

Research in the History of Programming Languages and Software Engineering

The Computing History Museum of the American University has been given a grant by the Alfred Sloan Foundation. The purpose of the grant is to facilitate using the World Wide Web to capture the history of specific technologies. The Computing History Museum has teamed with the IEEE History Center at Rutgers University and the Electrical Division of the Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Tim Beryin is the Principal Investigator for AU.

The Sloan Foundation is concerned that technology is progressing too rapidly for historians to capture it. The present research focuses on the question: could historians do better if they used web based tools? The Computing History Museum's efforts will focus on two topics: (1) the history of programming languages and (2) the history of software engineering.

Sloan Site

Please visit the site at <http://www.csis.american.edu/museum/sloan>. The first pages provide the purpose of the research and introduce the two focus areas. We see the site as a new type of tool to support research and collaboration. There are two discussion databases through which individuals can exchange memories, thoughts, opinions, etc. There is also an archive for contributed documents.

Staff Support

To support researchers interested in participating, the Computing History Museum has graduate and undergraduate students available to help scan materials, photocopy materials, write to potential contributors, get copyright permissions, and other back office functions. Since there are many more practitioners (of computing) than there are professional historians, we believe that the Sloan strategy has merit, and will assist contributors in any way possible. Please feel free to forward this note to people you believe would be interested in this research effort, and please encourage them to participate!

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