

advances but also grave concerns, not only for academics but for everyone. ChatGPT is of exceptional concern in the context of academic teaching and publications.¹²

While I was living in Nigeria, there was no possibility of using digital technology. After all, Xerox Alto had made its debut only the year before, playing a major role in developing technological advances.¹³ In 1973, cyber technology useable by individuals was in its infancy. That was the year of the first cell phone call and the invention of fiber optic technology. But none was available to individuals, especially if one were somewhere in Nigeria.¹⁴

It was not until my return to the United States that digital technology was even mentioned in terms of my work. An engineer friend asked if I would use computer analysis for my data. I smirked. How could someone in humanities possibly use computer technology? In 1975, I could barely imagine how that would be possible. Every page from twenty hand-scrawled notebooks required notation on 3x5 cards, taking a year just to index.¹⁵

When I finally decided on a topic and began drafting the dissertation, “cut and paste” was a literal procedure, not a computer process. After noting ideas, I analyzed paragraphs. If an idea seemed better placed elsewhere, I snipped it and Scotch-taped it into a new place. In the process of typing,

my wife and I used the very latest technology—a rented electric typewriter with no “erase” feature. Footnote space calculations were determined by counting words and lines.¹⁶

A computer and word processing software would have helped! Word processing systems date to the 1960s, but personal computers were introduced only in 1977. It would be another decade before they were somewhat common. When they were, we suffered an abundance of software/hardware systems. My first attempt at using a computer to develop ideas was in 1983, when Ellen Elsas and I worked on the first exhibition of African art for the Birmingham Museum of Art.¹⁷ Some work we conducted via telephone. Most communication was through written, mailed letters. On occasion, I traveled to Birmingham. As Ellen took control of her new personal computer, I dictated. She entered ideas into an early word processing system, likely WordStar. Because of possibilities of crashes and losing our work, we saved documents after every sentence.

My art history colleague John Ward had an early personal computer—Kapro—for calculating grades on a spreadsheet. When he and my colleagues requested a computer to share, our chair laughed. How can art historians use computers? When he was introduced to a system at an administrative

conference, he purchased one for himself, along with another for *all* art historians to share. Digital DECmate was not compatible with any other system. Its WPS-8 word processing program required a five-inch floppy disc inserted in one slot, document disc into another. We rolled its awkwardly large cart among offices. As I received Janet Stanley's printed bibliographies from the Warren Robbins Library, work-study students entered each issue's titles onto discs according to country and people.¹⁸

After I learned Digital DECmate's word processing system, my son needed an Apple IIe for fourth grade, which used another program—AppleWrite. Then our dean decided to provide the historians space on his IBM Office/36 system, using a completely different word processing system—DisplayWrite 36. Eventually we had PCs requiring WordPerfect, and finally Word. Each technological advance left carefully worked material behind on five-inch floppy discs or three-inch discs, no longer accessible on new hardware and software.

By then, the internet had come into being, making email possible. While Sieber visited as Harn Eminent Scholar for a year in 1995–96, he chided me for constantly checking email. But to be able to communicate with colleagues across the country and receive answers in an hour seemed superior to week-long “snail mail” waits.

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