Measuring the Impact of Digital Culture

inDICEs

Deliverable 3.6

Policy Brief: Towards community-focused cultural heritage institutions in the digital realm

D3.6 – Policy Brief

Towards community-focused cultural heritage institutions in the digital realm

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About inDICEs

inDICEs is a Horizon 2020 research project that aims to empower policy-makers and decision-makers in the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) to fully understand the social and economic impact of digitisation in their sectors and address the need for innovative (re)use of cultural assets. To this end, the project is tracking and establishing policy priorities for successful digital transformation and future governance of cultural and creative content ecosystems, and working to provide tools to measure and advance the impact of cultural heritage in Europe.

inDICEs brings together internationally renowned research groups in the domains of Cultural Economics, IP Law and Digital Humanities, representatives from the CCI with substantial outreach capacity, social innovators and pan-European heritage networks like Europeana and NEMO. Link: https://indices-culture.eu/

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1. Executive summary

"Towards Community-Focused Cultural Heritage Institutions Operating in the Digital Realm" is a set of policy recommendations designed to assist cultural heritage institutions (CHIs) in fulfilling their public mission in the digital realm. Its goal is to further the democratic and community-focused digital transformation of CHIs, and to support access to, and the reusability of, digital cultural heritage.

The brief is authored by inDICEs, a Horizon 2020 research project that aims to empower decision-makers in the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) to understand the social, economic and environmental impact of digitisation in their sectors and to address the need for innovative (re)use of cultural assets. It is the end result of an inclusive, collaborative process led by inDICE partners and outside experts, with contributions from over fifty Europe-based heritage professionals representing diverse organisational backgrounds and areas of expertise.

Its purpose is to better prepare CHIs for the digital transformation and empower the systemic changes needed in order to make CHIs open and digital, facilitating active participation based on reuse of digital collections.

The proposed policy recommendations are intended to be implemented at the local, national, or European level by the key stakeholders of digital cultural heritage policies: EU and national policy makers, heritage networks, CHIs, CCI professionals, and other relevant stakeholders collaborating with CHIs. However, the ultimate beneficiaries of these policies, once implemented, will be the citizens, represented through their communities.

The recommendations come in the context of major transitions under way in the cultural heritage sector. With COVID-19 spurring the need for new, hybrid models, and people exploring novel ways to interact with heritage, CHIs have been pivoting online, experimenting with new formats and ways of communication as they reevaluate their relevance.

CHIs will have to adopt a broader vision of heritage in the digital realm, and embrace collaboration and dialogue with their communities. They will need to reorient their approach to digitisation, focusing on quality and possibly redigitising previously digitised assets. Furthermore, CHIs must rethink their roles as stewards of digital public spaces, placing a greater emphasis on communities and social objectives, and providing a venue for debate and the exchange of ideas. At the same time, institutions have a responsibility to weigh the ethical ramifications of making digital cultural heritage freely accessible, and consider how certain communities may be affected by heritage objects, such as those obtained through violent means, or which perpetuate bias or prejudice.

This reorientation necessitates the development of new legal frameworks. Intellectual property laws need to be revised in order to empower CHIs to promote the reuse of digital cultural heritage in education, research, creation, and recreation.

2. Approach

The inDICEs Policy Brief introduces policy recommendations that aim to assist cultural heritage institutions (CHIs) in flourishing and fulfilling their public mission in the digital realm. inDICEs perspective is anchored in empowering the democratic and community-focused digital transformation of cultural heritage institutions supporting access and reusability of digital cultural heritage.

The policy brief is based on research and close observation of changes occurring in the cultural heritage (CH) sector and in European societies. These recommendations are inspired by the Culture 3.0 paradigm by Pier Luigi Sacco,[1] which stresses the importance of considering the multiple forms of value and impact culture has on society and different forms of value creation, leading to a more participatory, community-based ecosystem. The authors also refer to the work of Mariana Mazzucato who argues that the capacities and role of government within the economy and society have to be rethought, putting public purpose first.[2] Furthermore, an important point of reference for this document is the process of evaluation of the 2011 European Commission recommendation on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation,[3] which created a space for reframing Europe's digital heritage strategy.

The policy brief demonstrates how a commitment to the access and reuse of digital cultural heritage can support the organisational strategic commitments of cultural heritage institutions in a range of areas, in particular inclusivity, innovation, and sustainability that came to the forefront of the discussions conducted during the co-creation process of this policy brief. Focusing on these elements can allow cultural heritage institutions to flourish and fulfil their public mission also in the online environment, through appropriately designed digital transformation that might result in value creation relevant to various communities.

inDICE's ambition is to shape policy recommendations in a collaborative and inclusive way, following a participatory approach, ensuring that the document represents not only the research and the way of thinking of the inDICEs project, but those of the wider professional heritage community. For this reason the process involved experts from the inDICEs consortium as well as a broader community of heritage professionals contributing to the policy work at various stages. In result, the policy brief is the result of a co-creation effort by a group of more than fifty Europe-based experts representing diverse organisational backgrounds and areas of expertise. The process was built as a collaborative work based on a number of brainstorming sessions and feedback loops. The work was led by a core team of experts — again both inDICEs partners and experts from outside of the consortium.

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[1] Sacco, P.L.; Ferilli, G.; Tavano Blessi, G. From Culture 1.0 to Culture 3.0: Three Socio-Technical Regimes of Social and Economic Value Creation through Culture, and Their Impact on European Cohesion Policies. *Sustainability* 2018, *10*, 3923. https://doi.org/10.3390/su10113923

[2] Mazzucato M. Mission Economy https://marianamazzucato.com/books/mission-economy

[3] Digitisation and online access of cultural material and digital preservation (evaluation) https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/11837-Digitisation-and-online-access-of-cultural-material-and-digital-preservation-evaluation-_en

3. Key stakeholders of digital cultural heritage policies

The inDICEs Policy Brief is directed to four key stakeholder groups essential to shaping the future cultural heritage ecosystem:

1. **Policy makers at the EU and national levels** involved in decision making relevant to the CHI sector.
2. **Heritage Networks** (e.g., Europeana network association and Europeana Aggregators Forum, NEMO) on European and national, regional, cross-sectoral levels.
3. **Cultural Heritage Institutions** and the sector at large.
4. **Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) professionals** and **other relevant stakeholders collaborating with CHIs** (enterprises from other sectors, etc.)

inDICEs' policy recommendations are intended for implementation at local, national or European levels to better prepare the CHIs for the digital transformation and empower the systemic changes needed in order to make CHIs open and digital, facilitating active participation based on reuse of digital collections.

The main beneficiary of all the recommendations remain the citizens, represented through various communities, whose needs are to be addressed by CHIs creating space for citizen engagement and contributions, thus influencing their sense of belonging, social cohesion, and quality of life in general.

4. Context: digital transformation of the European cultural heritage sector

Need for relevance and sustainable development

The European Cultural Heritage (CH) sector is in a phase of a major digital transition, with cultural heritage institutions observing and witnessing the different ways in which people interact with heritage (both on-site and online). One can note a variety of interactions with heritage collections by various communities, varying from spectatorship practices to active creation or co-creation. Increasingly, cultural heritage institutions have started exploring these types of interactions and have been redefining their role and mission, taking into account the impact they have in many areas of social life. At the same time, in 2021 the New European Bauhaus[4] initiative was introduced by the European Commission, bringing focus onto culture and heritage in a political and economic context, including sustainable environmental solutions and social wellbeing. In addition, the COVID-19

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[4] https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en

pandemic has forced CHIs to imagine new, hybrid models for the sector. Many CHIs decided or were pressed to take a 'crash course' in digital transformation, pivoting their activities online, experimenting with new formats, tools, and new ways of communicating with relevant communities.

Shaping dialogue with digital heritage communities

In order to remain relevant in the changing socioeconomic landscape, cultural heritage institutions must embed their operations within the communities and networks they aim to serve. ICOM recognises this in its newly released museum definition[5] by making, for the first time, a direct reference to collaborations and dialogue with communities. Also the Council of Europe Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention, 2005)[6] promotes a wider understanding of heritage and its relationship to communities and society. The time has come to apply the same vision in the digital realm, namely by fostering the recognition of (new or existing) digital heritage communities that live around — and are fed by — specific virtual cultural assets, e.g. from the digital collections of local museums and libraries to cult movies preserved in fan archives, etc. Digital heritage needs to be better situated in relation to communities and society, and at the same time the production of digital assets and digital spaces need to better support social and community engagement.

Quality-focused approach to digitisation

Digitisation is still a significant area in the heritage sector, with many basic challenges present in the daily operations of cultural heritage institutions. The long-term management of digitised and born-digital collections following international preservation standards and protocols requires considerable investments (in hardware, software, licences, electricity, and last but not least, expert knowledge). In the European Commission's recent recommendation on a common European data space for cultural heritage,[7] it is stated that digital preservation goals may include not only cultural heritage assets that are considered a priority for digitisation, but also previously digitised assets that require revisiting and repeated digitisation of higher quality. Digitisation has therefore to some extent become a repetitive activity constantly searching for improved quality, also taking into account the needs of the users and potential reuse of the digitised collections.

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[5] https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/
[6] https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention
[7] https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-proposes-common-european-data-space-cultural-heritage

CHIs stewarding development of digital public spaces

Important shifts in how cultural heritage institutions see their mission have led to greater focus on communities and societal goals, as opposed to strategies focused solely on cultural goals. We see CHIs experimenting with taking on a stewardship role for the whole of the online environment. This is aligned with a vision of digital public space in which the internet is seen not as a market, but a place where we live together as a society. In Europe today, a range of activities are taking place that can be framed as building a digital public space. Tellingly, participation in a digital public space is one of the Digital Principles proposed recently by the European Commission.[8] As part of the path to the Digital Decade strategy, several steps have already been undertaken — for example, the development of common data spaces (including ones for cultural heritage and for media) or regulation of online platforms. This approach further prioritises the common good, the empowerment of citizens, and conditions for debate and sharing of ideas. Cultural heritage institutions should lead the way in designing and stewarding online spaces that are optimised towards civic engagement and community building through cultural value chains, instead of prioritising economic gains. In order to differ from the business model of the attention economy (constituting the logic of the mass media in contemporary social life, focusing on very few creative producers as the key manifestation of the accumulation of attention capital),[9] CHIs should push towards promotion of the value of the common digital space, prioritising societal objectives before any financial profit.

New impact and legal frameworks

Nevertheless, the current focus on quantitative targets in reporting and evaluation practices imposed on cultural heritage institutions by their organisers — referring mainly to content digitisation and online accessibility and statistics on online users — prevents them from fully understanding and embracing the difference they make for various communities accessing and reusing their collections, services and products. inDICEs aims to empower cultural heritage institutions in promoting the reuse of digital cultural heritage in education, research, creation and recreation. We encourage sharing based on the understanding that this is part of the mission of cultural heritage institutions across Europe. And it is not separable from their legal obligations. To achieve this, CHIs guided by a public mission should be equipped with appropriate legal instruments. In particular, it seems necessary to remodel the current shape of intellectual property law, including copyright, to allow for the implementation of this public mission.[10]

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[8] https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/declaration-european-digital-rights-and-principles

[9] See "Deliverable D1.7: Guidelines for the best practices regarding the maximisation of the impact of digitisation of cultural heritage"

[10] See inDICEs D3.5 A white paper with legal recommendations (the deliverable will be published in December 2022)

Ethics of open sharing

However, when acting in favour of removing barriers to the use of digital cultural heritage, one must simultaneously consider the ethics of digital open sharing and the reuse of data, with the possible negative implications, stemming either from direct harm created through the sharing and reuse or maximised by it. While ethics must be taken into consideration within both the physical and digital, broader access to collections via digital means might amplify certain ethical issues. Sharing digital cultural heritage alongside descriptive metadata might be harmful, contested or offensive to an individual or a community. Certain heritage objects might have been obtained through wrong, violent and/or imposed circumstances, e.g. genocide or colonialism, or may depict certain people or communities through the lenses of perpetrators (with all the bias and prejudice related to this gaze); this entails a certain responsibility towards the community. Some heritage might be recognised as conflicting, and thus requires CHIs to enable negotiations and introduce procedures that will allow conflicted voices to be heard. Ethical practices of sharing digital collections must be therefore embraced in CHIs' daily operations, not only in their high profile policies. Ethical considerations should become one of crucial elements of curatorial and archiving strategies, along with the integration of emerging technologies, especially artificial intelligence and the risk of potential algorithmic bias.

Given all the turbulence in the current world and the dynamically changing value models functioning between cultural heritage institutions and society, CHIs, supported by the relevant stakeholders and communities that they need to build relationships with, need to introduce measures that will allow them to prepare for the digital transformation and will ensure they fulfil their mission in the digital realm meeting the communities' needs. The research conducted under inDICEs[11] proves that CHIs must learn new mechanisms for more community-focused, including community-driven, cultural production in order to address a very relevant gap in online participation which doesn't immediately translate into actual active participation. The best way to achieve this goal is to rethink the reuse of cultural heritage collections by turning them into a driving force empowering active participation among various communities.

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[11] https://indices-culture.eu/deliverables/

5. Recommendations

The policy brief puts forth a total of fifteen recommendations, grouped into recommendation areas centred around five overarching themes:

#1 Recommendation Area

Anchor cultural heritage institutions' public mission in the digital realm

Digital institutional transformation

Change in the mindset of cultural heritage institutions is needed if they are to respond to the current challenges and opportunities related to digital transformation and new ways of empowering various communities. There is a growing need for autonomy and sustainability in the heritage sector,[12] with high demand for new value-based business models for cultural heritage institutions — models that would allow them to find their way in the contemporary, community-focused, sustainable and ethical realm. Digital is a transversal theme that is part of all cultural heritage institution operations, and is not limited to external communication or marketing activities. It is an integral part of preservation and exploitation services, including community-based services. New skills and self-positioning, understanding of the tasks and the organisation's mission online are crucial to efficiently execute the CHI's role, also by building, maintaining and developing relations with current and new communities and society.

Focus on communities

Cultural heritage institutions shouldn't attempt to "be everything": they need to adopt a clear focus, also to allow them to become a part of innovation processes. They should be able to embrace a tailored digital transformation process based on their core mission and available resources, targeting communities relevant to them. They need to recognise that, by definition, the digital space, in its plurality, is not just a marketplace, but the whole society experiencing a digital transformation.
To achieve this, CHIs need to be able to experiment, take on risks and self-assess their impact. There is also a need for community-focused impact assessment mechanisms within cultural heritage institutions, verifying their relationship with communities. Furthermore, their founding and organising entities need to acknowledge the need for implementing new evaluation mechanisms based on values.

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[12]
https://pro.europeana.eu/post/digital-transformation-in-the-time-of-covid-19-sense-making-workshops-findings-and-outcomes

Copyright enhancing public mission of CHIs

Copyright restricts access to, and the sharing of, cultural heritage. Given their special public mission, cultural heritage institutions must facilitate an understanding of public reuse conditions which includes making use of clear and understandable rules (e.g. in the case of faithful reproductions of public domain works), copyright terms, and licensing models, such as Creative Commons licences and tools, as well as Rights Statements, which will in turn help to maintain interoperable and multilingual standards that respond to the needs of CHIs and relevant communities.[13] However, in the long term, a new policy — preferably a reform of copyright law — must be introduced that will allow CHIs to fully embrace their public mission and bring down copyright barriers to access and reuse of digital cultural heritage.

Adequate financial support

In order for cultural heritage institutions to remain faithful to their public mission in the digital realm and to build upon the potential of the interoperable digital public space, additional support and resources need to be secured. It is crucial to ensure organisations have the capacity and expertise to develop their digital maturity, to support digital innovation, and to provide sustainable services and centres of research and excellence. Only with continuous and long-term financial backing and steered transition, supported by public bodies and other funders, will their actions be built on a social impact-based value chain ensuring that they are relevant to society.

1.1 Introduce fit-for-purpose impact assessment mechanisms and evaluation processes in cultural heritage institutions

Policy makers at the EU and national level   Heritage Networks   Cultural Heritage Institutions

Fit for purpose and tailored impact assessment mechanisms, metrics and processes should be integrated into cultural heritage institutions at theEuropean and national levels (e.g. in annual reports, funding programmes and schemes), allowing the cultural heritage sector and all relevant stakeholders to fully understand the social and economic impact of digital transformation in their respective sectors, and address the importance of innovative and need-based (re)use of cultural assets.[14] We encourage cultural heritage professionals, with adequate support from public institutions and funders, to design, measure and narrate their impact with a wider perspective, guided by the principles of Culture 3.0[15] and its eight impact tiers strongly embedded in societal needs.[16]

To facilitate this shift, both to demonstrate the impact of the (mostly public) cultural heritage sector on the society and to understand its value and relationship with communities, different types of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and impact indicators have to be introduced, including quantitative and qualitative metrics supporting self-assessment by institutions.

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[13] For example the OpenGLAM movement, see Critical OpenGLAM: Towards [Appropriate] Open Access to Cultural Heritage, https://openglam.pubpub.org/

[14] See "inDICEs Change Impact Assessment Theoretical Framework" (to be published in March 2023)

[15] See "Deliverable D1.1: inDICEs Methodological Toolbox", www.indices-culture.eu/deliverables

[16] See "Deliverable D1.7: Guidelines for the best practices regarding the maximisation of the impact of digitisation of cultural heritage"

1.2 Create and expand existing capacity building opportunities for cultural heritage institutions, empowering their operations in the digital realm

Policy makers at the EU and national level   Heritage Networks

Further tailored capacity building opportunities should be introduced and financed at the European and national levels, allowing cultural heritage professionals to fully embrace the challenges and opportunities tied to digital transformation and the potential innovative role of cultural heritage institutions in the digital operational mode. Capacity building should reflect the fact that digitisation is a cross departmental issue that needs to be recognised and addressed at all the operational levels. The main focus of capacity building efforts, especially through funded training for CHIs, should seek to achieve:

- New knowledge, competencies, skills and behaviours in cultural heritage institutions, empowering them to be fully operational in the digital realm in line with their public mission and in connection to all the relevant communities;
- Set of skills and awareness on how to use copyright to fulfil the public mission of the cultural heritage institution, empowering the reuse of their collections, especially in the digital realm;
- A mindset shift among cultural heritage professionals, promoting more agile, public interest led, democratic and community-focused, and if adequate also community-driven, operational models.

Capacity building should not be limited, however, only to CHI professionals. It must also involve education and empowerment of the stakeholder communities.

1.3 Facilitate cross-sectoral knowledge exchange, dialogue and collaboration opportunities leading to greater reuse of cultural heritage

Heritage Networks   Cultural Heritage Institutions   Other stakeholders

The digital realm should create more space for previously limited cross-sectoral collaborations that deserve to be further explored and encouraged as they support continuous growth of the heritage sector and its professionals in the dynamically changing digital ecosystem. Researchers, educators, creators, and technology experts are very much interested in and actively reuse heritage content. The value of these reuses and collaborations has to be better recognised and extended for different stakeholders, and at various (local, regional, national, European) levels, showing their contribution to boosting innovation, creativity, and knowledge growth in the heritage domain. Cultural heritage institutions need support to be more open and active in embracing the opportunities these collaborations bring.

Therefore, awareness raising actions, the creation of participatory platforms, and interaction opportunities enabling dialogue and exchange between professionals coming from various domains are key, as they may lead to new initiatives supporting a more profound and diverse reuse of heritage collections. These processes should be preferably facilitated by bigger heritage networks, operating as knowledge and network hubs. Designed as inclusive and democratic, the new initiatives will introduce external voices to the decision making processes and thus will foster joint, community-focused modelling of future heritage initiatives.

The above main recommendation is expanded by four additional recommendations:

#2 Recommendation Area

Empower democratic and community-focused cultural heritage institutions

Towards Active Participation

To embrace their role in the dynamically evolving digital realm, cultural heritage institutions need to become genuinely community-focused, better understanding the needs of their users, as well as understanding the difference between relationships built in analogue and digital spaces. Integrating democratisation processes based on inclusivity and equity into daily operations will turn them into active, participation-oriented and relevant components of society, strongly embedded in communities, responding to their greater needs.

From Knowledge Gatekeepers to Community Enablers

With some support from the policy makers and the sector, and taking into account the creative potential they entail, cultural heritage institutions will become enablers for a wider range of interest parties to engage with heritage. Cultural heritage institutions need to acknowledge their role as leaders in creating opportunities for the communities to get involved, to co-create, and to actively reuse heritage collections and the knowledge gathered in their vaults. For that to be possible, CHIs have to also consciously transition away from seeing their role primarily as knowledge gatekeepers.

Operationalisation of recommendation #2

2.1 Review and enhance cultural heritage institutions' operational principles and practices to support participation, co-creation and community focus

Heritage Networks   Cultural Heritage Institutions

We encourage cultural heritage institutions to become more profoundly empowered to engage with communities, both online and offline. Cultural heritage institutions will only become genuinely participative and community-focused when giving their communities the space (digital and analogue) they need. This can be space to gather, or space allowing for community involvement (e.g via consulting) in the decisional phases of the realisation of participative processes, and for use of the communities' knowledge to enrich the collections (eg. via crowdsourcing efforts or by collecting user generated content). For this, cultural heritage institutions need to have the freedom and capacity to create new inclusive and participatory operational models and procedures.

The new principles and practices might require the introduction of new professional roles in organisations, or the strengthening of existing roles of a similar profile that will contribute, structurally, to the transition process and managing new digital heritage communities, supporting sustainability, and empowering diversity. These new positions should be perceived as an essential part of the cultural heritage institution's core operational team.

2.2 Support the creation of innovative labs within cultural heritage institutions, leading to participatory reuse of digital heritage

Policy makers at the EU and national level   Heritage Networks   Cultural Heritage Institutions
Other stakeholders

To facilitate the shift towards a more community-focused environment, CHIs must be encouraged, through incentives such as access to more resources at the EU and national level, to turn into innovative labs: inclusive creative spaces open to new partnerships, innovation and dialogue. In order to remain relevant in the dynamically evolving digital realm, cultural heritage institutions need to be equally dynamic and eager to experiment and innovate, also in collaboration with different communities, including creators and technology experts. In order to be able to take on this task, cultural heritage institutions have to be allowed to become more "open to risk," i.e., have the ability to embrace and manage risks and have the right to fail (by absorbing impacts of and recovering from "failure"), similar to investment structures in the private sector.

Current legal and organisational frames for publicly funded cultural institutions restrain them from introducing more experimental approaches. Therefore, we encourage these legal and organisational funding frames to be revised, allowing for more flexibility and boldness in introducing operational models and strategies that match the mission of cultural heritage institutions to generate economic, social, and organisational value through participatory approaches.

2.3 Develop frameworks for digital community engagement

Heritage Networks   Cultural Heritage Institutions

Analogue and digital experiences should not be considered exclusive, but should instead be seen as complementary. At the same time, the need to understand the emerging and changing heritage communities is gaining importance. Therefore, the development of new research frameworks in cultural heritage institutions focused on better understanding of digital heritage communities should be supported, in order to better understand the newly forming or still evolving communities.[17]

To remain relevant to their communities and to create a true added value through their (digital) offers, cultural heritage institutions should be supplied with tested and harmonised methods and tools which allow them to understand their communities' needs and behaviours. This will enable them to compare and to reach their digital communities objectives, also keeping in mind ethical and privacy issues.

The research capacity should also empower cultural heritage institutions to create strategies allowing them to reforge passive community participation into active participation, encouraging stakeholders to become active contributors.

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[17] https://museum-id.com/digital-audience-research-understanding-visitors-by-elena-villaespesa/

#3 Recommendation Area

Prioritise purposeful digitisation supporting reuse of cultural heritage collections

Quality focus

The heritage sector needs to introduce a clear shift towards a more purposeful, qualitative approach in digitisation, leading to the introduction of digitisation for reuse, based on FAIR principles,[18] prioritising collections open for reuse. The discussion on openness and reuse practices should also apply to born-digital heritage collections. Adequate regulations of intellectual property law, including copyright, should directly enable the institution to both digitise and reuse the accumulated cultural heritage.

Environmental awareness

The digitalisation process is relying upon extensive ICT infrastructure which entails a meaningful consumption of resources and energy and thus directly and indirectly contributes to environmental pressures and the intensification of climate change. The heritage sector must better understand and seek to mitigate the environmental impacts of digital activities.

Inclusivity

Digitisation must become an inclusive process, engaging communities and external partners from outside of the cultural heritage domain in digitisation policy making, introducing a bottom-up approach towards digitisation strategies based on the stakeholders' needs, and making sure that access and reuse of digitised collections is relevant to a wider group of stakeholders (researchers, educators, creatives, local communities, etc.) at different levels.

3.1 Prioritise digitisation funding programmes, legislation and policies facilitating reuse

Policy makers at the EU and national level

To support the growth of creative collaborations in the cultural sector digitisation for open use and reuse should be recognised as a priority in programmes and other funding streams available at the EU and national levels. One possible idea is to introduce a new European legal instrument for ensuring access and (re) use of high-quality cultural heritage resources coming from CHIs collections.[19] Collection holders willing to open their own ready-for-digitisation collections for reuse, and thus create space for various collaborations that boost innovation and creativity (in education, research, cultural and creative industries), deserve to be put forward, promoted and financially supported.

Legal frameworks that are applicable to cultural heritage institutions and internal policies need to thoroughly and cohesively support reuse of heritage collections. Policies need to incentivise this,

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[18] https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/

[19] See inDICEs D3.5 A white paper with legal recommendations ((the deliverable will be published in December 2022)

while also providing legal safeguards (like a dedicated exception) for cultural heritage professionals to easily clear rights to make cultural heritage available online, and legal safeguards for users of digital cultural heritage in their reuse activities. CHIs must be prevented from claiming copyright over content where they hold no rights (e.g., making users seek licences and pay fees to use works that should be free for everyone to use).

3.2 Pool infrastructures

Policy makers at the EU and national level   Heritage Networks

As cultural heritage institutions are investigating how to best focus their limited resources for maximum societal impact, we encourage investing in plans to fundamentally change the long-term management of assets towards adopting a vision of shared and harmonised infrastructures. These are understood as infrastructures in which the 'intellectual' management (cataloguing, rights management, access strategy) and intellectual ownership of collections remain with the host Cultural Heritage Institution, and in which the long-term storage and management of the digital collections is managed by an entity best equipped to do so. In many scenarios, especially when collection owners lack the suitable IT infrastructure, this most-suited party is a large and technically well-equipped cultural heritage organisation such as a national library or national cultural heritage institution. These "hubs" operate using the latest standards for preservation, records management, and publication of FAIR data, connecting also to infrastructures such as the European Data Space for Cultural Heritage. Specifically in regard to providing access to collections, there are many possible scenarios for collection owners. They can still operate collection portals (referring to the digital collections hosted by third parties), or take advantage of the channels provided by the hubs, increasing the visibility of the collections. Other scenarios can involve adopting a combination of the two.

The exact nature of the conditions are described in service level agreements between the parties involved, providing clear division of responsibilities, costs and risk management. Decoupling the intellectual management of collections (still the responsibility of the collection owner) and the management of IT infrastructure (most suited party, or hubs) has multiple advantages for the collection owner entering a contract with a hub, as (i) it frees up resources that can be spent on access and programming that may have direct societal impact, (ii) they are in a position to directly connect their collections to (inter)national infrastructures, educational portals, and other channels operated by hubs, increasing the visibility and reach of their collections. Apart from these operational benefits, pooling of technical resources will also help reduce the environmental footprint of the sector as the number of operational IT infrastructures can be further optimised.

In this context, it is also worth mentioning open knowledge platforms run by communities, like the Wikimedia projects, notably Wikidata and Wikimedia Commons. These spaces allow CHIs to publish non-copyright limited vocabularies and digital objects respectively, allowing them to be used across Wikipedia platforms and thus increasing the impact of their collections to an international audience.

3.3 Ensure the participatory character of cultural heritage institutions' digitisation strategies

Heritage Networks	Cultural Heritage Institutions

In order to appear relevant and valuable to their communities with regard to accessibility and reuse of their collections, most cultural heritage institutions need to develop new, adjusted value proposals for digitisation. These revised approaches should empower a shift towards a more democratic, community-focused practice in digitisation strategies. Dialogue with various communities representing different domains and interests should be the starting point for needs-based digitisation plans, incorporated into general digitisation plans. Collections management should be led not only for preservation but with an audience in mind, prioritising digitisation activities with purpose in mind - e.g. for a particular target audience.

To successfully implement such a working model, cultural heritage institutions must adopt a new mindset based on their knowledge of intellectual property rights (verifying what is legally allowed), impact assessments (allowing a better understanding of the needs and demonstrating the change delivered by such an approach),[20] and community co-creation (ability to identify and be in dialogue with different communities, encouraging them to share their needs).[21]

#4 Recommendation Area

Make the heritage sector a pillar of the European digital public space

Broader, societal perspective

Recognising its mission in a broader, community-focused and socially responsible dimension, the heritage sector should support the establishment of a public space for cultural heritage: an interoperable ecosystem for cultural and creative content, in which public, civic and grassroots infrastructures, platforms and services play the main role.

Heritage pioneering the way

The current policy debate on the European common data space for cultural heritage is the best place to anchor further policies. The development of the digital public space will require not just creating new infrastructures, but also transforming organisational cultures and enhancing individual competences.

Funding

To ensure the quality of the initiative and its long-lasting impact, funding for building this ecosystem should be provided in the Digital Europe programme, and connected with the European heritage common data space.

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[20] See "inDICEs Change Impact Assessment Theoretical Framework" (to be published in March 2023)
[21] See "Deliverable D1.7: Guidelines for the best practices regarding the maximisation of the impact of digitisation of cultural heritage"

4.1 Accelerate interoperability of digital heritage collections by adoption of shared standards

Policy makers at the EU and national level   Heritage Networks   Cultural Heritage Institutions

Today we have the means to create a genuinely connected web of culture. At the same time, we have to deal with the "graveyard of heritage platforms", relics of completed initiatives with no sustainability, often extinct due to a lack of connections with the broader ecosystem. The principle of interoperability, as applied to digital heritage, will make it more accessible, resilient and relevant. It will also enable CHIs to enrich available datasets by making them interconnected and better structured.

Based on the European Strategy for Data, interoperability is a fundamental principle underlying European common data spaces. Therefore, the cultural heritage sector should support the establishment of strong interoperability rules and standards, as these will in particular benefit the reuse of digital heritage. Ensuring that digital archiving standards are equally relevant for digitised and born-digital collections, allowing users to access old databases and platforms from past projects, is paramount to preserving the work of past EU funded initiatives.

4.2 Foster development of the common European data space for cultural heritage

Policy makers at the EU and national level   Cultural Heritage Institutions

The common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage will be one of many data spaces developed in the coming years in Europe. This space has the capacity to serve as a European ecosystem that supports the mission of public institutions, but also allows civic and commercial actors to become more active in this space.

The design and development of this space can take place on the basis of data-sharing infrastructures and relevant frameworks and standards for the sector developed, among others, by Europeana. Cultural heritage institutions should have the ambition of establishing best practices for making heritage data and content interoperable, leading to greater reuse and allowing true participation. The experience of developing a common data space for cultural heritage should be the first phase in the development of the broader digital public space (mapping stakeholders, levels of participation and shared values). Both spaces must rely on democratic values and be driven by the public mission of their creators. They should also be aimed at empowering the society at large, providing them with spaces that encourage inclusivity, dialogue, and the exchange of knowledge. Starting with heritage data, considered as a public asset, we can build further spaces and forms of engagement.

4.3 Encourage Cultural Heritage Institutions to play an active role in exploring the creation of participatory platforms which support reuse

Heritage Networks   Cultural Heritage Institutions   Other stakeholders

According to the vision of a European digital public space, over the coming decade a greater role in the online ecosystem will be played by non-commercial platforms, services and apps, including those developed by public institutions, civic organisations and projects, and members of the public, or through collaboration of all of the above.

Cultural heritage institutions should play an active role in experiments with participatory platforms, based on a combined vision of reuse of heritage as a commons and the engagement of communities. These platforms should benefit from modern concepts of participatory online spaces, while adapting experiences with community engagement developed by cultural heritage institutions in their current practice, in real life.

Digital heritage platforms, built on the values of cultural engagement and co-creation can serve as incubators and laboratories for broader civic, democratic engagement.

#5 Recommendation Area

Design a model for ethical cultural heritage practices

Duty of care

The ongoing socio-economic challenges in Europe and on an international scale call for novel and systemic ethics-sensitive cultural heritage institutions. Institutions are focused on their duty of providing access to heritage collections, while upholding their responsibility to manage the way the objects and data are being shared with wider communities. This can be achieved through the introduction of more responsible and ethical curatorial strategies and the democratisation of processes in cultural heritage institutions.

Broad take on ethics

Moreover, cultural heritage institutions have a mission to provide information in a reliable, transparent fashion, and thus can and should provide spaces for democratic and transparent dialogue to engage and empower different communities and broader society. The same rules also apply to the adoption of tech by cultural heritage institutions (eg. heritage for ethical AI) as well as CHIs' environmental responsibility (specifically in regard to the digital realm).

Gap between strategies and daily operations

There is a perceptible gap between existing ethical policies and codes of ethics in the sector and their translation into daily operations in a constantly and dynamically changing world. The challenges and resistance to the addition of new translations into daily operations must be discussed at an international level, and lead to the integration of guidelines and strategies into the daily operations of heritage professionals.

5.1 Identify and address current ethical questions relevant to the heritage sector

Heritage Networks   Cultural Heritage Institutions

The heritage sector needs to place ethical questions in the centre of global conversations, e.g. by creating spaces for exchange and dialogue among concerned professionals. The first step for cultural heritage institutions is to re-define what ethical means in their everyday work, in operations, and with their communities of interest, taking into account new challenges arising in the global context and bringing to the forum new ethical questions.

A cross-sectoral think-tank representing various backgrounds and expertise from inside and outside of CHIs (including other sectors such as education and research, or environment) could address these issues and facilitate the dialogue. The debate on ethical cultural heritage institutions will become more meaningful when leveraged by the creation of a pan-European register of good or current practices related to contemporary ethical challenges in cultural heritage institutions: access to content, the quality and language of metadata and wider annotations, climate sustainability, treatment of sensitive content (traditional, involving children, obtained without consent, etc.), decolonising collections, and links to new technology (bias in AI). The cross-domain expert group and the register could be called to life and maintained by heritage networks already involved in capacity building and high-level discussion steering.

5.2 Revisit ethical strategies in cultural heritage institutions
Policy makers at the EU and national level   Heritage Networks

Ethical questions and challenges need to be recognised as important elements of CHIs' operations. As a first step, the task requires an overview of existing CH-led actions addressing broad ethical questions to define successful and efficient methods and strategies, but also to understand current gaps and barriers. In the context of reuse, the priority is to ensure the ethical management of digital cultural heritage collections, including the reviewing of the metadata language used to describe heritage, to ensure it does not use offensive or harmful terms. It should stress the relevance of an inclusive display and application of a technology (AI) where bias is mitigated, etc. CHIs must be transparent with users about possible sensitive issues in their collections,[22] and encourage good practice in their reuse activities, also by visually marking these as 'sensitive content' or by refraining from digitising this content entirely.

5.3 Empower a stewardship mindset in cultural heritage institutions
Cultural Heritage Institutions   Heritage Networks

To stimulate public reuse of digital collections leading to the generation of new knowledge and ideas, heritage professionals must give up their traditional roles as gatekeepers of collections and knowledge, and instead act as community enablers and stewards of collections and knowledge. This mindset change and bigger capacity building efforts are crucial to avoiding persistent copyright-related bad practices in the heritage sector, e.g. claiming copyright when no rights exist, or when CHI is not the rightsholder. etc. Such practices need to be addressed immediately, with an aim to protect the public domain[23] from additional copyright layers[24] and to remove unjustified barriers to reuse.

6. Infographic

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[22] See, for example, DPLA: https://dp.la/about/harmful-language-statement.
[23] https://www.create.ac.uk/blog/2022/01/07/21-for-2021-digital-heritage-and-the-public-domain/
[24]
https://creativecommons.org/2022/04/04/cc-publishes-policy-paper-titled-towards-better-sharing-of-cultural-heritage-an-agenda-for-copyright-reform/

inDICEs POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

TOWARDS COMMUNITY-FOCUSED CULTURAL HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS IN THE DIGITAL REALM

RECOMMENDATION AREA #1

ANCHOR CULTURAL HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS' PUBLIC MISSION IN THE DIGITAL REALM

Introduce fit-for-purpose impact assessment mechanisms and evaluation processes in cultural heritage institutions

Create and expand existing capacity building opportunities for cultural heritage institutions, empowering their operations in the digital realm

Facilitate cross-sectoral knowledge exchange, dialogue and collaboraation opportunities leading to greater reuse of cultural heritage

RECOMMENDATION AREA #2

EMPOWER DEMOCRATIC AND COMMUNITY-FOCUSED CULTURAL HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS

Review and enhance cultural heritage institutions' operational principles and practices to support participation, co-creation and community focus

Support the creation of innovative labs within cultural heritage institutions, leading to participatory reuse of digital heritage

Develop frameworks for digital community engagement

RECOMMENDATION AREA #3

PRIORITISE PURPOSEFULL DIGITISATION SUPPORTING REUSE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS

Prioritise digitisation funding programmes, legislation and policies facilitating reuse

Pool infrastructures

Ensure the participatory character of cultural heritage institutions' digitisation strategies

RECOMMENDATION AREA #4

MAKE THE HERITAGE SECTOR A PILLAR OF THE EUROPEAN DIGITAL PUBLIC SPACE

Accelerate interoperability of digital heritage collections by adoption of shared standards

Foster development of the common European data space for cultural heritage

Encourage Cultural Heritage Institutions to play an active role in exploring the creation of participatory platforms which support reuse

RECOMMENDATION AREA #5

DESIGN A MODEL FOR ETHICAL CULTURAL HERITAGE PRACTICES

Identify and address current ethical questions relevant to the heritage sector

Revisit ethical strategies in cultural heritage institutions

Empower a stewardship mindset in cultural heritage institutions

MEANING OF THESE ICONS

Policy makers at the EU and national level

Heritage Networks

Cultural Heritage Institutions

Other stakeholders

7.

inDICEs Measuring the Impact of Digital Culture

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