

## Practical Aspects of German Historical Culture – the Role of Volunteer Work and the Libraries

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The paper refers to two of the sub-themes of the conference:

- Case studies of information institutions (libraries, archives, etc.) that foster community research into family history or local heritage  
>> However, I will not talk about one institution but about diverse individual people, groups and institutions being engaged in
- [Case studies in] the digitisation and preservation of cultural heritage.

The central question of this paper addresses historical source material on the internet. The digital revolution of communication generates completely new chances to publicise and to use historical sources and historical knowledge. Traditional distances between professionals and the rest of the world tends to shrink everywhere on the web, crowd sourcing projects succeed in activating knowledge, skills and energy of people who are enthusiastic about history. My questions are: To which extent, and in which ways and channels does volunteer work of semi-professional or amateur historians broaden the basis of historical sources on the web? And can libraries – or other heritage institutions – encourage and support this kind of work?

I would like to introduce the term *historical culture* as an analytical means. It is a very broad term coined in the 1980s in order to analyse the way a society deals with its own history. “The scope of *historical culture* is to advocate the examination of all the layers and processes of social historical consciousness, paying attention to the agents who create it, the media by means of which it is disseminated, the representations that it popularizes and the creative reception on the part of citizens.”<sup>1</sup> So it has at least four dimensions:

- *institutional*: the framework of historical practice (schools, institutions of higher education, academies, archives, museums, libraries etc.)
- *professional*: the persons and professions involved in historical work and teaching
- *media*, the ways of communication
- *recipients*, the public

The focus of this paper rests on the first and second dimensions, institutional and personal aspects of Germany’s historical culture, but we’ll come back to the others in the end as well. Narrowing the focus once again, the paper will concentrate on the process of securing, preserving, describing and presenting historical source material.

Laws or by-laws set guidelines for the activities of state and community archives<sup>2</sup> and libraries<sup>3</sup>. They fulfil their tasks in collecting all kinds of material originating from state authorities,

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<sup>1</sup> Fernando Sánchez Marcos: Historical Culture, URL:

[http://www.culturahistorica.es/historical\\_culture.html#1](http://www.culturahistorica.es/historical_culture.html#1) <24.6.2013>; for the German discussion on ‘Geschichtskultur’ see the references in: Geschichtskultur, URL:

<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geschichtskultur> <24.6.2013>; see also the website of the Center for Historical Culture (CHC) at Erasmus University Rotterdam: <http://www.eshcc.eur.nl/chc/> <24.6.2013>. – Wolfgang Hardtwig: Deutsche Geschichtskultur im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. – München 2012, p. 10, defines: “Der Begriff Geschichtskultur ist [...] geeignet, die Gesamtheit der Formen zusammenzufassen, in denen eine Öffentlichkeit Geschichtswissen erzeugt, präsentiert und vorhält.“

<sup>2</sup> Einführung in die Archivkunde / Thomas Lux, Eckhart G. Franz. 9., vollständig überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage. - Darmstadt : WBG (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft), 2013; Einführung in die

but also from enterprises, societies, and individuals – for example bequests of writers, academics or other famous persons. They preserve the sources, index them, publish the metadata, and, somehow also initiate editions, for example comprehensive medieval document collections as typical publications of the archives<sup>4</sup>, or the academic edition of the complete works of an 18<sup>th</sup> century poet, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, as a product of our State and University Library in Hamburg which holds Klopstock's complete literary bequest<sup>5</sup>. So respectable amounts of historical source material have not only been collected but also edited in print by libraries and archives. And nowadays, of course, they have their digitisation programmes to bring the most important part of their own holdings to the web.

Beyond these 'standard' activities of stately and communal heritage institutions, there are, of course, all the professional historians at universities, academies and learned societies who produce the bulk of source editions, historiographic and interpretative work. But beyond this, there exist many ways and fields of action where non- or semi-professional citizens engage in historical work augmenting the material basis of our historical culture, here especially: by collecting and publicizing source material – in print or on the web. They are also very important 'players' in what we call our historical culture. Let me give you six examples and report about six categories of this kind of work. Each of them helps to discuss special aspects of the theme, and all of them illustrate the value of these multi-faceted, mostly small-scale crowdsourcing activities bringing historical source material to the public. The collaborative digital conversion of sources sometimes happens inside traditional institutional structures, others are typical innovations of the internet age.

#### (1) Historical and Genealogical Societies

They exist in almost every smaller and bigger German city, very often with roots deep in the civic society of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the Historical Society of Hamburg, for example, was founded in 1839, the ones in Munich and Frankfurt in 1837<sup>6</sup>, Berlin in 1865<sup>7</sup>, Bremen 1861/62<sup>8</sup>,

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Archivkunde / Thomas Lux, Eckhart G. Franz. 8. Auflage. - Darmstadt: WBG (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft), 2012, Online-Ressource (announced, not yet published).

<sup>3</sup> Portals to the past and to the future : libraries in Germany / Jürgen Seefeldt and Ludger Syré. With a foreword by Claudia Lux. Transl. by Janet MacKenzie. Publ. by Bibliothek und Information Deutschland - the Federal Union of German Library and Information Associations (BID). 3., rev. ed. - Hildesheim [u.a.] 2011

<sup>4</sup> For example in Hamburg: Hamburgisches Urkundenbuch, ed. by Johann Martin Lappenberg. 4 Vols. – Hamburg 1842-1967. Vol. 1 (1842): 786-1300, URL: <http://opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de/search?oclcno=163380559>; 2. (1911-1939): 1301-1336, URL: <http://ppn.sub.uni-hamburg.de/goobi/PPN629529477>; Vols 3-4 are not online yet. Lappenberg was the State archivist of the city of Hamburg from 1823 to 1863 and first chairman of the Hamburg Historical Society 1839. An overview for the South German Franconia region gives Dieter J. Weiß: Quelleneditionen der Gesellschaft für fränkische Geschichte. In: Erlanger Editionen. Grundlagenforschung durch Quelleneditionen. Berichte und Studien / hrsg. von Helmut Neuhaus. – Erlangen [u.a.] 2009 (Erlanger Studien zur Geschichte 8), p. 119-132.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sub.uni-hamburg.de/bibliotheken/sammlungen/klopstock-arbeitsstelle/hamburger-klopstock-ausgabe.html>; activities of the department: <http://www.sub.uni-hamburg.de/bibliotheken/sammlungen/klopstock-arbeitsstelle.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Historischer Verein für Oberbayern (München), <http://www.hv-oberbayern.de/>; Brigitte Huber: "Eine hochansehnliche Versammlung ausgezeichneter Kenner, Pfleger und Freunde der vaterländischen Geschichte". 175 Jahre Historischer Verein von Oberbayern. In: Oberbayerisches Archiv 136 (2012), S. 11-63; Gesellschaft für Frankfurter Geschichte, <http://www.geschichte-frankfurt.de/>.

<sup>7</sup> Verein für die Geschichte Berlins, <http://www.diegeschichteberlins.de/verein.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Historische Gesellschaft Bremen, <http://www.historische-bremen.de/>; Eva Determann: Der Sinn für Bremens Geschichte - 150 Jahre Historische Gesellschaft Bremen [...]. In: Bremisches Jahrbuch 91 (2012), S. 34-42.

Hanover in 1835<sup>9</sup>, Kassel 1834<sup>10</sup>, the one for Westphalia in Münster 1825<sup>11</sup>, the one for Hesse Nassau (Wiesbaden) even dates back to 1812<sup>12</sup>. Historicism was the common interest of intellectuals at that time and part of the civic culture<sup>13</sup>, and so the associations started famous historical source editions, very often in cooperation with the communal and state archives. Most of the associations declare in the preamble of their charters the collection, inventarisation and presentation of important historical sources and remains of their region to be one of their foremost objectives.

Next to the source editions, journals and regional or local bibliographies are their typical output. As most of the founding members had an academical background, they as a matter of course accepted contemporary academic standards of source editing and publicising, and so they do nowadays. But only very few editorial projects switched from print to web yet – genealogical sections excluded, we will come back to them soon -, and they are not being pushed in this direction by their connections with archivists and archives. Only a small minority of archivists in Germany actively uses social media channels, participatory tools and crowdsourcing initiatives<sup>14</sup>.

But there are some exceptions, positive examples and activities: The association for Hesse Kassel builds up a digital library of source publications and monographs from the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>15</sup>. The Westphalian historical society (Münster) cooperates with the German President's annual historiographic contest for young people ("Schülerwettbewerb deutsche Geschichte"<sup>16</sup>) offering pupils a web platform to publicise their professionally peer reviewed enquiries under the title "Pupils Write History" ("Schüler schreiben Geschichte")<sup>17</sup>.

And the most advanced web users are the genealogical branches of the associations, very often developed into independent genealogical societies and networks. Their organisational structures seem to be extraordinarily steady and far-reaching: local groups, collections and

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<sup>9</sup> Historischer Verein für Niedersachsen und Bremen, <http://www.historischer-verein-niedersachsen.de/>; Thomas Vogtherr: 175 Jahre Historischer Verein für Niedersachsen. In: Hannoversche Geschichtsblätter 64 (2010), S. 5-21.

<sup>10</sup> Verein für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde (Kassel), <http://www.vhghessen.de/>; Hans-Jürgen Kahlfuß: 175 Jahre Verein für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde, 1834 bis 2009. Vols 1-5. – Kassel 2010

<sup>11</sup> Verein für Geschichte und Altertumskunde Westfalens, Abt. Münster, [http://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/Verein\\_Geschichte\\_Altertumskunde/](http://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/Verein_Geschichte_Altertumskunde/).

<sup>12</sup> Verein für Nassauische Altertumskunde und Geschichtsforschung (Wiesbaden), <http://www.nassauischer-altertumskunde.de/index.htm>; Winfried Schüler: Bewahren - Erleben - Verstehen. 200 Jahre Verein für Nassauische Altertumskunde und Geschichtsforschung. Eine Bild- und Textdokumentation, 1812-2012. – Wiesbaden 2012.

<sup>13</sup> The Union of German Historical Societies (Gesamtverein der Deutschen Geschichts- und Altertumsvereine) provides a comprehensive list of its 217 members, URL: <http://www.gesamtverein.de/index.php?id=59> <6.4.2013>.

On 19th century historical associations in general see Gabriele B. Clemens: Säulen der Regionalgeschichtsschreibung: die deutschen Altertums- und Geschichtsvereine im langen 19. Jahrhundert. In: Historische Blicke auf das Land an der Saar. 60 Jahre Kommission für Saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung. – Saarbrücken 2012 (Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung 45), S. 333-349; Gunnar B. Zimmermann: Komplementäre Identitätsräume. Regionale Geschichtslandschaften in der bürgerlichen Gedächtniskultur Hamburgs von 1918 bis 1933. In: Das Gedächtnis von Stadt und Region. Geschichtsbilder in Norddeutschland / Janina Fuge, Rainer Hering, Harald Schmid (Hrsg.). – München 2010 (Hamburger Zeitspuren 7), S. 15-38.

<sup>14</sup> Joachim Kemper u.a., Archivische Spätzünder? Sechs Web 2.0-Praxisberichte. In: Archivar 65 (2012), S. 130-143, URL: [http://www.archive.nrw.de/archivar/hefte/2012/ausgabe2/ARCHIVAR\\_02-12\\_internet.pdf](http://www.archive.nrw.de/archivar/hefte/2012/ausgabe2/ARCHIVAR_02-12_internet.pdf) (contains reports about municipal archives in Frankfurt/Main, Heilbronn, Linz/Rhine, Speyer and State Archives in Amberg and Vienna); Bastian Gillner: Aufgewacht, aufgebrochen, aber noch nicht angekommen. Das deutsche Archivwesen und das Web 2.0. Vortrag [...] Speyer, 23.11. 2012, URL: <http://archive20.hypothesen.org/454>.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.vhghessen.de/> <7.4.2013>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.koerber-stiftung.de/bildung/geschichtswettbewerb.html>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/Verein\\_Geschichte\\_Altertumskunde/1272978295/](http://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/Verein_Geschichte_Altertumskunde/1272978295/)

libraries, national and international connections are interwoven<sup>18</sup>. They have been using digital technology for years not only for networking, but also publicising documents, indexes and registers. The Bavarian Society for Family Research produces CDs resp. DVDs every two years since 2004 with family research results for Bavaria<sup>19</sup>. In another case, a community archive, Minden/Westphalia, launched a joint project with the Historical Society of Minden and FamilySearch in order to transcribe the population census records (Volkszählungslisten) of 1880-1900 and index them<sup>20</sup>. On the national level the Computer Genealogists Association (Verein für Computergenealogie) works on indexing the digitised German death toll registers of the First World War (estimated 6-9 million records), using a wiki environment for about 500 volunteers<sup>21</sup>.

## (2) The 'Heimatbund' movement

'Heimatbund'-organisations are another species of civic movements concerned about local or regional history and culture. They are younger than the traditional historical societies. Most of them were founded in small towns and the countryside around 1900-1920 as associations of researchers, teachers and especially all kinds of conservative critics of modern civilisation and industrialisation, for example in the state of Lower Saxony<sup>22</sup> in the South of Hamburg. Village people and their 'Heimatbund' associations strived for the common good in their environment by protecting the landscape, old buildings, keeping up traditions, collecting folklore and documents of the past. Basically conservative, they turned into modernised local interest groups after World War II. Nowadays many of them foster source collecting, publications of village and family histories, etc. They have advisory boards for history and feel responsible for providing guidance to archives for interested people<sup>23</sup>.

One interesting example of source collection activities comes from the Northwest of Germany, the region of Emsland and Bentheim. The Studiengesellschaft für Emsländische Regionalgeschichte gathered and transcribed more than 100 school chronicles, written annually from 1894 – when they were officially ordered, some date back further – up to the 1960s. The project derived from a further-reaching intention to collect all kinds of material about World War I in this part of the country. The Emsland school chronicles provide so rich

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<sup>18</sup> <http://compgen.de/>: Gesamtnetzwerk Computergenealogie in Deutschland.

<sup>19</sup> Bayerischer Landesverein für Familienkunde; results of family research on CD/DVD: <http://www.blf-online.de/blf-dvd-2012>.

<sup>20</sup> „Seit Juli 2011 sind die ersten beiden Volkszählungsbände (1880/1885) im Original als Digitalisat bei FamilySearch™ verfügbar und per Link mit dem Portal archive.nrw.de verknüpft. Auf die von den Nutzern erstellten Indizes kann ebenfalls über FamilySearch™ zugegriffen werden.“ (Sina Westphal: Personenstandsarchive im Web 2.0 am Beispiel des Landesarchivs Nordrhein-Westfalen. – Marburg 2012, p. 6; URL: [http://www.archive.nrw.de/lav/abteilungen/fachbereich\\_grundsaeetze/BilderKartenLogosDateien/Transferarbeiten/Westphal\\_Transferarbeit.pdf](http://www.archive.nrw.de/lav/abteilungen/fachbereich_grundsaeetze/BilderKartenLogosDateien/Transferarbeiten/Westphal_Transferarbeit.pdf)).

There is another interactive genealogical project being run in North-Rhine Westphalia and now transformed into a web 2.0 project, working on the former Personenstandsarchiv Westfalen-Lippe (now belonging to Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen / Abteilung Ostwestfalen-Lippe); see Westphal: Personenstandsarchive, p. 8-26: „Das Verkartungsprojekt“.

Crowdsourcing projects launched by archives have very successful predecessors in France (Rennes, <http://www.archives.rennes.fr/>) and the Netherlands (VeleHanden, coordinated by the Amsterdam Archive, <http://velehanden.nl>).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.verlustlisten.de/>; [http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Verlustlisten\\_Erster\\_Weltkrieg/Projekt](http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Verlustlisten_Erster_Weltkrieg/Projekt)

<sup>22</sup> Carl-Hans Hauptmeyer: Die Historische Kommission und der Niedersächsische Heimatbund. In: Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte 83 (2011), S. 93-115.

<sup>23</sup> Just these days the Lower Saxon Heimatbund posted a job advertisement for setting-up a 'Heimat'-expert network. The focus lies on the implementation of modern technology in order to strengthen communication and further education of the associations; see [http://www.niedersaechsischer-heimatbund.de/files/pdf/2013\\_ausschreibung\\_volontaer.pdf](http://www.niedersaechsischer-heimatbund.de/files/pdf/2013_ausschreibung_volontaer.pdf), and <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/chancen/type=stellen&id=8867> <8.7.2013>.

and multiple information about everyday life, political influence from outside, social conflict and coherence, popular beliefs and mentalities, etc., that the Heimatbund, the archives and libraries of the region set up a cooperative transcription project separately. Outcomes are offered as digital versions for research, but have not yet been publicised on the web<sup>24</sup>.

### (3) History workshops and private archives belonging to the history-from-below movement

In many of the bigger cities there are working groups and private archives in the quarters, collecting all kinds of memorabilia and source material. They are quite active in presenting it in exhibitions, lectures or on the web. Their focus lies on the history of everyday life, working experiences, especially in the 20th century, the Nazi period in particular, the World Wars, after-war life. They advocate the history of small entities – city quarters, streets, factories, families, associations, etc. Oral history methods play an important role in their work. The German history groups and community archives movement arose in the 1970s and 80s in opposition to the traditional academic historiography and embedded in the new social movements of that period – picking up ideas from the British history-workshop-movement (Raphael Samuel) and primarily from the Swedish „Grabe wo du stehst“ tradition (Sven Lindqvist<sup>25</sup>). The history workshops mainly rest upon voluntary service and all kinds of donations. Some of them receive additional public funding – for example in Hamburg since 1987 – or are linked to adult education centres.

In Hamburg, for example, there are 16 bigger history workshops, joined into a Stiftung Geschichtswerkstätten Hamburg<sup>26</sup>. Some 4.000 objects (private photos, postcards, documents, books, etc.) out of their collections of about 150.000 items have been digitised and are being presented on the common web platform called [stadtteilgeschichten.net](http://stadtteilgeschichten.net), hosted by the North German Common Library Network GBV and integrated into the regional portal HamburgWissen Digital and the Europeana<sup>27</sup>. Two history workshops from Lower Saxony (Göttingen and Duderstadt) contributed to a virtual exhibition on forced labour in their region 1939-1945 together with three universities and foreign institutions<sup>28</sup>.

The history workshops in Kiel and Augsburg – just to mention two more distinguished examples from the North and the South of Germany – concentrate on the presentation of their local history on the web, representing typical houses and streets of their respective cities<sup>29</sup>. The aims of these archives and workshops as well as the standards and tools they apply technically are quite different, depending on individual skills and connections of the members and very often relying on proprietary solutions. Regional networking between several cities is rare; one example is [stadtteilgeschichten.net](http://stadtteilgeschichten.net) in Hamburg connected with archives in Hannover<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.studiengesellschaft-emsland-bentheim.de/materialsammlung.html>

<sup>25</sup> Sven Lindqvist: Gräv där du står: hur man utforskar ett jobb. Stockholm 1978; in German: Grabe, wo du stehst. Handbuch zur Erforschung der eigenen Geschichte. Aus dem Schwed. übers. und hrsg. von Manfred Dammeyer. - Bonn 1989.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.stiftung-geschichtswerkstaetten-hamburg.de/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://stadtteilgeschichten.net/>; [http://www.gbv.de/?set\\_language=en](http://www.gbv.de/?set_language=en); <http://www.hamburgwissen-digital.de/home.html>; <http://www.europeana.eu/>.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.zwangsarbeit-in-niedersachsen.eu/de/index-de.html> = „Auf der Spur europäischer Zwangsarbeit. Südniedersachsen 1939-1945“; German participants are Göttingen (<http://www.geschichtswerkstatt-goettingen.de/>) and Duderstadt (<http://www.geschichtswerkstatt-duderstadt.de/>), the universities Erlangen-Nürnberg, Hannover and the university for applied sciences Hannover. „Fünf der Organisationen in Deutschland, Polen, Italien und den Niederlanden, die vom Oktober 2008 bis November 2009 gemeinsam die wissenschaftliche, konzeptionelle und organisatorische Arbeit an der Wanderausstellung ‚Auf der Spur europäischer Zwangsarbeit. Südniedersachsen 1939-1945‘ durchgeführt haben, arbeiten weiter zusammen im Projekt ‚Moving with the Exhibition / Ausstellung in Bewegung‘.“

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.geschichtswerkstatt-gaarden.de/index.html>; <http://www.gw-augsburg.de/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://stadtteilgeschichten.net/handle/2339/2>; see also the overview by Joachim Räth: [http://www.lwl.org/westfaelische-geschichte/ag/tag201305/2013\\_raeth.pdf](http://www.lwl.org/westfaelische-geschichte/ag/tag201305/2013_raeth.pdf).

#### (4) Wiki structures

Beyond the history segments of Wikipedia<sup>31</sup> wiki structures are in use for different kinds of volunteer work. Wikis can be most useful for gathering and presenting historical facts – sources to a lesser extent -, transporting specialist knowledge in a condensed and consolidated level to the web. In some bigger cities like Munich or Karlsruhe<sup>32</sup>, but also in a mid-size city like Cuxhaven<sup>33</sup> at the Elbe Estuary community history wikis are very popular, growing steadily and in good quality. What they essentially need are enthusiastic and continually productive contributors, but is also a coordinating and structuring function wherever situated or institutionally associated.

Libraries seem to become aware of this demand, some already engage in this field: The Vienna Library<sup>34</sup> thinks of drafting a community history wiki for the Austrian capital. And the Dresden State and University Library opened its biographical database, connected with the Saxon regional bibliography, for crowdsourcing. Registered users can add or amend biographic articles about persons related with Saxony and its history or with the history of technology<sup>35</sup>. Thus the library can fructify specialist knowledge from Saxony and beyond, that the librarians working on the regional bibliography and this associated biographic resource would never could apply.

#### (5) History blogs

History blogs can focus on source editing or on the presentation and interpretation of content. Mostly they are of quite individual origin, but there might also be a backing institution exerting editorial influence. An example for a blog a single historian came up with is the “1628blog”<sup>36</sup> about one year in the history of Wertheim on Main, a pretty old city in the Southeast of Frankfurt. Every week the archivist Robert Meier posts a slightly commented summary of a historical source from 1628 – or in the meantime 1629 as well -, and he plans to continue for a longer period of time.

At the Hamburg State and University Library a history blog for a part of the city, the previously independent town of Bergedorf<sup>37</sup>, serves as a means to demonstrate the value of digitised regional sources in a sort of show case with 25 historical articles. A user of the library wrote most of the articles with editorial support of the staff. This blog is the first of a series of history blogs and small virtual exhibitions to be prepared together with specialists and library users.

The “Coburg community memory” project<sup>38</sup> was initiated by the community archive: a multimedia website assembling historical sources, historiography and in particular memories of the citizens. They are invited to enter pictures, letters, stories and their experience into the web interface. The archive provides editorial support and monitors the legal formalities.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:History>, <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Geschichte>, etc. - And there is Wikisource (URL: <http://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Hauptseite>), the source-oriented sister product of Wikipedia, without any topical or regional focus. Its German language platform has had 120 active users in the past 30 days <14.7.2013>, a comparably small group. In October 2013, seven years after establishing the German Wikisource platform, a first meeting of Wikisource activists will take place in Leipzig.

<sup>32</sup> Munich (8.605 articles): <http://www.muenchenwiki.de/wiki/Hauptseite>; Karlsruhe (23.856 articles and 27.483 pictures): <http://ka.stadtwiki.net/Hauptseite>.

<sup>33</sup> „Cuxpedia“ (2.611 articles and 3.412 pictures): <http://www.cuxpedia.de/index.php/Hauptseite>.

<sup>34</sup> Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, <http://www.wienbibliothek.at/english/index.html>.

<sup>35</sup> [http://personen-wiki.slub-dresden.de/index.php/Personen-Wiki\\_der\\_SLUB](http://personen-wiki.slub-dresden.de/index.php/Personen-Wiki_der_SLUB).

<sup>36</sup> <http://1628blog.de/>.

<sup>37</sup> <http://blogs.sub.uni-hamburg.de/bergedorf/>; see also <http://blog.sub.uni-hamburg.de/?p=12099>.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.stadtgeschichte-coburg.de/Startseite.aspx>.

## (6) Europeana 1914-1918

We have not experienced many large-scale crowdsourcing activities in Germany yet, but one of course was remarkable: the Europeana 1914-1918 project<sup>39</sup>. It was “based on an initiative at the University of Oxford where people across Britain were asked to bring family letters, photographs and keepsakes from the War to be digitised. The success of the idea – which became the Great War Archive – has encouraged Europeana, Europe's digital archive, library and museum, to bring other national institutions across Europe into an alliance with Oxford University.”<sup>40</sup>

The process of collecting private memorabilia – documents, artefacts, stories - from the period of the Great War (1914-1918) was organised in two ways:

1. One could add a picture of the item or type in the story online on the project website.
2. “Family History Roadshows”: People were invited to bring the items to the event where project staff would photograph the items and record the stories that go with them. The stories and scanned or photographed images of the objects are then added to the archive. Roadshows took place in libraries of nine German cities between March and June 2011 and in January 2012.

The archive now comprises 896 digital objects or ensembles of several items related to these nine cities, about 100 at average, the top result of 308 comes from Amberg, Bavaria<sup>41</sup>. For major cities where the roadshow did not turn up, the archive provides between 5 and 30 objects which will have been added individually.

## Summary I

The German historical culture includes a wide variety of initiatives, associations and activities in the private sector: agile local volunteers who are historically interested and ready to be part of the history work – mostly confined to local communication networks and organisations. Activities somehow differ from region to region, town to town, and, moreover, between cities and the countryside. Family historians and genealogists seem most likely to bridge gaps via networks.

Bringing historical source material to the web demands these enthusiastic and motivated volunteer historians – but also technophiles or, even better, organised connections to professional IT infrastructure. Many of the activities mentioned above are rooted in private initiatives, stand-alone-environments or individual collections. And sometimes they are reluctant to contact or engage public institutions for their work. All too often they tend to continue work in local isolation. Then again, others tried and succeeded in gaining budgetary or organisational backing from city administrations, from libraries, archives or research institutions. From my point of view it is up to the local heritage institutions to take the lead and, for their part, play an active role in merging historical culture activities for the web. Most of the following points relating to libraries *mutatis mutandis* also apply to archives.

## Libraries

So, shall libraries try to encourage and support these activities? What can libraries in particular bring forward? With which interests, possible effects, and at what price?

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/de>.

<sup>40</sup> <http://pro.europeana.eu/web/europeana-1914-1918>.

<sup>41</sup> <http://pro.europeana.eu/web/europeana-1914-1918>; <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/explore<7.7.2013>>.

First of all, regional and public libraries have to decide about whether they feel in line with demands to support historical culture activities proactively beyond their accepted core functions. Then they have to consider the question of resources – how many and which kind of resources can they invest into projects of this kind? If they opt for it, they open up to trends that have recently been outlined by several librarians.

Peter Murray (2008/2011) talks of applying library expertise to a “third wave of material, after commercial-physical and commercial-digital, now: local-digital. [...] The third wave of content is now emerging: local, digital material. This is content that does not come through well-established channels from commercial publishers. It takes the form of article pre-prints / post-prints, working papers, technical reports, datasets from experiments, slide collections, lecture notes and recordings, blogs, wikis, and corporate publications. To manage this new wave of content, a new suite of tools are emerging: content management systems, institutional repositories, e-print software, and collaborative writing applications.”<sup>42</sup>

Ed Summers (2012) imagines a u-turn to the “INSIDE-OUT library”: “Instead of being an OUTSIDE-IN library” – bringing the world to its users, selecting, indexing, commenting content -, “libraries should try and stay relevant by shifting their paradigm 180 degrees. Instead of only helping users to find what is available globally, they should also focus on making local collections and production available to the world. Instead of doing the same thing everywhere, libraries should focus on making unique information accessible.” Libraries have to offer “authentic, local context for information about a community’s past, present and future. But in the past century or so libraries have focused on collecting mass produced objects, and sharing data about said objects. The mission of collecting hyper-local information has typically been a side task, that has fallen to special collections and archives. [...] libraries need to shift their orientation to caring more about the practices of archives and manuscript collections, by collecting unique, valued, at risk local materials, and adapting collection development and descriptive practices to the realities of more and more of this information being available as data.”<sup>43</sup>

Or, as Michael Stephens (2013) puts it: The “participatory library” needs “embedded local experts”, provides “creation spaces” for crowdsourcing and oral history projects, it “engages users to add to library services” and plan activities together with librarians. “Preserving a community’s digital heritage is the work of both libraries and museums, but involving the community in these efforts is imperative as we move forward.”<sup>44</sup>

As I tried to demonstrate in the first part of the paper, in Germany we must not start from the point of origin. We have available active and somehow organised volunteer participants in German historical culture – primarily it seems to be a communication task for libraries to build up or renew relations to these prospective partners. And to find out the respective needs,

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<sup>42</sup> And he describes the consequences: Needed instead of “the management of content that is ‘done’” is “the management of content as it is being created. In the first two waves, the library profession focused on the curation of knowledge published in a fixed form, ... What if, instead, the author stored their work-in-progress in a library service from the beginning? We could offer the promise of robust backups and versioning, collaborative writing tools, and access from anywhere. With the working draft on our servers, we could mine the text to suggest content from our curated stores, and even suggest potential collaborators based on similarities of works. And with the completed draft on our servers, ‘publishing’ it in the institutional repository becomes a simple checkbox – ‘yes, make this public’ – as we have already collected all of the necessary metadata that would go into the archive package in the repository.” (Peter Murray: Riding the Waves of Content and Change <20.6.2008, updated 27.1.2011>, URL: <http://dlitj.org/article/riding-the-waves/>).

<sup>43</sup> Ed Summers: Inside Out Libraries, 18.12.2012. URL: <http://inkdroid.org/journal/2012/12/18/inside-out-libraries/>.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Stephens: Learning everywhere. Transformative libraries & services. TTW in Germany 2012, p. 63, 65ff., 72-76, 80ff., 85. URL: <http://tametheweb.com/2012/10/25/learning-everywhere-in-germany-presentation-download/> ; <http://de.slideshare.net/mstephens7/learning-everywhere-germany>.



possible common interests, suitable topics and fields of action, methods to apply, modes and resources for cooperation.

So what does 'applying library expertise' here mean in practice? What do we have to offer? Without describing in detail each little piece of the puzzle that could be of value, some aspects are:

- (physical and digital) collection building: methodological help and instruction, hosting
- providing technical infrastructure for digitisation and recording
- indexing, systematisation: applying expertise in indexing procedures, making use of standard metadata formats and authority files in order to facilitate cross-linking of different sources
- engaging quality aspects: standards, control procedures, workflow modeling, stable IT-solutions
- combining complementary sources from the library and its partners for certain projects
- bundling of activities by supplying communication channels, exhibition opportunities, ways of distribution, publication infrastructure
- contextualizing special material by integrating it into a library environment, generating lateral traffic
- supporting community building – in the region, cross-regional, with academic partners or other heritage institutions, etc.
- Finally libraries can launch cross-institutional projects or projects of their own with crowdsourcing components (tagging, correcting, transliterating etc. projects) which activate foreseeable groups of volunteers.

Each library will have to find out the particular balance between big- and small-scale activities matching its profile – and matching its regional, academic and social environment. Being involved in the construction of shared historical knowledge can have lasting effects on the library's customer retention chances and its good standing as a cultural heritage institution. Without doubt, the library has to apply resources for turning 'inside out' this way – but in a period which increasingly demands the ability to transcend traditional boundaries this is just one of several fields to prove networking creativity.

As for the volunteer groups, advantages of joint ventures with libraries or archives are quite obvious: enhanced visibility in larger contexts and connectivity in various directions (portals, institutional websites, search engines, etc.) appear most important to me.

## Summary II

Most of the public and state libraries are deeply involved in the historical culture of their region. The digital revolution of communication facilities enforces redefinitions of their agency in the cultural heritage field. For the state libraries which in many places are combined university and state libraries it is a double task to find and adjust their future roles in the academic field as well as for the broad public of their regional catchment. Remaining relevant in both respects demands concentration on the specific holdings and services beyond their well-known knowledge selection and transfer functions<sup>45</sup>.

Johan Schloemann recently described how the internet affects cultural studies on the whole. Not only knowledge exchange and publicising processes have fundamentally changed and are still subject to change. Also archives and libraries redefine their roles. Their selective

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<sup>45</sup> There is a trend in German academic libraries to put forward their historical and special collections being preferred subjects to digitisation. See Irmgard Siebert: Die Zukunft liegt in der Vergangenheit. Historische Bibliotheken auf dem Weg zu Forschungsbibliotheken. In: Bibliothek. Forschung und Praxis 37 (2013), 1, p. 78-90.

production and structuring of web resources influences the new order of knowledge. And libraries are inevitably affected by changes in communicative environments: "In popular fields of knowledge amateurs and academic experts encounter each other more intensely than ever before."<sup>46</sup> Libraries cannot escape these restructuring processes, they are involved anyway. If they take an active role, this might help them to remain relevant and provide good opportunities to shape their reputation. From my point of view, libraries are well advised to act as collaborative service providers for their historical culture, together with their regional experts as partners.

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<sup>46</sup> Durch die Existenz des Internets „tauscht man sich anders aus“ in den Kulturwissenschaften. „Zweitens forscht man anders. Immer mehr Primärquellen sind für alle gleich verfügbar. ... [Die Gelehrten] wissen: Die Art und Weise des Zugriffs kann das Denken verändern, ... Inhalte und Assoziationen gehen andere Verbindungen ein, die Gliederung von Online-Ressourcen greift in die Ordnung des Wissens ein, Archiv und Bibliothek verwandeln sich in ihrem Wesen. In Wissensgebieten, die sich hohen öffentlichen Interesses erfreuen, begegnen sich Amateure und Universitätsexperten intensiver denn je. Während die Wissenschaft immer spezieller wird, fordert man immer mehr Vermittlung an die Allgemeinheit.“ (Johan Schloemann: Server oder Sammelband. Die Anforderungen an einen guten Text sind dieselben geblieben. Trotzdem verändert das Internet die Geisteswissenschaften radikal – von der Recherche bis zu den Formen des Publizierens. In: Süddeutsche Zeitung 2013, Nr. 29 vom 4.2., S. 9).