Memories, Communities, Technologies

Memories, Communities, Technologies (MCT) is a joint project of Monash University (Australia) and Kings College London (UK)

Purpose

The Memories, Communities, Technologies Network brings together researchers and stakeholders from communities, memory institutions and universities who are interested in exploring the rich interplay between memories, communities and technologies at the nexus between the humanities, social sciences and information technology.

eResearch at the humanities, social sciences and information technology nexus is an exciting and challenging area. A key focus of the Memories, Communities, Technologies Network is the formation and transformation of community memories, including the role of memory institutions, and the potentially transformative and empowering effects of information and communication technologies.

Outcomes

The Network aims to:

- Build an international community of researchers and stakeholders.
- Undertake collaborative, multi-disciplinary research projects and publication initiatives.
- Pursue a research and action agenda relating to participatory models of community eResearch.

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Background

Key Concepts

Communities of *Memory*

Different disciplines have different views of what a community is (or should be). One may look along a cultural dimension of community, or a social dimension, one may see a community as a symbolic construction, either constructed in social action or through values and normative structure. Political theorists and communitarians see a community primarily as a political community, urban planners as a locality, others focus on global and virtual communities.

The Memories, Communities, Technologies Network focuses on communities as "communities of *memory*". Being a community of *memory* involves an embeddedness in its past and, consequently, in the *memory* texts (in any form, written, oral, as well as physical) through which that past is mediated and through which the community links the present with the past and to the future. Of particular interest to the Network are post-colonial, post-trauma and diasporic communities of *memory*.

Memories and *memory* texts are being structured by contextuality while interacting with people and technologies: technologies of interaction in time-space (performing and recording, transfer and use) that condition not only the form or the structure, but also the content of *memory* texts, in a complex interaction with social and cultural norms (including the politics of *memory*).

A focus on communities of *memory* does not exclude personal memories and their interplay with memories of families, groups, and societies. Many personal *memories* contribute to those public narratives of community, religion, ethnicity and nation which make private identity possible. Life stories are about *we*, and *belonging* rather than *I* and *singleness*. Appropriating community *memories* is an element in the construction of self.

eResearch

The term "E-Research" is primarily used to describe the use of infrastructures enabling researchers working co-operatively across geographical and technical boundaries, and across multiple repositories and datasets. The Network's working definition, however, extends the concept of eResearch to the engagement of communities and memory institutions as equal partners, taking into account its formative/transformative potential. eResearch challenges us to do research more collaboratively and creatively, and enables the dissemination of research outcomes across disciplinary and cultural boundaries. Collaborative projects can develop inclusive eResearch methodologies and test models for empowering communities in the research process, and supporting participatory models of community-centred research.

Memory Institutions

Most *memory* institutions were established as community institutions, in a time when community was defined by the nation-state's politics of *memory*. Today, more and more, these institutions are broadening their mission, opening up to (and empowering) other communities. However, any community of *memory* is entitled to establish and maintain its own repositories of *memory* texts (in any form), be it in a physical location or virtually. Frameworks for the selection, collection, arrangement and description, preservation and accessibility of *memory* texts are closely linked to societal processes of remembering and forgetting, inclusion and exclusion, and the power relationships they embody. In this sense, *memory* institutions are always political sites of contested memory and knowledge. The *memory*-texts of post-colonial, post-trauma and diasporic communities of *memory* are stored in multiple sites, many of them maintained by "the Others", raising questions of preservation of and access to a joint heritage (or a "*memory* commons") being used within different ontologies. This may entail redefining the boundaries and relationships between power, *memories* and identities at the levels of State, community and the individual. It may also entail redesigning some or all *memory* 'institutions' as adaptive, collaborative and trusted intelligent systems or grids.

Participatory Models of Community-Centred Research

Any research is inevitably framed in terms of a particular worldview. This may well be challenged by or will evolve based on richer understandings of differing worldviews emerging from the research. In particular, research on *Memories, Communities, Technologies* needs to grapple with a range of insider/outsider issues in relation to the way in which research governance frameworks and protocols, ethics and ethics regimes, recognised rights in research data and outcomes, including ownership, intellectual property, access, informed consent, and privacy, are constructed.

Therefore another critical focus for the Memories, Communities, Technologies Network is the formative/transformative nature of research frameworks and infrastructures themselves, including research and a related action agenda concerned with participatory models of community-centred research.

MCT network

Convenors

Professor Sue McKemmish
Chair of Archival Systems & Director of the Centre for Organisational & Social Informatics, CaSIT, Monash University

Research interest in records and archival systems. Records and archives are vital components of our corporate and social memory, providing evidence of identity, rights and obligations, instruments of accountability, and rich sources of value added information. Involved in major research projects and standards initiatives relating to the clever use of metadata in records and archival systems (Clever Recordkeeping Metadata), smart information portals (Breast Cancer Knowledge Online), Indigenous archival services (Trust and Technology), and the nexus between memories communities, and technologies. Interested in working in teams to develop ICT solutions that genuinely meet the needs of individuals, organisations and society, and empower people in their working and personal lives. Directs the postgraduate teaching programs in records and archives at Monash, and has published extensively on recordkeeping in society, records continuum theory, recordkeeping metadata, and archival systems. Foundation Director of the Centre for Organiational and Social Informatics (COSI). PhD in archival systems. Laureate of the Australian Society of Archivists.

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Research Associate, Centre for Computing in the Humanities (CCH), Kings' College London

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Ms Shannon Faulkhead
PhD Researcher, Monash University

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Non-Indigenous person working at Koorie Heritage Trust over the past five years, as part of the Koorie Family History Service, a Stolen Generations service established in 2001 out of recommendations from the 1997 "Bringing Them Home Report" - A national enquiry into the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, and as the cultural development coordinator of the Koorie Heritage Archive Project, a digital keeping place of Victorian Koorie cultural heritage materials. Both Projects aimed to: strengthen individuals and communities through knowledge and pride in who they are and where they come from; and to strengthen identity and culture by making available at a community level, family, cultural and historical materials relevant to Koorie people. Part of the journey of healing for Victorian Koorie people has been to listen, record stories, and assist individuals and communities including Koories in custody to access their family and cultural materials. Now also part of the Trust and Technology Project - Building archival systems for Indigenous oral memory, developed by Monash University, Koorie Heritage Trust and Public Record Office Victoria.

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Events

Upcoming events

Past events

- Workshop - Pluralising the Archival Paradigm
- Three key agenda-setting events have led up to the formation of the MCT Network, meetings in Wellington (4 October 2005) and Melbourne (11 October 2005), and a Search Conference in Prato, Italy (4-6 October 2006).

Memories, Communities, Technologies - Planning Workshops

Planning Meeting, Melbourne, 11 October 2005

Participants

Three groups were represented at the planning meeting:

- Academics
- Professionals/Practitioners
    - Including librarians, archivists and records managers, technologists, public historians, community networkers
- Community Members
    - Representatives of "communities of memory"
    - People engaged with issues of identity and empowerment in memories, communities and technologies

Themes

- The formation and transformation of memories, communities and technologies
    - with reference to issues of identity, power, governance, empowerment, community production of knowledge, cultural memory texts, communities of records, research dialectic with eEvidence
- eResearch issues and frameworks
    - ethics, privacy, and FOI
    - frameworks, protocols, and designs
    - empowerment of communities in and through engagement in research processes
- eResearch sources
    - storage, preservation, metadata and accessibility
    - digital repositories, digitisation, managing huge datasets, archiving websites
    - archival systems of the future – multiple views of parallel recordkeeping universes
    - authenticity and quality issues, multiple access and research pathways
- eResearch tools
    - strategies and tools for cross-domain searching across multiple large datasets
    - tools for manipulation of data, including scholarly annotation.

The pivotal theme was the formation and transformation of memories, communities and technologies as the focus of collaborative eResearch. The eResearch themes were explored and scoped in relation to how they can enable innovative multi-disciplinary research at the nexus of memories, communities and technologies, and empower the stakeholders – in the academy, industry/profession, community.

The presenters in each of the sessions led the development and scoping of the theme under discussion. Selected participants made an initial response to the presentation from the three perspectives - community, academic/research, or industry/professional.

By the end of the day, themes for further exploration at the Memories, Communities, Technologies Search Conference in Prato, 4-6 October 2006, were scoped, key issues emerged and a list of likely speakers and invited participants for Prato was identified. The final session involved a roundtable discussion, and agreement, on the key themes and issues that should be taken forward to the Prato conference.

Program

9:00 – 9:30   Framework setting – Prof Eric Ketelaar, Monash University and University of Amsterdam

9:30 – 9:45   Morning tea

9:45 – 11:30   Formation/Transformation of memories, communities, technologies

- Presentations
    - Profs Harold Short (Kings College London), Don Schauder (Monash), Graeme Davison (Monash)
- Responses
    - Prof Paula Hamilton (UTS)
    - Liza Dale-Hallett (Melbourne Museum)
    - Prof Marcia Langton (University of Melbourne)
- Discussion
- Wrap-up – emerging themes 5 mins
    - Prof Eric Ketelaar

Chair: Prof Marian Quartly (Monash)

11:30 – 12:30   eResearch issues and frameworks

- Presentation
  - Prof Sue McKemmish (Monash) on behalf of Prof Anne Gilliland-Swetland (UCLA)
- Responses
  - Vicki Court (RHSV)
  - Shannon Faulkhead (Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies, Monash)
  - Rachel U'Ren (Monash and Public Record Office Victoria)
- Discussion
- Wrap-up – emerging themes
  - Prof Eric Ketelaar

Chair: Anne-Marie Schwirtlich (State Library Victoria)

12:30 – 1:15   Lunch

1:15 – 2:15   E-Research sources

- Presentation
  - Dr Richard Marciano (San Diego Supercomputer Center)
- Responses
  - Marie-Louise Ayres (National Library of Australia)
  - Prof Harold Short
- Discussion
- Wrap-up
  - Eric Ketelaar

Chair: Kathryn Dan (Monash University Archives)

2:15 – 2:30   Break

2:30 – 3:30   E-Research tools

- Presentation
  - Dr Andrew Treloar (Monash Information Technology Services)
- Responses
  - Gavan McCarthy (Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre, University of Melbourne)
  - Graeme Johanson (Monash)
  - Jane Hunter (University of Queensland)
- Discussion
- Wrap-up – emerging themes
  - Prof Eric Ketelaar

Chair: Justine Heazlewood (Public Record Office Victoria)

3:30 – 5:00   Formation/Transformation revisited: agree on key themes and issues for Prato and action items

- Facilitator: Prof Eric Ketelaar

Planning Meeting, Wellington, 4 October 2005

The purpose of the meeting was to focus on the research agenda for Indigenous communities in relation to archives and records. An important component was the exchange of information about research and projects being undertaken by participants which enabled participants to identify points of connection between the various projects, and to explore how to develop those connections further.

Participants at the meeting included academic researchers, representatives from information professions (libraries, archives and records), and community representatives.

Program 4 October 2005

9:30 – 9:45   Welcome

9:45 – 10:30   Introduction, setting the agenda

10:30 – 11:00   Morning tea

11:00 – 12:30   Exchange of information

- Current research and projects
- What are the points of connection between projects?

12:30 – 1:30   Lunch

1:30 – 2:30   eResearch issues for indigenous communities

- ethics, privacy, and FOI
- frameworks, protocols, and designs
- empowerment of communities in and through engagement in research processes

2:30 – 2:45   Break

2:45 – 3:45   Identification of emerging opportunities

- Areas of potential collaboration
- Future research possibilities
- Possible funding sources

Memories, Communities, Technologies - Prato 2006 Conference

About the conference

eResearch at the nexus between the humanities, social sciences and information technology is an exciting and challenging area for future initiatives. The Monash University-Kings College London Conference Fund 2006 sponsored a research meeting at the Monash Centre Prato in October which aimed to develop an agenda for collaborative eResearch relating to Memories, Communities, Technologies, involving universities, memory institutions and communities.

The main themes explored were the formation and transformation of community memories, the role of memory institutions, and the potentially transformative and empowering effect of information and communication technologies; participatory models for community-centred research; eSources and accessibility; and eResearch tools. 70 invited participants attended, including academics, technologists, professional and industry partners, and community representatives from Australia, the UK, NZ, Europe, South Africa, USA, and India.

Major outcomes of the Conference are the formation of the Memories, Communities, Technologies Network, a research agenda for international collaborative research projects, which will seek European as well as British, Australian and NZ funding, and the conference proceedings which will be published by Monash ePress. An agenda of over 14 high priority research projects was agreed. Dr Rüdigar Klein, representative of the Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH), from the European Science Foundation (ESF), encouraged participants to apply to his group to support further collaborations. The ESF comprises 78 national research organisations in 30 countries. Australian researchers are able to participate in ESF sponsored exploratory workshops, research planning conferences, research projects and research networks with European partners.

Program

- Final Program (pdf, 68kb)
- Day One Presentations (pdf, 128kb)
- Day One Instructions (pdf, 96kb)

Conceptual statements

- **Sharing: Collected memories in communities**: Eric Ketelaar - Paper (pdf, 124kb)
- **'Communities of memory': Pluralizing archival research and education agendas**: Sue McKemmish, Ann Gilliland-Swetland, & Eric Ketelaar - Paper (pdf, 156kb)

Themes

- **Theme 1: Formation/Transformation of memories**: Eric Ketelaar (Monash University & The University of Amsterdam), Don Schauder (Monash University), Marian Quartly (Monash University), Lynette Russell (Monash University), & Patricia Methven (Kings College London) - Outline (pdf, 88kb)
- **Theme 2: Protocols**: Sue McKemmish (Monash University), Shannon Faulkhead (Monash University), & Anne Gilliland (UCLA) - Outline (pdf, 56kb)
- **Theme 3: Sources and Accessibility**: Harold Short (Kings College London), & Cathrine Harboe-Ree (Monash University) - Outline (pdf, 68kb)
- **Theme 4:** Tools: Andrew Treloar (Monash University), & Sheila Anderson (Kings College London) - Outline (pdf, 44kb)

Outcomes

- Photos

Research and Action Agenda

- Table 1: Memories, Communities, Technologies Research Themes - Download (pdf, 140kb)
- Table 2: Community Research Infrastructure: Research Themes and Action Agenda - Download (pdf, 108kb)