DELIVERABLE

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D3.7　　Report on the virtual exhibition presented in Europeana

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P	**Public**	**x**
C	**Confidential, only for members of the consortium and the Commission Services**	

Revision History

Revision	Date	Author	Organisation	Description
1.0	23.04.2014	Thomas Meyer	Humboldt-University of Berlin	Concept, design and implementation of the Virtual Exhibition "Places of Transitions"

Statement of originality:

This deliverable contains original unpublished work except where clearly indicated otherwise. Acknowledgement of previously published material and of the work of others has been made through appropriate citation, quotation or both.

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Overview

Partner in charge

Co-ordination: Humboldt-University / CLIO-Online

Involved: SBB, KB, BL, BNF

Short description

As described in the project's programme, four small physical exhibitions were prepared in Brussels, Paris, London and Berlin in 2014 accompanying the Launch Events. In addition, a virtual exhibition combining the materials from all consortium partners was created. This virtual exhibition focuses on certain topics relating to the First World War, based on the project's leading issue *WWI and everyday life.*

The concept of this virtual exhibition was worked out together with colleagues and groups of students of the Humboldt University of Berlin. In two lectures several students have selected a topic and the fitting materials and written accompanying texts based on scientific standards for the exhibition online.

The objective was to offer the VE in German, and also in English. Translations to other project partners' languages are currently under progress.

2. Concept and Implementation of the virtual exhibition

2.1 Target groups

The directed target group is the general audience, interested in historical exhibitions. But, the exhibition is particularly useful for educational purposes both for schools and universities: The content of the exhibition can be used as teaching material, the exhibition by itself can be used in student courses regarding the making of exhibitions.

2.2 Technical concept

The selection of an appropriate software environment for the creation and presentation of the virtual exhibition has needed an evaluation. Besides referring to the Omeka Content Management system and the TEL-software, the use of alternative software or a self-made one was also an option. There was so far no concept for the final design of the VE as well for its extent. Both are dependent on software, topic and the participating students. Hence a comparison of software packages was made.

Name	Description	Evaluation
Sajara	Linking and Presentation of Geo-related data	Only for geographical information; with costs
Virtual Spaces MWN	Originally released as part of a master thesis for creation of physical exhibitions	Primarily developed for physical exhibitions
SpicyNodes	MindMap System for the enrichment of virtual exhibitions or similar projects	Only for conceptualization purposes
Virtual Exhibit for PastPerfect 4.0	Software for museums for creation of virtual exhibitions, simple handling	With costs
Kompozer		
Drupal	Common Content Management Systems	Need implementation of customized code modules
Wordpress		
Open Exhibits	Several components for the integration of different kinds of objects (pictures, photos, videos, audio etc).; Gallery- and Zoomtools, Collection-Viewer; Multitouch-able; designed for interactive implementations on terminals in museums	More useable on terminals in museums; free for non-commercial use
Omeka	Designed for online exhibitions only; adjusted for use on mobile devices; widely spread used; also used in Europeana projects	Long term archiving and hosting by the Europeana Foundation; open source; customizable plugins
Pachyderm	Simple; more for presentation purposes	No flexibility
IMEJI	Simple metadata management for objects	A lot of metadata features, but less flexibility for presentations

Table 1. Comparison of software packages for virtual exhibitions

Finally the decision was made, that the Europeana Hosting for Virtual Exhibitions is the best solution for a long time preservation of the exhibition. Additionally this decision includes also an option to host the same content in an own Omeka-Hosting-Solution at the Humboldt-University of Berlin.

The Omeka Software Package is developed and maintained by the Roy Rosenzweig Center[1] and includes a lot of features not only for the presentation of objects including their metadata, but also a lot of plugins for the visualization, e.g. by the use of timelines or maps. The current presentation of the virtual exhibition uses only a simple presentation of the objects with its metadata, embedded into a story-concept and complemented with texts; these texts were written by student groups of the Humboldt-University of Berlin. The concept "Places Of Transitions" with regards to content was developed by an colleague of the Humboldt-University of Berlin Dr. Frank Reichherzer.

2.3 Realization - Places of Transitions

2.3.1 The first idea

The first proposal for the EC1418-Virtual Exhibition was to create an accompanying exhibition to the physical ones, where the materials displayed in the four libraries should be used to concentrate on a certain topic relating to the First World War. Based on the project's leading issue *WWI and everyday life*, candidate topics are so far: 'transgressions' (which could include: man to soldier, home to front, fight to calm,…) or more one-way-focused topics like everyday life at the front and the home front, advertising the war/propaganda, children's experience, nutrition, life and death. Other materials from the project's partners may be included.

As described in the Description of Work and at the first milestone reports, the first concept of the virtual exhibition was focused on the representation of the planned physical exhibitions or parts of the physical exhibitions, which were planned in Berlin, Brussels, London, Paris, and also in Belgrade. After the presentation of this concept at the consortium meetings in Rome 2012 and Belgrade 2012, and further discussions about benefits and disadvantages, all consortium partners decided to change the bearing, to focus on a more independent concept of the virtual exhibition regarding the finalization of the physical ones. If the finalization of the VE had to wait for the finalization of each physical exhibition at different libraries the complete process was in danger to delay. Other ways to finalize the virtual exhibition like the common and parallel completion of the virtual and physical exhibitions would be too complicated, because a lot of additional coordination would have been necessary.

So all consortium partners decided to develop a concept which was fully independent of the physical exhibitions, but which included content from all consortium partners.

2.3.2 Student courses

The conceptualization and realization of a virtual exhibition is a complex task and requires a great overhead of searching, inspecting and classifying content; likewise it is necessary to create a lot of text describing the objects and assemble them into a clearly structured narrative, respectively into a story board. That is why the decision was made to include more people to get better support in the content selection process and also during the writing of texts. Other projects at the Humboldt-University of Berlin regarding online journals and portals were compiled together with students in appropriate courses, often with great success. Hence, a student course could give the support again for the development of the virtual exhibition, together with colleagues from the Department of History at the Humboldt-University of Berlin, who are familiar with a lot of subjects and aspects regarding World War One. Finally, two student courses were realized by Dr. Frank Reichherzer. In

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[1] http://omeka.org (23.04.2014).

these courses students have written texts about WWI and everyday life and special objects from Europeana Collections 1914-1918.

An introductory course for the history of World War One, held by Dr. Frank Reichherzer, took place in the winter semester 2012; Dr. Frank Reichherzer was willing to coordinate this course with the VE-project. Therefore, he offered a complementary course to share a closer look on the EC1418-content with the students for preparing the VE. In the following semester colleagues from the consortium Partner Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Mareike Rake, Ulrike Hollender) supported a second course, which was centered to the content selection and writing of texts. Together, in these courses more than fourty students supported the development of an exhibition prototype and the realization of the final virtual exhibition. The cooperation with the History Department has provided quality on scientific standard in elaborating the exhibition, which is very important. Furthermore, it connects the exhibition to recent questions and ways of historical research in World War I.

2.3.3 The final concept

In any case, the VE needed elaborated texts on scientific standard to offer the interested audience contextualized information on the topic in an accessible and entertaining way and to not only show some interesting objects online.

Based on the project's leading issue *WWI and everyday life*, the concept of the virtual exhibition of Europeana Collections 1914-1918 was focused on places and spaces of war and in concrete, on places and spaces of transition. "Place of transition" means a place, like the train station or a field hospital, where people change under the exceptional circumstances of war. It also means places, like the laboratory or the military headquarter, where people actively change the conduct of war. Last, but not least, a place ot transition can as well be a place that changes through wartime itself, like the factory, or a place which exists merely in wartimes, like the trenches.

Accessing the First World War through these places of transition enables to access history in a transnational way, through different sources and their creative connection. World War One gets visible as an European, as a worldwide event, and people playing the major role in it. The places are junctions of people and history. The approach is a new one, not dividing between nations, rivalries, history from above or from below.

The idea of places allows a fresh perspective upon the wartime scenario between 1914 and 1918. In the last years, international historical research of the First World war focused on individuals during wartime and the individual war experience. The chosen approach enables to connect these individual perspectives and experiences with the spaces and places they belong to. Hence, the chosen places are junctions between general and individual history, collective and personal remembrance.

The idea of entering the war through its places and spaces is especially suitable for the Europeana Collections 1914-1918 project. A train station or a field hospital can be found on every war theatre - whether on the Western or Eastern front - and in almost all countries, involved into the conflict or neutral.

The experience of places in wartime can be found independently of nation, function, social or political affiliation, gender and age. Every soldier and every civilian has at least entered one of the chosen places during the war years. Thus, a multitude of stories can be found and narrated. The places are junctions of history and individual biography. They are as well junctions in time - through changing during war and by existing in our times as well. These places connect the time of war with today and today's people who want to know more about how the war was like.

Nonetheless, the chosen approach allows a sustainable use of the project's collected and digitized material. A place like the train station can not only be made accessible through photographies and individual descriptions in wartime diaries but as well through articles in different European media,

through manuals and official documents. By choosing a transnational approach to World War One, relations between the different collections can be found aiming to show Europe's diversity and commonalities which even existed in times of hostile and opposition.

2.3.4 Places of Transition

The following places were determined for the virtual exhibition, because on the one hand a lot of materials can be found in Europeana, on the other hand these are the most exciting places which are profoundly changed during the war, and even in few cases they are virtually caused by the war. The places marked with (X) were actually implemented in the virtual exhibition; for the other places we identified some lacks of materials and objects.

- The train station (X)
- The barrack yard (X)
- The bunker (X)
- The trenches (X)
- The headquarters (X)
- No man's land (X)
- The back area: front-line brothels, front-line cinemas, front-line theatres (included in No man's land)
- The Cantonment/billet
- The military hospital, field hospital (X)
- The camp (X)
- The internment camps (included in The camp)
- The military airfield
- The harbor/port
- The military cemetery
- The factories
- The farms
- The scholar's rooms (propaganda, war of the academics)
- The queues for food
- The black market
- The laboratory (X)
- The war memorials

These are all places or spaces where the First World War actually „happened", where something happened to people. Some examples:

- The *train station* is a place of farewell and good bye from the world one knows and at the same time, it is the place where one arrives in a new surrounding, a new world, the war with its dirt, the world of dying of drill, but as well a world that offers new liberties and new forms of collectivization.

- The *barrack yard* is the place where the civilian turns into soldier.

- The *airfield* is the place where one leaves the two dimensions of the soil and enters the three dimensions of space.

- The *bunker* is the place at the frontline where, within seconds, the stage of boredom may change to the stage of fraught and fear, the place where solitude and companionship co-exist.

- The *field hospital* is the place where one changes from sane to insane, where a body changes from healthy to cripple.

- The *back area* is the place of refuge, a refuge pretending rest and regeneration, a place of fun and where contacts between the sexes are possible, and a place where friend and foe meet each other.

- The *queues for food and the black market* are places where the civic society of the nineteenth century vanishes, where rules and laws are getting weakened, a place of the exceptional in everyday life.

- The *war cemetery* marks the transition from life to death and is the place where the survivors have to deal with their losses.

- The *war memorial* is a place where war and peace are connected and where the event turns into memory.

The topic places of transition will give a narrative for the VE, furthermore, on another level; the topic refers to World War One as THE place of transition itself where everything changed.

Working with the places, the VE can present different types of artifacts and themes, but there is a narration behind it.

2.3.5 Implementation - Schedule for the Virtual Exhibition

The virtual exhibition was developed during the first project phase, and it was implemented mainly in the last year of the project. The content was selected in the student courses and assembled by the colleagues of the project partner Clio-online (UBER).

The virtual exhibition is hosted by Europeana Foundation on its central virtual exhibition website: The first release was made in January 2014 and was implemented by Europeana Foundation.:

http://exhibitions.europeana.eu/exhibits/show/14-18-collections-de

This release is currently available in German language. During the last months of the project all texts were translated into English language. Currently translations of the introduction chapters of the exhibition will be translated into Dutch and also into Italian language. After its finalization a second release will be published at the central Europeana Virtual Exhibition Site, expected at the end of May 2014.

The following timetable gives a short overview about the main tasks during the conceptual design and implementation phases.

All Partners

Until end of 2012:	First feedback on own collections regarding the topic "places of transition"
Until end of January 2013:	Partners sent detailed information about/digital versions of available items, if not yet uploaded to Europeana

Summer 2013:	Feedback on selected items

Clio-online (UBER)

Until October 2012:	First conceptual design and evaluation of software packages for the creation of virtual exhibitions
October 2012:	Start of the students course 1 with basic work on the First World War and the definition of spaces and places
November-December 2012:	Starting search for the yet available items for the VE in Europeana
January 2013:	First look on feedback, work on concept of 'places'
February 2013:	Selection of 'places' for exhibition
April 2013:	Start of the students course 2 with writing of texts and selection of content
From April 2013:	Preparation of the exhibition, Feedback to partners on selected items
Autumn 2013:	Proof reading and assembling of the exhibition objects into the Europeana Virtual Exhibition schema
January 2014:	First release of German version, implemented by Europeana Foundation
January-April 2014:	Translation into English Languages (Dutch and Italian language also planned)
May 2014:	Release of the English and German version

2.3.6 Translation

Firstly, the German version of the exhibition was implemented. The translation of the texts into English language was first made after the finalization of the German version of the VE. After the translation into English language until end of April 2014 a new version of the VE can be implemented. The first translation, made by Thomas Meyer, was supplemented and tested by the colleagues of the BL.

2.3.7 Main Problems

The main problems during the implementation we identified were:

- Translation issues: descriptive texts are often bound to its "native language"

- Branding of all consortium partners in the VE

- Balanced presentation of items of each consortium member

- In the students courses a wide range of issues regarding searching and harvesting objects in Europeana were identified, and also some metadata issues:

  - Required features for serach on the Europeana portal (europeana.eu)

    - Time / Date ranges

    - Fulltext / OCR recognized texts

- General metadata and object information in one comprehensive language (English)
- Better subject related facetted search (currently more library orientated; should be more user-related)
- Detailed descriptions of non-text objects

○ Objects on Europeana.eu

- Poor metadata on a lot of objects
- Different concepts of "items": some "items" consists of a complete journal, on other objects each journal page is an "item"

2.4 The virtual exhibition – a short trailer

The following screenshots demonstrate the structure and the concept of the virtual exhibition. The exhibition consists of nine so called *themes*, which represent the individual places of transitions. Each theme is built by three stories. Each theme is introduced by a short text and one object (picture, text) from one of the consortium partners. Then each story is assembled by a minimum of one up to three objects. Hence, in the exhibition concept a place (theme) is introduced, and the introduction is followed by a first story, then a second and third story; each with different objects from all consortium partners.

Figure 1. Start page of the virtual exhibition "Places Of Transitions" (German version)
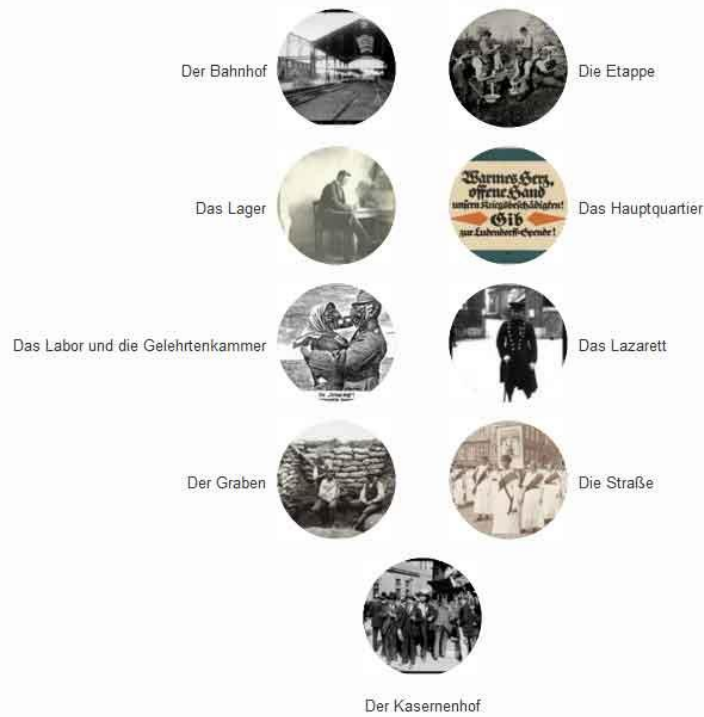
Figure 2. Overview for all themes (German version)

Der Bahnhof - Einleitung

Der Bahnhof prägt als zentraler Ort der Fortbewegung nicht nur das gesellschaftliche Leben seiner Zeit: Hier wird der Wandel des zivilen Alltags zur völligen Ausrichtung auf den Krieg besonders deutlich. Denn das weit verzweigte Eisenbahnnetz ist wesentliches Element des Ersten Weltkrieges. Ob in der Bahnhofshalle, am Gleis oder im Zug – stets sind Menschen anwesend, die sich im Übergang befinden: der Soldat, auf dem Weg an die Front, der Kriegsgefangene, abtransportiert ins Gefangenenlager und der Flüchtling, auf der Suche nach einer neuen Heimat. Der Bahnhof wird zum Knotenpunkt, zu einer Bühne, die alle bald wieder verlassen, um an einem anderen Ort neu aufzutreten.
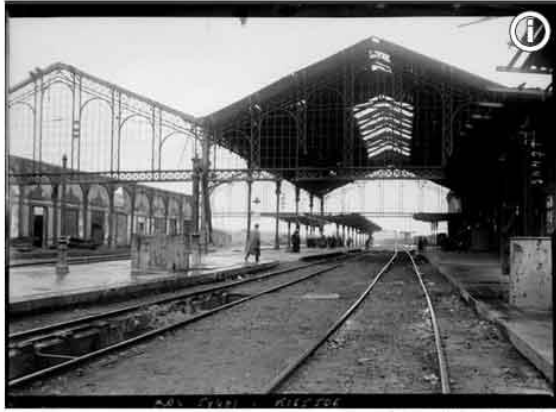
The train station of St Quentin was completely destroyed by the war.

Comments

Email

Your name

Comment

Figure 3. Introduction to the theme "Bahnhof" / "Train station" (German version)

Figure 4. The first story "Die Bahnhofshalle" / "Main hall" compiled by texts from the students course and objects from consortium partners (German version)

3. Interplay with other dissemination activities and other impacts

3.1 Dissemination activities

Presentation

- Launch of the exhibition at Conference "Unlocking Sources" January 30/31 2014, State Library of Berlin, Berlin[2]:
Presentation by students from the university courses.[3]

- Conference "Europeana Collections 1914-1918. Rediscovering the war experience", April 3/4 2014, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris[4]:
Presentation by Dr. Frank Reichherzer with a detailed introduction into the concept of the "places of transitions".

Other Exhibitions

The conference "Unlocking Sources" in Berlin in January 2014 was accompanied by an exhibition "Unlocking Sources – The making of", were each consortium presented on item of the collections.[5]

Thematic portal – Other websites

The virtual exhibition site is linked on a widespread set of websites, some examples follow:

- Website of the Europeana projects like the thematic portal of the project itself:
http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/de

- Clio online Thematic Portal "Erster Weltkrieg":
http://www.erster-weltkrieg.clio-online.de

- Department of History, Humboldt-University of Berlin (Project information page):
https://www.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/bereiche-und-lehrstuehle/histfi/projekte/virtuelle-ausstellungen

3.2 Other impact

The knowledge and the experiences, which were gained during the concept phase and the implementation of the VE are very useful and fruitful for other projects at the Department of History at the Humboldt-University of Berlin as well as for the consortium partners.

The Computer- and Media-Service of the Humboldt-University offers funding for a multimedia project every two years. Hence, with the acquired knowledge of the virtual exhibition of the Europeana Collections 1914-1918 project an application for funding by the Multimedia-Grants of the Computer- and Media-Service was made. The application was very successful, so that a new project "Virtual Education- and Research Environments: Historical collections and exhibitions" was started in July 2013 at the Humboldt-University..

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[2] http://www.europeana-collections-1914-1918.eu/unlocking-sources/ (23.04.2014).
[3] http://www.europeana-collections-1914-1918.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/HU-students-Unlocking-Sources-2014-01-30.pdf (23.04.2014).
[4] http://www.bnf.fr/en/professionals/pro_conferences/a.jp_2014_europeana_collections_en.html (23.04.2014).
[5] http://www.europeana-collections-1914-1918.eu/unlocking-sources/exhibition-unlocking-sources-1914-1918-the-making-of/ (23.04.2014).

The main objective of this new project is the development of an environment for research and education activities: In this environment both materials from different sources can be collected and stored, and also from these stored materials new collections (education collections, virtual exhibitions) can be created and presented. The software used for this purposes is Omeka, which has already been used for the Europeana Virtual Exhibitions.