

SSH13-007 - The Changing Role of Audio-Visual Archives as Memory Storages in the Public Space. Using the example of private video sources

Abstract

Archives and public spaces – what might sound like a contradiction at first, becomes clear by closer observing the function of archives. They convey a picture of the public sphere past and future. In the present, their collection and preservation strategy is the basis for fulfilling this role. They have to preserve the visual memory of society for a future public and ensure that the respective media possibilities of the past are passed on.

The technical innovations of the last decades as well as the digital revolution have fundamentally transformed the public space and maintain it in a state of constant further change. With the rapid media change and above all with the possibilities of a virtual public space on the Internet, the notion of public sphere has gained additional dimensions. With these possibilities, an interesting tension field between public and private has arisen. In the archive sector, however, it is not only a matter of current content, also historical sources that previously remained unpublished become part of the public space and depict social reality, due to their availability on the Internet.

The present project proposal discusses a type of source that is scarcely reviewed as regards content and is barely available for scientific research: private video-sources with a focus on the 1980s and 1990s. These hardly exist in audio-visual archives and are intensely vulnerable because of their technical properties. General considerations as to the function of archives as memory storages in the public space and the associated demands as well as viable possibilities in practice are to be discussed. This is followed by the development of a collection- and archiving strategy as well as contributions to the methods of audio-visual archiving.

Based on pertinent preliminary work and projects by the Österreichische Mediathek (Austrian National AV-Archive) this source preservation – thematically focused on Vienna – is to be conducted professionally and reflectively:

- Collection and evaluation of source material
- Professional digitisation conforming to the specifications of the IASA (International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives)
- Metadata acquisition
- Long-term archiving
- Scientific edition of the video recordings on the Internet In doing so, it is important that technical and content-related requirements are brought into accordance, because frequently a gap can be observed between projects that give priority to content at the expense of technics and projects that are technically well founded but show a theory deficit. This is especially true for the highly specialised fields of digitisation and digital long-term archiving.

Also, the bases of a scientific source edition on the Internet are to be theoretically developed and practically applied. The source edition requires a basic content analysis of the incoming video-material, furthermore, the source edition on the Internet is the basis for future research.

Keywords:

archival science, media history, social history, video, collection strategy, publishing policy, long-term preservation, accessibility

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Further links to the persons involved and to the project can be found under

<https://www.gmbh.wwtf.at/funding/programmes/past/ssh/SSH13-007/>