

legacy4reuse

Criteria and Methods for Upcycling Data Collections in Social and Economic History

Online Workshop, 22-24 November 2023

Organisation:

Prof. Dr. Werner Scheltjens, Professor of Digital History, University of Bamberg

Prof. Dr. Mark Spoerer, Chair of Economic and Social History, University of Regensburg

Call for Papers – Deadline 31.05.2023

New scientific findings are often based on the reuse or repurposing of existing printed, digitised or genuinely digital data collections. Disciplines such as archaeology or linguistics use the term legacy collections to indicate that such data collections share certain characteristics. They originate from the historical heritage of the respective discipline; usually, they do not meet today's scientific standards, and often they are documented poorly. Legacy collections are problematic, but hard to replace. They preserve unique data. Sometimes this data is no longer available elsewhere; often it is the result of years of research that cannot be repeated.

Social and economic history often draws on legacy collections, even though they do not usually label their historical data collections as such. Well-known examples from the German-speaking world include Harald Witthöft's handbook of historical metrology (Witthöft 1991-2007), the Hamburg Admiralty, Convoy and Revenue Books (Schneider, Krawehl & Denzel 2001), Moritz Elsas' history of prices and wages in Germany (Elsas 1936-1949), or Mikhail Lesnikov's edition of the trade books of the Hanseatic merchant Veckinchusen (Lesnikov 1973). The reuse of these and other legacy collections in social and economic history remains strongly person- and project-bound to this day and does not comply, or only to a limited extent, with the principles of FAIR Data (Wilkinson et al. 2016). Current research practice thus prevents a sustainable handling of legacy collections in social and economic history.

In order to achieve sustainability, the reuse and repurposing of historical data collections should perhaps take place within the framework of upcycling (Scheltjens 2023). The digitisation of a source is merely the starting point. Upcycling aims at digital enhancement of the historical data collection. In the process, both the original data genesis and the technical challenges and epistemological requirements for its reuse or repurposing are scrutinized and documented. This facilitates the creation of reconfigured, upcycled data collections that comply with the FAIR data principles and can be reused in a sustainable way.

The *legacy4reuse* workshop aims to gather existing expertise on legacy collections in social and economic history in order to find answers to four questions related to the sustainability requirement:

1. Which legacy collections should be upcycled urgently? We invite reflections on particular data collections and general assessments from the perspective of special fields within social and economic history.
2. Which means and methods are available to reuse and repurpose legacy collections? To what extent can they serve as best practice examples?

3. What are the technical challenges of upcycling historical data collections and how could these challenges be met? We look for conceptual considerations as well as practical solutions and examples of successful implementation.
4. What are the epistemological requirements for reusing and repurposing legacy collections? We call for methodological and theoretical considerations based on practical examples.

Proposals can be submitted in German or English in a PDF file until **31.05.2023**. The following information is requested for each contribution: Title, abstract (max. 300 words), author(s), contact information for all authors.

Please send the proposals to digihist@uni-bamberg.de.

We will send our feedback by **30.06.2023**.

References

- Elsas, M.J.: Umriss einer Geschichte der Preise und Löhne in Deutschland. Vom ausgehenden Mittelalter bis zum Beginn des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts. Leiden 1936–1949. <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=MMKB06:000003330:00009>
- Lesnikov, M.P.: Die Handelsbücher des Hansischen Kaufmannes Veckinchusen. Berlin 1973.
- Scheltjens, W.: „Upcycling historical data collections. A paradigm for digital history?“, Journal of Documentation, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-12-2022-0271>
- Schneider, Jürgen, Otto-Ernst Krawehl and Markus A. Denzel (Eds): Statistik des Hamburger seewärtigen Einfuhrhandels im 18. Jahrhundert. Nach den Admiralitäts- und Convoygeld-Einnahmebüchern. St. Katharinen 2001.
- Wilkinson, M., et al.: „The FAIR Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship“, Scientific Data, Vol. 3, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18>
- Witthöft, Harald: Handbuch der historischen Metrologie (8 vols.), St. Katharinen 1991–2007.