

Bernard S. Finn IEEE History Prize 2018

Julie Cohn

For “Data, Power, and Conservation: The Early Turn to Information Technologies to Manage Energy Resources,” *Information & Culture*, 52 (3) (2017): 334-361 DOI: 10.7560/IC52303

Cohn’s paper deftly connects two facets of electrical history—power engineering and information technology—and shows how they grew in tandem from the early twentieth century as networks of power generation and distribution took form. By connecting developments in power and data processing to ideas about conservation and environmental protection, the paper also bridges scholarship in the histories of technology, energy, and environmentalism. Cohn’s work allows us to see the power grid in new terms, for example as an early form of big data or by likening grid operators to natural resource managers whose goals aligned with those of conservationists. By making innovative contributions to multiple areas of electrical history and pushing the field into new areas, Cohn’s paper is most deserving of the Bernard S. Finn IEEE History Prize.