Reality check: From national towards European strategies for digitisation

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HATII
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Digital Preservation
http://www.erpanet.org
&
http://www.dcc.ac.uk

Technology for the Heritage
http://www.digicult.info

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DigiCULT Online

- Technology Watch Reports

- Newsletters

- Thematic Issues

- Events database

- Resources database

- Services for the Cultural Heritage

  - CV Service

  - Jobs Listing

DigiCULT Print Products

DigiCULT.Info

Thematic Issues

Technology Watch
Reports

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- Digital materials are intellectual capital

  renewable resources

  education enabling resources

  a wealth Education Materials

  Support for Life-Long Learning

  Product of and Foundation for Creative Industries

  Improved Quality of Life

  Fostering Tourism

- Fragmentation of Effort & Practice

- Limited Technological Knowledge & Skills

- Diversion of Policies and Strategic Activity

Have we made progress since LUND

- improve and reinforce the co-ordination of digitisation activities across Europe;

- enable the efficient and effective use of digitisation to open up Europe's unique and significant wealth in its cultural and scientific heritage;

- reduce, if not eliminate, redundancy and fragmentation of effort, divergence of technical approaches, and waste of financial resources;

- facilitate the creation of Europe's *e*Content industries;

- capitalize on the investment made digital resources creation;

- ensure visibility, interoperability and discovery of the resources;

- deliver digital assets that promote and reflect cultural diversity; and,

- bring cohesiveness and shared vision to what is currently a fragmented area of activity.

What Digitisation Activities are not doing

- Not creating coherent *e*Content programmes, still building discrete digitisation projects

- Not creating regional and national resources, still creating institutional resources

- Rarely Collaborative beyond single institution rare

- Not using strategic methods for planning digitisation activities

- Not addressing the tremendous variation in approaches to standards & technology

- Not always clear projects considered the qualities of the source material(s) to be digitised and the impact that this might have had on the processes and technologies

- Not paying enough attention to preservation at the outset of projects

- Not addressing the sustainability challenges (e.g. income generation, business models) at the outset

What only a few are doing?

- Few appeared to have appreciated the complexity of the processes—workflow from project conceptualisation to use to sustainability

- Few used a formal mechanism to select items for digital imaging

- Few have developed a coherent, transferable and consistent approach to metadata

- Quality assurance is mentioned, but often confined to a statistically insignificant sample and almost never extended to include the metadata

- A small, but growing, number of digitisation initiatives consider the needs of users

- Few deliver resources that have an interactive educational focus and almost none take a participatory educational focus

Education & Training

Lack of an agreed core knowledge domain

- Consistency of training courses across EU

  Lots in the UK, a few elsewhere (e.g. Lithuania)

- Availability of interactive learning tools and easy to use guidelines (e.g. 'tell it as it is', Minerva Guidelines, NINCH)

- Postgraduate programmes of study

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Complexities of the Process

KEY Failure of projects:
Lack of understanding of
WORKFLOW & PROJECT
MANAGEMENT

Authenticity

- Confronted with digital representations users have a Presumption of Authenticity –how do they know that a digital representation is what it purports to be

- Authenticity depends upon 'establishing identity and demonstrating integrity'

  Inference from how digital materials created, handled, maintained

- Assessment and maintenance of authenticity

  - A reflection of the processes of creation
    - Does workflow ensure authenticity is maintained?
    - Has the process of digital representation changed the content?
  - Maintained after creation (e.g. storage, management)

- Trusted Creator and Trusted Custodian

Can Users Establish the Authenticity of a Digital Representation?

- Who created the digital representation?

- In what manner it was created? (e.g. under what conditions, using what technology)

- What support, aid or help?

- Why was the digital representation created?

- Where was it created?

- When was it created?

- How secure is the link between the metadata and the digital representation?

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Few digitisation projects could demonstrate that they produced authentic digital representations of the analogue source and fewer repositories can show that they are able to maintain the authenticity of digital representations.

Definition of workflow, clarity of process from creation to delivery (including calibration) essential.

Benefits of DAMS to Heritage Institutions

- support the centralization of discovery and access;

- provide mechanisms to enable institutions to create coherent content services from disparate projects;

- give organisations the ability to implement centralized authorization, security, and tracking systems;

- support the implementation of organisation-wide mechanisms for managing intellectual property rights (IPR);

- can generate savings by reducing in the duplication of effort and resources;

- produce time savings for the creators and users through organizational structure and centralization of digital resources;

- enable institutions to put in place asset browsing and querying tools;

- provide organisations with the tools to monitor levels of service and usage patterns, including the types of objects they hold, how users discover and select objects, and what types or specific objects attract the most attention from users

- Improve the likelihood of preservation.

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- Relevance
- Blended Learning
- Engagement
- Interactivity
- Multi-linguality
- Diversity of Content

Access & Preservation

- Access primary justification for Digitisation

  not preservation, keep the original

- Preservation

  protection against loss

  improved usability

  extend usefulness of content

- Authenticity = identity + integrity

Digitisation transforms material and creates assets. It must be possible to authenticate and preserve these as their creation consumed scarce resources, formed the foundation for scholarship, educational resources and enjoyment.

Impact of Digitisation on the Original

- Pre-project conservation evaluation
- Plan conservation
- Ensure adequate staffing levels
- Review processes regularly
- Post-digitisation conservation evaluation

SCAN

- Scottish Archives Network

  Funded by Heritage Lottery Fund

  Led by National Archives of Scotland

- Interconnect 45 Scottish Archives

- Single point of entry to finding aids

- Digitisation of more than 400,000 wills representing 3.3 million pages from Middle Ages to end of 19th c.

- Deliver access to digital images

Sustainability

- Starts at project design
- Will depend upon a critical mass of resource
- Requires a focused market sector
- Depends upon reusability and models
- Requires collaboration to ensure that all institutions can play
- Trusted repositories

http://www.lhi.org.uk
http://www.arkive.org.uk

Public money may not sustain a project – *need to explore and plan for alternative revenue streams and develop an exit strategy to maintain access to resources as a minimum.*

New Economies for the *e*Content Age

- Public sector information should be available at cost.
- It should include holdings of Archives, Libraries and Museums
- We need a new approach to economic impact measurement that more precisely captures the economic impact of public sector resources on the eContent industries.
- *e*Content industries exist, but more could evolve around cultural content

Next Steps on a local level (1)

- Develop selection criteria, and consistent and widely used metrics for documenting how material is selected;

- coherent long term digitisation planning to reduce costs and eliminate the practice of digitising the best treasures of the collection or 'end of year' digitisation to make effective use of unanticipated revenue savings; and,

- the definition of workflow, standards, and infrastructure developments and implementations that can be consistently adopted across the organisation.

- establish of digital representation certification processes (e.g., mechanisms for demonstrating that the digital representation is a faithful copy of the analogue original) to provide a way to demonstration the authenticity of the digital copy;
- limit the number of units within an organisation engaged managing the in digitisation of holdings;
- establishing and adopting standards for the creation and representation of content across the organisation;
- outsourcing of digitisation activities to achieve the economies of scale where an in-house service can not deliver these;
- development of metrics to measure use and impact of the products of digitisation.

A reminder

- Avoid duplicate initiatives – co-ordinate activity

- Digitisation is a chain of activities of which selection is one small part--but it is an essential part

- Digitisation creates new assets, but it consumes scarce resources. A balance must be struck.

- Don't be a lemming--the rush to digitise makes us followers not leaders

- Focus on high quality resources (QA & evaluation)

  Accurate, authentic, reliable, and complete

- Planning (e.g. Workflow) and Project management key steps

- Focus on economic sustainability of resources

- Skills base -- invest first

Contribution of Culture to EU Wealth

- Demonstrate the centrality of cultural services and the role of digital representations

- Examine wealth creation The British Academy's report: *'That full complement of riches': the contributions of the arts, humanities and social sciences to the nation's wealth*. (2004).

- Encourage open access and free use of public sector assets

- Engage small and medium size institutions