

# The Digitalisation of Memory

Technology – Possibilities – Boundaries

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## Day 1: February 3<sup>rd</sup> – The digital museum, memorial and authentic site

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The first day is devoted to exploration within the field of the new technologies used by cultural institutions.

Join on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/a5SFabffDWk>

09:00 – 09:05	Welcome to <i>The Digitalisation of Memory</i> Christian Wee
09:05 – 09:35	<i>Museums Shaping Futures: Making Sense of Technologies in 2021</i> Ewa Drygalska
09:35 – 09:55	<i>Hidden</i> Øyvind Steensen
09:55 – 10:10	Break
10:10 – 10:40	<i>Falstad Digital Reconstruction and V/AR guide – reflections on a digital locative medium at a memorial site</i> Ingvild Hagen Kjørholt
10:40 – 11:10	<i>The Legacy Gallery, a new permanent exhibition at POLIN Museum, dedicated to the achievements of Polish Jews</i> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Tamara Sztyma
11:10 – 11:25	Break
11:25 – 12:00	<i>Memory, historical space, educational principles and technology - Summary discussion</i> Paul Verschure and Ewa Drygalska (P.hD.)
12:00	End of day 1

## Day 2: February 4<sup>th</sup> – the ethical boundary of technology at museums, memorials and authentic sites

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Day two is devoted to the ethical boundaries of the digitalisation of memory. Is there an ethical line? Why or why not? The main panel discussion will address the ethical boundaries of technology and the digital memory of the Holocaust.

Join on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/vLoLppqH8q8>

09:00 – 09:05	Welcome <b>Łucja Koch</b>
09:05 – 09:45	<i>Too far away or too close to the past? Some reflections on digital games as memory media</i> <b>Tabea Widmann</b>
09:45 – 10:00	Break
10:00 – 10:20	<i>Courtroom 600: A Virtual Reality Encounter with Evidence of the Holocaust</i> <b>Clarissa Ceglie and Ken Thompson</b>
10:20 – 10:40	<i>Anne Frank Video Diary</i> <b>Femke de Koning</b>
10:40 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 11:55	<i>Holocaust remembrance in a digital future: Towards deep truth or deep fake?</i> – Main Panel Discussion <b>Victoria Walden, Stephanie Billib, Tabea Widmann</b> Moderator: <b>Per Jynge</b>
11:55 – 12:00	Thank you <b>Christian Wee</b>
12:00	End of day 2

## Program posts day 1

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### *Museums Shaping Futures: Making Sense of Technologies in 2021*

Museums and institutions are facing unprecedented challenges due to pandemic which disrupted our everyday lives and the traditional ways of operating in the cultural sector. As simply return to the pre-pandemic modes are not possible we are in the critical moment to reflect on the future and purpose of museums. Therefore, it is worth rethinking how new technologies might help museums to prepare for the post-pandemic future. During the talk, I will address the sector's main challenges in the areas of operation, exhibition, and audiences, as well as share suggestions on what innovative solutions could be adapted to overcome them. We will also discuss the examples of how various institutions worldwide have been able to use their resources, expand to digital, and stay relevant during a time of crisis.

### *Falstad Digital Reconstruction and V/AR guide*

The Falstad Centre's digital experience takes you back in time and shows you the camp landscape as it looked at the Liberation in May 1945. Using specially developed XR technology and our iPad, you can wander around in a virtual reconstruction of SS Strafgefängenenlager Falstad. At different places in the digital landscape you will find witness testimonies and stories from 1941-1945.

### *The Legacy Gallery, a new permanent exhibition at POLIN Museum, dedicated to the achievements of Polish Jews*

The exhibition, located at a ceremonial room on the lobby level, in a relatively small space, is dedicated to the lives and achievements of a number of people, who, moreover, are representative of a number of others. The use of multimedia as the core medium in the construction of this space was the solution that eventually prevailed, despite of the doubts the curators shared. In our presentation we will explain in more details why such solution was chosen, what the cons and pros were, and how we developed the multimedia that eventually managed to carry the narration intended for this space. What may be of special interest is also how we managed to combine the multimedia core of the gallery with some other elements – art, graphic design and music, in this way creating a coherent, embracing visitor experience.

### *Discussion: Memory, historical space, educational principles and technology*

## Program posts day 2

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### *Too far away or too close to the past? Some reflections on digital games as memory media*

*Too far away from or too close to the past? Reflections on digital games as memory media* focuses on the ambivalent structures of the digital memory cultures surrounding the Holocaust. Using the concept of im-proper distance it seeks to trace the moral implications of memory media through which the remembrance of the past becomes more and more virtually accessible, seemingly close, while the historical events are moving further away from us. The talk focuses on digital games as new memory media that can help to illustrate such shimmering movements of current memory cultures.

### *Courtroom 600: A Virtual Reality Encounter with Evidence of the Holocaust*

The *Courtroom 600* research team is developing a headset-based virtual reality (VR) experience that engages self-directed learners, ages 18 to 35, in a quest to investigate Holocaust-era history using primary source documents from the Trial of the Major War Criminals, which was held before the IMT in Courtroom 600 of Nuremberg's Justizpalast (1945-46). With the aid of a virtual guide and short tutorials, learners will collect, analyze, and contextualize digitized primary sources held by the University of Connecticut's Archives and Special Collections, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and other repositories. A core focus of our research is the examination and reporting of such issues as the ethics of virtual embodiment and representation, impacts of the mixed temporal frames of VR "time travel" on historical understanding, how to deliver sufficient context in an action-oriented experience, and emotional effects of encountering traumatic histories within an immersive medium.

### **Ann Frank Video Diary**

Ann Frank House

In this presentation Femke will present the digital educational project 'The videodirary of Anne Frank', a series of 15 episodes + 7 educational episodes on the lifestory of Anne Frank. In the videodirary you see Luna Cruz Perez, in the role of Anne Frank, filming the events of nazi occupation in Amsterdam and the events in the backhouse in stead of writing it in her diary. This project was launched last year on Youtube and has been succesfully watched by many young adults worldwide.

Besides, telling something about the background, development and challenges about this project, you will see the first episode together with one educational extra on the topic of discrimination. She will present the educational material that was developed with the video's and discusses critical reflection questions that you can deal with in your practice.

### **Main Panel Discussion**

The main panel discussion will explore the ethical boundaries of technology and the digital memory of the Holocaust

## Experts

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**Christian Wee** is the director of The Falstad Centre

**Ewa Drygalska** earned her Ph.D. with Film Studies and Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program Society–Environment–Technology at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. She worked for the National Museum in Warsaw as Communication and Digital Specialist and The Fryderyk Chopin Museum in Warsaw coordinating the multimedia exposition. Currently, she teaches at Polish–Japanese Academy of Information Technology and supports museums and institutions in future strategy, innovation, and implementation of new technologies.

**Øyvind Steensen** is representing HIDDEN AS ( [hidden.digital](http://hidden.digital) ) as a founder and its CEO and Creative Director. Øyvind has a background in the production of computer games, film, animation and illustration. He is also a writer and a speaker who is passionate about finding hidden stories and potential in the places we go.

**Ingvild Hagen Kjørholt** is Associate professor at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and former Head of research department at Falstadsenteret. She holds a Ph.D. in comparative literature and has several publications within the fields of literary history and memory studies. Currently, she is the project leader of *Mediating memorial landscapes* (MeMin), a research project on digital media at cultural heritage sites, funded by the Norwegian Arts Council.

**Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett** is the Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator of the Core Exhibition at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews and University Professor Emerita at New York University. Her books include *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (1998); *Image Before My Eyes: A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, 1864–1939* (with Lucjan Dobroszycki, 1977), and *They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of Jewish Life in Poland Before the Holocaust* (with Mayer Kirshenblatt, 2007). She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, was decorated with the Officer's Cross of the Order of the Republic of Poland, and received the 2020 Dan David Prize. She serves on Advisory Boards for the Jewish Museum Vienna, Jewish Museum Berlin, and the Jewish Museum of Tolerance Center in Moscow, and advises on museum and exhibition projects in Lithuania, Belarus, Albania, Israel, and the United States.

**Tamara Sztyma** is an art historian and exhibition curator. She graduated from the Institute of Art History of the University of Warsaw, and obtained her doctorate in the field of art sciences at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. She also completed post-graduate studies at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. Her doctoral thesis was devoted to the work of Jewish sculptor Henryk Glicenstein. Since 2009, she has been working at POLIN Museum, first as a member of the core exhibition design team (co-curator of *“On the Jewish Street” Interwar gallery*), next as a curator of temporary exhibitions. She has published widely on Jewish art and

issues related to contemporary museum studies. She lectures on Jewish art at the University of Warsaw.

**Paul F.M.J. Verschure** (MA/Ph.D. Psychology) is a Research Professor with the Catalan Institute of Advanced Studies. Paul's research spans Neuroscience, Cognitive Science, Robotics, and Artificial Intelligence. His scientific aim is to develop a theory of mind and brain, and to apply it to interventions and technologies that support and advance the human condition. Paul directs SPECS-lab comprising a multidisciplinary team of 30 doctoral and post-doctoral researchers and has published over 400 articles in leading journals. Paul is founder/CEO of Eodyne Systems which brings science grounded neurorehabilitation and education technologies to society and Chairman of the Future Memory Foundation which pioneers new approaches towards commemoration of the Holocaust and Nazi crimes. He co-chairs the annual Living Machines conference, the annual Barcelona Cognition, Brain and Technology summer school and hosts the Convergent Science Network podcast. Paul has completed 20 Ironman races.

<https://specs-lab.com> // <https://www.eodyne.com> //  
<https://www.futurememoryfoundation.org> //  
<https://www.convergentsciencenetwork.org> //

**Tabea Widmann** is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Konstanz. In her research, she focuses on the digitalization of memory cultures and concepts of medialized witnessing surrounding the Holocaust. Her dissertation project "*The Game is the Memory*". *A Memory Cultural Analysis of Prosthetic Witnesses of the Holocaust in Digital Games*" (working title) explores digital games as memory media and acts of game play as gestures of witnessing.

After her bachelor's degree in European Cultural History and Comparative Literature at the University of Augsburg, she earned a master's degree in European Cultural Studies at the University of Konstanz and wrote her M.A. thesis on Humor and Holocaust Remembrance in Film. Following her master's degree, she worked as an academic staff member on the research project MEMOZE, where she participated in the conceptualization, realization and content-related authoring of an internet platform about modern and medialized strategies of memory transfer and testimony.

**Clarissa Ceglio**, Ph.D., is Associate Director of Research at Greenhouse Studios / Scholarly Communications Design at the University of Connecticut, where she is also Assistant professor of Digital Humanities. She works at the intersections of public history, museum studies, and digital media and collaborates with museums, archives, and others on public-facing research projects that engage diverse audiences in topics of contemporary concern. She is a contributor to the volume *Radical Roots: Public History and Social Justice* (2021) and an Advisory Board Member for *Public History Weekly*, an open peer review journal; her forthcoming book examines the role of U.S. museums during WWII. For more on the project and the full research team, see: <https://greenhousestudios.uconn.edu/projects/courtroom-600/>

**Ken Thompson** is a game designer and educator at the University of Connecticut. His research focuses on developing experiences that tackle difficult and serious subjects; this work includes Courtroom 600 and a

National Science Foundation-funded effort to foster independent science learning through game-based approaches. He previously worked as Game Designer and Lead Designer in industry, where his responsibilities included directing game projects, programming unique scenarios using specialized software tools, and working with publishers.

### **Łucja Koch**

Director's Plenipotentiary for Museum's Strategy and Cultural-Educational Activities and Head of the Education Department at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Coordinator of the *Jewish Cultural Heritage* educational project planned for years 2020-2024 and supported with a 10 million Euro predefined grant from the Norway and EEA Grants and state budget. The first edition of the project, carried out between 2013 and 2017, was awarded the 2017 European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award. Board member of the Association of European Jewish Museums (AEJM) in years 2013-2020

### **Femke de Koning**

Femke is a trainer, educator and curriculum developer at the Anne Frank House since 2014. She was one of the developers and presenter of the educational videos of the video diary of Anne Frank.