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What is Crowd Cafe?

During the 2018-19 academic year, Boston University and Boston College are co-hosting a monthly informal gathering intended to provide loose infrastructure for people wishing to contribute to crowdsourced projects.

These meetings take place starting 17 August 2018 and continuing on the third Friday of every month, 1-3pm Eastern time. Online connection is available via a [Zoom meeting](#) and the #crowdcafe hashtag on Twitter.

We provide in-person and online hosting, camaraderie, and light direction help as needed. Our communities, we hope, will provide human power for projects of their choosing.

Why are you doing this?

Crowdsourcing projects offer participants the opportunity to contribute human effort to work that at present cannot be done either computationally or by a smaller group of people. Contributing to crowdsourced projects is important, rewarding, and effective work. Barriers to entry vary by project, but are usually low enough to accommodate a wide spectrum of participants. In our experience working at the intersection of digital scholarship and librarianship, contributors to crowdsourced projects almost inevitably learn skills they find valuable, whether it be better ability to decipher 19th-century American handwriting, or a clearer understanding of how online mapping works. This work also tends to raise larger questions about the nature of knowledge production and use, ownership of work, public discourse, civic life participation, and other topics whose reach extends far beyond the work itself.

Some of this work, such as the many transcription projects out there, is deep cultural heritage whose benefit is longitudinal into the future. Other work — such as American Red Cross and other [humanitarian projects](#) hosted at OpenStreetMap — has an immediate effect on human rescue missions in disaster affected areas worldwide. In all cases, this work is larger than any of us, and we want to encourage our communities to contribute to it as civic and scholarly engagement.

How do I join?

If you're located near one of the institutions hosting Crowd Cafe in person, you may be able to join there — see below for the current list of in-person hosts. Please assume that you will need to bring your own laptop, unless specified otherwise.

You are also welcome to join individually via the [Zoom meeting](#).

In Person Meetings

Boston College: Digital Studio (Room 205), O'Neill Library, 140 Commonwealth Avenue, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467. The Digital Studio is located on the second floor.

Boston University: Estin Room (Room 302), Mugar Library, 771 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215. To get there, take the elevator by the circulation desk to the third floor. Turn left out of the elevator. Follow the signs around and along the wall in front of you.

What projects should I contribute to?

Any projects you like. We recommend sticking with one per editing session, though of course that's not required. Below are some suggestions, in a list we plan to expand.

- [Wikipedia](#) (English)
 - [Learn More about Editing](#)
- [Smithsonian Transcription Center](#)
 - [Instructions](#)
- [Colored Conventions](#)
 - [Transcribe Minutes](#)
- [Zooniverse](#)
 - [Projects](#) (choosing one to work on brings you to instructions)
 - [Anti-Slavery Manuscripts](#)
- [OpenStreetMap](#)
 - [HOT Tasking Manager](#)
 - [Learn: How to Contribute](#)
- [Transcribe Bentham](#)
 - [Getting Started](#)
 - [Transcription Guidelines](#)
- [Citizen Archivist Missions](#) (U.S. National Archives)
- [NYPL Community Oral History Transcript Editor](#)
- [NYPL What's on the Menu?](#)
- [Open Access Tracking Project](#) (OATP)

- [Getting started](#)
- [Open Access Directory](#) (OAD)
 - [Getting started](#)
- [Societies and Open Access Research \(SOAR\) project](#)
- [Digital Maine Transcription Projects](#)
- [Beyond Words](#) (Library of Congress)
- [Fit It+](#) (American Archive of Public Broadcasting)
- [The 1919 Boston Police Strike Project](#)

What's your contact info?

If you have further questions or comments about this project, please contact Sarah Melton (Boston College, meltons@bc.edu, [@WorldCatLady](https://twitter.com/WorldCatLady)), Vika Zafrin (Boston University, vzafrin-bu.edu, [@veek](https://twitter.com/veek)), or both of us.

- [Peter Suber, peter_suber@harvard.edu](mailto:peter_suber@harvard.edu)
 - I added OATP, OAD, and SOAR to the list of crowd-sourced projects above. I may not be able to attend as many Crowd Cafe meetings as I'd like. But I'd be happy to work with anyone interested in contributing to OATP, OAD, or SOAR.