

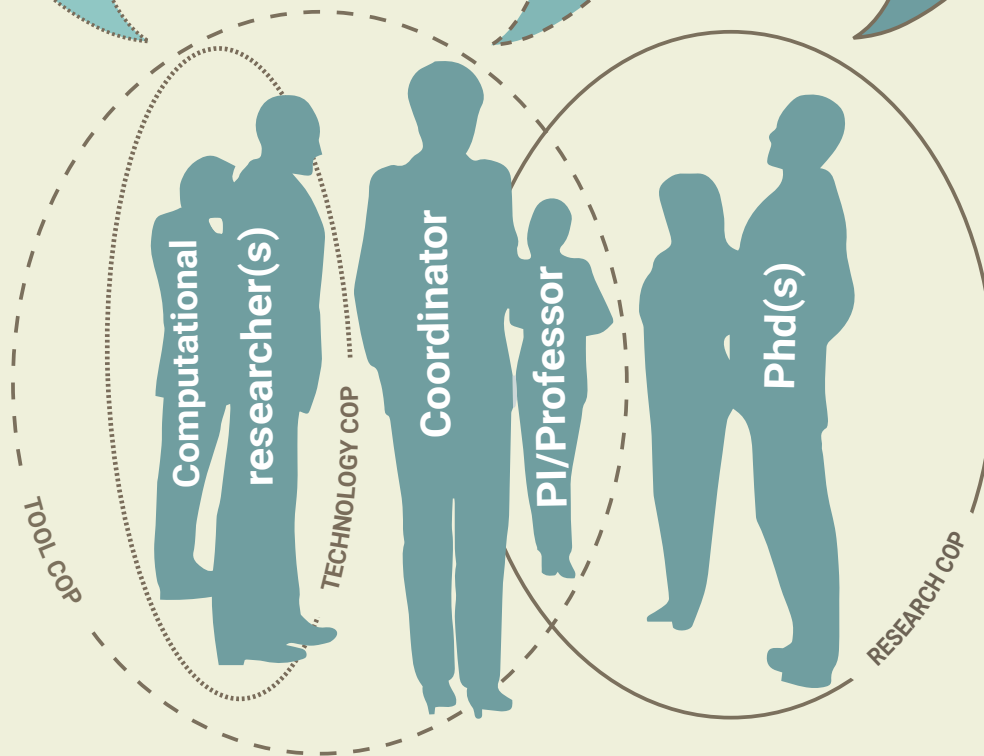
Unpacking Collaboration in Digital History Projects

A new tool with new technology for new historical research

"What I'm doing might provide additional information (...) from the original text sources that are not yet structured, that would be good, but it's not (...) paramount for the success of the project."

"The idea of the project has always been a proof-of-concept (...) and (...) bring attention to our system that we can try with them to get continued funding."

"If [the project] fails, it cannot be the case that my thesis also fails. You can to some extent see it independent of one another, as I do, so there is a secret clause; if [the project] fails I just graduate with a historical thesis."



The technology is probably not stable in time for the tool

The tool is probably not finished & stable in time for historical research

The research does not necessarily require the tool

Digital history collaborations constitute **trading zones**; spaces in which practices and terminology are negotiated to enable mutual understanding (Garrison 1996). A specific type of trading zones can be described by **boundary objects**; objects with a common core identity to all participants in the trading zone, while each participant shapes their individual understanding of the object to their (disciplinary) needs (Star & Griesemer 1989).

We explore the project itself as boundary object by interviewing participants about their individual **incentives**, consisting of three aspects (Weedman 1998): reasons for joining the project, individual goals, and expected effects of participation. We found participants can be grouped into several **communities of practice (COP)** (Wenger 1998) of shared incentives, which actively try to shape the project according to their needs, despite all participants subscribing to the common incentive of the project as developing a new tool with new technology for new historical research.