Crowdsourcing and citizen science bring a new life to practices of public engagement which were popular in the 19th century. Reinforced by modern technologies, they are gaining appeal across a number of scientific disciplines including biology, astrophysics, and mathematics. However, humanities and arts are still benefitting very moderately from this type of engagement project and tend to tap mainly into crowdsourcing activities. This talk will explore why citizen humanities initiatives are still not enjoying the same popularity as citizen science.

We will start with an overview of the use of crowdsourcing and citizen science across memory institutions focusing on recent developments in Europe. We will then discuss the challenges in organizing such projects and the concerns around data quality, continuity of engagement, IPR, and the provision of technological tools and infrastructures. We will look as well at the reasons for the slow uptake of citizen science among memory institutions, which are among the most natural hosts for citizen humanities projects.

About the speaker: Milena Dobreva worked in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences on digitization of cultural heritage, where she earned her PhD in informatics and served as the founding head of the first Digitisation Centre in Bulgaria. In 2007, she was a guest researcher at the University of Glasgow, contributing to the DELOS network of excellence in digital libraries. She later worked at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow and served as the principal investigator for projects funded by the European Commission, JISC, and Scottish Funding Council. She is currently an associate professor at the University of Malta where she directs the programs in library, information, and archival science. Recently, Dobreva contributed to the EC-funded Civic Epistemologies project, which developed a roadmap for citizen science in digital cultural heritage. Dobreva regularly evaluates programs in the area of digital humanities and eInfrastructures for the European Commission.