



Invitation to the Schöne lecture

Mind the Gap: Data absence, data silence, and data bias

by Julianne Nyhan

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Data absence, data silence and data bias may be said to haunt all kinds of collections, analogue and digital alike. The data absences that haunt heritage collections and the documentation that describes them (such as historical catalogues and present-day digital museum catalogues) grant important insights into the subjectivities that have shaped collections and their documentation over the longer term, raising questions about whose agency was and was not considered worthy of acknowledgement in the creation of a given collection, and the grounds on which such decisions were made. How then, as ever greater swathes of cultural heritage collections and the information that describes them are digitised and made computationally tractable, are fields like the digital humanities responding to problems of data absence and bias? To what extent are “collections as data” platforms seeking to challenge historical absence, bias and subjectivity rather than reinscribing such deleterious dynamics in computational contexts?

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Venue: Architekturgebäude, Hörsaal A 053
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*Image credit: Sloane's specimens in the
Museum's historical collections
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