



Many Digital Lives of Urban History

October 22–24 2026



Over the past few decades, digital methods have transformed the study of urban history, opening up new possibilities for discussing the city and its past. They allowed us to shift away from linear narratives and instead highlight the multilayered, complex, and intertwined nature of urban life across time and space. The city emerges as a dynamic weaving of processes, actors, and spaces that can be analyzed, interpreted, and understood in new ways.

The conference "The Many Digital Lives of Urban History" explores the methodological connections between urban history and the digital humanities. Its goal is to comprehend the complexity of urban history and the cultural or social contexts within it, using digital tools, as well as to ask: how – and if at all – do digital technologies change scholarly argumentation in urban history research? Alongside with this overarching question remains: does the digital realm offer new methodological achievements – does it produce knowledge that would have been impossible in analog research? We see, for example, how digital tools help us work with large datasets – yet the question of the nature and limits of this knowledge remains open.

Our approaches to digital projects about cities are as diverse as the cities themselves. However, it turns out that the digital city is more fragile than the real one: some projects have already disappeared, and digital urban history has its own history of loss. The conference also serves as a space for reflection for those who created such projects – on the experiences, decisions, and lessons of their work.

Bringing together different geographies and time periods, the conference focuses on intercultural connections, intertwined histories, and multicultural urban spaces. We invite participants to also focus on the digital solutions underlying their projects and research, to showcase practical and methodological approaches, decision-making processes, and considerations of resourcefulness and probability – aspects that often remain behind the scenes of academic discourse.

Among the questions we wish to reflect on together:

- How do digital tools make the invisible visible – allowing us to articulate inequality in urban space, gender, queer histories, memory, belonging, and violence?
- Which themes of urban history are more frequently or even overrepresented in digital projects, and which remain underrepresented?
- How can we account for the risks of hyper-focused narratives and digital "knowledge bubbles"?
- How do digital and analog relationships – within and between cities – shape the creation and communication of urban-historical knowledge for researchers, developers, public historians, educators, and museum professionals?
- What role does the digital play in preserving urban cultural heritage?
- How – or whether – do digital methods reproduce or challenge metanarratives – colonial, imperial, or national – about the city?
- How can we develop datasets and visualizations of urban history based on common metadata standards to ensure interoperability and cross-referencing between digital projects?
- How do we strengthen the urban perspective in historical, spatial, or network analysis?

We invite scholars and practitioners in the fields of digital humanities and urban history to submit proposals; in particular, we encourage applications from early-career researchers.

The application must include:

- A text description in English (up to 500 words)
- CV

Submissions should be sent to conferences@lvivcenter.org with the subject line "Many Digital Lives of Urban History" **by July 15, 2026.**

Notifications regarding conference participation will be sent by the end of July, 2026.

The working language of the conference will be English. The organizers can provide translation assistance to conference participants with limited knowledge of English but with interesting presentations.

The conference will take place on **22-24 October 2026** in Lviv (Ukraine). Online participation will be possible; however, preference will be given to in-person attendance. The organizers will cover travel and accommodation costs for all participants who are not funded by their home institutions.

The conference is organized by the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe in partnership with the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe at the University of St. Gallen, Centre for Digital Humanities at the Ukrainian Catholic University and the Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH).

The conference is also a part of the "REHERIT 2.0: Common Responsibility for Shared Heritage" project.



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University of St.Gallen
Center for Governance
and Culture in Europe

UCU Centre for
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Ukrainian
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