

Patricia Fumerton, “New Directions in Digitizing Broadside Ballads: EBBA”

This talk will address the kinds of challenges and possibilities scholars face in creating a digital archive of early broadside ballads, using the English Broadside Ballad Archive, or EBBA, as its case study. The talk considers the gnarly problem of capturing the collecting practices of antiquarians, who across time gathered these artifacts, ensuring their survival for us today, while at the same time conveying the practices in the artifacts’ own time of their production, dissemination, and consumption. It especially addresses how to digitally re-create in the here-and-now the past multimedia experience of early moderns of early broadside ballads for whom the artifacts were simultaneously texts, art, music, and culture. Finally, it showcases some of the digital innovations EBBA has recently forged in order to convey the multifaceted features of broadside ballads in a way that makes them more accessible to advanced interdisciplinary scholarship.