Institute of National Remembrance

Byte-written history: the IPN to join HackYeah 2021, Europe's biggest hackathon

Meeting the needs of history fans, the IPN head Karol Nawrocki established the New Technologies Office, tasked with implementing solutions that will deliver historical content in new digital formats. VR goggles and virtual reality itself, as well as advanced digitized databases are the maint points of interest for the new unit – which secured the IPN participation in HackYeah 2021, Europe's largest hackathon, to be held in Katowice between 10 and 12 December.

What the Institute of National Remembrance is holding is a competition for HackYeah participants, a contest for a design of technical solutions and a concept of a website that could serve as an information hub for open-access IPN resources. The task is to come up with a solution that would, on the one hand, become an integration platform fitted with an aggregator for data available online, and on the other, serve as a research platform, both for Internet users and the Institute. In cooperation with HackYeah participants, we're aiming to build an advanced database devoted to modern Polish history, offering its resources to teachers, students, and history buffs.

The competition projects will be evaluated by a panel of the IPN historians and digital humanities experts, and the total prize pool is PLN 60,000.

Read more about the competition [here](#).
Read more about Hackathon 2021 [here](#).

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Can history be alive? Can it be interesting or intriguing? History is usually associated with dusty books filled with dates, facts and names, and additionally, with piles of documents, our past written on yellowed pages. This is all true, but history is also data, and plenty of it – structured and unstructured, related and unrelated. Petabytes of data.

History today employs IT systems, databases and websites, where

teams of historians and IT specialists collect, analyze and provide users with assorted data. Currently, it is difficult to imagine historical research without the solutions offered by the IT market. It is not about basic software for text edition or conference presentation tools, but about extensive IT systems based on the latest technical solutions, including artificial intelligence.

Advanced IT tools help historians analyze data, interpret past events, and, consequently, understand them better.

The problem is that the data is building up incessantly; for instance: a one-page document produced 300 years ago is described in several dozen fields of a database entry, photographed and scanned, and these photographs and scans are input as well. We record its appearance, content, time of creation, creator and recipient identity. The more recent history is, the more of this data we collect, and the greater the problem to control becomes. Hence the need to develop advanced tools for managing petabytes of data that tell the fascinating Polish history.

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