

Session 407

Amalia S. Levi
iSchool, UMD

The 'Wandering Jew' in the Age of Web 2.0: Crowdsourcing the Sephardic Diaspora

The dispersion of Jewish communities in the world is traditionally considered as the epitome of the diaspora concept. Jewish archives in the US tell the story of leaving behind the old country and “becoming American,” while at the same time exacerbating the problematic definitions of what constitutes an authoritative, reliable and inclusive narrative of history. Digitization and Web 2.0 technologies offer users the opportunity to contribute their knowledge by crowdsourcing archival and museum collections. By shedding light to hidden collections, adding context, and linking material dispersed among institutions, countries or individuals, Web 2.0 platforms redefine the ideas of memory, identity and belonging. This paper will examine how new technologies are and can be used in archival settings, particularly in the case of the Sephardic diaspora. Particularly it will examine how beyond crowdsourcing, user-generated content can increase the sense-making process in archival collections.