

Appendix B: CHNM Profile

Center for History and New Media, George Mason University

Since 1994, CHNM <chnm.gmu.edu> has used digital media and computer technology to democratize history—to incorporate multiple voices, reach diverse audiences, and encourage popular participation in presenting and preserving the past. CHNM combines cutting edge digital media with the latest and best historical scholarship to promote an inclusive understanding of the past as well as broad historical literacy. CHNM has established itself as a focal point for collaboration and communication within the emerging discipline of digital humanities with events such as the Rosenzweig Forum for Technology and Humanities <chnm.gmu.edu/dcforum> and THATCamp <thatcamp.org>. CHNM's work has been recognized with major awards and grants from the American Historical Association, the National Humanities Center, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Department of Education, the Library of Congress, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Historic Publications and Records Commission, and the Mellon, Sloan, Hewlett, Kress, Rockefeller, and Kellogg foundations.

CHNM maintains more than four dozen online history projects directed at diverse audiences, making them available at no cost through its website. In 2008, CHNM's websites had almost 400 million hits and over 11 million visitors—making it one of the busiest non-commercial history education sites on the Web. CHNM's staff of more than fifty people (including eleven with doctoral degrees) includes those skilled in all aspects of digital history—database architecture, software engineering, web development and design, preservation, and archiving. CHNM has conducted more than \$20 million in grant funded research, boasts an annual budget of nearly \$2 million, and enjoys a nearly \$3 million endowment (achieved with the assistance of two Challenge Grants from NEH), all of which guarantee its long-term stability.

CHNM has been a leader in using digital media to improve the understanding of history by students, in building digital archives, and in mounting online exhibitions—often in partnership with museums and libraries. CHNM maintains several very popular and award-winning educational projects such as *History Matters* <historymatters.gmu.edu>, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution* <chnm.gmu.edu/revolution>, *Historical Thinking Matters* <historicalthinkingmatters.org>, the *National History Education Clearinghouse* <teachinghistory.org>, and the *Object of History* <objectofhistory.org>, a partnership with the National Museum of American History. For this work, CHNM has won (or shared) the American Historical Association's James Harvey Robinson Prize four times. CHNM has also assembled and actively maintains several large-scale digital archives, including the *Hurricane Digital Memory Bank* <hurricanearchive.org>, the *Papers of the War Department, 1784-1800* <wardepartmentpapers.org>, the *September 11 Digital Archive* <911digitalarchive.org>, a partnership with the Library of Congress, and the *Bracero History Archive* <braceroarchive.org>, a partnership with the National Museum of American History. More recently, CHNM has launched a program of online exhibitions for more general audiences, including *Gulag: Many Days, Many Lives* <gulaghistory.org>, a partnership with the National Park Service, and a forthcoming exhibition on Martha Washington and the Revolutionary generation of American women, a partnership with Mount Vernon.

CHNM has also emerged as a leading developer of free tools and software for museum professionals, librarians, scholars, and students. CHNM currently heads two major open source software development projects, one designed to assist the consumers of digital content, the other to help producers of digital content. For content consumers, CHNM offers *Zotero*, a free, open source, easy-to-use research tool that helps researchers gather and organize resources, and then annotate, organize, and share the results of their research. Funded by major grants from IMLS and the Mellon and Sloan Foundations, *Zotero* has received several awards, including the American Political Science Association's "Best Software" award in 2007 and PC Magazine's "Best Free Software" award for two years running. For content producers, CHNM offers *Omeka*, a web publishing tool oriented toward the needs of cultural heritage institutions and the foundation upon which the *Omeka Commons* project will be built. Less than one year after its public launch, *Omeka* has seen tremendous success with nearly 5000 downloads and robust, growing, and active open source development and user communities. Institutions adopting *Omeka* include the New York Public Library, the Newberry Library, the Ohio Humanities Council, the University of Arizona, and the University of California, Berkeley. In December 2008 *Omeka* was awarded a Mellon Award for Technology Collaboration by a blue ribbon panel of leading technologies and internet pioneers.