

Title: Adding Value to Provenance Data through Graph Databases and Historical Context

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Abstract:

Value is defined as “The regard that something is held to deserve, the importance, worth or usefulness of something.” The true value of provenance does not come in the form of individualized data points. Instead, value is generated when it is linked to the historical context of who, how, when, and why objects are transferred. This paper will demonstrate how graph databases merge object documentation, archival sources, media resources, and geospatial technology into meaningful historical context. Graph databases express highly complex sets of data through information visualization and through their capacity to produce valuable information from complex data queries. To demonstrate graph database attributes, the research uses data sets from the ERR Project’s *Database of Art Objects at the Jeu de Paume*. This database contains information about the systematic seizure and dispersal of Jewish cultural assets in German-occupied France, Belgium and the Netherlands between June 1940 and August 1944. A graph database visualization of the ERR Project will highlight the organic relationships that tied victims, dealers and perpetrators as well as the patterns of displacement of specific categories and types of objects through space and time.

It will also allow users:

- to highlight the paradoxes in Nazi cultural policy in occupied territories through selections of works and objects intended for Nazi collections or for the private art market,
- to apprehend esthetic preferences among Jewish collectors, dealers, and artists,
- to explore aspects of an artist's works not covered by art historians.