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STAGE - Ethics Report n°1

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From Stage to Data

STAGE - Ethics Report 1

2024/08/30

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Table of Contents

Revision Board.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Context of the project.....	4
General overview.....	4
Objectives.....	5
Ethical issues.....	6
Regulatory Compliance and Ethical Frameworks.....	7
Regulations and directives.....	7
Ethics Committees.....	8
Research ethics committee.....	8
Ethics advisor.....	8
Organization.....	8
Allocated Resources.....	8
Training.....	9
Contact Persons.....	9
Conclusion.....	10
Significance and ethical integrity of STAGE.....	10
Future prospects.....	10
Remaining Questions.....	10
Assessment strategies on future ethics compliance.....	10
Appendixes.....	11
Appendix 1: Consent form.....	11
Appendix 2: Information Notice.....	13
Appendix 3: Ethics Committee certificate.....	16

Revision Board

Name	Date	Modifications
Jeanne FRAS	2024/07/05	Creation
Clarisse Bardiot	2024/07/16	Revisions
Alessia Smaniotto	2024/08/26	Review and approval

Introduction

This document is an answer to the last ethics screening for the STAGE project, which was brought to us on April 5th 2023, as well as a self assessment of the progression of compliance to ethics regulations and principles.

In the field of the human and social sciences, more specifically inside European Union boundaries, the protection of moral and intellectual rights represents a complex and robust system. In the case of STAGE, multiple obstacles of this kind were raised in the ERC proposal, leading to the construction of this document.

In order to frame the evolution of STAGE's strategies and the thought process that lead to the various outcomes, a Data Management Plan was thoughtfully written. This DMP relates most of the research methodology in detail, hence why this ethics report will only focus on ethics issues.

It is composed of three main points:

- Presentation of the STAGE project;
- Ethics issues;
- Steps accomplished and next objectives for compliance.

Context of the project

General overview

Digitized or born-digital, digital sources are one of the most significant challenges facing performing arts historiography: they are fragile (technological obsolescence), multimodal (texts, images, videos, programs), and numerous (big data). Think, for example, about the 20,000 photographs taken each year by the official photographer of the Avignon Festival; or the 15,000 files documenting the creation process of only one work. Digital traces are the future of performing arts studies and our new primary sources. The shift of creative resources to digital not only transforms the nature of our sources but also reshapes how research is conducted and its outcomes. How can we interpret digital traces? How can we "make them talk"? What new insights can we draw from them? STAGE tackles these questions head-on by offering a theoretical and methodological framework situated at the confluence of history, epistemology, and digital humanities. Drawing from the Avignon festival

collection and employing interdisciplinary methodologies, we aim to renew performing arts studies and demonstrate the profound significance of digital traces in both preserving and analyzing our cultural heritage. By leveraging the advancements in digital humanities and artificial intelligence, we uncover new insights into the historical and aesthetic dimensions of *mise en scène* since WWII. Through the two prisms of resurgence and collaboration, STAGE endeavors to reveal creation contexts and networks, aesthetic reminiscences and creative process models. This approach lays the groundwork for what we call "performing arts analytics."

Objectives

STAGE, spanning from January 2024 to December 2028, delves into a pivotal moment of transformation: the transition of traditional sources into digital traces. This paradigm shift alters the nature of historical sources, operating on both hermeneutic and epistemological levels. Digital technology transforms traces into data, inviting us to reconsider traditional research approaches in performing arts studies. To build these methods and demonstrate their potential, we will rely first on a corpus that has not yet been explored at this scale and which offers a particularly fertile field to approach such questions: the archives of the Avignon Festival, before opening to broader corpora in a second phase in order to scale up our results and expand our analysis. Bridging qualitative and quantitative research approaches, STAGE focuses on three intermediate objectives:

1) To visualize performing arts, by creating a network using data from programs to showcase interactions among thousands of individuals, different forms of artistic and technical collaborations as well as the context of creation over time. This approach, drawing on actor-network theory, will lead to an updated perspective of the rich and complex context of contemporary European stagings. However, a crucial challenge lies in the absence of a universal standard for describing performing arts. STAGE plans to address this by creating an ontology to enhance description and facilitate interoperability with other collections and datasets.

2) To reveal staging intertextuality. Photographs and videos are crucial traces in performing arts, enabling "distant viewing". By applying intertextuality to stage imagery, we unveil complex relationships with past performances, identifying resurgences and connections. Advances in computer vision facilitate the development of an iconology of performing arts, tracing aesthetic networks. STAGE will contribute to the training

and development of computer-vision algorithms dedicated to performing arts.

3) To model creative processes, taking into account not only the rehearsals but also all the data produced by all the team members. The computational analysis of performances' creative process, particularly their collaborative dimension, presents significant challenges in performing arts studies. Digital traces, often ignored in actual research on creative processes, offer new opportunities by capturing the entire creation process, from initial ideas to premiere. By developing a multimodal environment to collect and analyze data from 15 performances, STAGE will renew the study of creative processes. This approach will unveil unique insights into the diversity of performing arts practices.

Ethical issues

The project involves personal data collection and study of copyrighted content, and most importantly the publication of results and research products emerging from these, which constitute the main ethical issues for STAGE. Following the ERCEA recommendations, STAGE has since worked on a suitable research methodology, in order to achieve:

- A fully informed agreement and a satisfying work frame and workflow for contributors (regarding copyrights and participation to the project);
- A decision-making position within the project for contributors (regarding their data and their performances);
- A minimization of the personal data collected and processed;
- Control and monitoring in the processing of data and personal data (especially when using AI driven processes);
- The security of collected data;

Anonymization and pseudonymization of data in the project were suggested to avoid any ethical problems in collection and processing. However the studies to be conducted by STAGE imply the construction of a network constituting of social entities, persons, their influences and connexions. An entity and its name can therefore not be separated from the related data. Moreover, if some data can be categorized as personal, most of them are already public, and published on different public online and open databases.

Following judgements and advice from qualified persons, the anonymization and pseudymization solutions were discarded. Indeed, after exchanges with a legal expert, it was concluded that the GDPR requires

complete and precise information on participants; this transparency must enable the concerned individuals:

- to know the reason for the collection of the various data about them; (Article 4.11 and 7)
- to understand the processing that will be done to their data; (Article 12 and 13)
- to ensure control over their data, by facilitating the exertion of their rights. (Article 12.4, 15, 17, 18 and 21)

If these conditions are met, the project complies with the GDPR, and there is no need for anonymization of data. STAGE received a certificate and the approval of Université Rennes 2's DPO and Research Ethical Committee, as well as an external analysis.

Regulatory Compliance and Ethical Frameworks

Regulations and directives

STAGE falls under the recommendations and limitations of two different but intersecting legislations: French law and EU directives. The protocols and processes imagined by STAGE are directly conceived according to the GDPR, the AI Act and the French Data Protection Act (Loi Informatique et Libertés). In addition to these, Open Data principles remain a central objective.

Within this framework, STAGE must answer to the needs and comply to:

- The respect of the GDPR by acquiring the consent of every participant, preserve the transparency of the use and the processes their data will undergo, remain available for any modification or removal requested, and the security of these data.

In order to fully and precisely comply, in addition to the DPO consultations, STAGE used recommendations provided by the Commission Nationale de l'Information et des Libertés (CNIL) (complying with the French Data Protection Act simultaneously);

- The respect of the AI Act, by classifying and adapting the processes used with the bill of materials it presents, and preserving the transparency of each system.

These systems underwent a legal expertise driven by SATT Ouest valorisation to insure their compliance;

Other European and French regulations on personal data protection are currently in place but do not concern this project's intentions, research methodology and research outputs to this day (Directive ePrivacy, Cybersecurity Act).

Ethics Committees

Research ethics committee

STAGE's host institution, Université Rennes 2, has an entity in charge of certifying the compliance of research projects requesting an expertise on their ethics practices and obstacles.

STAGE recently received a certification from the research ethics committee of Université Rennes 2. This certificate is the result of analysis and discussions from this committee, as well as consultations to the DPO and an outsider legal expert (from SATT Ouest Valorisation).

This certificate is available in Appendix 3, on page 15.

Ethics advisor

To ensure the best screening and monitoring of STAGE's respect of all ethics best practices and obstacles, in addition to consulting the host institution's DPO, STAGE has designated an ethics advisor: Alessia Smaniotto. This advisor will be reviewing and validating any ethics papers (such as this report), steps to compliance or documents addressed to collaborators and partners (consent forms and information notices to company members).

Organization

Allocated Resources

STAGE has setup a set of solutions and resources in order to answer, monitor and solve any problems regarding ethics throughout the span of the project.

In addition to services available from the host institution, such as a regular consultations with the DPO, STAGE has recruited a Data Engineer, responsible for supervising firstly the writing of the DMP, and secondly the good relationship with collaborators and the respect of their rights,

the respect of current legislations and the precise documentation of the research process.

Training

Initially, the recruited Data Engineer received a certification within which a training on current obstacles surrounding copyright legislations and GDPR regulations was available.

From their hiring to today, the Data Engineer has received additional training on those subjects, as well as on the tools and solutions made available to the project:

- Two presentations on the tool DMP OPIDoR (4h);
- Two workshops on data management at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme en Bretagne (MSHB) (6h);
- A presentation on scientific integrity of research data (3h);
- A presentation on GDPR from Université Rennes 2 and the DPO (2h);

Contact Persons

Since STAGE involves collaborations with individuals, the team designated the Data Engineer as the manager of data and the contact person to be consulted during the project:

jeanne.fras@univ-rennes2.fr

STAGE consulted multiple contacts to verify all the protocols and their compliance. These persons are:

DPO: **xxx**

Ethics Advisor: **xxx**

Legal expert: **xxx**

Conclusion

Significance and ethical integrity of STAGE

The process of STAGE's compliance to current legislations concerning personal data collection, analysis, treatment and publication revealed many complex situations. A good part of this project involves personal data as central resources which cannot undergo the usual transformations recommended to achieve a protected state, such as pseudonimization or anonymization; the project aims to address the important obstacle of archiving these. STAGE acts as an example for future archiving culture, which implies public results and open data frameworks.

Future prospects

Remaining Questions

To this day, AI systems under considerations aren't clearly determined, since the Data Scientist will be joining the team in September 2024. Nevertheless, every regulation currently monitoring the use of those technologies are acknowledged by STAGE's team, and further works will remain within these frameworks.

Assessment strategies on future ethics compliance

STAGE will be monitored on ethical questions by an ethics advisor for the rest of its research period.

SATT Ouest Valorisation agreed to provide help on legal expertise, and provided a legal expert as a new contact person for further advancements and questions.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Consent form

M /Mme Name: Maiden name:

Firstname: Date & place of birth

Address:.....Phone:

I was invited to participate in the STAGE project as part of the study of the creation process.

The researcher Clarisse Bardiot informed me that I am free to accept or decline.

- 1) The study will focus on past and ongoing creation processes. To distinguish between the two situations, please indicate which applies to you:

Past Creations (P) **Current Creations (C)**

To inform my decision, I confirm and acknowledge the following:

	YES	NO
I have read the information notice.		
I am voluntarily participating in this project.		
I can stop my participation at any time if I wish, without having to justify myself.		
I will be able to view the results of the study as a whole once it is completed.		
I agree to be filmed or photographed as part of the creation process follow-ups. (If case C)		
I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.		
I agree that personal data such as my name and surname, my emails, and my CV are part of the data collected.		
I agree that my data will be processed and analyzed by different researchers within the STAGE project.		
I agree that the data collected will be part of a public dataset publication on Nakala (Huma-Num).		
I agree that the data collected will be part of a public collection publication on Nakala (Huma-Num).		
I agree that the data collected will be the subject of scientific publications.		
I am aware that all the data collected have archival value and I agree that they will be archived by an institution responsible for heritage preservation.		

Given the information that has been provided to me [check the appropriate boxes according to your will]:

(Yes / No) YES NO

1) I freely and voluntarily agree to participate in the research of the STAGE project.

YES NO

Date: XX/XX/XXXX Date: XX/XX/XXXX

Participant's signature:

Researcher's signature:

In accordance with the French Data Protection Act of January 6, 1978, as amended, and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of April 27, 2016, during the course of the project, you can exercise your right to access, rectify, or delete your personal data by contacting the Data Protection Officer: dpo@univ-rennes2.fr

Appendix 2: Information Notice

You have been invited to participate in research conducted as part of the STAGE project (ERC advanced grant no. 101097091), aimed at studying and highlighting various aspects of creative processes in performing arts, including directing, acting, technical personnel, company members, and freelance performers.

This study also aims to underscore the importance of digital traces, their analysis, and preservation as essential elements in studying contemporary performing arts. The ultimate goal is to define a precise descriptive language for performing arts (an ontology), study collaborations within teams, identify aesthetic patterns across works, and analyze creative processes. Therefore, this project serves scientific, historical, and archival purposes.

To ensure effective collaboration and respect for data collected by the STAGE team during this study, you are requested to review this explanatory document, which outlines the conditions for data collection, preservation, processing, and sharing.

Participation

Your participation in the project will involve tracking your writing sessions, work sessions, and rehearsals by a member of the STAGE team, and subsequently sharing the content related to the creation processes on your work computer's hard drive.

The content you submit to the STAGE project consists solely of documents, folders, or files that you voluntarily choose to provide to us. To select relevant and meaningful content for the STAGE project, you may refer to the following (non-exhaustive) list and ask questions to the project researchers:

- Email exchanges related to the creation of a performance;
- Email exchanges with other members of the company;
- Private correspondence concerning the creation of a performance;
- Design documents for the performance (sketches, plans, reading notes, artistic references, etc.)
- Script documents (performance score, annotated texts)

- Technical documents (plans, sound cues, lighting, video, technical specifications)
- Production documents (schedules, intent notes, funding application dossier)
- Videos and photos from rehearsals.

Processing

Within the scope of this research project, the STAGE team is engaged in processing personal data. The data collected are intended for the researchers involved in this project and will be retained for a maximum of 5 years after the project's completion. No sensitive data (such as religion, political opinions, etc.) will be collected. STAGE regards the collected data as objects for study, analysis, and archives of creative processes. These objects will be processed using image detection algorithms, pattern recognition, and named entity recognition algorithms to automatically annotate them. This will enable STAGE researchers to quickly identify the emergence of an idea at the precise moment it appears in a document.

Data protection and security

You may withdraw from the project at any time without needing to provide justification. In accordance with the French Data Protection Act ("loi Informatique et Libertés") of January 6, 1978, as amended, and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of April 27, 2016, you have the right to access, rectify, or erase your personal data by contacting the Data Protection Officer. This project is accompanied and overseen by the Data Protection Officer of Université Rennes 2, as well as an external Ethics Advisor. For more information or any inquiries, you can contact the Data Protection Officer via email at

dpo@univ-rennes2.fr.

The data will be stored at IR* HumaNum in a secure and dedicated space for the STAGE project.

Research outputs and publications

The collected data will be divided into two distinct sets:

- A "collection," which gathers all data in their original format and state.
- A "dataset," which contains the same data but organized and sorted.

These two commits are compiled for publication purposes, as the project aims for open science and research reproducibility. Publications will be made on Nakala (open and free french data warehouse, hosted by Huma-Num), and archival storage will be handled by CINES.

Scientific articles showcasing potential results achieved by STAGE based on these data sets will also be published.

Results and transparency

All participants and collaborators of the project will be informed about the results and progress of the project, as well as the status of their data and its publication. You have the right to request access to your data from the STAGE team at any point during the project. To do so, please contact the project's data manager: jeanne.fras@univ-rennes2.fr

Appendix 3: Ethics Committee certificate

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH RESEARCH ETHICS

Reference: 2024-028

The Research Ethics Committee of Université Rennes 2 has examined the research project entitled “« **STAGE: From Stage to Data, the Digital Turn of Contemporary Performing Arts Historiography** » led by BARDIOT Clarisse, and has judged that it complies with the usual practices and ethical rules in force in the Human and Social Sciences. In particular, the project complies with the personal data protection rules of the General Data Protection Regulation (UE 2016/679).

RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Scientific leader of the project: BARDIOT Clarisse
- Status: Professor
- Institution: Université Rennes 2
- Email: clarisse.bardiot@univ-rennes2.fr
- Mobile: xx xx xx xx xx
- Disciplinary field: Theatrical Studies
- Persons involved in the project (name, status, affiliation):

The STAGE project began on January 1, 2024, so the team is not yet complete. Some recruitments are underway.

The current team

- Clarisse BARDIOT, Professor, Université Rennes 2
 - Jeanne FRAS, Data Engineer, Université Rennes 2
 - Jacob HART, Associate Researcher, Université Rennes 2
- Currently recruiting:
- Nicolas FOUCAULT, Data Scientist
 - PhD student 1
 - Doctoral student 2

- Institution carrying out the project: Université Rennes 2
- Research unit: Arts: practice and poetics (APP)
- Scientific subfield of the project: Performing Arts, History of Performing Arts
- Dates and duration of the project: 5 years
- Subject of the project: Studying the importance of digital traces for the historiography of the performing arts
- Project funder: European Commission, Horizon Europe Program, ERC advanced (Agreement n° 101097091)

CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION

This certificate is valid for the project as validated by Université Rennes 2 and as described in the application document. If significant modifications are made to the research protocol, they must be communicated to the committee. Any event or information that could affect the integrity of the research must be communicated to the committee, as well as any suspension or termination of the project (temporary or permanent).

Rennes, July 12, 2024

The Chairman of the Research Ethics Committee, Nicolas MICHINOV:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicolas Michinov', written over a horizontal line.