Born-Digital Collections, Archives and Memory Conference
School of Advanced Study, University of London
2 Apr 2025 to 4 Apr 2025

Location: Senate House and Online || Institute: Digital Humanities Research Hub

Conference Proposal
Status: Accepted

Category: **Posters, demos & showcases**
Theme: A broad range of born-digital objects and formats

Project Title: **Waqiat-e-Dilli (The Chronicles of a City)**

Abstract:

Over its millennium-long history, Delhi has seen the rise and fall of many kingdoms/empires with various cities, leaving behind a rich legacy of cultural heritage. One of these cities is Shahjahanabad, established by Shahjahan in 1648 CE. Designed as a model city in terms of its spatial planning and landmark structures, the city has remained resilient in the face of various turbulent events in its history - invasions, its sack in the aftermath of the Revolt of 1857 and the near-complete desolation after the Partition in 1947. It still remains a living city with significant built as well as intangible heritage in the form of arts, crafts, traditions and their practitioners.

Research in digital humanities has traditionally focused solely on objects and archives. However, the rise of born-digital cultural materials — originating and circulating across various formats and platforms — presents new opportunities and challenges for research, archiving, and disseminating information. *'Waqiat-e-Dilli'* – a spatio-temporal web portal for Delhi – exemplifies born-digital cultural heritage's transformative potential. With a mid-19th century city map as the base, the project aims to visualise Shahjahanabad of those times. It also explores Delhi's socio-cultural evolution by incorporating historical texts, illustrations and photographs into the places marked on the map. It thus underscores the significance of born-digital formats in reimagining and preserving urban histories and memories and making them accessible to contemporary audiences.