

Announcing the 49th Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference
October 15-17, 2026
Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA

Shakespeare and Technology

Plenary Speakers:

Alan B. Farmer (Ohio State University), Associate Professor and co-creator, with Zachary Lesser, of *DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks*

Samuel Lemley (Carnegie Mellon University) Curator of Special Collections, CMU Libraries, Director of the Posner Center for Special Collections

This conference considers a range of intersections between Shakespeare and technology, both in the early modern period and in contemporary critical and performance practices. Shakespeare's works emerge from a culture shaped by developments in print, theater architecture, and stagecraft, while ongoing innovations in digital tools, computational methods, and performance media continue to influence how those works are studied, taught, and performed. Bringing these perspectives into relation opens new ways of understanding the material, cultural, and interpretive frameworks that shape Shakespearean texts across time.

The OVSC welcomes papers and roundtables on all topics related to a general theme of Shakespeare and Technology. Questions addressed might include:

- How does the use of current technologies, including digital archives, computational analysis, and immersive media, open new interpretive and/or pedagogical possibilities for Shakespearean texts?
- What potential do emerging tools and media forms have to reshape our understanding of early modern playgoing, textual transmission, and the Shakespearean archive?
- How do early modern plays and poems represent and interrogate the changing technologies of their day? What scientific, religious, economic, and moral considerations does early modern literature attach to technological innovation?
- How might performance technologies, both early modern (such as stage machinery and theatrical effects) and contemporary (including projection, motion capture, and virtual environments), shape the staging and reception of Shakespeare's works?

We welcome papers and projects taking any number of critical approaches, be they historicist, presentist, theatrical, or theoretical. Projects considering Shakespeare's reception, adaptation, and performance, as well as papers focused on Shakespeare's contemporaries (i.e., other early modern authors, artists, and thinkers) are also welcome. We especially encourage papers that adopt an interdisciplinary approach.

The conference is open to graduate students for regular sessions and to undergraduate students for roundtable seminars. Graduate students and undergraduate students are encouraged to submit papers for the M. Rick Smith Memorial Prize and the Julia R. Lupton Graduate Prize.

Please submit 200-300 word abstracts by September 10, 2026 to edieteri@andrew.cmu.edu and swittek@andrew.cmu.edu. The OVSC also offers an Early Decision option, with the deadline of July 15, 2026.