Scientific Prerequisites for Building an Infrastructure for the Long-term Archiving of Research Data: "Archival Cultural Heritage Online" (ArCHO)

The research cooperation between the research program "History of the Max Planck Society" (GMPG) based at the Max Planck Institiute for History of Science in Berlin and the Gesellschaft für Wissenschaftliche Datenverarbeitung mbH Göttingen (GWDG) has the goal of creating the scientific concepts and requirements for building a sustainable infrastructure that enables the long-term archiving of research data.

The infrastructure is to allow the GDWG and other MPG computer centers to offer in the future a generic service for archiving digital and non-digital documents that is open to the institutes and general administration of the MPG and can constitute one of the future bases for a digital memory of the MPG. The scientific conceptions require cross-disciplinary expertise combining history of science, computer science, digital humanities and library and archive science, in order to make current research data and historical sources, like those stored in Essential Cultural Heritage Online (ECHO), permanently available for scientific research and analysis. The research data of the project and their storage constitute a prototypical application for the development of such an infrastructure.

The cooperative project, oriented on issues of history of science and contemporary history, makes it possible to develop parameters for a digital storage infrastructure and to indicate ways how research data can continue to remain legally utilizable in the future. For this best practices are to be developed, on the basis of which data can be captured and processed for scholarly re-use in the future. The research questions this raises imply as yet unresolved problems with building a basic technical infrastructure and with the demands on the corresponding software, but also concern the design of data models as well as the development of concrete workflows for digitalization.

The evaluation of the quality of these methods' results is ensured in the framework of the cooperation through an interdisciplinary working group comprised of software and hardware specialists and humanities scholars.