources undoubtedly are really important in order to add new knowledge to the existing corpus of historical writing. These living traditions are ingrained in the memories of the people, as the saying goes "our books are in our heads" which are encoded, decoded, dissected and applied using the right oral engine to locate, retrieve, upload and download for proper utilization. These memories are the files which serve as important sources of historical records and the oral sources which add to the historical document are the sure living fossils of the communities. While folklore and folk narratives serve as a chronicle of the living traditions and the communities have preserved them through generations by virtue of oral techniques.

Nowadays, due to the irresistible factors of urbanization (Raimi & Ekpenyong, 2011) and multimedia dimension people's culture is undergoing major changes. The vibrant oral cultural heritage which are distinctive to many societies are fast fading from the mind space of its own people, as a cultural synchronization architecture of the digital age. Oral narratives are not documented in the old ways of transmitting by words of mouth from one generation to the next, rather oral history recordings are increasingly done with digital recording equipment as opposed to analog recording. Example of digital recording equipment include digital audio recording equipment which brings a variety of challenges to oral historians of Africa, as elsewhere documenting oral traditions. This is saying that analog recording equipment for oral history are increasingly becoming obsolete as the world is moving to a digital era. If, as Ritchie (2003) has predicted that the digital revolution is something to come by electronic

media will eventually replace magnetic tapes as tape recorders become old fashioned, is an inevitable fact of history.

New technologies underscore the nature of history for oral societies especially African historians in a digital age encompasses the transformations and changes in the way history and historical methodologies are being shape, engaged and written. The availability of text recognition and full textbooks and archives online makes it possible for scholars to engage historical sources in new and vibrant ways. Online libraries were not alone, such as JSTOR, share sourcing and management systems for historical scholarship and organizing historical sources. Reference management systems, such as Mendeley, have revolutionized research environment and established practices of the oral societies (Oyeweso, 2018, 205). This is obviously generating numerous epistemological and methodological issues for oral historians plying their craft in the digital age as a result of the paradigmatic shift.

This is an important consideration for communities who rely on oral traditions to carry forward their traditional knowledge transmitted via oral traditions. This is because digital technologies present an opportunity for oral communities to find ways to engage “more technology-driven, spontaneous, and multi-sensory” teaching and learning of traditional knowledge transmitted through oral traditions (Prensky, 2001). The bottom line is to acclimatize the idea of multimodal literacy to broaden the “textual landscape” as the transition from print to “digital text” with new strategies and changes to accommodate the range of digital media that are becoming embedded in people's lives (Walsh, 2010). But unfortunately, the oral literature is unfashionable in an educational context to preserve and passed on their knowledge to future generations. As Beck informs, “religion and music as a singular entity appears to have tumbled down into one of those bottomless ravines between monolithic departments of institutions of higher learning today (Beck, 2006), deserve new orientation and accommodation by keying-in into practices of the digital historical age.

This clarifies that religion and music are not alone, several Departments of History have been forced to redefine their nomenclature and curricula by adding “International Studies, Strategic Studies, Heritage Studies” and others, to attract student enrolment. Besides being very methodologically dogmatic about its disciplines, unfortunately the historical discipline is also blamed on its traditional reliance on, and infatuation with textual traditions and sources (Marini, 2003). Apart from the above structural challenge, the influence of digitization occupies a vital category generating numerous epistemological and methodological questions for oral societies to square up, for effective transmission and learning of oral traditions. Despite the many challenges that confronts oral societies as a result of the paradigm shift, has reduce the intellectual gentrification gap (between the West and non-Western societies) or further marginalize them in the intellectual bourgeoisie that has enveloped humankind?

Arguably, many traditional historians are taking the bull by the head, by making themselves relevant to the current needs of the society in which they live (Olukoju, 1996, 105), engaging this whole new field around the concept of digital history as oral historians tried to experiment with the new media. More so, many have begun using new tools that computational systems

and networked information made available. This is so especially Geographic Information System (GIS) have become prominent because of the wide interest in more spatial approaches to the past, but a whole range of technologies proved useful (Trinkle, 1998; Cohen & Rosenzweig, 2006). Such tools that have proved useful by scholars are flash animation, XML coding, digital video, blogs, and wikis for examples. Hence, the importance of digital documentation of oral societies becomes the quintessence of oral historians.

Unless the vast oral heritage is preserve for future generations, many things will perish. Therefore, digital technologies make oral document easier to be stored and retrieved at any time. Because the knowledge oral cultural traditions embody is priceless and once lost, cannot be recovered. Documentation and popularization are thus essential to bring the valuable treasures of the community to public knowledge, so that it is available for the people to appreciate. Digital technologies provide new possibilities to effectively and efficiently document and disseminate these oral narratives; they transcend the boundaries of space and time. The fact is that these interactive digital media technologies including social media like Facebook, Twitter, blogs as well as emails, online communities, online forums and various online outlets where users can create, upload and share contents with people all over the globe, is a floodgate for oral societies to benefit from.

The digital space creates an environment where users can exchange ideas and information about their oral musical genre. This implies that digital technologies allow easy recording, storing and distribution of ideas, beliefs, thoughts, and experiences and also make it easily accessible to the global audience. This form of documentation will enrich the knowledge gaining and sharing experience. Accordingly, oral societies can be research for recording the oral cultural traditions and thereafter, upload and share the information in social media which will create awareness and ensure wider appreciation of the local traditions among the global masses. This way, Sutapa Misra advocates, “the potentialities of this digital age can be fully utilized to bring the rich cultural heritage of the population...to the whole of mankind” (2020:92), without engaging the traditional archives, libraries, and other institutions. So, what is digital history and how should we understand its conceptual categories?

Concept of Digital History

Digital history might be understood broadly as an approach to examining and representing the past that works with informatics system. First, it is an open field of scholarly production and communication, encompassing the development of new course materials and scholarly data collection efforts. And, secondly, a methodological approach frame by the hyper textual potential of these technologies to make, define, query, and annotate associations in the human record of the past. It is certain for sure that applying digital history, then, is to digitize the past, but it is much more than mere digitization. It is to create a framework through the technology for people to experience, read, and follow an argument about a major historical problem (Thomas, 2008, 454). It is also subscribed as “anything (research method, journal article, monograph, blog, classroom exercise) that uses digital technologies in creating, enhancing, or distributing historical research and scholarship” (Cohen, Frisch, Gallagher, Mintz, Sword, Taylor, Thomas, & Turkel, 2008, 453).

Arguably, it is an essential reading of historians and other humanities fields, as well as anyone interested in how digitization and digital cultures are transforming historical scholarship (Salmi, 2020). In fact, digital history is an emerging advocacy that draws on digital technology and computational methods of how history exists in a digitized knowledge. The concept of digital history engages the use of database and archives, interdisciplinary and public or collective engagement. Among other things interplay of outlining problems and methods in the study of big data, both textual and virtual, particularly the born-digital, living primarily in digital knowledge. The idea is basically formatted on interdisciplinary collaboration among different professionals to explore scholarly techniques and means of communication (Seefeldt & Thomas, 2009, 2) and made it accessible in digital scholarship of the past on an unprecedented scale are searchable, indexed and retrievable.

Digital history makings, however, tended to galvanize a more discrete collection of sources and materials around a historiographical lens. It establishes a different model of historical scholarship, one that has an ambitious goal to both democratize the past and attempt alternative historical, theoretical, and methodological approaches. Historians might do a great deal of digitizing as part of their calling, but the focus is different from that of the librarian or archivist raising core historical research question, such as what is the social impact of the Nigerian Civil War, how do urban historians explain youths' restiveness in contemporary societies or what are the dynamics of insurgency in Africa? This is as digital technologies opens the question for scholars to interrogate and form interpretive associations of their own (Seefeldt & Thomas, 2009, 3). This crystallizes the defining characteristic of this genre. Scholars now work with digitized data reprocessed into a web-deliverable format as well as presented with a suite of interpretive elements, ways to gain leverage on the problem underscored.

This is saying that historians, librarians and archivists are exploring new ways to publish sources, to study them and to share the results of their work. All these efforts can be linked to the umbrella term “digital history”. These methodological exploration of how software and the internet are currently reshaping the field of history. This consists of the new ways for historians to communicate with each other and to share the results of their research with peers, and more importantly, with non-professionals. The mind bugging question is what effects do online social networks have on academic communication? Are historians entering a period of collaborative history-writing as others claim? Can history be computed? Or what role will public history and crowdsourcing play in historical scholarship? It is however logical for the historical discipline adapt to the digitization of sources and increased the connectivity between scholars, an element of Digital History.

Although Toni Weller averred that digital history does not only entail the utilization of technology for researching and teaching but also implicitly signifies the consideration of new methods to frame new types of research questions (Weller, 2013), and standardized earlier conceptualizations. Pushing further Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig says digital history as a step towards the democratization of the historical profession and extending the reach of historical research to new audiences. The duo stress that “at least for research, digital history

can be defined as theory and practice of bringing technology to bear on the abundance we now confront” (Cohen & Rosenzweig, 2006). This is that oral societies and historians that depend on traditional techniques to document research and disseminate knowledge for solving societal problems are swimming in abundance of sources, making interpretation easier and informed conclusion possible.

Digital history is however the revolution in technology and information that divest the prejudices of the old ways of conducting research, allowing scholars to research electronically and make their results available via the internet. The question is how these changes affects the oral societies and historians (especially in Africa) that are utilizing digitized data and collective knowledge production for the global audience. Has the digital revolution transformed our understanding and representation of the past? Have new technologies changed historical methodologies of oral societies? Are oral societies going to be significant in the digital age? And what future holds for oral societies in a digitized world?

Oral Societies and History

Oral societies are people who lived before or without the invention of written language in the proper sense of what writing is all about. The expression is a cultural stage in which writing has not been invented and therefore, no records have been kept in written form. This is that there has been no use of writing for some deliberate purpose. This lack of conscious effort to read and write in such societies does not in any way suggests that thoughts cannot be documented by other means (Philip, 1978:21). The fact is that most oral societies, for, as it is a strong argument that, “our books are in our heads”, have many ways of documenting historical events justified their strong attachment to oral traditions in these places are doing what writing does for written traditions.

Therefore, oral societies are wearing a special garb peculiar to their environment that best serve to document the past in oral traditions, that does not make them inferior to other cultural climes. This is so as oral societies around the globe had a specialized way of doing things. They had a sense of value and were conscious of every happening around them and ways to deal with them. Oral traditions can be an important framework and methodology that repositions questions about the lived experiences and how it is remembered, both individually and collectively. This consciousness among them makes them devise mechanisms to preserve their social and political past admirably.

As such, there are no records for historical purposes. For this reason, some scholars claim that oral societies have no history, thus undermining the age-long traditions of documenting history. For examples, Newton, Margery, Perham, Hugh, Trevor-Roper, and others of this school of thought expresses the view that oral societies are never part and parcel of the world march of civilizational contexts (Osadolor, 1993, 1-2), are being trashed into the waste bins of unethical Eurocentric claims by African historiographical traditions. While the sensibilities of those being spoken for are not taken into context, is rather discriminatory by any academic standards by crushing the red lines of cultural relativism, which sees every culture as important relative to it. The prejudices, profiling and stereotyping points to the significant fact

that European historians overlooked the merits of non-Western societies and disdainfully arrogated standards without considerations for peculiarities (Eferebo, 2021,183), is dangerous historicism.

For oral societies history is factually a way of life and it is intertwined with religion and philosophy of the people. The concept of change and continuity run through and explain the idea of history, constructed around a sequence of events, and linked to time and space. The key element of these societies is that the people acknowledge themselves as essentially the bridge between the dead ancestors and those forthcoming generations, rooted in their worldview, mirrors a special historical process conspicuously absent in other cultural environments especially those of the West. This is articulated in the three categories of which constitute the society, that is, the dead ancestor, the living, and the unborn which make an inseparable whole. This is however not to lose sleep as there is no form of documentation that does not have a lacuna, even with written traditions.

Multidisciplinary approach is however utilized to shore up lapses, so the characteristic absence of chronology, and emphasis on symbolic and poetic interpretive of the lived experiences, is its special application of a framework peculiar it as group experience. Thus, oral tradition as a distinct approach to historical knowledge must be recognized, a strategy for adding value to what is special to oral societies for creative historical thought. Arguably the “nexus for crystallizing the past historical experience, a particular form of knowledge that is appropriate to the oral historian must be globally acceptable, is the appropriate form of the method they invented and connect generations through oral traditions” (Eferebo, 2021, 184), it is indeed something of practical application in every sphere of their existence.

History functions for corporate identity, to reaffirm and regenerate institutions, values and more of community property. Also, history is a function of the purpose of making claims to certain rights and privileges, education of the citizens and disseminating values, as well as for security of the whole community (Osadolor, 1993,31). This is why history is an important aspect of oral societies and their religious worldview that are re-crystallized to accommodate trends formulated by the community's sense of history (Dike & Ajayi, 1968:395). The dynamic process of transformation, the society engaged historical memory especially during various traditional festivals and ritual ceremonies, re-enacted by those who were believed to be knowledgeable in the traditions and folklore of the past. It is these lived experiences that are collectively referred to as history in oral societies. For purposes of preservation and retrieval of these historical experiences, oral societies utilized oral traditions.

Oral tradition Jan Vansina writes are reported expressions which are specifically about the past (1965). Accordingly, they are the cultural items transmitted by word of mouth for generations. Each society has its own oral culture and traditions through which they express their attitudes and cultural life as well as reflecting the traditional society. Oral traditions, remains the basis of studying the culture of the people of a particular place which helps in understanding the culture and society. These are collective and community forms (Dos, 2010), that are heard, retained and recalled at the point of transmission. Oral tradition is the

recollection of antiquity that had been transmitted orally for many generations and become what can be called “a sort of commonwealth” for the use of society.

This is because oral traditions are important sources of historical studies. This is that they are “unwritten” sources conveyed in dimensions fashionable “for oral transmission and their preservation depends on the ability of memory of successive generations of human beings. Thus, as in writing, oral traditions are major sources of the historiography of the past; and even among the people of written culture, much historical writing, are based on oral traditions” (Alagoa, 1978, 10). They were testimonies of the past which were deliberately handed down from mouth to mouth and from one generation to the next. They were eyewitness accounts that re-enact the history of oral societies and written culture as well. Therefore, of great historical value in oral societies are oral traditions.

The reliability of oral traditions is to look oral historical traditions, not only as materials from which a construction of aspects of the oral societies (especially sub-Saharan Africa) past may be undertaken but as historical texts or interpretation of the past. The important point to emphasis is that the advent of foreign historical traditions on these societies redefined and measured them with external indices, claiming universal standards. Arguably therefore, oral societies have no sense of history as externally perceived, is not only spurious but condemnable as there is a division that portends a different history for different cultures. For Smith (1978), history is history whatsoever. Oral societies connect with history is justifiably articulated that “there are no people without history or who can be understood without it” (Hobsbwam, 2007, 227). Of importance is that in every clime history shares the same features as well as purposes. This is to say whether oral or written History is just a model of how different culture fashioned ways to preserve the lived experiences on the thought making process and interpretation of the perspective of history.

What is important is that the basic methodology of studying oral societies is oral sources which historians globally accept as a veritable tool as well as history in its own right. These societies have also created mechanisms to forestall objectivity and standardize their historical traditions and the reliability of oral sources and history as well, for telling an objective history. This is so especially that the reliability of its fixed text goes with complexes of arrangements guided, its objectivity can rarely be contested, and it is more absolute than a written historical text (Jones, 2009:2). Therefore, among oral civilizations, it is the medium of preserving and telling the truth about the past as there were no revised versions. This is again tied to the inductive approach, which is, “most useful for the direct establishment of oral historical facts” (Topolski, 1976, 460), is the surest ingredient in the attainment of history and continues to play a part in the digital age.

Future of Digital History

The sustenance of digital history was presciently herald for this transition at an event organized prior to the 118th annual meeting of the American Historical Association titled, “Entering the Second Stage of Online History Scholarship” (AHA Workshop, 2004). Where some scholarly voices posited the necessary shift from experimentation with the tools and

theories of digital scholarship to engage the future with something more permanent. This phase requires interdisciplinary collaboration, were many historians are yet to embrace this cooperative initiatives that involve historians, programmers, information architects, designers, and publishers. Archives, libraries, and other repository institutions are already creating the infrastructure to collect, manage, explore, and manipulate these resources and to support and sustain the various forms “new-model scholarship” comes with. For historians must join this essential next step or, as Abby Smith shares, face losing our scholarship to the “dustbin of history” (2003).

The advent of these varieties of digital history has clearly redefine the historical space, away from traditional methods in the digital era. This is as “the Internet allows historians to engage to vastly more people in widely diverse places (Cohen & Rosenzweig, 2006, 5). The Internet provides small, accessible and punchy platforms for marginal cultures to have a place and in some cases thrive (Bryne (2012). Thus, the Internet allows more people to speak about history without professional training and this is bringing oral societies live and direct to the global audience. As Leslie Madsen-Brook (2012, 60) subscribes that “our role as historians whether we hold academic degrees in history or learned to practice public history on the job ought to be encouraging greater, more thoughtful participation in historiography regardless of the medium. Certainly, digital sources have come to stay and historians have recognized the potential and tremendous advantages of electronic sources and digitized primary sources. Therefore, oral societies are keying-in to digitize to be part of the open sources, such as Wikipedia, resonate with historical methodologies are more secure in the digital space.

The fact that these open sources reach out to the public faster than any other sources is important challenge for traditional historians as they confront the digital age. Oral societies engage public history space, a form of relationship between the academic historian and the public. This public history is rooted in narratives about the past or present in public and for a purpose and in varying degree igniting historical consciousness. The use of digital visuals such as YouTube, the creation of online videos, the use of television and radio are some examples of digital platforms that serve as agencies of public history. This is saying that oral historians should not shy away from engaging in debate over history with the “larger public” (Foner, 2002: xviii), as digitized documentaries about oral cultures can reach a large audience via digital technologies with a blink of the eye.

Certainly, it is clear that digital data does not take history away from primary sources. But rather provides a new context in which these sources triggers socialization, externalization, combination and internalization, which enables a multidisciplinary analysis, not a replacement of one by another in all three repositories of oral, written and digital knowledge processes (Burnett, Macafee, & Dorothy, 2017, 68). As it were, knowledge cycles back and front between oral and media sources, knowledge generated in one medium can become beneficial to other situational contexts. This is going beyond presentation of data analysis using the digital platform to integrate and open for further interrogation the many sources related to the research and thus, shapes argument and narratives, for example.

However, the future digital environment might challenge some of the traditional methods, perhaps even the historiographical practices of the disciplines, especially for historical studies. This is so as the sources alone in the future will be almost entirely digital for example instant messages, e-mails, blogs, doc files, pdfs, digital video, podcasts, and databases. More so, their scale and complexity will demand that historians use tools and techniques not yet a part of our practice to create their own digital sources and employ those created by others (Seefeldt & Thomas, 2009:5), justifies challenges historical scholarship has to face in the digital age.

This is saying that these tools can be widened to accommodate familiar subjects in exciting ways that entails multidisciplinary features for interpretive work of collaborating both synchronously and asynchronously breaking knowledge barriers and shed new light on these rich but problematic sources. Using digital image tool to zoom in more detail in the collection of numerous oral cultural heritage of communities during cultural festivals and crowd violence during elections, and a combination of single-author essays and collaborative online discussions, scholars are able to re-interpret the scenes in their nuanced complexity, says (Professor David O'Donnell at the Digital Humanities Summer School interactive section in Lagos, August 17 to September 2, 2018). This summit actually boosted and exposed many scholars to a variety of research and teaching tools already at our disposal. Such tools as Google Earth, Google Books, Wikipedia, SIMILE, Scribe, del.icio.us, and many others, have become household tools.

Although historians must endeavor to shift the focus of digital historical studies away from what "Tool Reviews" referred to "product-oriented exhibit or web site" and move it more toward the process-oriented work of employing new media tools in research analysis "doing" digital history. For digital history data to be considered a scholarly product in and of itself, as Christine Borgman (2007) argues, to share our research with others, need to more fully address the accompanying challenges of quality (peer review), preservation, and open access. Besides, historians are enlightened of the characteristics of future digital history scholarships might be computational, al/algorithmic, large-scale, and visual for example. Certainly, historians need to think about digital history in integrative ways and the challenges that scholars will face and recognized as well that digital history, perhaps more than analog, invite researchers and the public into the digital process (Cohen & Rosenzweig, 2006).

This process of knowledge making is fundamentally premised on the integration of teaching, researchable, and sharing of research results via the internet through crowdsourcing, indexing, and immediately retrievable online by the audiences. This rigorous knowledge making process of "Internet truth" is just "oral history truth" made in a new and artfully distressed garb. Because disregarding the internet truth whichever way portends danger for history. The Internet however has come to serve as the largest library, preserving each and every single thing in the human record assured us of it. And as Maxi Gorynski (2020) enlightens "the more we move away from the oral tradition, technologically speaking, the more we find ourselves in need of it" secure and protect oral societies in the digital age.

Conclusion

While oral societies use of digital history methodologies becomes popular in historical scholarship, these technologies continue to utilize oral traditions as tools to overcome spatial barriers in accessing, adding values to democratizing and popularizing oral societies cultural heritage to the global audience. Rather it provides opportunity for these societies to source, share, and preserve oral cultural heritage in ways unprecedented but also the basis for equal footing to internet sources and practices of teaching and transmitting knowledge that would have lost to oblivion. However, the new media and information sharing can definitely universalize the indigenous knowledge of varied communities. The digitally documented oral traditions in the new technologies and brought into public history view, for example, when recorded and promoted in the popular paradigm, will make it accessible to the present and future generations. Thus, creating awareness and further popularizing the oral literature unique to a particular society on a global platform, thereby diminishing the digital gap for robust intellectual engagement globally. This is because new media documentation will make oral traditions to live, forever.

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