PROGRAM RESEARCH WITH A DIGITAL ARCHIVE: BACKGROUND, EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES
K. Heuer, F. Semrau, I. Specht

German Institute for Adult Education
Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning

STRUCTURE

• Development of the digital archive
  • Collection logic and research logic
  • From the printed archive to a digital archive at the DIE

• RetroPro from the researchers’ perspective

• Examples of program research with RetroPro

• Value & challenges
• Discussion with the audience
DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Collection logic and research logic

Collecting

- Cultural heritage
- Preservation
- Documentation

Bias

Researching

- Usability
- Fitting
- Evidence

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Rationale for the digital archive at the DIE

Gathering and preserving programs from adult education centers (VHS) has always been a responsibility of the DIE

- Digital turn
- Guarantee the continuity of the collection
- Protection and conservation of the printed programs

⇒ RetroPro!
DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE

The digital archive RetroPro

• A model project: Research and Development Centre (FEZ / "Programmes and Participation") and Data and Information Centre (DIZ) working together

• (Retro-)Digitalization of a representative sample of programs from 41 German adult education centers (VHS) → 270,000 pages from 3,400 programs were digitalized

• Containing past and current programs/catalogues since 1957

RESEARCHERS’ PERSPECTIVE

Value of RetroPro for research

• Subject of program research: programs (catalogues)

• Digital turn

• Change in program preservation: digital archives are needed for further program research

• In Europe until now only a few digital archives exist (exploratory survey; see exhibition Room 208)

→RetroPro is unique for research
RESEARCHERS’ PERSPECTIVE

Value of RetroPro for research

Unique nature
• Location-independent
• Open access to a wide range of German programs/catalogues
• Full text database system
• Programs since 1957
  → historical, longitudinal studies are possible
  → qualitative and quantitative research questions are possible

How to handle these digital data for instance

EXAMPLES OF PROGRAM RESEARCH WITH RETROPRO

Access to the archive: via the homepage of the German Institute for Adult Education:
https://www.die-bonn.de/weiterbildung/archive/programmplanarchive/default.aspx
CONCLUSION

Digital Archive RetroPro

Value
- Open access
- Providing of technical prepared data
- Different search filters
- Integration in other digital libraries (e.g. German National Library)
- High potential
  → further development and improvement (FEZ & DIZ)

Challenges
- Quality: completeness of provided data
- Technique/Access: compatibility with different analyzing systems/software
- Adaption to the research logic
  → discussion

DISCUSSION

Questions to the audience:

- What do you (as a researcher) expect from a digital archive?
- Which challenges do you see yourself confronted with when thinking/using a digital archive?
Thank you very much for your attention!

Dr. Klaus Heuer – heuer@die-bonn.de
Dr. Inga Specht – specht@die-bonn.de
Franziska Semrau – semrau@phil.tu-chemnitz.de