

The Memoro – Bank of Memories project

The past is never dead, it's not even past
William Faulkner, poet and Nobel prize

For many of us, we have fond memories of sitting on the lap of a parent, auntie, or grandparent, listening carefully and closely not to miss a word of their experiences, memories, and life stories. We didn't know it then, but they told us their stories for a reason: so that we may learn from their experiences and to teach us about our family, our traditions, shared customs, and moral values. Those memories were shared as examples useful to teach us what life had taught them as well as to keep alive the memory of lives lived through different customs and values. Our elders told us stories about themselves so that we might benefit from the wisdom coming from lives long-lived. As adults, we now realize the importance of these stories, especially now that so many of our elders are no longer with us. Only now do we fully appreciate our grandparents' memories and stories and, sometimes, we strive to look for and to capture what our grandfathers would have told us.

Banca della Memoria Onlus cultural association was established in June 2009, and it developed and followed-up the international Memoro – the Bank of Memories project, a website devoted to the collection, classification and sharing of the memories, experiences and life stories of people born before 1950. The collection of memories is realised through video and audio recordings of interviews. During the interview the person is free to tell about one or more events that he considers interesting, to be preserved and passed on to the younger generations. The video and audio recordings are the chosen tools: the video represents a direct tool, that preserves the original message. Voices, faces and expressions represent an essential element of a person and of his or her tales. Audio recordings date back in time, to tales of people who are no longer with us: recorded voices, significant and precious memories. Moreover audio recordings simplify the collection of memories for those who do not own a video camera, for instance recording by phone.

Internet, the tool chosen to share the memories, enables a wide flexibility and accessibility of contents. Moreover internet enables everyone with a computer to contribute to our growing archive and to organize content effectively through thematic pathways enabling others to easily access and browse it. Moreover internet represents the media of young people: the fundamental beneficiaries of memories and the future keepers of past experiences.

Memoro – the Bank of Memories aims at representing the electronic version of stories that traditionally grandfathers told to their nephews. And more than that: Memoro – the Bank of Memories also represents a community jointly developing contents, following updates



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through newsletters and on social media, comments and votes videos, organizes training activities and projects in partnership with associations and public Regional and Local Authorities.

Among the project goals it is important to highlight the aim of promoting in the wider audience the desire to take part in the collection of memories, thus providing the individuals interviewed with the precious opportunity to be the actual focus and protagonists of history. To this purpose the Memoro project developed the role of “memory hunter” (anyone who uploads a video) and “witness” (anyone sharing his memories through an interview). Anyone uploading a video becomes a memory hunter and is provided with his own personalised webpage featuring his repertory of collected memories. Such profiles may be easily enriched through the creation of specific thematic pathways as well as through news and oddities.

Also witnesses are devoted a specific webpage featuring their videos, photos, personal data and a short biography: this section was conceived to provide the witnesses taking part in the project as “interviewees” a personal space on the Memoro website.

International dimension and geographical diffusion

Memory represents a universal value. For this reason, since the beginning, the project was conceived in an international dimension.

When an individual, a group of people or an association expresses the interest to develop the Memoro project in another Country, Memoro the Bank of Memories starts a cooperation process that results in the establishment of a new Memoro branch. Through the years these cooperations enabled the creation of new Memoro branches that enriched the Memoro web portal. Today the Memoro web portal features several different national websites, easily accessible through the international home page.

Today the MEMORO project is active in: Italy - Finland - France - Germany - Greece - Poland - Spain - United Kingdom - Argentina - Canada - Puerto Rico - Venezuela - United States of America – Japan - Cameroon



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