A Participatory Interface for a Photo Archives

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Image: Screenshot / Mock-up of one way to visualize the PIA Collections



- PIA is a large interdisciplinary project, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation from 2021 to 2025.
- => Academy of the Arts (Design)
 => Cultural Studies and European Ethnology (Humanities Research)
 => Digital Humanities Lab (Technology).
- The visual material and the metadata is provided by the photographic archives of the **Swiss Association for Folklore**.
- Three collections are in focus:
 - Scientific Cartography (Atlas of Swiss Folklore, published from 1950–1995)
 - Estate of the photojournalist Ernst Brunner (1936–1979)
 - Photographic collection of the Kreis family (1860–1970).

Collections of the Swiss Society for Folklore Studies within PIA







SGV_05 Atlas der Schweizerischen Volkskunde

Scientific Photography

SGV_12 Ernst Brunner

Photojournalism

SGV_10 Familie Kreis

Vernacular Photography



Archives

- became digital from the 2000 onwards,
- did significant work on digital preservation,
- had to respond on the pressure to provide open data,
- have increased complexity of metadata due to semantic technologies,
- need working infrastructures.



Participation

- The depth of meta-information is shallow. Indexing requires a profound knowledge of the photographs and experts that know the content are not easy to find. An open archive can help in this situation significantly.
- Participation is vital for most digital archives of historic photo material.
- Machine learning approaches allow the indexing of image content automatically, the general quality of such an automated process is limited and significantly biased.



Image Data

- Fact is: The digital availability of photographs and collections alone does not automatically lead to the broader use of the material.
- We develop an full stack solution:
 - A backend based on Omeka S and IIIF
 - Full featured APIs for media files and metadata
 - An intuitive frontend that supports new methods of display and organisation of image data.
- ML image recognition is implemented to give fundamental searchability of uncatalogued images.
- We develop methods and tools that attract and enable all interested parties to conduct research!

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Objects of the moment



Emmentaler Schindelmacher



E Leaflet

Trubschachen

creator

Brunner, Ernst

about

Views	Actions
– <u>Graph</u>	— <u>React</u>
– <u>Mirador</u>	— <u>Search by clipping</u>
– <u>Similar</u>	— <u>Memeify</u>
– <u>IIIF Image</u>	 Add to collection Add
– <u>IIIF Manifest</u>	

Problematic Content?

In Collections

- (Report problematic content to us)

Metadaten

- JSON-LD

identifier

- SGV_12N_27351

— LY 51

name

Emmentaler Schindelmacher

temporal 1947

location

image URL...

sipi.participatory-archives.ch/SGV_12/SGV_12N_27351.jp2/full/^299,299/0/default.jpg

ad an image file

File No file chosen

ch by text.

ext to search for

nreshold: 0.65

<u>Clear Form</u>

esults in PIA Explore



Enter an image URL...

https://sipi.participatory-archives.ch/SGV_12/SGV_12N_27351.jp2/full/^299,299/0/default.jpg

...or upload an image file

Choose File No file chosen

...or seach by text.

Enter text to search for

Score Threshold: 0.3

Search Clear Form















- How to ensure the quality of the metadata?
- Sustainable implementation is essential? How to do the transition from being a project to a running product?
- Dialog is not easy, e.g. to define common aims.
- SW Development need much human resources.

Approach

- In a series of workshops and interviews with different target groups (e.g., archivists, database specialists, humanities scholars, and journalists), new requirements for digital tools for participation are being developed.
- From a technical point of view, finding a sustainable implementation is essential. In the project, a running prototype is developed to match the following requirements:
 - Data, back-end and front-end are strictly separated
 - The communication with the backend is based on well-defined APIs
 - The functional components of the front-end are modular
 - The development of the user interface is fully Web-based
- Following these design boundaries, it is possible to migrate parts of the components to another infrastructure. This is specifically important because of the fixed end time of the project.

Collection ohne Titel X

Results



info	
Name:	Besucher des Viehm
Autor:	Brunner, Ernst
Zeitraum:	Mai 1942
Ort:	Ibergeregg
Medium:	Fotografie, Schwarz
Identifier:	le.
Neue Nummer	SGV_12N_07541 Alte
Ist Teil von:	sgv_421714, Collectio
Kommentar:	Auf der Negativhülle
Stempel:	В
Schlagwörter:	Zentralschweiz, Kirc
	Restaurant Arnold, A
Lizenz:	CC BY-NC 4.0



Tags



Kommentare

Hier steht der Titel, der im Formular eingegeben wird mit max lehnt und dann....

ΡΙΑ

Titel des Kommentars

Titel

Langer Titel

Add Comment

Problematic Content?

Inform us

Conclusion

- While analogue archives are primarily concerned with the long-term preservation of the material, digital archives primarily serve communication with the public.
- The ongoing interpretation and reinterpretation of image documents and their integration into various cultural, historical, and aesthetic contexts create a living form of knowledge.
- This approach contributes to conserving that knowledge beyond just preserving physical documents. However, this does not mean it will make the physical archive unimportant, but rather that layers above the "archive" will be developed in dialogue with the users.



Screenshot of the current prototype of the GUI, showing a search result for "Tracht" (eng. "traditional costume"). On the right, you can see selected objects for the collection.