Digital storytelling in DH practice to encourage civil participation and reconstruction of the historical narrative

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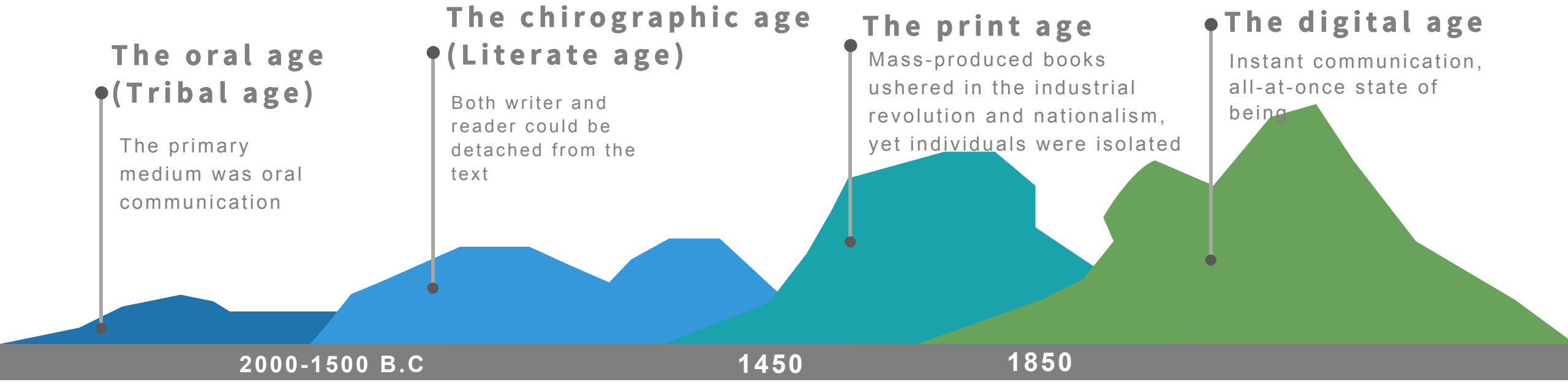
Session Outline

- The theory of digital storytelling (DS)
  - background, definition
- Crossover of DS and digital humanities (DH)
  - the possibilities of using DS as a guiding concept and an approach in DH
  - the common goals of the two
- Shanghai memory project
  - research subject
  - research methods
  - how DS is applied in the project
  - future work

Marshall McLuhan's Map of the History of Media



The invention of phonetic alphabet

The invention of printing press

The invention of telegraph

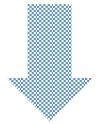
Griffin, E. M. (2006). A first look at communication theory. McGraw-hill.

From storytelling to digital storytelling

- Storytelling: the interactive art of using **words and actions** to reveal the **elements and images** of a story while encouraging the listener's imagination.[1]

- Digital storytelling: a movement or method for creating, expressing, interpreting, and sharing stories and personal experiences using **digital tools**, has been viewed as a "**democratization** of culture." (Clarke & Adam, 2011)
- It draws attention from the mainstream to the marginalized, the minority, the overlooked and forgotten.

- Single-modal
- One-way output



- Multi-modal
- Initiative, interactive, democratize

[1] https://storynet.org/what-is-storytelling/

The theory of digital storytelling

- Backdrop:
  - The "digital turn" (Noiret, 2018)
  - Web 2.0 (UGC)
  - Evolution of media
- Representative studied fields:
  - Media studies: audio-visual story creation using digital media (Lambert, 2018)
  - Public history: as a way of collecting historical materials from ordinary people (Burgess & Klaebe, 2009)
  - Pedagogy: an effective means of enhancing the interaction between students and teachers, and helping students understand important concepts and knowledge (Robin, 2008)

Examples:

- The COVID-19 pandemic story by Imperial College, London
- Bristol Stories
- University of Houston-Educational use of digital storytelling

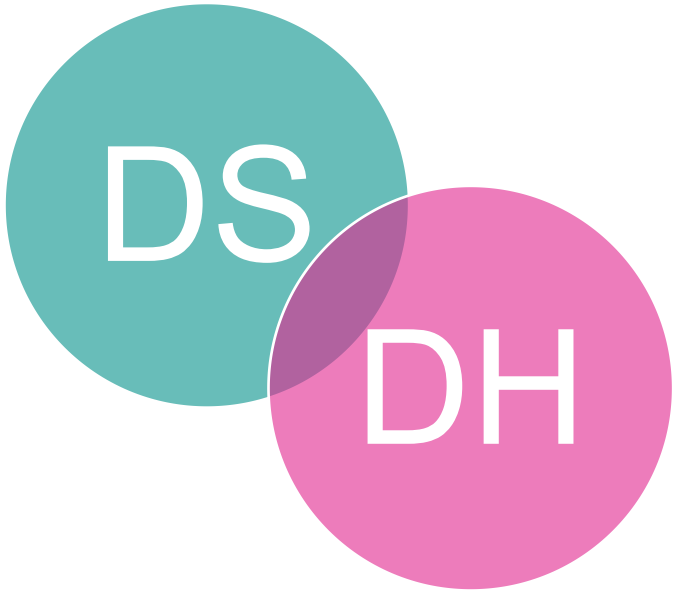
Common ground of DS & DH

1. DS provides new opportunities for DH

   - encourage dialogue
   - make the world comprehensible
   - discover new ways of interaction with the support of digital tools (Barber, 2016)

2. DS can serve as a bridge between cultural heritage and DH

   - space and time as shared concepts (Münster et al., 2019)



A great potential exists for DH practitioners to employ GLAM collections to reconstruct knowledge and cultural heritage, discover hidden knowledge, and support knowledge creation through the lens of digital storytelling.

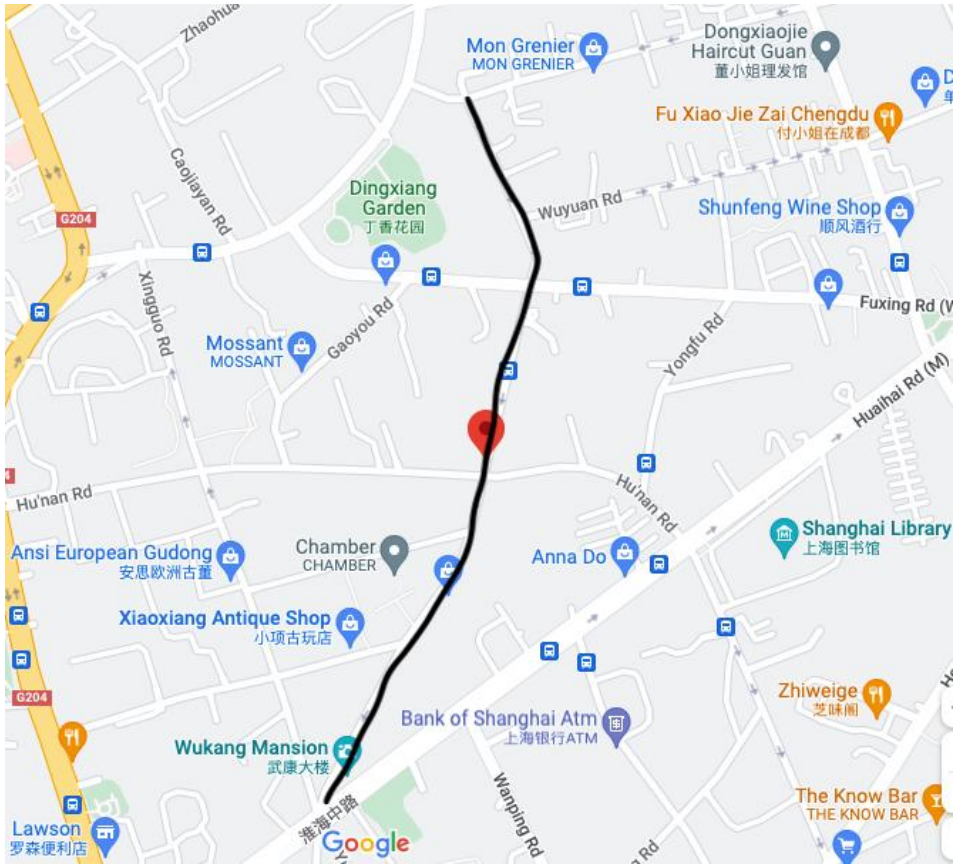
Shanghai Memory: A Journey from Wukang Road

上海图书馆 SHANGHAI LIBRARY
上海科学技术情报研究所 INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL INFORMATION OF SHANGHAI

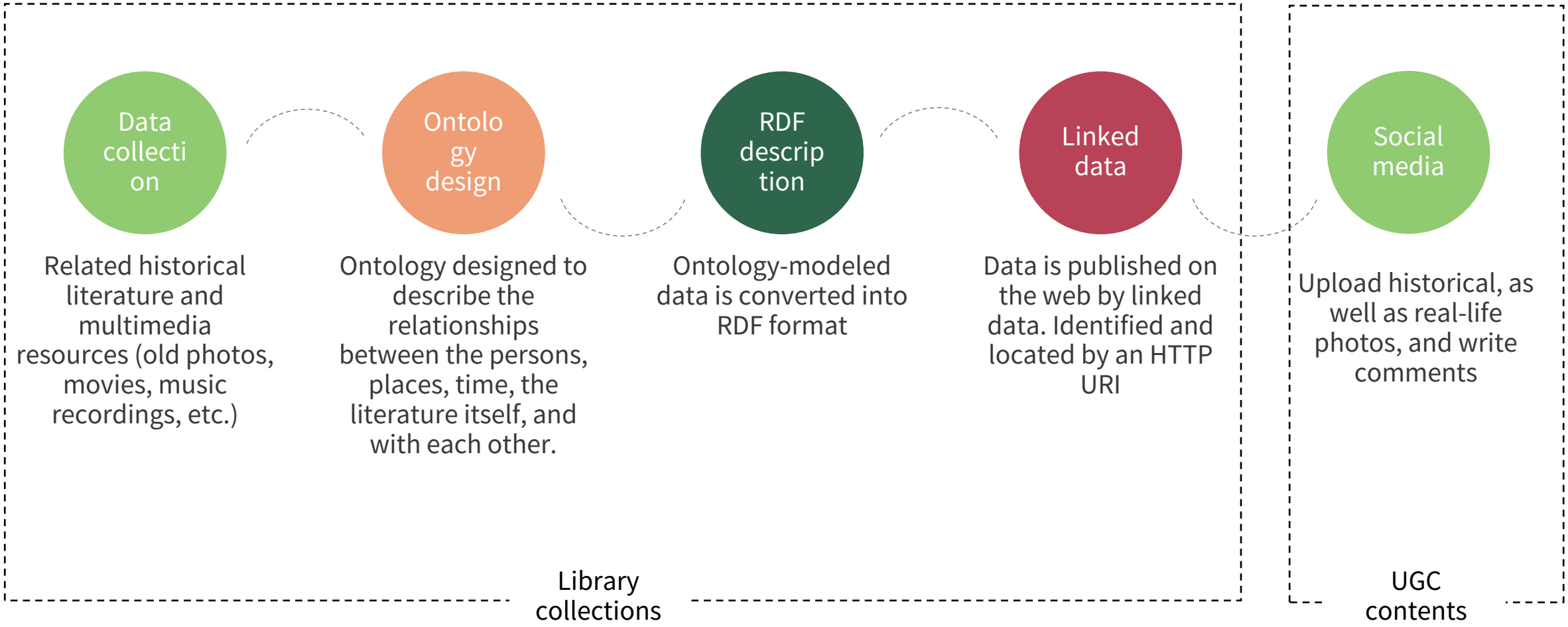
- Length: 1.183 km
- a residential street in the former French Concession
- more than 30 celebrities lived here
- Historical buildings presenting the "old Shanghai"

Wukang Mansions

Former Residence of Bajin



Research process and research methods



Research process and research methods

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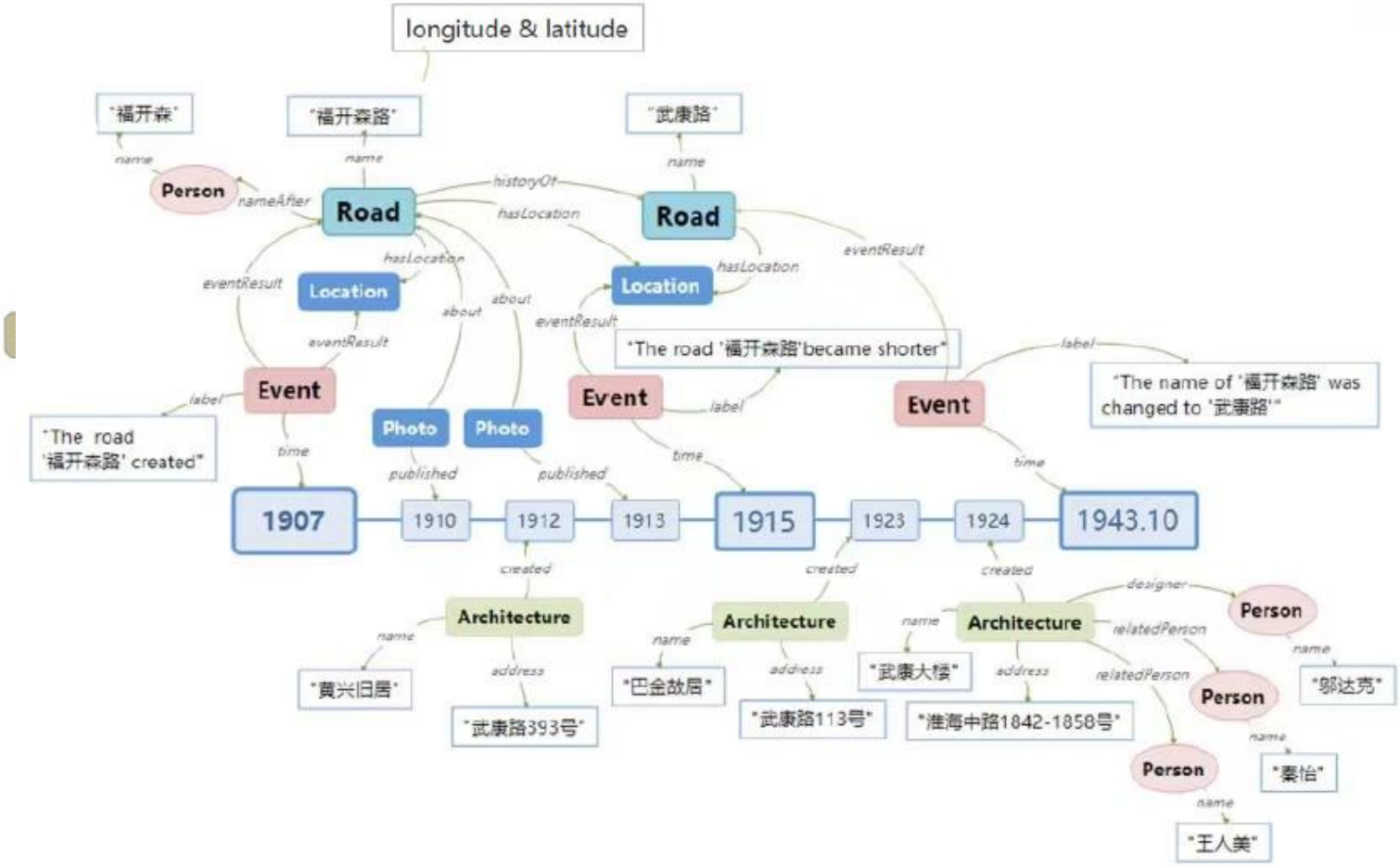
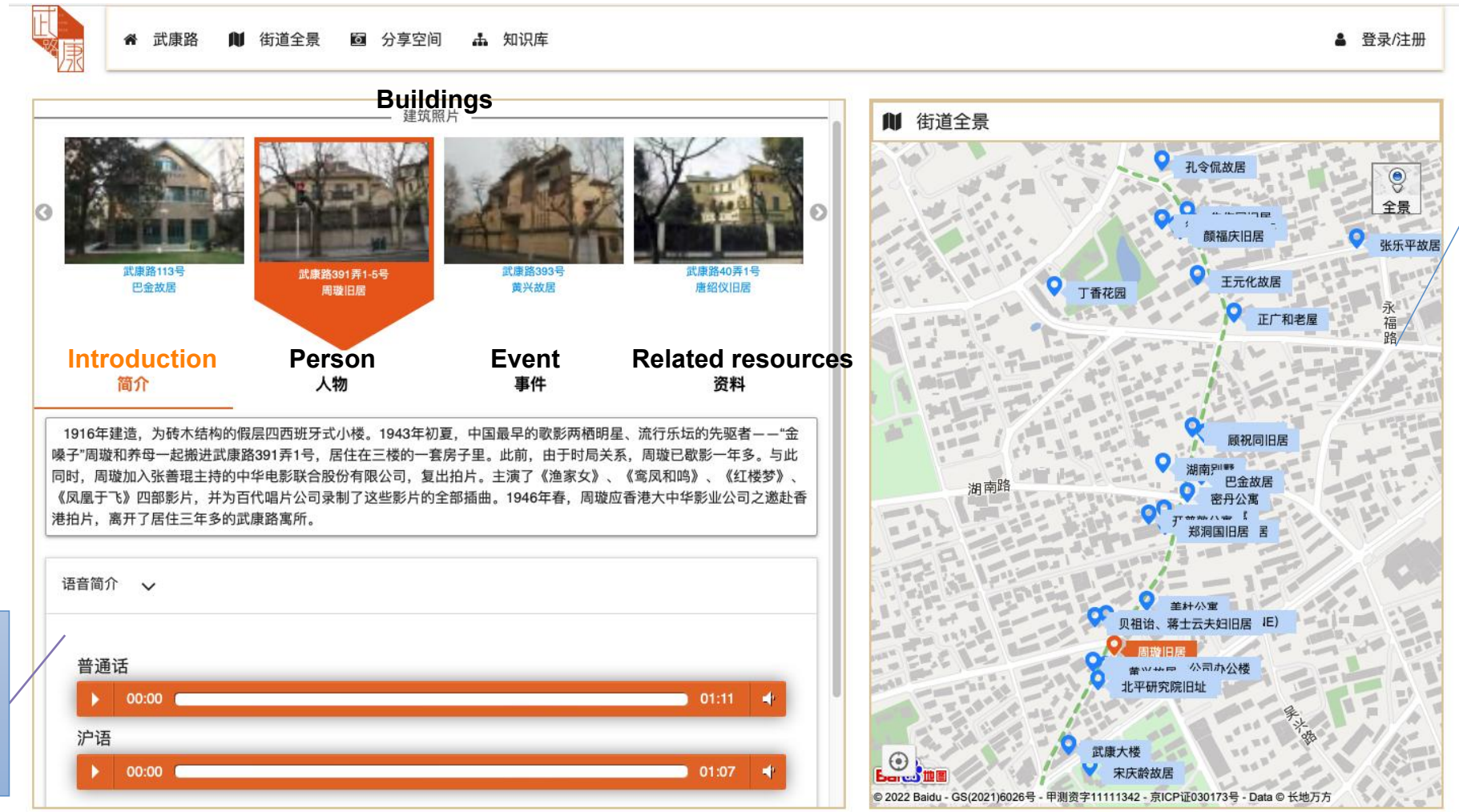
INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL INFORMATION OF SHANGHAI

- Shanghai memory ontology
- Entities organized by time



Xia, C., Wang, L., & Liu, W. (2021). Shanghai memory as a digital humanities platform to rebuild the history of the city. Digital Scholarship in the Humanities, 36(4), 841–857.

Project website

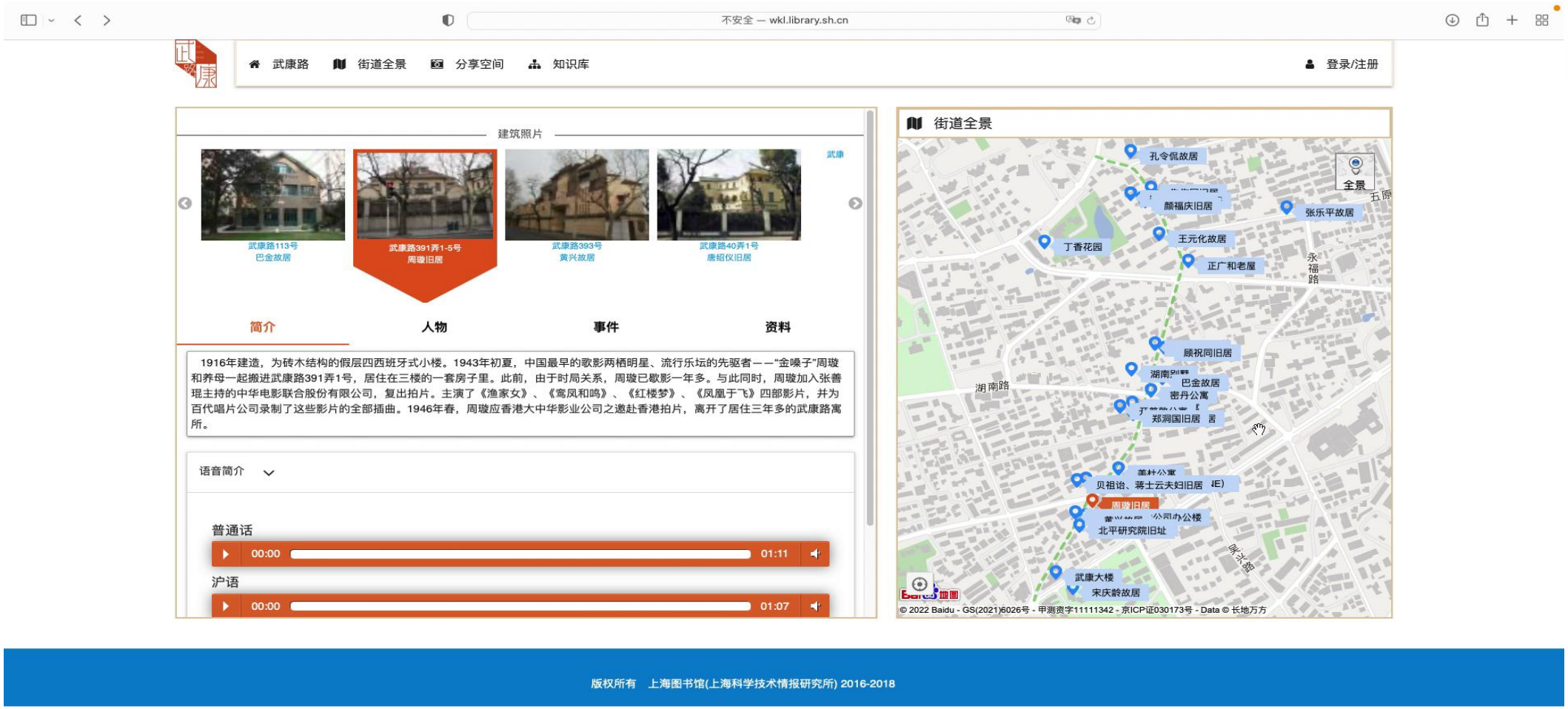


Audio introduction in mandarin & Shanghainese

Map presenting spatial information

http://wkl.library.sh.cn

Website functions



Video demonstration

http://wkl.library.sh.cn

How DS is understood here

Studied field	Digital tools used	Characteristics	Goal	Focus
Media studies, public history, pedagogy	Multimedia technology (video, animation, image, sound, etc.), new media platform	Focus on marginalized people, personal and community records collection, culture democratization	Sources of material in humanities and social science research, as a complement to other research materials	Creation
DH	Knowledge organization methods, knowledge graphs, artificial intelligence, etc.	Integrity of knowledge, culture reconstruction, knowledge organization and discovery	Presentation and dissemination of humanistic research process and outcome	Research

Fu, Y., Zhang, Y., Liu, W., & Zhu, Q. 'Digital Storytelling as a Digital Humanities Method: the Status Quo and the Potential.' Library and Information Service (in press).

To close

Impact of the project:

- Brings together many aspects of memory construction as part of a comprehensive programme of heritage management
- Helps the reconstruction of the city history
- Public library as an advertisement platform and attract citizens
- Working with universities, and getting continuous feedback from researchers and students

Future work:

- DS theory exploration in DH field and practice
- The evaluation of DS in DH as part of the research

References

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Xia, C., Wang, L., & Liu, W. (2021). Shanghai memory as a digital humanities platform to rebuild the history of the city. Digital Scholarship in the Humanities, 36(4), 841–857.

Thank you!

- Shanghai memory website: http://memory.library.sh.cn
- A journey from Wukang Road website: http://wkl.library.sh.cn
- Digital Humanities Platform of Shanghai Library (Demo): https://dhc.library.sh.cn

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