

The Digitalisation of Memory: Technology – Possibilities – Boundaries

Detailed program

Some parts of the seminar will be streamed online and are therefore open to the public.

Day 1 – February 2nd, 2021

The group of Polish and Norwegian participants meet for an afternoon session to get to know the Falstad Centre, POLIN Museum, the collaborative project and most importantly each other. The main goal of the session is to create a safe arena for good discussions and reflections, despite that the seminar is taking place online. The activities include presentations of the participants, various get-to-know-each-other activities, and initial discussions.

12:00 – 12:50 Welcome to “The Digitalisation of Memory”

Practical information and presentation of the program

Presentation of the Falstad Centre and the POLIN Museum and their cooperation

12:50 – 13:00 Break

13:00 – 15:00 Presentation of the participants

Short introduction by each participant, plus a short introduction of each participants experience in developing and using technology at museums and memorials.

15:00 – 15:15 Break

15:15 – 16:30 Introduction to the main topic of the seminar and initial thematic

Discussion

16:30 End of Day 1

Day 2 – February 3rd, 2021

This day is devoted to further exploration within the field of the new technologies used by cultural institutions. We will have lectures and presentations of digital solutions at museums and memorials, and we will have a workshop about modern technology for museum

audiences.

Part 1 – The digital museum, memorial and authentic site

09:00 – 09:05 Welcome to “The Digitalisation of Memory” (public streaming)

Christian Wee, director of The Falstad Centre

09:05 – 09:35 “Museums Shaping Futures: Making Sense of Technologies in 2021” (public streaming)

Ewa Drygalska

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.

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.

09:35 – 09:55 “Hidden”

Øyvind Steensen

09:55 – 10:10 Break

10:10 – 10:40 “Falstad Digital Reconstruction and V/AR guide” (public streaming)

Ingvild Hagen Kjørholt

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 Strafgefangenenlager Falstad. At different places in the digital landscape you will find witness testimonies and stories from 1941-1945.

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.

10:40 – 11:10 "The Legacy Gallery, a new permanent exhibition at POLIN Museum, dedicated to the achievements of Polish Jews" (public streaming)

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Tamara Sztyma

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.

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.

11:10 – 11:25 Break

11:25 – 12:00 “Memory, historical space, educational principles and technology” - summary discussion (public streaming)

Paul Verschure and Ewa Drygalska

Paul Verschure (M.A./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
<https://specs-lab.com>; <https://www.eodyne.com>;
<https://www.futurememoryfoundation.org>; <https://www.convergentsciencenetwork.org>

12:00 End of the first part of the day

Part 2 – Workshop – Modern Technology for Museum Audiences

13:00 – 16:00 “Modern Technology for Museum Audiences”

Malgorzata Zajac

Why do museums need web-enabled digital content, artificial intelligence, virtual/augmented reality, gamification, immersive audio guides and podcasts, video walls, technologies enabling interactive contact with objects, user-generated content, holograms, contemplative audio guides, or transmedia storytelling?

The workshop will take a closer look at the latest technology trends in the museum sector, analyze and prioritize the underlying needs of conventional and virtual museum visitors.

Then, in groups, we will try to come up with solutions, not necessarily technological, aimed at responding to the changing and varied needs of visitors.

Malgorzata Zajac is a Deputy Marketing Manager at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw, Poland. She is responsible for co-ordinating research into current and potential audiences and operationalizing its findings in the POLIN Museum’s activities. Also, Malgorzata has actively promoted state-of-the-art marketing data acquisition and application ideas to cultural institutions. Earlier, Malgorzata spent 11 years marketing research services and developing syndicated projects for the international research group Ipsos in Poland. She is member of Polish Society of Market and Opinion Researchers.

16:00 End of Day 2

Day 3 – February 4th, 2021

The final day seminar 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 when educating about the Holocaust.

Part 1 – The ethical boundary of technology at museums, memorials and authentic sites

09:00 – 09:05 Welcome

09:05 – 09:45 “Too far away or too close to the past? Some reflections on digital games as memory media” (public streaming)

Tabea Widemann

Tabea Widemann 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.

09:45 – 10:00 Break

10:00 – 10:20 “Courtroom 600: A Virtual Reality Encounter with Evidence of the Holocaust” (public streaming)

Clarissa Ceglio and Ken Thompson

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.

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.

10:20 – 10:40 “Anne Frank Video Diary” (public streaming)

Jurmet Huitema-de Waal

10:40 – 11:00 Break

11:00 – 11:55 Main Panel Discussion (public streaming)

Victoria Walden, Stephanie Billib, Tabea Widemann

Moderator: **Per Jynge**

The main panel discussion will explore the ethical boundaries of technology in Holocaust education.

11:55 – 12:00 Thank you

12:00 End of the first part of the day

Part 2 – Workshop

13:00 – 14:15 “Dimensions in Testimon”

Karen Jungblut and Kia Hays

At the core of USC Shoah Foundation’s efforts of the past 25 years has been documenting survivor and witness testimonies. Its mission is to develop empathy, understanding, and respect through testimony. Over the past decade, USC Shoah Foundation has harnessed innovative new technologies to develop its Dimensions in Testimony collection, a user-led engagement with interactive biographies. During this workshop, USC Shoah Foundation staff will address the thinking and process behind the interactive biographies, speak to the ethical and methodological questions it wrestled with, share some insights into the various uses, and provide an opportunity for workshop participants to experience an interaction with an interactive biography as well.

Kia Hays is Manager of Immersive Innovations. She manages and produces USC Shoah Foundation’s immersive interview collections, including the Dimensions in Testimony interactive biography collection and the 360 Testimony on Location collection. Prior to the Institute, Kia worked and interned in various capacities for The USC Center on Public Diplomacy, the Wende Museum of the Cold War, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Los Angeles-based non-profit Youth Policy Institute. She received her Master’s in Public Diplomacy at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, where she was the Editor-in-Chief of Public Diplomacy Magazine.

Karen Jungblut is Director of Global Initiatives. With the USC Shoah Foundation since 1996,

Karen led an international and multilingual staff to successfully index the archive of 50,000 video testimonies, including development of methodologies to index testimonies of genocides and mass violence. Karen developed testimony collection programs with partners in Africa, Asia, and Central America. She also managed the first productions and pilots of interactive biographies as part of the Dimensions in Testimony program, and currently heads the pilot of the first German interactive biography in Germany.

14:15 – 14:30 Break

14:30 – 15:45 Workshop: TBA

15:45 – 16:00 Summary and final discussion