

SEPTEMBER 11 DIGITAL ARCHIVE:
COLLECTING, PRESERVING, AND PRESENTING
THE HISTORY OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

“September 11 changed everything” quickly emerged as an instant shorthand analysis of the shocking and tragic events of that day. But with the rapidity of our electronic era, revisionist interpretations just as quickly appeared. Michael Kinsley, writing two weeks later in *Slate*, argued that we should resist the binary opposition between a “before” of “innocence and sun-dappled lawns” and an “after” of “knowledge, modernity, and darkness.” September 11, he wrote, was “a horrible day, certainly, and—yes—a day that will live in infamy.” But, it may not have been “a day when life changed dramatically and permanently for everyone.” A few days later, *New York Times* columnist Frank Rich observed that there is a case to be made that both “everything has changed” and “nothing has changed.”

Historians—for whom change and continuity are standard tropes—are probably more likely to prefer Kinsley and Rich’s mixed picture. If it is not too soon to begin speculating on how the history of the attack on the World Trade Center (WTC) and the Pentagon (and the global response) will be written, it is also not too soon to consider what sources and tools historians will use to write that history. Indeed, the question of how to write the history of the first major event of the twenty-first century can be broadened considerably: How will the history of the next century be collected, preserved, and written? How specifically does the emergence of new electronic media and networks change the collection, preservation, and writing of our history?

Change and continuity are as likely to mark the collecting, preserving, and writing of twenty-first century history as they are likely to figure in the act of interpreting the dramatic events of September 11, 2001. On the one hand, historians will proceed with many of the same analytical tools and research methods they have always used. On the other hand, the evidence

of these events is more likely than ever before to be digital. Michael Kinsley's analysis, for example, appeared in the online publication *Slate* and many people received it via email.

The prospects for properly recalling the events of September 11 are thus both complicated and enhanced by that day's status as the first major American historical event of the Internet age. The "historical record" is no longer purely made of paper, but also of email, websites, digital photos, online discussion forums, and other electronic forms of communication. Indeed, significant portions of the historical record have already appeared in digital form, and more will follow. Many people in nearby buildings let loved ones know of their safety through email. Even more interesting has been the flood of efforts to record stories and reactions in dozens, if not hundreds, of online forums and web pages. According to the Pew Internet Report, almost three-quarters of Internet users "have used email in some way related to the events—to display their patriotism, contact family and friends to discuss events, reconnect with long-lost friends, discuss the fate of victims, and share news."

Although its content is often ephemeral, the Internet can provide the means to gather far-flung, critical materials about September 11 with greater outreach and participation and less effort and cost than traditional historical means of research, such as the taped oral histories collected after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and archived at the Library of Congress. Moreover, the Internet allows the collection of such history in unique ways. A website reaches around the globe as easily as next door and each element of this proposed project takes advantage of this remarkable capacity.

The *September 11 Digital Archive* project will play a key role in the use of electronic media to collect, preserve, and present the history of the September 11 attacks and public responses. Historians have responsibility for helping create this historical record in all of its complexity, for asking important questions of those who were there, organizing this material into a useful and illuminating whole, and grappling with its meanings. Historians can provide documentation, analysis, and contextualization for those in the present as well as for those in the future to whom the events, emotions, ideas, and repercussions of September 11 will seem as remote as

Pearl Harbor is for today's schoolchildren. Finally, this project provides an opportunity to build upon and extend the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's long-term interest and our own work in fostering a new habit by participants of contributing to the recent historical record.

This project includes four key components, detailed below:

- A. Organizing and collecting the electronic record;*
- B. Collecting digital narratives and evidence of the September 11 attack and its aftermath;*
- C. Contextualizing and teaching about the WTC and Pentagon attacks; and*
- D. Developing tools and models for collecting and preserving the past electronically.*

The project will be carried out by the American Social History Project (ASHP) at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York and the Center for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University (GMU), both of which have extensive experience in producing and teaching digital history and are located in the centers of the September 11 attacks. CHNM, moreover, is currently working with the Sloan Foundation to preserve the history of science and technology online through the *ECHO* (Exploring & Collecting History Online) project.

It should be noted that any effort to plan for preserving, collecting, and presenting this recent history has to reckon with the fluidity of the current situation. Not only are events in the near future, such as the escalating U.S. military reaction, likely to alter public responses and perceptions, but the response of the historical and archival communities remains in flux as well. Some archival and collection efforts emerged in the first weeks after the event, new ones have appeared in the past two weeks, and many more are undoubtedly to come. One such effort, a large meeting at the Museum of the City of New York on October 4, 2001, of libraries, archives, historical societies, and electronic history projects, including ours, officially launched a broad-based collaboration on September 11 collecting and presentation strategies. To effectively build a permanent, expansive archive, therefore, we will remain involved in such collaborative efforts while continuing to adapt our work to changing political and organizational circumstances and new collecting and archiving opportunities.

Our project will begin four months after the events in question, in part to address these ongoing needs. Beginning in January 2002 will allow for perspective, permitting the project to proceed more reflectively and deliberately than the initial collecting efforts currently under way. As explained below, this timeline allows us to serve as the archiving agent for completed Internet collections that might quickly disappear as well as learn from early online attempts to gather history about September 11. A permanent digital archive of such importance must be thoughtfully and thoroughly organized.

I. PROJECT PLAN

A. ORGANIZING AND PRESERVING THE ELECTRONIC RECORD

The electronic record related to September 11 is already substantial—including everything from detailed print and television coverage by large media companies to personal “web logs” or electronic diaries produced by individuals across the globe. Newspapers and magazines have set up online forums to collect readers’ reactions as events unfold. The Library of Congress’s American Folklife Division is conducting “citizen on the street” audio interviews across the country, much as the division did after December 7, 1941. A new website, September11.archive.org, which went online on October 11, 2001, already contains more than half a million web pages related to September 11. A number of individuals have started memorial websites to record personal reflections about the victims. A group in Manhattan’s Soho neighborhood has mounted a highly evocative exhibit—“This is New York: A Democracy of Photographs.” Many more email inboxes and outboxes contain messages of historical value.

Two problems face those who want to use that record now and in the future. First, its immensity makes navigation and filtering difficult. How does one find the truly valuable material? Second, despite the immediate efforts to preserve this digital record, will it truly be preserved? The Library of Congress and the Internet Archive in San Francisco, for example, have periodically taken automated “snapshots” of a wide array of websites related to September 11. In addition, a group of New York state-based archives, library, and records management

organizations—coordinated by the New York State Archives and the National Archives-Northeast Region—is creating a Documentation Task Force focused on the World Trade Center attack. While uniformly important, these projects are dedicated to immediate, broad-based collecting of materials related to September 11, and, by definition, cannot practically contend with qualitative issues of interpretation and selection.

Many of these initial collection efforts, with the exception of the Library of Congress/Internet Archive's September11.archive.org site, are offline projects. Even more significant, it is unclear whether the vast majority of materials gathered in these “rapid-response” methods will exist in a few years, much less survive for future generations. Quickly established websites often have a limited existence, disappearing as creators take them off-line or change user accounts. In addition, “snapshots” provide only a partial record of what actually appeared on the Internet on a given day since many sites utilize constantly changing information extracted from databases rather than static pages. In other words, while the Library of Congress/Internet Archive project took anywhere from several to dozens of snapshots of relevant sites in the weeks following September 11, it is likely that important information and recollections were missed. The *September 11 Digital Archive* project will work with these existing collecting and archiving efforts, but will start with a long-term plan and the goal of creating a permanent historical record.

To understand these efforts and insure cooperation with existing projects, we will begin with an extensive survey of online materials about September 11, creating a portal to available materials. Unlike some of the gateway and portal efforts that have emerged, ours will emphasize qualitative filtering, annotation, and contextualization. As we have done in other projects such as *History Matters* (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu>, which includes an annotated guide to the 600 best websites in U.S. History) and *ECHO* (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/echo>, which offers a gateway to 2,600 sites in the history of science and technology), we will develop a searchable, annotated, and catalogued database, using a sophisticated yet flexible metadata structure, of the best online resources. We have already constructed a basic version of this database and have begun collecting URLs related in anticipation of this project.

While we will collect this information broadly, we will selectively display quality sites to the public. Annotations for 500 of the most worthwhile sites will be made available through a searchable database and we will further highlight the 100 best sites. The filtering and annotating will also be conducted in the interest of long-term preservation and archiving.

Some sites—such as those from commercial news organizations like the *New York Times* or CNN or from major cultural institutions like the New-York Historical Society—offer institutional permanence. But many others (especially those created by individuals, businesses, and small organizations) will probably disappear. Where that is a danger, we will create a web archive of the site. We will contact site owners and offer to become a permanent repository on a non-exclusive basis. While the sites are maintained by their owners, visitors will be referred from our gateway to their sites. If the sites disappear, we will become the permanent repository. In so doing, we would follow the approach of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research and similar groups in making ourselves a permanent clearinghouse for data collected by others. To archive database-driven sites, we will request a copy of the entire database since this contains the complete record of memories and thoughts (unlike a constantly changing web forum or bulletin board).

This gateway will also take advantage of one of the Internet's greatest strengths—its international reach. Most of the existing websites related to the September 11 events focus on the experiences of Americans, but the WTC accommodated employees from almost one hundred countries. By gathering materials about the foreign nationals who worked in the building, we can create a unique perspective on the tragedy. We will also sample and archive the broad range of international websites that reported on and interpreted the September 11 events. Once established, this September 11 gateway will provide a valuable resource for individuals and historians today and in the future—the first place people will turn for related materials.

In addition, our goals stretch beyond this public service function towards creating a gateway that offers the opportunity for qualitative research in two senses. First, the September

11 events provide an unparalleled opportunity to study Internet-based grassroots historical preservation and collection, to see how a range of people and institutions (in many cases spontaneously) used the Internet to collect, preserve, and memorialize the event. Our own efforts in the *ECHO* project (and many other Sloan funded projects) have focused on fostering a social habit and practice of collecting history online and as it occurs. These events offer a fascinating and unparalleled insight into new social practices that will define historymaking and archiving for the next century. Studying what people have done on their own allows us to understand these processes and to leverage their results. Thus, as we create the gateway site, we will contact a sample of those who have created September 11 websites. We will interview them (either online or by phone) about their motivations, methods, and problems. During the first phase of *ECHO*, interviewing Sloan grantees and others who collected history online provided us with crucial insights into the dilemmas faced by those interested in this practice, and we expect to learn even more from this wide-ranging effort.

Closely studying the process of online historymaking will also allow a second (and more action-oriented) form of research—it will provide insights into where to intervene in the process of recording and preserving this important history. By creating a qualitative gateway and guide, we would become aware of the most important gaps in the online historical record. Have certain stories (from groups of people, parts of the nation, and the world) been recorded in great detail while others have been neglected? Have certain aspects of the events (e.g., rescue efforts, diplomatic responses) been well documented while others (e.g., responses of individual communities and neighborhoods) are forgotten? Are personal websites related to September 11 likely to disappear in a few months or years? This knowledge about the state of the online history will be crucial in shaping the agenda for the project's collecting work.

While we cannot save everything—nor should we—we can position our project as a repository for the best materials that have little chance of being saved, especially materials that lie outside the purview of institutions with existing protocols for archiving.

B. COLLECTING DIGITAL NARRATIVES AND EVIDENCE OF THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACK AND ITS AFTERMATH

This is the most important part of the project. As noted above, the concrete plan for what will be collected online will be shaped by lessons learned while creating the project gateway. Although we have ideas of where to focus our efforts, we will remain open to reshaping those plans in response to our systematic survey. In order to meet the needs of future scholars, we will solicit input from leading historians about what they see as the most important parts of the story to be gathered and preserved. We will also work to ensure the preservation of otherwise ephemeral digital communications for future historians to evaluate.

We propose a *five-part* digital collecting effort structured by types of communities addressed (witnesses and observers), collection strategies (amateur historians, community groups, businesses), and types of evidence sought (email recollections and digital images):

1. Witnesses: The most prominent part of the website will be composed of first-hand recollections—*gathered online*—from approximately a dozen major firms, organizations, and communities who were “witnesses” to the WTC and Pentagon attacks. The purpose of *Witnesses* is to create a representative yet detailed, evocative, and comprehensible “portrait” of the experiences of September 11 that will provide current citizens and future historians with a useful and coherent record. The largest number of recollections will come from those who directly experienced the attacks, but we are defining “witnesses” broadly to include those with a range of secondary relationships to the events—such as those who watched from windows and rooftops in Jersey City and Brooklyn; relatives and friends of people working in the WTC and the Pentagon; residents of communities adjacent to the Pentagon; and schoolchildren and their parents close to scenes of the disasters. While these cohorts will be selected largely from data gathered in the research phase of the project, we begin with some preliminary ideas of how to construct a representative cross-section of “witnesses.” Additional communities, whose records are in danger of disappearing (e.g. a company Intranet bulletin board), will be quickly identified. The communities we are actively considering include:

- Executives and employees (and their families) of Marsh & McLennan Companies, Inc., the world's leading risk and insurance services firm;
- Workers and their families of The Windows on the World Restaurant (Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union, Local 6);
- Residents of Battery Park City;
- Fire fighters from Ladder Co. 118 in Brooklyn Heights and Ladder Co. 11 in Manhattan's East Village;
- Students (and parents) from the High School for Leadership and Public Service, Stuyvesant High School, and Borough of Manhattan Community College;
- Pentagon military, civilian, clerical, and service staff;
- Port Authority staff, including clerks, security, engineers, and janitors (SEIU), who worked in the WTC;
- Employees (and their families) of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, the firm with the largest number of workers (3,500) in the WTC towers;
- Arab-American and Muslim residents of Jersey City, New Jersey and Brooklyn, New York;
- Artists participating in the *World Views* WTC artists-in-residence program (Lower Manhattan Cultural Council); and
- Residents of immigrant and poor neighborhoods in South Arlington near the Pentagon.

Our initial outreach campaign to these communities will rely on email and other online contacts (such as listservs, online newsletters, web forums, bulletin boards, and newsgroups), as well as offline methods (such as regular mail, telephone, and personal contacts). We will share information on how to contribute to the digital archive through our website, including how the contribution will be incorporated, our non-profit status, and our ability to provide free collecting and archiving services for already extant September 11 related materials. In particular, we will attempt to reach central figures in various communities—such as executives, union and neighborhood leaders, and human resources directors—to assist us in promoting the collection of personal, workplace, and community accounts.

Our goal is to create a critical mass of initial contributions—the key to drawing subsequent online contributions to a growing digital archive. The locations of CHNM and ASHP in northern Virginia and New York City and their longtime institutional links to their respective region's diverse educational, professional, cultural, and neighborhood organizations, will facilitate the gathering of online contributions. Where communities are not as clearly defined as employees of specific corporations or rescue agencies, we will help create a sense of

virtual community. As CHNM's experience with the *ECHO* project and ASHP's experience running a nationwide new media education network have shown, the likelihood of collecting online contributions is enhanced by the creation of a sense of common purpose and shared experience in which participants have a stake. The individual act of contributing to an online archive by posting materials can be deepened if contributors also have opportunities to engage actively with one another in online discussions about the larger, collective meaning of their experiences and their contributions.

As an example of this outreach and community-building, we plan to take advantage of ASHP's long-standing connections to the New York City labor community by reaching out to Local 6 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, which represented Windows on the World kitchen and wait staff, and to SEIU Local 32B&J, which represents building, maintenance, and elevator staff in the WTC towers. These initial union contacts will provide entrée not only to the families of restaurant and custodial workers who were killed in the attack, but to other unionized WTC workers who witnessed the attacks and whose personal stories might otherwise not be collected and archived. Those contacts will help demonstrate the ease of using online forums to create a permanent record of individual experiences and will give individual workers a chance to engage with one another online in discussion and debate.

Depending on the group or firm, we hope to follow a collection strategy that both details the events of September 11 and examines the impact of time and subsequent events, a record that will be particularly important for future historians. Thus, a year after our first collection of experiences we will invite our "witnesses" to register how their experiences and views have been affected by the passage of time and subsequent developments. One advantage of online collection is that this second wave of collecting can be done easily, quickly, and at a relatively low cost with email follow-ups. As part of this effort, we will target some communities for intensive follow up, especially if we note a relative lack of online contributions from important groups or constituencies, either initially or on the one-year anniversary.

To collect a truly representative archive of the people affected by September 11, we will seek to reach those underrepresented in the emerging digital record. Confronting the persistent challenge of the “digital divide” between low-income and more affluent communities, the project will work with schools and digital education projects to provide online access for populations that otherwise might not be able to contribute to a web-based archive. For example, we anticipate basing one sub-project in three schools near the WTC (High School for Leadership and Public Service, Stuyvesant High School, and Borough of Manhattan Community College) that have significant immigrant populations among students and parents. We will also collaborate with the “Urban Alternative,” a GMU-affiliated project in the low-income Columbia Heights West community in South Arlington (an immigrant community near the Pentagon that includes a large number of Muslims), using their network of computer labs as a locus for gathering recollections. Finally, when we cannot provide digital access, we will offer a toll-free telephone number, with a digital back end, to record and disseminate accounts and ideas from those who are not regular users of the World Wide Web. Although this collection will not necessarily be web-based, it will be automated. We will collect these oral histories digitally, then automatically convert them to streaming RealAudio, Windows Media Player, or QuickTime.

2. *Observers:* This will be the most open-ended section of the project because it will not be limited to those who directly experienced the attacks. We will seek reflections from those who were deeply affected by September 11 but not necessarily because they or a loved one were “there.” Our recruiting strategy will move beyond individuals and discrete groups to encompass communities indirectly affected by the WTC and Pentagon disasters. We will recruit in relevant online communities and gather comments from people who visit our gateway and want to deposit their reflections in our permanent archive. We will begin with one specific recruiting tool that allows us to enhance the electronic record—asking those who have already posted recollections and responses online to offer further reflections on the events of September 11.

3. *Participant Historians:* Non-professional historians created some of the best early sites capturing the events of September 11. This initiative will provide assistance to these lay historical practitioners and enlist new ones. We will take advantage of this popular initiative while insuring that its products are permanently preserved and of a quality that will interest future historians. To that end, we will hold a workshop in New York on “recording the history of your community during and after the September 11 events.” Participants will include neighborhood associations, local history societies, school groups, unions, and corporations. The workshop will provide the twenty participants with basic tools for collecting history online, including our survey builder, a tool for allowing people to generate online collecting forms (see below, section II.D). Each workshop participant will receive a modest seed grant for his or her project and will collect and preserve history online through our website. We have already had good success with this basic approach in the *ECHO* project—workshops scheduled for this year and next are oversubscribed and eagerly anticipated by participants.

4. *The September 11 Email Repository:* A new medium of extraordinary historical importance has emerged in the past two decades, but most of its products are not being preserved. It is a cliché to say that email has replaced letters, but no one has seriously begun preserving email as part of the historical record. In response, this initiative would establish an online archive for storing historically valuable email messages. Indeed, many of the accounts and testimonies from September 11 have not been posted to any website, but sit in the sent-mail or inboxes of innumerable email users. The creation of a trustworthy and longstanding place to store these electronic letters will be a unique feature of our project’s site. To make email donations easy, we will offer both an online form and an email address for submissions. Adding to the value of this archive, we will ask contributors to annotate their emails and select categories, based on pre-selected classifications, to allow efficient searches of the database that will house the repository. Gathering contributions to the Email Repository will involve active solicitation on a wide variety of commercial, professional, and academic listservs (many with international membership) as well as published notices in a select cross-section of newspapers

and trade journals. As with other elements in this part of the project, we will emphasize the permanence and significance of such contributions.

5. *Visions of September 11:* The historical record of September 11 extends beyond text. This part of the website will contain representative visual resources that delineate the breadth of experiences and responses to the WTC and Pentagon disasters. Many individuals now own digital cameras or digitize their photographs and other visual materials via low-cost scanners, posting them on the web or attaching them to email messages. To archive these records, we will create an online visual database (a counterpart to the Email Repository) where people may deposit digital images for permanent storage. As with the Email Repository, we will enhance this archive by asking contributors to annotate and categorize their submissions. As the archive grows, we will provide a comprehensive search engine to help users search for individual images or research specific themes.

To supplement the images we gather online, we will also work with New York City urban folklore groups and museums (including City Lore, the New-York Historical Society, and, hopefully, the group behind the “Here is New York” exhibit) to create digital versions of the visual documentation they are currently collecting of the shrines, graffiti, and messages etched in dust on windows and walls near “Ground Zero” and throughout New York City. In short, we expect this aspect of our collecting work to yield a rich set of visual materials related to September 11 and its aftermath, complementing the project’s rich, text-based contributions.

C. CONTEXTUALIZING AND TEACHING ABOUT WTC AND PENTAGON ATTACKS

September 11 and its aftermath will remain an epochal event in U.S. history and politics for decades to come. While students today have vivid, firsthand memories, future students will not. And regardless of their memories, all students will need guidance in making sense of these events and their larger historical, political, and social contexts. To meet the needs of students (and the general public), the *September 11 Digital Archive* will organize and amplify the Archive’s holdings to facilitate education and learning. Significantly, our work on teaching about the

September 11 attack will reinforce the project's larger goals by fostering assignments that encourage students to interview parents and neighbors and, thus, add to the historical record. In addition, teaching-related materials will make the site immediately useful and will thus help attract additional digital reminiscences from a broader group.

Since 1989, ASHP has provided professional development programs to teachers in New York City and around the country, including the New Media Classroom, a pioneering nationwide teaching-with-technology faculty development program. We will draw on the experience and knowledge of classroom practice from this work, and on our existing network of high school and college teachers in a variety of humanities and social science disciplines, to develop the following resources:

1. *Providing Historical Context:* The work of historians involves not only collecting and sifting through evidence of the past, but also putting that evidence into larger interpretive frameworks. In order to make meaning of the wealth of data collected by the *September 11 Digital Archive*, students and teachers will need access to perspectives that can, taken together, provide a conceptual map to the Archive's contents. To provide those intellectual signposts, we will commission twelve essays (1,500 words each) by historians that begin to put the events of September 11 into a variety of important contexts. These essays will be divided into four categories:

How Will the History Be Written? What will the history of September 11 look like in fifty years? Three leading historians will consider how different sources and organizing themes might be of interest to future historians. Addressing contemporary evidence, these essays will provide teachers and students with insight into the historian's craft, making visible the ways scholars construct meaning from evidence. These essays will also contribute to the historical profession by signaling sources and classifications whose future significance is not yet readily apparent. In addition, they will help us formulate our own collecting efforts.

Precedents. These essays will consider events in the U.S. past that are similar to September 11 and some of the ways they affected American life. Possible topics include: urban

disasters and the responses to them that contributed to city building; previous wars and their impact on civil liberties; and changes in the U.S. and global economy resulting from other shocks of this magnitude.

International Roots. These essays will look back at past international developments and foreign policy debates to explore connections with the September 11 attacks. Among other topics, the essays will consider United States foreign policy in the Middle East and the impact of previous conflicts and alliances in the region.

Memorialization. These essays will offer insights into how Americans have grieved for, remembered, and commemorated the victims and heroes of past catastrophes and conflicts, and the long- and short-term impact of private and public memorials, rituals, and other expressions of memory on U.S. culture.

2. *Making the Archive Manageable:* No one expects teachers to walk into the Library of Congress and easily create lesson plans from the acres of primary sources available. Similarly, the *September 11 Digital Archive* is less valuable to teachers, students, and the general public without a series of supplementary materials and “finding aids.” This section of the website will enhance the usefulness of the overall *September 11 Digital Archive* by providing general context, improving the “teachability” of the materials, and by attracting people to the site who will, in turn, contribute to the Archive. To achieve these goals, we will: expand the annotations of the best one-hundred websites to inform teachers of themes, length, format, and age-appropriateness; create customized supplements to the data, including an overall timeline, six or seven maps, and four short multimedia narratives (successfully employed in our *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* CD-ROM on the French Revolution); and create twenty lesson plans (available through the searchable database) using *Archive* materials.

3. *Incorporating The September 11 Digital Archive into Existing Courses:* The *September 11 Digital Archive* will provide teachers with a wide array of resources for classroom use, especially assistance integrating these materials into existing courses. As ASHP and CHNM have learned in nearly six years of running professional development seminars on new media

around the country, the web, while a marvelous teaching tool, is not a self-evident one. Teachers (particularly of younger students) need support and guidance to overcome the conceptual, pedagogical, and logistical obstacles to incorporating the web into classroom practice. Building on our extensive knowledge of faculty development and classroom practice, we will conduct a dozen workshops with teachers at the middle school, high school, and community college levels in New York City and northern Virginia to help them integrate the *September 11 Digital Archive* into existing courses in Social Studies, History, English, and Political Science. We will post the results of these workshops—from broad ideas to concrete lesson plans—on the site, making them available to all teachers seeking to use the *September 11 Digital Archive*.

D. DEVELOPING TOOLS AND MODELS FOR PRESERVING AND PRESENTING THE PAST ELECTRONICALLY

Past epochal historical events have led, surprisingly, to new archival and collecting innovations and techniques. Espionage efforts and document preservation issues during World War II promoted the use of microfilm, which had a profound impact on library and archival collecting and storage practices in the postwar era. How might what we learn in preserving, collecting, and presenting the story of September 11 lead to positive changes in the way history is done in the future? To ensure this result, this project will develop models, templates, tools, protocols, and best practices for documenting and interpreting the history of future events and contexts. We propose to do this through reports and recommendations to professional historians, archivists, and non-professional historical practitioners as well as through the creation of online history tools. Although these tools will transcend the *September 11 Digital Archive*, they are part of the larger effort to consolidate and disseminate the tools and lessons throughout the project.

1. Lessons for Historians and Archivists from the Events of September 11: This effort will take the form of a report that draws specifically on what we learn from the surveying and gateway efforts undertaken in Part I. The report, which will be published in abbreviated form in

scholarly journals and newsletters and presented at professional meetings of archivists and historians, will assess the digital recording and preservation of September 11. It will be a case study of how history will be recorded in the twenty-first century and will include recommendations for historians and archivists on how to think about collecting and preserving the past in the digital present and future.

2. *Doing Digital History: A Historian's Sourcebook and Toolkit*: Beyond reflecting and reporting on the lessons of September 11, we plan to foster historical practices that take advantage of the new digital environment. Such an effort builds upon CHNM's work with the *ECHO* project—especially our “practical guide for doing history online.” To further this work, we will produce a full-fledged sourcebook and toolkit, *Doing Digital History*, covering such key topics in online historymaking and collecting as recruitment, publicity, ethics, intellectual property, design, and historiography. While the *ECHO* guide is limited by project's focus on the history of science and technology, this project will allow us to produce an enhanced and expanded sourcebook and toolkit for use by all historians.

Doing Digital History will also build upon the easy-to-use, web-based software tools being developed for *ECHO*. For example, we will reconfigure and expand *ECHO*'s Survey Builder, a browser-controlled program that allows historians with no technical knowledge to create online surveys, to create a flexible, accessible memory collection program. More significantly, we can transform elements of the current project into a suite of related web-based tools at little cost. The toolkit will thus include an email archive builder, an email-enabled contact database (for recruitment and follow-up), a digital image archive builder, a website annotator, an electronic clipping file tool (allowing historians to easily preserve online materials), and a timeline builder. All of these tools—as with the Survey Builder—will be developed in open source formats so they can be easily shared, customized, and upgraded. We will distribute the final software tools as for free, available for installation on any server. End users will not need HTML, database programming, or other computer skills to establish comprehensive websites for collecting and displaying historical materials.

The sourcebook and toolkit will offer historians an online historymaking environment, similar to what online tools do for online teaching. They will enable historians, archivists, and citizens with limited technical ability to collect, preserve, and present the digital past. Such a set of resources would be one fitting legacy of the destructive attacks of September 11—from the disaster would come innovative and lasting ways to preserve, and learn from, the past.

II. PROJECT TEAM

The team at CHNM and ASHP that will undertake this project possesses a mix of historical, educational, production, and technical talent and expertise that make us uniquely well qualified to carry out this project. Working in collaboration, we have been engaged for almost two decades in rethinking the ways historical ideas and information can be recorded, conceived, and presented. In addition to our background, our locations in the two centers of the September 11 attacks—Northern Virginia and Manhattan—and our longstanding connections to a range of local institutions (e.g., schools and unions) further enhance our ability to carry out this work.

Our interest in making innovative use of new technology grows directly out of our successful work in developing one of the first scholarly based CD-ROMs about U.S. history—*Who Built America? From the Centennial Celebration of 1876 to the Great War of 1914* (published by Voyager in 1993), which won the American Historical Association’s James Harvey Robinson Prize for “outstanding contribution to teaching.” Since the publication of that disk, we have been involved in many other new media projects aimed largely at educational audiences, including development of a sequel to the original disk, *Who Built America? From the Great War of 1914 to the Dawn of the Atomic Age in 1946* (Worth, 2001); a web/CD-ROM project on the French Revolution (*Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*) and *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, a gateway website for high school and college teachers and students. These projects have received support from the National Endowment for the

Humanities, the Rockefeller Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Florence Gould Foundation.

CHNM has already researched the methods for collecting history online and saving it for posterity in its *ECHO* project, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. In a white paper distributed to the foundation and to others engaged in collecting history online, the *ECHO* staff outlined rules and techniques for successful Internet gathering of recent history. As noted, we anticipate building upon and further solidifying these rules and techniques in the first phase of this project, resulting in greater effectiveness for the second phase, the core of the project, which includes collecting first-hand accounts of September 11 using the Internet.

ASHP is currently in the production stage on two innovative websites related to the history of New York City, both of which complement the proposed *September 11 Digital Archive*. *Virtual New York* (<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/ashp/nml/durst>) utilizes The Graduate Center's recently donated Old York Library collection and aims to become the prime portal of web resources available on New York City history. Its opening exhibit on "New York Disasters" relates specifically to this project. Another ASHP project (in partnership with CHNM and funded by NEH) also reinforces our position as a gateway to New York history: *The Lost Museum: Exploring Antebellum American Life and Culture* (<http://www.ashp.cuny.edu/LM/>), a web-based interactive 3-D re-creation of P.T. Barnum's American Museum, located in downtown Manhattan until its demise in a spectacular fire in 1865.

Both CHNM and ASHP have longstanding connections to, and collaborative relationships with, a number of national and local museums and archives and public history groups, including the Library of Congress, National Museum of American History, the New York Public Library, the New-York Historical Society, City Lore, the Gotham Center on New York City History, the National Archives, as well as local, district, and citywide education projects in New York and Virginia. Both organizations have established track records over the past two decades in conceiving, producing, and implementing large scale, digital public history projects similar in scope and impact to the *September 11 Digital Archive*. We have already begun

discussions with some of the other historical and cultural organizations interested in these issues and will carry those discussions further if we receive funding from the Sloan Foundation.

Equally important, both groups have the permanence that will insure the long-term preservation of the *September 11 Digital Archive*. ASHP has been in operation for two decades and CHNM began more than a decade ago. In addition, CHNM has raised a \$2 million endowment that assures its permanence beyond university and grant funding. Even so, we believe that a permanent digital archive like this one needs a strong connection to a major library or archive since such institutions are best prepared to insure permanence. We have already begun discussions with the GMU library about preserving *ECHO* materials and, if we are funded, will broaden the discussion to include this project and other possible partners like the New York Public Library and CUNY.

In sum, we think that this four-part plan will enable us to create a permanent record of the events of September 11, 2001, as well as to foster some positive legacies of those tragic events by allowing people to tell their stories, making those stories available to a wide audience, providing historical context for understanding those events and their consequences, and helping historians and archivists improve their practices based on the lessons we learn from this project.

Appendix A: Work Plan

January 1, 2002 -- June 30, 2002:

The primary goal of this period will be to catalog and annotate the most important and compelling online material relating to September 11 in the first year following the event and begin initial collecting of materials:

- begin cataloguing existing websites related to September 11
- begin to annotate the 100 best sites
- conduct online and telephone interviews with creators of early September 11-related websites
- contact webmasters for sites to offer permanent archive host
- begin work on annotator, clipping file and email archive tools develop contacts with Library of Congress and the Internet Archive as well as other groups developing September 11 archives
- develop and launch the Email Repository
- consult with advisors to develop categories and goals of the collecting project
- contact historians to commission essays
- begin outreach to NYC and DC communities to call for materials
- conduct NY workshop on recording the history of communities during and after September 11
- begin collecting digital materials for archive
- design on-line database and search functions
- develop over-all site design and navigation, and test

July 1, 2002 -- December 31, 2002

The primary goal of this phase will be to continue cataloguing and annotating the electronic record and begin aggressively to collect substantive contributions for each of the sub-projects including the Witnesses, the observers, the Email archive, and the digital image archive for a launch on the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks:

- continue cataloguing and annotating existing sites, connections with other archives and site design and programming
- collect a wide range of images, video, audio, and text materials
- digitize, catalogue, and index all materials
- work with educational advisors to develop areas/themes for teaching materials
- edit and program essays by historians

- develop publicity and outreach for September 11, 2002 launch
- use launch for increased outreach for further collecting
- work on Sourcebook and Toolkit
- write report on how September 11 was recorded on the web

January 1, 2003 -- June 31, 2003

In this period we will work to generalize from the experience and lessons of the first year, while continuing and intensifying our collection efforts and developing online teaching materials and teacher development workshops:

- continue collecting, digitizing, and programming the materials archive
- write, test, and program online teaching materials
- develop and test teacher workshops in middle schools, high schools and community colleges
- continue publicity and outreach
- refine Toolkit software and Sourcebook

July 1, 2003 -- December 31, 2003

In the final phase of the project we will ensure the permanence of the historical record accumulated by the project's Web site as well as build a legacy in the uses of the web by historians:

- continue teacher workshops, write up, and program results online
- finalize, publicize and distribute Sourcebook and Toolkit enabling other historians to capture future major events online.
- present our results at major conferences and publicize our results and techniques in both popular and academic journals
- store all data in several formats with proper metadata tags as well as traditional library designations.
- complete plan for maintaining the project website in the years and decades beyond the end of 2003