

DIGITIZED HERITAGE Events - from Studying to Actions or the Ukrainian Digital Movement

Digitized Heritage is a series of informational and training events on the subject of digitizing of historical, cultural and scientific heritage stored in archives, museums, libraries and private collections. The events have been held in Ukraine, in Kiev and some other cities since 2013. The initiator was The Specialized Centre BALI, LTD, an Ukrainian company dealing with ICT in the culture, education, and science sectors. (The author of this article is the main manager of the *Digitized Heritage* events).

We started our events under the common title *Digitized Heritage* in November 2013 by organizing the first International Workshop *Digitized Heritage: Preservation, Access, Representation* with the focus-subject of *Preservation and use of digital collections of photographic documents*. The seminar was held at the State Polytechnic Museum at the National Technical University of Ukraine “Kiev Polytechnic Institute”. The name in quotation marks is the historical name of the University (short name KPI), founded in 1998, <http://inter.kpi.ua/about/history>).

The idea of that workshop was supported by our colleagues from **Fratelli Alinari Photo Archive & Museum (Italy)** and the **EuropeanaPhotography Project**. It is worth adding here that our colleagues from EuropeanaPhotography kept up our morale during the difficult time for Ukraine in the beginning of 2014 by inviting our museums to participate in the *All Our Yesterdays multimedia exhibition* and helping with its realisation. (<http://www.digitalmeetsculture.net/article/preservation-and-use-of-digital-collections-of-photographic-documents/>, <http://prostir.museum/ua/post/32827>). It was our great step toward our digital Euro-integration but not the first experience of collaboration with the projects from EUROPEANA. Before that, we had collaborated with **LinkedHeritage** (later with **AthenaPlus**) and been providing digitized content to EUROPEANA. Due to that activity, nine Ukrainian libraries, museums, archives and also a private collection provided their digital content to EUROPEANA (<https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en/search?f%5BCOUNTRY%5D%5B%5D=ukraine&q=&view=grid>). In addition, we were published in Uncommon Culture (“we” means SC BALI and a number of Ukrainian memory organisations).



Why and for what did we start the Digitized Heritage events?

Ukrainian libraries, archives and museums are far behind European and world institutions in IT and digital technologies development related to national heritage. This concerns using CMSs (Content Management Systems) and the forming and presentation of digital collections in the Internet. The low level of digitising and IT knowledge and competence in the Ukrainian heritage sector negatively influences the development of national memory institutions and blocks their integration and cooperation with European institutions, resources, and projects. Digitized Ukrainian heritage content is poorly represented in integrated global resources. Only about 1800 objects of 9 Ukrainian collections have been presented in EUROPEANA, constituting only 0,0003% of the 51.5 million objects of European heritage. That is not an objective proportion, because it represents an infinitesimally small part of the rich Ukrainian national heritage and absolutely does not correspond to its share of European heritage, even in digital form. The causes are related to ICT underdevelopment in the national heritage sector, lack of knowledge and tools for digital collections, absence of electronic data management and means for integrated resources, and

absence of systematic education and digital skills upgrade for experts.

Concerned about this state of affairs on the one side, and having professional contacts and experience of collaboration with EUROPEANA projects on the other side, we decided to improve this state by bringing in new knowledge from Europe and exposing specialists in the national heritage sector in Ukraine to the best digital practices.

Therefore, the series of *Digital Heritage* events are aimed at assisting memory organisations in overcoming the difficulties discussed above.

The *Digitized Heritage: Preservation, Access, Representation* events were launched in 2013. **Over a period of five-years there were 15 informational and training events** on digitizing of historical, cultural, and scientific heritage stored in archives, museums, libraries, private collections, and other memory organisations, as well as developing digital libraries, archives and museum collections and enabling open access to them.

The objective of these events was:

- to acquaint heritage specialists with advanced international practices and train

them to use technologies for digitizing, development, and integration of digital collections, access and use methods;

- to promote the construction of a platform in Ukraine for technological development and improvement of digital competences for international professional collaboration and integration of national resources with European digital heritage, with EUROPEANA as a first priority;
- to transfer knowledge on digitizing and technology of digital content and metadata integration to global systems like EUROPEANA according European standards and methods (including CI-DOC/CRM and LIDO).

There was a large variety of **event formats**: lectures, presentations, training workshops, summer schools, professional meetings, anti-conferences; professional dialogues and consultations, discussions oriented toward research of appropriate technological solutions as well as project partners.

We do not have permanent funding, which limits the opportunities for attracting our foreign colleagues as speakers to these events. That is why we used **Skype and video-lectures** and presentations.

The scope of events was later expanded. In 2016 we started the **festival of digitized content DIGITALLY-FEST (in November, in Kiev)** to provide a place for all institutions and collections to demonstrate and show online resources and services with their digitized collections content. On the screens and locations of DIGITALLY-FEST there were shown modern online representations of the digitized content of memory institutions, private and other collections, advanced experience and successful projects on the presentation of world and national heritage in digital content. The festival enjoyed great success.

In 2017 we organized the **Summer School of Digital Competence in Odessa (in June)** for more detailed study of basic methods and practice of digitizing. **Moderators and spokespersons** were highly experienced specialists on digitizing and related areas of information and communication technologies from Ukraine and Europe: **Italy, Belgium, Poland, Malta, Great Britain, Germany, and Russia**. As **participants** we welcomed experts and heads of archives, museums, libraries, publishers, owners of private collections, IT-specialists, scientists, and everyone wishing to acquire knowledge and skills in the field of digitizing technologies.



To reach a larger audience, the events were held in **different cities of Ukraine: Kiev, Odessa, Kharkiv, Lviv, Kolomyia.** Rivno is planned in 2018. The audience of each event is not limited by the local specialists, people from other regions also attend.

High interest and the need for implementing actions to promote IT development and digital culture are evidenced by the level of participation in the events of *Digitized Heritage: preservation, access, representation* (2013-2017). **Approximately 600 experts from 259 institutions from 44 cities and towns of Ukraine and speakers from 8 European countries** participated ([http://demo.dcvisu.com/uploads/objects/298/pdf/Digitized%20Heritage Events 2013-2017.pdf](http://demo.dcvisu.com/uploads/objects/298/pdf/Digitized%20Heritage%20Events%202013-2017.pdf)).

The geography coverage of the *Digitized Heritage* events and distribution of participants is reflected in the **interactive map** (<http://server1.inhost.com.ua/museum/>) **of the Museum Planet** project (<http://museum.ontology4.inhost.com.ua>) by our science-technical partner at the national centre *Minor Academy of Sciences of Ukraine* (NC MAcSU, <http://man.gov.ua>). The map has GIS-data of **all museums in Ukraine** with common information about each museum, gallery, or collection as well as data about **locations of Digital Heritage 2013-2017 and its participants** (fig. 1).

Information materials of *Digitized Heritage* events are posted on the homonymous Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/DigitizedHeritage>), the *Prostir.Museum* portal (<http://prostir.museum.ua/default/search/index/query/%D0%91%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0>), official sites, and on-line resources of the partners and participants in these events.

The first *Digitized Heritage* (2013-2017) events cycle consolidated specialists from memory institutions, universities, and research institutions; attracted private collectors, public institutions and private IT and digital technology solutions developers; and established professional links with European Projects and organizations in the digitized Cultural Heritage sector. Local projects have taken place and started active development; new digital collections have been launched; agreements on scientific and technological cooperation have been concluded; a modern vision of urgent needs of digital development has emerged; a professional request has been submitted and acted on by governing bodies on cultural heritage needs of digital development. Leaders and specialists in institutions, thanks to the preparation given to them by these events, are already having an impact on digital promotion of their institutions. Participants have highlighted the need for

further development of professional digital competencies. A graduation thesis has been written on the topic of events attended by participants.

Trying to find financing for the development of these activities, we have positioned *Digitized Heritage* events as a project for covering the digitization of the cultural heritage sector of Ukraine and accelerating IT, digital breakthrough, and sustainable development of Ukrainian memory institutions within the European digital community. **The objectives of the project are to:**

- increase the level of experts' digital awareness and qualifications through the provision of basic digital knowledge and skills;
- stimulate modern cultural product development: promote familiarity with advanced European experience and domestic technological solutions for latest technologies of multimedia network content by making presentations of trending solutions and products—for example, through a festival of digitized content;
- strengthen *Digitized Heritage* integration and stimulate cross-sectoral project initiatives: conduct training on resource

integration and project management, roundtables on technological, resource, and project cooperation;

- increase the level of conscious professional information and digital technologies management in memory institutions: apply the format of international professional tourism for training and vivid exchange of experience in practical digitization.

Integration effects are expected to occur, whereby a number of Ukrainian memory organisations will be involved in EUROPEANA projects in order to provide national historical content to EUROPEANA and other European integrating systems. This will also help Ukrainian memory institutions to participate in EU-funded projects in the field of digitized heritage.

We are continuing to organise *Digitized Heritage* events in Ukraine, including the Summer School in Odessa (June) and DIGITALLY-FEST in Kiev (November).

Starting in 2018, we have changed the slogan of the event to ***DIGITIZED HERITAGE: Integration, Consolidation, Creativity***. In this way, we have been focusing on using fundamental digital knowledge, methods, and tools for local and international integration of digital content and



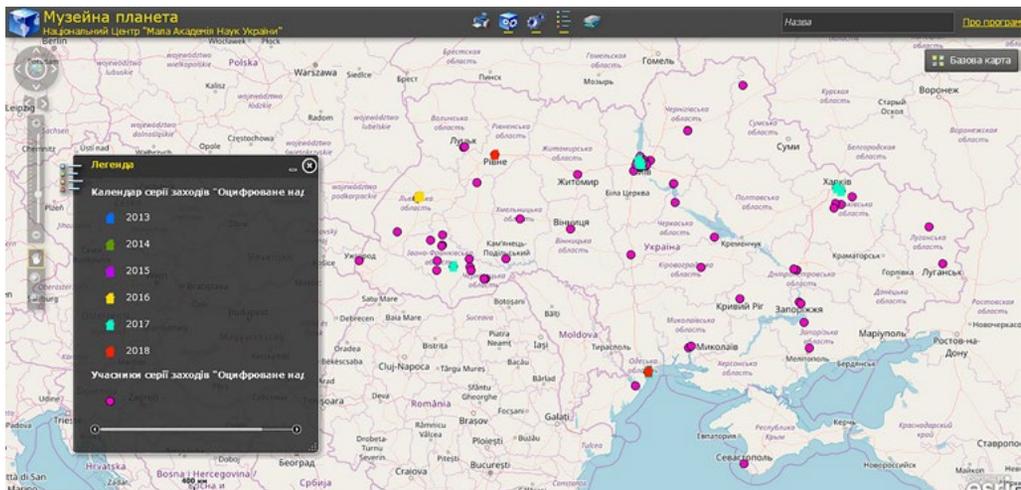
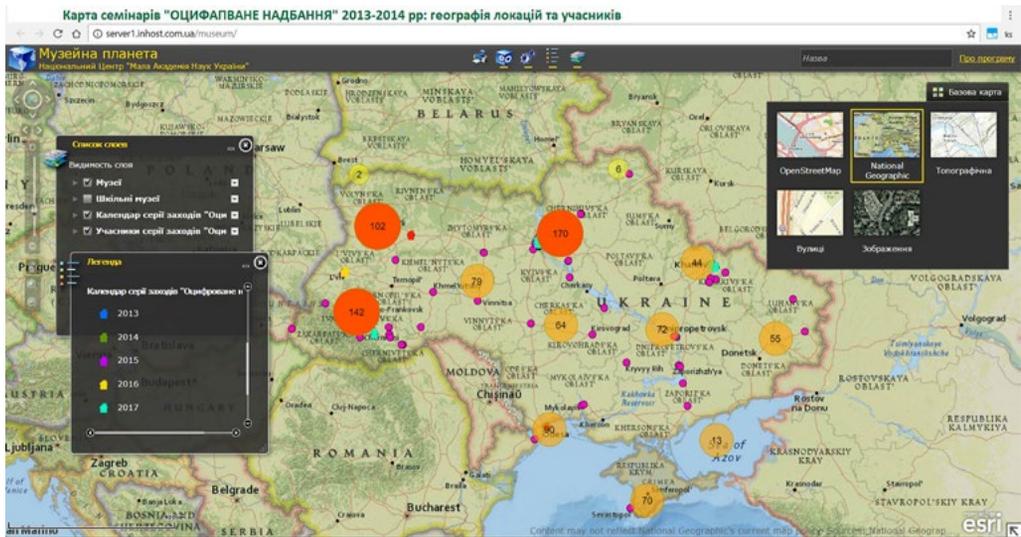


Fig. 1. The locations of *Digitized Heritage* events and their participants on the interactive map of the *Museum Planet* project (<http://server1.inhost.com.ua/museum/>) showing geography locations and common data of Ukrainian museums, developed by the Intelligent Network Tools Department of the National Center *Minor Academy of Sciences of Ukraine* headed by Maryna Popova, PhD, an experienced specialist on the interaction of ontologies and GIS

cooperation on development of modern creative digital and multimedia cultural products, as well as initiating common projects.

A new cycle of international *Digitized Heritage* events will facilitate new development, expansion of the professional community, new types of professional communication, and digital development of memory institutions. The participants in these events will be able to identify the urgent topics in digital and creative development to be addressed in subsequent cycles, as well as new forms of events.

We would like to thank European experts and speakers who took part in our events and invite more digital heritage specialists from other countries to join our future events, to come to Ukraine and see our rich cultural heritage (both traditional and contemporary), to meet our cultural heritage experts, and hopefully to initiate joint activities.

Our plans are to start international professional tours between Ukraine and Europe as well, together with European partners for making our digital movement more mobile, effective, interesting, and recognition, as well as to see more European culture and show you the bright culture

and rich heritage of still very little-known Ukraine.

In conclusion of this report, I want to **thank all our European colleagues** for our collaboration in the EUROPEANA projects and participation in our *Digitized Heritage* Workshops.

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