



New Directions in Active History:  
Institutions, Communication, and Technologies

October 2-4 2015, Huron University College  
London, Ontario

The term "active history" carries with it a diverse range of meanings. In different contexts, it can refer to: the broader public diffusion of historical knowledge, approaches to research that "share authority" with the communities being studied, a more focused use of historical knowledge as a tool of well thought out public policy and politics, or even specific fora like *ActiveHistory.ca*. These different meanings and emphases are linked by the ideas that history can and should play a more constructive role in contemporary cultural and political life and that historical knowledge should be much more than a tool of patriotism or the rote memorization of events, dates, and people. In this, it dovetails with recent discussions about the meaning and future of history, from John Tosh's *Why History Matters* (2008) to Jo Guldi and David Armitage's more recent *The History Manifesto* (2014).

The low cost of websites, podcasts and other digital publishing mediums opened the door to a new form of publishing aimed at communicating these goals, finding common ground with the open access publishing movement. As a primarily web-based project, *ActiveHistory.ca* is interested in, but is not exclusive to, using the internet to bring historical perspectives to a wide audience. This website, which emerged out of a 2008 symposium, was never intended to be the only approach to active history and we would like to come together again to explore the many approaches to engaged/public/applied/active history.

In marking these varying definitions of Active History, this conference seeks to explore these shifting dynamics through a series of practically-oriented workshops, paper and poster presentations that take stock (or, suggest new directions in) the state of historical knowledge, its uses, and mobilization. Conference organizers are particularly interested in presentations that explore the ways institutions function to enhance or detract from the knowledge of history in popular culture, the nature of historical knowledge as it is mobilized and contested in the wider society, digital approaches to history, or alternative ways of recording, marking, and disseminating and understanding of the past and its processes.

Proposals for papers or posters that address these themes or other aspects of active history are welcome. Proposals should consist of a titled 250 word abstract that includes the author's institutional and/or community affiliation and contact information along with a one-page

curriculum vitae. We plan to publish a selection of conference papers through ActiveHistory.ca's peer-reviewed papers section in addition to featuring conference related content on our group blog.

We will also be arranging four specifically focused panels on the following topics. Please indicate in your submission if you would like to participate on one of these panels:

- Active History, Heritage and Museums
- The future of public history programs in Canada
- Community engaged history
- Active History beyond the Academy

Proposals should be submitted no later than April 15 to Kaleigh Bradley at [activehistory2015@gmail.com](mailto:activehistory2015@gmail.com)

Questions or inquiries about this conference can be made at the same address.