

Journal18 #24: DATA

Deadline: Sep 15, 2026

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JOURNAL 18 #24 DATA (Fall 2027).

How does the notion of 'data' shape our understanding of the eighteenth century?

This issue queries the role of data in relation to art, visual, and material histories of the eighteenth century: for example, maps as an encapsulation of land-based statistics, the recording of flora and fauna, lists of people and occupations, the making of pattern books, logs of plantation produce, the quantification of goods traded, building/describing archives, the catalogues of collections, taxonomies, census taking, or even journals of voyages and touristic activities in the context of Europe's maritime expansion into Asia, Americas, and the Pacific. From trade ships carrying porcelain as ballast (that was cataloged diligently) to personal cabinets of curiosity (that are examples of selective data mining), the scale and scope of data building varied. To what extent was the creation of "big data" foundational to the process of empire building? And what sort of products (maps, albums, logs, gazetteers, almanacs) were the result of this information gathering? To what extent can complex, high volume datasets, such as those generated from maritime exploration, account for modes of colonial expansion? What was the nature of intangibles that resisted typification and classification?

The theme of 'data' takes a historical view of a phenomenon that is now driving the creation of large data centers and a quest for infinite data, and what critics have described as "data colonialism" and dispossession. This issue seeks to query the idea of humanistic data as something emerging from specific cultural and historical contexts and representations of lives and ideas that were subjective and personal but that nonetheless drove larger conceptual and economic shifts in the context of empire building in the eighteenth century. This issue also encourages papers that bring together ideas from the digital humanities and collection-as-data theory and practice in order to reflect on the eighteenth century.

Issue Editors

Yuthika Sharma, Northwestern University

Clara Drummond, McCormick Library, Northwestern University

Proposals for issue #24 Data are now being accepted. Deadline for proposals: September 15, 2026.

To submit a proposal, send an abstract (250 words) and a brief biography to the following email addresses: editor@journal18.org, yuthika.sharma@northwestern.edu, and cdrummond@northwestern.edu. Articles should not exceed 4000 words (including footnotes) and

will be due for submission by April 2, 2027. For further details on submission and Journal18 house style, see Information for Authors. <<https://www.journal18.org/info/>>

Reference:

CFP: Journal18 #24: DATA. In: ArtHist.net, Jun 8, 2026 (accessed Jun 8, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52657>>.