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## DIGITALIZATION IN THE SERVICE OF NATIONAL MEMORY

**Abstract:** The topic of this paper is creation of the digital archives where one of the most tragic events in Kraljevo history during World War II is presented and which consequences extend way beyond local character, becoming an integral part of the national history. It is about mass shooting of civilians from Kraljevo by the German Army, which is known as '14th October'.

Intention is to present this tragic event from the viewpoint of the librarian by collecting all of the material on this matter so far (stored in or published by libraries, museums, archives...) to one place, implementing in this way the basic principles of digitalization – availability of the information that can be easily searched and found for all the users, regardless of space or time constraints.

**Keywords:** cultural diplomacy, 14th October, Kraljevo October, mass shooting.

The Local History Department of the Public Library “Stefan Prvovencani” in Kraljevo has been selecting diverse material about the most significant and tragic event in the recent history of Kraljevo. It is about the tragedy known as *October 14th* or *Kraljevo October*, a mass shooting of the local population in October 1941.

Taking into consideration the far-reaching consequences this event had on the citizens of Kraljevo, it should be no surprise the great interest in the topic, as well the great need for the event to be known and heard about outside the confines of cultural institutions. As librarians of the library of Kraljevo, we have made efforts to shed some light on this event from the viewpoint of our profession, by continually digitalizing and publishing on-line all the relevant and publicly available written and unwritten sources on this topic thus simultaneously achieving the basic principle of digitalization – making the information accessible to everybody, and under equal conditions. We consider the creation of this digital archives to be extremely important, primarily because of the fact that all the material pertaining to the topic has been collected and put in a single place, easing for the most part the research work of the local researchers, students and pupils. At the same time, the average user<sup>1</sup> is encouraged to get informed about the event by having easy access to proper information, i.e. literature, without being limited by time or space. We, as librarians, fulfill another role, which perhaps goes beyond the basic call of duty, and can be best described by the words of Ivan Ivanji:

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<sup>1</sup> We would here like to draw attention to the users from Kraljevo, or those born in Kraljevo, as they frequently, for understandable reasons, have a very intimate and emotional relationship with this particular event, making their motives different from those of other library services users

*I, of course, find it is of paramount importance that the public will not only come to know about the events of recent history, but also manage to remember, as only thus will it be possible to preserve even a rough remembrance of the truth.*

## History

The event that is remembered as *October 14th* does, in fact, according to authentic sources, cover the period beginning with the arrest and incarceration of civilians in the locomotive hall in Kraljevo by the hand of German occupation forces, and ending with the shootings committed from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 1941. To be more specific, the arrests began on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, when 600 employees of the Aircraft factory were imprisoned, with 800 more workers from the Railway workshop (Wagon factory) and 360 railway men to follow in the coming days. The arrests and the subsequent shootings of the civilians were actually a terrible retribution of the Germans for the resistance put up by the fighters for the defense of Kraljevo. The decision was to shoot 100 Serbs for a single felled German, and 50 for a wounded one. It was so that Kraljevo suffered a gruesome fate, fate that so many other cities had suffered during World War II, losing over 2000<sup>2</sup> people capable of work. The victims were mostly men, but also women and children.

The consequences of this event were far-reaching. Kraljevo, a town that had already experienced stagnation in economic growth and development throughout history, was again faced with a great number of impoverished families that were left without a breadwinner. It is said that almost every household was stricken with this misfortune. An additional burden for the town were the 3500 refugees, which had settled in the town. The local authorities were faced with a difficult task of providing basic living supplies for the population while, at the same time, trying to restore the normal way of life as much as possible.

It is considered that the first organized visit to the location of the mass shooting happened on October 14th, 1942, which is why this event has been commemorated on that exact day every year since World War II. The way of commemorating, i.e. remembering the victims of the shooting, changed throughout the years, depending on the current politics and the governing ideology. The reasons for manipulating the number of victims are the same, which is why the number of 6000 victims had long been repeated as the only truth.

*The Kraljevo October Memorial Digital Archives* has been created exclusively because of the wish to present all the relevant data on the event in a single place, without the desire to influence the public opinion by expressing personal opinions. Only a comprehensive view of the matter can help us understand more easily the causes and consequences of a tragedy like this, and also influence our relationship towards the past, the present, and our loved ones.

### **About *The Kraljevo October Memorial Digital Archives***

The uploaded material is mostly stored in the Local History Department of the Kraljevo library, and is the result of several years of continual procurement, in accordance with the Law on the Library and Information Services. In order for the material to be more easily accessible, it is systematically sorted according to the type – book and non-book material, periodicals – newspapers and magazines, and audio and video records and photographs. We have paid close attention to singling out press clippings – cut-outs from the newspapers that

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<sup>2</sup> An exact identity of 2190 victims of this German crime has been confirmed so far.

were published, or are still published, outside the territory of Kraljevo, as well as clippings from the local newspapers. All the material has been digitalized and made available to the users either partially or wholly, in accordance with the copyrighting law. We redirect users to some publications that are entirely published online, by using a hyperlink. Depending on the type of the material, we use PDF and JPG formats. Everything uploaded to the blog is protected by a watermark of the library. The next phase of the development includes parts of the material being analytically processed in order to become searchable by keywords.

This division into the types and categories of material is in accordance with the rules of library classification, and partial deviations are present for easier reference and better motion through information.

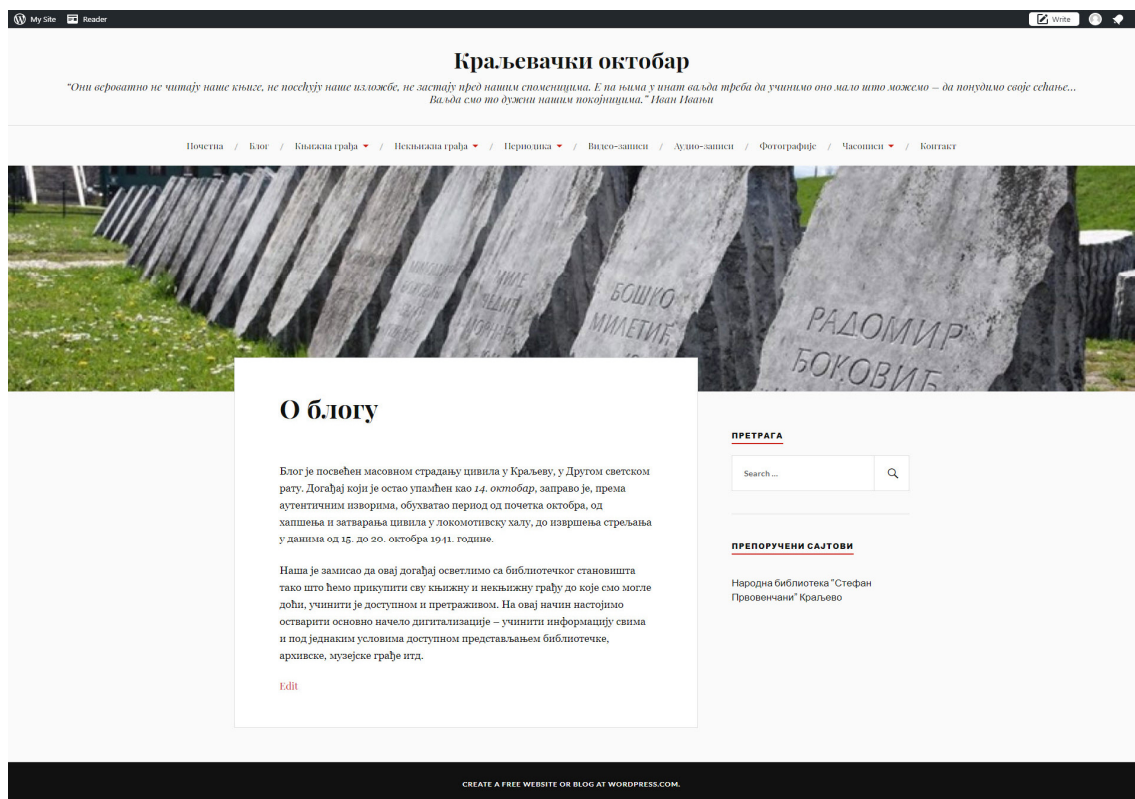


Figure 1. The structure

The book material has been divided into several subcategories – *books* (in the classical meaning of the term), *manuscripts*, *booklets*, and *rare and electronic books*. The books are sorted out into *Historical sources* and *Literary opus* in order to distinguish between publications that dealt with this event from a documentary and historical viewpoint, and those that represent literary, poetic interpretation of the tragic event. Works in the category of *Historical sources* are either the result of individual scientific research, or the publications created after gatherings of professional on the subject. The publishers that stand out as the most significant on this topic are the National Museum in Kraljevo and the Historical Archives of Kraljevo. The literature and art inspired by *October 14th* are mainly works by the poets and writers from Kraljevo. The Public Library “Stefan Prvovenčani”,

which has a reputation in the publishing world of being a *small publisher of great significance*, has published a poetry collection titled *The Angel from the Slopes of Grdica – lyrical records of the mass shooting in Kraljevo*.

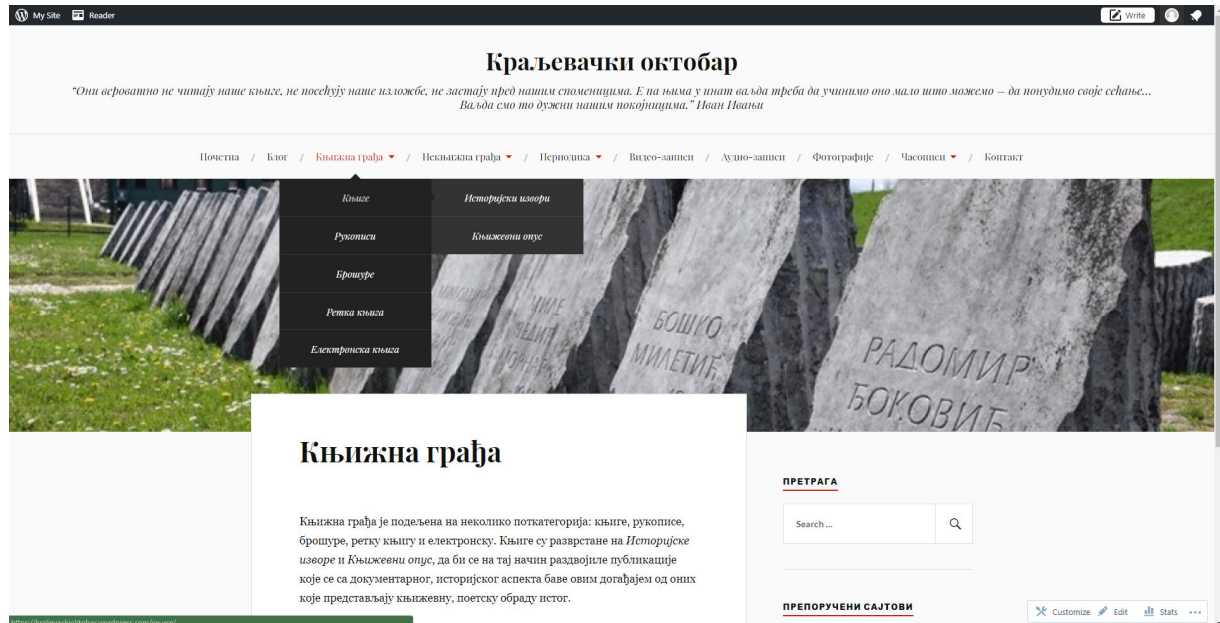


Figure 2. The Book Material Section

The screenplay for the 1974. film *Red Earth*, written by Branimir Tori Janković, stands out in the rich collection of manuscripts in the local history department. The film was screened in cinemas in 1975. IMDb, the international movie database, has record on this film, for which we use a hyperlink. The screenplay, i.e. the storyboard, is published in its entirety. The section titled *Manuscripts* possesses a part of the *October 12-14 'Bratstvo-jedinstvo' Organizational Committee Transcript*, recorded from 1975. to 1980.

There are posters, leaflets and catalogues within the non-book section. The visual identity and the content of the program *October Solemnities* has changed with the current politics, and those changes are most noticeable on the accompanying propaganda material printed for the occasion. The catalogues published are mostly from the exhibitions, the authors of which are mainly historians of the National Museum in Kraljevo. The exhibitions were often organized as parts of the commemorative program on *October 14*, and are equal in content to monographic publications on the same topic.

Articles published in the press called press clippings, are in the *Periodicals* sections. The articles were published in the local newspapers in Kraljevo (primarily *Ibarske Novosti*, which has been coming out continually since 1953), as well as in the non-local dailies (*Vecernje Novosti*, *Politika*...). The articles that have been selected are those that are in any way related to the topic of the *Kraljevo October*, whether relating to the event itself, or to the ceremonies later organized in honor of the victims. In order for the articles to be accessed more easily, they have been divided into categories based on the newspapers they were first published in, and within those categories, sorted chronologically, beginning with the oldest ones. The exception is *Ibarske Novosti*, due to the number of articles at disposal. They are sorted according to the decade – articles published from 1953. to 1960, articles

published from 1960. to 1970, etc. Press clippings are small documents, but they paint the clearest picture of the local social and political changes, as well as local everyday events. The experience of working at the local history department shows that users dedicate the majority of their time browsing local press in search of information on the exact events from the history of the town, which is why the selection and publication of press clippings makes scientific research easier.

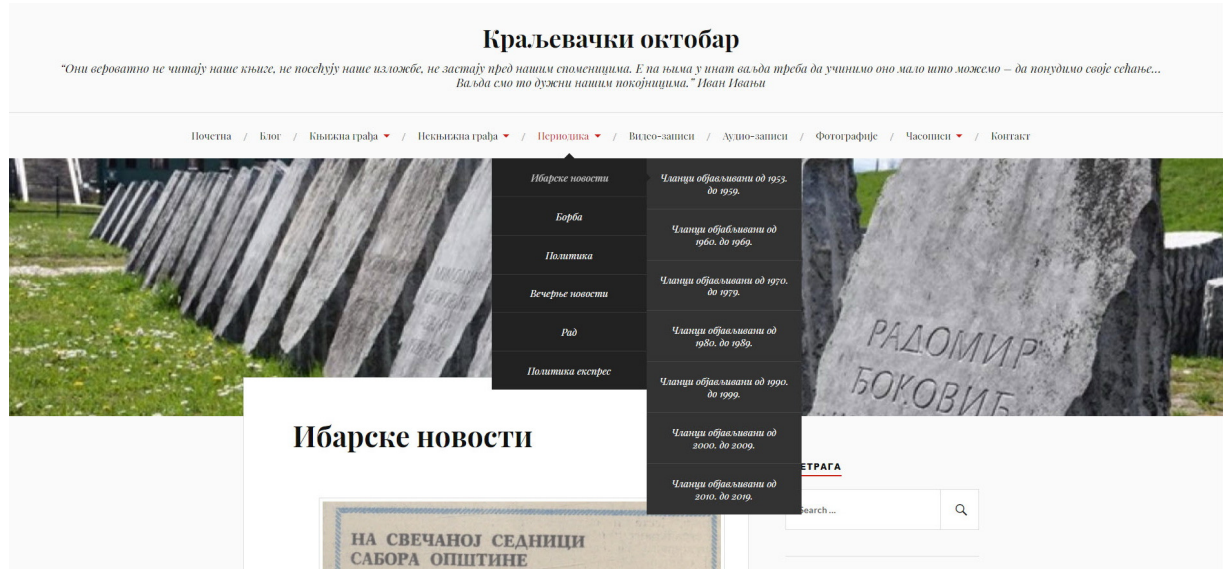


Figure 3. Press Clipping Section

The *Photographs* section is quite modest at the time. There are four photographs of the mass shooting location, before it had been regulated and properly marked. Those photographs are kept in the *Museum of Genocide Victims* in Belgrade. Moving scenes can be seen in those photographs – human bodies, crosses and unregulated cemetery. The photographs in possession of the local history department are mostly those of ceremonies organized in subsequent years, in memory of the victims. The photographs last published are those of the *Memorial Park* today. A sizeable photo collection of the killing field is kept at the National Museum, and it is part of the permanent museum exhibition. We mustn't overlook private archives, believed to hide still unseen sights from the mass shooting location, as well as scenes from commemorations.

Magazines, which fall into the category of serial periodical publications, have been put into a separate section, in order to facilitate easier reference, and to avoid merging with press clippings. Uploaded are those magazines that have, for the most part, dealt with this event, or have been entirely dedicated to it – *Oktobar*, *Povelja*, *Nasa Proslost*, *Kraljevacki Oktobar*.

*Oktobar* is a magazine started in 1966. It was published up until 1990, when it was completely shut down, experiencing longer or shorter publishing pauses in between. An important piece of information for our digital archives is the fact that *Oktobar* was published once a year from 1975. to 1990, and was solely dedicated to *Kraljevo October*.

*Povelja* – this magazine or literature, art, and culture was first printed in 1971, as a publication of the cultural and educational community of Kraljevo. It was published under the name of *Povelja Oktobra* for a time. The library took over the publication of *Povelja* in



# Фотографије



Велика недовршена рака и људска тела. Снимио непознати немачки војник.

Figure 4. One of the photos


1985, and it has been continually published ever since. The magazine is not uploaded in its entirety. Only those texts about the topic in question have been selected.

The magazine *Nasa Proslost* was started in 1964 by the Historical Archives and the Association of Historians of Kraljevo county. The magazines published articles from the local historiography, and provided relevant facts for getting acquainted with the past. The publishing continuity was interrupted in 1975, with a new beginning following in 1986, this time published by the National Museum and the Historical Archives. Publication ceased after only five editions until 2005, when it started to be printed continually up to this day. A total of 16 issues have been printed thus far. Almost all the issues of *Nasa Proslost* have been uploaded to the National Museum of Kraljevo website, and there are hyperlinks to those web addresses. We were guided by the same principle we employed in the *Periodicals* section, only singling out texts dedicated to *Kraljevo October*, or entire issues, if they were solely about this event.


**Краљевачки октобар**

*"Они вероватно не читају наше књиге, не поседују наше изложбе, не застају пред нашим споменицима. Е па њима у шнат ваљда треба да учинимо оно мало што можемо – да понудимо своје сећање... Ваљда смо то дужни нашим покојницима." Иван Павлић*


Почетна / Клоп / Књажана грађа / Писмањана грађа / Перџоџана / Видео-записи / Аудио-записи / Фотографџе / Часописи / Контакт



## Наша прошлост



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ИСТОРИЈСКИ АРХИВ  
КРАЉЕВО КРАЉЕВО 2009.



НАША ПРОШЛОСТ - часопис  
Исторџког архџва Краљево /  
главни и одговорни редакџ:  
Мариљуб Спасојевић - Број 1-2  
(1967), Краљево - Исторџски  
архџв, 1967.

**ПРЕТРАГА**

**ПРЕПОРУЧЕНИ САЈТОВИ**

Народна библџотека "Стефан Прџољенић" Краљево

Figure 5. The Periodicals Section

### Technical description

As a software basis for this project, we have selected wordpress, for it is currently the most up-to-date simple platform used to publish content on the web, initially designed to publish blogs. Since it is an open-source software and is managed by a large web community, as such has been greatly improved in recent years. This software allows installing many additional tools for viewing audio, video and image content, which will enable us to always respond to the future web demands, as the platform will develop alongside the technology. Due to the fact that it belongs to OSS (Open Source Software) with extensive web support, we will not have to invest in the updating of our software, but will always have the most up-to-date platform. More complicated platforms would be technologically too demanding and therefore unnecessary. The platform mobilizes the most diverse types of sites: from blogs and portfolios via portals and online shops, to social medias. Its basic functions are the following: it is not demanding concerning any programming skills for uploading the content, it is available in different languages including Serbian, content formatting is very

easy, content marking, stylized sections of the content (quotes, programming code, information etc.), good optimization for search engines, link structure control, content comments, feedback in the form of comments whenever somebody links the site. It has been implemented by Ivana Hrenko, Ana Voštinić and Marijana Jakšić in wordpress (Lovecraft theme).

### Conclusion

*The Kraljevo October Memorial Digital Archives* has been envisioned as an interactive environment, where library service users, as well as anybody else, can upload material from their personal heritage.

After all the material stored in the library becomes visible on-line, we will move on to searching in other archives of relevant institutions of national importance.

This archives is a result of the librarians` wish to influence the attitude of the local community towards their own tragic past and to make a small but important step towards rising awareness of the citizens about the responsibility for the the memory of the victims. The whole project has the enthusiasm and individual volunteer work as a foundation, which influenced not only the speed of the project implementation, but also the technical and esthetic characteristics of the web presentation itself. The abundant amount of the material and the lack of the appropriate equipment slowed down the pace of the material upload to the site. Also, there are several reasons why some rubrics are empty or poor with material. Except legal limits for publishing one section as a whole, contacting the authors or copyright holders for the consent of publishing their literary, science and other works, consumes great amount of time and means a lot of local `researching` as well. The majority of the authors are no longer among us, and most of the family members are often difficult to reach. Nevertheless, publishing portions of the available material we provide the user with a partial insight into the content of it, thus referring the user to the place where the material is kept, either physically or virtually.

Furthermore, some rubrics, such as audio and video sections, are empty. They mostly refer to TV shows, news and extracts from commemorative manifestations or music compositions, all inspired by this history event. The archives of local TV stations and radio channels, the main producers of these materials, have not been organized yet, which makes the digitalization process more difficult.

For uploading of audio and video material on the site, the new version of the application itself is needed. Minimal financial investments are obligatory in order to avoid unneeded and interfering ads and other details on this web presentation.

In order for this type of digital archive to exist and be sustainable at all, sheer desire and good will of individuals is not enough. The system support of city authorities and cultural institutions, as well as the support of the local library itself is necessary. Knowing that this project has just started, we may expect that, with adequate promotion and lobbying, it can draw bigger public attention, providing thus means for much better presentation of the local memory of national importance.

[www.kraljevackioktobar.wordpress.com](http://www.kraljevackioktobar.wordpress.com)



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