Summary of activities by the New Technology Division of IPN at the 21st General Congress of Polish Historians

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From September 17th to 20th, 2024, the 21st General Congress of Polish Historians took place in Białystok, with the participation of Dr. Karol Polejowski, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). On the third day of the Congress, Adrianna Paradowska, Deputy Director of the New Technology Division, led a workshop titled "Immersive Historical Education Based on the Projects of the New Technology Division."

Opening ceremony of the congress

During the opening gala, speeches were delivered by prominent figures, including Prof. Andrzej Waśko, advisor to President Andrzej Duda; Maciej Żywno, Deputy Speaker of the Polish Senate; Dr. Paweł Pietrzyk, Chief Director of State Archives; Prof. Krzysztof Mikulski, President of the Polish Historical Society (PTH); and Dr. Karol Polejowski, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance. "Our profession is the study of history. We do this because we understand its significance. We know how important memory is, which also serves the future. On the other hand, historians have one primary goal: the pursuit of truth. Memory and truth are the two pillars of a historian's work," emphasized Dr. Karol Polejowski. The Congress featured numerous events for all attendees, including a historical book fair, exhibitions, workshops, lectures, film screenings, historical reenactments, and an impressive mapping display projected onto the façade of the Branicki Palace in the evening.

Workshop: immersive historical education based on the projects of the New Technology Division and the New Technology Zone

On the third day of the Congress, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Adrianna Paradowska led the workshop titled "Immersive Historical Education Based on the Projects of the New Technology Division." The workshop was divided into four sessions to ensure that all interested participants could join. The audience primarily consisted of teachers, but also included researchers and scholars from across Poland. The workshop was split into two parts. The first part presented the findings of the research report "IMMERSIVE HISTORICAL EDUCATION – Towards New Educational Pathways." The study revealed that digital solutions offer new opportunities for learning, providing an effective way to diversify and personalize education. Additionally, the workshop discussed engaging methods of teaching contemporary history to Generation Z and the use of gamification in education. In the second part, workshop participants were invited to the New Technology Zone, where they engaged with educational games and applications from the IPN's New Technology Division, both on PC and in Virtual Reality (VR). Podcasts on modern historical education were also available. During the practical demonstrations, discussions arose about the potential of incorporating new technologies into schools and the educational mission of the Institute of National Remembrance. It is worth noting that the New Technology Zone was open to all Congress attendees, not just workshop participants. Anyone interested could visit the Zone. We extend our thanks to everyone who participated in the workshops and to those who visited the Zone outside of the presentations to learn more about immersive historical education.

Immersive historical education not just for youth

According to feedback from workshop participants, modern historical education can benefit not only young learners but also help educators and teachers enhance their digital skills. The educational games and applications from the New Technology Division support history learning, facilitate the use of new technologies, foster civic attitudes, and develop empathy.

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