A Digital Bridge for Collaboration in Cultural Heritage

Heritage for People

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Introduction

The conflict between the desire to modernize large metropolises and the desire to preserve the artistic, historical and cultural heritage has always represented a considerable problem for the municipalities. Bad management of the heritage, inaccurate reading of the context, lack of knowledge and flawed urban planning can inflict enormous damage on the legacy that has been handed over to us from the past, often irreversible damage. Contemporary architecture and cultural heritage can coexist in a single context when knowledge of the former represents a starting point for the latter. Underlying all this is a need for knowledge and collaboration between different actors, such as architects, urban planners, members of the local and non-local community, municipalities and others.

The importance of history and the role that culture plays on the population is well defined, but shared culture can reach a new level of collectivism in the digital age. Currently there is no single source of information that provides a central overview of the value of all cultural heritage worldwide. Following the need for cultural awareness, the new pandemic era brought the role and the tools which technology can offer to our lives to the surface. This holds especially true into the cultural heritage field. Trying to answer the question, "how cultural heritage responds to the new and future needs of societies" there is a certain answer that is related to networking and bridging the gap between the manifold parts that constitute the new globalised society and the notion of cultural heritage. The essence of the Outstanding Universal Value is changing as the new technological tools are developed in such a way to fulfill the needs of human relationships. Cultural heritage is based on

human interaction and as the latter is changing forms and manners over the years, cultural heritage needs to respond and develop the next steps of interaction into the future IT field.

Methodology and Outcome

The need for digitizing data and archiving could be transformed into an exceptional tool for connecting all different users and sectors of cultural heritage into a "Global heritage" interaction and communication. Following the aforementioned guidelines, our aim is the development of an interdisciplinary crowdsourcing platform, which will include and support data ranging from a simplified level to a more expert audience. Having in mind the global scene, it follows the structure of cartography and mapping in order to collect all possible heritage sites (from less to well known). Everyone could edit the mapping system by adding new heritage sites and data (e.g. pieces of scholarship, 3D-models, tourism, information). In a simplified schema, by clicking a site, you will be able to reach all the available data that exists on the archive. Having in mind the future heritage sites that will be mostly identified in the urban fabric, mapping heritage is more than essential. Taking Vienna's historical centre as an example of a world heritage site, the platform tries to respond to the new needs of mapping the changes and the route of a historical site that tries to harmonise to the new needs of a modern technological urban centre. The stakeholders along with the institutional help of the Technical University of Vienna will contribute to the platform / map, where over-layering data from different sectors will be collected, giving a holistic approach to each cultural site. Communities - as public institutions, private businesses and people interested in (heritage) culture - alongside with the University will be both part of this effort: archiving the collective memory.

The platform/map interface will start with the basic info and it will be built up by adding data from communities. Anyone can search for a location of historic sites, see their uploaded data and provide different contacts. This will be a very helpful tool to network and connect industries and communities working on similar issues and also share their knowledge with the wider public. The platform will not only store historical information but also present ongoing and scheduled events. Through a range of filter options, everyone will be able to sort different types of information and happenings. Having a good map is essential to find the treasure - even more so today, if a map can be found in digital format, free of charge, easily upgradeable and more predisposed to its easy and immediate consultation. For this reason, the importance of offering an efficient and precise global mapping of the protected cultural and natural heritage, from the most to the least known, is essential to the project. The platform named "Heritage for people" will be supported by contemporary geographic information (GIS) and digital mapping tools, providing accurate representations of a particular area, specifying in detail information supported by the Global Positioning System (GPS). This will be done through the creation of a global computer archive, based on the collection of geo-referenced data, which can be used not only for cognitive and informative purposes, but also to conduct statistical analyses for the tourism industry and at the service of the scientific community. It will therefore be necessary to create a server dedicated to information on a geographical basis, free access, with the aim of creating a sense of belonging, central to creating a cultural identity. "Heritage for people" will exploit the potential of smartphones and mobile devices: the underlying concept is that mobile functions, such as geolocation and real-time interaction, can be used to provide personalized cultural

content, up-to-date, interactive and real-time, enabling more active cultural involvement, helping to broaden opportunities.

"Awareness" and "knowledge distribution" will be key for the future of cities and cultural heritage alike. The "Heritage for people"-framework is designed as a contribution to global collective memory, aiming to prevent the further destruction of historical substance.
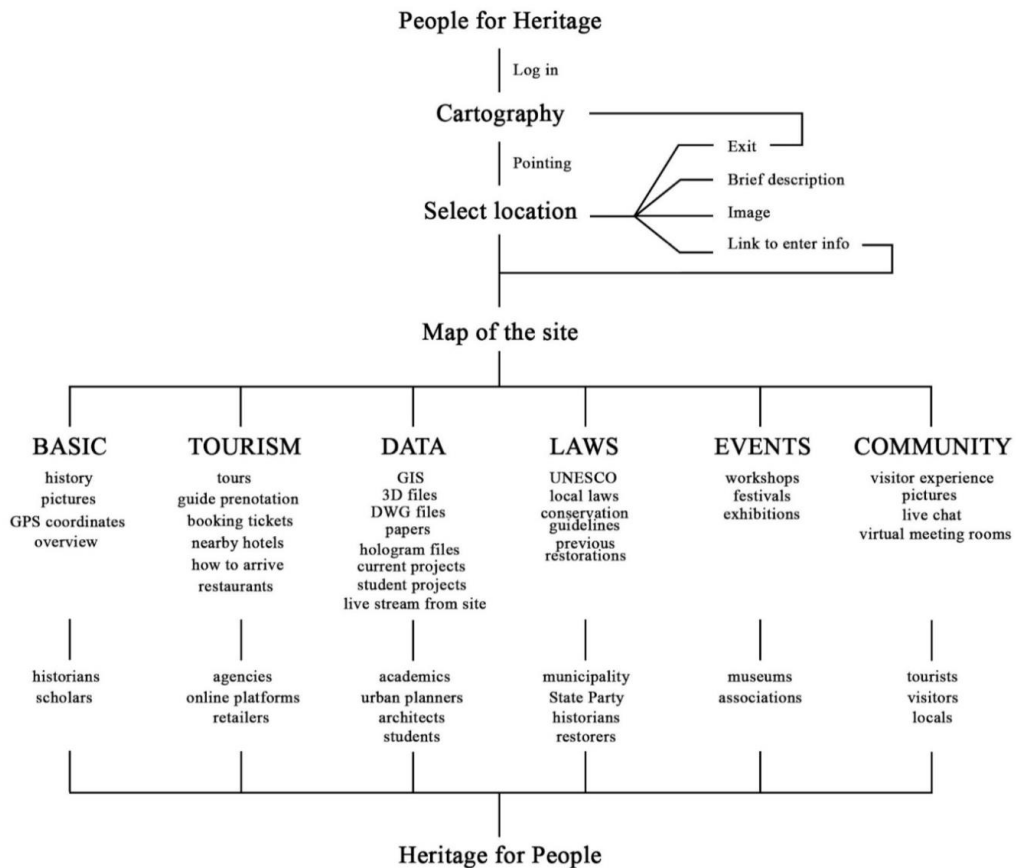

Fig. 1. Platform Workflow (© Heritage for People)

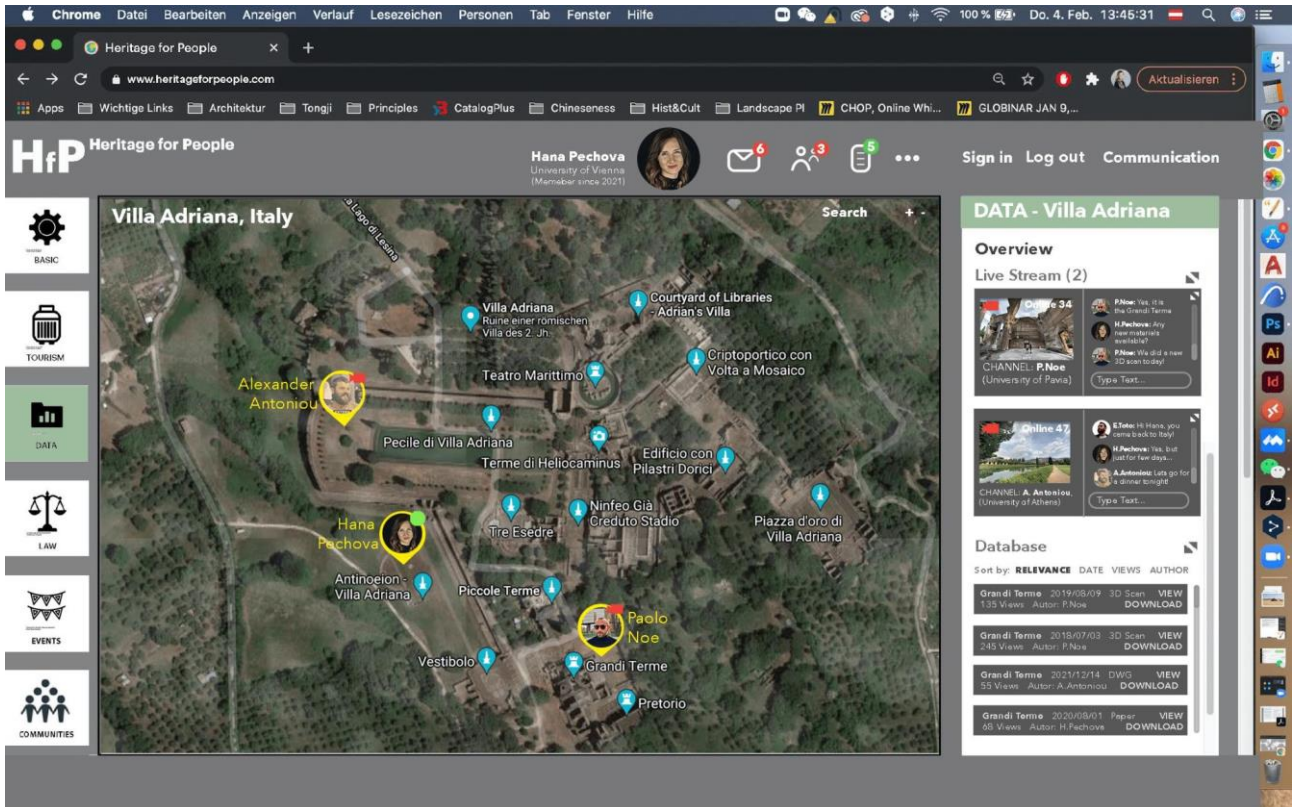## Funding and Conflict of Interests Disclosure

Fig. 2. Platform Example Section "Data" (© Heritage for People; Google Maps)

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