

# PRESERVING HISTORY

in the Digital Age

One Day Symposium

Melbourne Holocaust Museum

Sunday 14 April 2024



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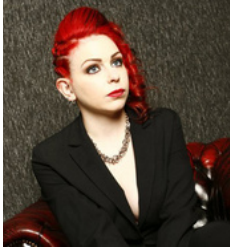
## in the Digital Age

This symposium brings together museum professionals, academics, and educators, working in museums, education, digital media and related fields across Australia. This is an opportunity to meet colleagues, hear experts present on digital projects and applications, and discuss opportunities, challenges, and ways forward.

### Draft Program

9.00 am - 10:30 am	Registration and exhibition open	
10:30 am - 10:45 am	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION	
10:45 am - 11:45 am	KEYNOTE - Dr Victoria Walden (University of Sussex) How can we ensure the sustainability of Holocaust memory in the digital age?	
12:00 pm - 1:15 pm	SESSION 1 - Parallel 1 EXHIBITIONS & COLLECTIONS	SESSION 1 - Parallel 2 EDUCATION
1:15 pm - 2:15 pm	Lunch	
2:15 pm - 3:30 pm	SESSION 3: Digital Projects	
3:30 pm - 4:00 pm	Afternoon tea	
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL MEMORZY	
5:00 pm - 5:15 pm	Closing words	
5:15 pm- 7:00 pm	Tour of exhibitions	

DRAFT PROGRAM - GUEST SPEAKERS TO BE ANNOUNCED



## KEYNOTE: Dr VICTORIA WALDEN, University of Sussex

Dr Victoria Grace Walden SFHEA FRSA MILM is the Director of Learning Enhancement and Senior Lecturer in Media at the School of Media, Arts and Humanities, Sussex Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies. She is the author of *Digital Holocaust Memory, Education and Research* (2021).

### How can we ensure the sustainability of Holocaust Memory in the digital age?

For several decades, the Holocaust museums, archives, memorial sites, and educational organisations have been preparing for the time when this past moves from a 'living memory' to a solely 'mediated memory' (James Young 2000). As we soon reached the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, this time is getting closer. Despite almost 30-years of digital development in Holocaust commemoration and education, there has been no systematic exploration of the projects created to date and the experiences of those involved in producing and using them.

In my fieldwork, which commenced in 2022, professionals working at Holocaust institutions have voiced their frustrations with feeling like they are 'reinventing the wheel' every time they approach a 'new technology' (knowing it has been done elsewhere but not connected to those other projects extensively enough to learn from their practice). Tech companies commissioned to produce digital works for Holocaust museums and memorial sites often have a very different understanding of the possibilities of the technology to the curators and educators with whom they partner, which often leads to frustration and disappointment regarding the finished products (on both sides).

Digital capacities and literacies within the sector are uneven and few organisations have a permanent team dedicated to their digital development and projects are often funded by short-term grants which leaves them abandoned after a short period, broken and buggy.

There is also little support to run extensive user impact research, so as a sector, we are left wondering what really works and why bother with any of this expensive technology at all? Social media has also made denial, distortion and hate more visible to staff as part of their daily work and emotional labour.

After introducing the context so far, informed by interviews with those involved in the production of digital Holocaust memory projects and the recording of walkthroughs of these works, and a series of participatory workshops, I will introduce a new venture launching at the University of Sussex this May: The Digital Holocaust Memory Innovation Lab. The Lab has 5-year funding for a series of activities which seek to support digital Holocaust memory in a sustainable way taking a global, sector-wide and interdisciplinary approach.