

**STORIAINDUSTRIA.IT**  
**Industrial Geography goes online**  
*By Luciano Gallino*

The project [storiaindustria.it](http://storiaindustria.it) is an original online center, a timely addition given the growing interest towards the history of industry, labor and technology in all developed countries. From Germany to the United States, from Japan to France and the UK, the last ten years has seen a significant increase in the number of museums, archives, study centers and websites specialized in this field. Most centers, in addition to a material records collection, have a website; others, like ours, exist only on the Web. The reference territories of the industrial history centers can be local or national. [Storiaindustria.it](http://storiaindustria.it) covers Northwestern Italy: Liguria, Piemonte and Valle d'Aosta. The features of [storiaindustria.it](http://storiaindustria.it) are described in the article published on *Culture e Impresa* (6/2008), however the project itself is constantly evolving.

Designed primarily as a tool for *e-learning* and actively promoted in schools and universities, the portal offers new resources using the techniques of the 2.0 Web to offer an active role to the users in the “didactically equipped” use of the contents. Indeed, each user can add texts to enhance each course in the same way as Wikipedia (the editorial staff checks the quality and relevance of each submission). Users can also create their own record and image files, contribute to the development of new websites dedicated to products or companies or point out factories or companies worthy of inclusion in the courses or in other parts of the portal.

In the complex construction of the portal, which is easily consulted through a semantic network instead of the usual site map, the latest news published in October 2009 is the *Luoghi della produzione*. The starting points are Google maps on which the editorial staff marked the places where the plants of hundreds of companies were built or are still working in the three regions and that are discussed or only mentioned in the courses.

Once the user has chosen its field of interest, a chronological line appears; by moving the cursor from 1850 up to the present, the user can find where the manufacturing plants relevant to that field were built on a given date in the three regions. Clicking on the symbol of the site, more detailed information appears: a synthesis of the data of that plant, a wider historical record, and finally a reference to the pages and the archives of the portal in which it is possible to find further documentation on that particular plant or company.

Also in this case, any user can update the map – which already includes about 400 plants – marking new plants or adding information on plants already marked by other users or by the editorial staff.

With *Luoghi della produzione*, the team of the center has created an invaluable multimedia tool to facilitate research and study of cultural, economic and technological industry of the three regions.