Archival Intelligence: AI x Archives x Museums (Karlsruhe, 10 Dec 25)

ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Dec 10, 2025

Margit Rosen

Archives and museums are placing great hopes in Artificial Intelligence. Time-consuming, labor-intensive tasks — such as the description and analysis of objects — can already be, or may soon be, taken over by machines. Artificial Intelligence (AI) promises not only access to previously unexplored holdings but also new, powerful analytical tools for research, enabling the extraction of new information about cultural objects and the visualization of previously unseen connections. Finally, the hope is that automation will free valuable resources for research and creative work with cultural heritage.

The conference »Archival Intelligence: AI × Archives × Museums« asks where we currently stand with regard to these promises. It seeks to show where and how AI can be used in practice and to open a discussion on the new possibilities and consequences arising from the availability of these technologies — implications that we may not yet have anticipated. The focus lies on concrete applications of AI — from automated text, speech, and handwriting recognition, and the analysis of images and videos, to the cataloguing of archival holdings and scholarly data analysis, the curation of collections, AI-supported provenance research, and restoration.

Experts from museums, archives, and universities offer practice-oriented insights into the use of AI as an analytical tool and as valuable support for semantic indexing and targeted information retrieval. Particular emphasis is placed on learning from applications outside the fields of art and culture, such as research data management, in order to develop pragmatic approaches for museums and cultural archives.

Organized by the ZKM | Center for Art and Media, one of the leading institutions in the field of media art and recognized for its expertise in the preservation of electronic and digital artworks, this conference offers an opportunity to discover innovative approaches and to engage with experts who are actively shaping the future of work with cultural and scholarly objects.

Program

10:00 Welcome (Margit Rosen, ZKM | Karlsruhe)
10:15 Adelheid Heftberger (Bundesarchiv, Berlin): “AI Projects at the Bundesarchiv – First Steps and Initial Findings”
10:45 Christiane Sibille (ETH Zurich): “Transform – Evaluate – (Re-)Use: Collections as Data in Practice”
11:30 Giovanni Colavizza (University of Copenhagen): “Using AI to Broaden Access to Historical

Archives”
12:00 Jasmijn van Gorp (Utrecht University): “Repeated TV: Methods to Study Archived Television with AI”
13:30 Andreas Kohlbecker (ZKM | Karlsruhe): “Experiments, Prototypes, and Perspectives – AI--Supported Access to the ZKM Archive”
14:00 Ralph Ewerth (Philipps University Marburg, TIB Leibniz Information Centre for Science and Technology, Hannover): “Using the TIB AV Analytics Platform for Analysing Disinformation Patterns in News Videos”
14:30 Dominik Bönisch Alpári (University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf): “Inside the Toolbox: Exploring AI-Driven Prototypes in Archives and Museums”
15:00 Heiko Schuldt (University of Basel): “Ask not what your archive or museum can do for you – ask what vitrivr can do for your search”
16:00 Bárbara Romero-Ferrón (Leuphana University of Lüneburg): “Tracing the Life of Objects: Artificial Intelligence, Humans, and Provenance Records”
16:30 Robert Erdmann (University of Amsterdam): “Artificial Intelligence Across the Museum Workflow: Conservation, Collections, Curation”
17:00 Summary & Closing Remarks

The conference is part of the »Artificial Intelligence & Art« (2018–2025) funding project of the City of Karlsruhe. Participation is free of charge.

For further information, please feel free to contact us at wissen@zkm.de
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Reference:
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