



European Holocaust Research Infrastructure
H2020-INFRAIA-2019-1
GA no. 871111

Deliverable 2.6

International Conference

Rachel Pistol
King's College London

Petra Drenth
NIOD

Start: June 2023 [M34]
Due: June 2024 [M46]
Actual: September 2024 [M49]



EHRI is funded by the European Union

Document Information

Project URL	www.ehri-project.eu
Document URL	https://www.ehri-project.eu/deliverables-ehri-3-2020-2024
Deliverable	D2.6 - International Conference
Work Package	WP2
Lead Beneficiary	1 NIOD-KNAW
Relevant Milestones	MS4
Dissemination level	Public
Contact Person	Petra Drenth p.Drenth@niod.knaw.nl
Abstract (for dissemination)	In the final year of the third phase of the EHRI project, we organised a major international conference to discuss Holocaust research in a digital age and the role of EHRI in this area. The conference was designed to bring together individuals from the sector of Holocaust studies from a diverse range of backgrounds including academics, archivists and those working in cultural heritage to discuss, and reflect upon, the achievements of EHRI, as well as to explore the impact the EHRI infrastructure has had on Holocaust research and documentation.
Management Summary	n/a

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Preparation.....	4
3	Conference.....	5
4	Conclusion	10
5	Conference Programme	10

1 Introduction

In the final year of the third phase of the EHRI project, we organised a major international conference to discuss Holocaust research in a digital age and the role of EHRI in this area. The conference was designed to bring together individuals from the sector of Holocaust studies from a diverse range of backgrounds including academics, archivists and those working in cultural heritage to discuss, and reflect upon, the achievements of EHRI, as well as to explore the impact the EHRI infrastructure has had on Holocaust research and documentation.

2 Preparation

It was decided that it would be beneficial to schedule the conference alongside the EHRI General Partners Meeting in June 2024, in order to enable as many EHRI Partners as possible to attend the conference. A call for proposals with the conference title “Researching the Holocaust in the Digital Age” was released October 31, 2023.¹

EHRI’s partners in Poland expressed a desire to co-host and it was decided that the Polish Center for Holocaust Research would lead coordination of the conference organisation and the Jewish Historical Institute would lead coordination of the General Partners Meeting, which took place June 19, 2024.

Submitted proposals were evaluated by the conference organisation panel in early 2024. There were many strong proposals and the panel wished to include as many as possible from many different disciplines. Not only were there opportunities for traditional conference presentations but there was also a chance for poster presentations, to enable as much research to be discussed and showcased at the conference as possible. It was also decided to link with EHRI-IP and encourage National Nodes to create flyers that could be handed out at the conference to inform attendees about the future of EHRI as it becomes an EHRI-ERIC and update them on EHRI progress across different countries.

New promotional materials were also created for the EHRI conference, including posters, banners, as well as bookmarks that specifically promoted the EHRI podcast. The background motif and inspiration for the designs was a photo of one of the markers showing where the Warsaw Ghetto was located, making reference to the significance of the location of the conference being held in Warsaw.

¹ <https://www.ehri-project.eu/call-proposals-ehri-academic-conference-2024-researching-holocaust-digital-age>

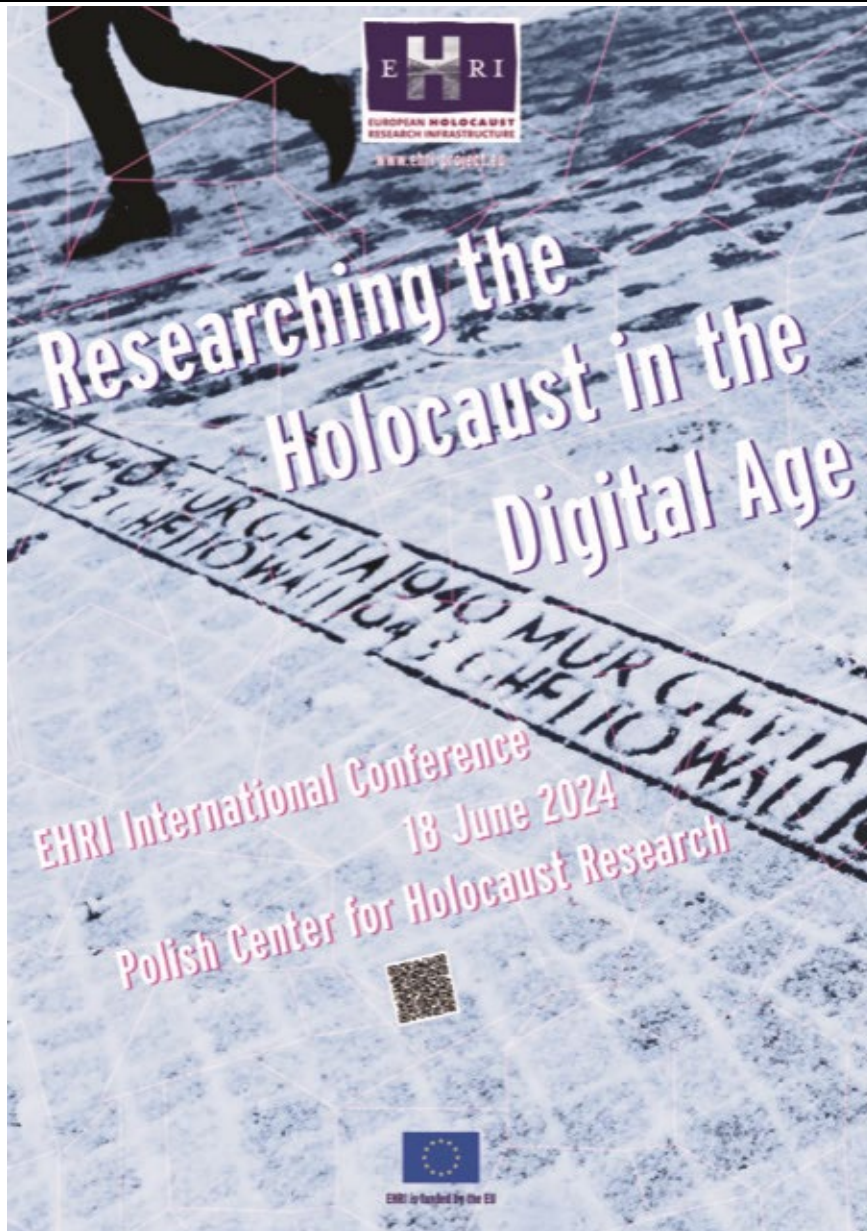


Figure 1 - Poster designed by Anchorette Koolman

3 Conference

On Tuesday 18 June 2024, the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) project hosted the international academic conference “Researching the Holocaust in the Digital Age” at the Staszic Palace, home of the Polish Center for Holocaust Research in Warsaw. EHRI partners in Poland, the Polish Center for Holocaust Research and the Jewish Historical Institute were co-organisers of the conference.



Figure 2 - Conference attendees registering at the Staszic Palace and networking between sessions

A recording of the conference with time schedule is available on our [YouTube channel](#) or on this [webpage](#).

The conference programme featured 12 presenters whose conference papers were selected as well as a 'marketplace' of poster presentations relating to both Holocaust research and EHRI's future development in Europe and beyond.

On the day itself, the conference attracted a crowd of almost 100 attendees from all over Europe, Israel and the USA, including researchers, archivists, academics, policymakers and media specialists.

The entire conference was live streamed and watched by over two hundred people during the day.



Figure 3 - Karel Berkhoff, Co-Director of EHRI, giving an introductory presentation to a packed room of attendees

When the conference started, the audience was welcomed by Barbara Engelking, Director of the [Polish Center for Holocaust Research](#) and received a short introduction to EHRI from EHRI Co-Director and senior researcher at the [NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies](#), Karel Berkhoff.

Then the first panel of four presenters started, moderated by Michal Frankl from the [Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences](#) and involved in EHRI from the beginning. The theme was “New Digital Research Methods and Innovations” related to the Holocaust.



Figure 4 - The first panel of the day

Presenters from large international Holocaust archival institutions [Yad Vashem](#) in Israel and the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) in Washington D.C. gave an insight in the digital impact on the archival services. First [Yael Robinson Gottfeld](#) from Yad Vashem showed how reference and information services in the Yad Vashem archives are challenged by the digital turn, with positive and negative results. [Emily Klein](#) from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum gave a presentation with the title “Querying the Archive”, which investigated the advantages and risks of using relational databases for studying Holocaust-era materials, with the example of diary entries made by pen or pencil.

The other two presentations on this theme were from participants with strong technical backgrounds. [Stanislaw Szombara](#), AGH University of Science and Technology and [Alicja Jarkowska](#), Jagiellonian University, Poland, explained how an intensive study of cartographic representations of the Krakow Ghetto gave new insights into the sometimes distorted image of the tragedy and how interactive online maps may improve this. [Floriane Chiffolleau](#) and [Sarah Beniere](#), both from Inria, France and research and development engineers, shared their experience with streamlining the creation of Holocaust-related Digital

Editions (such as the [EHRI Online Editions](#)) with tools that automatically detect potential named entities within texts.

After a Q & A moment, it was time for a lunch break, which also gave lots of opportunities for asking more questions and networking. During the break, you could also visit several poster presentations related to Holocaust research and get more information on the future development of EHRI by talking to representatives of the National Nodes that are being set up in every EHRI participating country.

There were seven poster presentations of selected candidates, which received much attention, on topics such as “Tracing the ways of Jewish removal goods seized and auctioned in Hamburg and Bremen” by [Jacqueline Malchow](#), German Maritime Museum, or “The Language of Emotions in a Digital Project about the Holocaust” by [Pawel Rams](#) and [Agnieszka Zalotynska](#), from the Polish Academy of Sciences (see [here](#) for all poster presentations).



Figure 5 – Attendees engaging with the poster presentations

After this informative lunch break, two sessions were dedicated to “Exploring the Use of Digital Techniques in Holocaust Research”. The first one was chaired by Rachel Pistol, [King’s College London](#), UK. In four twenty-minute presentations various new digital techniques, such as binary logistic regression, language processing and a virtual platform, were applied to Holocaust research and archival data.



Figure 6 - The second panel

[Simone Gigliotti](#) from the Royal Holloway, University of London talked about “Interacting with Restless Archive: Sustainability and Archival Aggregation in Long-Form Digital Storytelling Platforms”. [Adina Babeş-Fruchter](#), KU Leuven, Belgium, gave a presentation on how to discover patterns in the deportation of Jews in Brussels using binary logistic regression modelling.

Language processing techniques have also given new insights in Holocaust research, as was shown by [Martin Wynne](#), from the University of Oxford and involved in the colleague research infrastructure [CLARIN](#). [Aliisa Råmark](#) and [Héctor López-Carral](#), Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands, shared their research into how to keep the collective memory aware of the Holocaust by creating virtual interactive exploration platforms, to begin with a digitally reconstructed Bergen-Belsen.

The third session of the day was chaired by EHRI Co-Director Karel Berkhoff. It started with a presentation by [Inka Engel](#) from the University of Koblenz about citizen science as an innovation in Holocaust research. [Boris Czerny](#), Université de Caen-Normandie, France applied a multiscale approach, going from a more general level to the smaller, individual one, to the Brest-Litovsk Ghetto.

[Daria Cherkaska](#), Staffordshire University, UK, presented on the Holocaust by bullets and mass grave investigations of Holocaust victims using digital strategies for searching in a country that is fighting a war in the present, Ukraine. We were fortunate that several representatives of EHRI's partner institute in Lviv, the [Center for Urban History of East Central Europe \(UA\)](#), were able to attend the conference.

The last presentation of the day also connected the past to the present. [Adina Marincea](#) from the "Elie Wiesel" National Institute for Studying the Holocaust in Romania gave an inspired talk called "Memory Wars and Digitized Denialism: The Rehabilitation of a Romanian War Criminal". She maps the contemporary far-right network of actors, from bottom (grassroots) to top (parliament representatives), that actively contribute to this process of rehabilitation, rewriting, and circulation of fascist memory and Holocaust distortion through digital videos, memes, blog, articles, social media content and public chats.

With a few closing remarks from the chairs of the panels, that tied all the presentations together, and after a lot of "thank yous" to all involved in the organisation and especially the presenters, the conference was wrapped up. Everyone could reflect, discuss, and relax with a drink and a light dinner that concluded the warm and thought-provoking day.



Figure 7 - Conversations between conference attendees and enjoying the networking buffet dinner

Images by EHRI and Andrzej Stawinski

4 Conclusion

The feedback received from those who attended was overwhelmingly positive. People appreciated the wide variety of presentations from different academic disciplines and from different perspectives, such as that of archival science and from museums as well as those from universities. The conference demonstrated how important the work of EHRI continues to be, bringing people together to share advances in Holocaust research and create transnational and interdisciplinary connections. Looking toward the future, it would be good to continue the EHRI academic conference in some form once EHRI becomes an ERIC as it provides a valuable networking and learning environment for an international audience in the sector.

5 Conference Programme

The full conference programme was as follows:

09:15 – 10:00 Coffee and Registration

10:00 – 10:05 Welcome by Barbara Engelking, Director of the Polish Center for Holocaust Research in Warsaw

10:05 – 10:20 The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI), introduction by EHRI Co-Director, Karel Berkhoff

10:20 – 12:00 Session 1 - New Digital Research Methods and Innovations

Chair: **Michal Frankl**, Masaryk Institute and Archives, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czechia

10:20 – 10:40 Reference and Information Services in Yad Vashem Archives - Opportunities and Challenges of the Digital Era - **Yael Robinson Gottfeld**, Yad Vashem, Israel

10:40 – 11:00 Cartographic Representation of the Krakow Ghetto: A Distorted Image of Tragedy - **Stanislaw Szombara**, AGH University of Science and Technology and **Alicja Jarkowska**, Jagiellonian University, Poland

11:00 – 11:20 Streamlining the Creation of Holocaust-related Digital Editions with Automatic Tools - **Floriane Chiffolleau** and **Sarah Beniere**, Inria, France

11:20 – 12:00 Querying the Archive: Relational Database Design and the Study of Holocaust-Era Materials - **Emily Klein**, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

11:40 – 12:00 Q & A

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch and Poster Presentations*

13:30 – 15:00 Session 2 - Exploring the Use of Digital Techniques in Holocaust Research

Chair: **Rachel Pistol**, King's College London, UK

13:30 – 13:50 Interacting with *Restless Archive*: Sustainability and Archival Aggregation in Long-Form Digital Storytelling Platforms - **Simone Gigliotti**, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK

13:50 – 14:10 Unveiling Patterns: Exploring Socio-Demographic Characteristics as Predictive Factors for Deportation of Jews Registered in Bruxelles in 1940, Using Binary Logistic Regression - **Adina Babeş-Fruchter**, KU Leuven, Belgium

14:10 – 14:30 Natural Language Processing Meets Holocaust Research - **Martin Wynne**, University of Oxford, UK

14:30 – 14:50 Digital Heritage Related to Nazi Persecution: Reactualisation of Collective Memory of the Holocaust through a Virtual Interactive Exploration Platform - **Aliisa Råmark** and **Héctor López-Carral**, Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands

14:50 – 15.10 Q & A

15:10 – 15:40 Tea and Coffee Break

15:40 – 17:20 Session 3 - Exploring the Use of Digital Techniques in Holocaust Research

Chair: **Karel Berkhoff**, NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide, The Netherlands

15:40 – 16:00 _Integrating Citizen Science in the Digital Age as a Sustainable Innovation in Holocaust Research: Participatory Research, Presentation and Transformation - **Inka Engel**, University of Koblenz, Germany

16:00 – 16:20 Digital Humanities and Multiscalar Approaches to the Holocaust: The Case of the Brest-Litovsk Ghetto - **Boris Czerny**, Université de Caen-Normandie, France

16:20 – 16:40 Mass Grave Investigations of Holocaust Victims in the Digital Age: Strategies for Searching in Ukraine - **Daria Cherkaska**, Staffordshire University, UK

16:40 – 17:00 Memory Wars and Digitized Denialism: The Rehabilitation of a Romanian War Criminal - **Adina Marincea**, "Elie Wiesel National" Institute for Studying the Holocaust in Romania, Romania

17:00 – 17:20 Q & A

17:20 – 17:30 Closing Remarks

17:30 – 18:00 Drinks Reception

18:00 - 20:00 Buffet Dinner

*** Poster Presentations:**

- What Are Good Examples of the Opportunities for Holocaust Research in the Digital Age? The Example of Visual History Archives – **Alessandro Matta**, Sardinian Shoah Memorial Association, Italy
- "The Sunflower": Narrating the History of Wiesenthal's Book Through a Digital Online Edition – **EHRI-Team (VWI)**, Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, Austria
- Knowledge Modelling with Holocaust Testimonies – **Isuri Anadhuri**, University of Lancaster, UK
- Repurposing Holocaust-related digital scholarly editions to develop multilingual domain-specific named entity recognition tools – **Maria Dermentzi**, King's College London, UK, and **Hugo Scheithauer**, Inria, France
- Project "Evaluating and Publishing Files on Compensation Cases" (<https://kittl.arbeiterarchiv.de>) – **Steffen Müller**, Bundesarchiv, Germany

- Tracing the ways of Jewish removal goods seized and auctioned in Hamburg and Bremen – The Lost Lift Database – **Jacqueline Malchow**, German Maritime Museum, Germany
- The Language of Emotions in a Digital Project about the Holocaust – **Pawel Rams** and **Agnieszka Zalotynska**, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland