

LOST OBJECTS AND
FOUND MEMORIES:
LAUNCHING THE JEWISH
DIGITAL CULTURAL RECOVERY
PROJECT FOUNDATION

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The Jewish Digital Cultural Recovery Project Foundation was established to provide a central archival and research platform for all cultural objects looted by the Nazis, their allies, and collaborators. The foundation cooperates closely with a network of European and international partners working on archival research in this field.

A state-of-the-art technological structure for the platform has been established with the help of a pilot project, "The Fate of the Adolphe Schloss Collection," co-funded by the European Union. To continue populating the database, the JDCRP Foundation has launched discussions on cooperation with important archives in France and Germany, as a starting point. The foundation is focusing on ways to establish mutual access to the archival data based on a common search platform provided by JDCRP. Initial archives to be included document the seizure and confiscation of property. Later, archival data on recovered artworks and on the relevant art trade since World War II will be added.

To create such a digital platform, support is necessary for foundation operations, digitization projects, and data technology that can expand a central database across various archival sources and databases. The digitization of these important archival sources, which are in danger of being lost, is key to deepening our understanding of the largest cultural theft in modern history. The network of international partners established by the JDCRP Foundation is key to creating a central database to gain a comprehensive overview of the mechanisms and ongoing consequences of the vast Nazi-led looting of Jewish-owned cultural assets. The digital tools and pilot procedures developed for the platform can be a foundation for documenting other cases of cultural theft as part of genocide.

The archival platform, the first open-source transnational database of its kind, will enable a comprehensive record of the theft of Jewish cultural property in the period between 1933 and 1945. The JDCRP will also promote research projects and educational programs on cultural theft, furthering knowledge of a long-forgotten chapter of the Holocaust.