

Online Research Collaboration: from Workaround to Best Practice

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Over the last two years we have seen a striking amount of innovation in how scholarly researchers collaborate online—not out of choice, but out of necessity as our usual customs of travel and convention have been disrupted. Using the example of the COST Action NEP4DISSENT (research on the culture of opposition in Eastern Europe 1945–1989), this presentation will focus on the role of digital interfaces for archival access, training in digital history methodologies, and the concept of ‘virtual mobility’ in research collaboration as a new normal. NEP4DISSENT includes an equal ratio of scholars, archivists, curators, and ‘digital practice enablers’; the pandemic conditions, therefore, mandated a unique opportunity to rethink how we carry out work together. This began with a manifesto ‘against mobility’ presented to the COST Association, and then developed into a series of workshops and training schools on working with digitized data in shared environments such as nodegoat. Key actors in this effort included the nodegoat team (Geert Kessels and Pim van Bree), Lars Wieneke and C2DH, Robert Parnica and Josh Bóné of the Blinken Open Society Archives, and Tamás Scheibner who brought in legacy data from the COURAGE Horizon 2020 project. As a result, many NEP4DISSENT scholars came to understand how they could leverage the results of their individual scholarship by sharing their datasets in a virtual environment, and then aligning and relating their datasets with those of other members of the group.



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