Teaching South African History in the Digital Age: Collaboration, Pedagogy, and Popularizing History

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Abstract: The digitization of African materials has made it easier than ever for students to engage with primary source documentation and undertake original research. Digitizing sources and using digital sources to teach African history has great pedagogical value, but must be done ethically. This article suggests a model for collaborative and publicly-engaged scholarship, demonstrating the potential of transnational projects and shared knowledge production while maintaining sensitivity towards questions of the hegemony of the North. The study draws on experience of a virtual internship project between North American-based university students and the South African non-profit South African History Online (SAHO).

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Résumé: La numérisation de documents africains a permis plus facilement que jamais aux étudiants et chercheurs d'utiliser des sources directement produites en Afrique et d'entreprendre une recherche originale. La numérisation de ces sources et leur utilisation a une grande valeur pédagogique pour enseigner l'histoire de l'Afrique, mais cette utilisation doit être effectuée de manière éthique. Cet article propose un modèle de travail scientifique collaboratif et public, démontrant le potentiel des projets transnationaux et de la production de connaissances partagées tout en conservant une sensibilité aux questions de l'hégémonie du Nord. L'étude s'appuie sur l'expérience d'un projet de stage virtuel entre des étudiants basés en Amérique du Nord et le site à but non lucratif: South African History Online (SAHO).

Introduction[1]

The rapidly changing world has transformed the way we undertake new research, write, and teach. The increasing availability of text recognition and full-text books and archives online make it possible for researchers to engage with historical sources in new ways. Software such as Zotero, Tropy, and Scrivener offer group libraries, shared sourcing, and management systems for writing and organizing.[2] Such changes are often associated with a new age of globalization, but Paul Tiyembe Zeleza reminds us that "the world has been 'globalising' for a long time, that the intensity and extent of international interactions across continents, countries, communities and cultures have been growing for centuries." These processes accelerated in the twentieth century and continue to do so. Africa has long been central to this globalization, but the interactions have not always been beneficial to Africans. Zeleza charges: "The challenge for Africa's intellectuals, leaders and assorted friends is to map out modes of integration into the unfolding global system that will maximise, not further marginalise, the interests of the continent's peoples and polities, economics and environments, societies and cultures."[3]

Of particular interest here, the digitization of archives and advancements in search engine technology and big data has changed the way we teach and present history. The use of IT (information technology) in the classroom and lecture theatre in both the North and the South has made it cheaper and easier for teachers and students to engage with primary source documentation

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[2] Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Jack Dougherty and Kristen Nawrotzki (eds.), *Writing History in the Digital Age* (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013); T. Mills Kelly, *Teaching History in the Digital Age* (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013).

[3] Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "The Politics of Historical and Social Science Research in Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 28–1 (2002), 9–23.

and undertake original research. The growth of online history projects can "decenter the classroom and shift focus away from the instructor and onto the material."[4] As these projects are used widely in Northern classrooms, we must be cognizant of historian Premesh Lalu's warning that digitization projects "should not be aimed at creating minority discourses in the US or even multicultural syntheses that are eventually returned to Africa for consumption."[5] A number of early archival digitization partnerships between the North and South proved to be lessons for those working together in digital collaborations.

This article examines how transnational collaborative digital history projects can generate new knowledge that pushes back against Eurocentric views of African history while maintaining sensitivity towards questions of the digital and the hegemony of the North. The study draws on a five years long experiment that we call the "virtual internship." This internship brings together American- and Canadian- based university students and the South African non-profit South African History Online (SAHO) as part of SAHO's project to develop new African histories and share resources. The article addresses both issues of collaboration and African history pedagogy.

Omar Badsha founded SAHO in 2000 as a non-profit, non-partisan "people's history project" to address the legacies of colonial and apartheid rule in historical education and cultural and heritage institutions. The initial goals included producing, promoting, and popularizing new research and history; developing educational programs that reflect this new history to improve the teaching and learning of history; organizing conferences and traveling exhibitions; publishing books; and enabling people to tell their own stories. Over the years, SAHO has been supported by a number of public entities, including South Africa's Skills Education Training Authorities, the National Lotteries Commission, and the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS), as well as private entities from both South Africa and abroad, including the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Standard Bank, and BP. The project has become the largest public history project in South Africa, if not the continent. Their work has been recognized by the NIHSS Award for Digital Humanities.

The virtual internship collaboration began in early 2012 as a partnership between SAHO and Jon Soske and his students at McGill University. Since then, SAHO has partnered in digital projects with professors and students at Southern Methodist University, the University of York, Principia College, and most recently Bridgewater State University. This article draws on the

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[4] John Rosinbum, "Teaching with #DigHist: Introducing a New Series on Using Digital Projects in the Classroom," *AHA Today* (blog) (23 August 2016), http://blog.historians.org/2016/08/teaching-with-digital-history/, accessed 17 July 2018.

[5] Premesh Lalu, "The Virtual Stampede for Africa: Digitisation, Postcoloniality and Archives of the Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa," *Innovation* 34–1 (2007), 28–44, 42.

experience of collaboration between SAHO and Jill Kelly's History of South Africa classes at Southern Methodist University between 2012 and 2017.

The virtual partnership project puts North American-based students to work for SAHO, producing biographies or essays for SAHO's online encyclopedic webpage of South African history. SAHO is made up of an administrator, an IT team, and a research team as well as regular interns from local and international universities and local and international contributors. This project runs parallel to and intersects with SAHO's internship program, which in the past six years has taken on students from South Africa and the rest of Africa who write on Africa and who also participate in the North-South virtual internship program.

Sensitive to the struggles of previous North-South collaborations (albeit, those on larger scales), we want to ensure that our cooperation is a two-way street – that both our North-based students and SAHO benefit from this collaboration, as well as the public audiences. The students support SAHO's mission, carrying out research led by local priorities. SAHO gets new content for the site based upon their identified needs and the students learn about South African history, develop research and analytic skills, and gain experience in writing for public audiences.

Historians, archivists, and librarians have said much about collaborations between the North and South on digitizing archives. Here we want to move the discussion beyond the archive and into classrooms to suggest how archives, heritage organizations, and history educators can work collaboratively on a popular site as a serious academic project with pedagogical benefits for history education. This project demonstrates the innovative use of IT to bridge gaps between transnational partners, between historical educators and archives, and between historians and the public by popularizing history and making the archive accessible for new research and learning and teaching in the classroom and lecture theatre.

The paper that follows is in three parts. It begins with a review of debates around digitization projects in South Africa, looks at the disconnects that have characterized and continue to characterize the relationship between North and South in these projects, and highlights how SAHO seeks to transcend and bridge some of these issues and divides. The article then briefly considers some of the digital archival projects useful for African history educators and the place of SAHO within those. The third section outlines the nature of the SAHO virtual internship partnership project and suggests some of the pedagogical successes of the collaboration. It argues that the SAHO virtual internships offer an example to historical educators of ways of digitally collaborating with heritage and education projects to enhance classroom learning.

Digital African Archives and Disconnects

Considerations of African history in the digital age have largely been undertaken by historians and the librarians and archivists with whom they partner.

Their work sheds extensive light on the digitization of African archival materials, particularly considering developments towards best practices and how to chip away at the digital divide – political and economic inequality between the North and South that shapes form, content, and access to material about the continent. Peter Limb, over a decade ago, pointed out that this new scramble for African resources to digitize marks a new process: "the digitization of Africa."[6] In this digitization, there is significant concern that this scramble is what Peter Lor and Johannes Britz called "information imperialism."[7] Curator Michele Pickover strikes at the heart of these issues: "What is at stake is the politics of memory in digital form and how *what* is selected for digitization projects frames research agendas and plays a role in curriculum strategies."[8] These remain critical questions, as evidenced by a recent conference that highlighted how digital archives have created many connections, but also a number of disconnects.[9]

Digital projects have been part of the academic and public debate about the archive in post-apartheid South Africa. The release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 was a historic occasion, but as Leslie Witz, Gary Minkley, and Ciraj Rassool note, it also marked an opportunity for "history to be reconstructed on a vast scale" with new archives, new publications, and newly revised curriculums.[10] As a place of contested knowledge, archives have become a site crucial to transform society in the wake of apartheid. Debates over archives consider how they can retrieve histories and represent those previously excluded, how they constitute power, and produce histories.[11] Scholars recognize that the archive is figured – the product of processes of preservation, exclusion, and power – and that it is always being refigured.[12] Contributors to the 2002 *Refiguring the Archive* point to archives as "the very substance

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[6] Peter Limb, "The Digitization of Africa," *Africa Today* 52–2 (2005), 3–19, 3.

[7] Cited in: Limb, "The Digitization of Africa," 15; Johannes Britz and Peter Lor, "A Moral Reflection on the Digitization of Africa's Documentary Heritage," *IFLA Journal* 30–3 (2004), 216–223.

[8] Original emphasis. Michele Pickover, "The DISA Project. Packaging South African Heritage as a Continuing Resource: Content, Access, Ownership and Ideology," *IFLA Journal* 34–2 (2008), 192–197, 192.

[9] Terry Barringer, Jos Damen, Peter Limb and Marion Wallace, "Introduction," in: Terry Barringer and Marion Wallace (eds.), *African Studies in the Digital Age: DisConnects?* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 1–11, 2.

[10] Leslie Witz, Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool, *Unsettled History: Making South African Public Pasts, African Perspectives* (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 9.

[11] Lalu, "The Virtual Stampede for Africa."

[12] Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid, Razia Saleh and Jane Taylor (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2002); Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer, *Tribing and Untribing the Archive: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Periods* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2016), 7–11;

of the politics of the time" and argue the boundaries of what constitutes the archive must be extended.[13] For the post-apartheid era, historians and archivists have been concerned about the records destroyed in the dying days of the apartheid regime as well as documenting the many threads of not only the liberation struggle but also everyday life under apartheid. As Pickover points out, the compilation of these new archives through digitization "speaks directly to the politics of collecting, representation of History and the privileging of certain 'knowledge.'"[14] In the context of the post-apartheid archive, Lalu argues that the work of archivists and historians must be blurred and that new digitization projects should not surrender to new narratives of nationalism or globalization. Given the focus of so many digital archival projects on anti-apartheid and anti-colonial struggles, these need to "expand what can be said about the history of liberation struggles in Southern Africa."[15]

Before we can elaborate on digital archive partnerships projects, it is important to distinguish between the information sources too often widely glossed as "digital archives."[16] As Peter Limb points out, debates over definitions and more flourish: "It remains a moot point whether in all sub-disciplines of history we can now write a doctoral dissertation entirely from online resources, or whether 'digital history' refers to the history of technology, a new methodology or even an entire sub-field of African history."[17] Beyond the traditional, paper-based materials brought together in repositories, the growth of information and communication technologies has led to a growth in collections of digitized analog historical materials and born-digital materials. These digital archives can be based out of one institution or be topically based and assembled from several repositories. Digital archives should not be confused with what Kate Theimer calls "digital historical representations," often created from archival sources but curated for particular purposes – often educational.[18]

That which looms over many discussions of collaboration, digital projects, and archives in southern Africa is the beleaguered partnership between

Siona O'Connell, "No Hunting: Finding a New F. Stop for the Bushmen," MP thesis, University of Cape Town (Cape Town, 2008).

[13] Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and Graeme Reid, "Introduction," in: Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid, Razia Saleh and Jane Taylor (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2002)**,** 7–18, 15.

[14] Pickover, "The DISA Project," 195.

[15] Lalu, "The Virtual Stampede for Africa," 28–31.

[16] Kate Theimer, "A Distinction Worth Exploring: 'Archives' and 'Digital Historical Representations,'" *Journal of Digital Humanities* 3–2 (2014), http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/3–2/a-distinction-worth-exploring-archives-and-digital-historical-representations/, accessed 17 July 2018.

[17] Peter Limb, "Introduction: Digital and Numerical Sources," in: Thomas Spear, Peter Mitchell, Kathryn de Luna, Olufemi Vaughan, Peter Limb and Richard Waller (eds.), *African Histories: Methods, Sources, and Historiographies* 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 819–826.

[18] Theimer, "A Distinction Worth Exploring."

Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA) and Aluka, an online digital library of African sources. Several of those involved with the project offered their critiques at conferences, in publications, and before government committees at the time and since then. DISA is a non-profit collaboration between heritage workers and researchers in government, universities, libraries, and archives. From its start in 1997 as a pilot digital imaging project sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, those involved with DISA sought to find an approach that considered the ethical and social issues of such a project in an African context. They debated what sources to include – written, audio/visual, etc. – and who – the state, organizations, working people, women. The project initially digitized forty anti-apartheid publications that represented a wide spectrum of political views and subjects, sought to build strategic local partnerships between institutions, and develop skills among staff. Since then, it has expanded to include letters, reports, and other archival materials. DISA is committed to open access. Project participants, including Michele Pickover and Dale Peters, thought critically about the strengths and weaknesses of the project to try to produce a "modest, but feasible, digital library model."[19]

One of the issues that DISA members considered was the lure of funding and how it might reinforce divisions rather than bridge them as intended. Indeed, these questions of North-South flow of funds and knowledge are not limited to DISA or South Africa.[20] The Mellon Foundation encouraged DISA to collaborate with one of its new projects and offered generous funding. Mellon previously launched JSTOR to make back issues of scholarly journals available online and in 2002 formed the nonprofit Ithaka to encourage new uses of information technology in scholarly communities.[21] Pickover points out that Ithaka changed the game, as it focuses on resources to service tertiary institutions in the North.[22] Mellon directed DISA to relate to one of the Ithaka projects, Aluka. Aluka is a collection of materials ranging from archival documents to GIS data sets and 3D models created by more than hundred partners in over thirty countries.[23] Aluka's "Struggles for Freedom in

[19] Michele Pickover and Dale Peters, "DISA: An African Perspective on Digital Technology," *Innovation* 24–1 (2002), 14–20.

[20] See, for instance: Siona O'Connell, "No Hunting;" Lorraine Dong, "The Economics and Politics of International Preservation Collaborations: A Malian Case Study," *Archival Science* 12–3 (2012), 267–285. For questions about the politics of philanthropy and digitization more generally, see: Peter Limb, "The Politics of Digital 'Reform and Revolution:' Towards Mainstreaming and African Control of African Digitisation," *Innovation* 34 (2007), 18–27.

[21] Allen Isaacman, Premesh Lalu and Thomas Nygren, "Digitization, History, and the Making of a Postcolonial Archive of Southern African Liberation Struggles: The Aluka Project," *Africa Today* 52–2 (2005), 55–77.

[22] Michele Pickover, "Negotiations, Contestations and Fabrications: The Politics of Archives in South Africa Ten Years after Democracy," *Innovation* 30 (2006), 1–11, 9.

[23] Deirdre Ryan, "Aluka: Digitization from Maputo to Timbuktu," *OCLC Systems & Services: International Digital Library Perspectives* 26–1 (2010), 29–38.

Southern Africa" project was designed to preserve important documents, stimulate debate on the liberation struggle, and make the debate on archives and access to information relevant to postcolonial histories. The project was sensitive to questions about the nature of the archive and recognized that the endeavor needed to be driven by local scholars. Many initial discussions heatedly tackled the politics and economics of the collaboration.[24]

But the DISA-Aluka partnership faltered with contradictory goals and as questions of ownership and audience, resultant from funding in the North, fueled concerns about information imperialism. With an eye towards unsettling seamless narratives of the liberation struggle, the partnership hoped to emphasize the transnational struggle against apartheid and use specialist, local scholars to source rare materials for the project – objectives that historian Keith Breckenridge argues ultimately undermined each other and slowed the pace of the project, which frustrated funders.[25] Pickover contends that Aluka pushed DISA towards a "one-dimensional repression/resistance narrative mainly aimed at an undergraduate studies audience in the USA."[26]

Despite sensitivity to the economics and politics of this transnational collaboration, the third goal of developing expertise in digital imaging among South Africa-based librarians and archivists fell short. Mellon advised DISA to emphasize building content over capacity building and promised financial returns to southern Africa hardly materialized. DISA originally envisioned a future in which it would serve as an umbrella body for digitization in the region, but expressed concern that it had been reduced to a production center. The collaboration agreement signed by the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Ithaka gave Aluka license to all of DISA's content, but the rights to documents housed in Northern archives would have to be negotiated for. It quickly became clear that the flow of data from the South would be unrestricted and immediate, but the flow from the North carefully licensed to protect the North.[27]

In the wake of the breakdown of the partnership, digital archival production in South Africa all but collapsed and is only slowly recovering (important exceptions to be discussed below). DISA's server has been

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[24] Isaacman *et al.*, "Digitization, History, and the Making of a Postcolonial Archive."

[25] Isaacman *et al.*, "Digitization, History, and the Making of a Postcolonial Archive;" Keith Breckenridge, "The Politics of the Parallel Archive: Digital Imperialism and the Future of Record-Keeping in the Age of Digital Reproduction," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40–3 (2014), 499–519.

[26] Michele Pickover, "Patrimony, Power and Politics: Selecting, Constructing and Preserving Digital Heritage Content in South Africa and Africa," paper presented at IFLA WLIC (Lyon, 2014), http://library.ifla.org/1023/1/138-pickover-en.pdf, 10.

[27] Breckenridge, "The Politics of the Parallel Archive;" Pickover, "The DISA Project;" Lucius Bavusile Maaba, "The History and Politics of Liberation Archives at Fort Hare," PhD dissertation, University of Cape Town (Cape Town, 2013), 237–238.

unreliable at best and runs with unpaid support. The Aluka materials are freely available (except for telecom costs) to not-for-profit institutions in Africa, but not the general public.[28] Breckenridge is not alone in pointing to the lull in new digitization projects. The quantity of digital resources for African Studies might be described as a "critical mass" but questions about their nature remain forefront.[29] Limb highlights that despite advances in the North, "there has been relatively slow growth of open access digital libraries" that go beyond aesthetically pleasing image galleries and exhibits.[30]

Breckenridge argues that the expansion of the internet "rubbishes many of these foundational claims about the politics of the documentary archive." He contends that seeing such projects as "digital imperialism" obscures the actual nature of difficulties in international collaborations and is ultimately unhelpful. Championing a return to digitization free from the subject constraints of the DISA-Aluka project, he points out the digital resources produced in the North and available online function as a massive gift economy in which South Africa should participate.[31] But the warnings of Pickover, Lalu, and others suggests we must remain cognizant of the nature of these gifts and unintended messages to students, scholars, and citizens.

The DISA-Aluka project and the willingness of so many of its participants to share their experiences and critiques – and archive their processes – offer lessons to new collaborators. We are thinking about some of the same questions: how do we share knowledge without exploiting/being exploited? How do we partner to address the digital divide rather than reinforce?[32]

There is growing sensitivity around collaboration and questions of intellectual imperialism with emphasis on partnerships rather than aid.[33] Cognizant of the potential and perils of these relationships, the African Studies Association in the US and various universities have created "best practices" documents for research ethics for Africanist researchers.[34] Educational

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[28] Breckenridge, "The Politics of the Parallel Archive."

[29] Barringer *et al.*, "Introduction," 2.

[30] Peter Limb, "Concluding Remarks," in: Terry Barringer and Marion Wallace (eds.), *African Studies in the Digital Age: DisConnects?* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 244–254, 245.

[31] Breckenridge, "The Politics of the Parallel Archive."

[32] Pickover, "Negotiations, Contestations and Fabrications," 10.

[33] Joel Samoff and Bidemi Carrol, "The Promise of Partnership and Continuities of Dependence: External Support to Higher Education in Africa," *African Studies Review* 47–1 (2004), 67–199.

[34] See, for example: African Studies Association, "ASA Ethical Conduct Guidelines" (2005), https://africanstudies.org/about-the-asa/asa-ethical-conduct-guidelines/, accessed 17 July 2018; Michigan State University African Studies Center, "Faculty Guidelines for Scholarly and Professional Cooperation between Colleagues in Africa and Michigan State University" (1993), available in appendix in: Amy Jamison, Thomas Jayne, Isaac Minde, Richard Mkwandawire and Jamie Monson (eds.), *Rethinking African Partnerships for Global Solutions* (Alliance for African

councils (many of these interested in partnerships for study abroad for undergraduates) and several African Studies Centers at universities in the North partnered with African-based institutions continuously rework guidelines for developing and sustaining collaborative projects that respect individual and communal rights and "enhance the resources and capacities" of African institutions.[35] Individual scholars have also identified ways to build cross-regional partnerships that can positively impact communities involved.[36]

This North-South divide is not the only disconnect of interest to us – another is that of educational trends. As new generations increasingly move beyond paper research, we must address the gap between the digital and paper for students in the North and South; doing so requires bridging librarians and archivists with academics.[37] Having access to sources requires helping students develop the skills to use those sources effectively. The student desire for quick and firm answers often first involves an internet search. Online sources and search engines can be a great help, but they are also problematic. Safiya Umoja Noble argues that search engines are discriminatory by nature, favoring those who design and fund them.[38] This means that the process students use can be particularly dangerous. T. Mills Kelly highlights how easy it is for students to get taken in by sites ranging from questionable to outright racist with Google searches on "Adolf Hitler."[39] As an example for similar dangers for topics in South African history, a Google search for "Afrikaner Day of the Vow" brings up three Wikipedia entries, one SAHO entry, several articles on debates around the renaming of the public

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Partnership Michigan State University, 2017), http://aap.isp.msu.edu/files/4915/0169/5733/AAP_Thought_Piece_Web.pdf, accessed 17 July 2018.

[35] See, for example: American Council on Education, "International Partnerships: Guidelines for Colleges and Universities" (2008), https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/AppendixB-IntlPartnerships.pdf, accessed 19 December 2019; Michigan State University African Studies Center, "Best Practices for International Partnerships between Higher Education Institutions in Africa and Abroad," available in appendix in: Amy Jamison, Thomas Jayne, Isaac Minde, Richard Mkwandawire and Jamie Monson (eds.), *Rethinking African Partnerships for Global Solutions* (Alliance for African Partnership Michigan State University, 2017), https://aap.isp.msu.edu/files/4915/0169/5733/AAP_Thought_Piece_Web.pdf; National Consortium for Study in Africa, "NCSA Guidelines for High Quality Study Programs in Africa" (1995); Terra Dotta, "Creating Global Partnerships," http://www.terradotta.com/articles/article_International_Partnerships_7–21–17.pdf, accessed 17 July 2018.

[36] Jaimie Bleck, Chipo Dendere and Boukary Sangaré, "Making North-South Research Collaborations Work," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51–3 (2018), 554–558.

[37] Limb, "Concluding Remarks," 245.

[38] Safiya Umoja Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism* (New York: NYU Press, 2018).

[39] T. Mills Kelly, "Tomorrow's Yesterdays: Teaching History in the Digital Age," in: Mark Pegrum and Joe Lockard (eds.), *Brave New Classrooms: Educational Democracy and the Internet* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 213–224, 217.

holiday, and then links to the white supremacists David Duke and AfriForum within the first twenty results. Searching "Day of the Vow" returns the Duke and AfriForum sites within the first ten.[40] A less than diligent student may inadvertently take in racist interpretations of this historical event. Research requires critical analysis, rather than their practices of habit – calling up search engines, typing in keywords, and perusing the first results.

This is true for classrooms regardless of location. Diana Jeater warns that such access to online academic journals and digital archives in Africa alone does not eradicate global inequalities of knowledge and power. In a study in the early 2010s, she found that students at the University of Zimbabwe and Midlands State University had access but not necessarily experience in how to make use of the materials – for instance, how to discern online journal archives from online digital archives and archival collection sites from digital archives.[41] Beyond the classroom and writing of history, designing projects for Northern audiences has implications for the ability of archives to contribute towards critical citizenship in southern Africa.[42]

The question remains the extent to which this digital shift changes research practices and opportunity in Africa. Many of the digital resources were developed in the North; in what ways are they accessed and used on the continent?[43] The funding of many projects encourages making the material usable and accessible beyond the academy and often with an international audience in mind, often linked to teaching units. This means students in southern Africa must "learn how to make use of these 'not-for-them' digital archives" that lack context about how and why sources are chosen for digitization and what is missing.[44] For students globally, the sheer quantity can undermine learning if they are not trained in the conventions of the historical discipline. But local scholars additionally approach digital archives with a well-founded skepticism of materials archived and published by western academics. Grounding students in local modes of thought and debates challenges that hegemony, but can also disengage students from global debates. Students need to access not only the archives, but the pedagogic knowledge about how to use the materials.[45]

SAHO wants to be part of changing these pedagogical, partnership, and archival trends. Their goal is to refigure the archive – to not only share vast

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[40] Searches undertaken on 17 July 2018.
[41] Diana Jeater, "Data, Data Everywhere, but Not a Byte to Think," in: Terry Barringer and Marion Wallace (eds.), *African Studies in the Digital Age: DisConnects?* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 61–77, 66.
[42] Pickover, "The DISA Project," 195.
[43] Jonathan Harle, "Dazzled by Digital? Research Environments in African Universities and Their Implications for the Use of Digital Resources," in: Terry Barringer and Marion Wallace (eds.), *African Studies in the Digital Age: DisConnects?* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 39–60, 40–41.
[44] Jeater, "Data, Data Everywhere," 66.
[45] Jeater, "Data, Data Everywhere," 67–76.

documentation but also to embed the digital archives in digital histories written for public access and engagement. Bhekizizwe Peterson argues that refiguring the archive is not enough if accessibility (geographic, linguistic, and socio-economic) is not addressed and community and cultural organizations, themselves repositories of material and knowledge, struggle for survival.[46] SAHO maintains an open access archive of 40,000+ documents, collected over its eighteen years through partnerships with academics and the generosity of the public. Historian Allison Drew donated documentary sources and books. Garth Benneyworth (Sol Plaatje University) contributed transcripts of Nelson Mandela's original handwritten journal from his Africa travels found in the National Archives of South Africa in Pretoria. Various members of Afrapix, including Omar Badsha, shared photographs and documents. As SAHO's reputation grew, community members and readers began to donate items to be made publicly accessible. Struggle stalwarts donated already digitized materials. They make available the valuable UNESCO General History of Africa Collection. Through collaboration with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, SAHO now hosts the entire DISA archive. The SAHO team is in the process of integrating these materials into their features and biographies to encourage accessibility and engagement with the DISA archive.

The expansion of this archive is only limited by SAHO's lack of facilities to store and digitize in large quantities. SAHO's archive operates similarly to Zotero Commons in the spirit of open access. Questions of classification and copyright are not foregrounded. The emphasis is on making materials available publicly and encouraging engagement with the documents.

Here, SAHO sought to distinguish itself by offering not just a digital archive but a digital archive embedded in digital history essays. SAHO's flagship project is the website, which offers both the archive and history written for public engagement.[47] Students, teachers, researchers, and the wider public access it and contribute to it. In addition to the archive, it provides articles, biographies, features, and "This Day in History" entries. To date, SAHO has nearly one million pages. Since its founding, the website has become the go to source for journalists in radio, newspapers, and the national broadcaster, SABC (occasionally without attribution). Most recently it was cited when *The Citizen* sought facts in the face of a spat between opposition leader Mmusi Maimane of the Democratic Alliance and the African National Congress' Fikile Mbalula over apartheid legislation.[48] Since

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[46] Bhekizizwe Peterson, "The Archives and the Political Imaginary," in: Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid, Razia Saleh and Jane Taylor (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2002), 29–37, 32–33.

[47] www.sahistory.org.za.

[48] "Mbalula tries to school Maimane on Apartheid legislation," *The Citizen* (10 July 2018), https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/1975355/mbalula-tries-to-school-maimane-on-apartheid-legislation/, accessed 18 July 2018.

2012, the website had over 60 million page views with over 5.3 million visitors in 2017 alone (up 35% from 2016). Without a dedicated media budget or fulltime marketing staff, its social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) reach on average over 300,000 people per month. On heritage-related holidays such as Youth Day and special events, the reach expands to over 400,000 people per day. In the first half of 2018, the most viewed page was the biography of the recently deceased Winnie Madikizela Mandela. Some of the other popular entries include essays on apartheid, the June 16 Soweto Youth Uprising, and Shaka Zulu.[49] The SAHO history project links their essays and biographies to archival resources on its own website and partner websites, enabling the public to engage with primary sources and thus refiguring the apartheid archive through accessibility.

This is the disconnect that digital projects such as SAHO best enable us to jump – the disconnect between academic scholarship and the public. The popularity of SAHO's website is just one indication of the public demand for new histories. Jacana's "Pocket History" and "Pocket Biography" series are the most stolen books at South African booksellers – another suggestion that free history for a wider public consumption is in great demand.[50] Academic history writing in South Africa has undergone tremendous change over the last several decades. A cohort of scholars inspired by the resistance of African youth in the 1970s and influenced by the historical materialist approach turned toward "history from below" and wrote against settler interpretations of histories that undervalued or ignored African cultures, kingdoms, and agency more generally. The Southern African Societies seminar series at the University of London and the History Workshop conferences at the University of Witwatersrand set out politically relevant subjects for social histories and promoted research into the lives of everyday people. Historians turned to oral sources such as the James Stuart Archive and the University of the Western Cape's People's History Project.[51] Since the end of apartheid, scholarship on the liberation struggle has proliferated, some of it supported by the South African government.[52]

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[49] Google Analytics, SAHO Pageviews, 1 January 2018 – 29 July 2018.

[50] "Which are the Most Stolen Books at Exclusive Books?" http://www.702.co.za/articles/2683/which-are-the-most-stolen-books-at-exclusive-books (29 April 2015), accessed 18 July 2018; "The Most Shoplifted Books in South Africa: Jacana Media Launches the Hot Reads Collection," http://bookslive.co.za/blog/2015/03/27/the-most-shoplifted-books-in-south-africa-jacana-media-launches-the-hot-reads-collection/ (27 March 2015), accessed 18 July 2018.

[51] For recent historiographical reviews and analysis of history in the public sphere, see: Leslie Witz *et al.*, *Unsettled History*; Hans Erik Stolten (ed.), *History Making and Present Day Politics: The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2007).

[52] President Thabo Mbeki supported the South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), established after the president expressed concern about the state of the historical record. SADET produced six volumes of *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*

But historians have been slow to get this historical knowledge to the public, an action made imperative by the use and abuse of history in contemporary policy debates around land, traditional authority, reparations for apartheid, and investigations into unnatural deaths (to name just a few). The History Workshop offered popular history days and open days with history conveyed via dance and film, but critics expressed apprehension about this compartmentalization of professional and popular. Others – Leslie Witz, Gary Minkley, and Ciraj Rassool – began to champion what they call an "engaged public history" to distinguish between popularizing history (making academic history available to public) and a public history that engages with the public to open up debates about pasts.[53] The SAHO virtual internship pairs academic historical educators and their students with SAHO team members to popularize history, both for the audience and the students participating. Just as engaging with local and global debates is a skill to be developed, so is writing for larger public audiences.

SAHO and Digital Africa in the Classroom

The debates around digitization of African archival material have dominated discussions around the digital in South African history. Here, we want to move beyond the archives and into classrooms and lecture theaters. As Tona Hangen recently pointed out, "the digital" has moved into the mainstream of the historical field and "the digital" includes everything from "archival digitization, electronic publishing and reading formats, and new modes of scholarship that employ computing and technology integrally. Yet how these rapid transformations might best be incorporated into history classrooms remains an unsettled issue."[54] T. Mills Kelly, a specialist in historical teaching and learning, argues that for technology to be useful in the classroom it must be connected to specific learning outcomes.[55] In an age of expanding technology and increasing availability of digital archives, digital collections, and digital historical representations, learning outcomes in the history classroom must be not only about developing historical methodologies and ways of thinking. They must include the cultivation of a critical approach to historical information on the web.

covering decades from 1960 as well as international and African solidarity. These are far from exhaustive and were not without controversy, but attempt to cover rural struggles and the diverse organizations that contributed to the liberation struggle in South Africa. SADET also published some of the oral history accounts recorded as part of research (some of which are available on their website). Other scholarly efforts consider the ANC, Mkhonto weSizwe, the United Democratic Front, the ideas of Black Consciousness, gender in the struggle, and beyond.

[53] Witz, Minkley and Rassool, *Unsettled History*, 6–15.

[54] Tona Hangen, "Historical Digital Literacy, One Classroom at a Time," *Journal of American History* 101–4 (2015), 1192–1203, 1192.

[55] Kelly, "Tomorrow's Yesterdays," 214.

Curriculum design and course instruction within the field of African history has long used the digital for a number of learning outcomes, though the number and availability of digital tools and archives pale in comparison to resources for European and American history.[56] Chris Saunders began using the Aluka Struggles for Freedom in Southern Africa documents in several courses at the University of Cape Town from its initial access to universities in South Africa in 2007.[57] Some of the digital archives often used by history educators of South Africa include the various collections digitized by single holders such as the South African History Archive, the University of Witwatersrand Historical Papers, and the Gandhi-Luthuli Documentation Centre, or the topically based digital collections assembled from several repositories such the *Traces of Truth* project.[58] The Five Hundred Year Archive Online Project, in development, aims to stimulate research into the longer South African past by promoting understandings of archival possibilities through the digitization of physical objects, sonic items, and texts – in ways that transcend disciplinary interpretations and colonial classifications.[59] These digitization achievements in South Africa are important exceptions to the decline in projects pointed out earlier.

A number of digital collections, including the African Activist Project, Forward to Freedom: The History of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, and the Nordic Documentation on the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa, document the international struggle to end apartheid.[60] Other digital collections covering the wider continent include the African Online Digital Library (products of collaborations between Michigan State University and Africa-based researchers) and the digitized projects emerging out of the British Library Endangered Archives Program, such as the Rescuing Liberian History: Preserving the Personal Papers of William V.S. Tubman. Visual source collections include the poster galleries at Northwestern University and Indiana University and "Africa Focus" from the University of Wisconsin.[61]

[56] Trevor Getz, *A Primer for Teaching African History: Ten Design Principles* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 128.

[57] Chris Saunders and Andrew Deacon, "Aluka Exercises: Learning through Describing Historical Documents," Aluka Award report (2007), http://psimg.jstor.org/fsi/img/raw/pdf/2007_Chris_Saunders_report.pdf, accessed 18 July 2018.

[58] www.saha.org.za; http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/?digitalSelection/U/; http://scnc.ukzn.ac.za/; http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/index.php?11/P/Truth-and-Reconciliation-Commission-(TRC)-Project, both accessed 18 July 2018.

[59] http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/apc/research/projects/five-hundred-year-archive, accessed 20 December 2019.

[60] For a review of these, see: Peter Limb, Richard Knight and Christine Root, "The Global Antiapartheid Movement: A Critical Analysis of Archives and Collections," *Radical History Review* 119 (2014), 161–177.

[61] AODL includes projects on Ajami in the Senegambia, Qadiri Community of Buh Kunta, and Everyday Islam in Kumasi, among others. http://www.aodl.org/; https://eap.bl.uk/search/site?f%5B0%5D=ss_simplified_type%3AProject; http://www.indiana.edu/~libsalc/african/Digital_Somali_Library/digibks.html;

Several digital historical representations most known among historians of South Africa are the Google Institute's projects with institutions and archives such as the South African History Archive, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, and the Steve Biko Foundation. These online exhibits on topics such as "Detention without Trial in John Vorster Square" and "Steve Biko: The Black Consciousness Movement" make archival documents such as posters, diaries, and trial records publicly available alongside contextual essays.[62]

A number of these digital archives and historical representations include lesson plans for primary and secondary educators that are adaptable for university-level classes. *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, first published on CD-ROM in 1999 and subsequently online, gives students access to data on slave voyages and enables them to conduct their own research.[63] The *Overcoming Apartheid, Building Democracy* site includes primary sources (particularly, new oral history interviews) alongside lesson plans and essays.[64] Historians based in Ghana, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Nigeria, and the diaspora designed the West African Senior School Certificate Examination History Textbook with sample lectures for teachers, links to digital resources, and a history textbook for West African students taking the West African Senior School Certificate Examination.[65] Beyond these lesson plans, the podcast *Africa Past and Present* has become a powerful tool for connecting students with African perspectives and voices and

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https://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/africafocus/; https://www.library.northwestern.edu/libraries-collections/herskovits-library/collection/posters.html, all accessed 18 July 2018.

[62] https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/detention-without-trial-in-john-vorster-square/gQ–1o9MM?hl=en; https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/AQp2i2l5?hl=en, both accessed 18 July 2018.

[63] For more on the ASTD and related databases, see: Daryl Williams, "Digital Approaches to the History of the Atlantic Slave Trade," in: Thomas Spear, Peter Mitchell, Kathryn de Luna, Olufemi Vaughan, Peter Limb and Richard Waller (eds.), *African Histories: Methods, Sources, and Historiographies* 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 866–879.

[64] http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/. Other digital tools for the primary and secondary educators include Michigan State University's African Studies Center and MATRIX Center for Digital Humanities and Social Sciences' "Exploring Africa," which includes lesson plans on Africa from social sciences and humanities perspectives (http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/) and Northwestern's Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, which includes a lesson plan on East Africa (http://winterton.library.northwestern.edu/classroom.html), all accessed 18 July 2018.

[65] Nwando Achebe, Samuel Adu-Gyamfi, Joe Alie, Hassoum Ceesay, Toby Green, Vincent Hiribarren and Ben Kye-Ampadu, *History Textbook: West African Senior School Certificate Examination* (2018), https://wasscehistorytextbook.com/, accessed 3 February 2019.

nearly every instructor sends their students to the popular *Africa is a Country*.[66]

SAHO's work is thus part of this global movement for the production of free scholarly and educational content about Africa and by Africans. The website exists for general educational purposes, but SAHO's mission goes beyond that to provide curriculum and develop historical skills among students. This is true of their work within South Africa and with students abroad. SAHO's educational projects are aimed at all ages. Beyond the "History Classroom" curriculum and tertiary partnerships to be discussed below, other educational initiatives include the Annual Albert Luthuli Oral History Project for school learners and a planned skills training project for liberation struggle veterans to train them to write their autobiographies and interview other veterans. SAHO has already published several memoirs of struggle veterans; they hope this series will expand with such training.[67]

SAHO's "History Classroom" curriculum was developed in partnership with South Africa's Department of Basic Education "Curriculum and Policy Statement" (CAPS) to strengthen the teaching and learning of history at South African schools. The writers included former teachers familiar with CAPS then working with SAHO as interns during their postgraduate studies. The "History Classroom" consists of free downloadable history material including lesson plans and a range of resources for use in the classroom. The material covers all required topics from Grade 4 through Grade 12 (primary and secondary grades of general education).[68] For instance, the Grade 6 lesson plans cover the "Kingdoms of southern Africa: Mapungubwe, Thulamela, and Great Zimbabwe," "Explorers from Europe find southern Africa," "Democracy and the Constitution," and "Medicine through Time." These are designed to highlight African civilizations that thrived prior to colonization and push back against popular misconceptions about historical African societies. The unit on European exploration carefully positions the trade center of Mapungubwe within a global context of growing trade and travel. The lessons also include glossaries, references, and potential sources to follow for activities.

Some of the curriculum pages are the most widely viewed on the site. In the first half of 2018, the most popular lessons were those that looked beyond South Africa, on the Great Depression and civil society protests in the 1960s. SAHO is currently developing a mobile application that would enable

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[66] www.africasacountry.com; Peter Alegi, "Podcasting the Past: Africa Past and Present and (South) African History in the Digital Age," *South African Historical Journal* 64–2 (2012), 206–220; Getz, *A Primer for Teaching African History*, 132–133.

[67] Michael Dingake, *Better to Die on One's Feet* (Cape Town: South African History Online, 2015); Fanele Mbali, *In Transit - Autobiography of A South African Freedom Fighter* (Cape Town: South African History Online, 2012); Sindiso Mfenyana, *Walking with Giants* (Cape Town: South African History Online, 2012).

[68] http://www.sahistory.org.za/classroom.

students, teachers, and parents to access this material offline. SAHO also plans to produce a series of interactive presentations with suggested methodologies and lesson plans designed to cover South African history topics newly introduced to the post-1994 history curriculum, including pre-colonial South African history such as debates surrounding the *Mfecane*, the historiography of which might be unfamiliar to in-service teachers trained prior to the end of apartheid.

SAHO's expansion was possible because of the strong tertiary (university) partnerships. Working with three Western Cape universities, SAHO brings university and postgraduate students into the intern program. The interns create new content and develop skills in history, technology, and data management. Since its commencement in 2012, over hundred students have served in internships ranging from six to twelve months while receiving stipends funded in a variety of fashions. They come from departments of history, IT, and design and include former history educators. But not all interns come through these departmental connections. During the #FeesMustFall protests, a number of young activists went to SAHO to look at past student activities. Out of that grew a project about the history of student movements in South Africa and the #FeesMustFall movement on the SAHO website. Thierry Luescher, then with the University of Free State and now the Human Sciences Research Council, learned about SAHO's Fallist project and reached out to SAHO to propose they work together to undertake a more in-depth project, funded by the Mellon Foundation. Several of those activists are now Master and PhD students formally interning with SAHO to create a new feature on student activism for the site. What started out as a small project on SAHO's website has become a major research project with the materials available online.

Beyond the partnerships with local universities and those in North America, SAHO works to build South-South connections. The team has laid the groundwork to build SAHO into an African history and heritage project through working with the interns. The long-term objective is to build a network of historians and institutions across the continent to create a continent-wide history website. In the short term, SAHO works with student interns from elsewhere in Africa studying at universities in South Africa to add new material on Africa to the SAHO website. SAHO has sought out partnerships to expand their reach, such as that with a former SAHO intern Dr. Memory Biwa to launch a Namibian History Online (NAHO). But this and similar efforts with Zimbabwean academics falter due to lack of funding to employ full-time project coordinators.

Moving beyond the African continent, SAHO is embarking on a partnership with the University of Buenos Aires to translate material on the SAHO website into Spanish, Portuguese, and French as part of their program to decolonize their curriculum so that people in South America, especially those on the continent with roots in Africa, can begin to relate to Africa and African history. This partnership will include joint research projects on Africa

that would bring together scholars from across the two continents. This project in the next five years will help those in southern Africa to become aware of the effort to build a Pan African identity and also become an additional educational and cultural platform for African and South American scholars.

The SAHO-SMU Virtual Internship

SAHO also helps develop the historical skills of university students abroad in this North-South virtual internship in which Northern-based students get put to work for SAHO. The SAHO virtual internship is the centerpiece of Jill Kelly's "History of South Africa" course, taught face-to-face annually with relatively small class sizes (under thirty students). Most of the enrolled students are not history majors or even humanities majors; the course design is intended to introduce them not only to South African history but also to require them to think about how history has been written and how it can be presented to public audiences. As a historian, Kelly's pedagogical goals are twofold: to get students to think like a historian (and perhaps even be excited about doing so) and to develop the research and writing skills that will assist them in the disciplines and careers of their choice.

But as a historian of Africa, one adds an additional goal: to get students to think of Africa as place to be engaged with, rather than acted upon. Soske, who first partnered with SAHO in the internship, described similar motivations:

> I was inspired by relationships as a mode of coming to know a country and its history. While it is not possible for students to visit South Africa in a term (and most of our students have never been there), the use of Skype can allow students to build an ongoing, meaningful collaborative relationship and through that relationship come to understand aspects of South African history in a different fashion than is allowed by the reading of texts. It was a way of making the connection to the country and its past more meaningful and real.[69]

Thinking about Africa as a place to engage with also requires that we have conversations about how these digitized archives they will use came into being, how they are funded, who is represented (or not), and who benefits from access to these.

In the months before the semester begins, Kelly meets with the SAHO team via Skype and Whatsapp to develop a plan. SAHO drives the project, drafting a list of potential project subjects based on their identification of gaps on the website, plans for anniversary features, expansion of coverage on certain topics, or forthcoming publications. Kelly then passes the list through a round of preliminary research with an eye towards feasibility from an

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[69] Jon Soske, personal communication, 20 March 2018.

American university. This is shaped significantly by the availability of digitized sources such as those described above. The first year (2012), students all did projects around the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on account of the accessibility of those documents online. The following year, some students undertook further TRC projects and others contributed to SAHO's plan to commemorate twenty years of democracy. In 2014, SAHO identified several topics around women as an area in which they hoped to expand. In 2016, SAHO tasked us to write about artists in exile as part of a larger SAHO project called "Children of Nonti: Culture and Resistance under Apartheid, 1960–1990," designed to include research, lectures, and publications on art under apartheid at a time SAHO was preparing to publish several books of essays and poems.[70] In 2017, the students worked on essays about the lives and deaths of South Africans killed in detention.

Across two class sessions during the first week of class, students engage with *A History of South Africa for Native Schools,* a 1932 South African textbook designed for black students, to understand how South African settlers portrayed the country's history. The students break into five groups, to which Kelly assigns one of the first four chapters and introduction. The students work through their assigned chapter in groups before coming together to share their analyses. The mission of the textbook is discussed: "This little book has been written with the idea of providing native children with a suitable text-book of South African history. The language has been simplified accordingly and chapters have been introduced to make the point of view of the European more intelligible to the native child."[71] The students and instructor pull apart each chapter, considering how not only this mission but also settler stereotypes of Africans shaped the textbook. The exercise enables examination of the language of tribes, races, blood, and war used to describe Africans and a comparison of the lack of dates and leaders with names in chapters on "The Bushmen and Hottentots" and "The Coming of the Bantu" with the dates of European arrival and portraits of Jan van Riebeeck in later chapters. Kelly points out the myths underpinning white minority rule embedded in this settler history – those of the empty land and the late arrival of Bantu-speakers to southern Africa. We listen to Hugh Masekela's "Vasco da Gama" to understand how Africans later challenged these history lessons in popular culture.

This opening unit does two things: it launches a critical discussion of the language, stereotypes, and frames that produced the text and that can still plague contemporary interpretations of Africa and its history. Indeed, in our second week where we look at southern Africa's historical hunter-gatherers

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[70] Mafika Pascal Gwala, *Collected Poems* (edited by Ari Sitas) (Cape Town: South African History Online, 2016); Ari Sitas, *Flight of the Gwala Gwala Bird* (Cape Town: South African History Online, 2016); Alfred Temba Qabula, *Collected Poems* (edited by Mandla Langa and Ari Sitas) (Cape Town: South African History Online, 2016).

[71] Peter A.W. Cook, *A History of South Africa for Native Schools* (London: Longmans/Green and Co., 1932), vii.

and earliest farmers, the students read that text assigned by so many educators, Binyavanga Wainaina's "How to Write about Africa," and the Africa Policy Information Center's "Talking about Tribe" piece to continue this discussion.[72] But the lesson with the 1932 textbook also frames the course and sets up the virtual internship.

Student participation in the SAHO virtual internship engages them with the decades of revisionist histories and enables them to contribute to the writing of new histories, or, in the language of SAHO, "towards a people's history," themselves. Kelly designed a series of assignments to facilitate students to utilize available primary sources and develop the fundamental skills of historical research, critical thinking, analysis, and clear writing they will need to undertake their SAHO projects. The students practice their secondary source analysis in a book review, learning to identify arguments and analyze the historian's use of evidence. They develop skills in interpretation and analysis in a primary source examination. They then turn to the project itself, identifying primary sources and developing a proposal, outline, and drafts before submitting the final paper for consideration for the SAHO website.

Across the semester, the students pair with partners from SAHO who advise them on project topics and possible sources and directions via regular Skype sessions. A session with the university librarian and in-class discussions allow the educator to engage with students in conversations about the differences between digital archives and digital representations, search engine results, and what is available and not available in these results and online archives.

When the semester is complete, SAHO's team publishes the papers after some level of quality control (for more on this, see below). These are uploaded as PDFs under the "South African History Online and Southern Methodist University Partnership Project." Some of the stronger essays are better integrated into the site as entries rather than student papers in the project archive. The former note at the top that "This article was written by John Doe and forms part of the SAHO and Southern Methodist University partnership project" while the latter do so at the end of entries so readers are aware that these are essays undertaken by students.

When including technology in a course, educators should consider whether the use of technology in this way improves student learning outcomes.[73] Pedagogically, this virtual internship teaches students not only historical content but also the practices of the history discipline. It enables

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[72] Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write about Africa," *Granta* 92 (2005), https://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/; Chris Lowe, Tunde Brimah, Pearl-Alice Marsh, William Minter and Monde Muyangwa, "Talking about 'Tribe,'" Background Paper 010, Africa Policy Information Center (1997), http://africanactivist.msu.edu/document_metadata.php?objectid=32–130–153D, accessed 5 April 2018.

[73] Kelly, "Tomorrow's Yesterdays," 213.

them to develop the analytical and research skills of a historian and engages them in historiography. The project has been effective in the way that Hangen describes the possibilities of digital projects for history:

> to disrupt the common misconception that history is a finished packet of knowledge to be handed off by professors and simply received and retained by the students. Effective history instruction permanently and irreversibly awakens students to the insight that history is a constructed, contestable argument, and it does so in such a way that prevents students from unlearning it.[74]

While students often want concrete solutions to historical problems, historical educators want students to learn the past as contested.[75] Here students learn this also about history and the archive.

The virtual project also teaches students about writing in the digital age and for public audiences. As Alex Sayf Cummings and Jonathan Jarrett point out, the growth of innovations that allow greater speed and openness passed by many scholars, particularly historians.[76] This has changed significantly since Cummings and Jarrett wrote only five years ago. Historians blog via formal sites (such as the American Historical Association or the African American Intellectual Society's *Black Perspectives*) or personal sites (such as Peter Alegi's *Football is Coming Home*, Timothy Burke's *Easily Distracted*, Jennifer Hart's *Ghana on the Go*, and John Edwin Mason's *Documentary, Motorsports, Photo History)*. A number of historians contribute regularly to *Africa is a Country*.[77] Writing for the web in this way is distinctive and should not be confused with putting existing academic scholarship on the web. The medium requires authors to consider the size of screens, the attention spans of readers, and technical issues while offering "instant passage" to citations and relevant materials.[78]

To help students develop these skills, the SAHO team put together a guide for the virtual interns for the initial round of the partnership. We continue to adjust and adapt this each year. The guide helps students think about their audience. It also lays out instructions for formatting, especially for

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[74] Hangen, "Historical Digital Literacy, One Classroom at a Time," 1194.

[75] Kelly, "Tomorrow's Yesterdays," 215.

[76] Alex Sayf Cummings and Jonathan Jarrett, "Only Typing? Informal Writing, Blogging, and the Academy," in: Jack Dougherty and Kristen Nawrotzki (eds.), *Writing History in the Digital Age* (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 246–258.

[77] See, for instance, articles by John Aerni-Flessner, Meghan Healy-Clancy, Jill Kelly, Daniel Magaziner, Marissa Moorman, Michelle Moyd, Benjamin Talton, Thuto Thipe and Liz Timbs. *Africa is a Country* also often interviews or features the work of historians. For more on AIAC's history, see: Sean Jacobs, "Journal Work: Africa Is a Country," *Small Axe* 20–2 (2016), 52–57.

[78] Cummings and Jarrett, "Only Typing?"

biographies, which allow visitors to the SAHO site to quickly take in important points such as dates and significance before choosing if they want to read the entire piece. The guide also instructs students in hyperlinking other significant people, places, and events as well as digitized archival documents on SAHO and other sites. This is where the draft assignment is crucial, as it allows Kelly the opportunity to not only identify shortcomings in research or general writing, but to also provide feedback on how the student has considered their public audience and whether or not the student has written for the web.

The collaborative relationship also humanizes African history for North American students and suggests the significance of history to the present. A score of textbooks on Africa – from Curtis Keim and Carolyn Somerville's *Mistaking Africa* (4th edition, 2018) and Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds' *Africa in World History* (3rd edition, 2011) to David Northrup's *Seven Myths of Africa in World History* (2017), part of the Hackett "myths of history" series – arm instructors with texts to make the unfamiliar familiar to students by tackling head on the stereotypes and National Geographic images of Africa that dominate the western imagination. While these texts go a long way to demystify the continent, one goal posited by Trevor Getz is to reduce the distance between students in North America and in Africa.[79] This project connects them via Skype.

The virtual internships require students to meet bimonthly with their SAHO partners – a number of whom themselves are student interns – introducing them to conversations that go beyond the historical. Perhaps most memorable is the year that, early in the semester after Kelly asked how internship meetings were faring, one of our students raised their hand and asked if we could talk about something that had come up in conversation: "My partner says there are still socialists in South Africa!" This was still early in the semester and our lectures and discussions had not yet covered the founding of the Communist Party of South Africa, its successor, or the influence of communism in South Africa. The comment is illuminating, showing not only how the collaborative relationship enabled students to learn about contemporary politics in South Africa but to get them to engage with ways of seeing the world beyond their own.

To be clear, this collaborative project is a labor of love and commitment to these kinds of partnerships for all involved. While historical papers not for public consumption allow the students to choose topics at will (and repeat well-trod topics), those for publication on SAHO's page must be a needed biography or topic and need alone cannot define choice. Subjects are shaped by the availability of sources online and in our university libraries. For the instructor, the project requires a good deal of management beyond advising a more typical research paper – pre-semester planning with SAHO, assigning partners and scheduling trans-Atlantic meetings, checking in regularly with the SAHO team to ensure accountability, extra research consultations for

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[79] Getz, *A Primer for Teaching African History*, 126.

struggling students, and debriefing at the end of each term, to name just a few obligations. But the value to both students and SAHO outweighs this labor. Student evaluations of the project attest to their enjoyment: "The SAHO project was definitely a project that enhanced my learning. Being able to Skype with someone from South Africa, as well as writing a paper on an important topic from the apartheid period was amazing. It definitely prepared me for my [research] seminar as well." Another student shared: "I loved getting to Skype my SAHO partner in South Africa to talk about my paper – one of my coolest college educational experiences!"

For the SAHO team, it also brings challenges and benefits. Transatlantic Skype calls can require later working hours. The quality of the pieces are not even; some require additional editing. Others prove unpublishable. We continue to adjust the boundaries of the internship – now only A and B papers will be published. This helps us with quality control, but it also means that SAHO investment in a particular entry can fail to produce a publishable essay. On the other hand, the partnership also produces some really stellar contributions, such as Hope Anderson's entry on Lawyers for Human Rights, Carly Spagnola's essay on *SPEAK* magazine, and Karen Folz's biography of Eli Weinberg.[80] SAHO's interns gain valuable experience in advising undergraduate research projects.

Conclusion: Collaboration, Pedagogy, and Possible Directions

This article demonstrates how the SAHO virtual internship collaboration offers a model for more partnerships between history educators, archives, and other heritage institutions both nationally and transnationally. For history educators, academics, and students in the North sensitive to the disconnects and challenges of earlier partnerships described above, we can do more with these resources designed for us – collaborating and making work publicly available. In observations on the state of African history a decade ago, Heike Schmidt argued that African Studies in the United States needed to "internationalize itself" and that part of this would require closer collaboration with scholars and institutions in Africa – while of course recognizing that the "production of knowledge is located in a field of power."[81] More recently, the jubilee SCOLMA conference acknowledged that efforts such as theirs to bring together librarians, archivists, and information technologists with practitioners in the humanities and social sciences are still all too rare.[82]

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[80] See papers here: https://www.sahistory.org.za/collections/94780, accessed 19 December 2019.

[81] Heike Schmidt, "The Future of Africa's Past: Observations on the Discipline," *History in Africa* 34 (2007), 453–460, 457–458.

[82] Harle, "Dazzled by Digital?," 4.

The SAHO virtual internship works so well in the classroom because of how it helps students achieve a number of learning outcomes. First, it introduces students to not only the content of South African history but also the practices of the discipline. By involving students in research projects geared toward writing "a people's history," students learn about historiography through considerations of how South African history has been presented. The tools of search engines, digital archives, archival collections, and historical representations enable them to grapple with how to conduct research and locate appropriate information – rather than any information – in the digital age. Secondly, the virtual internship project requires the students to question what is available for research and who has access to those materials. What databases can we access through our Northern universities that our SAHO partners and public audiences can benefit from? SAHO's commitment to popularizing history through open access necessitates that students work to develop the skill of writing for public audiences. Lastly, this project serves to introduce students in the North to students and historians in the South, encouraging a bridging of divides on a personal level.

The collaboration prioritizes SAHO needs and South African public audiences. As a potential model, there remain questions of access and sustainability for replicating this kind of collaborative project. One must recognize that in addition to the North-South digital divide, such divisions exist within African countries and within African universities (the latter most recently indicated by the #FeesMustFall movement in South Africa). Access to devices and the internet remain uneven and class sizes are rarely as small as those at North-based liberal arts colleges and universities.

As Omar Badsha envisions, these kinds of collaborations are possible and necessary *within* South Africa too. A recent SAHO proposal aims to partner the non-profit organization with education departments in universities in the Western Cape so that their students will work with SAHO to develop new curriculum materials, update existing materials, and run workshops with teachers in the use of new technologies in the classroom. The size of many university classrooms means this would likely be with additional postgraduate students, but an ideal situation would be to start with smaller groups of honours undergraduates as well. While such developments are essential for existing history teachers, so too is training for students of history education at universities where education faculties are often "at the bottom of the food chain when it comes to funding and resources."[83]

This kind of training is critical as South Africa debates whether to make history training mandatory in high school. In 2018, the Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga released the Ministerial Task Team History Report that recommended history become a compulsory subject at

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[83] Linda Chisholm, "South Africa Wants to Make History Compulsory at School. But Can it?" *The Conversation* (1 June 2018), https://theconversation.com/south-africa-wants-to-make-history-compulsory-at-school-but-can-it–97633, accessed 23 June 2018.

South African schools from 2023. The report recognized that history offered essential skills beyond historical content – problem solving and analysis.[84] As some have pointed out, the proposal faces great challenges including the number of well-trained history teachers to meet the new demand and the resources to train new teachers.[85] The declining funding and increasing corporatization of universities afflicts universities in both the North and South, but Zeleza argues the effects are worse for universities in the South without protective networks of generous alumni. He warns such trends can reinforce an "international intellectual division of labour" where Africans import packages of theory and export data.[86] This kind of academic-archival collaboration should be part of preparing a new generation of teachers in South Africa to make history accessible and engaging to students. It will require support.

This project also suggests possibilities for reversal – as the University of Witwatersrand launches its African Centre for the Study of the United States – and as SAHO's project with the University of Buenos Aires facilitates South-South collaboration.[87] Akosua Adomako Ampofo, in her 2015 Distinguished Lecture at the African Studies Association annual meeting, called for Africanists to "blur the lines between the experiences of people of Africa around the world and the attendant academic studies."[88] Such virtual internships could offer possibilities for students at African universities to produce scholarship on the Americas in collaboration with American-based students, to create cooperative, comparative studies on indigeneity, settler colonialism, and Pan-African struggles for rights.

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[84]   Thando Kubheka, "Task Team Recommends History Be Made Compulsory at Schools from 2023," *Eyewitness News* (31 May 2018), http://ewn.co.za/2018/05/31/task-team-recommends-history-be-made-compulsory-at-schools-from–2023, accessed 23 June 2018.

[85]   Chisholm, "South Africa Wants to Make History Compulsory at School;" Natasha Bambo, Linda Chisholm, Michelle Friedman and Anyele Queenta Sindoh, "Decolonising the Teacher Education Curriculum: Mapping the Status and Nature of Teaching and Learning of History in Faculties and Schools of Education in South Africa" (Report funded by the South African National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, May 2017).

[86]   Zeleza, "The Politics of Historical and Social Science Research in Africa," 21.

[87]   http://www.wits.ac.za/acsus/.

[88]   Akosua Adomako Ampofo, "Re-Viewing Studies on Africa, #Black Lives Matter, and Envisioning the Future of African Studies," *African Studies Review* 59–2 (2016), 7–29.

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