

## Laying the foundations for the European Digital Library

A project has begun to bring the European heritage online through a single portal. Seventy senior managers and technical experts from museums, archives, audio-visual collections and libraries across Europe came together to plan the European Digital Library. The meeting took place at the National Library of the Netherlands.

The initiative stems from the call by Viviane Reding, the European Commissioner for Information Society and Media to 'make the wealth of material in Europe's libraries, museums and archives accessible to all'.

This reflects growing user interest in major digitisation projects that are creating large-scale online heritage resources. However, this is the first initiative to focus on providing a multilingual interface to digital artefacts, texts and media from across the European heritage.

Such collaboration between the archival, library, audio-visual and museum domains on this scale is a significant new move. Claudia Dillmann, director of the Deutsches Filminstitut and President of the Association des Cinémathèques Européennes said 'We recognise that researchers and people learning about European history and culture need to explore all sorts of media, including films, sounds, photos and papers. Their expectation of the internet is that it can give them integrated access to all these things. It's vital that the different domains work together to collaborate on the technical solutions to enable research across different media.'

The project – the European Digital Library network (EDLnet) – runs for two years, and will develop a prototype that demonstrates proof of concept, bringing together content from some of Europe's major cultural organisations. The project will be run by The European Library together with the National Library of the Netherlands.

The project will look at the political, human, technical and semantic issues that will contribute to the creation of an interoperable system able to access fully digitised content. It will invite feedback from different types of users in order to create a service that enriches the widest public and answers the needs of researchers, students, teachers and the creative industries.

### **Notes for editors**

[EDLnet](#) is an initiative developed following the European Commission's [recommendation](#) on 24 August 2006 on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material. It is a Thematic Network funded under the [eContentplus programme](#) as part of the [i2010 policy](#)

EDLnet builds on the success of [The European Library](#), a portal that enables people to search across 150 million titles, from 172 collections in 31 European national libraries. The European Library is a service of the [Conference of European Libraries](#).

[Experts from Europe's major heritage institutions](#) will collaborate on the technical solutions and user-centred functionality.

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