

# ICOHTEC

# NEWSLETTER



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## Newsletter of the International Committee for the History of Technology ICOHTEC

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### Editorial

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The ICOHTEC and TICCIH Program Committees are still working on the program of our joint conference in Tampere (10 – 15 August 2010), but they will publish a preliminary program soon. If you intend to visit the conference it makes sense to register before **17 May 2010** - the deadline for early registration. Please find a registration form on our homepage for the Tampere meeting: <http://www.tampere.fi/industrialpast2010/registration.html>.

A conference in Luxembourg was dedicated to the influence of digital tools and digital sources on the work of historians. Beside other subjects the participants discussed 3D reconstructions of demolished carmaker's plants: Do they provide a better understanding of the adoption of assembly line techniques? The results of the whole conference might be interesting for historians of technology.

Best wishes  
Yours Stefan Poser

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## I. Conference Report

### Conference: Contemporary History in the Digital Age

Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe, Université du Luxembourg in October 2009

Frédéric Clavert, Luxembourg, [frederic@clavert.net](mailto:frederic@clavert.net)

The aim of the 'Contemporary history in the digital age' symposium that took place in October 2009 in Luxembourg was to identify new elements which would provide contemporary historians with a better understanding of the digital tools and methods available to them, both at the present time and in the future. This issue was explored through two keynote addresses given by experienced digital humanities specialists — MARIN DACOS (Marseille/Paris), and GINO RONCAGLIA (Viterbo), an Italian philosopher who has been working in the field of new technologies for 20 years — along with contributions from participants selected by a committee of experts after the issuing of a call for contributions. Seven major themes emerged from the contributions and debates (we have partly based our report on the very detailed summary report by PATRICK PECCATTE (Paris), one of the participants in the conference<sup>[1]</sup>).

Firstly, the field of Digital Humanities comprises a number of extremely varied initiatives, creating an 'archipelago', to coin the term used by Marin Dacos. ALAIN MICHEL and SHADIA KILOUCHI (Paris) demonstrated how the 3D reconstruction of a Renault plant can help provide a better understanding of the adoption of assembly line techniques in Europe. AURORE FRANCOIS (Louvain) offered a technical and methodological description of the online publication of data on Belgian magistrates as an aid to the work of legal experts and historians. GENARO OLIVEIRA (Auckland) emphasised the use of software, particularly graphics software, for teaching purposes. MARIE-PIERRE BESNARD (Caen) explained the benefits of information and communication techniques in connection with new trends in museography. GERBEN ZAAGSMA (London) described the web's contribution to research on contemporary Jewish history. TITO MENZANI (Bologna) highlighted the lack of awareness of available online resources among researchers specialising in the study of the Italian cooperative movement. DAVID BODENHAMER (Indianapolis) emphasised the new educational and research implications of the spatialisation of history and the increasing use of geographic information systems. This wide diversity, both in terms of the subjects and techniques discussed, shows great potential but also raises the question of the interoperability of data (Marin Dacos). MILAGROS GARCIA PEREZ (A Coruña) and CRISTINA BLANCO SIO-LOPEZ (A Coruña/Luxembourg) nevertheless brought some elements of response to the challenge of the archipelago with the example of the Local Studies Library in A Coruña (BMEL), which, although it promotes local history through

various digital techniques, is now focusing its attention on the creation of a pan-European portal for local studies of the complex construct known as 'Europe'. The dynamism of this field also gives the impression that there is a growing gap between the digital practices of a minority of researchers and 'traditional' higher education, an idea which was raised by ENRICA SALVATORI (Pisa).

Secondly, much attention was focused on the fundamentals of history as a discipline. The digital methods and tools available to researchers will lead to major changes in the discipline of history (Gino Roncaglia on Web 2.0 tools and researchers), but will strengthen the basis of our methodology, namely, critical distance — RENÉ LEBOUTTE (Luxembourg), who chaired the session, particularly emphasised this point — and the interpretation of sources, particularly important to the eyes of ÉLODIE NOWINSKI (Paris) who works on the history of rock and fashion. There will nevertheless be considerable transformations, particularly resulting from qualitative changes in certain sources such as the press (ANNICK BATARD, Paris) and from the use of Web 2.0 platforms to enhance historians' methods (Gino Roncaglia) or improve sources (Patrick Peccatte and the PhotosNormandie project).

Thirdly, according to Marin Dacos and OLIVIER LE DEUFF (Lyon) historians will need to acquire a culture which embraces information technology and become accustomed to working with IT specialists, to avoid technicians 'taking over' (Marin Dacos). However, Élodie Nowinski referred to this idea in terms of cultural transfers, preferring to speak more generally of an acculturation: we need to envisage a process whereby historians acquire an information technology culture which is as yet unfamiliar to them. PHILIPPE RYGIEL (Paris)'s contribution went some way towards illustrating the risks associated with digital projects or the digital aspects of research projects. He attempted to shed light on the reasons why the digital aspects of the study on 'History and memories of immigration within France's regions' were not particularly successful: the files collected had not undergone a process of quality control, the study was weakened by its complex environment (there were around 15 partners), technicians and historians did not communicate between themselves to a sufficient extent, and the researchers were more interested in publishing a book or an article than a joint database. He went on to describe elements which might enable such a situation to be avoided; these include a data entry validation procedure, mediation between the various professions involved and safeguards if partners do not fulfil their commitments. He concluded above all that 'the server does not create a society': in other words, the social organisation behind a digital project is particularly important. In conclusion, as Enrica Salvatori, Élodie Nowinski, Marin Dacos and others had done, he emphasised the importance of including statistics and digital methods in humanities teaching.

Fourthly, the rapid growth in digital technologies and their influence on social and human sciences should encourage cooperation between historians, librarians and archivists — all of whom have elements of the expertise needed to use the web in humanities (Olivier Le Deuff) — and should also stimulate a culture of sharing data and sources. Rapid technological development brings with it the very great risk of isolation and of blocking access to data which might be useful for research. Moreover, as Marin Dacos points out, the use of closed proprietary software may prevent researchers from exchanging data and therefore from working together.

Fifthly, the symposium's participants expressed concern at the verifiability and credibility of sources in the digital era, and the quality of the people involved. This issue is not a new one, but it is taking on new proportions in the Internet age. Nevertheless, methods exist to counter ideological currents which distort history, a point emphasized by TSURIEL RASHI (Jerusalem) and to improve the 'citability' of sources (Marin Dacos), and optimism should outweigh concerns in this field. In this connection, RICHARD HACKEN (Provo) emphasised the importance of making primary sources available online. GREGORY MIURA (Bordeaux) highlighted the need for a 'web archaeology', in other words an auxiliary science to digital documents which particularly helps guarantee the reliability of sources. The contributions of STEFAN HALIKOWSKI-SMITH (Swansea), who compared the digitisation policies of European national libraries, and PAUL ARTHUR (Umea/Canberra), who looked at the case of New Zealand and Australia, introduced a comparative dimension, demonstrating that political support can result in significant differences from one country to another. It also seems to play a role in the question of the quality of sources, as too great a difference from one country to another may undermine the credibility of digitised sources. Stefan Halikowski-Smith nevertheless emphasised that the situation can change rapidly and that there is an increasing desire to digitise cultural heritage in Europe. However, vast disparities remain between France and Italy, for instance.

Sixthly, the mediatisation of history must be rethought. History's relationship with traditional media, online media, museology, libraries and archive centres is being transformed by the use of the Internet. Moreover, to a certain extent, history is also a medium on the Internet, where historians do not have a monopoly; this was demonstrated by the contribution of Patrick Peccatte and the ensuing debate. Patrick Peccatte is an information scientist who has 'redocumentarised' photographs on the 1944 Allied landings in Normandy with the help of amateur historians; this work led to results of a very high quality.

The last major subject for discussion that was regularly raised concerns the issue of copyright. This question was the focus of the debates which followed many of the contributions, particularly those of Marin Dacos and EVA DEAK (Budapest). Restricted access to certain sources and the possibility of sharing digitised or born-digital sources are questions which cannot be resolved at the present time, given the legislative uncertainty on the subject in many European countries. The contribution of ANDREAS BAGIAS (Luxembourg), at that time a member of the European Parliament Archive and Documentation Centre (CARDOC) but speaking on his own behalf, underlined the justified legal obstacles to the online publication of bodies of archives.

In the end of the symposium, I had, as organizer, the impression that we covered a quite large part of the field of "digital contemporary history" but that large questions remained open, such as the quality of digitalised/born-digital sources and the elaboration of appropriate methodologies to use those resources. Though historian's work might change, the core of our work – critical distance, interpretation of sources – will be reinforced. Digital history remains today a "work in progress".

[1] <[blog.tuquoque.com/post/2009/10/20/Compte-rendu-symposium-Histoire-Luxembourg](http://blog.tuquoque.com/post/2009/10/20/Compte-rendu-symposium-Histoire-Luxembourg)> (13.04.2010).

See: Tagungsbericht *Contemporary history in the digital age*. 15.10.2009-16.10.2009, Luxembourg, in: H-Soz-u-Kult, 17.04.2010, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=3076>.

## II. Future Conferences

**20-21 May 2011**

**Corporate Governance in Financial Institutions. Historical developments and current problems.** European Association for Banking and Financial History Annual Conference  
Amsterdam

CFP – **Attention:** Deadline **30 April 2010**

Please find the call for papers on

<http://www.ehs.org.uk/ehs/noticeboard/Assets/EABH2011.pdf>

Please contact Kata Böhmer, [info@bankinghistory.de](mailto:info@bankinghistory.de)

**27 – 29 May 2010**

**Knitting the web: Railways, users and the city – Cities, users and the railways. Past Present, Future.** 4th International Railway History Conference

Mechelen, Belgium

The conference is jointly organized by: The City of Mechelen & Heritage Centre Lamot and the International Railway History Association. The Organizing Committee invites proposals for papers to be presented at this International Conference to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the first commercial rail operations on the European continent, between Brussels and Mechelen, to be held in Mechelen, Belgium, from 27th to 29th May 2010.

This conference should shed light on the complex relationship between the railways, the cities and the users – consumers of this new transport mode. Railway lines structure cities and create landscape. Cities benefit from the railways, like railways benefit from the cities. Railways bring in new culture, new identities and new representations. A railway station was a new object, a new place and a new building in the city's environment. With a railway station a city became part of a greater chain of production and consumption in a network without borders.

Please contact the conveyers by [trein@mechelen.be](mailto:trein@mechelen.be)

**27 – 29 May 2010**

**Conference of the Economy & Business Historical Society 2010**

Braga, Portugal

Please visit <http://ebhsoc.org/Portugal.htm>

If you have any questions about the conference, please contact Maria Cristina Moreira, [mcmebhs@gmail.com](mailto:mcmebhs@gmail.com), or Neil Forbes, [n.forbes@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:n.forbes@coventry.ac.uk).

**3 – 6 June 2010**

**Industriekultur und regionale Identität, Industrial Heritage and Identity**

XXIX. Gesprächskreis Technikgeschichte, 24th Meeting of the Discussion Group for the History of Technology

Linz, Schlossmuseum

Please find the program on [http://www.gtg.tu-berlin.de/mambo/mambots/editors/tinymce/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=936&Itemid=267](http://www.gtg.tu-berlin.de/mambo/mambots/editors/tinymce/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=936&Itemid=267)

Please contact [u.streitt@landesmuseum.at](mailto:u.streitt@landesmuseum.at)

**6 – 7 June 2010**

**Technikhistorisches Forum der Gesellschaft für Technikgeschichte, GTG**

**Workshop for PhD. students of the German Society for the History of Technology**

Gesellschaft für Technikgeschichte, Münchner Zentrum für Wissenschafts- und Technikgeschichte München

Deutsches Museum, Kerschensteiner Kolleg

Please find the program on <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/termine/id=13710&count=6&recno=1&sort=datum&order=down&current=1&search=technikgeschichte>.

Please contact Andrea Spiegel, [ZIGT@mzwtg.mwn.de](mailto:ZIGT@mzwtg.mwn.de)

**17 – 20 June 2010**

**4th Tensions of Europe Plenary Conference & Closing ESF Inventing Europe Conference**

Sofia

Deadline for early registration **19 May 2010**

The main theme of the conference is *Technology & East-West relations: Transfers, parallel histories, and the European laboratory*. All contributions focus on the circulation and appropriation of technologies between Eastern and Western Europe as an entry point into the contested practice of Europeanization. During the Cold War Europe has been one of the central laboratories for the experimentation with ideological and political regimes, which infected traditional paths of knowledge and technology transfer in Europe. While the history of the Cold War has mainly been told as a history of discontinuity and fragmentation, all conference papers deal with examples of successful co-operation or “hidden continuities” in inter-European technology transfer during the 20th century.

**General areas to be explored are:**

- Changing times: Continuities and discontinuities in the transfers of knowledge and technology between Eastern and Western Europe.
- Negotiating identities: spaces and places of co-operation or confrontation before, during, and after the Cold War.
- Parallel histories: alternative processes of European integration and fragmentation in Eastern and Western Europe.

- Blurred boundaries: spill-over effects and holes in the Iron Curtain
- Europe as a trading zone, a symbolic battle field, and the diplomatic playground for world hegemony.
- Chilling effects: Technologies at war & wartime technology
- Contested approaches: the merits and pitfalls of concepts like Americanization, Sovietisation, Westernization for European historiography.

Key note speaker: Prof. Luciano Segreto  
 Early registration deadline: May 19, 2010.

Conference website [www.conference2010sofia.com](http://www.conference2010sofia.com)  
 Please contact: [ToE@tue.nl](mailto:ToE@tue.nl)

### **15 – 17 November 2010**

#### **Ester Boserup Conference 2010 - A Centennial Tribute**

Long-term trajectories in population, gender relations, land use, and the environment in Vienna, Austria

CFP – Deadline **28 June 2010**

Ester Boserup was one of the pioneers of an integrated theoretical approach to questions of development and sustainability. 2010 marks the centennial of her birth. The Ester Boserup Conference 2010 “*Long-term trajectories in population, gender relations, land use, and the environment*” wishes to pay tribute to her work and to her intellectual heritage. Ester Boserup’s work focussed on understanding processes of social change. She conceptualized human societies – in their present-day form and in their historical development – as dynamic relationships between natural, economic, cultural, and political structures. This interdisciplinary approach to social development and the manner in which Boserup positioned herself at the interface between academia and politics form integral parts of her intellectual legacy. The conference will therefore consider contributions addressing her approach, her interface position and the applicability of her theories to current sustainability issues

Please find more information on <http://www.boserup-conference.org/>  
 Please contact the organizers by [info@boserup-conference.org](mailto:info@boserup-conference.org)

### **2 – 5 December 2010**

#### **2010 Dehli – Transportation as a Lifeline of Development**

Eighth International Conference on the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility (T2M)  
 New Delhi, India

CFP – Deadline **15 May 2010**

Please find the call for papers on <http://t2m.org/conferences/dehli-2010/>  
 Please contact Dick van den Brink by [info@t2m.org](mailto:info@t2m.org)

**31 March – 2 April 2011**

**Knowledge.** Business History Conference, Annual meeting 2011

St. Louis, Missouri

CFP – Deadline **1 October 2010**

The history of business has for millennia been entwined with the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. Artisans have jealously guarded trade secrets; merchants have networked to improve their access to information on market trends; promoters have fostered business education; scientists and engineers in corporate research and development laboratories have devised innovative artifacts, techniques, and theories; management consultants, journalists, and business academics have hailed the emergence of a "knowledge industry"; business leaders, philanthropists, and academic administrators have established universities and foundations to nurture innovation; and, most recently, lawmakers and computer programmers have created an Internet that has facilitated the creation of new kinds of knowledge that have transformed the conduct of business, public affairs, and private life.

Our 2011 annual meeting takes "Knowledge" as its theme. Knowledge embraces, but is not confined to, the human capital generated and sustained by entrepreneurs, middle managers, and technical professionals; the tacit knowledge of clerks and factory workers; the cultural messages broadcast by advertisers and public relations professionals; the learning paths of institutions that contribute to the generation, circulation, and preservation of knowledge; the intellectual history of constructs like the "knowledge economy"; and the relationship of knowledge-generating economic institutions to government, the professions, and communications networks. While we hope that many of the proposals could be fit under this rubric, and in keeping with a venerable BHC tradition, the program committee welcomes proposals on topics that are not directly related to the conference theme.

Potential presenters may submit proposals for individual papers or entire panels. Individual paper proposals should include a one-page (300-word) abstract and one-page curriculum vitae (CV). Panel proposals should include a cover letter stating the rationale for the panel and the name of its contact person; a one-page (300-word) abstract and author's CV for each paper (up to three); and a list of preferred panel chairs and commentators with contact information.

The BHC awards the [Herman E. Krooss Prize](#) for the best dissertation in business history by a recent Ph.D. in history, economics, business administration, the history of science and technology, sociology, law, communications, and related fields. A "recent Ph.D." is defined as a Ph.D. whose degree is less than three years old. If you wish to apply for this prize, please send a letter to the Krooss Prize Committee expressing your interest along with a one-page CV and one-page (300-word) dissertation abstract. After the Krooss committee has reviewed the proposals, it will ask semi-finalists to submit copies of their dissertations. Finalists will present summaries of their dissertations at a plenary session of the 2011 BHC annual meeting in St. Louis.

The [K. Austin Kerr Prize](#) is awarded for the best first paper delivered by a new scholar at the annual meeting of the BHC. A "new scholar" is defined as a doctoral candidate or a Ph.D. whose degree is less than three years old. If you wish to participate in this competition,

please notify the BHC program committee in your proposal. Proposals accepted for the Krooss Prize are not eligible for the Kerr Prize.

The deadline for receipt of all proposals is **1 October 2010**. Acceptance letters will be sent by 15 December 2010. Presenters are expected to submit abstracts of their papers for posting on the BHC website. In addition, presenters are encouraged to post electronic versions of their papers prior to the meeting and to submit their papers for inclusion in the BHC's on-line proceedings, Business and Economic History On-Line. To offset some of the costs of attending the conference, the BHC offers modest financial grants to graduate students who are presenting papers; information will be sent out once the program has been set.

Please send proposals for papers, panels, or the Krooss Prize to [BHC2011@Hagley.org](mailto:BHC2011@Hagley.org). The **Oxford Journals Doctoral Colloquium in Business History** will be held in conjunction with the BHC annual meeting. This colloquium is intended for doctoral candidates in the early stages of their dissertation projects. If you are interested in being considered for this colloquium, please submit to Roger Horowitz by **1 December 2010** (at the address listed above) a statement of interest, a CV, a preliminary or final dissertation prospectus of 10-15 pages, and a letter of support from your dissertation supervisor (or prospective supervisor). Please find more information on <http://www.thebhc.org/annmeet/call2011.html>. Please contact the organizers by [BHC2011@Hagley.org](mailto:BHC2011@Hagley.org).

### III. Grants

#### **Core Fulbright Scholar Competition for 2011-2012**

Deadline for application **2 August 2010**

Over 800 grants are available for teaching, conducting research, or combining both in more than 125 countries around the globe. The deadline is August 2. For information on Fulbright Scholar Awards, consult our website at [www.iie.org/cies](http://www.iie.org/cies). If you are interested in requesting information, please write to [scholars@iie.org](mailto:scholars@iie.org).

### IV. Recently Published Books

**Bartels, Christoph (ed.):** Berufliches Risiko und soziale Sicherheit. Beiträge zur Tagung „Vergangenheit und Zukunft sozialer Sicherungssysteme am Beispiel der Bundesknappschaft und ihrer Nachfolger“ im Deutschen Bergbau-Museum Bochum 8. und 9. Oktober 2009. Deutsches Bergbau-Museum, Bochum 2010.

The book is dedicated to the development of industrial safety and health in coal mining with special reference to the social security and health care systems for miners of the German Ruhr region. Contributions by ICOHTEC members as Lars Bluma, Michael Farrenkopf and Markus Montz.

**Naumann, Friedrich:** Dejiny-informatiky-od-abaku-k-internetu. Edition Galileo, Praha 2009.

Kniha zpracovává zajímavé a obsáhlé téma, pojednává o dějinách informatiky v širokém kontextu historie přírodních věd. Kromě dějin výpočetní techniky zahrnuje pozoruhodné události z historie matematiky, fyziky, geodezie, elektrotechniky, elektroniky a dokonce i obchodu a podnikání. Dějiny informatiky jsou v ní podány velmi podrobně a přitom přehledně, stylem „od Adama“. Kořeny dnešní informatiky jsou totiž vystopovány až k různým způsobům počítání na prstech a k základům zeměměřictví. Kniha obsahuje relevantní historické informace kvalitativního charakteru (co, kde, kdo) i přesné kvantitativní údaje (kdy, kolik). Podrobnost kvantitativních údajů je tak vysoká, že se čtenář může dozvědět přesné údaje, např. o počtu vyrobených počítačů v určitých letech, o kapacitě jejich operační paměti i počtech zaměstnanců výrobních firem apod.

Friedrich Naumanns book (published in German, too) is dedicated to the history of calculating machines and information technology. He analysed the development of mechanical devices and machines for calculating from the 18th century as well as the development of computing.

**Schinkel, Eckhard, Scholl, Lars U. (ed.):** Rudolph Haack (1833-1909). Industrie-Pionier unter drei Kaisern. = Schriften des Deutschen Schifffahrtsmuseums, Bremerhaven. Hauschild, Bremen u.a. 2009.

The book (and an exhibition of the LWL Industriemuseum in Henrichenburg/Dortmund) is dedicated to the ship builder and engineer Rudolf Haack, who inaugurated the construction of iron ships in Germany. He was educated in ship building in England and became one of the most important authorities in this field in Germany later on.