Citizen Science in the Age of the Digital Humanities:

Rewarding Experiences, Uncompensated Labor, and the Ethics of Engaging the Public in Collaborative Research

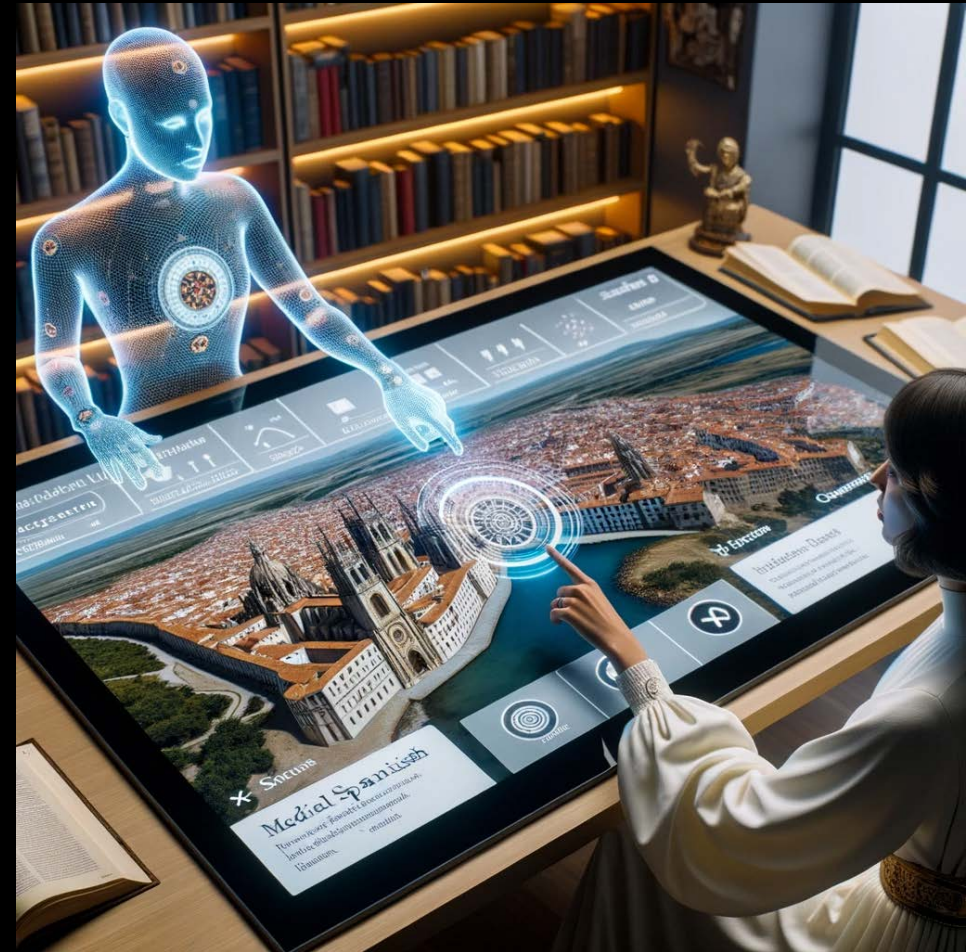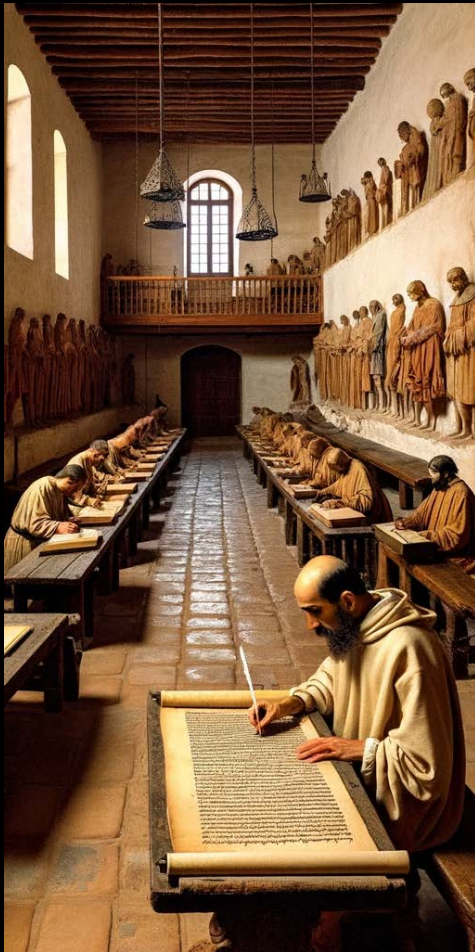Roger L. Martínez-Dávila, Ph.D.

Professor of History

in collaboration with Open AI's DALL-E 3 and ChatGPT4

Importance of Citizen Science in the Digital Humanities

The Deciphering Secrets Project

Video at:

https://youtu.be/dAY3RUAKABg?si=Pep-X9ZQDY18Qq-n

The Deciphering Secrets Project

https://grants.uccs.edu/deciphering-secrets/
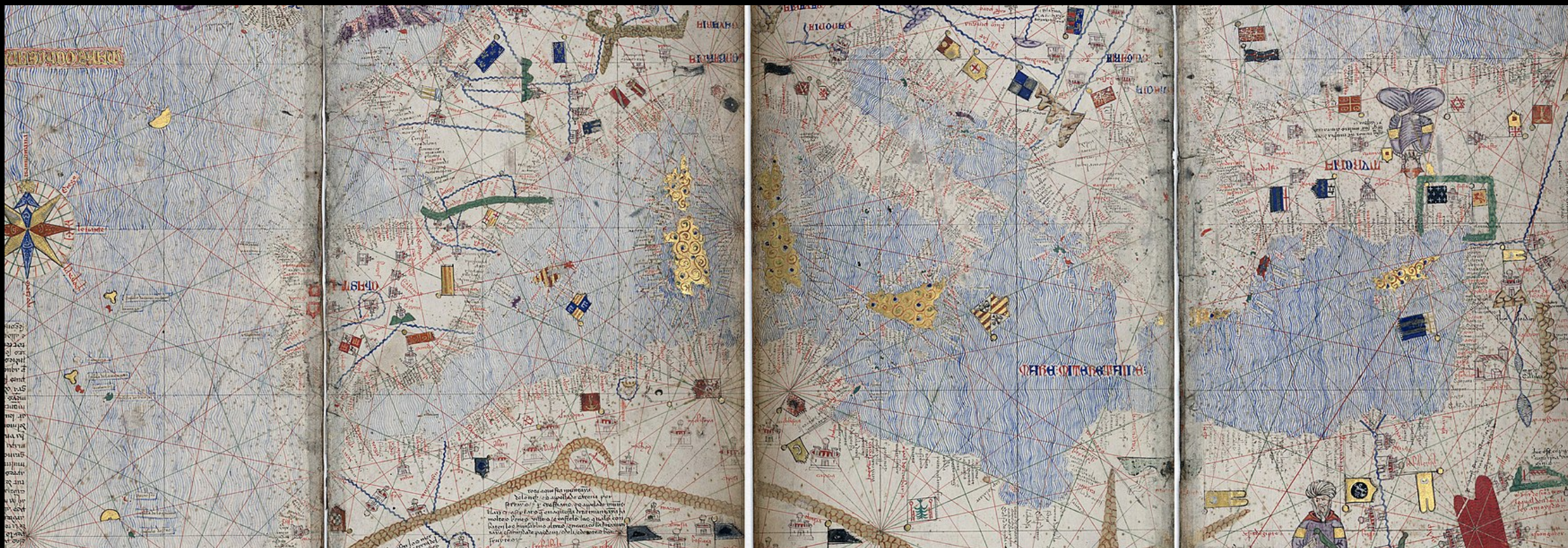
Why Medieval Spain?

Catalan Atlas, 1375 CE, Cresques Abraham

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Engaging the Public For Discovery

Findings We Locate
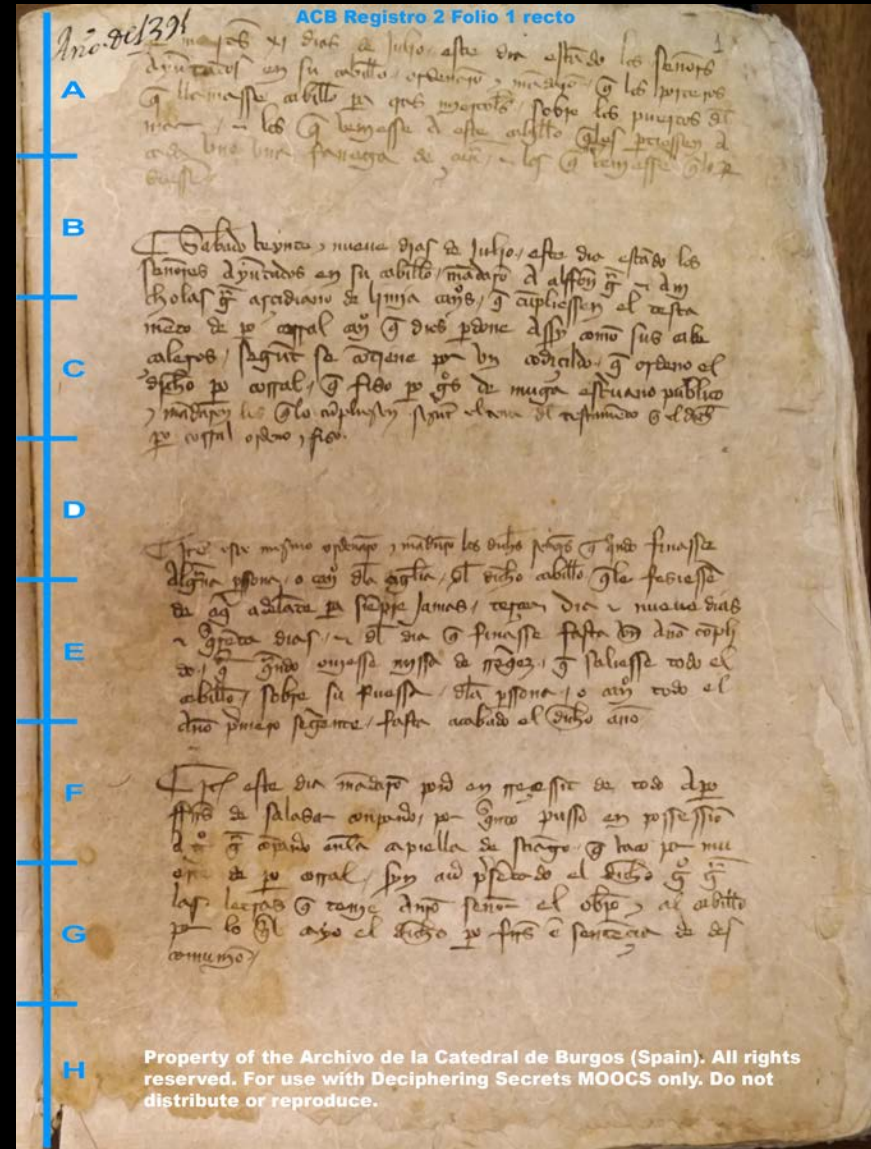
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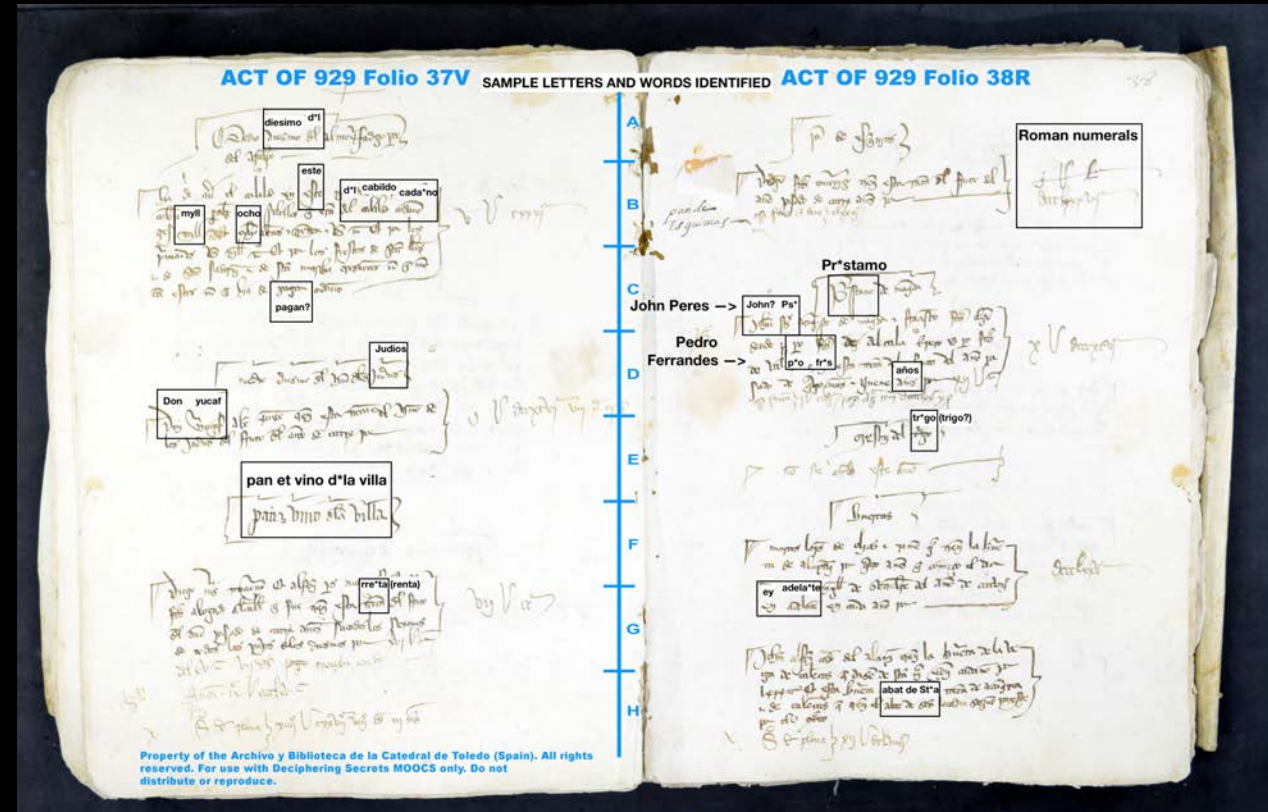
Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative Principles

Application of Integrity

Oil painting set in a medieval Spanish scriptorium. Diverse scholars, including a Christian priest, a Muslim imam, and a Jewish rabbi, are diligently working together on transcribing and interpreting a shared manuscript. Each brings their own religious text to cross-reference, ensuring the integrity and accuracy of their collective work. Above them, a decorative archway displays symbols from each of the three religions, signifying unity and collaboration.

Application of Trust

Illustration of a medieval Spanish research hall or library. Scholars and citizens gather around a large table that displays various scrolls and manuscripts. A large banner overhead reads 'Trust in Research'. Some scholars openly share their findings, pointing to clear diagrams and charts. However, in a few corners of the room, individuals whisper and hide their scrolls, symbolizing lack of transparency. The contrast between the open scholars and secretive individuals underscores the importance of trust and the consequences of its violation.

Application of Accountability

Illustration of a medieval Spanish courtyard leading to a grand lecture hall. The archway entrance of the hall is adorned with intricate stone carvings, and inside, a scholar stands on a raised platform, passionately presenting his findings to an attentive audience. Outside the hall, a group of citizen scientists eagerly wait, hoping for their turn to share their contributions. The scene emphasizes the distinction between the recognized scholar and the yet-to-be-acknowledged citizen scientists, portraying the importance of inclusivity and recognition in the realm of research.

Application of Transparency

Illustration set in a medieval Spanish town square. The focal point is a large glass container, symbolizing 'Transparency'. Inside the container, scrolls and manuscripts are displayed for all to see. Around the container, scholars and townspeople gather in discussion, examining the scrolls and engaging in open dialogue. Some scholars are seen guiding citizens through the scrolls, emphasizing the peer-review process. A few other scholars hold look more closely, representing the scrutiny and transparency of the research. The surrounding architecture, with open archways and clear windows, further underscores the theme of open and truthful communication.

Application of Fairness

The scene unfolds in a vibrant Islamic city marked by its ornate minarets, mosaic-tiled courtyards, and characteristic arched doorways. Dominating the city square is a grand balance scale symbolizing fairness. Scrolls and manuscripts, representing research opportunities, are balanced against golden coins symbolizing recognition. Scholars and citizens actively engage around the scale, sharing their contributions, emphasizing equitable access to research, and receiving due recognition for their work. The entire scene vividly captures the essence of fairness, equitable relationships, and the democratization of the research process.

Application of Respect

Oil painting set inside a grand meeting hall reminiscent of the Real Alcazar in Seville, Spain, characterized by its ornate arches, intricate tile mosaics, and lofty ceilings. Two groups of scholars of diverse medieval origins stand on opposite sides of a large wooden table, engaged in an animated debate. Their postures and expressions convey both passion and mutual respect. Some scholars are seen gesturing towards scrolls and books, presenting their views, while others listen intently. The scene captures the essence of 'Application of Respect', emphasizing the importance of honoring diverse views and contributions in the realm of research. The ambient light filtering through the ornate windows bathes the room in a warm glow, further highlighting the atmosphere of respectful discourse.

Application of Rule of Law

Oil painting set in a medieval apothecary or laboratory. A distinguished medieval doctor, adorned in scholarly robes, inspects various plants spread out on a wooden table. Some of the plants are vibrant and fresh, symbolizing the original plants, while others appear to be descendants, having slight variations in color and form. Nearby, on shelves and counters, are an array of bottles containing different mixtures and solutions. A few other physicians gather around, eager to learn and share knowledge. However, there's a visible hesitation among some, representing the ethical dilemma of sharing something that was once an exclusive gift. The scene subtly touches upon the concepts of copyright, sharing, and the ethical considerations of using and distributing knowledge in the medieval context, drawing parallels to the digital world.

Application of Viability

Oil painting of a cozy, candlelit medieval study. At the center sits a Jewish scholar, adorned in Islamic garments, deeply engrossed in contemplation. Surrounding him are scrolls, books, and writing tools. Above him, in a dream-like haze, futuristic medieval-digital technologies emerge: parchment scrolls intertwined with digital code, quills that shimmer with electric light, and ancient manuscripts that seem to glow from within. However, at his feet, there are scattered papers that are slowly turning to dust, symbolizing the fleeting nature of knowledge and the uncertainty of its preservation. The scene captures the scholar's internal struggle between the hope of enduring research and the fear of its impermanence.