**Innovative Technologies for Preserving and Disseminating Testimonies of Sexual Assault Survivors (Women And Children) in War Zones—From The Holocaust to October 7, 2023.**

 **A. Scientific Background**

**a**) Preserving Holocaust testimonies holds immense academic, historical, and moral significance. These testimonies not only serve as a means of educating future generations but also provide vital evidence of the atrocities committed during one of the darkest periods in human history. With the number of survivors dwindling due to old age, capturing their voices has become increasingly urgent. Without these firsthand accounts, future generations risk losing the personal and human dimensions of these events, which are crucial to understanding the Holocaust beyond abstract historical facts. As Elie Wiesel (1956) noted, the preservation of these testimonies is essential in combatting Holocaust denial and revisionist narratives that attempt to distort or diminish the scope of the tragedy. This urgency extends beyond the Holocaust to contemporary issues faced by survivors of sexual assault in various war zones. The preservation and dissemination of these testimonies have evolved significantly, with innovative technologies now playing a central role in documenting and archiving survivor narratives. These technologies, such as virtual interactive testimony platforms and augmented reality, not only preserve the stories but also facilitate healing and education, contributing to broader societal awareness and advocacy. One such example is the National Holocaust Centre and Museum’s use of Virtual Interactive Holocaust Survivor Testimony (VIHST), which allows users to interact with digital representations of survivors (Marcus et al , 2021). This mirrors the findings of Pennebaker et al. (1989)[[1]](#endnote-1), who observed that sharing trauma through testimony can significantly alter survivors' relationships with their past and enhance their psychological well-being. The importance of testimony preservation is further emphasized in research focused on testimonies from Eastern Europe and North Africa, regions deeply impacted by the Holocaust and contemporary genocides (Satlof, 2006). Testimonies of children and women, particularly those who experienced gendered sexual abuse during the Holocaust, have often remained in the shadows. Cultural taboos and the sensitive nature of these stories have resulted in their being largely overlooked in academic research and public discourse (Chalmers, 2020). This silence only compounds the trauma experienced by survivors, who have been denied the opportunity to share their stories—a dynamic that continues to affect survivors in modern conflict zones. In response to this historical and contemporary silence, technological advancements have been pivotal in preserving and disseminating testimonies in ways that were previously unimaginable. Projects like the "Interact" platform enable users to engage in real-time conversations with virtualized survivors, creating an immersive and engaging educational experience (Ma et al., 2015). This digital approach helps bridge the gap between past and present, allowing younger generations to interact with survivors' stories in a meaningful way. By leveraging advanced technologies like AI and augmented reality, these platforms enhance the pedagogical impact of survivor narratives while ensuring their preservation for future generations. Moreover, the focus on survivor-centered methodologies in research and advocacy has grown significantly. As noted by (Alyce 2023), peer involvement in research concerning child sexual abuse survivors is critical. The hermeneutic justice approach emphasizes the importance of prioritizing survivors' voices, ensuring that their narratives are preserved in a way that respects their lived experiences and aids in their healing process. This survivor-centered approach is essential, especially in contexts where testimonies have been suppressed or ignored due to societal discomfort with discussing sexual violence, as was often the case with Holocaust testimonies. The integration of innovative technologies in this field not only enhances the preservation of narratives but also addresses broader societal challenges. ( Dhawan and Fink 2022) highlight how discourses around sexual assault can influence the credibility of survivor testimonies in legal and social frameworks, often leading to harmful stereotypes that undermine their experiences. By documenting and sharing these testimonies through advanced digital platforms, we not only preserve the narratives but also challenge and reshape societal perceptions of survivors. In conclusion, the preservation and dissemination of testimonies from survivors of sexual assault—whether from the Holocaust or modern war zones—have been significantly enhanced using innovative technologies and survivor-centered methodologies. These advancements not only facilitate the archiving of these crucial narratives but also contribute to healing, societal awareness, and empathy. As we continue to learn from the Holocaust and modern atrocities, the role of technology in ensuring these stories are never forgotten is more important than ever. The issue of sexual violence, especially against women and children, is not unique to the Holocaust but is tragically recurrent in many genocides throughout history. Rape and sexual assault have often been employed as deliberate tactics of war and ethnic cleansing, used to terrorize populations, humiliate victims, and destabilize communities (Oron, 2005-2011 Gellately and Kiernan 2003). For instance (The Cambridge world history of Genocide 2023):

* **Rwanda (1994)**: **Rwanda (1994):** During the Rwandan genocide, the Hutu-led government orchestrated a systematic campaign of extermination against the Tutsi population. Beyond the mass killings, rape was weaponized as a tool of terror and humiliation with the goal of instilling fear and degrading the Tutsi community. It is estimated that between 250,000 and 500,000 Tutsi women were subjected to sexual violence during this period. In many cases, these assaults resulted in forced pregnancies, aimed at erasing the ethnic identity of the victims. (Cohen, M. H., Mutimura, E., Adedimeji, A., & Anastos, K. 2012; Power 2003; Gellately and Kiernan 2003). **Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995)**: In the wake of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, ethnic tensions culminated in widespread atrocities. In particular, Serbian forces targeted Bosnian Muslims. Women were confined to "rape camps," where sexual violence was systematically used to degrade and destroy the fabric of Muslim communities. These crimes have since been recognized as genocidal by international courts, establishing a precedent for the prosecution of rape as a war crime (Gellately and Kiernan 2003). **Congo (since the early 21st century)**: The ongoing conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has seen the weaponization of sexual violence on an unprecedented scale. Women and children have been the primary victims, subjected to systematic rape in a context driven by ethnic, economic, and territorial conflicts. The persistent violence highlights the global failure to address these crimes adequately. (Power 2003).
* **Darfur, Sudan (2003-present)**: The genocide in Darfur, led by Sudanese government forces and Janjaweed militias, has similarly involved widespread sexual violence. Women and children from non-Arab ethnic groups have been targeted as part of a broader campaign to suppress and destroy these communities. The trauma endured by these survivors continues to ripple through generations. (Gellately and Kiernan 2003[[2]](#endnote-2); (Weitz, 2003).
* **Myanmar (2017)**: The Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar has been subjected to what has been described by international organizations as ethnic cleansing, including systematic rape. The military-led campaign against the Rohingya has left women and girls particularly vulnerable, with rape used as a tool to erase their cultural and ethnic identity. (Uddin 2022).
* **Israel (October 7, 2023)**: In a more recent event, Hamas militants, including their elite "Nukhba" forces, crossed into Israeli territory, targeting civilians in the nearby Kibbutzim and the Nova music festival. Among their tactics were acts of sexual violence, a grim reminder that the weaponization of rape in conflict zones persists into the present day. On this date, the Nazi-like Hamas terrorist organization carried out a sadistic massacre, including the sexual abuse of Israeli civilians living on the border of the Gaza Strip in southern Israel and young people at a nature party celebrating life. A total of about 1300 men, women and children were murdered, tortured, raped and burned alive in a few hours. The horrific events of that day were frighteningly similar to the actions of Nazi German’s Einsatzgruppen; Hamas exhibited no hesitation in their execution of murder, the sexual abuse of women and 14-to- 15-year-old adolescent girls, and the butchering and abduction of the elderly, infants, and children.

As In retrospect, it is also essential to explore ways to understand what happened to the victims of the October 7 massacre, to teach about the event, and to recommend treatment methods for the victims using advanced technologies, drawing from similar cases in the past.

**b) Child Sexual Abuse in Research, Media, and Digital Documentation**

**b.1) World War II**

Research shows that during World War II, many instances of child sexual abuse occurred within local families who were entrusted with the care of hidden children. In many cases, the abusers were family members, such as fathers or relatives of the rescuers. The abuse varied in severity, ranging from voyeurism and inappropriate touching to rape, often accompanied by physical and psychological violence (Rotem, 2015). In other instances, parents exploited their own children in exchange for food or protection, while privileged prisoners and ghetto authorities abused their power by sexually exploiting young boys and girls.

Tragically, many children and young women who were sexually abused during the war were killed, often to cover up the abuse or because their abusers wanted to avoid exposure or replace them with new victims (Chalmers, 2020). Some children attempted to document their trauma in diaries, but most of these were destroyed, leaving behind only fragments (Chalmers, 2015). Many adult survivors shared their childhood experiences years later, providing new insights into the abuse they suffered (Kluger, 2001).

The reluctance of archives in Israel and around the world to cooperate on this subject, citing privacy concerns and cultural taboos, has made it challenging for researchers. Testimonies related to child sexual abuse have often been overlooked, as many survivors either remained silent or substituted their own experiences with accounts of others (Chalmers 2022). Language barriers also played a role, particularly when interviewing survivors from North Africa, where the cultural context was misunderstood, and important details were lost or omitted (Satloff 2006, Saadoun 2008).

Female scholars, such as Rochelle Saidel and Sonja Hedgepeth (Saidel and Hedgepeth 2010), faced resistance in their research on gender and the Holocaust. The lack of "proofs" was a significant barrier to gaining academic acceptance for these sensitive topics (Lin & Dror). Despite the challenges, the importance of sharing these narratives, especially those of children, remains vital to understanding the broader impact of the Holocaust and World War II on children.

Robert Satloff highlighted the difficulties of interviewing North African women in their native language and understanding their sociocultural background. Even when interviewed by women from their own communities, the information provided was often fragmented (Satloff 2006, Kozlovsky Golan 2017). Likewise, the sexual abuse of boys during the war remains a relatively undocumented subject, with only a few testimonies offered in documentaries (Screaming Silence).

Beverley Chalmers (Chalmers, 2020) emphasized the necessity of confronting these difficult narratives to prevent erasing the stories of sexually abused children. By ignoring their experiences, she argued, we inadvertently shield their perpetrators and become bystanders to these historical crimes.

**b.2) Rwanda 1994**

 The 1994 Rwandan genocide was marked by horrific violence, including the systematic use of rape as a weapon, primarily targeting Tutsi women and children. This brutal strategy was not only intended to cause physical harm but also to dismantle the social fabric of the Tutsi community and assert Hutu dominance. Estimates suggest that between 250,000 and 500,000 women were raped during the genocide, many of them subjected to repeated assaults. These atrocities left survivors with severe psychological and physical health consequences, including a high prevalence of HIV (Gard et al., 2012; Bijleveld et al., 2009; Hamel, 2016).

Rape was used as a deliberate military tactic to instill fear and demoralize the Tutsi population. The United Nations and human rights organizations documented that sexual violence was widespread and often publicly executed as part of an ethnic cleansing strategy (Reid-Cunningham, 2008; Denov et al., 2017). Survivors of these crimes often suffer from long-term psychological effects, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression (Cohen et al., 2009; Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008). Additionally, the stigma of being a rape survivor in Rwanda makes recovery even more difficult, with many women facing social exclusion and economic hardships (Woolner et al., 2018; Zraly et al., 2011).

Children born of genocidal rape face their own unique challenges, often carrying the stigma of their conception. Many struggle with issues of identity and belonging in a society still dealing with the aftermath of the genocide (Kagoyire & Richters, 2018). Research shows these children are at heightened risk for psychological problems, as they inherit the trauma their mothers endured (Uwizeye et al., 2021). The intergenerational impact of such violence ensures that the effects of the genocide will continue to reverberate through future generations (Kagoyire & Richters, 2018; Denov et al., 2017).

In the years following the genocide, Rwanda has made efforts to support survivors through the establishment of support groups and mental health services aimed at fostering resilience and recovery (Walstrom et al., 2012; Zraly et al., 2011). However, access to comprehensive healthcare, especially mental health services, remains limited, and many survivors still face significant barriers to healing (Zraly et al., 2011; Temoney, 2016). The enduring legacy of sexual violence during the genocide highlights the urgent need for ongoing support and interventions to address the complex social and health needs of survivors and their families.

In summary, the use of rape as a weapon during the Rwandan genocide left deep and lasting physical and psychological scars on survivors and their children. The impact of these atrocities continues to affect generations, requiring a long-term commitment to healing and support within Rwandan society.

**b.3) Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995)**

The Bosnian War (1992-1995) was marked by widespread ethnic violence, with the use of "rape camps" by Bosnian Serb forces being one of the most heinous tactics employed. These camps were part of a broader strategy of ethnic cleansing aimed at Bosniak women, using sexual violence as a tool to terrorize and demoralize entire communities. Scholars like Francesca Leaf and W. Cedar have documented the systematic nature of this violence, especially in locations like Foča, where mass rape was employed as a war tactic to forcibly change the ethnic composition of the region (Leaf 2011). Salzman has further contextualized these atrocities, discussing the cultural, religious, and ethical responses to such crimes (Salzman 1998). Survivor testimonies have played a crucial role in the historical documentation of these atrocities. Legal cases, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) trial of Dragoljub Kunarac, have reinforced the recognition of rape as a crime against humanity (Iverson 2014). Scholars like Lawrie have critiqued the ICTY's processes, advocating for a more thorough acknowledgment of survivor experiences in legal contexts (Lawrie 2023). Additionally, Clark has emphasized the importance of ethical methodologies that respect survivor trauma while also highlighting how these experiences shape personal and community identities (Clark 2017). These academic efforts are mirrored by cultural initiatives to raise awareness and preserve survivor narratives. For instance, exhibitions like *"My Body: A War Zone"*, developed by PROOF: Media for Social Justice and the Post-Conflict Research Center in Sarajevo, use photography and personal testimonies to highlight the ongoing struggles of survivors of sexual violence from Bosnia and other conflict zones. These exhibitions, although based in Bosnia, have reached international audiences, including in Serbia, through cross-border projects and international displays. Their goal is not only to ensure that the brutal use of sexual violence during the war is not forgotten but also to empower survivors to seek justice and share their stories. Both the academic and cultural approaches to documenting wartime sexual violence offer a multidimensional view of these atrocities, contributing to historical record-keeping, legal accountability, and an understanding of the long-lasting psychological and cultural impacts of these crimes.

**b.4) Technology literature review**

Exploring the intersection of testimony, media technology, and film raises a compelling question: How do films and firsthand accounts preserve memories of the Holocaust and memorialize this dark chapter of history? Documentary films, up until the mid-20th century, played a crucial role in capturing recollections of the World War II era, particularly the Holocaust. These films serve as powerful mediums, employing various narrative techniques to portray the different phases of war and genocide. By blending individual narratives with documentary footage, they offer a nuanced understanding of historical truths, even those that are challenging to confront (Kozlovsky Golan 2023). Themes of death, symbolizing various forms of suffering, resonated with audiences (Chalmers 2022); however, these films sometimes overlooked aspects of physical and sexual violence, particularly against women and children.

Survivor testimonies, archived at institutions like Yad Vashem and the Hebrew University in Israel since the 1980s, provide chilling accounts of the systematic extermination carried out by the Nazis. These narratives delve into the horrific conditions endured by victims, encompassing hunger, fear, labor, and maltreatment. While early studies focused on events causing physical and emotional trauma, recent evidence from testimonies of individuals like Nina Rossman and Ruth Eliaz highlights the sexual exploitation of young women (Shik 2022). The challenges survivors face in recounting their past are evident in testimonies provided to memory institutions, such as Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Museum. Advancements in technology have significantly contributed to the preservation and interpretation of these memories, even after witnesses have passed away (Meyers, Neiger, and Zandberg 2011). This prompts us to consider the future methods and means of representing and safeguarding these testimonies. Historically, archives have served as distinct, heterotopic entities responsible for gathering unique items and regulating their accessibility (Pinchevski, Neiger, Meyers, and Zandberg 2011). However, in the mid-20th century, they transformed into online, accessible, shareable sources of information, albeit exposing them to risks of unregulated distribution.

The responsibility of memory preservation has shifted to the public, with museums and mass media becoming conduits for crafting meaningful experiences (iiD Projects at Duke University) . The advent of new media technologies, such as YouTube, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, and NFT artwork utilizing AI technology, has revolutionized the narrative structure of testimonies, including those from the Holocaust (Burghardt, Heftberger 2020). These technologies have enhanced accessibility and immediacy but also pose the risk of distorting narratives (Rudolf 1996, Shalin 2017). Memory institutions have adapted to these technological advancements, allowing living witnesses to share their complete testimonies while ensuring that those who are no longer present can have their stories preserved for future generations.

**B) Research objectives and expected significance**

**b.1) This study will gather the most effective existing methods for preserving Holocaust and Genocide experiences through various media and technologies** (both high-tech and low-tech), using them as case studies—both positive and negative—for other instances of mass atrocities. The research may uncover additional, unexpected options for preserving these testimonies, contributing to an even broader understanding of memory preservation and victim support. In this context, cutting-edge technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) have further advanced these efforts. AI systems, capable of performing data-related tasks independently and self-learning, represent the future of testimony preservation. At the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., an AI program was crafted utilizing sentiment analysis rooted in neural networks to decipher survivors' memories (Tsur 1988). By analyzing oral interviews, this program helps decode the intricate emotions in family memories within testimonies (Blanke, Bryant, and Mark Hedges 2020). Additionally, programs like ChatGPT have revolutionized approaches to data collection, transforming survivor testimonies into museum displays for future generations. Current initiatives include creating text-based animated films from survivor testimony and utilizing NFT technology to depict these experiences in artistic formats (Burghardt, Heftberger 2020). These technological innovations, such as the Meta Holocaust Museum project, ensure that the legacy of Holocaust testimonies continues to evolve alongside modern media (<https://opensea.io/chasdei_naomi/created>).

A review of the current research will suggest that advanced technologies will open new avenues for memorializing other atrocities, such as genocidal rape and violence, particularly against women and children, which have not yet been fully explored. (Makhortykh et al. 2023) argue that the search for new ways to preserve, reconstruct, and present through generative AI can revolutionize how we commemorate victims of genocide, offering innovative and less hierarchical approaches to memorialization. The experiences of women and children, often overlooked in traditional historical narratives, will be brought to the forefront through AI’s immersive capabilities. By enabling deeper engagement with survivors' stories, these technologies foster greater empathy and understanding (Walden, 2019). Moreover, by addressing gaps in the documentation of sexual violence, AI can contribute to a more comprehensive and accurate historical record. Ultimately, the intersection of testimony, memory, and advanced technologies holds significant potential to preserve these narratives and honor the marginalized voices of the past. (Manovich 2018)

The need for ‘eternal’ methods of memory preservation is now more urgent than ever, as the promise of 'Never again!' was tragically shattered by the events of October 7. The lessons drawn from the Holocaust, during which Jewish people man and woman —including children—were raped, murdered, and subjected to horrific abuse during World War II, must continue to resonate. These atrocities remain relevant today as similar crimes are inflicted in conflict zones worldwide, targeting people based on their ethnicity, religion, or even the color of their skin. The preservation of these memories should not be confined to museums and archives alone but must also be adapted to various platforms and contexts, in accordance with the survivors’ age and their mental, emotional, political, and legal state (Jessica Peake 2024). (Erin O’Callaghan and Hannah M. Douglas, 2021 Sabine and Glaesmer and Bartels 2023).

Using contemporary technologies for preserving testimonies offer living witnesses a way to reveal their innermost experiences, leaving a lasting legacy that transcends the limitations of traditional archives and reaches broader, more diverse audiences. This could include historically insular communities, such as the ultraorthodox society in Israel, while also allowing global learning communities to confront their own national histories, as seen in the case of Norway’s "war children." (Ingvill C. Mochmann and S. U. Larsen 2008) and **Rwanda**. These technological advances provide an opportunity for nations to reckon with their past, fostering greater understanding and collective memory.

To achieve these goals, the study offers three reference points:

**Exploring New Media for Historical Preservation**: This study will explore the most effective existing methods for preserving Holocaust and genocide testimonies using various media and technologies—ranging from high-tech solutions like AI to low-tech archival practices. These tools will be used as case studies, examining both their strengths and weaknesses, to provide insights for preserving testimonies of other mass atrocities. Moreover, the research may reveal additional unexpected methods for preserving these critical memories, further enhancing the preservation and dissemination of survivor testimonies.

One such advanced technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI), plays a pivotal role in this field. AI systems can perform data analysis independently, using algorithms to self-learn and make decisions. At the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., AI-powered sentiment analysis was utilized to decode the emotional depth of survivor testimonies. This allowed researchers to analyze oral interviews and understand the complex emotions embedded in family memories (Blanke, Bryant, and Mark Hedges, 2020). Similarly, programs like ChatGPT have transformed the way survivor testimonies are collected and presented in museums, creating text-based animated films and NFTs to depict these experiences in artistic formats (Meta Holocaust Museum, 2024).

Advanced technologies like AI not only preserve Holocaust testimonies but also extend their application to other modern-day atrocities, particularly those involving sexual violence against women and children. Makhortykh et al. (2023) emphasize how generative AI can revolutionize the memorialization of victims by offering creative, non-hierarchical approaches to memory preservation. These technologies allow for deeper engagement with survivor narratives, creating emotional connections that foster greater empathy and understanding (Walden, 2019). By filling gaps in documentation, especially regarding sexual violence, AI contributes to a more accurate historical record.

The importance of exploring ‘eternal’ methods for memory preservation is now more urgent than ever, especially after the tragic events of October 7. The lessons drawn from the Holocaust—during which Jewish people, including women and children, were raped, murdered, and subjected to horrific abuse—must continue to resonate. Similar crimes still occur in conflict zones around the world, targeting people based on ethnicity, religion, or even skin color. The preservation of these memories should not be confined to museums and archives but must adapt to new platforms that cater to survivors’ mental, emotional, political, and legal conditions (Peake, 2024).

By using contemporary technologies, survivors are offered a means to share their stories in a way that transcends traditional archival limitations, reaching a broader, more diverse audience. These technological advances have the potential to engage historically insular communities, such as Israel's ultraorthodox society, and global learning communities, as seen in Norway’s "war children" case (Mochmann & Larsen, 2008).

**To achieve these objectives, the study will be organized into three key areas:**

1. **Exploring New Media for Historical Preservation:**
	* What technologies and methods currently exist for preserving past memories?
	* Which of these technologies are being used, and where?
	* How can new media technologies—be integrated to preserve and disseminate testimonies while ensuring accessibility and historical accuracy?
2. **Engaging Contemporary Audiences:**
	* Analyzing the impact of these technologies on various age groups.
	* Creating emotional connections to historical events to strengthen education on the Holocaust and genocide.
	* Sharing knowledge between memorial organizations, survivor groups, and educational institutions to improve preservation and dissemination strategies.
3. **Contextualizing for Future Generations:**
	* Investigating how the lessons learned from preserving Holocaust testimonies can be applied to documenting modern atrocities, particularly in light of the events of October 7, 2023, on Israel’s southern border.

These innovative methods will provide a comprehensive framework for preserving the voices of the past while preparing future generations to confront and learn from the atrocities that continue to shape our world.

**C. Detailed Description of the Proposed Research**

1. **Central Research Hypothesis**
This research hypothesizes that integrating advanced digital technologies, particularly AI, AR, and blockchain, will revolutionize the preservation and dissemination of Holocaust testimonies and those from other genocides. These technologies will be especially impactful in preserving testimonies related to sexual violence and abuse, providing more accessible, ethical, and accurate methods for memory retention. Moreover, they will play a critical role in overcoming institutional reluctance to engage with sensitive materials and allow these accounts to reach broader, more diverse audiences.

The lessons learned from these efforts can serve as a framework for documenting human rights violations inspired by World War II up to the present day; and on the notion that these digital technologies, by creating immersive and interactive platforms, can emotionally connect contemporary audiences to testimonies in ways that traditional methods cannot.

It will be possible to utilize technological, digital, and internet resources for recovery—such as video therapy and emotion-reading software—for educational purposes. This includes initiatives to study historical heritage, preserve it for future healing, and ensure that we remember and learn from the past to prevent similar events in the future. Furthermore, these technologies offer innovative ways to preserve testimonies in formats adaptable to future technological advancements, ensuring that these critical narratives endure.

**Research Design and Methods**

| **Section** | **Description** | **Focus Areas** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Research Design and Methods** | Mixed-methods combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques | Analyzing preservation strategies using case studies of digital testimony projects compared to traditional archival methods |
| **Case Studies** | Examples: AI sentiment analysis program at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Meta Holocaust Museum | Effectiveness of digital (high-tech) vs. traditional (low-tech) strategies, audience engagement |
| **Literature Consolidation** | Research on Holocaust survivor testimonies, Yad Vashem, and global memorials (e.g., Rwanda, Bosnia) | Preservation methods, technologies used, and meanings conveyed |
| **Technology Assessment** | Advantages, disadvantages, and educational suitability of technologies | Age group effectiveness, empathy and connection vs. alienation from stories |
| **Emerging Technologies** | Exploring technologies not initially meant for preserving testimonies but with potential healing and recovery applications | Detecting emotional distress, survivor well-being and resilience |
| **Recent Events and Recommendations** | Insights based on the October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorist attack | Recommendations for welfare, trauma care, and preservation efforts by government and private entities |
| **Documentation** | Recording of these activities will be included in a scientific report | Special remembrance methods, event documentation strategies |

**Ethical Considerations**
The study will address the ethical challenges of using digital technologies to handle sensitive content. Survivor privacy, consent, and the potential for oversimplification of trauma will be critically analyzed.

**a**) **Literature Review**.
A comprehensive review of existing academic literature on Holocaust testimony preservation will be conducted, with particular emphasis on the sexual abuse of children and women during the Holocaust. This review will also include case studies from three significant massacre sites: Israel following the events of October 7, Rwanda, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. These areas were selected for their accessibility and the well-documented cases of sexual atrocities that occurred there. The research will examine why this sensitive subject has been marginalized and will analyze the reluctance of historical archives—such as Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., the Jewish Museum Berlin, the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris, and institutions in Bosnia and Rwanda—to fully engage with these testimonies. This review will lay the groundwork for identifying gaps where digital technologies can offer innovative solutions. The challenges in addressing child sexual abuse testimonies are multifaceted. Cultural and linguistic barriers, particularly when interviewing survivors from regions with traditional gender norms like North Africa, have made it difficult for survivors to speak openly about their traumatic experiences. Moreover, ethical challenges arise with the use of advanced technologies, such as AI, to represent these sensitive testimonies. While these technologies can make survivor stories more accessible and engaging for younger audiences, there is a risk of oversimplifying or diminishing the emotional depth of these accounts.

Overall, the literature emphasizes the critical need to preserve and give voice to these historically marginalized testimonies using respectful and innovative technological approaches.

This research paper aims to compile all digital and online resources available to create a comprehensive report that will assist organizations and individuals in effectively teaching about the past and preparing for similar occurrences in the future. Given that this study was conducted during the "Iron Swords" war, specifically following the events of October 7th, it will incorporate an analysis of this period. For instance, it will explore spontaneous citizen initiatives, such as the installation of modern totems on utility poles or the façades of prominent public buildings, transforming these sites into memorial columns. These would feature personalized stickers for each victim, displaying their name, a meaningful phrase, and the date of their murder. This paper's contribution to the field will add an essential layer to the current discourse and reading list.

 **Research Plan:**

#### **1. Research Approach**

* **Methodology**: This study employs a case study approach, focusing on Holocaust and genocide testimony preservation through various media technologies (both high-tech and low-tech). **Scope**: Each media method will be critically analyzed to understand its strengths, limitations, and applications to other atrocities, such as genocidal rape and violence, particularly against women and children.
* **Blockchain for Testimony Verification:** Blockchain technology will be explored to verify the authenticity of digital testimony archives, ensuring that data remains unaltered and preserving its integrity for future generations.
* Each media method will be critically analyzed to understand its strengths, limitations, and applications to other atrocities such as genocidal rape and violence, particularly against women and children.

#### **2. Literature Review**

* **Comprehensive Review**: A thorough examination of existing methods for Holocaust testimony preservation.
* **Institutions Studied**: Technologies currently employed at major institutions like Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., and other global archives.
* **Technology Focus**: The review will cover advancements in AI, AR, and blockchain technologies and their impact on preserving testimonies of mass atrocities like genocidal violence.

**3. Data Collection and Case Study Analysis**

* **a) Collection of Testimonies**: A selection of existing oral testimonies from survivors will be analyzed, particularly from archives at the Holocaust Museum and Yad Vashem.
* **b) AI Sentiment Analysis**: The AI program at the Holocaust Museum that utilizes sentiment analysis will be a focal point for understanding how AI captures the emotional depth of survivor testimonies.
* **c) Case Study Development**: Technologies like ChatGPT, NFT technology, and AI-powered storytelling will be assessed through positive and negative case studies. These will include the Meta Holocaust Museum project and similar initiatives, showcasing how digital tools transform survivor testimonies into museum displays and learning tools for future generations.
* **d) Visual Evidence and Documentaries:** The research will examine evidence preservation through various media, including videos taken during events on cell phones and GoPro cameras, and their transformation into testimony and documentary films such as *The Day That Never Ends*, *We Won't Stop Dancing*, and *Nova* series. Films based on testimonies, such as *NCC Nazi Concentration Camps* (1946) and *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), will also be assessed for their use in education and legal settings.

**4. Comparative Analysis**

* **Preservation Methods:** A comparative analysis of high-tech and low-tech preservation methods, focusing on their practicality, ethical implications, and accessibility in different contexts, particularly in regions with less advanced technological infrastructure.

**5. Engagement with Contemporary Techno and visual evidences**

* **Technologies Explored and Applications:**
The research will:
**a**) Explore various technologies that can be employed for evidence preservation, memory retention, learning, and documentation.
**b**) Examine advanced technologies such as augmented reality (AR), interactive platforms powered by artificial intelligence (AI), and holograms, which have been utilized in museums and memorial institutions to preserve evidence of past atrocities. This research will assess their potential applicability for documenting and preserving testimonies of more recent events, including different types of media such as feature films and documentaries that have previously addressed these issues (both in Israel and internationally).

**c) Simulations, Museum Exhibitions, and Video Installations:** The research will review significant exhibitions, such as "I Don't Want to Forget" at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and "My Body: A War Zone" in Sarajevo, which highlight the stories of survivors of sexual violence.

**d) Social Media Platforms and Gaming:** Tools like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and gaming applications (e.g., *My Child Lebensborn* 2019) will be assessed for their role in preserving and sharing testimonies.

**e**) Pay special attention to documentaries produced after October 7 and documentary materials (cinéma vérité) filmed by the perpetrators during the events.
**f**) Analyze films that interviewed survivors and helped disseminate information about the events, such as the film *Screams and Then Silence*.
**g**) Additionally, aim to identify new technologies that can be tailored to factors such as age, gender, research focus, and memory retention.

* **Applications:**
These tools will be applied to testimonies from genocides such as those in Rwanda and Bosnia, focusing on how AI can engage younger and more diverse audiences.
* **Recent Atrocity Context:**
This section will also explore the October 7, 2023, massacre in Israel and the role immersive technologies could play in preserving testimonies related to this event.

6. **Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

Collaboration will be sought with historians, AI specialists, and media technologists to analyze how AI, AR, and blockchain are currently used in testimony preservation.

* **a) Collaborative Efforts:** Collaborative efforts with organizations like the USC Shoah Foundation and the USC Institute for Creative Technologies will support the exploration of emerging technologies for testimony preservation.
* **b) Field Research:** The research will involve meeting, conducting interviews, and exchanging information with creators, curators, and directors of memory districts like Jonathan Torgovnik, who established the exhibition *Intended Consequences: Rwandan Children Born of Rape,* or visiting the Kigali Genocide Memorial to learn about their remembrance activities related to sexual violence during the inter-tribal war of 1994.
* **c) Special Recommendation Report:** This will culminate in a special recommendation report that will compile all the available information for distribution and learning among all parties interested in enriching, correcting, or enhancing their remembrance messages and platforms.
* **d) AI Tools for Diagnosing Trauma:** A team of AI scientists, psychologists, and Holocaust researchers will be assembled to develop AI tools for diagnosing inhibited traumas, using machine learning to analyze testimonials and identify underlying trauma.

**7. Validation and Ethical Review**

**Expert Validation**: The study will include interviews with experts in archival science and digital preservation to validate findings.

* **Ethical Considerations**: Special attention to ethical issues, including consent, privacy concerns, and the challenges of using AI and blockchain to preserve sensitive testimonies like those of sexual violence survivors.

**8. Outcome**

* **Framework for Future Use**: The research will result in a comprehensive framework for the future use of digital technologies in testimony preservation, extending beyond Holocaust studies to other modern atrocities.
* **Specific Recommendations**: The framework will highlight the pros and cons of various technologies and offer recommendations for their application to preserve marginalized voices from genocides and other mass atrocities.

**Preliminary Results**

 From the above research plan, I expect to achieve the following goals:

**Development of a comprehensive technological framework for preserving and accessing testimonies**: Establishment of a methodology and standards for using advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality (AR), holograms, and blockchain to preserve testimonies while ensuring their authenticity and accessibility for future generations. Examples include the hologram of Eva Mozes Kor presented by the USC Shoah Foundation, which elicited an emotional connection from the audience, and the success of "Eva’s Story" on Instagram, which reached 100 million views within 24 hours. **Improving accessibility and security of testimonies through different technologies**: Examining and enhancing the use of technologies like AI-based emotion analysis, holographic representation, and integration into social networks and digital applications to reach young and diverse audiences. Using technologies such as blockchain will ensure that testimonies are preserved immutably while maintaining the survivors' privacy and consent. **Deep understanding of the advantages and limitations of different methods**: Assessing the advantages and limitations of each technology and tailoring their use to different situations, including regions with limited technological infrastructure. **Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration**: Encouraging cooperation among historians, technologists, psychologists, AI experts, and archivists to enhance the understanding and preservation of testimonies. The goal is to develop innovative tools for diagnosing hidden traumas and improving the understanding and treatment of victims. **Supporting recommendations for organizations and institutions**: Providing a framework and recommendations with the pros and cons of each technology to help organizations implement new technologies in preserving testimonies from historical atrocities such as the Holocaust and the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia. **Connecting history to modern cases of violence**: Preparing lesson plans that link historical events with contemporary cases of sexual violence and rape. Drawing comparisons between these events will contribute to understanding and preventing denial of atrocities, while strengthening international outreach efforts. Overall, the plan aims to integrate advanced technologies with historical research to ensure the preservation and understanding of testimonies while adhering to ethical principles and promoting international collaboration. The goal is to ensure that the lessons of the past are maintained and conveyed appropriately to future generations.

**Research Conditions**

The research will require collaboration with memory institutions such as the USC Shoah Foundation, and the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. These institutions will provide access to existing testimony archives and the technological resources necessary to test the implementation of AI, AR, and holographic technologies. Additionally, the digital expertise in AI and blockchain from these institutions will be essential for the technological development of the research.

The research will also rely on access to advanced technological infrastructure, including servers for processing AI algorithms, holographic and AR display hardware, and Blockchain integration tools. Ethical considerations, such as survivors' privacy and the content's sensitivity, will be carefully managed in coordination with legal advisors and institutional review boards.

The above considerations underscore the importance of cultural sensitivity, especially when dealing with such taboo subjects, and emphasize the need to protect survivor privacy. The ethical challenge of using technology to handle sensitive content is particularly significant, given that digital methods can both preserve and, in some cases, distort survivors' stories. This research highlights the importance of access to archival testimonies and the logistical challenges involved in working with institutions that may be reluctant to share sensitive material due to concerns over survivor privacy and the taboo surrounding child sexual abuse.

Additionally, the need for emotional and psychological support is stressed, particularly when survivors recount traumatic experiences. The research proposes a multi-dimensional approach to preserving and studying traumatic testimonies—one that combines respect for the dignity of survivors, the use of advanced technologies for memory preservation, and a thoughtful, ethically sound approach to overcoming institutional reluctance.

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**Partial movie list:**

**2023:**

* ***The Endless Day***, documentary film, Kan – Israel's Public Broadcasting Corporation
* ***We Won't Stop Dancing***, documentary film, Kan – Israel's Public Broadcasting Corporation
* ***Kan 360***, radio project, documentary film, Kan – Israel's Public Broadcasting Corporation
* ***Nova***, documentary film, Kan – Israel's Public Broadcasting Corporation
* ***Red Dawn***, TV series that reenacts three real-life events
* ***Cries and Then Silence***, Shari Soderberg, directed by Anat Stalinsky, December 2024
* ***The Horror Movie*** (working title), a collage of footage from GoPro cameras worn by Hamas Nukhba militants during the execution of their attacks

**2016:**

* *Aida’s Secrets*, directed by Alon Schwarz (Israel/Germany/USA)

**2015:**

* *Screaming Silence: A Collection of Oral Testimonies*, directed by Ronnie Sarnat and Gil Lesnik, Israel Broadcasting Authority

**2010:**

* *Vacuum: Season One*, “Secrets,” directed by Roni Aloni Sadovnic and Gal Gabay, Israel Educational Television

**2007:**

* *Josef and Maria*, directed by Vered Berman (Israel-Germany)

**2006:**

* *Documentary - The Rwanda Massacre*
* *Sometimes in April*, directed by Raoul Peck (Rwanda)
* *Shooting Dogs*, directed by Michael Caton-Jones (Rwanda)

**2005:**

* *And the Rat Laughed*, opera by Nava Semel, directed by Oded Kotler
* *Fateless*, directed by Lajos Koltai (Holocaust)
* *Shared Fate in A Matter of Time*, directed by Marco Carmel (Israel/France)
* *Geldof in Africa – Episode 3*
* *A Question of Time*, Israeli documentary on the Holocaust in North Africa

**2004:**

* *Hotel Rwanda*, directed by Terry George (Rwanda Genocide)
* *Ararat*, directed by Atom Egoyan (Armenian Genocide)
* *Life Is A Miracle*, directed by Emir Kusturica (Bosnia-Serbia Conflict)
* *Aryeh*, Holocaust film

**2003:**

* *Hitler’s Top Ten*, directed by Susana Benze Axer Oliver (Nazism)

**2002:**

* *Long Walk Home*, directed by Phillip Noyce (Aboriginal Australians)

**2001:**

* *No Man's Land*, directed by Tanovic Danis (Bosnia-Serbia Conflict)

**1996:**

* *Red Cherry* (World War II, Chinese Prisoners under German Rule)
* *Bent*, directed by Mathias Sean (Persecution of Homosexuals in Nazi Germany)

**1988:**

* *Red Sorghum*, directed by Zhang Yimou (Japanese Occupation of China)

**1984:**

* *The Killing Fields*, directed by Roland Joffé (Cambodian Genocide)

**1974:**

* *The Night Porter*, directed by Liliana Cavani (Austria-Italy)

**1971:**

* *The Damned*, directed by Luchino Visconti (Italy, Nazism)

**1960:**

* *Kapò*, directed by Gillo Pontecorvo (Italy)

**Other notable mentions:**

* *November Days*, directed by Marcel Ophüls (Eastern Germany Collapse)
* *The Sorrow and the Pity*, directed by Marcel Ophüls (French Collaboration with Nazis)
* *Memory of Justice*, directed by Marcel Ophüls (Nuremberg Trials, Algeria and Vietnam comparison)

Budget

To conduct comprehensive research on preserving Holocaust testimonies, particularly those related to sexual violence and child abuse, a well-structured budget is essential. Here's a suggested budget breakdown for this research project:

**Personnel Costs**

* Principal Investigator (50% time): 200,000NIS/year
* Data Scientist (50%) – 250,000 NIS
* AI Specialist (50%) – 200,000NIS
* Research Assistants (2 full-time): 200,000NIS/year
* Transcriptionists/Translators: 100,000/year
* Technical Support (part-time): ,000/year

**Technology and Equipment**

* High-quality audio/video recording equipment: $15,000
* Computers and software licenses: $10,000
* Cloud storage and data management, AI subscriptions: $5,000/year
* Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality development: $50,000

**Travel and Fieldwork**

* International travel for archive and memory institutions access: $30,000/year
* Accommodation and per diem: $15,000/year

**Data Collection and Analysis**

* Archive access fees: $10,000/year
* Specialized software for data analysis: $5,000
* Servers and Cloud Services: $20,000 - $50,000 per year
* Participant compensation: $10,000

**Dissemination and Outreach**

* Conference attendance and presentations: $10,000/year
* Publication costs (open access): $5,000/year
* Workshop and seminar organization: $15,000/year

**Ethical and Legal Considerations**

* Ethics board review fees: $2,000
* Legal consultations: $5,000

**Miscellaneous**

* Office supplies and materials: $3,000/year
* Contingency fund (10% of total budget): Approximately $40,000

**Total Estimated Budget**

* First Year: Approximately $450,000
* Subsequent Years: Approximately $400,000/year
1. Pennebaker, J. W., Barger, S. D., & Tiebout, J. (1989). Disclosure of traumas and health among holocaust survivors.. Psychosomatic Medicine, 51(5), 577-589. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Gellately and Kiernan 2003 PP: 325-338 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)