Founding of "Time Machine Organisation" (TMO) in Dresden.
Network Aims at Leading Europe to the top in the Area of Big Data of the Past

- Founding of TMO – organisation for international cooperation in technology, science and cultural heritage, Dresden, 9 October 2019
- Network already counts more than 300 members from science, economics and cultural heritage institutions

A day in the year 2030. "Imagine standing in one of Europe's famous museums in front of a drawing. Like any other visitor you will have an app, that immediately gathers together all the relevant information around this work of art from the net for you. The crucial question is: Who will stand behind this app." With this example Frédéric Kaplan, professor for Digital Humanities at the EPFL Lausanne and "founder" of Time Machine opens his keynote speech at the second Time Machine Conference in Dresden from 10-11 October 2019.

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN CULTURAL HERITAGE, SCIENCE AND ECONOMICS

As a highlight of the event, which is set at the interface between artificial intelligence, humanities and economics, the "Time Machine Organisation", short TMO, is officially founded. "The TMO is a network that aims at creating technological breakthroughs when dealing with historical documents of the past", states Thomas Aigner, head of the episcopal archives in St. Pölten and vice president of the TMO. "What is completely new about the TMO is that it is intending to develop and use artificial intelligence to create and interpret Big Data of the Past", explains Thomas Aigner. Companies like UBISOFT are already members of the TMO. Within the joining GLAM partners ('Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums') there are Europe's top institutions like Louvre, the Rijkmuseum (Netherlands), the German States Archives and the Austrian National Library.

ETHICAL DIMENSION

Harry Verwayen, executive director of Europeana Foundation, the operator of the Europeana Platform, who is also on the steering board of the TMO, stresses the relevance of establishing the organisation. "The founding of the TMO was important, as it formalizes the ambition of the Time Machine project." Similar to Frédéric Kaplan he puts an emphasis on the ethical dimension of Time Machine for Europe. "In future Europe the question will arise who has the power over historical narratives. Will it be only one single corporation? Or will those narratives be open for interpretation by the public?" Verwayen states that TMO and Europeana complement each other as "the TMO has a broad network in the area of computer sciences and artificial intelligence, from which Europeana can benefit. Likewise, Time Machine can build on the infrastructure, network and frameworks of Europeana."

REVOLUTIONIZING HISTORIOGRAPHY

Julia Noordegraaf, professor for Digital Heritage (Department for Media Studies/University of Amsterdam) sees the TMO as an opportunity to "revolutionize the access to cultural heritage in Europe." "Digitization will change historiography completely", says Noordegraaf. As head of the local Amsterdam Time Machine she calls it a "reciprocal process", in which the population can actively contribute to historiography with their knowledge and documents. "There are already good models, that show us how such cooperation may function, such as Wikimedia", says Noordegraaf.

PARTICIPATION MAKES NEW NARRATIVES POSSIBLE

The city of Dresden has also got a local Time Machine Project under the guidance of conference organizer Sander Münster, computer scientist and junior professor for digital humanities (TU Dresden/ FSU Jena). One of the focuses are 3D and 4D reconstructions of the city. "It is a commandment of time to make history visually experienceable, participatory and open for everyone", says Münster. "Thanks to the digitization of the Dresden photo collection it is already possible to resurrect the city as it was 100 or 200 years ago." Moving the time beam on the platform of the Dresden Time Machine, means actually being a time traveler.

LOCAL TIME MACHINES BUNDLE THEIR ENERGY

Amsterdam and Dresden are only two of already 20 Local Time Machines, that were presented at the conference; other places are for example Thessaloniki, Budapest or Paris. The TMO brings all these initiatives together. Around two years ago 33 partners submitted a proposal for a FET flagship project of the EU. Frédéric Kaplan calls it a "collective energy", that emerged "bottom-up" and lead to a common vision in no time.

TIME TRAVELLING FOR EVERYONE!

Frédéric Kaplan, the just elected president of the TMO, is convinced that the founding of the new organisation is a fundamental step into the direction of the realization of the large-scale project. "A day in the year 2030. I imagine, that all people have the possibility to take a walk through history – and that data and documents are not locked away in storage rooms, but free and openly accessible for everyone."

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