

The final two essays move away from the theoretical and provide practical steps to more efficaciously integrate religion into “tours, artifact exhibitions, and public presentation[s]” (169). The suggestions follow smoothly from the case studies and range from the obvious (identify goals) to the controversial (promote honest dialogue) (169, 177). The strategies evolve out of the assumption that the modern audience—not merely the material culture—should be the focus of museums and historic sites. Still, in the final essay, the editors again stress the importance of representing the complexity of religious belief and practice by taking advantage of recent historical scholarship. The editors point out the various functions of religion, from motivating change to instilling social control to helping people navigate through the cycle of life. Even as Americans become increasingly secular there still is a “hunger for spiritual experiences,” which museums and historic sites can address (189).

There is an assumption in *Interpreting Religion* that learning about religions by entering into the worldview of someone else will generate positive results. In this the public historian’s goal is almost a religious one—to create a more tolerant, respectful, and empathic America. Not all scholars of religion would agree that studying religion or understanding religious difference promotes civil behavior. Even if knowledge does not set us free, the case studies indicate that representing religion will not embroil institutions in never-ending culture wars. By being sensitive to those whose religion one intends to represent (by inviting them into the planning and exhibiting process) and by monitoring audience reaction (and making adjustments), public historians can tap into Americans’ curiosity about religions and explore the impact of this cultural expression. *Interpreting Religion* is an essential starting point for those who seek to represent religion to the public. It not only will generate ideas for curators and educators, it will serve to stimulate reflection on the slippery beast we name “religion.”

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Digital Community Engagement: Partnering Communities with the Academy edited by Rebecca S. Wingo, Jason A. Heppler, and Paul Schadewald. Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati Press, 2020. x + 245 pp.; illustrations, notes, works cited, index; paperback, \$32.96; eBook, \$31.30, open access eBook.

It is a rare thing for a book to greet you upon opening it. But page 1 of Rebecca S. Wingo, Jason A. Heppler, and Paul Schadewald’s new book opens with a “Hello and welcome!” (1). The salutation sets the tone for the rest of the volume, which is a collection of case studies that consider how public history, digital humanities, and community engagement can symbiotically work together. The editors call this overlapping trinity of activities “Digital Community Engagement,” or “DiCE,” and the volume seeks to elucidate the “cohesive practice” (7) of this emerging field of work. But in many respects, the editors might be illuminating public history’s future.

What defines DiCE, according to the editors, is its attention to “the impact of technology on community engagement from the perspective of academics and the communities we serve” (14). Because while public history, digital humanities, and community engagement are themselves intrinsically collaborative, blending these three raises new questions about the relationships between academics, community partnerships, and digital scholarship. How should community engagement shape the technological choices project leaders make? Who should benefit from the knowledge produced by digital projects? And who owns them?

The editors make no claim to having the answers to these questions. Rather, they see the volume’s main contribution in presenting DiCE as a reflective practice rooted in dialogue. This is the reason for the book’s greeting. Instead of opening with a traditional introduction, the editors begin with a letter to future community partners. The letter provides guidance on how community groups can work with academics and academia, the rights community partners can claim in entering into an academic partnership, and an introduction to using a scholarly anthology such as this. It’s a simple, but powerful demonstration of the volume’s collaborative intention. But the editors take this a step further. Beyond seeing future community partners as a potential audience for the book, the editors also invited community partners to help coauthor the text.

After the letter and a brief introduction on the concept of DiCE, the volume provides nine case studies of digitally inflected, community-engaged projects that are authored by project directors and, occasionally, community partners. The opening essay on the *SNCC Digital Gateway*, for example, lists sixteen authors. Born out of a partnership between Duke University and veterans of the Civil Rights Movement, the project documents the grassroots organizing efforts of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. To illustrate the degree to which community partners directed major aspects of the project, the essay includes an extended, collaboratively written section that describe the roles and responsibilities of project members, the shared values that sustains their work, and their approaches to conflict resolution. Another essay authored in part by historians Julia Brock and Robin Morris and archivist Shaneé Murrain focusing on an effort to preserve the collective memory and archival record of the first Black church founded in Decatur, Georgia, includes an extended reflection from church member Elayne Washington Hunter on why the congregation entered into a university partnership. Though future scholars will almost certainly benefit from material collected for the *Antioch A.M.E. Digital Archive*, the essay reveals how the project also was guided by the congregation’s desire to pass its history on to members who had joined the church after geographic and generational shifts.

Though not every essay includes community partners as coauthors, they all do consider how making community partners collaborators in a project’s development challenges common practices in the public history community. Two themes stand out, which the editors also identify in their introduction. The first has to do with the kinds of publics that digital projects can constitute. Whereas exhibits and public

programs typically focus upon engaging those within an institution's immediate surroundings, digital projects can forge communities that transcend time and space. An essay by editor Rebecca S. Wingo coauthored with community partner Marvin Roger Anderson, for instance, discusses how history harvests (community-based digital collecting) helped reconstitute the community of Rondo, a Black neighborhood in Minneapolis that had been razed by the city in the 1950s. An essay by historian Amy C. Sullivan recounts how the digitization of artifacts and memories brought together those who had attended a Girl Scout Camp that had been closed under tragic circumstances.

Yet while DiCE can foster new forms of community, public history's migration to digital spaces does raise new questions about who owns these projects. A particularly compelling essay by Melissa A. Hubbard on an effort to build an archive of police violence in Cleveland, Ohio, highlights how the low cost of maintaining a digital presence allowed a diverse network of archivists to devise a project that remains owned, operated, and updated by community activists who use the collection in their social justice work. Another essay by Patrick Collier and James J. Connolly discusses the ways in which their attempt to build a kind of public diary for Muncie, Indiana, drove them to abandon the academically favored Omeka platform for the commercially driven, but more familiar WordPress.

An enhanced, open-access version of the text exists online through the University of Cincinnati Press that includes even more resources that public historians and community partners can consult. Surprisingly, however, the editors only mention this in passing in the introduction's last line. A more direct explanation of this material and its potential use would have been helpful. And as with many volumes devoted to case studies, the collection also has a celebratory tone that leaves one wondering what they could learn from a DiCE project that struggled. (To be honest, there is a need for a whole volume of public history's cautionary tales.) But taken as a whole, the volume's essays constitute a vital contribution to the field. If the newfound interest in virtual meetings and remote learning brought on by the pandemic are any indicators, our lives will only continue to become more mediated by digital technology. Wingo, Heppler, and Shadewald's volume might have just provided us with a road map to navigate these times. The National Council of Public History's awards committee certainly thinks so, having awarded the text the organization's book award for 2021.

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