

The 20 millionth item in Europeana

David with the Head of Goliath

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610)

Date: 1600/01

Oil on poplar wood

90,5 x 116 cm

Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Gemäldegalerie

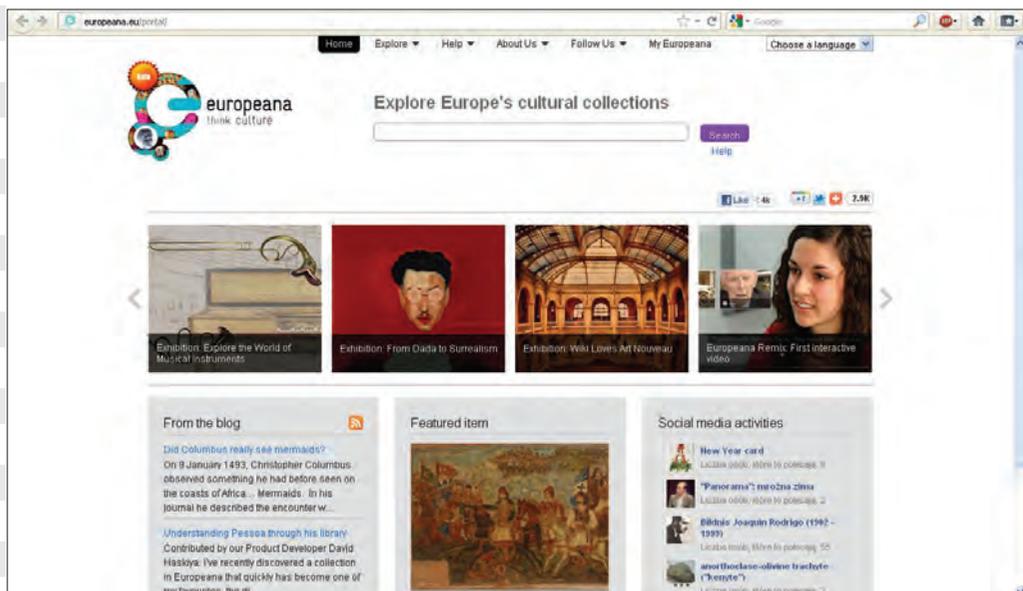


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uropeana: from prototype to production

Netherlands
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Purday

The Europeana version 1.0 project ran from January 2009 to September 2011, and enabled the transition of the portal Europeana.eu from a prototype to an operational service. It also transformed the Europeana Foundation, which runs the service, from a project-based organisation to a sustainable business. Many procedures needed to be put in place as the organisation scaled up, including financial planning and management, human resources, metadata ingestion, site development and management of events and PR campaigns. The staff of the Foundation, hosted by the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague, grew four-fold over the period. Together with a network of contributing projects and other partners, Europeana version 1.0 achieved its targeted results.



Europeana website

These results include 3 million visitors this year to date, 57 000 newsletter readers and access to 19 million digital items. Considerable media attention has been generated over the timespan of the project, with two particular highlights. The first of these was the reporting of the community collection campaign that ran in Germany, Europeana 1914-1918: The First World War in Everyday Documents, which resulted in 260 articles, radio interviews and TV pieces.



Invitation to Europeana1914-1918

The second was the Hack4Europe events for developers in Barcelona, Stockholm, London and Posnan, which culminated in an awards ceremony for the winning prototype apps at the 2011 Digital Agenda Assembly, and resulted in wide media coverage across all four countries.

Technical perspectives

From the technical point of view, the v1.0 project covered important ground.

We launched our Open Search API (Application Programming Interface) and widget to enable partners' sites to incorporate Europeana data – the initial step in our strategic intention to make our data accessible to users in their own workflows.

We continue to develop our Linked Open Data Pilot, with 3 million metadata records from 15 partners, in order to be able to place Europeana data in the expanding cloud to generate new linkages and discovery.

All technologies deployed with Europeana to date are based on open source code and licensing. The further technical development of the portal and its validation by the network of technicians within the Europeana network was significant, with proof of its usefulness coming from the re-use of the code by the Instituut Collectie Nederland, the Amsterdam Historical Museum and Norway's ABM Utvikling, the aggregator for archives, libraries and museums. The creation and development of the Europeana Data Model (EDM) was a large-scale undertaking, bringing together practitioners and standards' custodians from all the domains – museums, libraries, archives and audiovisual collections – to refine and validate the Model. It has resulted in the beginnings of a new rich and interoperable standard that makes use of semantic web technologies, particularly in relation to Linked Open Data. A primer and 2 page explanation of





EDM are constantly updated and made available to providers of metadata and others with interest in using it. Its value in an international context is shown by the recent statement of their intention to adopt EDM by the Digital Public Library of America.

Europeana version 1.0 facilitated the setting up and hosting of several development environments. These resulted in both a developers' sandbox environment and a production-standard hosting for the portal. A technology watch wiki allowed an overview of developments within and without the cultural heritage sector.

A webspace was created for members of the network and others with a professional interest in the work of Europeana, where we put policy papers, technical and standards documentation, tools for partners and other resources, including information about all the projects contributing to Europeana.

This project website has gone further than its remit to cover Europeana version 1.0 and is acting as a coordinating knowledge sharing space. Its success has led to the creation of Europeana Professional, due for launch by the end of 2011, which will not only act as a repository for ongoing documentation but will also be the access point for the whole collection of reference materials developed by Europeana-related projects in recent years.

During the course of version 1.0 two major updates were made to the portal. The first, in 2010, was the Rhine release, which moved Europeana to a functioning operations service. The second, Danube in 2011, used a different approach of incremental mini-releases culminating in a redesign of all the main pages of the interface. It used the Agile methodology, which proved more flexible and compatible with Europeana's requirements.

Partner and stakeholder perspectives

The project was successful in developing and strengthening relationships with the large network of data providers - the aggregators, projects and individual content holders who helped us take the total number of items up from 2 million at the launch of the prototype to a ten-fold increase to nearly 20 million as the project closed. Throughout the process we were able to canvass the opinion of the network on the construction and look and feel of the site, and develop tools and resources to help them control their ingestions process.

To consolidate the network of partners and increase their representation in the governance of Europeana, an independent stakeholder network was set up, the Council of Content Providers & Aggregators (CCPA). This group, which now numbers 275 members, elects six officers who sit on the Board of Participants of the Europeana Foundation, the policy forum of the organisation.

Two surveys were conducted during the lifetime of the project together with another EU project, Athena. The surveys sought to understand the evolutionary state of the aggregation landscape. Year on year huge strides have been made in the development and delivery of aggregators at national and domain level, facilitated by the Europeana network gearing up to deliver a critical mass of cultural heritage.



The development of the network was also important in the technical and research side. To this end Work Package 3 worked on the inclusion of people and knowledge from a technical perspective. To provide a wider focus and complement the expertise of the group members, a small core group of experts from across Europe and the US was convened which fed ideas and specialist opinion into the broader technical group. This community is wide-ranging and worked on the validation of the EDM as well as envisaging future trends.

Managing the wider group of contributing projects has been a significant challenge and one successful outcome was the creation of the Europeana Communications Group. This group ensured the communication to a very wide network of Europeana-related projects, countries and networks that the Europeana team would not have had the resources or skills to reach without the help of the communications partners in each one of the Europeana group of projects.

Meetings are central to engaging and strengthening the knowledge transfer process, and members of the Communications Group played a key role in helping to organise events and mobilise support on the ground in a number of countries. We ran scores of small workshops, seminars and round tables, and gave well over a hundred presentations about Europeana throughout Europe, but the large scale events, our major annual conferences, which brought all members of the network and beyond together to hear inspirational speakers in the vanguard of international cultural heritage thinking. In 2009 at Museon in The Hague, and in 2010 in Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam, over 300 people came together to contribute ideas, to see and hear about innovative new websites, to exchange information, and to celebrate the vitality of digital culture.

The Europeana Foundation Board ably fulfilled its role as the Network Advisory Board, participating in twice yearly discussions at Board level on the project. Many members of the Board were also active participants in the workshops and conferences. The project management was strong but flexible, allowing for the changing landscape but keeping the partners in line with the deliverables of the project.

Fundraising has gone remarkably well in difficult times. Aside from the core funding for v1.0, Europeana has to raise extra funds to be able to participate in projects as a partner. Such projects are not 100% funded, and overheads are not covered. Europeana has to raise 'matching funds' to become a partner in nearly 20 projects that are providing content and technology. By the end of Europeana v1.0 a total of €2.5 million had been raised for matching funding and overhead costs from 18 of a possible 27 countries. This is a significant accomplishment, and we thank all those countries that made the achievement of Europeana possible.

Legal perspectives

Rights and licensing have played an important role in our work during the course of the project. Aided by Europeana Connect, which also have a work package focused on IPR, led by Kennisland, we developed and launched the Public Domain Charter, a robust Commission-backed statement with recommendations that set out the need to preserve the public domain as a





freely-accessible knowledge resource. What is in the public domain in analogue form, said the Charter, should stay in the public domain after digitisation.

In partnership with Creative Commons, we then went on to develop and launch the Public Domain Mark, an icon to identify material in Europeana together with an explanation of what the public domain means. We now ask that all data providers supply rights information, and though this has only just begun to be implemented, we already have nearly half a million items in Europeana that carry the Public Domain mark. Alongside the mark is a set of guidelines, letting people know that they have the right to do as they choose with public domain content, but asking for their co-operation in crediting, showing provenance and avoiding misleading or derogatory usage.

The project also saw the creation of two data licensing agreements. The first was CC-BY-SA-NC and allowed Europeana to use the data from providers in non-commercial environments. However, this limited the use that Europeana was able to make of data, for example in a Linked Open Data environment, or in the development of apps, which might turn out further down the line to have commercial opportunities. It restricted Europeana's API, which couldn't be embedded in sites that were part commercial - which includes several of our own partners, like Institut national de l'Audiovisuel - or cultural blogs that carry Google AdWords.

We led a very thorough consultation and reworking of the Data Exchange Agreement, alongside a thorough debate on the very complex issues surrounding Open Data Licensing. In autumn 2011, the Europeana Foundation, which includes the elected chairs and presidents of all the major cultural heritage professional associations in Europe, voted to endorse the final version of the Data Exchange Agreement. This is governed by the CC0 Universal Public Domain licence and will allow for better and wider redistribution of the metadata.

It is also in accord with the Commission's intentions to revise the Public Sector Information Directive to make it applicable to cultural heritage organisations, but already most are recognising the potential value to them, their users and their digital society in making their data openly available. Within days of the Foundation's announcement, both the Conference of European National Librarians and EUscreen, a project representing the major film archives in Europe, endorsed the Data Exchange Agreement and Open Data Licensing.

User perspectives

We focused on creating a site that was user-friendly, with clear navigation, engaging graphics and as much opportunity as possible to move between languages and translate important details. Work Group 1 focused on the needs of users, actively gathering and analysing information via surveys, logfile analysis, focus groups, media labs and its own panel of users who tested designs and gave us ideas about features and functions they wanted.

Usability reports were commissioned to discover the areas where users faltered when using Europeana, and the new designs focused on eradicating these stumbling places. Two online user surveys were commissioned, in 2009 and 2011. 3 000 people filled in the former, 5 000 the latter,



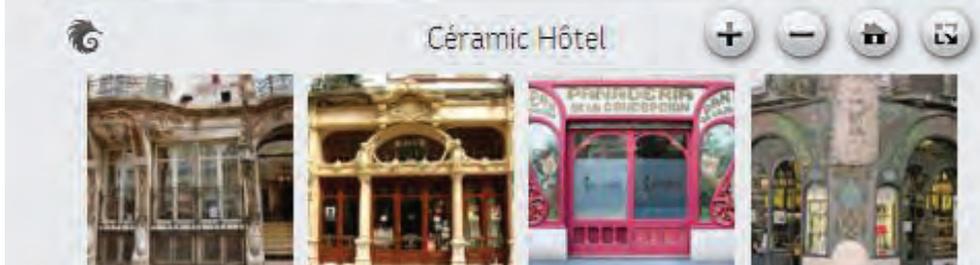
and we gained much valuable information about user demographics, interests and frequency of visits. Over 60% of respondents had visited the site more than five times and some 5% had visited over 100 times, which gave us a sense of the loyalty of our core users. Overwhelmingly, the improvement that most wanted was to be able to download content.

The newsletter is sent out every other month to 57 000 readers, and click-through rates from the newsletters to featured items is high. Our Facebook friends are growing in number and our regular blog, highlighting interesting new content, anniversaries and current events, is attracting a growing following and can now be seen on the new homepage.

The opportunity to contextualise the content and tell stories to link items is important to users, and helps us to engage them with the content. To further develop this aspect of Europeana's value to end-users we have commissioned a series of exhibitions. These have included - a celebration of Art Nouveau, the great pan-European design style that moulded everything: from industrial buildings to haute couture



The "Wiki Loves Art Nouveau" exhibition





- Reading Europe 1 000 digitised literary masterpieces
- the ceremonies, music and dance of East European weddings, with remarkable early 20th century archive sources
- two exhibitions highlighting Jewish culture - Dada and Surrealism in Romania, and Yiddish Theatre in London
- historic musical instruments, curated by the Musical Instrument Museums Online project



 *Meisje met de parel*
(*Girl with a Pearl Earring*),
Johannes Vermeer
van Delft
(1632-1675)
Date: ca. 1665
Oil on canvas
44.5 cm × 39 cm
(17.5 in × 15 in)
Mauritshuis,
The Hague



Work Package 1 also developed our User Generated Content (UGC) Policy, the outcome of which was our first foray into a UGC campaign, Europeana 1914-1918.eu This was launched in Germany in February 2011 and resulted in phenomenal uptake by the press and over 25 000 scans and images were submitted by users under the theme of Erster Weltkrieg in Alltagsdokumenten. In partnership with Oxford University Computing Centre, the German National Library, major libraries around Europe and Facts and Files, a Berlin-based PR and historical research company, we ran roadshows in 8 German cities at which we digitised family papers and memorabilia. We also created a website, in German and English, through which people could upload their own digitised items, and 40% of the material was contributed through this website.

The range of material, from children's drawings of combatants to personal diaries, drawings, letters and photographs, has created a unique and previously unpublished record that is of inestimable value to education and historical research. These private documents complement the published sources, and the major collections held in public collections which are also being digitised as part of a companion project, Europeana Collections 1914-1918. Taken together, these will create an unparalleled resource as we move towards the centenary of the conflict in 2014.

Significant work in opening up the site to search engine robots brought our data high in the search rankings, resulting in a dramatic increase in user numbers and achieving our target of 3 million users in 2011 ahead of the year's end. However, it also created a challenge, in that visitors would land in the results pages of the portal, rather than on the home page, and would be unclear about what the site offered. This was addressed in the redesign launched as part of the Danube release in October 2011, in which we have made significant changes to the results display and the selected item display, in order to make them more self-explanatory and engage users who have clicked through from a search engine. Though it is too early for a full analysis, initial analytics suggest that this has paid off in terms of reducing the bounce rate - the immediate clicking away from the site if the result doesn't seem relevant to the user.

Overall, the users' experience of the site is constantly improving. Further development of the API and search widget will enable content to be accessible to many more users in the sites that they congregate. Finally, the move to open licensing using the Creative Commons rights waiver CC0 will allow us to work with Wikipedia to provide authoritative data to their articles, and to enable bloggers, cultural sites and educational resource providers to feature Europeana material. Version 1.0 has put Europeana in a position to share Europe's cultural heritage widely, to move beyond a destination site to a more distributed model, and one that provides a firm foundation for increased user engagement.





Sheet music from the opera
Shulamith
by Abraham Goldfaden,
arranged for piano, violin or voice.
(Plays - Shulamith)
Virtual Exhibition
by Judaica Europeana project



Viola d'amore
(Instruments and Creatures
- Human Beings)
Virtual Exhibition
by MIMO project



Viola d'amore

