



Doing Migration History with Digital Methods. Summer School 2026 at the German Historical Institute in Paris

Organised by: Mareike König (German Historical Institute Paris), Denis Scuto (C²DH), Machteld Venken (C²DH), Giovanni Vitali (université de Versailles Saint-Quentin en Yvelines), Claire Zalc (CNRS/EHESS)

Place: German Historical Institute Paris / Institut historique allemand, Paris, 8, rue du Parc-Royal, 75003 Paris

Date: 22-26 June 2026

Application deadline: 15 January 2025

Submissions by mail: dh [at] dhi-paris . fr

How does the history of migration change when it relies on digital sources and methods? What new knowledge and what forms of inquiry, narration and documentation do these digital practices make possible? How can we identify and reduce bias while complying with the ethical and legal requirements that govern the collection, analysis and dissemination of data? These questions will be at the heart of the workshops, presentations and discussions of the 2026 summer school at the German Historical Institute in Paris.

Over the past few decades, the history of migration has broadened its horizons. Today it articulates shifts in scale from the micro to the global, takes social and cultural differentiations into account, and focuses on the infrastructures of mobility as well as the material, legal and affective conditions of “being on the move.” Greater attention is paid to the practices and everyday lives of migrants, often from a transnational perspective. This development goes hand in hand with increased use of large, multilingual corpora, whose access increasingly depends on digital tools. In addition to serial and statistical collections, sources include administrative, police or NGO archives, genealogical databases, documents from associations and religious organisations, legal sources, the press and other media, correspondence and private writings (including social media), as well as oral history interviews.

In this context, digital technologies are profoundly transforming research practices and have effects on the history of migration, a field long familiar with serial sources and open to computational tools. Large-scale digitisation and easier access to textual and visual corpora make new explorations possible. Analytically, computational approaches—text mining (e.g. topic modelling, sentiment analysis), network analysis and geographic information systems (GIS)—enable the exploration of large corpora and the identification of trends, recurrences and developments (by themes, periods, places, actors, etc.). For scholarly communication, maps, graphs and timelines offer readable ways to present, compare and discuss results. Oral history also benefits: remote collection, assisted transcription and indexing, archiving and online dissemination, as well as interactive forms of restitution that broaden audiences, open up new perspectives while calling for increased vigilance in matters of ethics, consent and data protection.

At the same time, we must take into account OCR/HTR errors, platform and selection biases—especially in the choice of sources to digitise and put online—which make some sources and voices more visible than others; gaps in provenance and coverage; and descriptive and dating

inconsistencies that are common in often multilingual corpora. Hence there is a need for rigorous source criticism, transparent documentation of procedures and continuous contextualisation.

Objectives and thematic axes

The GHI summer school 2026 will examine what digital methods bring to the history of migration and how digitisation and computer-based processing influence results, interpretations and research pathways. It will also encourage the explicit discussion of limits and uncertainties. We invite presentations from advanced master's students, as well as doctoral and postdoctoral researchers who wish to discuss ongoing projects and share a critical assessment of practices.

Proposals may address, in particular, the following themes:

- **History of migration (all periods and regions):** presentation of an ongoing project using digital methods in migration history, specifying the research questions, corpus/sources, methods and expected or obtained results.
- **Theoretical perspectives on migration history:** epistemological contributions of digital sources and traces of migration; effects on categories, scales of analysis and the writing of migration history.
- **Critique of digital and ethical issues:** relationships between research and the digital in migration history (datafication, algorithmic mediation and platform bias, digitisation and online dissemination policies, standards and interoperability, documentation and replicability); data protection, security and legal frameworks; the role of platforms and infrastructures of migrant communities, as well as those created for them.
- **Data practices on migration:** transforming migration corpora into databases (modelling, normalisation, alignments, documentation); critical reuse of existing databases; the contribution of these practices to substantive findings on migration.
- **Oral history and digital narratives of migration:** uses of born-digital sources, collection and archiving, interactive narratives and online exhibitions, associated ethical requirements.
- **Computational methods and visualisations:** network analysis, spatial analysis and GIS applied to mobilities (infrastructures, trajectories), text mining and image processing, sequence and temporality modelling, visualisations for exploration and argumentation, using mixed quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Other topics related to the theme of the summer school are also welcome.

Format

The summer school will take place from 22 to 26 June 2026 at the German Historical Institute (Paris). It will begin with an informal get-together on Monday evening, 22 June. On Tuesday morning, three hands-on workshops will be offered, applied to the participants' corpora and fields. The other days will be devoted to short presentations by participants, each commented on by an expert and discussed collectively. The event will conclude on Friday, 26 June 2026, after lunch. Coffee breaks and lunch will be provided on site; partial funding may be considered for travel and accommodation costs (subject to funding currently being sought).



Eligibility and prerequisites

Applications are open to advanced master's students, doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers at the time of the summer school, with a project in migration history that includes a methodological dimension related to the themes. The working languages are French and English: active proficiency in at least one of the two is expected; passive comprehension of the other is desirable.

Application file

A single PDF file titled "name_topic_application_dh_migration" including a brief cover letter (with an indication regarding funding for your participation, particularly whether it can be covered by your home institution), a one-page CV, and a two-page abstract of the proposed presentation specifying the research question, the source or data base, the digital methods used, the expected contribution and the limits or uncertainties.

Submission

Applications must be sent by 15 January 2026 to: dh [at] dhi-paris . fr

Informations

<https://dhdhi.hypotheses.org>