European Holocaust Research Infrastructure
H2020-INFRAIA-2014-2015
GA no. 654164

Deliverable 12.3

Report on digital archives and lieux de memoire

Michal Frankl
Jewish Museum in Prague and the Masaryk Institute
and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences

Wolfgang Schellenbacher
Jewish Museum in Prague

Start: May 2018 [M38]
Due: April 2019 [M48]
Actual: June 2019 [M50]

Document Information

Project URL	www.ehri-project.eu
Document URL	
Deliverable	D.12.3 Report on digital archives and lieux de memoire
Work Package	WP12
Lead Beneficiary	P3 Jewish Museum in Prague
Relevant Milestones	MS3
Dissemination level	Confidential
Contact Person	Michal Frankl, frankl@mua.cas.cz
Abstract (for dissemination)	This deliverable summarises the activities of WP12 for a critical exploration of making documentation about the Holocaust available in the places of memory (concept by Pierre Nora), with a particular focus on public space. To investigate the questions on how different digital approaches contribute to the social construction of space and to map and discuss the forms of bringing Holocaust documents digitally to the public space, WP12 organised an international workshop "It happened here! Digital and Shared: Holocaust History in Public space" and brought together local initiatives from several countries. The deliverable gives an overview on the workshop and also summarises the discussions and possible future areas of engagement of EHRI to support projects in this overlapping fields of spatial studies and human geography.
Management Summary	Management Summary (required if the deliverable exceeds more than 25 pages) N/A

Table of Contents

1   Introduction

Mobile maps and the constant accessibility of information, as well as more experimental technologies like augmented reality, are changing our perception of the present as we move around in our daily life or while we travel. Do these technologies also affect how we consume and understand information about the past in space? In this task, EHRI encouraged a critical exploration of how such digital approaches contribute to the social construction of space: Do such projects contribute to the rethinking of the public space, today often ethnically and culturally homogenised? Does such experience ignite new forms of imagination of such spaces as shared and multi-ethnic, locations where encounters, exchange and enrichment took place as well as spaces of conflict reaching from ethnic and political violence, through expropriation to deportation, incarceration and murder?

In this task, EHRI explored the possibilities of making documentation about the Holocaust available in the places of memory[1], with a particular focus on public space outside of archives, museums and memorials (in the strict sense of the word), and the role of EHRI among numerous initiatives that aim to make Holocaust documentation available in the (physical) space where the historical events unfolded, be it a cityspace or the area of a former ghetto or camp and its vicinity.

In order to achieve this goal, WP12 wanted to take stock of local initiatives and to map and discuss the forms of digital approaches to bringing Holocaust documents to the public space. For this purpose, it organised an international workshop "It happened here! Digital and Shared: Holocaust History in Public space" which took place on April 1st-2nd, 2019 at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (full programme see Workshop Programme). The workshop was organised by Wolfgang Schellenbacher and

Illustration 1: Participants of the workshop "It happened here! Digital and Shared: Holocaust History in Public space", April 1st 2019.
Photo: VWI

Michal Frankl from the Jewish Museum in Prague, in cooperation with the staff of the Wiesenthal Institute. Vienna was selected for the possibility to explore the results of several digital projects which place data on Holocaust victims and other Holocaust-related information and documentation into the space of the city.

The call for papers for the workshop resulted in a surprising number of proposals of papers and project presentations, including many which weren't known to the organisers beforehand. This way, 40 speakers from 13 different countries (Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Israel, Romania, USA, Netherlands, Sweden) presented various projects from those countries. While not a complete

---

1   Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7–24.

list, the workshop programme gives a good overview of the types of projects that are currently being developed. In order to foster both discussion of methodology and exchange of experience, the organisers included only a limited number of full papers and, instead of formal passive presentations, attempted to create space for the participants to engage and share their projects with others. Two guided walks through Vienna, based on two local digital projects (Memento Wien and Hungarian Jewish Labour in Vienna), further added to the hands-on character of the workshop. The first panel was devoted to different aspects of Holocaust history in the city of Vienna and the transformation of its representation from analogue to digital formats. Further papers critically analysed similar phenomena in Berlin and in the Netherlands and scrutinised the role of virtual tours and street view in Auschwitz.

Illustration 2: Discussion in one of the so-called "project exchanges" on the workshop "It happened here! Digital and Shared: Holocaust History in Public space"
Photo: VWI

The core activity of the workshop was the two so-called "project exchanges" in which each project first offered a short (10 minute) presentation in a plenary session, offering the representative(s) an opportunity to discuss their applications, methodology, sources, etc. at separate stations. Participants circulated between the project "stations" spread over the two floors of the Wiesenthal Institute. This possibility to engage in individual and group discussion resulted in lively discussions and participants engaged with each other and commented positively.

2 Workshop programme

Monday, April 1st

09.30 – 09.45	**Welcome and Opening Comments**	*Béla Rásky (Vienna),* **Wolfgang Schellenbacher** *(Prague, Vienna)*
09.45 – 11.15	**It happened in Vienna! – Holocaust history in the city space** *Chair:* **Béla Rásky** *(Vienna)*	**Dieter Hecht, Eleonore Lappin-Eppel** *(Vienna)* "Topography of the Shoah in Vienna": Analog Concepts of Holocaust Research for a Digital World
		Thomas Jekel, Katharina Wöhs *(Salzburg)* A Wiki Approach to Enhance Database Use in Holocaust Education
		Popescu, Diana *(London)* The After-Lives of Holocaust Archival Images in Public Art
11.15 – 11.30	*Coffee Break*	
11.30 – 13.00	*Many digital projects on Holocaust in public space are in development, at the same time and without communicating with each other. The Project Exchange gives possibility to share experience and learn from similar activities. Project representatives will give a max. 10-minute very brief and concise introduction, followed by an interactive session in which participants can individually engage with them and digitally share their comments, notes and ideas.*	
	Project Exchange – Introductions *Chair:* **Marianne Windsperger**	**Wolfgang Gasser, Benjamin Grilj** *(St. Pölten)* "juden-in-st-poelten.at" and "Communicating Vessels"
		Sarah Gensburger *(Paris)* "Voices from the Holocaust in Paris" The Web Application "It Happened Here": From Scientific Researcher to Everyday Use [virtual participant]
		Mathias Lichtenwagner *(Vienna)* "POREM" – Digital Maps of Remembrance
		Roderick Miller *(Berlin)* "Tracing the Past - Mapping the Lives"
		Anders Blomqvist *(Uppsala)* "Életem = My Life". The Holocaust in Jászberény and the

		Possibilities of Digital Technology
		Susanne Maslanka, Sophie Rathke *(München)* Münchner Leerstellen. A Virtual Exhibition on Forgotten Places of Nazi Crimes in Munich and its Environs.
		Martin Recken *(Berlin)* The „berlinHistory APP"
		Carmen Smiatacz *(Hamburg)* "Geschichtomat" – How to Teach Jewish History with Digital Aid
13.00 – 13.45	*Lunch Break*	
13.45 – 15.15	**Project Exchange – Interactive Session**	
15.15 – 16.30	**Guided Tours**	*Group 1:* **"Memento Vienna"** – **Wolfgang Schellenbacher** *(Prague, Vienna)* *Group 2:* **"Hungarian Forced Labour"** – **Kinga Frojimovics, Éva Kovács** *(Vienna)*
16.30 – 16.45	*Coffee Break*	
16.45 – 17.45	**Making private space public?** *Chair: Éva Kovács*	**Caroline Cormier** *(Toronto)* Addressing Jewish Life in Berlin: Sites of Memory in Jewish Places and Denk Mal am Ort
		Angela Boone *(Amsterdam)* Usage of Historical Information Outside a Museum or Memorial Site: Annual Project Open Jewish Homes in the Netherlands

Tuesday, April 2nd

09.30 – 10.30	**Bringing Holocaust documentation into public space** *Chair: Kobi Kabalek (Tel Aviv)*	**Alina Bothe** *(Berlin)* Testimonies in the Social Sphere – Layers of Time and Memory
		Zofia Trębacz *(Warsaw)* The memory of the Holocaust through a Historical Model
10.30 – 10.45	*Coffee Break*	

	Many digital projects on Holocaust in public space are in development, at the same time and without communicating with each other. The Project Exchange gives possibility to share experience and learn from similar activities. Project representatives will give a max. 10-minute very brief and concise introduction, followed by an interactive session in which participants can individually engage with them and digitally share their comments, notes and ideas.	
10.45 – 12.00	**Project Exchange – Introductions** *Chair: **Magdalena Sedlická***	***Gudrun Blohberger, Christian Dürr** (Mauthausen)* Virtual Interventions in Public Social Space. Digital Resources of the Mauthausen Memorial and the Linking of Space and Memory.
		***Andreas Filipovic, Michael Hollogschwandtner** (Wien)* Audiovisual Archive
		***Thomas Irmer** (Berlin)* Satellite Camps - A New App on Satellite Camps of Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp in Berlin
		***Alfred Lang, Michael Schreiber** (Eisenstadt)* Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft – Remembrance and Commemoration
		***Aneta Plzáková, Zuzana Schreiberová** (Prague)* *Integration and Segregation in the City Space: The History of the Holocaust in Prague through a Mobile Application*
		Martin Šmok (Prague) Iwalks at the Intersection of Testimony and Space
		***Maciek Zabierowski** (Oświęcim)* The Story of Jewish Oświęcim [virtual participant]
12.00 – 13.15	**Project Exchange – Interactive Session**	
13.15 – 14.00	*Lunch Break*	
14.00 – 15.15	**Guided Tours**	***Group 1:** "Hungarian Forced Labour" – **Kinga Frojimovics, Éva Kovács** (Vienna)* ***Group 2:** "Memento Vienna" – **Wolfgang Schellenbacher** (Prague, Vienna)*
15.15 – 15.30	*Coffee Break*	
15.30 – 16.30	**Auschwitz through digital technology**	***Imogen Dalziel** (London)* Walking Through the Auschwitz Museum - At Home: Online Virtual Tours and the Concept of Authenticity

	*Chair: **Elana Jakel** (Washington DC)*	***Tomasz Łysak** (Warsaw)* Digital Visualisation of Former Death Camps: Google Street View vs. Virtual Tour of Auschwitz-Birkenau
16.30 – 17.30	**Concluding remarks and discussion**	***Michal Frankl** (Vienna, Prague)*

3   Summary of discussion

While the projects presented focus on different territories, victim groups and topics, and the resulting applications used different methodology and targeted different user groups, certain core topics crystalized during the workshop. The report below builds on the summary of the workshop given at the end by Michal Frankl and the concluding discussion.

The projects introduced during the workshop illustrated two overlapping approaches to data brought to public space via web/mobile technology:

1. Bringing pre-existing data to the public space using mobile technology. This included, for instance, new approaches to the large data sets of Holocaust victims and capitalises on the documentation of names conducted by numerous Holocaust archives and Gedenkstätte.

2. Bottom-up approaches which build on local initiatives and centre the applications around data creation through school projects, citizen science or – for instance – crowdsourcing.

The presentations showed not only the methodological difference, but also possible synergy between both approaches which should be explored in the future. For instance, the potential of deploying large data sets to mobilise local participation and to create new data should be examined and tested. On the other hand, presenting large amount of data within the limits of a mobile screen and while moving through space presents problems with usability.

The number of projects shows the momentum driven by the technological advances and the spread of mobile connectivity in Europe. Yet, interestingly, not much discussion was devoted to technology itself, be it on its possibilities or constraints. Most participants showed more interest in methodological and ethical questions, rather than the options and problems of available software and hardware. The technology was understood only as a tool rather than a subject in its own right. There was, however, relatively little information provided in the presentations and in discussion on the real user experience, one which involves emotional reactions and interacting with information via mobile devices in space, reaching beyond just usage statistics. Participants found it difficult to measure the effectiveness and clearly outline what works or doesn't work. On the other hand, several participants stressed the significance of allowing the perceptions of space and history and the experience of our audience to be reflected in such applications.

All projects shared the same objective of recoding the public space by adding another dimension to space in which we move as citizens and residents, but also as tourists. The activists behind these projects wish us to see and experience these spaces, familiar or new, in novel ways. In this way, the workshop connected to the recent research in the overlapping fields of spatial studies and human geography which understand space not only as a physical structure measurable by distances and shapes, but rather highlight the socially constructed nature of space. Social space is established through action and interaction and is based on numerous social relationships. However, this also means that the projects presented during the workshop are not objective observers, but interventions that are themselves part of the social construction of space.

This recognition generated much discussion stressing the need for reflectivity and to pay more attention to ethical issues. Do projects focused on the history of the Holocaust run risk

of essentialising spaces as "Jewish", implying a separate Jewish identity and an enclosed and/or excluded locations? How to present oral history or other testimony in the current space and cope with the inevitable time shifts and place shifts (paper by Alina Bothe and Kobi Kabalek)? Moreover, is there a risk that the presentation with mobile technology, representing actors and historical events as simple dots and short texts, reduces complex reality and human mobility into something stable, petrified and trivialised? Discussants called for reflectivity and for exposing the project methodology to users, including the limitations of data and the methods of representation.

Surprisingly, no participant discussed how to create a good map, even though mapping was central for almost every single project presented. While communicating information about events and interactions in historical spaces, the discussed applications consistently relied on mapping services providing current geographic information, most prominently on the Google Maps, or Open Street Map. For historical information, this can prove most confusing and counter-productive due to the changing street plan, or place names. Very clearly, the projects lacked a reliable infrastructure for WWII and Holocaust-related geographic data on which they could rely.

Related to the dominance of current spatial data (provided by the Google Maps or the Open Street Map), the workshop also exposed the lack of cartographic innovation in the discussed digital projects. Much more experimentation could be done to tailor the maps to the specific topics and to capture uncertainty and mobility, change in time, to show connections between locations or to expose statistical information.

4   Future role of EHRI

Several possible areas of engagement crystalised in the discussion which could be considered by EHRI in the future:

- **Repository of spatial data and geographic services** related to the history of the Holocaust: To lower the threshold for integration of historical geographies, EHRI could collect and/or develop datasets of data on historical borders during the WWI, the locations of camps and ghettos, and possibly selected historical maps.

- **Registry of projects**: As the projects that bring Holocaust documentation to the public space multiply and often develop in isolation, EHRI could develop a simple registry of such projects, making it possible to identify such activities and compare their scope and methodology.

- **Long-term preservation**: Especially smaller projects run by activists face the question of the long-term preservation of data and applications (this was for instance addressed by the Susanne Maslanka and Sophie Rathke in the presentation of the Münchner Lehrstellen project). If resources would permit, EHRI could offer the possibility of a long-term preservation and accessibility, following the FAIR principles, without further developing such applications.

- **EHRI Document Blog**: More effort could be made to present the projects through the EHRI Document Blog which provides space for discussion, exchange and dissemination (workshop participants were encouraged to contribute to the Document Blog).