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Doing it! - Experiences collected while publishing museum-object-information in Web 0, 1, 2, 3 An example from Germany

In 2009 six German museums (including university-museums) of the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt started to explore the possibilities the internet offers for the publication of object-information. Is it worth the effort? That was the starting point of an interplay of action – reaction – analysis – correction – reaction - analysis ... we call this undertaking “museum-digital”. Meanwhile there are 174 museums of all kinds and sizes in 9 federal states participating in www.museum-digital.de.

The first action undertaken was to determine the effort necessary. We discovered that only very few museums had information (including images) worth to be published in their institutions databases and none had published object information in the Internet so far (=Web 0). As a result we created a software for the publication of object information which is very easy to use. Whenever a new feature is invented the participating museums test its usefulness and make propositions. The software is in a permanent process of improvement. The museums also determine the way the objects are publicly visible (Web 1). If a museum wants it, its objects are displayed with a feedback-button which invites website-visitors to comment (Web 1-2). In a lot of cases this improved the knowledge about the objects and their contexts. In the very moment a museum makes information about one of its objects visible this information is automatically published via Twitter and Facebook (Web 2). This again generates feedback and experiences. The Internet is also used to enrich the published object-information automatically (“semantic web” – Web 3).

The report will be about the experiences the museums made so far. It will be about efforts necessary and gains possible.

Stefan Rohde-Enslin works in and with museums since 1992. Currently he is employed by the Institute for Museum Research of the State Museums of Berlin, Foundation Prussian Cultural Heritage. There he acts as a consultant for museums regarding digitization and digital preservation. He is responsible for the national inventory of photographic collections in Germany (www.fotoerbe.de) and actively creating www.museum-digital.de together with many museum-directors and curators. He studied Political Science of South-East Asia and Cultural Anthropology in Heidelberg and holds a Ph.D. degree in the History of Science.

Maria Teresa Natale

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Web 2.0, citizen science and virtual volunteering: how and why could museums benefit from it

The presentation intends to illustrate how the use of citizen-science networks could allow museums to accomplish research objectives more rapidly than would otherwise be possible, aiming at the same time at promoting public engagement and enlargement of the museum communities.

Maria Teresa Natale since ten years is working in the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage in the field of European projects on digitization of cultural heritage. From 2002 to 2008 she participated in national and European activities of the MINERVA projects related to quality, accessibility, usability and user interaction. From 2008 to 2011 she has been technical coordinator of the ATHENA project, and has taken part in the Europeana Working Group on users. Currently she is involved in DC-NET, Indicate, Linked Heritage and Judaica Europeana projects. At national level, within the Italian Technological Observatory for Cultural Heritage and Activities she supports institutions for the implementation of cultural websites. She takes also part in a MiBAC working group on virtual exhibitions.

Susan Hazan

Israel Museum, Jerusalem

The Museum in a Web 2.0 world: a tectonic shift in situated knowledge

The role of the museum traditionally acts not only as a repository for unique and wondrous objects but also as the location of the situated knowledge that these objects imbue. In a Web 2.0 world end users not only expect to take on an active role during their online browsing but also a pro-active role in the production of their own micro-content.

This presentation discusses one of the more resounding clashes of civilians that are currently taking place around the world when the museum meets social networks head on and challenge the museum's monopoly of situated knowledge reflected in their collections and exhibitions.

Susan Hazan is Curator of New Media and Head of the Internet Office at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (since 1992), identifying, and implementing electronic architectures for the gallery, online and mobile platforms and outreach programs (<http://www.imj.org.il>). Her Masters and PhD at Goldsmiths College, University of London in Media and Communications focused on electronic architectures in the contemporary museum. Hazan has been recognized for her numerous publications on new media in education, art, museums and cultural heritage, and is currently investigating social networks, innovative platforms for disseminating virtual museum, and digital libraries in the context of cultural heritage. In 2002-2003 Hazan was visiting lecturer at the Computing Department at Goldsmiths, University of London; teaching Web Design and Critical E-Museology, with an emphasis on the correlation between cultural theory and contemporary practice, and is an annual guest lecture in the Museology Department at Haifa University, Israel (2005-2009). September 2010, guest lecturer at City University, Hong Kong.

Margherita Sani, Manuela Oliveira Pereira

Istituto Beni Artistici Culturali e Naturali, Regione Emilia Romagna

New participatory models in European museums

The idea of museums as participatory organisations, i.e. of places which welcome and encourage the engagement of visitors, as well as of the community at large, is not new, but has gained new centrality and a new momentum more recently, with the opportunities offered by the social Web.

A participatory cultural institution, as defined by Nina Simon, is “a place where visitors can create, share and connect with each other around content” in a way that doesn’t lose sight of the institution’s values and mission, but on the contrary reinforces them and promotes institutional goals.

The presentation will discuss the idea of a “participatory museum”, illustrate practices adopted by some museums in Europe and give an overview of how museums can interact with visitors by using and combining some web platforms.

Margherita Sani BA in Literature and Philosophy at the University of Bologna, MA in Museums and Galleries Administration at the City University, London, works at the Istituto Beni Culturali of the Region Emilia Romagna where she is in charge of European projects, training of museum personnel both at regional and at international level.

Since 1996 she has organised the EMF Workshop in collaboration with the European Museum Forum, an international yearly training event open to museum professionals from all over Europe.

Since 2004 she has designed and project managed several EU funded projects -“Lifelong Museum Learning”, “Museums Tell Many Stories”, “Voch – Volunteers for Cultural Heritage”, “MAP for ID – Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue”, “LEM- The Learning Museum” – focussed on museum education and lifelong learning and has edited several publications on the same subjects in Italian and English.

Since 2007 she has been a member of the Executive Board of NEMO (Network of European Museum Organisations) and of ICTOP (ICOM Committee Training Personnel).

Manuela Oliveira Pereira, graduate in Cultural Tourism Management and specialised in Tourism at the Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra, Portugal, works at the Institute of Cultural Heritage of the Emilia Romagna Region, supporting the management of European projects and the communication of IBC via web. In the past, she has been web content manager of the web portal www.prodottitipici.com and has worked with the Regional Tourist Board - Tourism Promotion Agency Services of the Emilia-Romagna Region for the marketing development of the Project “Food & Wine Trails” of the Association for the promotion of the Apennines area.

Rita Cucchiara, Costantino Grana

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Social tagging and social networks for a second life of digital artistic content

We are assisting to an explosion on Digital Artistic Content, which is either new artistic manufacture, either reproduction of well-known digital content, either digital descriptions, commentaries and subsidiary material of artistic content. Unfortunately its accessibility and fruition in different ways is often very difficult. Tags and annotations are often available, but it is almost impossible to connect each content with every possible meaning and significance and it's quite hard for a semantic network to connect this data with every detail of its content.

To overcome these limitation we must think to new generation of social network for arts, defined on the web for practitioner or art lovers, or defined locally as a subsidiary support to an exhibition. In this scenario, every one managing digital images should be allowed to tag the content, defining new correlations between them with semantic graphs and with content-based similarity connection.

To this aim we propose the use of new forms of visualization of artistic images, in standard and multi-touch displays for improving natural interaction. We propose new forms of Continuous Relevance Feedback for search by content that allows users to keep visually close images that are perceptually similar or connected by similar tags and send away other images and pictures that are returned by normal search engines but are not valuable or interesting for them. This new form of interaction can be used for images relabeling, for associating new meaning and to create a *second life* for this artistic digital content.

Rita Cucchiara is Full Professor at the "Enzo Ferrari" Engineering Faculty of University of Modena and Reggio Emilia in Italy. She graduated in Electronic Engineering in 1989 and received the PhD degree in Computer Engineering at University of Bologna in 1992. Formerly Assistant Professor at the University of Ferrara, joined UNIMORE in 1998 as Associate Professor. She is currently Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, and heads the ImageLab laboratory of Computer Vision and Multimedia (<http://imagelab.ing.unimore.it>). She is Scientific Coordinator of the Regione Emilia Romagna "Platform of ICT and Design". Her current research interests are in computer vision and pattern recognition for video surveillance and forensics, machine vision for industrial application and multimedia for cultural heritage. Currently, she coordinates many national, European and extra-European projects, and many collaborations with companies and public partners. She published more than 50 journal papers and 170 conference papers on these topics. Since 2006 she is Fellow of International Association of Pattern Recognition.

Costantino Grana graduated at the University of Modena, Italy in 2000 and achieved the Ph.D. in Computer Science and Engineering in 2004. He is currently Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Modena, Italy. His research interests are mainly in Computer Vision and include analysis and search of digital images of historical manuscripts, multimedia image and video retrieval, medical imaging, color based applications, motion analysis for tracking and surveillance. He published 3 book chapters, 22 papers on international peer-reviewed journals and 60 papers on international conferences. He is currently member of the IEEE, ACM and IAPR.

Giuliana De Francesco

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Re-using museum content: opportunities and challenges

Reuse and re-purposing of digital museum data offers powerful means to reach new audiences, release the value of the digital content in use and engage new public with museum content.

Reuse however is only made possible by appropriate licensing mechanisms of the digital content to be reused. While for individual reuse initiatives it is possible to the museum to fix the own rules or to negotiate an appropriate licence with the business partner[s], this is not the case when content is made available through third parties owned platforms or major aggregation initiatives.

Museum initiatives can be effectively disseminated, for example, through social networks, allowing users to share, tag, comment, contribute and build on museum content. But who sets the rules? Can the content remain under the control of the museum? And can the museum reuse the content provided by the users?

Digital objects and their descriptions might be shared with those provided by other cultural institutions at local, national, international level in domain or cross-domain initiatives targeted to the aggregation, enrichment and further publication of cultural content. As a result, a great amount of content is made available to the public in a consistent format through a single user interface. At European level, Europeana makes available millions of records related to the European cultural heritage and contributed by several thousands of European museums, libraries, archives, audiovisual collections.

Europeana currently requires that the contributing institutions waive all the rights on the contributed materials.

While full copyrighted materials can hardly be reused, initiatives that, as Europeana does, encourage the waiving of intellectual property rights raise concerns across the museum community. In a broader, long term perspective, would the risk-benefit ratio be favourable?

Giuliana De Francesco has a university degree in Classical Studies (thesis in Roman Numismatics) and a background as medieval manuscript curator.

Since 1999 she is public official at the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Cultural Activities. Responsible for the unit Organisation and Project Planning at the Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova (1999-2001), then for library and archival programmes for the Direzione Regionale Liguria (2002), since 2003 she is involved in major European projects for the digitisation and digital access to cultural heritage. Among others, MINERVA, MICHAEL, ATHENA, Europeana.

Since 2008 she is head of the office International Projects for the Access to Cultural Heritage of the ICCU, and responsible for the coordination of the MICHAEL service and of the Italian contribution to the projects World Digital Library and Europeana Judaica. Recently she was WP leader for DC-net, the Digital Cultural Heritage Network, aiming at coordinating policies and programmes in the field of research and infrastructures applied to digital cultural heritage.

Since 2009 member of the IFLA IT Section, she is currently (2011) Bellevue Fellow at the Institute for Museum Research, Foundation for the Prussian Cultural Heritage, based in Berlin (Germany).

Maristella Agosti

University of Padua

Digital annotations: a way for users to create and share contents over cultural heritage artifacts

Digital Library Systems have moved from being monolithic systems to become component and service-based systems, where easily configurable and deployable services can be plugged together and re-used in order to create a Digital Library. Moreover, Digital Library Systems started to be seen as increasingly user-centred systems, where the original content management task is partnered with new communication and cooperation tasks, so that Digital Libraries become a common vehicle by which everyone will access, discuss, evaluate, and enhance information of all forms.

The term “Digital Library” nowadays identifies a coherent collection of information digital objects that represent informative resources and artifacts that are present in museums, libraries, archives, and other cultural heritage institutions that keep memory of and give access to cultural heritage objects.

The design and development of effective services which foster the cooperation among users and the integration of heterogeneous information resources becomes a key factor. A relevant example of this kind of new services are digital annotations, i.e. providing users or groups of users with the possibility of adding personal annotations on the managed information resources, even crossing the boundaries of the single Digital Library.

Throughout our history, annotations have been often used as asynchronous communication tools and as a vehicle for knowledge creation and sharing. Nowadays, in the digital context, annotations come to us as a powerful tool to involve users in approaching Digital Libraries, to promote the communication and cooperation among users, and to allow us to enhance, enrich, and curate existing content by exploiting user-added information.

Digital annotations allow users to naturally merge and link personal contents with the information resources provided by a Digital Library and to create new relationships among existing contents, by means of links that connect annotations together and with existing content. Moreover, annotations and annotated resources constitute a hypertext that can span and cross the boundaries of the single Digital Library and connect information resources that belong and are managed by different Digital Libraries. In this way, not only annotations foster cooperation among users but they also make Digital Libraries that otherwise would have been separated cooperate together.

Maristella Agosti is full professor in computer science, with a main focus on databases, digital libraries and information retrieval, at the Faculty of Humanities and at the Department of Information Engineering of the University of Padua, Italy.

Her research Interests are in digital library systems, digital library architectures, information retrieval, search engines, analysis of log data in digital libraries and search engines, annotation of digital contents, design and development of advanced services for archives and digital libraries.

She coordinates a number of national and international research projects, and she has been the organizer of national and international conferences.

She is member of the Editorial Board of the International Journal on Digital Libraries (Springer-Verlag).

Program Co-Chair of the 13th European Conference on Research and Advanced Technology for Digital Libraries - ECDL 2009, Corfu, Greece. General Co-Chair of CLEF 2010 Conference on Multilingual and Multimodal Information Access Evaluation 20-23 September 2010, Padua, Italy.

Chair of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on Theory and Practice of Digital Libraries (2009-now)

Editor of: Access through Search Engines and Digital Libraries. Springer-Verlag, Heidelberg, Germany, 2008.

Alessandro Bollo

Fondazione Fitzcarraldo, Torino

Museums and the challenges of the new digital culture: between perspectives and preliminary assessments

What the new digital cultural is about? What makes a museum a real 2.0 museum? Is opening a Facebook or Twitter page enough to be considered truly participatory and connected?

Technology is changing our way of communicating, of creating social and individual spaces, of participating, of learning, of being creative, of using and experiencing cultural goods. These changes affect museums, in particular those that intend to build new forms of relationship with people and who try to understand and meet the different needs and demands coming from the diverse audiences.

Multilateral ways of communicating, the raising importance in sharing information and knowledge, the user generated contents approach represent doubtless a great opportunity for museums, but at the same time a big challenge because these changes urge organizations to evolve and innovate. The point is that the renewal process should apply not only to the communication and promotion functions but to the entire museum organization. Differences between online and offline will tend to fade in the next future and museums who desire to achieve a real “participatory” status should concentrate their efforts both on the online side and the intramuseum activities.

Within “museum walls” there is, at last, a real problem of “dialogue” and interaction between the scientific body and the communication staff. There is also a diffuse lack of skills and human resources (particularly in Italy) dedicated to develop or to co-project digital identity and technological solutions able to meet - more and more sophisticated and demanding needs for information, participation and conversation on and about museums.

Alessandro Bollo, co-Founder of Fondazione Fitzcarraldo - international independent centre for research, training, planning, and documentation on cultural, arts and media management, economics and policies based in Turin, Italy – where he now is responsible of the Research and Consultancy Unit. Professor of evaluation and marketing of cultural heritage and activities at Polytechnic of Turin – II Faculty of Architecture and lecturer at various university courses both in Italy and abroad.

He has been the coordinator of Piedmont Cultural Observatory from 2000 to 2009.

An editor and publisher responsible for the Italian web portal on cultural marketing: Fizz (www.fizz.it), his main cultural policy interests are aligned with audience research, visitor studies and topics related to access to culture.

Has published books and scientific articles on cultural management and museum studies and contributed as speaker to domestic and international conferences.

www.fitzcarraldo.it

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Daniela Nasi

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New promotional opportunities in the era of Web 2.0

One of the strategic aspects for the success of a cultural event is to spread information of it to an interested audience as wide as possible. Conventional promotion means like for example posters, playbills, newspaper advertisements and so on can be combined with a new type of promotion based on the Web and on its services.

Starting from the creation of a website or a webpage dedicated to the event, the aim will be the increase of the number of visits to that page according to the principle that the higher is the number of visits, the more will be the persons informed. First of all, some useful tools will be presented, for example including the website within search engines and the optimization techniques in order to make the website “findable” by Google or other search engines. Moreover, some advices will be given for a correct use of mailing-lists and for the exchange of links within similar bodies. Finally, major social networks will be dealt with in order to generate interest in the event: creation and use of Twitter profiles, Youtube channels, Facebook pages and events connected to the website, the use of the “I LIKE”, the word-of-mouth advertising, and how to manage a paying advertising campaign.

Daniela Nasi graduated in Applied Mathematics at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and got the Master in Computer cataloguing for the valorization of cultural heritage. Since 1995 she works in the field of Informatics and in particular of Internet services. She took part to several project for the creation of web portals in the University field, linked both to education and to research. In the field of cultural content dissemination she has been coordinating the technical part of two important multimedia publication on CD-ROM, one for the Museo della Bilancia of Campogalliano, Modena (the Museum of Scale in Campogalliano) and one for the Laboratory of Mathematical Machines of the University of Modena, for which she designed also the websites.

At present she deals with information architecture and accessibility of web content. She is the technical responsible of the web site of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

Marek Bukowski

University of Gdańsk

Social networks in the Museum of Medical University in Gdańsk

Over the past 30 years one of the biggest changes in our civilization over the centuries was observed. The transformations have affected all spheres of human activity. Universities have played a significant role in making the changes through research, they extended the scope of knowledge and the unique academic atmosphere conducive to changes in the field of culture and human behavior. The dynamic development of information technology, computerization were among the factors underlying these changes. The aim of presented study was to evaluate the use of "social network" for the purposes of the Museum of Medical University of Gdansk. The concept of a modern museum of the university involves the collection and exhibition of historical objects and participation in creating the tradition of the university. The overriding objectives of the two orientations of the museum is to educate students in the spirit of humanism understood universally, and to act to promote the activities of and achievements of the University.

Is the proposed model feasible? Is it attractive to the university community and guests of the museum? How important is the museum for the university?

This paper will attempt to answer these questions.

Marek Bukowski is a pediatric surgeon from profession and works at the Museum of Medical University of Gdańsk. His main fields of interests are history of pediatric surgery, history of medicine from the 19th to the 21st century, and philosophy of science.

Simona Caraceni

University of Bologna – AVICOM-ICOM Board member

Benchmarking of web 2.0 presence of museums and institutions in Italy

The thematic commission “Audio-visivi e nuove tecnologie” of ICOM Italy made a research for mapping the presence of museums in social networks. That’s a benchmarking research, that maps how and where museums promote them with web 2.0.

In Italy there are several national and international projects that helps museums in terms of interoperability, and web presence (Minerva, ATHENA, CulturalItalia, ...) but there is a lack of help in giving guidelines for a web communication. MIBAC started a work on “guidelines for virtual expositions on the web” in the last months, and this useful document (with an interesting production dynamic) puts itself in a situation in which every museum has a “personal” strategy for its web presence.

Facebook and Twitter were not born to promote museums, they are “general” social network. The aim of this work will be to map both the presence, and also the type of activity of the museums in Social Networks in April/May 2011.

Simona Caraceni is concerned with new media communication and multimediality, and since '94 has been involved in new media and new technology applications in communications and art. She taught at the Universities of Bozen, Milan, Florence, Macerata and Bologna. Actually she teaches Museum Informatics at the University of Bologna, and History of New media at NABA: Academy of Fine Art in Milan.

ICOM member, she's the promoter of the thematic commissione "audio-visivi e nuove tecnologie" for ICOM-Italy. She's in the executive board of AVICOM.

Her museological activity is about the relationship between museum and technology, started with her PhD research on "museum and technology" at the University of Plymouth, dept. of Aesthetics and Technology. In the field of applied research, she is involved in didactic with new technology, restoration of virtual museums and interaction design.