

## Vahur Puik



Job title: Project Manager

Organisation: Estonian Photographic Heritage Society

Abstract:

**Title: 70,000 geotagged pictures later**

Ajapaik.ee is a crowdsourcing platform for geotagging and rephotography of historic images. The aim is enriching digital heritage content with user generated metadata in order to make content accessible in a map based interface that is more 'generous' than the usual text based search. When the pictures have been pinned on the map the next task of rephotography can be performed that has huge educational potential as it helps wide audience to learn more about how places have changed over time, what kind of historic events have taken place in exactly what places etc. Rephotography is didactic both when exercised in person or when studying the repeat photos taken by other users.

Ajapaik has mostly Estonian content and user base, but it is open source and meant as a generic platform for crowdsourcing additional information to pictorial content. By April 2018 almost 72000 images have been geotagged by more than 8000 users and more than 200 users have submitted 8300 rephotographs to historic images.

The biggest issue for the platform is sustainability. It is run and owned by a non-profit organisation and developed with the help of public grant funding from Estonian funding bodies. The platform that was started during a hackathon in 2011 and had around 150000 user sessions (by more than 90000 users) in both 2016 and 2017 (surpassing the traffic to Estonian national central museums database) has accumulated considerable technical complexity and also technical debt. Since November 2017 the main development and maintenance has been outsourced to Ukraine but the funding is ending and the future is unclear.

Bio:

I have been working as photographer and then in several Estonian museums on positions related to exhibitions and photographic collections. With academic background in cultural geography my interest is drawn to landscape issues in connection to both photography and heritage sector.

I'm also obsessed with crowdsourcing as there is so much information ordinary users can contribute to enrich public collections with additional metadata. Since the end of 2012 I've been dedicated full time to developing Ajapaik.ee – a crowdsourcing platform for geotagging and rephotographing historic pictures.