

Call for participation: Alternative media and digital activism: what documents to collect, for whom and with whom ?

On June 8, 2026, the third seminar of [Work package 4](#) of ACTIVATE project will take place at **la Contemporaine** and online

The workshop is co-organised by Université de Lausanne, Blinken OSA Archivum and la Contemporaine.

The [ACTIVATE](#) project, «The Activist, the Archivist, and the Researcher: New Collaborative Strategies of Transnational Research, Archiving, and Exhibiting Social and Political Dissent in Europe (19th-21st centuries)» is a Marie Curie Staff Exchange project funded under the European Union's Horizon program. Launched in 2025, this four-year program aims to explore practices for collecting, archiving, and promoting documents, objects, and data, thereby contributing to a renewal of European history of social and political dissent from the early 19th century to the present day.

One of the project's specific work packages focuses on [alternative media and digital activism](#). In this context, the aim is to reflect on the policies and practices of preservation, as well as the methods of transmission that, over the long term, have enabled social movements to perpetuate the «spirit and letter» of their struggles and mobilizations. This work package intends to give special attention to dissident approaches to official archives and the mainstream media system, as well as to media that have often escaped or been less associated, for political, economic, or institutional reasons, with conservation and, even more so, valorisation efforts.

After two initial hybrid seminars devoted respectively to the history of certain institutions of reference for the project and to the different acceptances of the notion of “alternative media,” we wish to focus this meeting on an exchange of experiences regarding the evolution of the missions of institutions involved in the archiving of social movements.

This third seminar of Working Group 4 will focus on **document collection by institutions, yesterday, today and tomorrow**. Several topics may be addressed during the presentations and discussions. For example, questions may arise regarding the **scope of collections** that an institution can define. The Contemporaine's documentation charter defines four priority thematic and geographical areas: wars, conflicts and post-conflict situations from 1914 to the present day; exile and migration; colonial empires and decolonisation; citizen mobilisation and human rights. However, the scope can also be defined according to the types of documents collected or their origin.

The **organisation of document collection** is another interesting topic for discussion. While in the distant past, La Contemporaine was able to send people to collect archives in the field, close to a conflict, this is no longer feasible today. The documents collected by the institution's agents therefore enter the collections in the form of donations, depending on their participation in various events, which can introduce biases in terms of representativeness.

Another aspect that may fuel reflection is the **relationships maintained by institutions with other local, national and international actors**. An inter-institutional documentary cooperation service attached to Paris Nanterre University, La Contemporaine is a library, archive centre and museum all in one. It is thus involved in several aspects of heritage and collaborates with various national and local institutions and associations, including the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Archives nationales, INA, Campus Condorcet, Sciences Po, MSH Mondes, CODHOS and IALHI.

The **legal aspects** related to collection, storage and communication conditions may also be enlightening for

participants. As the storage of public archives is clearly regulated in France, La Contemporaine can only accept private archives in the form of donations, which means that rules governing their communication or



reproduction must be defined with each donor. However, this allows La Contemporaine to preserve resources that complement those held by state organisations.

The seminar is conducted in a **hybrid mode on site and online** and is **open to consortium partners and external contributors**. It will take place in **English**.

We encourage archivists, activists and researchers to **submit proposals** on these topics, whether from the perspective of the institution preserving the archives, the researcher interested in them, or the producer wishing to bequeath them.

To apply: Please submit your proposal, with a maximum of 300 characters including spaces, along with a brief **CV**, by **9 aprile 2026** to francois.vallotton@unil.ch, archivum@ceu.edu and elise.lehoux@lacontemporaine.fr (Subject: "ACTIVATE Seminar WP4 June 2026")

Application deadline: 9 aprile 2026

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