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**Cultural Heritage
Archives
and Research Prospects**

Zoom Conference,
27/11/2020

Department of History
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Women (University of
Delhi)

Cultural Heritage - Definitions and Approach in Archives and in Academic Research

- ❑ Cultural Heritage Definitions
- ❑ Approach by archivists and researcher
 - ❑ Archives in Europe
 - ❑ Researcher's practice
- ❑ Digital aspects/tools
- ❑ Example - Arolsen Archives
- ❑ Participation in collecting archival material and research contributions
- ❑ conclusion and outlook



Cultural Heritage – Definitions by the EU

According to Unesco, cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations

- the tangible cultural heritage category:
- paintings, sculptures, coins, manuscripts;
- monuments, archaeological sites, and groups of buildings);
- dance, music and theatre), traditional craftsmanship, rituals and beliefs.

→ archives and libraries also considered as national memorials, memory storage

An additional category – digital cultural heritage – is defined by the European Commission as resources that were created in digital form (for example digital art or animation) or were digitised as a way to preserve them (including text, images, video and records)

Archives and Libraries as Cultural Heritage

defined by the EU

- like library Goethe and Schiller Archives, Weimar/Germany
- rare manuscripts (Gutenberg Bible)
- archival collections (Arolsen Archives)
-



Gutenberg Bible, 1490 Germany

National and European stakeholders

27 countries (EU) - every state has its National archive, library and other institutions and research facilities

- preserving and providing cultural heritage



Platform for cultural heritage - Europeana



- Europeana works with thousands of European archives, libraries and museums to share cultural heritage for enjoyment, education and research
- Europeana provides access to millions of books, music, artworks and more – with sophisticated search and filter tools to help to find



20th century

Explore collections and stories from 20th century history and culture



Vote now! [🔗](#)

Pick your favourite gifs in this year's GIF IT UP contest before 30.11



Screenshot of the Europeana website showing a blog post titled "Beethoven's Ode to Joy: a cultural kaleidoscope". The page features a portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven and a bouquet of flowers. The text on the page includes: "On this blog, we share stories from Europeana, providing access to millions of digitised cultural heritage items – books, artworks, recordings and more, written by cultural heritage professionals from across Europe. Europeana works with thousands of European archives, libraries and museums to share cultural heritage for enjoyment, education and research. Find out more about how Europeana supports digital transformation of cultural heritage." The page also includes a search bar, navigation links (Exhibitions, Explore Europeana, Galleries, About Europeana), and a newsletter sign-up form.

<https://www.europeana.eu/en>

Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg



National Archives

- next to state archives
- and archives of the Catholic and Protestant church, archive of the Court of the Grand-Duchy
- others (private archive...)
- specific collections - video, literature archive....

Access and Use of archival collections

Archives and Libraries are free of charge for everyone (citizens and foreigners) - Rule

- restricted by special laws and regulations regarding data protection and private sphere
- GDPR - (General Data Protection Regulation)
- national laws: archival law, state secrecy etc.

Rule: Cultural Heritage - Definition by the European Union - is for everyone and should be general free

- access to archives is free
- challenges for research and archives and different approaches as archivist and researcher

Research: University



University of Luxembourg

- University of Luxembourg (2003)
- Analysing and investigation into collections and records in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions
- providing research results
- teaching and education

Different understanding and approach to archival collections

archivist

- provides information
- collects, indexes, keeps and preserves

researcher

Uses information

- interpretation of documents and historical events
- critical reflections of politics and society
- education
- stimulates discussions

Role of an Archivist

“provider” of information

evaluates, indexes and secures documents that are handed over by public and private administrations as well as private individuals for long-term storage.

make a significant contribution to ensuring that important information and evidence for citizens, institutions and administrations as well as for various research topics are authentically held and that their accessibility is permanently guaranteed



Role as a Researcher

“receiver” of information

going beyond the historical documents and the document

questioning, comparing, contextualization

publishing, sharing, discussing



Approach to a historical document - ARCHIVES

Structures

sender and receiver of a letter

indexing and inventorization the files

date, place - short title about content

- comprehensible title
- structure
- preservation
- providing information for private clients and institutions and researchers

index and categorizing in record group

→ formal conditions - metadata

Approach to document collections - RESEARCHER

Who writes to whom?

why? when? where?

What is it about?

Meaning? For what?

Sender and receiver - what about the background
of the people ? connection to the people?

the date of the letter - historical event?

→ Contextualization

Example - Biographies of WWII

Nr.	Name	Profession	Location	Date
21	Hirtzig Viktor	Mechaniker	Riebelshausen/Saarbg.	23/3/14/6
526	Klees Arnold	Masch-Schlosser	Hoert	23/12/7/8
2522	Teyler Joh.Peter	Schlosser	Bettingen	22/15/2/2
230	Milles Joh.Peter	Schlosser	Göblingen	22/17/3/10
6423	Kooh Robert	Mechaniker	Berellingen	21/12/14/4
6394	Majerus Edmund	Ing.Schüler	Luxemburg Sohelstr.115	21/1/15/6
4425	Kafzinet Arthau	Heizer	Redt/Syz	20/19/1/34
4326	Ients Felix	Schüler	Luxemburg Hellerichstr.74	23/1/18/6
444	Kirts Alf	Mechaniker	Luxemburg Königsring 30	23/1/20/1
9627	Alf Jakob	Mechaniker	Schulstr.12	22/10/1/2
5328	Klein Ernst	HB-Inspektor	Hagen	21/17/6/1
8629	Biehler Michel	Landw.Gehilfe	Hollwäls	24/14/14/2
642	Kalber Edgar	Schüler	Müllendorf	24/12/12/5
5230	Bourkel Joh.Peter	Grubenarbeiter	Ruelingen Kochstr.65	23/16/6/2
106	Christmann Josef	Grubenarbeiter	Differdingen Mühlstr.16	21/8/2/10
5431	Kuno Anton	Landw.Gehilfe	Soch/Alsig Hülstr.04	23/10/22/8
243	Preti Josef	Hilfsarbeiter	Düdingen Herrn.Oberingstr.33	23/9/16/2
7232	Müller Arnold	EB-Arbeiter	Steinfurt	24/17/6/4
268	Parasch Raymond	Bürolehrlg.	Petingen Herrn.Oberingstr.135	24/12/7/3
944	Pikar Nikolaus	Hilfsarbeiter	Soch/Alsig Neustr.65	21/10/20/8

Archival title: Recruitment Lists of year 1942

- names of recruits
- contextualization into the topic and the period
- in research: the names are needed, but are not indexed
- OCR not possible, handwritten additions
- different approaches: some were drafted, some volunteered, they came from different cities (no communalities)
- have to filter and separate the information in laborious effort

Recruits for German Army, 1942
Luxembourg (ANLux, CdZ-E-150)

Providing and Finding information

Information on searching



Full Text Search

Use the full text search to find a word or an expression irrespective of which field it occurs in.

Use the full text search first to check whether your search returns a result.



Field search

Use the field search to find a word or an expression in a selected database field such as title or reference code.

Use the field search if you want to search selectively and know the meaning or use of the individual fields.



Archive plan search

The archive plan search enables you to navigate in the hierarchical tree structure of the archive, from the higher-level fonds to the individual document provided that it has been captured. Many documents are only comprehensible from their classification in the archive plan.

Use the archive plan search to get an overview of the various fonds or to selectively access known fonds.

“query”, archive database from <https://query.an.etat.lu/Query/suchinfo.aspx>

Archivist vs. Researcher/Historian ??

Archivist - building the road for historical research



Historian - “driving” on the provided road / using the product



Digital tools

Databases

Digitizing

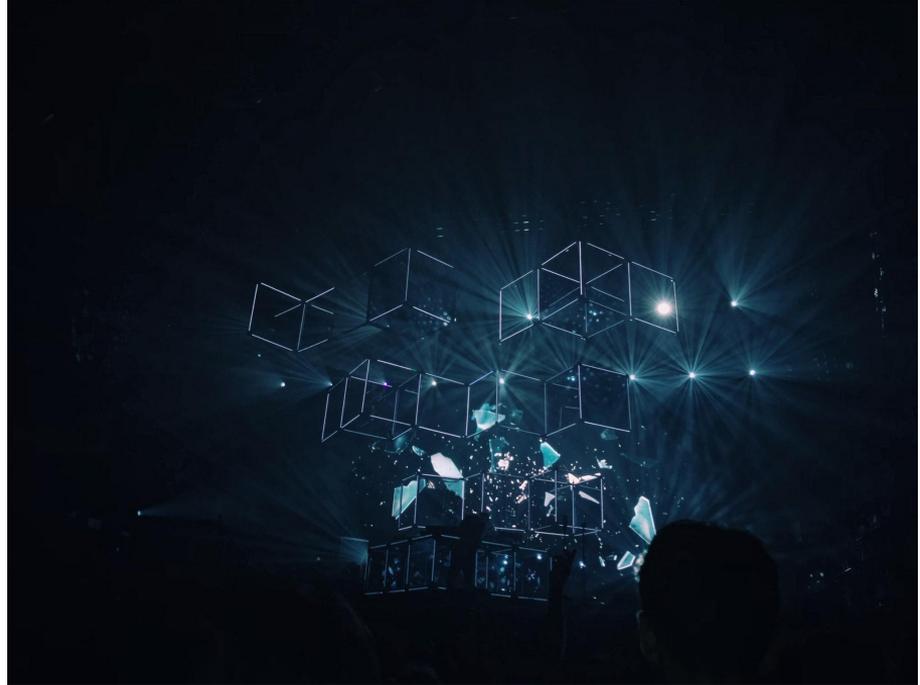
Text Analysis tools

data visualizations

machine learning

AI

.....



source: <https://unsplash.com>

Special Case - Arolsen “more than an archive”

archive on the victims and survivors of National Socialism and international center on Nazi persecution collection on 17, 5 million people belongs to UNESCO’s Memory of the World

- receives 20.000 inquiries every year
- focuses on research and education
- building up online archive



Send us your inquiry

Are you looking for information on the fates of victims of Nazi persecution? Please fill in the form provided. We will check whether the Arolsen Archives hold relevant documents. If so, we will send you digital copies.

[Send us your inquiry →](#)

A r o l s e n
A r c h i v e s

<https://arolsen-archives.org/en/>

Contributing and Searching

AND:

collections offers and need a participation from the outside - researchers and a wider audience are contributing in the indexation and transcription of the documents

Since 2016, the Arolsen Archives have been publishing of their documents in an online archive. Most of the users search for names. But lists, in particular, often have no digital link to the names they contain.

This means that these lists are not found when users do a name search. Launching “Every Name Counts”: the goal of the project is to make it possible to find all the names on all the documents contained in the online archive

“Every Name Counts”



**Search the
online archive**

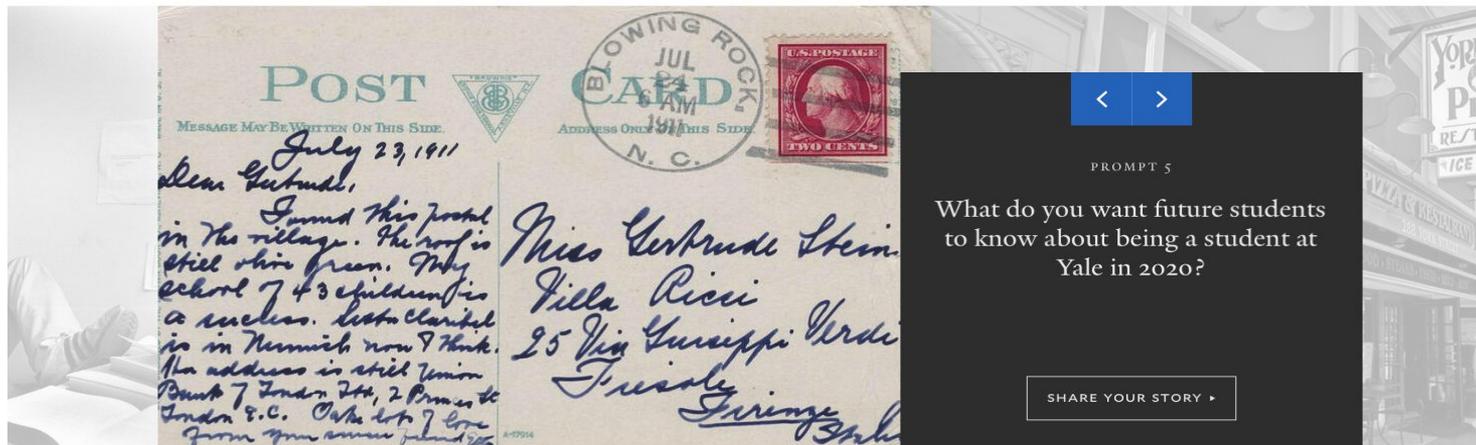
The persecution of the Jews, the extermination camps and all the crimes perpetrated against humanity by the National Socialists must never be forgotten. To give people all over the world access to the documents on these subjects, the Arolsen Archives are gradually putting them online.

[Online Archive ↗](#)

Current global health crisis – Impact on (future ?) cultural heritage

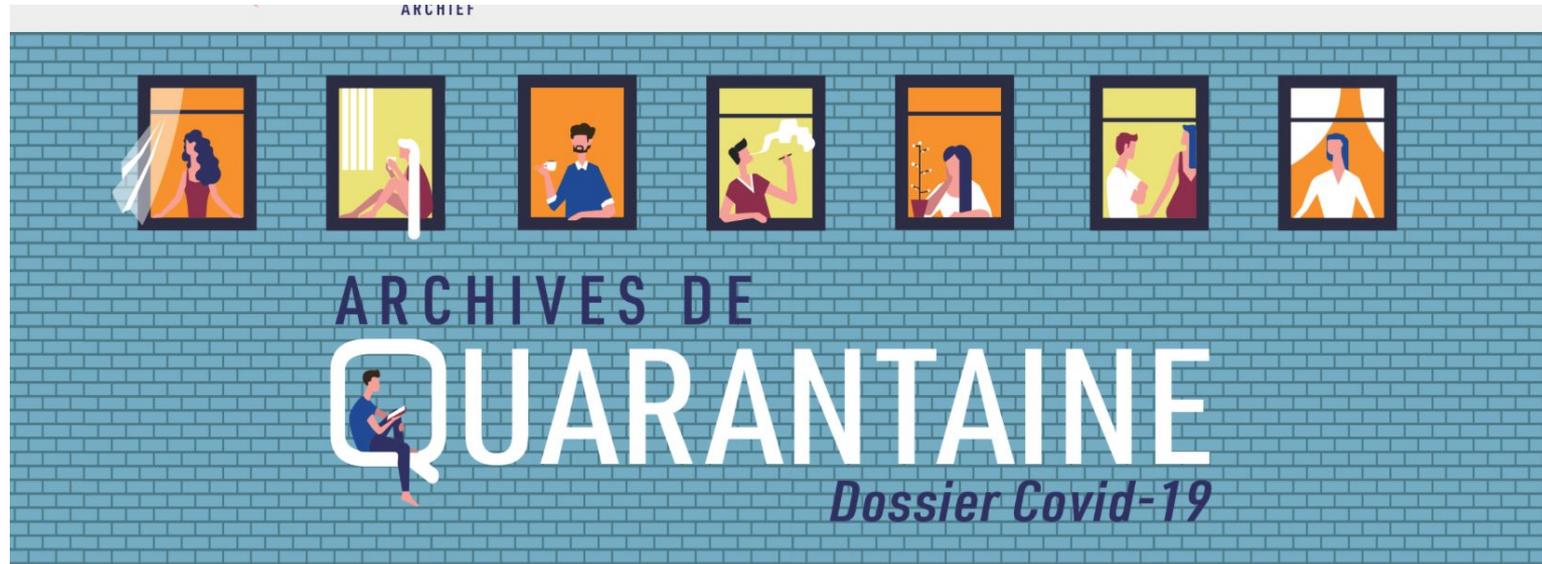
Help us make history.

Scroll through the prompts to share your stories about being a student during COVID-19



Archives and other institutions collect documents and object about the current pandemic

- History modeling ?
- “Making” history - critical term - who “make” history? Politician?? Signing peace treaty? Sports men? In breaking the record? Archivist - meddling?
- decides at the end if a document is worthy being preserved and decides now at the beginning
- We are “live” in history making? Civil society and researchers can turn in documentations and information what is going to be preserved for future generations and will be (eventually) claimed as cultural heritage in the future



Archives and/research in 2020+

“Live” Participation in preserving and collecting documents

Already other projects, like the Transcribtheon @ Europeana

sharing research results - open access - online publications, communications

communication and researching - in real-life sequence



source: <https://unsplash.com>

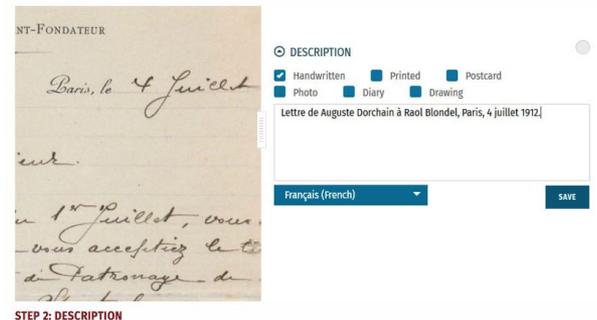
Transcribathon - Crowdsourcing (@Europeana)

Transcribathon is a crowdsourcing platform that offers to work with historical material and become an integral part of their digitisation process.

This digital material — scanned images of historical letters, diaries and pictures — has been collected by various cultural heritage institutions

By discovering, reading, and adding transcriptions, tags and georeferences to these documents, the user plays a vital role in increasing their access and open up their future potential for research and education

<https://transcribathon.eu>



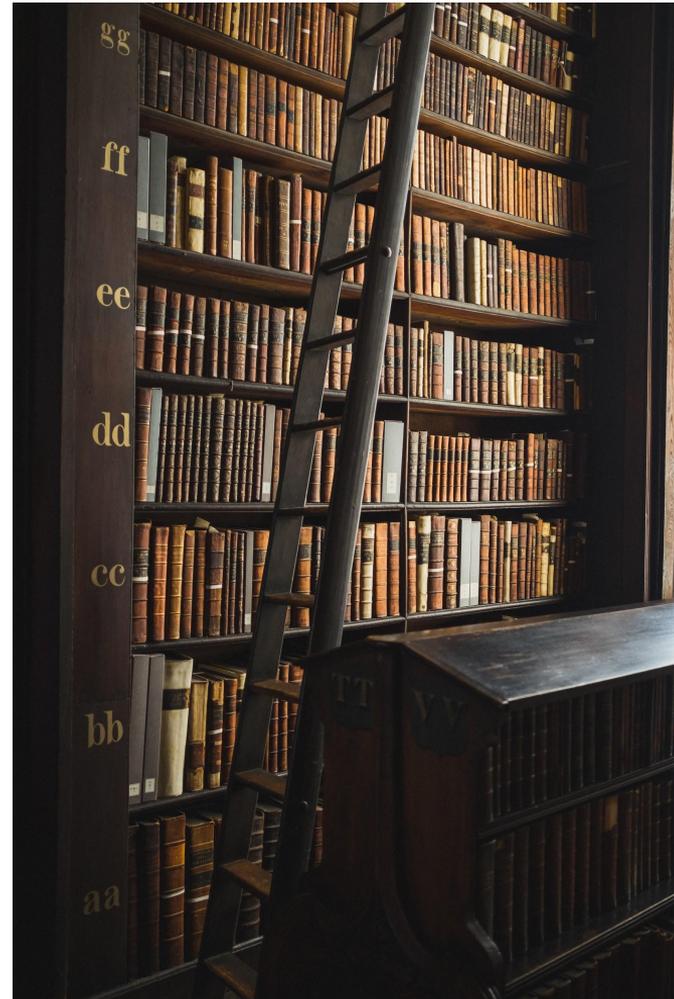
Outlook

Research - in 100 years we still have to go to archives

accessibility and approach will change

- more digitized sources but dealing with born digital material - another approach
- connected - publishing sharing of data and the used material - faster and quicker
- stronger exchange in the world

source: <https://unsplash.com>



Conclusion

cultural heritage (archival institutions) and research - “hand in hand”

Plaidoyer for a stronger cooperation

- archivists in the role of mediator between the past, present and future and between the records
- support for more engagement between cultural stakeholders like archives and researchers - both defining what can be preserved
- first steps are crowdsourcing and open archive projects



Stay connected with us!



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