When War Comes Home: A Humanistic Archive for Veterans, Families, and the Long-Term Consequences of War

Laboratory of Information Systems

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Slide 1 00:00–00:56 Opening

War enters the home through memories, illness, displacement, and the absence of people who never returned. Families continue to live with its consequences long after the fighting ends. Much of this history remains in personal conversations, photographs, letters, and collections that no public institution has assembled.

The Laboratory of Information Systems is developing the PD Human Experience Archive to give people a means of preserving what they themselves consider important. The project is technically feasible, and work on it is underway. Today we present its public principles and intended purpose.

The central principle is simple: the person decides what to preserve. Our responsibility is to provide the infrastructure that makes preservation possible.

Slide 2 00:56–02:01 The war within everyday life

The experience of war includes what happens after a person returns, after a family moves, or after a community loses its home. It includes the work of caring for someone, the effort to understand a disappearance, and conversations between generations. It also includes ordinary life, humour, friendship, and the meanings people attach to what they survived.

A person may preserve a photograph because of someone standing at its edge. A letter may matter because it contains the last words a family received. A recording may preserve a voice that the next generation would otherwise never hear.

The archive should allow those meanings to remain with the people who know them. They should be able to explain why an item matters without having to translate their experience into an institutional category.

Slide 3 02:01–03:04 The person's choice

Our starting point is the person's freedom to preserve an account of their own life. Its importance does not depend on whether a researcher has already found a use for it. A story can matter to a family before it matters to an institution. It can matter even if no institution ever investigates it.

Contributors should not have to establish that they are exemplary veterans, recognised victims, authoritative witnesses, or accomplished writers. An ordinary life can contain something worth keeping. An incomplete recollection can also deserve preservation.

This is the humanistic foundation of the project. We propose a place where people can preserve material according to their own understanding of its value. Historical and scientific research may later use it, where the contributor permits that use.

Slide 4 03:04–04:08 Personal memory and official history

States and other powerful institutions can impose an authorised account of the past. They can decide who appears as a hero, who appears as a traitor, and whose experience receives no place in public memory. The concern behind this project includes the experience of official historical falsification and the loss of inconvenient voices.

The archive's principle is that preserving one's own account should not require approval of its historical or political interpretation by the state. Neither should it require approval by an academic editor.

The project does not prescribe what a veteran should feel about service, what a civilian should think about a war, or how a family should interpret its losses. People must be able to preserve their own position, including disagreement with the official account.

Slide 5 04:08–05:11 A personal or family collection

The proposed form is accessible participation through personal or family collections. People can contribute text, photographs, correspondence, audio, video, and documents they are entitled to share. They choose the language and the form that suit them.

A contributor may begin with one item and add more later. A family may assemble material that has remained scattered among relatives. A person may record a conversation instead of writing a memoir. The archive should make these forms possible without demanding a finished academic publication.

The familiar idea of a platform where people upload their own material helps explain participation. The purpose here is durable preservation, together with control over access and later additions. People should not need to become professional archivists before their history can enter the archive.

Slide 6 05:11–06:12 Language and viewpoint

The archive is international in its humanistic principle. Nationality, language, and political perspective should not determine whether a personal experience deserves preservation. Contributors may remember the same period differently. Their accounts may disagree, and the archive need not force agreement.

A person may express pride, anger, grief, shame, or uncertainty. Some feelings may coexist. The archive should preserve the person's words rather than rewrite them into a coherent public message.

Language belongs to that freedom. People should be able to speak in the language in which they remember and can express themselves. Translation may help others encounter the account, while the original remains available under its access conditions. The translation should be identifiable as a translation, with its own origin and limitations.

Slide 7 06:12–07:14 Later reflections on earlier experience

Memory changes, and people change their interpretation of experience. Someone may describe service with pride at one point and with doubt many years later. Another person may find a new meaning through family conversations or documents discovered after a relative's death.

The archive should allow later reflection without pretending that the earlier account never existed. A new statement can accompany an earlier one, with its date and context. The sequence tells us something about the person's life and the changing place of war within it.

Families can also hold different understandings of the same events. The archive should give those perspectives room to remain distinguishable. Its task is to preserve the history of expression, while letting contributors add what they have come to understand.

Slide 8 07:14–08:14 Preservation and access

The freedom to preserve includes the freedom to decide who can see the material. Depositing a document need not mean publishing it to everyone. A contributor may make a narrative public while keeping other items available only to family members.

A person may also permit research access without authorising public quotation. These choices should be understandable to the person making them. Participation should not depend on surrendering control over the subsequent use of one's own history.

Public and private preservation both serve the project. A collection can matter to a family even when it remains inaccessible to researchers. The archive should support that choice. What matters is that the person understands the arrangement and can decide how to participate.

Slide 9 08:14–09:18 Rules for preservation

A shared archive needs rules for preserving material and making it findable. Such rules concern how contributions enter the system, how their origins remain identifiable, and how later additions relate to earlier material. They should help a person preserve a history.

The project rejects ideological editing and political conformity as conditions of acceptance. A contributor's account should not have to satisfy an approved interpretation of a war. Preserving it records what that person chose to communicate.

Responsibility for one's own material must remain distinguishable from authority to expose someone else's confidential records. The archive must explain that boundary clearly. We do not need to settle the full operational framework in this presentation. The principle is that preservation rules serve the participant's freedom and the integrity of the entrusted material.

Slide 10 09:18–10:21 The laboratory's role

The laboratory takes responsibility for the means of preservation. It must make participation usable, preserve what people entrust to it, and keep the relationship between the material and its contributor clear. It must also support the access choices attached to a collection.

The public principle has practical consequences. A difficult form can prevent an elderly or exhausted person from contributing. An unexplained change can undermine trust. A system that depends entirely on one person's continuing presence has a fragile future. These concerns belong to the work of building the archive.

The participant should encounter a service that makes preservation possible. Technical organisation remains the responsibility of the project. The purpose is to remove avoidable barriers between a person and the history they wish to keep.

Slide 11 10:21–11:22 Tools that support the contributor

Tools can help people work with material that would otherwise remain difficult to find or read. Transcription can make a recording searchable. Translation can open a collection to readers in another language. Search can help families or researchers discover related material.

Artificial intelligence may assist with these tasks. Its role is subordinate to the preservation of the contributor's own words. A transcript, translation, or summary must remain distinguishable from the original contribution, and its origin must be clear.

Such assistance does not give a system authority to decide the moral worth of a memory or rewrite it into a preferred interpretation. The public concern is what these tools enable for the participant. The detailed technical arrangements belong to the ongoing development work.

Slide 12 11:22–12:26 Possible uses of preserved experience

Preserved experience can support historical, environmental, medical, and social investigation. A personal account may identify a place, a time, or a question missing from another collection. Several accounts may suggest something that researchers should examine more closely.

Those possibilities do not define the whole value of the archive. Families may use it to transmit memory. Contributors may simply want their own understanding to remain available to someone in the future.

Preservation and verification are separate activities. An archive entry records an identifiable contribution. Scientific conclusions require their own evidence and methods. The following presentation examines the transition from fragmented records to reliable victim data. Our concern here is the prior humanistic question: how people can retain a place for their own experience before any later investigation begins.

Slide 13 12:26–13:26 Development is underway

The project is technically feasible, and work on it is underway. The conference provides an opportunity to state its purpose and the principles that guide that work. We are not announcing a public launch or asking participants to evaluate confidential implementation details.

Development takes time. The humanistic principle must remain meaningful in the decisions through which the project becomes a working service. Access, continuity, and the contributor's experience require sustained attention. A declaration cannot complete that work, but it can make its intended direction explicit.

The commitment we present is to build an archive in which people retain a meaningful choice over their own material. Future public announcements can explain how to participate when the service is ready to receive contributions.

Slide 14 13:26–14:32 The value of a person's own history

War creates consequences that public records can never fully contain. People live those consequences through their own relationships, questions, and changing understanding. Their collections may preserve something that no official account recognises.

The PD Human Experience Archive begins with the person's choice of what to keep. Its purpose is to provide the technical basis for that choice to become durable preservation, with intelligible rules and control over access.

We cannot guarantee how every future institution will behave. We can state the principle that guides the project and make that principle available for public judgement. A person's history should not have to wait for a state, an editor, or a researcher to declare it worthy of preservation. People should be able to preserve what they consider important, in their own words. Thank you.

Sources and conceptual basis

Reference material for preparation. This section is outside the oral presentation.

Laboratory of Information Systems. When War Comes Home: A Humanistic Archive for Veterans, Families, and the Long-Term Consequences of War (2026). DOI: 10.66659/bhh9qg69. https://pollution-diseases-ojs.org/index.php/pd/article/view/68

Laboratory of Information Systems. PD Human Experience Archive. Legal and Organizational Framework (2026). DOI: 10.66659/097dbc26. Public abstract. https://pollution-diseases-ojs.org/index.php/pd/article/view/82

Project conceptual framework and discussions supplied for preparation, with the project organiser's current instructions governing this declaration.

Project feasibility and ongoing development: status confirmed by the project organiser for this presentation.