LuxTIME Project: Lessons Learned

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The "Luxembourg Time Machine" (LuxTIME) project was launched in April 2022 and funded by the Luxembourg National Research Fund (FNR). The main goal of the LuxTIME project is to build an interdisciplinary consortium to analyze and interpret historical "big data." By working with the main stakeholders of historical data in Luxembourg (archives, libraries, statistical offices, research institutions, governmental bodies, and private associations), LuxTIME aims to break new ground in studying the past in a truly interdisciplinary and interinstitutional setting.

LuxTIME has three main deliverables. First, we work to create a consortium of key stakeholders in Luxembourg. Our goal is to identify, understand, and unite the efforts of different national players in order to provide a critical mass of the historical record in its diversity, develop a shared understanding of a governance structure, and facilitate interdisciplinary historical research and interinstitutional collaborations in Luxembourg. Second, we want to map the state of the art of historical data in Luxembourg based on the multiple interviews we have with the key national stakeholders of historical or historicized data. In that way, we will have a broader overview of what kind of historical data the Luxembourgish institutions hold, how they use and share historical data, in which research initiatives they are or have been involved, and how they describe their experience with interinstitutional collaborations. Third, we aim to collaborate with the European Time Machine and create a "Luxembourg Time Machine" (LTM).

In this paper, we will present our experience from the creation of the LuxTIME consortium, and we will discuss our findings from the interviews with the main stakeholders of historical data in Luxembourg. Specifically, in our presentation we will focus on four aspects: 1. The historical data institutions hold, use, and/or share. 2. The current and future research initiatives in which institutions are involved or aim to get involved. 3. The collaborations they had so far with other institutions and researchers and their experiences from their collaborations. 4. Their willingness to collaborate with us and participate in our project's consortium. We surveyed the following institutions: the National Library of Luxembourg (BNL), National Archives of Luxembourg (ANLux), Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER), Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST), Luxinnovation, Historical Consulting, Luxembourg Income Study Database (LIS), Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C^{2}DH), the Ministry of Culture, and the National Museum of Luxembourg.

By discussing the state of the art of historical data in Luxembourg and the different ways institutions approach historical or historicized data, work on or design research projects, and collaborate with other stakeholders and individual researchers at a national level, we will offer valuable insights on how national consortiums can be established and maintained. At the same time, based on our discussions with the stakeholder of historical data in Luxembourg, we will explore methods that enhance collaborations between universities, research institutions,

archives, libraries, and museums and promote the visibility of their projects. The main logic of our consortium is that archives, libraries, governmental bodies, and private associations, which hold or use historical data, should not be perceived as service providers by historians and scholars but as active collaborators in historical research.[1]

The contribution of LuxTIME to digital history and digital humanities more broadly is that it will allow an exploration of the deep history of Luxembourg in a collaborative way, relying on open data and resources generated across disciplines. Unlike traditional history, bound by access to texts, deep history interrogates the full span of human existence necessarily extending backward beyond the written historical record and also outward beyond ordinary archival sources.[2] And unlike standard research, which typically unfolds within disciplinary silos — economists, historians, archivists, librarians, and environmental scientists, for example, rarely collaborate despite working the same terrain — LuxTIME will encourage an examination of the past in an interdisciplinary fashion, crossing barriers and offering unprecedented access to historical data. In addition, LuxTIME will contribute to the change of the nature and scale of research methods in the sciences and humanities by allowing bolder questions to be asked, new kinds of understanding to be reached, and large-scale collaboration between scholars, businesses, cultural heritage institutions, and ministries. Lastly, LuxTIME will allow the simulation of possible futures and pasts, as it will combine data from different disciplines and institutions and allow the exploration of hypothetical pasts and possible futures with the help of Time Machine technology.

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[1] For this argument also see, Trevor Owens and Jesse A. Johnston, "Archivists as Peers in Digital Public History," in *Handbook of Digital Public History*, ed. Serge Noiret, Mark Tebeau, and Gerben Zaagsma (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2022), 151-163.

[2] Daniel Lord Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520258129/on-deep-history-and-the-brain.