



www.becoming-german.de

Project Description
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Becoming German - A Database

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Presentation of the Database

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Aim of the Database



Winnetou and I, Galeria Kaufhof, Cologne, 2004

The aim of the internet database "Becoming German" is to provide a digital source of information and assistance to those who do not have a German childhood and would like to "become German" or for those who would simply like to have a different German childhood.

There are two ways to use the database: either memories of growing up in Germany can be entered into the database i.e. "donated" or details of an imaginary childhood in Germany can be "received". The childhood memories which are "received" are compiled from the data which has been "donated" and represent memories of a possible German childhood which can then be appropriated as one's own.

The database is a work in progress. At any time it can be revised and it grows with every "donation".

How does the Database work?



Screenshot der Internet-Datenbank "becoming german"
www.becoming-german.de

The database can be found in the internet at:
www.becoming-german.de

There are two ways to use the database. Childhood memories can either be "donated" or "received". On the first level the user interface of the database consists of one form each for "donors" and "recipients". At this level both groups of database users are required to answer the same questions pertaining to their own childhood (e.g. number of siblings, living situation etc.).

Donating Childhood Memories

After submitting the first form "donors" i.e. people who have grown up in Germany may select one or more of several given childhood memory fields (favourite book, favourite song, grandparents, general memories etc). In each of these fields the donor is required to answer questions about specific childhood experiences. In this way comprehensive data necessary in determining a possible collective - but also subjective - German childhood is collected.

Receiving Childhood Memories

When a "recipient" form is submitted the personal details entered are compared with the donated database entries and a list of matching German childhood memories is compiled.

The database is programmed so that each received childhood is a combination of memories from the best matched donors; it is unlikely that any childhood will be from one donor only. The two factors year of birth and sex are given priority. Each received childhood will be from donors within five years either side of the recipient's own year of birth and the memories will only be from donors of the same sex as the recipient. In future the compiled childhoods will also be geographically grouped.

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Screenshot - Donor Memory Fields

Donating a childhood

Memory fields:

Please select a field in which you would like to donate memories. You can enter as many or as few memories as you choose. If you would like to suggest new memory fields or make comments on the existing fields please write me a mail.

When you have finished donating please click [HERE!](#)

Memory fields:


- grandparents
- children's birthday party
- favourite book
- favourite fairytale cassette
- favourite song
- other memories

Further memory fields to come ...

becoming german -- eine deutsche Kindheit spenden - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Tiscali

Datei Bearbeiten Ansicht Favoriten Extras ?

Adresse <http://www.becoming-german.de/giverOptions.php>

kindheit spenden  ... oder doch lieber empfangen?

Erinnerungsbereiche:

Bitte wähle einen Bereich aus, in dem Du spenden möchtest. Du kannst so viele Erinnerungen eintragen wie Du möchtest. Bei Vorschlägen zu den einzelnen Bereichen, bitte eine Mail an mich schreiben.


Wenn alle Erinnerungen gespendet sind, klicke [HIER!](#)

Erinnerungsbereiche

- [Großeltern](#)
- [Kindergeburtstag/Party](#)
- [Lieblingbuch](#)
- [Lieblingshörbuch](#)
- [Lieblinglied](#)
- [Andere Erinnerungen](#)

Weitere Erinnerungsbereiche folgen ...

Wenn alle Erinnerungen gespendet sind, klicke [HIER!](#)

becoming german 

Internet

www.becoming-german.de

Screenshot - Recipient Results

Receiving a childhood

You are:

female and you were born on **09.06.1973**.
You are the **eldest child** and you have **one sibling**. You grew up with **your parents** and you shifted home **once** during your childhood. Your favourite hobby as a child was **football** and your favourite colour was **blue**.

Your favourite book as a child in Germany was:

(With a probability of 70%)

Woman Chief by

Your favourite characters were **main character (?)** and **supporting character (White feather)**

The story was about:

It was about a Indian girl who was stolen by another tribe and grew up with her "fosterparents". Her new father was very generous and let her be like a boy, later she married a woman.

It was your favourite book because:

I could identify with the characters in the book and dreamt of another world.

How did the book influence your everyday life:

when I cycled to school my bike (I tied a rope around the handle bars) was my horse which accompanied me

The book was important for me when I was about **7/8 years** old.

becoming german -- eine deutsche Kindheit empfangen - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Tiscali

Adresse <http://www.becoming-german.de/requestResults.php>

kindheit empfangen ... oder doch lieber spenden?

Du bist:

weiblich und am **09.06.1973** geboren.
Du bist **ältestes Kind** und hast **ein** Geschwister. Du bist **den Eltern** aufgewachsen und Ihr seid **einmal** umgezogen. Dein Lieblingshobby als Kind war **fussball** und Deine Lieblingsfarbe war **blau**.

Dein Lieblingsbuch als Kind in Deutschland war:

(Mit einer Wahrscheinlichkeit von 70%)

Woman Chief von

Deine Lieblingsfiguren waren **hauptperson (?)** und **nebenperson (Weiße Feder)**

In dem Buch ging es um:
Um eine Indianerin, die von einem fremden Stamm geraubt wurde, und die bei ihren "Ersatzeltern" aufwuchs. Dort hatte Sie einen grozügigen Vater der ihr erlaubte wie ein Junge zu sein, später heiratete sie eine Frau.

Es war Dein Lieblingsbuch weil:
mit der Identifikation der Figuren dieses Buches habe ich mir eine andere Welt erträumt

Das Buch hat Dein alltagsleben folgendermaßen beeinflusst:
wenn ich mit dem Fahrrad zur Schule gefahren bin (ich habe ein Seil an das Lenkrad gebunden), war es mein Pferd das mich frei begleitete

Das Buch war wichtig für Dich als Du **ca. 7/8 Jahre** alt warst.

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The Mobile-Info-Module



Collecting memories in the Kassel city centre, November 2004

In order to inform the general public about the project and to collect data for the database on location - town centres, railway stations etc. - the Mobile-Info-Module was developed. This consists of a light wooden trolley with a built-in folding table and two folding stools. Carried in a Becoming German Travel Bag a laptop with the database installed on the local hard drive is used to collect data on the road. Data collected in this way is later uploaded onto the live internet database with a specially developed synchronisation software tool.



On the Road



Collecting memories in the Kassel city centre, November 2004

Echoing both the century old tradition of itinerant apprentices in Germany and the wanderings of the Brothers Grimm in their search for Fairy Tales in the early 19th Century I planned to collect data for my project by travelling through Germany and speaking to people on the street. This walkabout with the Mobile-Info-Module enabled a direct exchange between the storyteller and listener in the oral tradition.

Both past and future stations of the journey can be found on the internet at:
<http://www.becoming-german.de/aktuell.htm>.

The Info-Point



In an exhibition situation a Becoming German Info-Point is installed in the space. Here visitors can access the database online on laptops connected to the internet. During the exhibition further memories are collected in the town center and the exhibition surroundings. Photographs documenting this walkabout are presented as digital prints in the space. Each day the number of both entries in the database and photos documenting the project grows. In this way the work in process is visualised.



The fixed Info-Point at the Kulturbahnhof,
Kassel, November 2004