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Digital Monument to the Jewish Community in the Netherlands and the Jewish Monument Community: commemoration and meaning¹

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Abstract

In April 2005, the Digital Monument to the Jewish Community in the Netherlands went online. This monument is an Internet monument dedicated to preserving the memory of more than 100,000 men, women and children, Dutch Jewish victims of the Shoah. As of September 2010, the interactive Jewish Monument Community website has been linked to the website of the Digital Monument. The main objective of the monument, and its community, is to reconstruct the picture of the Jewish community in the Netherlands on the eve of their destruction by “returning” to each individual victim his or her identity. With this monument, and its companion Community website, a new approach to commemoration is introduced, characterized by the application of new concepts in design, memorial space, and communication. My research on the practices engaged in, and the meaning of this Digital Monument and the associated Community, has been a qualitative and explorative exercise within the interdisciplinary field of memory studies and ritual studies. Questionnaires, ninety in total, were returned by first-, second- and third-generation users and by other users without any family connection to victims remembered on the monument.

The results of my research show that although practices are mostly limited in time they evoke deeply felt emotions raised by the enormous number of names, the ages at which people were killed, and the stories behind the victims. My research also shows that the characteristics Foot, Warnick & Schneider put forward as being typical of web-based memorializing – co-production of memory and voice – are indeed distinguishing features of the Digital Monument and its associated Community (Foot, Warnick & Schneider 2006, 88–91). By sharing with the Community their own personal remembrances, stories, pictures or other digitized objects, users are in effect co-producing the remembrance of the

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Shoah. Each individual may decide, 24/7 and from all over the world, what they consider is important to voice within the Community; the memorial refrains from taking sides or imposing closure upon the audience's interpretation of the memory of the Shoah. Expressing oneself in public – in this case in a virtual environment – appears to have a healing effect (Casey 2004, 17–44; Savage 2009, 261–295).

Overview to research report

“It is a very important and valuable monument. It acts like a monument at a (digital) grave-yard to honor those who went up in smoke. It makes all those people and thus also my previous (before 1942) social life tangible. I think it is a blessing that their names will not be forgotten. My answers should be considered against the background of the loss of almost my entire family and social background during the Shoah”.

Focus

In this report, the focus will be on the meaning of commemoration practices engaged in at the Digital Monument to the Jewish Community in the Netherlands and the Jewish Monument Community in which people are registered as members. The meaning of these commemoration practices will be explored within the context of cyberspace as a place of commemoration. This research report is based on the results of one of the case studies concerning monuments analyzed for my PhD. In my PhD research, the central focus is on manifestation, context and meaning of monuments, and in this project theoretical frameworks from both cultural memory studies and ritual studies have been applied. With regard to the research on the Digital Monument and Community, theoretical frameworks from the field of cultural memory studies have been applied as will be explained in chapter Web-based memorializing in general: theoretical exploration.

Research method

To answer the formulated research question in my PhD research project, an appropriate research method had to be selected. Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss assert that the research question should “dictate” the methodological research approach (Corbin & Strauss 2008, 12). In order to answer the central research question of this project, focused on the meaning of ritual commemorative practices at a monument, it appeared to be essential to enter the field in which these practices take place, and observe and consider people in their relation to a monument. As the main objective of qualitative research is to “[...] study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln 2008, 4) it seemed appropriate to apply a qualitative research method in this mainly explorative research project. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln state that within qualitative research, a variety of empirical materials may be gathered through alternative sources. Case study materials, personal experiences, life stories, interviews, cultural texts and productions, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts are mentioned in this respect (Denzin & Lincoln 2008, 4). With regard to this online monument, it was considered to be appropriate to gather as much information as possible on the meaning of the Digital Monument and Community by means of approaching online registered members of the Community and asking them directly to give their opinion.

Therefore, in August 2011, one of the Community editors, Anat Harel, sent out a request to all registered (active and non-active) user profiles of the Community if they would participate in a research on practices, meaning and opinion of

the Digital Monument and Community. After an inventory, the number of user-profiles appeared to be 2503 in total. A positive response to participate was received from ninety members of the Community. These participants originate from all over the world, from the United States of America to Israel, thereby indicating that the use of the Digital Monument and Community is not restricted to Dutch inhabitants. A questionnaire was drafted in both Dutch and English. Some of the participants answered the questionnaire in English. They could elaborate as much as they wanted on their answers to the questions posed in the questionnaire, which many of them did showing that they were very involved with both Monument and Community and my research.

The research method was explorative and qualitative, and the responses to the questionnaires will be interpreted accordingly. Participants were asked to give their opinion on the following topics:

- Practices on the Digital Monument and Community;
- Commemoration;
- Motives with regard to participation;
- Meaning and opinion of the Digital Monument and Community.

Participants were asked how they were related to the Second World War. They could choose between the following options:

- I am a first generation relative;
- I am a second generation relative;
- I am a third generation relative;
- Other, like for instance: historical interest, research, interest in family matters.

Consequently, with regard to the analysis, the participants have been divided in four groups. Participants were asked to give their consent in confidential reporting of the results of the research. All of the ninety participants gave their consent and their responses were consequently included in analysis and reporting.

I will continue with an introduction on the Digital monument and Community. Next I will explore the current scientific debate on web-based memorializing practices. I will summarize and discuss the findings of my empirical research applying the theoretical frameworks, which will be discussed below.

The Digital Monument to the Jewish Community in the Netherlands and the Jewish Monument Community

The Digital Monument to the Jewish Community in the Netherlands

The Digital Monument to the Jewish Community in the Netherlands at first sight appears to be no more than a webpage on the Internet. The home page consists of a screen with thousands of little colored bars grouped together in blocks. Each block represents a family and each little bar within a block represents a person who died during the Second World War. This virtual monument is dedicated to preserving the memory of “all the men, women and children who were persecuted as Jews during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands and did not survive the Shoah”. In total 104,000 names of victims are included in the Digital Monument. The home page (see Image 1. below) is intended to be the actual virtual monument.



Image 1. Digital Monument to the Jewish Community in the Netherlands (Screenshot Laurie M.C. Faro, 26.6. 2013, www.joodsmonument.nl)

The objective of the Digital Monument is to show the details and circumstances of each individual personal life and that person's family circumstances at around 1941 or 1942 in order to reconstruct the picture of the Jewish community in the Netherlands on the eve of the Shoah. Clicking on a colored bar on the home page of the Digital Monument one is directed to the family that is represented by the bar. All families include individual members. Each member has their own personal page. This way, the life of every individual victim is commemorated. On this personal page, basic personal details are given and, if possible, a reconstruction of the family relationships.

The monument provides information on thousands of individual victims, ranging from biographical details and photographs to information on household belongings. The original addresses of most of the families are known and have been added to the Digital Monument. When you click on a family's address, you will be taken to the address page of that family. On that same page, to the left and right of them, other Jewish families who lived close to this family are shown, and clicking on the address of a neighbor will take you to their family page. Because addresses have been added, visitors of the Digital Monument can take a virtual walk through towns and streets as they were on the eve of the Shoah.

Because of the digital nature of the Monument, there are almost unlimited possibilities for extending the monument. The Digital Monument can thus "grow into a unique presentation of Jewish life in the Netherlands between the 1930s and the early 1940s". Family members who survived the Shoah do not appear on the Digital Monument's home page but they do appear on the family pages as bars without color and thus without information on gender or age.

The initiative for the monument was taken in 2001 by Professor Emeritus Isaac Lipschits. His objective was to sketch a picture of the Jewish community in the Netherlands on the threshold of the deportations (Heyting 2000). This idea was the founding idea of the Digital Monument. His aim was for the monument to bring back in people's memory not only the names of about 104,000 Dutch Jewish victims of the Shoah but also their social environment on the eve of their

deportation. To realize these objectives, a digital format seemed to be the most appropriate form. The Digital Monument, and later on also the Community, were designed by an Amsterdam company called Mediamatic. Responsibility for the Digital Monument, and later on for its Community, were transferred to the Joods Historisch Museum (Jewish Historical Museum) in March 2006.

The Jewish Monument Community

The screenshot shows the website's layout. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'Home', 'Agenda', 'About', 'Monument', 'Help', 'FAQ', and 'Open Joodse Huizen'. A search bar is located on the right. The main content area features a large image of a photograph with the handwritten text 'vergeet ons niet!' (Don't forget us!). Below this, there are several sections: 'Jewish Monument Community' (with a grid of small images), 'Requests from members', 'Newest stories and photos', 'Reactions', 'New pictures', 'Members', and 'Editors' choice'. A 'Digital Monument' section is also visible on the right. The footer contains metadata: 'created: , modified: Redacteur Community [article] 2947 views' and 'Design by Mediamatic Community Management (CMS) Anymeta 4.17.47'.

Image 2. Jewish Monument Community (Screenshot Laurie M.C. Faro, 26.6.2013, www.communityjoodsmonument.nl.)

As of September 2010, the Jewish Monument Community website has been linked to the website of the Digital Monument. The Community is an interactive website where registered users or members can contribute and exchange information on the people remembered through the Digital Monument. The Community contains a copy of all the pages of the Digital Monument but will also be extended by contributions from members of the Community. These members may also add their own profiles on their own personal pages. The number of user profiles is still growing: in July 2013, about 6000 user profiles had been registered at the Community website. In 2011, at the time of the research, the number of user profiles was 2503.

The idea behind the Community is to create a place where “past and present meet”. The opening phrase on the home page of the Community welcomes visitors and invites them to post pictures, information and stories about persons and families commemorated through the Digital monument. This way the Monument will be an ongoing effort and a conjoined effort between the original constructors and members of the Community.

The objective of the Community is to allow users to post information and make contact with other Community users. Users who have become registered members can log in and participate actively in the Community. All this is meant to ensure that the ultimate goal – “do not forget” – will be realized, a goal that also occurs on a copy of a yellowed page from a photo album placed prominently on the Community’s homepage and showing three photographs of unknown victims with the phrase “Vergeet ons niet” (“Don’t forget us”) written in pencil below them.

Web-based memorializing in general: theoretical exploration

The concept of memory

In his seminal work *Multidirectional Memory. Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, the American professor of English Michael Rothberg explores the concept of memory: “memory is the past made present” (Rothberg 2009, 3–4). Rothberg comments that the notion of a “making present” has two implications. A first one is that memory is not something of the past but a contemporary phenomenon: while concerned with the past memory happens in the present. In this project there is a connection between people or events of the past and remembering them in the present by means of a monument. A second observation is that memory is “a form of work”, people who remember act through interventions and practices at particular places, for instance by means of erecting a monument.

The American philosopher Edward S. Casey states that through the “work” of commemoration the past does not just disappear in the present but instead only traverses the present on its way to becoming future: “[...]. It is the creating of memorializations in the media of ritual, text, and psyche; it enables us to honor the past by carrying it intact into new and lasting forms of alliance and participation” (Casey 2000, 257).

In this respect the past, present and the future are connected through memory and commemoration and with the aid of media like ritual and text, or perhaps through the erection of a monument.

Web-based memorializing practices

Kirstin Foot, Barbara Warnick and Steven Schneider, in their discussion of web-based memorializing practices after 9/11, define web-based memorializing as “an emerging set of social practices mediated by computer networks, through which digital objects, structures and spaces of commemoration are produced” (Foot, Warnick & Schneider 2006, 72–96).

In one of the early studies on the emerging phenomenon of death memorials and remembrance sites on the Internet, Swiss sociologist Hans Geser defines the potential of the virtual memorial as follows:

It could be a significant cultural innovation because it has the potential of providing a focus for longer-term mourning: an ever accessible publishing channel for adding emotional expressions and for reworking the remembrances related to the deceased (Geser 1998, 14).

In this respect, virtual memorial sites may reflect the fact that even many years after their family members’ deaths, survivors have not ended their emotional relationship to the deceased, as appears to be the case with relatives of the

victims of the Shoah. The Internet may provide means for expressing emotional processes which apparently existed at a mental level, but perhaps could not be expressed through the conventional methods and media or through conventional ritual commemoration practices such as attending a ceremony at a monument. Geser suggests that virtual memorial websites should be seen as an "outlet" for expression and that they may have a therapeutic significance.

These therapeutic effects have been studied by other scholars (Roberts & Vidal 2000, 521–545; Roberts 2006, 1–4). Roberts concludes that, according to the results of her assessment, "creating and visiting web memorials can be beneficial for the bereaved" (Roberts 2006, 4). It seems that web memorials are visited more frequently than physical memorials, which might be explained by their easy accessibility. They provide room for emotional expression and personalization which is apparently different from attending funerals and visiting physical memorials. Many web memorials are personal tributes, written in the form of stories or letters, to the deceased. They are a demonstration of continuing bonds and include efforts to make sure that the missed ones are not forgotten. They function as shared grieving through the sharing of stories and the organization of a community in bereavement (Roberts 2006, 1–4). Australian Professor of Digital Humanities Paul Arthur studied how traditional physical memorials to war and other catastrophic events differ from online memorials and concludes that nowadays "online environments provide public spaces for expressing, sharing, and working through experiences of trauma and crisis" (Arthur 2009, 65–75).

Foot, Warnick & Schneider, who extensively studied web-based commemoration, in particular after 9/11, distinguished the following seven dimensions of web-based memorializing practices: The object or focus of commemoration, co-production, voice, immediacy, fixity, intended audience and the relational positioning of victims (Foot, Warnick & Schneider 2006). The focus in this report will be on co-production and voice. As has been explained above in the explanatory paragraph on the Digital Monument and Community, they seem to be the most notable and differentiating dimensions in the virtual commemoration of Dutch victims of the Shoah. Members of the Community may contribute their own and individual memories, and in fact "co-produce" the memory of the Shoah in general.

Co-production

Foot, Warnick & Schneider studied the characteristics of web-based memorializing practices in comparison with offline memorializing and focused on the producers of memory. In the case of traditional monuments, like for instance regular First or Second World War monuments which may be discerned in many places all over the world, the designers can be regarded as the producers as they seek to frame the significance and meaning of the event for a general public. Traditional monuments will have visitors or even audiences, as may be the case on special commemorative occasions, but these, as Foot, Warnick & Schneider observe, will be "spectators" or "co-celebrants" at ceremonies, but they will not be "co-producers of memory" (Foot, Warnick & Schneider 2006, 75). The characteristics of traditional and offline public commemoration result from authorship, purpose, form and how audiences are positioned to respond, leaving little room for individuals to contribute their own personal memory. In comparison with offline monuments, online monuments, and in this case the Digital Monument and Community, offer the possibility of individual input which may be considered as a form of co-production of memory.

Different voices

Cultural geographer Kenneth Foote explained the difficulties of designing a memorial to commemorate 9/11: "This will be a very difficult task at the World Trade Center site because of the magnitude of the losses, the diversity of the victims, and the fact that the entire nation feels it has a stake in the commemorative process" (Foote 2003, 344).

Following Foote's line of argumentation, a virtual space may play a crucial role in voicing different interpretations in public memory and the virtual memorial will have its own meaning and place, separate from a physically tangible monument (Foote 2003, 343). Where the Digital Monument and Community are concerned, individuals may, in co-production, decide what they consider is important to contribute — the memorial refrains from taking sides and from imposing closure upon the audience's interpretation of the memory of the Shoah. The Digital Monument and Community encourage users to voice and contribute their own individual memories, acknowledging that public memory may be seen as an evolving process.

The Digital Monument and Community: opinions and meaning

Four groups of participants

For analytical purposes, the ninety participants in this research were divided into four groups. The first three groups included people with a family and relative involvement in the Shoah: they were the participants that indicated they were either first-, second- or third-generation relatives. The fourth group consisted of people with a historical and research interest in the Shoah.

First-generation participants

The oldest participant in this group was eighty-eight years old at the time the research took place; the youngest participant was seventy-one. There were fifteen participants in all in this group.

To find out about the relevance of the Digital Monument and Community for these people, they were asked in the questionnaire about their emotions in connection with the monument and what it meant to them to have a digital monument available in their homes. Remarks as to the importance of the monument ranged from "*Important, it is keeping me busy every day*" to "*[the] remembrance of those that were murdered should be kept alive.*"

The Digital Monument and Community elicit a mixture of emotions: participants are at the same time both sad and happy. They are happy to be able "to do something", yet sad because seeing the enormous number of victims all together on a "one-page website monument" is overwhelming (the names are not shown on the monument page) and brings out feelings of great sadness and helplessness. On the other hand, people are also "happy" to be able to do something, if only to keep the victims from being forgotten or "grateful" because data about lost family members had surfaced thanks to the monument.

The group pointed out the many advantages of having the Digital Monument and Community, in particular its facilitating the search or even enabling them to search at all for information on their lost relatives and the fact that they can do this anytime now, at home or wherever they are, all over the world. They receive information that they otherwise might never have been able to gather. One female participant in this group described this monument as being "open to the world" and an ongoing base of support regarding information on victims. Some point out it is very easy to access the information, while others doubt whether especially older people from their own generation will be able to benefit from the digital advantages of the Digital Monument and Community. The overall opinion on both the Digital Monument and the Community in this first-generation group seemed to be very positive.

Second-generation participants

In this group, the oldest participant was seventy three years old at the time of the research and the youngest forty-four. In all, there were forty-six participating second-generation relatives. Most of the participants valued the Digital

Monument and Community very highly. Some because the family tree could finally be completed by means of the information retrieved thanks to the monument: *“Up until five years ago, the family tree stopped at my father’s mother”*.

One male participant mentioned that both the Digital Monument and the Community increased the family feeling: *“It is part of the family feeling because nobody ever spoke about the family”*. Another participant was happy with the Digital Monument and Community because a family member had managed to find her through it: *“I am glad it exists: through the site a cousin managed to find me. All of a sudden I have a relative that I did not know about before”*. One female participant mentioned that especially with regard to the younger generations, the Digital Monument and Community are very valuable: *“My younger brothers and sisters did not dare to become involved. Now that our mother has died three years ago, there is much more openness and curiosity about what happened, I think”*.

As was the case with the first-generation participants, both the Digital Monument and the Community bring out a mixture of emotions. Participants were sad because of the terrible loss: *“A terrible sadness of the loss of warmth of grandparents [...]”*. People are amazed and stupefied about all that happened but also “glad” that they have this source available and that through it people can be provided with useful information. One female participant mentioned that she did not consider this a monument, but more of a database, but others said that although it is only about “letters and data” it makes it all very real. For some, visiting the Digital Monument and Community is helpful when they are feeling sad: *“When I feel sad and visit the site, this offers me comfort”*.

The fact that it is “only” a website, a database, for some put the emotions into perspective; some participants did not feel comforted when they visited the Digital Monument and Community. One male participant said: *“It is with me every day but when you see your murdered family members it offers little comfort”*. Another male participant phrased it as follows: *“Fine, I am second-generation. My father still has nightmares of tanks rumbling down the road so a website does not have much impact”*.

Third-generation participants

In this group of participants, the oldest person was fifty-six years old at the time of the research and the youngest was thirty-two. There were nine participants in all in this group. One of the female participants in this group phrased the relevance of the Digital Monument and Community as follows: *“It is like a permanent, sad presence, always at my disposal when I want to visit it, anytime and anywhere”*.

As was the case with the other groups of participants, this group also reported a variety of emotions with regard to the Digital Monument and Community. First of all, there is sadness: *“Sad, very sad”* and *“great sadness and sorrow”*. Others, like this female respondent, mentioned a mixture of emotions:

Mainly intense sadness, but on the other hand it also makes me feel good to be able to mourn, unlike my parents who suppressed everything. It is the harm that I have seen as it manifests itself in my parents, which resurfaces and it is as if I am putting this sorrow in the right place at the monument.

One male participant phrased it as follows: *“It offers some comfort that the site is dedicated to remembrance whilst being of great sadness and sorrow”*. Yet another female participant was proud of her grandfather, who, unsuccessfully, tried to escape from his imprisonment: *“It makes me sad because of the loss, but I also feel proud. You do not often hear about attempts to escape [...]”*.

Most participants were very positive about the Digital Monument and Community. One female participant pointed out the relevance of the Digital Monument and Community for the present and future generation.

Other participants

People who participate in the Digital Monument and Community for other reasons than immediate family-related matters were included in the fourth group of participants. There were twenty participants in this group. The motives for participating were mostly related to historical interests and research.

One male participant in this group, for example, lives in the street of Maastrichtsestraat in the Dutch town of Scheveningen. When he was organizing a party with all the families living in the same street, older residents were asked to tell about the history of the street. It turned out that back in 1942, Jewish families had been living in the Maastrichtsestraat who were deported and did not return. Many present residents had never heard these stories and this was a shocking experience for them. They began researching things, starting at the Digital Monument and Community, and it turned out that the deportation concerned sixteen families, fifty-two men, women and children. The families in the street decided to erect a “living” monument by creating a site on the internet: www.deportatievanzestienjoodsefamiliesstraat.nl. The information they had found was put on this internet site. One of the residents began to write small portraits of the families who had been deported, and present residents were asked to leave these portraits in the residences in order to keep them connected with the premises, lest the Jewish family be forgotten.

Another male participant discovered that the deportation of the Jews had taken place very close to his own neighbourhood and that all the names could be found at the Digital Monument and Community, which made everything very personal and very emotional, especially when he discovered that the apartment he is living in at the moment, had been owned and occupied by Jewish families, who had been deported and never returned from the Shoah.

This group of participants concerns people who first and foremost are working on and working with the data at the site. However, just as was the case in the other groups of participants, the Monument and Community stirred a lot of emotions. Some participants reported experiencing a mixture of emotions: “sad” obviously, “happy” because they were “able to do something”, and also “angry”.

One male participant in this group said that working on the site makes him so sad that he finds it difficult to work for more than an hour at a time because of the emotions. Another male participant said: “Again and again: inconsolable”, and: “The enormous amount of individual experiences and individual sorrow oppresses me time and again”. One male participant reported that the data provided on the site make it hard for him to do his work properly: “I am often struck by feelings of deep depression. The enormous number of names, the ages, the stories behind the sometimes brief facts impede research”.

Overall this group of participants is positive about the Digital Monument and Community and considers it a valuable addition to research their research activities.

Conclusions

This research on practices engaged in at the Digital Monument and Community, and the meaning these sites have for the users, has been a qualitative and explorative exercise. The objective of the Digital Monument and Community is to reconstruct the picture of the Jewish community in the Netherlands on the eve of their destruction by “returning” to

each individual victim his or her identity. This objective enables “double individualized” commemoration: commemoration of each individual victim by returning their identity, making known who they were and how they lived, and individualized commemoration, at home, alone or in a small group in each person’s own time, instead of mass organized ceremonies on designated days.

In 1998, Geser expressed that in his opinion commemoration practices at a virtual memorial would be limited to “behavior extremely short in time and extremely unrelated to any other social involvements. It becomes a small ‘intermezzo’, during surfing activities [...]” (Geser 1998, 20). The results of the research on the meaning of and the practices found at the Digital Monument and Community show that, although practices are mostly limited in time and take place at irregular intervals, they do not have the character of an ‘intermezzo’ in between other internet activities. Within all groups of participants, even within the group of participants without any direct personal involvement in the Shoah, the practices evoke deeply felt emotions raised by the enormous number of names, the ages, and the stories behind the victims.

The first-generation participants consider the monument as exemplifying the “true form” of commemoration of the victims. This is how the victims ought to be commemorated: by means of returning them their identity. They seem to be hesitant about the value and use of the Community. The monument is considered to replace or to function as a graveyard, a place to visit and to commemorate the dead. In this respect, the Monument functions as an “organic tombstone”, capable of growth and evolution and always open to new inputs from persons wherever and whenever they are (Geser 1998, 27).

For a long period after the war, participants in this group have had difficulties sharing their personal memories with others. The Digital Monument and Community, apart from its commemorative function, appear to have the added function of helping them handle their emotions by contributing their personal stories to the Digital Monument and Community. Many participants in this group have assisted in compiling and completing the Digital Monument right from the start by supplying the names and additional information they could remember. Participants in the research indicated that they felt a “healing” effect in expressing oneself in a public, in this case virtual environment. The results of the research thus show that the site offers many opportunities to co-produce memory, and that every individual input or voice is valued equally.

The element of co-production may be even better illustrated by the other groups of participants. In the other groups of participants, the Community is valued highly and being able to connect to other users is considered important. Many participants consider their practices as being a contribution to their family history but also as being a more general form of contributing to the history of the Shoah. The site is considered as a means of sharing knowledge but also as means to create public awareness of the Shoah. This objective of awareness becomes more private when for example individual people realize that their current residence used to be occupied by Jewish families on the eve of their deportation.

In conclusion: the Digital Monument and Community appear to be valuable contributions to commemoration practices of the Shoah, a place accessible 24/7 for commemoration all over the world, where each can contribute to the memory of the Dutch victims of the Shoah at their own place in their own time. The dimensions of co-production of memory and voice as proposed by Foot, Warnick & Schneider have been defined as distinguishing features of the Digital Monument and Community. In this respect the Digital Monument and Community form a ‘living monument’, one that is not closed but open, and one that may continue to grow in the future depending on the contributions of the members of the Community.

Biographical note:

Laurie M.C. Faro (1957) has a background in Culture Studies, and is currently working on a (PhD) research project at Tilburg University, focusing on the context and meaning of 'postponed monuments' as a separate category within Dutch monument culture. 'Postponed monuments' are monuments erected a long time after the event or disaster to be commemorated took place. This study is a qualitative exploration within the interdisciplinary field of memory studies, and ritual studies. This research report is based on the results of one of the case studies explored within the context of the PhD study.

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