History of Economic Society – New Initiatives Fund

Proposal – December 2021

Oral Histories: The Computerization of Economics

Applicants

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Thomas Delcey
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Center for the History of Political Economy
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Associate Professor in Economics
Université Paris-Dauphine – PSL University
Laboratoire d’Economie de Dauphine (LEDa)
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romain.plassard@dauphine.psl.eu
Motivation and objectives of the project

This project aims at building an online oral history collection for the history of economics. The online oral history archive would, initially, collect interviews focused on the study of the computerization of economics—that is, the increasing role of computer technologies (hardware, software, World Wide Web) in economic research and in the training of economists.

The phenomenon of computerization introduced crucial changes to the discipline, encompassing all aspects of economists’ practices: for instance, theoretical representations have been reshaped by computer sciences;\(^1\) the boundaries between theoretical and applied economics is blurred;\(^2\) econometric techniques become embedded in specialized software.\(^3\) Despite the importance and pervasiveness of computerization, this phenomenon has been so far understudied by historians of economics—as we have argued elsewhere.\(^4\) One possible reason for this neglect is the lack of appropriate sources to analyze what remains mostly hidden beyond textual or even archival materials. We think that oral history would provide a paramount source to highlight how computer technologies have shaped economists’ practice. Scholarship in history of economics has emphasized how oral history can help in better investigating economics as a scientific practice,\(^5\) or as a conversational practice unveiling methodological and epistemological views.\(^6\) Similarly, in the field of computer history, oral history has been identified as a fundamental source. Computer history scholars have already built large online collections of oral histories.\(^7\) Our project is broadly inspired from these examples.

Our project plans to conduct, record, and transcript 2-hour interviews with about 30 economists whose direct experience is relevant to the research questions surrounding the computerization of economics (see the Provisional list of interviewees and Interview template in the Appendix).

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7. The Computer History Museum (Mountain View, California), a key institutions for researchers in the history of computers, produces such an oral history archive for research purposes ([https://computerhistory.org/oral-histories/](https://computerhistory.org/oral-histories/) and a dedicated YouTube channel). Similar institutions elaborated oral history initiatives, such as the Charles Babbage Institute (Minnesota; [https://cse.umn.edu/cbi/cbi-oral-histories](https://cse.umn.edu/cbi/cbi-oral-histories)) or the Archives of IT (UK; [https://archivesit.org.uk/interviews/](https://archivesit.org.uk/interviews)).
A preparatory phase to the interviews will take place in Spring-Summer 2022: this will include a one-day workshop, gathering historians of economics currently working on the topic of computerization. This preliminary workshop would ensure that our project collects relevant feedback from ongoing experiences in researching the computerization of economics. Moreover, the workshop will also allow sharing best practices in conducting interviews on this subject. During the preparatory phase, the project team will also consolidate the list of targeted interviewees and prepare the technical aspect for interview production and post-production (purchase of the equipment, recording standards, and technical routines for efficiently storing and editing interviews’ audio and video files). After the summer, we will contact potential interviewees (September-October 2022). Interviews will be held, either online or in person, in Fall-Winter 2022-2023. The actual interview phase will be completed by the Spring 2023. During Spring-Summer 2023, the collected materials will go through a “post-production” phase, in order to produce three outputs:

(i) a full transcript of the interviews;
(ii) an audio file of each interview;
(iii) a short video (10 minutes) of highlights, summarizing each interview.

These three outputs will be delivered to the HES by September 2023. We suggest that transcripts and audio files should be made available only to HES members, for the purposes of their research (via the HES website, requiring HES membership login). Conversely, short videos should be broadcasted publicly on a dedicated YouTube channel. If our project is accepted, we are of course open to discuss this proposal with the Executive Committee of the Society, in order to find the most suitable (scientifically and technically) dissemination channels for the materials.

**Project provisional timeline**

![Timeline Diagram](image)

We think that such an oral history collection would benefit to several areas of inquiry in history of economics (those areas for which computerization has had a distinctive impact). This would notably include the history of applied economics, the history of the economic profession (particularly those

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8 This one-day workshop will take place in May in Paris, immediately before or after an already planned workshop, gathering around 20 authors working on the special issue "The Computerization of Economics. Computers, Programming, and the Internet in the History of Economics," organized by OEconomia – History, Methodology, Philosophy (see Boumans et al., 2021). See Appendix for a provisional list of participants.

9 For instance, an alternative solution would be to make audio recordings of interviews also publicly available, as an independent podcast (with no additional cost).
interested in education and training issues), the history of macroeconomics, the history of econometrics—just to mention the most obvious research areas for which computerization is a highly relevant aspect. Most importantly, once this project is completed, it would have established guidelines, methodology, and “technical infrastructure” for an oral history collection on the other topics in the history of economics. Other historians of economics (individually or as teams), working on other topics that would require collecting oral histories, could, in the future, build upon our project to enlarge and enrich the oral history collection. For these reasons, we think that our project meets the requirements of the HES New Initiatives Fund, since it will create two public goods for the community: materials for advancing our knowledge on the computerization of economics; and the basis for putting resources in common in the future (i.e. an oral history online collection). Moreover, we think that a careful editing and framing of short videos from our interviews could create an attractive channel for people outside the community of historians of economics. Henceforth, our project also would contribute to further enlarge and improve the visibility of the HES.

Each interview will be prepared and conducted jointly by two among the six participants to the project. All participants have already conducted interviews in their past research (see CVs). The ambition of the project is to investigate a sufficiently diverse spectrum of actors (see the Provisional list of interviewees in the Appendix) and to engage in an in-depth conversation with interviewees (see the Interview template in the Appendix). The project requires a technical an editorial support for the transcription and editing of videos: hence, the main funding requirement of our project consist of an honorarium for a research assistant taking up these tasks (after the interviews rounds, Spring-Summer 2023). We would like, ideally, to take in for this role a young scholar (graduate student or post-doc), who is already part of the history of economics community; he/she could then also intellectually benefit from participating to the project. This is the main funding requirement for our project, besides expenses for travel (for in-person interviews) and for equipment (to ensure the technical audio and visual quality of the outputs).

Strategy for project evaluation

Stage 1 (preparation of interviews, Spring-Summer 2022). The general template for interviews as well as best practices will be evaluated through collective discussion between the six main investigators of this project and the attendees to the one-day workshop (cf. supra). During this preparatory phase, investigators will also discuss bilaterally issues and specific questions (relating to particular interviewees) with other historians with expertise on the interviewee’s career or on the intellectual/institutional context. These will guarantee that interviews are adequately prepared, following best practices, and oriented toward precise and relevant questions for each interviewee.

10 This includes obviously the existence of an online repository for transcripts/audio/videos, but we are also willing to make available our interview production process (techniques, software, protocol of interview) to anyone who will decide, in the future, to contribute enriching the HES oral history collection with new interviews, focused on other topics.
Stage 3 of the project (editing of the video interviews). The first four-five “test” edited videos will be sent out for feedback to a pool of diverse historians of economics not part of the project. Feedback received from them will help setting the right standards for producing the final videos.

Finally, an overall evaluation of the project could be conducted one or two years after publication of the interviews and transcripts, based on usual metrics (view-count for videos, number of demands for accessing the full transcripts, number of published articles using the materials, etc.).

**Budget**

The main expense of this project is an honorarium for a research assistant producing a full transcript for each interview and an edited video version of the interview.

The one-day-workshop organization cost will cover (i) the cost of lunch and coffee for the day, based on an expected attendance of 30 in-person participants (total 1050 euros, i.e. 1218$); the rest of the funding should support travel and accommodation expenses for young scholars.

Travel expenses for in-person interviews are highly dependent from responses by prospected interviewees and the possibility to arrange a satisfactory schedule. At this early stage, the amount budgeted below has been calculated as corresponding approximatively to the cost of one-week journey to the US for two interviewers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price (US$)</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-day-workshop organization</td>
<td>2500$ USD (travel and accommodation support, particularly aimed at young scholars)</td>
<td>May 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full transcription of the interviews &amp; Video editing</td>
<td>6000$ 30 2-hour interviews x 9 hours of transcription work per interview x 12.72$ per hour honorarium; plus an additional three months’ work for video editing¹¹</td>
<td>Spring/Summer 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>1100$ 1 camera 150$ 1 audio-recorder 250$ 2 microphones 400$ 1 external hard drive 100$</td>
<td>Summer 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel expenses for interviews</td>
<td>3000$ (approximatively: this obviously depends on the actual interview schedule)</td>
<td>Fall-Winter 2022-2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12'500$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹¹ Based on the transcription honorarium established by French CNRS, that is 10.97 euros per hour of transcript.
Applicants CV

Francesco Sergi

Current position: Associate Professor in Economics, Université Paris Est Créteil; Applied Foreign Languages Department Co-Chair

Education: PhD, Economics, Université Paris 1 Panthéon -Sorbonne (2017)

Publications

Interview experience

Grant management experience
- Research Grant (« Bonus Qualité Recherche »), Université Paris Est Créteil, 2021
- Research Grant (« Bonus Qualité Recherche »), Université Paris Est Créteil, 2020

Conference/Workshop organization experience
- Workshop “From thought experiments to Agent Based Models and calibration. Reflecting (on) the many facets of simulations in economics.” (Paris, 10-11 October 2019).
Pierrick Dechaux

Current position: Teacher in law and economics, Saint-Lambert CFA.

Education: PhD, Economics, Université Paris 1 Panthéon -Sorbonne (2017)

Publications and working papers


Interview experience

- 4 Interviews and a 3-month ethnographic inquiry at the Surveys of Consumers in the Survey Research Center, University of Michigan (2015).

Grant management experience

- HES Young Scholar Travel Grant, 2018.
- Young Scholars Travel Grant, Collège des écoles doctorales de l’université Paris 1 Panthéon- Sorbonne, 2015.

Conference/Workshop organization experience

- Doctorissimes, Paris 1 Economics PhD bi-annual conference, Université Paris 1 Panthéon- Sorbonne (2013-2014)
Cléo Chassonnery-Zaïgouche

Current positions

Research associate, “Expertise Under Pressure” research group, Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Cambridge, CRASSH, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
Research Fellow, Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge.

Education: PhD, Economics, Université Paris 1 Panthéon -Sorbonne (2014)

Recent publications (selection)


Interview experience

- Interviews with De Orley Ashenfelter, Barbara Bergmann, Charles Betsey, Margaret Simms, Shoshana Grossbard.

Grant management experience

- Young Scholars Grant, Collège des écoles doctorales de l’université Paris 1 Panthéon- Sorbonne, 2012.

Conference/Workshop organization experience

- 2021. Special session – “Women and Economics” (with J. Singleton and E. Forget), ASSA online.
Thomas Delcey

Current position: Post-Doctoral Fellow, Duke University, Center for the History of Political Economy, Durham, US.

Education: PhD, Economics, Université Paris 1 Panthéon -Sorbonne (2021).

Publications

Grant management experience
- Young Scholars Grant, Collège des écoles doctorales de l'université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2019.

Conference/Workshop organization experience
- 2017-2020 Research seminar Albert O. Hirschman, Centre d'Economie de la Sorbonne.
- 2020 Conference “REHPERE”, Centre d'Economie de la Sorbonne.
- 2018 Conference “14th Doctorissimes” , Ecole doctorale Panthéon-Sorbonne.Workshop
Dorian Jullien

Current position: Associate Professor in Economics, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne.

Education: PhD, Economics, Université Nice Sophia Antipolis (2016).

Publications


Interview experience
Extensive work on the methodological foundations of the interview as a method in the social sciences and in the history of economic thought in particular (see Jullien, 2018a; *supra*).

Grant management experience


Conference/Workshop organization experience

- “Historical, Methodological and Philosophical perspectives on microeconomics” (Nice, March 2015).
- Journées de microéconomie appliquée (Nice, June 2013).
- “Process and Order in the History of Ontological Thinking in Economics » (Nice, June 2013).
- Gide Conference (Nice, 7-9 June 2012).
Romain Plassard

Current position: Associate Professor in Economics, Université Paris-Dauphine, PSL University.

Past positions: Research Fellow, Université Côte d’Azur (2018-2019); Research Fellow, Duke University (2017-2018).

Education: PhD, Economics, Université de Lille (2016)

Publications


Interview experience

17 semi-directed interviews with economists and econometricians involved in the development of disequilibrium macroeconomics in Europe. These interviews will serve to write an article, “The Europeanization of Macroeconomics: The case of Equilibrium Models with Rationing,” with Mathieu Renault (Université Côte d’Azur).

4 semi-directed interviews with experts in Agent-Based Modelling. Three interviewees, Karen Braun-Munzinger, Arthur Turrell (the physicist), and Arzu Uluc are current or past staff of the Bank of England. For details, see “Making a Breach: The Incorporation of Agent-Based Models into the Bank of England’s Toolkit” (http://www.gredeg.cnrs.fr/working-papers/GREDEG-WP-2020-30.pdf)

Grant management experience

- 2017: Research Fellowship, Center for the History of Political Economy.

Conference/Workshop organization experience

- 2016: Co-organization of “Macroeconomics in Perspective II” (Université de Lille).
Appendix

Provisional list of interviewees

This list is provisional insofar as we have not been yet prospecting interviewees or groups of interviewees (so refusal/absence of response is to be taken into account; hence, the list includes more than the prospected target of 30 interviewees). Moreover, the list will remain open to suggestions and to a more in-depth discussion within the project team (cf. Step 1 of the project).

Rationale

The overall logic of this provisional list is to showcase (for the purpose of HES assessment of the project) what would be some relevant “profiles” for potential interviewees. Our rationale for selecting interviewees would be to cover different generations of economists, male and female economists, and different geographical areas, as well as four key research areas within the discipline (broadly defined: applied microeconomics, macroeconomics, computational economics, and statistics and econometrics). However, we would also like to explore (although less systematically) a few other areas (finance, experimental economics, and game theory)—which, we think, could provide interest contrasts with the four main areas and, moreover, encourage new historical research on these fields.

We also tried to select individuals who, to our best knowledge, have not been yet interviewed on similar or related questions. Following the same logic, we decided, so far, to include only few “big names” (such as, for instance, Nobel Memorial Prize laureates), insofar as such “big names” have already received a significant lot of attention from historians, including in oral histories. We consider that focusing on somehow “hidden figures” is more consistent with both the nature of the topic (i.e. computerization) and the purpose of the project (i.e. to open new leads for further research in the history of economics).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Research field</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARIFOVIC, Jasmina</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>50-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Former President of Society for Computational Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVOUY-DOVI, Sanvi</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>60-ish</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Conception of a Fortran Program to estimate equilibrium models with rationing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 For these four areas, we also suggest including a few authors of popular textbooks (especially for econometrics), in order to get their perspective on the changing role and place of computer in the training of economists.

13 For instance, for macroeconomics, we have excluded from our list most people related to the development of DSGE-related software (such as Dynare), as ongoing research on this subject, including oral history, is already being conducted in parallel (cf. Workshop attendees list infra, Cherrier et al. and Bongers et al.). The same remark applies to experimental economics (ibid., Svorenčik).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BAUM, Christopher</td>
<td>Applied econometrics</td>
<td>50-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Founder member of the REPEC project and STATA contributor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>BOURGUIGNON, François</td>
<td>Applied microeconomics</td>
<td>60-is</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Development of microsimulation models of taxation for policymaking institutions in France and Europe (SYSIFF, EUROMOD, TAXIPP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>CHIAPPORI, Pierre-André</td>
<td>Applied microeconomics</td>
<td>60-ish</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Development of microsimulation models of taxation for policymaking institutions in France and Europe (SYSIFF, EUROMOD, TAXIPP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>COTTRELL, Allin</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>60-ish</td>
<td>UK/US</td>
<td>Developer of GRETL (econometrics software)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>COX, Nick</td>
<td>Applied econometrics, statistics</td>
<td>50-ish</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Most active member of the online forum STATAlist (main forum for STATA users)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>CUNNINGHAM, Scott</td>
<td>Applied microeconomics</td>
<td>40-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Organizer of the “Codechella Econometric Workshop”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>DAWID, Herbert</td>
<td>Computational Economics</td>
<td>40-ish</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Developed an agent-based model of the European Economy (EURACE project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>EPSTEIN, Joshua</td>
<td>Computational economics and Epidemiology</td>
<td>70-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Builder of Sugarscape, a computer program to perform agent-based simulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>FAGIOLO, Giorgio</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>40-ish</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Development of Agent-based models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>FAIR, Ray</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>80-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Decades of experience in macroeconomic modelling + developer of solution algorithms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>FAMA, Eugene</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>80-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Pioneering use of computers to collect financial data and test the “random walk” hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>FARMER, Doyne</td>
<td>Computational economics</td>
<td>60-ish</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Agent-based model builder, including at the Bank of England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>FISCHBACHER, Urs</td>
<td>Experimental economics</td>
<td>60-ish</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Developer of Z-tree (a software for ready-made experiments in economics that is used extensively by the experimental economics community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17+</td>
<td>Fred Online's Team (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis)</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>50-ish (avg)</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Development of the FRED Online database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>GOFFE, William</td>
<td>Econometrics and Monetary Economics</td>
<td>60-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Coordinator of AEA NeTEc project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>GREENE, William</td>
<td>Econometrics</td>
<td>60-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Reference textbook author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>GUJARATI, Damodar</td>
<td>Econometrics</td>
<td>80-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Reference textbook author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>KENDRICK, David</td>
<td>Computational economics</td>
<td>70-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Former president and founder of the Society for Computational Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>JUDD, Kenneth</td>
<td>Computational economics</td>
<td>70-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Former president of the Society for Computational Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>LEBARON, Blake</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>50-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Specialist in non-linear dynamics and elaboration of an agent-based model of the stock-market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>MONTFORT, Alain</td>
<td>Econometrics</td>
<td>70-ish</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Development of estimation methods based on simulations and expert in financial econometrics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>PARKS, Robert</td>
<td>Public finance</td>
<td>70-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Creator of the Economics Working Paper Archive and REPEC team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>PIERSE, Richard</td>
<td>Econometrics</td>
<td>40-ish</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Author of WINSOLVE (non-linear modelling software)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>ROVENTINI, Andrea</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>40-ish</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Development of Agent-based models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>SALANIE, Bernard</td>
<td>Econometrics and contract theory</td>
<td>50-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Contributed to the emergence of estimation methods based on Monte Carlo simulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>SHADMAN-MEHTA, Fatemeh</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>40-ish</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>In charge of computer programming in the European Unemployment Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>TESFATSION, Leigh</td>
<td>Computational economics</td>
<td>70-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Development of Agent-based models, Society for Computational Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>TUROCY, Theodore</td>
<td>Game theory</td>
<td>40-ish</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Developer of GAMBIT (game theory software)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>VARIAN, Hal</td>
<td>Microeconomics</td>
<td>70-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Reference textbook author; research on software industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>VELUPILLAI, Vela</td>
<td>Computational economics</td>
<td>70-ish</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Contributions to computational economics, applied to both macro and micro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>VERMANDEL, Gauthier</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>30-ish</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Had to adapt DYNARE to incorporate a genetic algorithm into a DSGE model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35+</td>
<td>World Inequality Database Team (Piketty, Saez, Chancel, …)</td>
<td>Inequalities</td>
<td>40-ish/50-ish</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Design and data collection for an online repository of inequality data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>ZIMMERMANN, Christian</td>
<td>Macroeconomics</td>
<td>50-ish</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Coordinator of the REPEC team and member of the NeTEc project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Provisional Interview Template

This is a draft for the general template of our questions for interviews. Sub-questions (e.g. Q1.1) denote “follow-ups” on the main questions. Obviously, this template should be adapted to the specific profile of each interviewee’s personal history. Notably, questions specific to the field of expertise of the interviewee will be included.

Q1 When did you use a computer for the first time (either for personal or professional purpose)? For what purpose or activity? What kind of hardware you had at your disposal?
   - Q1.1 When did you use a computer for the first time as an economist?
   - Q1.2 For what purpose or activity?
   - Q1.3 What kind of hardware you had at your disposal?

Q2 What kind of training had you received in using computers (or any specific software)?
   - Q2.1 If computer training was part of your undergraduate or graduate training as an economist, how did it fit with the rest of your training program?
   - Q2.2 Do you know how your computer training compare with the computer training was provided elsewhere at the same period?

Q3 In your own teaching (past and/or current) to undergraduate or graduate in economics, do you use computers and/or any specific software? To what purpose?
   - Q3.1 Why do you teach using this specific software? (Why did you chose this software and not another?)
   - Q3.2 In your opinion, with respect to the use of computers/software, how does your teaching experience compare with your own experience as a student? What has changed?

Q4 In your first research works (as a young scholar), what was the role/use of computers and/or software?
   - Q4.1 What kind of hardware were you using? What kind of software? Why?
   - Q4.2 Were researchers in your institution equipped with the same type of hardware? Were they using the same software?
   - Q4.3 What was your institution’s policy in terms of hardware equipment, software licences, …?
   - Q4.4 Did you operate the computer exclusively on your own, and why? Did you write your own code, and why? Did you need any assistance or help, and in this case, where were you able to find it?
   - Q4.5 At the time, would you say that your use on computers/software was the “norm” within the profession?

Q5 Along your research career, do you recall any particular moment of “amazement” or “wonderment” about computer technology? That is, anything (process, results, …) in your use of computers/software
for research that you have found particularly satisfying (for instance particularly time- or cost-saving), or unexpectedly useful, or working out better than expected (for instance, producing unexpected but meaningful results)? Can you explain precisely why?

**Q6** Conversely, do you recall any moment of “frustration” about computer technologies in your research career? That is, something that did not work out as expected, that was not satisfying, that was too time-consuming, or things that you had planned but that were not “technically” feasible because of the computer technology at the time?

**Q6.1** Do you remember changing anything in your research design, to adapt to these constraints, and how?

**Q7** How would you characterize the evolution of your own use of computers and software along your career? That is, did your use of computer and software became more intensive (more time and tasks processed through computers)? Did you have to change periodically your computer-related routines, or did these remain steady over time?

**Q7.1** For instance did you always use the same software? Why keep using it? What role would play: Personal habit? Collective norm? The evolution of the software (updates, new releases, fixes)? The community around the software (particularly, did online communities such as online forum play a role?)

**Q8** When did you first use the World Wide Web and for what kind of personal or professional activities? Why and how did you started?

**Q8.1** At the time, was this use widespread?

**Q8.2** How did your use of the World Wide Web evolved over time?

**Q9** Free-software and open-access policy vs. proprietary software: Did this opposition ever played a role in your engagement with software/computer/the internet?

**Q10** For writing, presentations, and teaching, do you use Office (Word, Powerpoint) or LaTeX? How did this evolve over your career?

**Q11** Let’s consider your most recent paper (or couple of papers). Imagine you would need to write that most recent paper using the computer technologies (hardware and software) that you had at your disposal at the beginning of your career: Would that have been possible? What would have been the most important differences/challenges?

**Q12** As you know, this interview is part of a broad project trying to understand, from a historical perspective, the role and place of computer, software, and the world wide web in the history of economics (a phenomenon that we call, in short, the “computerization” of economics). As conclusive
questions, we would like to hear your thoughts about the main research questions of our project, based on your own personal experience (such as we just discussed).

**Q12.1** In your opinion, what role played computerization in creating the conditions for new interactions between academic research, economic policies, business activity, and economic teaching?

**Q12.2** One recurrent view on computerization is that this is simply about the adoption of pre-formatted “tools” that do not fundamentally alter the scope and nature of economics. Such “tools” solely increase “computational power” or “tractability”, i.e. they allow economists to perform the same operations as in the pre-computerization era, only “faster” and at a “lower cost”; computers allow to “incrementally complexify” models, or to handle “more data”. What is your opinion on this view? Does this correspond to your experience?

**Q12.3** Do you think there any particular areas of economics or time periods that we should investigated in relation to the computerization issue?
Workshop – Provisional list of attendees and their research topic

0. **Editors of special issue:** Marcel Boumans, Cléo Chassonnery-Zaïgouche, Pierrick Dechaux, Francesco Sergi

1. **Bo An** (Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, Yale University)
   “The Rise of Quantitative Economics and Software Crisis in the People’s Republic of China from the 1950s to the 1980s”

2. **Oliver Beige** (Visionary Lab, Vienna)

3. **Anelí Bongers, Benedetto Molinari and José L. Torres** (Department of Economics, University of Malaga)
   Computers, Programming, and Dynamic General Equilibrium Macroeconomics Modelling

4. **Béatrice Cherrier** (École Polytechnique, CREST), **Aurélien Saïdi** (EconomiX, Université Paris Nanterre), **Francesco Sergi** (LIPHA, UPEC)
   “‘Build Your DSGE Model in Ten Minutes’: The Role of Dynare in the Development of the Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium Approach”

5. **Chung-Tang Cheng** (London School of Economics)
   “From Computers to Computers: The EDSAC and Cambridge Microeconometricians”

6. **Pierrick Dechaux** (REhPERE)
   “The Propagation and Consolidation of Technical Knowledge through Web Forums: The Statalist Case”

7. **Marc Gaudry** (Département de sciences économiques, Université de Montréal)
   “Seemingly Computer-Driven Choices in Theory, Tools and Documentation of Results: A Few Trends Away from Realism Observed over 60 Years of Transport Economics”

8. **Johanna Gautier-Morin** (European University Institute, Florence)
   “The Revenge of the Nerds: How Ph.D. Scientists Took Over the Market”

9. **Julien Gradoz** (Université de Lille, CLERSE)
   Computers and the Disaggregation of Trade Data

10. **Tinu Joseph** (St. Francis De Sales’ College, Seminary Hills, Nagpur, India)
    “The Role of Digital Household-Level Data and Analytical Software in Reshaping the Development of Labour Research in India”
11. Lauren Laurroy (GREDEG, Université Côte d’Azur)
   “How computerization at RAND in the 60s translate an interdisciplinary methodology
   and an open-system ontology: The example of Schelling’s contribution”

12. Laetita Lenel (Humboldt University Berlin)
   “The Need for Speed. Electronic Computers in Business Forecasting at Mid-Century”

13. Maria Alejandra Madi (UNICAMP and Center for Pragmatism Studies, Pontifícia
    Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUC-SP), Brazil)
   “Computer Simulations and the Real World: Rethinking the Epistemology of
   Economics in the Light of Pragmatism”

14. Andrej Svorenčík (University of Mannheim)
   “A Tale of Two Laboratories: The Role of Computers in the Emergence of Experimental
   Economics”

15. Narcis Tulbure (Department of Finance, Bucharest University of Economic Studies)
   “Disruptions to Plan: Computers, Data, and the Transition from Socialism in
   Romania”

16. Pedro G. Duarte (INSPER Institute, São Paulo) and Francesco Sergi (Université
    Paris Est Créteil)
   “Computer Operators and Software Engineers at Data Resources Inc. (DRI): An Oral
   History (1969-1983)”