Proposal for poster presentation DH Benelux 2018

European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI): A Digital Infrastructure I A Human Network

The mission of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) is to support the Holocaust research community by building a digital infrastructure and facilitating human networks. EHRI provides online access to information about dispersed Holocaust sources through its Online Portal (https://portal.ehri-project.eu), and tools and methods that enable researchers and archivists to collaboratively work with such sources. EHRI further facilitates an extensive network of researchers, archivists and others to initiate new transnational and collaborative approaches to the study of the Holocaust. EHRI thereby seeks to overcome one of the hallmark challenges of Holocaust research: the wide dispersal of the archival sources across Europe and beyond, and the concomitant fragmentation of Holocaust historiography.

EHRI is based on a consortium consisting of 24 partners from Europe, the United States and Israel. It brings together expertise from the broad fields of Holocaust studies, archival sciences and digital humanities. EHRI is an open and expanding infrastructure, continuously integrating new information about Holocaust-related collections from an ever larger number of collection holding institutions, thereby increasing their visibility among the research communities. The Online Portal and all other EHRI online services such as the EHRI Document Blog (https://blog.ehri-project.eu) and the EHRI Online Course in Holocaust Studies (https://training.ehri-project.eu) can be accessed by any individual with an interest in the Holocaust free of charge.

EHRI has successfully commenced a Europe-lead integration of dispersed Holocaust sources and research. Currently the portal gives information on more than 1,900 Holocaust-related archival institutions from 57 countries and access to more than 230,000 archival descriptions. EHRI's infrastructure is based on standards as EAD (EAD-ODD), EAC-CPF. EHRI also works on domain vocabularies. In 2017 and 2018 EHRI publishes authorative files as Camps and Ghettos for reuse in Wikidata.

The quantity of access to the EHRI Portal, currently averaging around 375-400 active users a day, demonstrates that EHRI thereby fulfils a real research need. Likewise, its trans-national fellowship scheme and programme of events have provided Holocaust studies with a much-needed transnational and collaborative impetus, and have enabled the sharing of information and expertise across geographical and disciplinary boundaries. Finally, by combining virtual and physical access and activities, by reaching out to non-academic audiences through its public history activities, and by highlighting the importance of historical research for and understanding of contemporary European societies, EHRI has become a showcase and model for large-scale collaborative research infrastructure activities in history and the (digital) humanities at large. By providing training and user support programmes, EHRI enables the next generation of Holocaust researchers and collection specialists to acquire the skills they need to excel in the digital world.

We would find it a great opportunity to present the EHRI project and its services mentioned above in a poster presentation at the DH Benelux conference. DH Benelux would be a great place to meet our colleagues, exchange information and receive feedback from the attending audience.