

Digitisation in European Museums

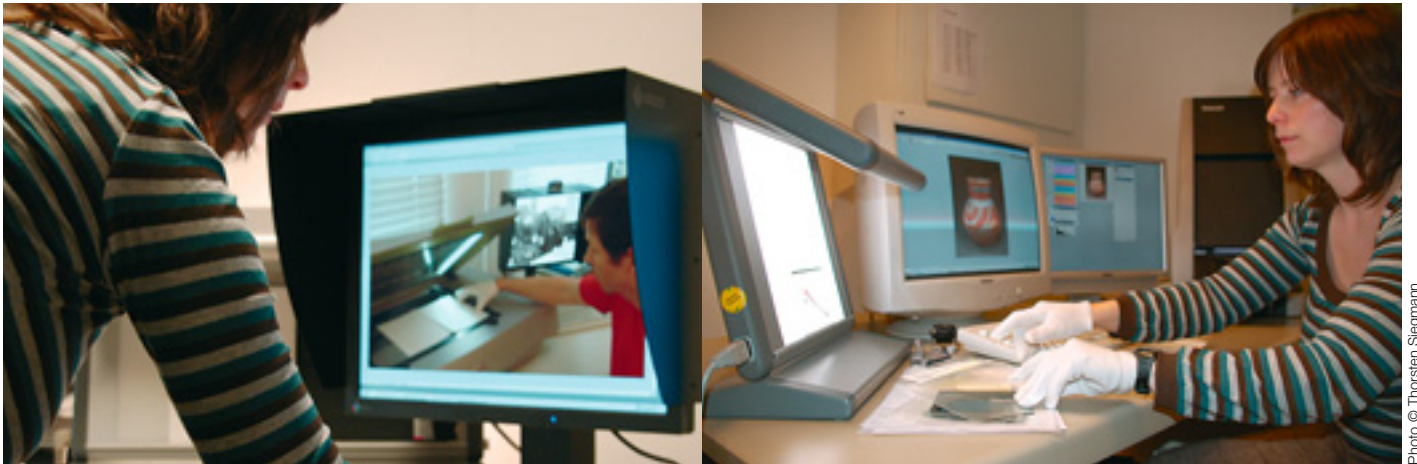


Photo © Thorsten Siegmann

Digitisation of museum objects at the bpk-images Archive, Berlin

“ **Equal access assures all European citizens opportunities to explore their common cultural heritage.** ”

Digitisation of cultural and scientific heritage is currently one of the main focuses of the European Cultural Agenda.

Member States are engaged in various ongoing initiatives to digitise the content of their archives, libraries and museums and make it accessible online. Contributors have to date made varying levels of progress.

EUROPEANA was conceived as a multilingual point of access to Europe's digital cultural heritage, capable of storing data on all types of cultural material (texts, audiovisual media, museum objects, archival records etc.) and delivering it to users. The initiative's aim is to enable all Europeans to access Europe's collective memory and use it for education, work, leisure and creativity. As the European Commission

stated in August 2006, efforts in this area will contribute to Europe's competitiveness and support European Union action in the cultural field. Firstly, material from different cultures and in different languages will be available online for citizens, and thereby foster awareness of their respective national cultural heritage and the heritage of other European countries. EUROPEANA will contribute to presenting Europe's rich and diverse heritage on the Internet and to protecting cultural objects from irrevocable loss.

Secondly, the cultural heritage sector will benefit from the digitisation process. Thirdly, such activities will contribute to enhancing growth in related sectors such as tourism, education and media.

The initiative to 'make the wealth of material in Europe's libraries, museums and archives accessible to all' stems from Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for the Information Society and Media. The first steps to launch this initiative were taken following a recommendation on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material made by the European Commission on 24th August 2006.

Libraries are leading the way in digitisation but in order to have a complete overview of our cultural heritage we need to include archives and museums in this process, too. A lot of museums have already created digitised information about the cultural heritage in their care.

“ **Museums play a central role in promoting culture and preserving European cultural heritage.** ”

NEMO's role in the digitisation context is two-fold: it gathers and distributes news about EU digital initiatives that concern museums, and provides information about successful museum digitisation projects on its website.

In doing so, NEMO seeks to encourage museums to take an active part in the digitisation process and make their treasures visible online.

By | **Monika Hagedorn-Saupe**

NEMO

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NEMO – The Network of European Museum Organisations is an independent network representing the European museum community. For more information about NEMO, visit: www.ne-mo.org

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Education and Culture DG

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The European Agenda for Culture

The first ever EU Cultural Strategy

In November 2007 the EU finally adopted the 'European Agenda for Culture'. This affirms the central role of culture in the process of European integration and proposes a cultural agenda for Europe and for Europe's relations with non-European countries. It was adopted in the wake of an extensive consultation process involving decision-makers and interested parties from all over Europe.

Three common sets of objectives were identified as being crucial to Europe's cultural development:

- 1. cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue**
- 2. culture as a catalyst for creativity**
- 3. culture as a key component in international relations.**

Under the first set of objectives, the Union and all other stakeholders are to work together to foster intercultural dialogue and ensure that the EU's cultural diversity is understood, respected and promoted. To do so they should, for example, seek to enhance the cross-border mobility of artists and workers in the cultural sector and the cross-border dissemination of works of art.

The second set of objectives focuses on the promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs. Cultural industries are an asset to Europe's economy and competitiveness. Creativity generates both social and technological innovation and stimulates growth and jobs in the EU.

Promotion of culture as a vital component of the Union's international relations

is the third set of objectives. As a party to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the EU is committed to developing a new and more active cultural role for Europe in international relations, and to integrating the cultural dimension as a vital component of Europe's dealings with partner countries and regions.

A fundamental feature of the new policy stance is the proposal to introduce a more structured system of cooperation among Member States and EU institutions on cultural matters, which is based on the 'open method of coordination' (OMC). This intergovernmental, voluntary and flexible instrument is intended to stimulate Member States to reflect, converse and exchange ideas on a number of key policy issues.

In addition to experts nominated by Member States, civil society stakeholders were invited to Brussels on 19 February 2008, to contribute to the European Agenda for Culture by participating in three different platforms covering the topics: Intercultural Dialogue, Access to Culture and Creative Industries.

NEMO participates in the platform "Access to Culture" as a spokesperson for European museums and will ensure that the potential of museums is fully tapped.

The first results of the platforms will be presented in the first half of 2009. Member States, civil society stakeholders and the EC will come together to present their results to the Cultural Forum in 2010.



NEMO executive board: Elizabeta Petruša-Strukelj, Frank Birkebæk, Margherita Sani, Mechtild Kronenberg, Anja-Tuulikki Huovinen, Mark Taylor

At the last NEMO annual meeting, held in Riga/Latvia in November 2007, Mechtild Kronenberg (German Museums Association) was re-elected to act as Chair of NEMO for the coming two years.

The following board members were re-elected: Anja-Tuulikki Huovinen (Finnish Museums Association), Frank Birkebæk (Roskilde Museum, Denmark) and Mark Taylor (Museums Association, UK). Margherita Sani (Istituto Beni Culturali Regione Emilia Romagna, Italy) and Elizabeta Petruša-Strukelj (Slovenian Museums Association) were also appointed to the NEMO executive board in Riga.

A Letter from the NEMO Chairwoman

One key objective of current European policy is to make the content and digitally preserved material of archives, museums and libraries more widely available – thereby taking into account the right of all European citizens to equal access to their cultural heritage. In support of this policy, cultural institutions throughout Europe have started to convert their 'analogue' collections into digital form. So, in March 2008, as a means of encouraging museums in particular to participate in this digitisation process and facilitate direct access to Europe's cultural heritage, NEMO published the brochure "Digitisation in European Museums". As well as outlining the advantages of digitisation for museums, the brochure lists a number of ongoing projects and initiatives that museums can join in order to actively take part in the digitisation of heritage objects.

Another topic that NEMO is focusing on is the role of museums regarding the Lifelong Learning. Many institutions are already dealing with this issue as opportunities for informal learning are becoming increasingly important. A general introduction to adult learning, presentations of case studies and examples of good practice, and an overview of the funding opportunities available to museums in the framework of the European Union's Grundtvig Programme will be the focus of this year's NEMO annual meeting, to be held in Ljubljana/Slovenia from 28th to 30th November 2008. In keeping with this topic, the meeting will open its doors to the public for the first time ever, the idea being to let the European – or, in this case, Slovenian – museum community benefit from the experience and debate of the meeting's participants.



In addition, various internal NEMO issues and other subjects relevant to European museums will be discussed. NEMO is also looking forward to presenting an account of its European activities during the last year. An important step was its participation in the EU Structured Dialogue via the Civil Society Platforms, which contribute to shaping European cultural policy. NEMO will continue to draw on the expertise and experience of the European museum community it represents to inject vital input into these debates.

By | Mechtild Kronenberg

NEMO Activities

NEMO Standard Loan Agreement Online-Toolkit

After two years of work the NEMO Standard Loan Agreement was officially launched at the Annual Meeting in Riga/Latvia in November 2007. It is applicable to all kinds of museums and seeks to encourage them to increase their activities regarding the lending and borrowing of works of arts throughout Europe.

To facilitate use of the document by every museum in Europe, NEMO has developed an online-toolkit that will enable museums – both as lenders and borrowers – to create their individual loan document online, in accordance with the specific conditions and requirements of each museum and each object.

To help users work with the standard English version, NEMO will provide convenient translations of the document into most European languages. At present the document is available in Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Latvian, Polish, Romanian, Russian and Spanish.

The online-toolkit and the loan document are available at: www.ne-mo.org



NEMO Brochure on "Digitisation in European Museums"

NEMO has undertaken to promote the digitisation of cultural and scientific heritage in European museums and therefore produced an information brochure for museums, which was published in March 2008.

It contains up-to-date information on the progress of various digitisation projects and on national and European Union digitisation policies and funding opportunities.

The brochure is available at www.ne-mo.org in pdf-format.

A print version can be ordered at office@ne-mo.org



The i2010-Strategy

A European policy framework for digitisation of cultural heritage in Europe

The i2010 strategy, presented by the European Commission in June 2005, sets out the EU policy framework for the information society and media up to the year 2010. It promotes the contribution of information and communication technologies (ICT) to the economy, society and personal quality of life. The i2010 strategy has three aims:

1. to create a 'Single European Information Space' that promotes an open and competitive internal market for information society and media services,
2. to strengthen investment and innovation in ICT research,
3. to support inclusion, better public services and quality of life through the use of ICT.

The third aim promotes an inclusive European Information Society, supported by efficient and user-friendly ICT-enabled public services. This includes proposals to make online access to and use of Europe's diverse cultural and scientific heritage easier and more interesting. In this context, the European Commission published a "Recommendation on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation" in August 2006, which calls on EU Member States to take the lead in developing a more coordinated approach to key issues for digitisation, for example by setting up large-scale digitisation facilities for online access to Europe's cultural heritage, or by addressing copyright issues.

As a sequel to the Recommendation, the Commission adopted a "Communication on Europe's cultural heritage at the click of a mouse" in August 2008, which describes progress made in creating the European digital library and in actions deployed by Member States to address the organisational, financial, technical and legal issues, that are essential for making cultural material available on the internet.

Further information:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society



Photo © Whipper

Museum visitor looking at the exhibition, Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin

By | Vera Neukirchen



With the **Conclusions on the Digitisation and Online Accessibility of Cultural Material, and Digital Preservation**, published by the Council of Europe in December 2006, the following priority actions and a schedule for the years until 2010 were set for the Member States and the Commission:

Activities and goals for Member States:

1. To reinforce national strategies and targets for digitisation and digital preservation
2. To reinforce co-ordination within and between Member States
3. To contribute to the European digital library
4. To contribute to an effective overview of progress at European level
5. To improve framework conditions for digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation

Activities and goals for the Commission:

1. To stimulate and co-ordinate work towards a European digital library
2. To contribute to improved policy co-ordination on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation
3. To address framework conditions
4. To assess overall progress at European level

Digitisation Projects in Europe



Minerva EC is a Thematic Network funded by the European Commission as a part of the eContent Plus Programme and coordinated by the Italian Ministry of Culture. Its operations focus on the coordination of national policies, programmes and institutions in the cultural sector. The general objectives of the network are to improve the accessibility to and visibility of European digital cultural resources; to support the development of the European Digital Library (EUROPEANA) for greater access to cultural resources; to reinforce the European position in global market competition; to facilitate exploitation of cultural digital resources and provide clear rules for their use and re-use, and to respect and protect creators' rights.

Minerva has produced various publications and studies that will support cultural institutions in the digitisation process:

- 1) Technical Guidelines for Digital Cultural Content Creation Programmes** (Guidelines for the use of technical standards)
www.minervaeurope.org/interoperability/technicalguidelines.htm
 - 2) Handbook for quality in cultural web sites** (Handbook for building a quality cultural website)
www.minervaeurope.org/publications/qualitycriteria.htm
 - 3) Cultural Website Quality Principles** (Short explanation of the ten 'Minerva Quality Principles' for cultural websites)
www.minervaeurope.org/publications/tenqualityprinciples.htm
 - 4) Quality principles for cultural web sites: a handbook** (Commentary and practical explanation of how to implement the ten 'Minerva Quality Principles')
www.minervaeurope.org/publications/qualitycommentary_en.htm
 - 5) Handbook on cultural web user interaction** (Information on and tools for setting up a web project that takes serious account of users' needs and opinions)
www.minervaeurope.org/publications/handbookwebusers.htm
 - 6) IPR Guide** (Guide on the topic of intellectual property rights, especially for digitisation projects)
www.minervaeurope.org/IPR/IPR_guide.html
- Further information:** www.minervaeurope.org

By | **Maria Teresa Natale**



The MICHAEL portal is the first on-line service that allows multilingual access to digitised cultural resources in Europe. Launched in May 2008, it enables users to find high-quality digitised collections from archives, museums, libraries, audio-visual archives, monuments and archaeological sites online: 8,000 digitised collections from more than 3,000 cultural institutions in Europe are now available, and new collections are regularly being added.

MICHAEL is based on a decentralised approach: the European portal allows users to interconnect the inventories of digitised collections created in each of the 18 European partner countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

MICHAEL's national partners are mainly public bodies, such as Ministries of Culture or heritage agencies. In each country they have developed and

organised a network of cultural institutions in order to encourage the latter to contribute to the national catalogue. National publications make information available at the national level and allow its integration in the European portal. MICHAEL has developed an interoperability framework based on shared



standards (common data model and vocabularies) and Open Source tools (a production module and a publication module). The standard OAI-PMH protocol facilitates the collection of data in the European portal.

MICHAEL is one among several European initiatives for the information society. It was developed from 2004 to 2008 in the context of two European projects (MICHAEL and MICHAEL+) funded by the former eTen Programme

(now integrated in the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme – CIP), which has supported trans-national new services for European citizens.

The MICHAEL Culture Association was created in 2007 in order to take over from the various European projects. It brings together the partners involved in MICHAEL and MICHAEL+. The Association aims at ensuring the sustainability and development of the MICHAEL European service. Through the association, participation in MICHAEL is open to all European countries willing to share their collections at European level. In every participating country the national partner supports the growth of the overall inventory.

MICHAEL proposes a cultural map of the richness and diversity of digitised heritage across Europe. Its comprehensive and reliable information is easy to access or to integrate into other initiatives. This is why MICHAEL is also contributing as a partner to the construction of the European digital library EUROPEANA that will propose direct access to digitised cultural material.

For further information or participation, see: www.michael-culture.org

By | **Christophe Dessaux**



Photo © Viviane Reding

An Interview with Viviane Reding

Viviane Reding is Commissioner for the DG Information Society and Media of the European Commission. Since 1989 she has been a Member of the European Parliament and she became a member of the European Commission in 1999.

Her political career started in 1979 as a member of the Luxembourg Parliament. After gaining a PhD in Human Sciences at the Sorbonne in Paris, Viviane Reding initially worked as a journalist in Luxembourg.

NEMO News asked her about recent developments of the Commission's i2010-strategy and the EUROPEANA portal, which will be launched in autumn 2008.

How can the digitisation of Europe's cultural heritage contribute to bringing Europe and European citizens in closer contact?

Imagine a student in Denmark who wants to find out more about paintings in Italian museums or manuscripts in German libraries. This can be done easily if these treasures are available online. Information technologies allow us to overcome geographical barriers, but if you want to access cultural material from another country it has to be available in digital format in the first place. Digitisation is therefore an essential precondition for a better dissemination of cultural heritage.

Neither history nor culture stops at borders. Of course we knew this, but once you can combine and compare cultural resources from different countries, you are better able to see the things they have in common, as well as their differences. You get a real picture of how Europe is 'united in diversity'. For this reason the creation of Europeana, a common multilingual access point to Europe's cultural heritage, has great significance. It is a concrete tool that makes the richness and diversity of our heritage more visible to all who are interested.

What chances and challenges does the European Community face in digitising Europe's cultural heritage?

Digitisation offers an enormous chance to improve the way in which Europe's cultural collections can be consulted and used. And it can also be a way to preserve material that might otherwise be lost. This is the case with older audiovisual material: tens of thousands of hours of film are lost every year, because the originals are falling apart.

The cultural significance of digitisation is obvious. It allows European citizens to get to know in an easy way more about their own culture and that of other European countries. But there are also economic opportunities. Digitised material can, for example, be used in services that help tourists to make the most of their trips, or as a basis for innovative learning products.

A first major challenge is how to finance digitisation. All Member States are digitising cultural material, but the scale and speed varies widely. Most Member States will need to invest more if they want to have a real cultural presence on the internet.

A second key challenge is finding ways for bringing in-copyright works online. Copyright lasts until 70 years after the death of a creator, so it particularly affects material from the 20th century. We cannot limit ourselves to public domain material and take the risk of creating a twentieth century black hole, a situation in which much

material from before 1900 is available online, but very little from the 20th century. Just think what that situation would imply for the youngest generation since, for many youngsters, what you cannot find on the internet simply does not exist. Bringing 20th century material online requires intensive co-operation with the copyright owners. Over the last two years I have chaired a high level group of stakeholders that has looked into this issue and indeed, made considerable progress in finding consensual solutions.

Which are the DG Information Society's activities in the cultural sector?

In fact, many of the activities of DG Information Society and Media have a cultural dimension and for these issues my counterparts are often the national Ministers responsible for culture or audiovisual affairs. We are, for example, responsible for European legislation on the audiovisual sector and for the MEDIA programme – the support programme for the European audiovisual industry. The same goes for the "content online" and the "digital libraries" initiatives. These deal with the opportunities and challenges of the online environment for the cultural sector.

Then there are of course the research programmes. For years, the Directorate General has been active in bringing information technologies and culture together, a must in today's internet age. ►

Many cultural institutions – museums, libraries, archives – have participated and are still participating in our projects. In the coming two years we will spend some €120 million on digital libraries through the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

When and how was the idea of the European Digital Library, a multilingual digital access point to Europe's cultural heritage, born? What are the aims of the project?

The idea of bringing Europe's cultural material online is not new. Through its funding programmes and through co-ordination actions the Commission has been working for years to improve the visibility of cultural collections via the internet. Of course the aim was to make the collections available in the most user-friendly way. This ambition gained major impetus in April 2005, when six Heads of State and Government sent a letter to the Presidents of the Commission and of the European Council. The letter asked for the creation of a European Digital Library that would give access to Europe's cultural heritage. It is one of the aims of the Commission's digital libraries initiative, launched in September 2005.

The Europeana will give citizens direct access to digitised books, maps, documents and films from Europe's libraries, archives, museums, and audiovisual archives. Users will not have to know about multiple sites to find the material, but can access it through one single entry point.

What makes Europeana better than Google Search?

Let me first get one thing straight. Europeana does not try or pretend to be in any way a competitor to Google. It is a specialised entry point focusing on the content of Europe's cultural institutions.

Its strength is that it gives access to quality content from a wide range of trusted organisations. So it will give fewer but targeted results which will represent the authenticity and quality that users are looking for. Another interesting feature is that it will give access to different types of material

(text, images, audiovisual, music) through one single search operation. The success of Europeana will ultimately depend on the availability of a critical mass of digitised objects from Europe's cultural institutions. This will not be achieved straight away at the launch of the prototype in November of this year, when 2 million digitised objects will be accessible. It is something that will have to grow over the years, as more museums, libraries and archives from all over Europe make their content accessible through Europeana.

How does the Commission contribute to the European Digital Library and what is the role of the Member States?

In our view Europeana should be owned and run by the cultural institutions that make their content available. They have organised themselves as a foundation that aims to create the common access point to their digitised resources. Founder members are major European associations representing Europe's museums, libraries and archives, as well as individual institutions such as the French 'Institut National de l'Audiovisuel' and the German 'Bundesarchiv'.

The Commission contributes in several ways. First of all it has brought the topic of digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material to the European political agenda. The message to the national Ministers responsible for culture has been clear and consistent: if we want to realise the ambition of a European Digital Library, more has to be done across Europe. In 2006, the Commission adopted a Recommendation that aims at focusing and co-ordinating the ongoing actions in the Member States on digitisation. Of course we also put our money where our mouth is: I already mentioned the considerable funding the Commission has earmarked for digital libraries in the coming two years.

We expect the Member States to fund basic digitisation as part of their policies for culture and the information society. They also have to put into operation the package of measures that they jointly agreed to in the Council in November 2006. This package requires Member States for example to establish detailed overviews of what has been digitised and what will be digitised in

the coming years and to deal with certain copyright issues relevant to the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material. Finally, Member States or their Ministries are encouraged to sponsor Europeana directly as associate members.

How can different material and objects from different cultural institutions be presented conclusively?

There is no such thing as 'the ultimate way of presenting cultural material'. Over time, different types of cultural institutions have developed different traditions of describing and presenting their material and this also has an influence on how they want to make it available online. We see this in the discussions between museums, libraries and archives in the context of Europeana – but it is equally clear that technology creates new opportunities for bringing these approaches together, without losing their distinctive traditions. What is important for the user in the digital age is to get direct access to the books, films, paintings or documents he or she is looking for, not what type of cultural institutions they come from. Europeana will make this integrated search possible.

How can museums contribute to the process of achieving seamless access to Europe's cultural heritage?

In fact, museums are already contributing. The European Museum Forum and the International Council of Museums are founder members of the European Digital Library Foundation, and are thereby committed to making Europeana a success. And some major European museums such as the Louvre and the Rijksmuseum are committed to supplying digitised content to the prototype of Europeana that will be launched in November. We expect that over the coming years many other museums will follow this example and will make their digitised material searchable through Europeana. This is good for users, and will at the same time increase the visibility and profile of Europe's museums on the internet.

EUROPEANA

Connecting cultural heritage



Europeana.eu will give direct access to the digitised resources of libraries, museums, archives and audio-visual collections across Europe. On 20 November 2008 the public prototype of Europeana will be launched by Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Information Society and Media, at a meeting of the Council of Ministers in Brussels.

Europeana will enable users to find content across Europe. Millions of significant pictures, films, books, photographs, sounds, newspapers, manuscripts and archival records have been digitized in recent years. While they may feature in the catalogues and databases of individual institutions, they're deep web content and are not always discovered by search engines.

The value that *Europeana* adds for users is the ability to connect related content in diverse institutions in different countries. For example, images of the Rubens paintings in Paris, London, Madrid and Brussels would appear on a single results page. But in addition, his drawings, sketchbooks, accounts, personal papers could also be there, alongside books and films about his work. Students will be able to follow the ripples of influence as ideas spread across Europe, or track the growth of the modern city through blueprints, adverts, articles and newsreels.

Interoperability is at the heart of what *Europeana* is doing: integrating access to heritage materials across borders, domains, formats and institutions. Museums, libraries, archives and AV collections have had different histories, user groups and purposes. These are reflected in their diverse approaches to cataloguing and the development of varying standards. The result is that delivering all content types in the same online space requires a commitment to working collaboratively and sharing knowledge across long-established professional boundaries.



One hundred network partners

Europeana is being developed by a network partnership of 100 members, and the collaborative nature of the project is strengthening professional understanding

between the domains. The network includes representatives of every member state, together with many arts, culture and education ministries, and a wide range of cultural institutions. Among these are the British Library, the Science Museum, the Deutsche Bundesarchiv, Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum and the Institut National d'Audiovisuel in Paris and NEMO – The Network of European Museum Organisations.

Meeting users' expectations

To create a space in which all manifestations of Europe's cultural and scientific heritage could be connected and integrated within a single portal, in a multilingual environment, is an ambitious plan. In the cultural heritage field this



expectation was beginning to be met by the cross-domain sites that were being pioneered in a national context. Examples include Britain's Discover site, developed by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the French Culture Ministry's culture.fr and the German BAM [Bibliotheken, Archive, Museen] portal. *Europeana.eu*, in partnership with these portals, has set out to consolidate that work and extend it across national boundaries.

Cross-domain portals meet evolving user expectations while at the same time removing their need to know or understand the arbitrary historic development of collections. People no longer have to find out what type of institution would hold material of interest – the location of material will no longer be an impediment to access.

In order to remain relevant to new generations of users, heritage organisations need to position themselves strongly on the web, presenting their content in ways that people want. This is not just about creating portals that are cross-domain, cross-border and multi-format – it also means giving users the opportunity to customise their interaction

in ways that are familiar from the social networking sites. So features include My *Europeana* and Communities, where people can work on projects together or create interest groups around subjects.



Richer metadata

One issue that the *Europeana* developers are dealing with is the inadequacy of metadata. In some cases, digitisation programmes have clearly put their resources into creating high resolution files, but been unable to devote sufficient expertise to creating substantial metadata.

Europeana is looking at ways of enriching metadata by linking to authority files, thesauri and ontologies, such as Iconclass and the Getty art thesauri. The Thesaurus of Geographic Names amplifies place names given in the metadata, adding other languages as well as global coordinates, so that a place can be linked to a clickable map like Google Earth. Our metadata standard builds on Dublin Core.

Mapping digital resources

Information about the digital assets across Europe by means of a survey is gathered on the website to find out about collection types, formats and metadata standards. The survey helps to select contributors to the first prototypes to ensure that *Europeana* is representing the range of formats, domains and countries.

When the *Europeana* public prototype launches in November it will have direct links to at least two million digital objects. By 2010 a full service version 1.0 of *Europeana* with access to at least 6 million items will be launched. The interface of the November prototype will be in English, French and German. More interface languages in subsequent releases will be offered as well.



Join the partnership

We are always delighted to welcome new members to the network and contributors to the site.

To find out more, visit www.europeana.eu

European Museums and ICT

A survey in the Netherlands

To what extent do Dutch museums use ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to shape their core activities? This was the central question in a 2007 survey, initiated by the Dutch Museums Association and Digital Heritage Netherlands. The survey was intended as a sequel to a research project conducted in 2002, and aimed to monitor the developments that had ensued in the five intervening years. In total, 143 Dutch museums participated in the survey.

The results of the 2007 survey are somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand progress is clearly visible, as virtually every museum was participating actively on the web in 2007. On the other hand, it is clear that the majority of museums still do not regard ICT as a strategic instrument that needs to be embedded in their institutional policy. Less than 30% have specified the use of ICT in an overall policy or collection plan or a specific information plan. One can only conclude that the use of ICT is ad hoc and digitisation and all the processes that come with it cannot be efficiently embedded within the organisation. Also, any investment in digitisation and new media may not be durable.

So, although some real progress has been made regarding their visibility in the digital world, museums still have to organise their role in the networked society.

Some figures from the survey illustrate this:

- only 29% of the Dutch museums have specified costs on ICT in their annual budget reports. Among these, the amount of budget reserved for ICT is between 1 and 5%. This is comparable to other public institutions. However, since 71% of the museums did not specify their budget for ICT, it is not easy to tell whether the museums are really in line with trends in other sectors.
- The most prominent features on museum websites can still be characterised as 'push': contact information, news/newsletters and collection descriptions. Also quite prominently featured is the option to become a friend of the museum. This may prove that the museums are exploring the web as a marketing channel.

- A topic that scored considerably higher in 2007 than in 2002 is the knowledge of ICT standards. Standardisation has been a main topic in Dutch governmental policy aimed at achieving interoperability between digital heritage collections, and it is rewarding to see that this policy is leading to positive results – although the survey in fact asked whether participants had heard of ICT standards, not if they applied them. For museums, the most known standards deal with description and retrieval of information, such as metadata schema (Dublin Core) and thesauri (AAT, RKD Artists).
- A final striking result is the wide variety of staff members in museums responsible for using ICT and new media or bearing the final responsibilities for ICT policy or services: directors, curators, heads of departments for human resources or finances, IT specialists, or external companies. Obviously, there is not yet a clear and common approach within the Dutch museum community to embed the procedures that can put ICT into daily practice.



Photo © Wipper

The Dutch government encourages museums, archives and libraries to write ICT policy plans and use them to support their proposals for innovative

projects. Since 2006, a funding scheme supports heritage institutions by granting the financial means to create ICT policy plans. It enables institutions to either get help from a consultant or to compensate the time invested by a staff member in writing such a plan.

Another recent development is the release of the Dutch version of *Spectrum*, the standard for collections management, originally developed in the UK. This fully translated version of *Spectrum*, launched in spring 2008, was the result of close co-operation between Dutch and Flemish museums, supporting museum organisations, and the British Collections Trust. *Spectrum* provides overall procedures for managing and documenting all the collection-related activities of a museum.

To conclude: this second survey in the Netherlands on the use of Information and Communication Technology in museums proves that the museums have invested substantially in their websites, and that they have learned more about collaboration and exchange of information in the digital domain.

The full survey is available at www.den.nl/ictmonitor/onderzoek/

By | **Marco de Niet**



Photo © German Museums Association

European Museum Landscapes

Cities in Competition

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Today, art museums rank among the most popular cultural institutions.

As competition between cities grows ever tougher, they are the hope on every city council's horizon, a fact clearly demonstrated by the remarkable series of new venues opened since the 1980s. How much catching up there is to do may vary from nation to nation yet belief in a repeat run of the proverbial "Bilbao effect" is everywhere unanimous. Whether in the provinces or the established bastions of the arts, all means are fair in the fight to be number one in the public and media eye, be it the acquisition of a spectacular collection, new thematic content or, not least, architectural élan.



Photo © Binet / Kolumba 2007

Kolumba – Art museum of the Archbishopric of Cologne, Germany. Exterior view

Whilst France, in exporting the Louvre – the nation's sanctuary – to the Emirate of Abu Dhabi has taken a controversial global approach to strengthening its domestic museum landscape, quasi by establishing an international brand name, other countries in Europe, Germany in particular, still retain a more traditional demeanour. Two new houses opened their doors in September 2007. In 1997 Swiss architect Peter Zumthor won an architectural competition for the new Kolumba project, the diocesan art

museum of the archbishopric of Cologne, recently built in one of the last remaining inner city gaps. Set in customary superstructure style above the ruins of a church and a unique archaeological excavation area, the 1,500m² exhibition area will house artworks related to existential issues, dating from the late antiquity to the present. Also in September, on the mountain crest above Remagen's railway station, a few kilometres further south, the Hans-Jean-Arp Museum will open: yet another building designed by Richard Meier, whose museums, town halls and department stores seem set to become part of the furniture in every German city. Here, the

focus will be those works of the two Dadaists held in the collection of the Hans-Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp Foundation, a non-profit cultural association.

Monograph Museums: the combination of an internationally renowned architect and this famous artistic couple's collection seems extremely promising. Certainly, the monographic museum is a recipe on the rise. The Paul Klee Museum, opened in Berne in 2005, comprises 4,000 of Klee's works and archival artefacts and presents itself as a kind of research centre. The Franz Gertsch Museum opened in 2002 in Burgdorf, Switzerland, the Max Ernst Museum in Brühl in 2005, and the Emil

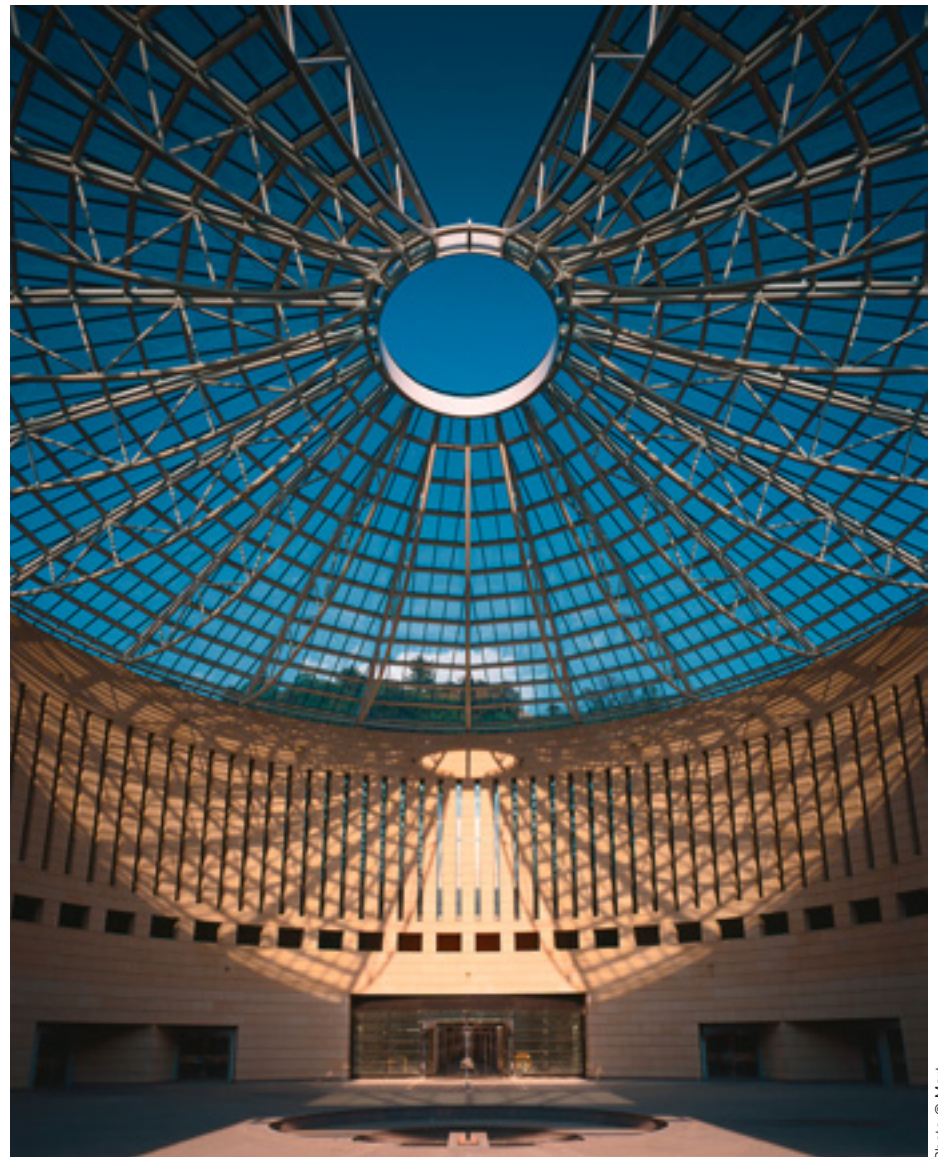


Photo © Mart

Mart – Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Italy. View to the cupola



Photo © MUSAC

MUSAC – Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, Spain. Exterior view

Schumacher Museum presently under construction in Hagen will in turn present the collection garnered from the estate of the “father of the Informal”. The Ritter Museum, which opened in 2006 as a square structure designed by architect Max Dudler and reminiscent of Ritter’s famous chocolate bars, also devotes itself to a conceptually, relatively limited display of Abstract-Geometric art; and recently in Lower Austria, even a Hermann Nitsch Museum opened its doors. In a way, what we are seeing now is a move away from the long predominant trend to build museums purely as exhibition venues, the orientation of which would manifest only in the course of time, prior to them acquiring an in-house collection – and which allowed them to occasionally quite radically alter their profile.

Italy: Elsewhere too, big names are part of the upgrade. Italy, a bit of a straggler with regard to new temples of contemporary art, is now making a big effort to hit the headlines with its museum revival. Venice can lead the field with the most famous names, architect Tadao Ando and collector Francois Pinault, whose joint venture has unfolded at the Punta Dogana, the seat of the historic Customs Office located between the Canale Grande and Canale della Giudecca. Failure to submit concrete proposals for a permanent collection led the Guggenheim Foundation (with Zaha Hadid) to be outdone by the heavy-weights of the international art market so the remodelled depots will instead house a selection of works from the legendary Pinault Collection in coming years – in any case for the next 30, until the contract between Ms Pinault and the City of Venice expires.

In 2002 in Rovereto in Northern Italy the Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea

– an art temple of gravitas covering almost 30,000 m², designed by Tessin architect, Mario Botta – kicked-off the Renaissance of Italian museums. In 2005 two historic city palaces for contemporary art were opened in Naples: the PAN, (Palazzo delle Arti Napoli) in the restored Palazzo Roccella and, close to the National Museum of Archaeology, the MADRE in the Palazzo Donnaregina converted by architect Álvaro Siza. A key target of both projects is urban regeneration in Naples: art is here a means to anchor future prospects in a city struggling with high unemployment and social unrest.

There’s little doubt that Rome has a sensation in store for 2008 with IL MAXXI, its premier house for contemporary art, currently under construction on the site of the former Montello Barracks, in the Flaminio district to the north of the Villa Borghese. Zaha Hadid, an architect world renowned for extravagant design won the international competition in 1998 and created for the new 30,000m² art centre a range of intertwining tubular elements, which intervenes in the linear structure of



Photo © Héliène Bineir/Kunsthaus Bregenz

Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria. Facade

the original barracks and will also integrate the adjoining grounds in the exhibition complex.

Austria: Austria was already building new venues for contemporary art at the start of the decade. The first was the Kunsthaus Bregenz, the artistic rank of which is no longer disputed. Vienna’s Museum District followed in 2001. New major venues opened most recently in 2003 and ‘04, when the regional cultural bastions Salzburg, Linz and Graz each complemented their existing cultural image, quasi by adding the contemporary factor. More remarkable than their various collection and exhibition concepts is the range of their architectural statements. The Lentos in Linz – a broadly-spanned bridge construction on the banks of the Danube which is equally distinct from the Salzburg project’s minimalist reserve and the spectacular “bubble architecture” revival in Graz – embodies a solution that is formally as unusual as it is aesthetically original.

Spain: New museums are springing up in Spain too. In the provinces, above all those of Northern Spain, new venues recently opened: in Huesca the CDAN (Centro de Arte y Naturaleza & Fundación Beulas) and in León the MUSAC art house. Yet it is in the capital that “one of the world’s greatest cultural projects” (to quote former Minister of Culture, Pilar del Castillo) will attract the most attention. Here, in collaboration with Pritzker Award winners Jean Nouvel, Raphael Moneo and Álvaro Siza, annexes to the Prado, the Thyssen Collection and the Reina Sofia Foundation will be interlinked by an art boulevard, the ‘paseo del arte’.

In conclusion, it can be said at the moment that competition between major cities for culture vulture tourists is growing tougher.

By | **Frank Maier-Solgek**

About: ROMANIA

Romania, one of the former communist countries, finally gained independence in December 1989. Reforms occurred very slowly until 2004, when the economy seemed at last to have become irreversibly independent of the political system. Romania has joined the European Union on 1 January 2007.

The National Institute for Statistics recorded the activity of 557 public museum entities in 2005. Most of them are funded by public budget but the concept of a private museum is gaining ground, in theory at least, and this will surely provoke interesting changes in the museum sector. Multiple initiatives in this regard are therefore to be expected, mostly due to opportunities provided by EU Structural Funds made available to Romania.

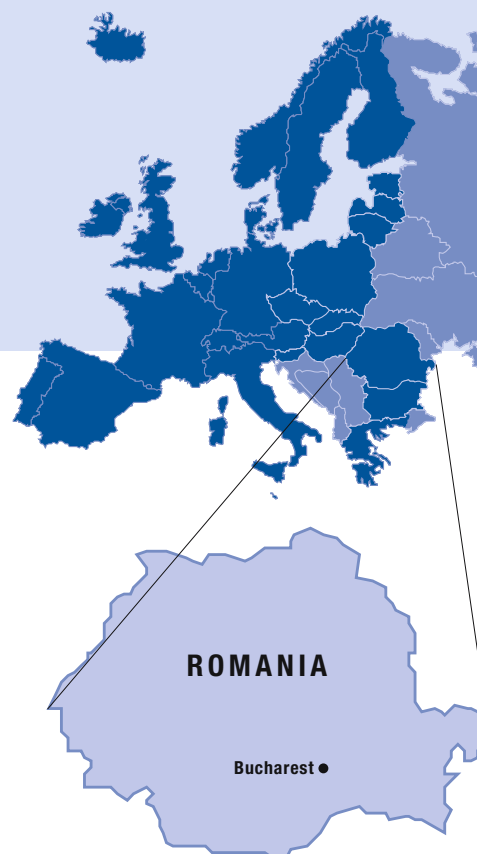
The National Network of Romanian Museums (NNRM) is the only professional museum network in the country. Prior to its foundation Romania had no network to cater to the needs of museums and cultural operators arising either from their relations with local, regional and national authorities, or the development of effective cultural policies in the museum sector. The NNRM aims to support and develop all parts of the museum sector, with a primary focus on cultural heritage, cultural tourism and professional training. The organization is also a think-tank that generates solutions to changes in national and European cultural policies and their effect on Romanian museums. For example,

resistance to adopting institutional management competency as the main selection criterion for skilled museum managers is still remarkable; private influence and subjectivism play a major role in the assignment of general managers to Romanian cultural institutions, though this appears to be on the decrease.

One of the first tasks of the National Network of Romanian Museums was to increase the level of professional training and competence in the museum sector. Significant expertise gaps persist among representatives of the museum community, mainly between the project management and institutional management levels. The NNRM has implemented an important national project for its members, *Regio.Muz*, financed with the support of the National Cultural Fund, which aims to increase museums' institutional capacity to access a part of the EU Structural Funds allocated to the main axes relevant to culture. These axes are stipulated in the National Development Plan of Romania 2007-2013 and in the Regional and Sector-level Operational Programmes. Additionally, Sibiu, a large city in Transylvania, was chosen as a European Capital of Culture in 2007.

The largest museums in Romania are located in the capital, Bucharest: the National Museum of Art of Romania, the National Museum of Romanian History, the National Village Museum and the Romanian Peasant Museum (that was awarded the EMYA – European Museum of the Year Award – in 1996). Other important museums are located in Iasi (The Moldavian National Complex Museum), Sibiu (ASTRA Complex Museum), and Cluj (Transylvanian History Museum).

At the official level, under the ministerial mandate of Adrian Iorgulescu (Minister of Culture and Religious Affairs) intervention areas identified in the strategy for the development of the cultural sector (2007-2013) will rest on two central pillars – continuation of the decentralisation



process, and capacity-building amongst the relevant personnel. Strategic objectives are based on the supposition that sector-level policies will be implemented in line with European policies.

Three intervention areas have been defined: support of SME (small and medium sized enterprises) development in the cultural sector; the promotion, preservation and protection of cultural heritage; and the contribution of contemporary creation to improving access to and participation in culture.

By | Dragos Eduard Neamu



Biertan fortified church (UNESCO world heritage), Transylvania

Photo © NNRM



Romania

is a unitary semi-presidential republic. With around 22 million inhabitants (2002), it is the largest country in South-eastern Europe. The capital is Bucharest (pop: 2 million). Romania's population consists of 89.5% Romanians and 6.6% Hungarians. Other significant ethnic communities are German, Ukrainian and Roma.