

TwHistory: Historical Reenactments with Twitter
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The TwHistory project began in early 2009 with the first Twitter reenactment of the Battle of Gettysburg over a period of several weeks. TwHistory is based on the idea that historical reenactments can take place online and have positive effects for all involved. In school settings these virtual reenactments can increase engagement while providing opportunities for students to research personal journals and other historical primary source documents. In order to organize, study, and preserve these online reenactments a website has been created at <http://TwHistory.org>.

Twitter provides all the necessary elements for a recreating a historical event: actors, communication, relationships, and a timeline. Followers of Twitter reenactments get updates in real-time as the characters of a particular historical event communicate, or "tweet" about what is happening. In a TwHistory reenactment, people are assigned to historical figures in a particular event. They prepare and schedule a series of messages, or "tweets," describing the event from the perspective of the historical figure, using primary source documents. The messages from the various characters in the event are triggered chronologically and result in a virtual reenactment that can be shared with others via the Internet.

In any historical reenactment it is often the actors who get the most benefit, and this is no different with Twitter. And just like traditional reenactments, TwHistory projects have the potential to draw a large audience. Spectating Twitter followers often retweet favorite messages, drawing additional followers to the reenactment. Interest has grown steadily, attracting historians and hobbyists alike. The TwHistory project has attracted the attention of the UNESCO Chair in E-Learning at the Open University of Catalonia, as well as the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library. TwHistory is also being used to teach part of a Cold War History class at a high school in Missouri, and there is similar interest from educators in Switzerland and Germany.

For more information on the TwHistory project please contact us!

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