

Cfp Digitales Kulturerbe: Zugang, Vernetzung und Darstellung

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The Online Edition as an Open Format for the Presentation of the Digital Cultural Heritage

Editions have traditionally been regarded as being part of the sphere of academic research. Printed editions, which are both content-wise heavy and usually quite expensive, appear in limited numbers, which can be found on the shelves of special libraries. They are often only used by a small circle of specialists in order to correctly quote the canonical wording of a passage of text and – contrary to their claim – all too rarely serve as a basis for new research. However, the shift in media from print to freely accessible online publications has fundamentally changed access to editions and to the materials they contain. Sources can now be researched remotely, transcripts can be searched in fulltext and digital facsimiles may be integrated into the collection of sources created on one's own computer.

Internet search, social media and online encyclopedias make editions visible to a broader public, which has a decisive impact on the user group. This applies all the more to topics of wide public interest, as it is the case with Jewish history. Beyond collecting, preserving and documenting, the presentation and dissemination of the material becomes a central aspect of an online edition.

The bilingual (German/English) online source edition “Key Documents of German-Jewish History” (<http://jewish-history-online.net/>), which is published by the Institute for the History of German Jews (IGdJ) in Hamburg and freely accessible since September 2016, sees itself as such a link between collecting, preserving and researching as well as mediating the Jewish cultural heritage. Through the digitization and presentation of textual, visual, audiovisual and material sources that provide an exemplary insight into the Jewish history of Hamburg from the early modern era to the present – the so-called key documents – it digitally recollects Hamburg's Jewish heritage scattered all over the world due to persecution and migration and contributes to its long-term preservation for future generations. The systematic inclusion of material and audiovisual sources and the markup of all materials according to current standard formats for digital editions are intended to take full advantage of the new possibilities of the digital publication environment.

The availability on the Internet and the manifold contextualization of the source material are aimed at making it accessible to a wide circle of users – from researchers and students to an interested public. The website is characterized by its high usability and a modular structure. In addition to the three primary access options (topic, timeline, map), various formats of text are offered, ranging from general overview articles on specific topics to interpretations developing their argument by a close study of the source. They comment on the documents provided and integrate them into their historical context. On the one hand, these articles facilitate access to the source for readers who without deeper knowledge of the subject and, on the other hand, provide a link to professional discussions through the integration of current scholarly debate.

The “bridging function” of the edition is further strengthened by the newly introduced format of the online exhibition. In contrast to the previous individual contributions, an exhibition offers the opportunity to present sources in a synopsis and thus emphasizes mutual references, developments and dependencies. The attractive visual presentation can appeal to users without much previous knowledge and guides them through. At the same time, the exhibitions are intended to present additional source material that has so far received little attention to a larger (academic) public.

If the online publication is taken seriously as a presentation medium, there can no longer be a definitive format. Rather, the presentation and display of the materials must always be questioned and reinvented. If corresponding resources are available, this openness offers a great opportunity.