

**The Digital and the Visual:
New Approaches to Urban Studies Research of East Central Europe**

Program

Day One / Thursday / November 7, 2013

Opening and Welcome

Dr. Iryna Macevko, Mariya Pohorilko (Center for Urban History of East Central Europe)

10:00 – 10:15

Panel 1: Cities “in digits” – representation, investigation, or collaboration? Various Methods of Presenting Urban History on the Internet

10:15 – 12:15

The expansion of and access to the internet has created a world of nearly limitless potential for those interested in compiling and distributing content via a designated website or blog. Despite the physical existence of a museum in a particular city, the net has made possible the creation of virtual urban museums, as well as museums of events and processes, past and present, which relate to the urban space. The literary, sport, cultural, and historical city, the city in memoir and photography: the contemporary setting requires a minimal amount of resources for the establishment of its own virtual city.

What is the place of digital history projects, assembled by qualified researchers, among the hundreds of historical projects on the internet? Given these new formats for the assembly and propagation of information, of what value, if any, is the arbitrary distinction of the professional vs the amateur researcher? What in the given context is meant by a work of “scholarship”, and who can and should be involved in urban research and its dissemination on the internet? What is the function of trust and data verification in the attendant pluralistic context?

Presentations:

- 1 *Ryszard Mączewski, Poland.* Presentation of the project “Warsaw 39” (<http://www.warszawa1939.pl/>)
- 2 *Dr. Oksana Dudko, Ukraine.* Presentation of the project Lviv Interactive at The Center for Urban History –(<http://www.lvivcenter.org>)
- 3 *Dr. Dmitry A. Khitrov, Russia.* City Maps of the Russian Empire of the late-18th – early-19th centuries. Methods of Digital Analysis
- 4 *Pavlo Kryshenyk, Czech Republic-Ukraine.* 3D Model Creation in the project The TimeMachine (<http://timemachine.comuv.com/>)

Discussion Leader: *prof. Charles van den Heuvel, the Netherlands* (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, E-Humanities Research Group)

12:15-1:30 - Lunch

Panel 2: The Multiplicity of the Past: the Urban Space as Place of Alternative Memories and Competing Narratives

1:30 – 3:30

Until the mid-20th century, the typical central European city had been a space in which varying ethnic groups, religious confessions, social groups were woven together in a braid of cultural coexistence. The Second World War nearly inextricably altered this demographic and, in many instances, the very spatial structure of these cities. The radical extent of this change expunged prior urban histories and former communities in residence, communities of which, in the post-war period, there was often no account in official – and often unofficial – narratives. The struggle to establish “ownership” of a city is often carried out on the internet through the formulation of highly selective, exceedingly narrow viewpoints in the examination of complex histories. Visual materials play a vital role in these representations, in particular when the discussion turns to heritage that is expressed in multiple languages for readers from different countries with different views of the past.

In consideration of the given contexts and challenges in the examination of the selected projects, a vital question comes before our panels: what is the potential contribution of visual research to changes in the putative urban *mapscape*? How can the mapped visualization of data assist the interpretation of historical fact, event, or process? Are digitized historical resources able to facilitate the research of topics previously unavailable to historians? Does the accumulated data reconstruct comprehensively the varying ethnic, cultural, and historical phenomena of a city’s past? By depicting only certain aspects of life, do these project resources effectively silence other aspects? Conversely, do projects of this type possess the potential to stimulate interplay among differing narratives? Or does the internet contribute to the development of a niche appropriate for the city of the past and its multi-ethnic history? Do projects which employ visual materials, and in particular historical materials, also invite critical consideration of said materials as instruments fostering a particular narrative to the marginalization of others?

Presentations:

Menachem Kaiser, USA. Presentation of the “reVILNA: Vilnius Ghetto Project” (<http://www.revilna.org>)

Nenad Lajbenšperger, Serbia. Presentation of the project “Starosajmiste.info – Past and present of Staro sajmište” (<http://www.starosajmiste.info/en/#>)

Joanna Zętar, Lukasz Kowalski, Poland. Presentation of the project “Teatr NN. Ośrodek Brama Grodzka” (<http://teatrnn.pl/>)

Żanna Słoniowska, Poland-Ukraine. Oral history project Lwow przedwojenny
(<http://lwowprzedwojenny.eu/>)

Discussion Leader: *prof. Paul Arthur, Australia* (University of Western Sydney, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society)

3:30-4:00 - Coffee Break

Discussion with prof. Charles van den Heuvel: Digital Cartography, Social Networks, Historical Record

4:00 – 5:30

Moderator: *Maria Pohorilko, Ukraine* (Center for Urban History of East Central Europe)

Day Two / Friday / November 8, 2013

Discussion with Prof. Paul Arthur: Collective Biography and Social History

10:00 – 11:30

Moderator: *Dr. Volodymyr Kulikov, Ukraine* (Vasyl Karazin Kharkiv National University)

11:30-12:00 - Coffee Break

Round-table: Isolated histories, contradicting narratives, collaborative projects: how can “digital history” assist in the teaching of East Central European urban history?

12:00 – 2:00

Currently, in post-communist and post-socialist Europe recorded histories to a large degree continue to be formulated in keeping with state, political, and established institutional, academic guidelines. One may assert in general terms that for an extended period history has been monopolized and turned to the purposes of political parties on every level of civic life. Certain states and communities have worked to consciously sever this connection, attempting to liberate historical research from the paradigms of the past. Still other states have been unable thus far to dispense with “old habits” and continue to exploit the historical record for political purposes.

During this roundtable, enlisting all our participants, we will discuss what is public, i.e. nonpolitical and non-ideological, history? What distinguishes one from the other? What else has changed along with the

regime, border, and social structure changes that accompanied the close of the 20th century? Has there been – and will there be – a reconsideration of the role of history and the historian in society and in the State? Can “digital history” foster a better grasp of history in this complex and contentious corner of Europe? What advantages do researchers who employ the tools of digital history enjoy? What are the challenges and limits of these tools? Does “digital technology” imply a change in research methodology? Or is this merely new technology which supplements the technique of extant research praxis and method? How to best benefit from collaborative projects which digital technologies make possible? What is the impact of crowd sourcing on historical research?

Moderator: *Bohdan Shumylovych, Ukraine* (Center for Urban History of East Central Europe)

2:00-3:30 - Seminar Closing. Informal communication and a buffet & wine