Software History Research Internship

The EaaSI project, hosted at Yale University Library, seeks a research intern to assist with gathering and generating documentation crucial to accessing legacy digital collections.

Emulation software, such as the platform under development by EaaSI, allows for modern computers to run and render “obsolete” applications, a great boon for accessing files and data in older digital collections. However, technical documentation around computers tends to be created and published by developers and manufacturers for contemporary, commercial use - once a new version or product is released and the old version no longer supported, there are few systematic attempts to save this documentation for the historical record.

As a result, important details - including system requirements, hardware compatibility, software dependencies, intended user experience and more - critical to accurate interaction with older files and programs are often now scattered, anecdotal, inaccessible, or all three.

The research intern will search for, consolidate, and summarize key information from existing available resources - potentially ranging from canonical histories and official product guides to hobbyist forums and personal interviews - to help build a public online portal of technical computing and software history aimed at using and/or providing emulation in an archival/preservation context.

Day-to-day work will primarily consist of historical research/scholarship, but the intern will also be trained in the concerns and practicalities of publishing new online resources, web site development and maintenance, and using/deploying emulation as a digital access strategy.

Skills required:
- Proficiency with office productivity software (Microsoft Office, G Suite, etc.)
- Effective writer and communicator (good at summarizing/consolidating information)
- Strong interest in history of personal computing and software

Learning outcomes:
- Assessment and citation of non-standard historical resources
- Creating and publishing materials for online research platforms/portals (EaaSI platforms include OSF, GitLab, web CMS)
- Components and theory of emulation as preservation and access strategy

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