

Debate on Perspectives of Digital Cultural Heritage in the fields of Cultural Mediation, Education and Tourism

The debate took place after the presentations of the workshop about tools and experiences related to digital story telling, mainly created in the framework of AthenaPlus project. It was focused on perspectives of DCH in the fields of cultural mediation, education and tourism in Europe.

The participants of this round table were outstanding professionals in the field of DCH in Europe, with a large experience:

- Rossella Caffo, from Michael Culture Association - **RC**
- Melanie Leroy-Terquem, from National French Library (BNF) – **ML-T**
- Monika Hagedorn-Saup, from NEMO – **MH-S**
- Enric Senabre Hidalgo, from Europeana - **ES**

Moderator : David David Iglésias Franch, Ajuntament de Girona



INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the debate, the moderator, David Iglésias (SGDAP-Ajuntament de Girona) focused on 2 ideas written by the Comité des Sages at the report “**The New Renaissance**” (2010) that is a reflection on bringing Europe’s Cultural Heritage online:

- First. About the idea of **access**. “If one word should encompass and summarise the vision of the Comité des Sages, it would be « access ». When it comes to our common cultural heritage, there is no bigger challenge, there is no more urgent question than to secure the access of current and future generations to this heritage. Access to the largest population, both European and non-European. And access to one of the richest cultural heritages in the world, a universal common good.”
- Second. About the idea of **future**. “Our cultural heritage is not only the legacy of the past, but is a body of knowledge, imagination and creativity which is constantly evolving and growing every day. Today’s wealth of cultural expressions and knowledge will be our common cultural heritage tomorrow. Therefore, although the recommendations focus on digitisation and the cultural heritage from the past, they always include what is added in the present because the past and the present must be available to future

generations. One of our core missions is to ensure full access to cultural expressions and knowledge of the past, the present and the future.”

At the first round, the participants explained the different experiences in DCH as representatives of national and international institutions. They were also asked to talk about **future perspectives** concerning DCH in the fields of Education, Cultural Mediation and Tourism, at European level, and about the **strategy of the European Commission**.

MH-S. Nemo it is a network of European Museum Organizations hosted in Germany. The network was created for cooperation and one of the aspects is training. They learn from each other. Among the courses they organize, there are the ones about Digital Storytelling. They also organise Webinars to discuss about different topics, i.e., there is one preview about creative museums. It is always important to discuss about how to use digital media to communicate.

ES. Europeana is working in new ways for public access to its contents and they are exploring with technologies. One example of this approach is Europeana Creatives. The idea is to foster the cooperation with different sectors: video games industry, local institutions, education, etc. Europeana enable access and enable tools (open source). One of the challenges is the sustainability of all this.

RC. Michael Association organise practical activities devoted to museums and memory institutions. Training activities are focused on digitisation, aggregation, discovery and creativity. Michael pretends to engage final users and in this sense it is in line with Europeana strategy to reach the final users and so to foster access to digital contents.

ML-T. The BNF developed Gallica (the digital library). They are redesigning the website in order to facilitate the reuse of contents. They offer tools to give additional services with the idea of reuse in mind. This is a first step of a long process that pretends to engage final users.

After this general introduction the debate started. The questions can be grouped in two main blocks: the first one related to opportunities for DCH and the second one related to difficulties. In the following text we reproduce the questions and the most relevant opinions given by the members of the round table.

OPPORTUNITIES

GLAM sector are responsible for heritage. They have the contents. On the other side Creative Industries have the technology and probably the ideas on how to succeed in the market with these new products / services. How can creative industries be attracted by Cultural Heritage?. Are there real possibilities for business? What is the challenge for public bodies?

MH-S. There is a business for Creative Industries. Memory institutions alone don't have the technology and the knowledge needed to disseminate contents. It is very important to work together with Creative Industries, cooperating, co-creating and dialoguing of both sectors.

ES. Creative Industries are not only big companies but also individuals that are passionate and that could do some business with memory institutions. Collaboration is needed in order to understand each other.

RC. It is important to convince cultural institutions that there are benefits also for them by opening the contents for creative industries. We are creating a market with the cultural heritage and that means benefits for society, like creating new jobs. For example, there is a need for digitisation of contents and that could foster the creation of a digitisation market.

Family and personal memories can linked to the creation of the memory of the community based on the individual memory and the reuse of this Cultural Heritage. For the first time in the

History of Humanity, the majority of the population has the capacity to create records relating to their personal memory both as an individual and as a part of a family or social collective. However the paradox is that, together with the resources to produce and share information and records of all kinds, the risk of losing all of this generated memory has also greatly increased, either through technological issues or simply by the great mass of information we create. Is there an opportunity for these personal memories to be part of the future cultural heritage? Are there any initiatives to take into account?

ML-T. To provide good services to individuals we need tools easy to use, enough open and user friendly. Everybody can benefit for digitisation process and so, we should think on the best way to do this. Provably, in the genealogy field we could find good examples.

RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES

It looks like there are many opportunities for general public to access to cultural heritage in order to be educated and also for entertainment. However there are also some drawbacks that make this difficult for many people. One of the main difficulties is languages. How can we make DCH accessible to everybody if we cannot solve the language problem? Are semantic technologies the best solution? Or maybe we can trust on online dictionaries?

MH-S. Technology has developed so much, but it doesn't look like you can do things automatically. However, you can do a lot semi-automatically as we have good technology available as LOD. If we properly implement it, it can help very much. We need to develop much more tools with this approach.

RC. Technology cannot solve any problem. We must accept that multilinguism is a difficulty, not only for Europeana, but also for National Systems. When national systems open their contents, they should also take care of translations.

Another drawback is generations. People responsible for DCH are not so young. People who most use these technologies are very young. How can young people feel attracted by our proposals? Is there a strategy from Europeana side?

ES. The strategy has to do with cooperation and co-creation. Europeana has some experiences that count with the participation of young people, like teenagers. They include them in its strategy.

RC. It is important to work with schools.

ML-T. It's more productive to think in communities or specific users of collections instead on focusing on age categories.

Difficulties for re-use because of **legal issues**: Public domain, copyright, image rights. Etc. What are the limits? Everything open and for free?

MH-S. Museum objects are usually copyrighted and this is a difficulty as there are several issues. Even if works are in public domain there are some issues because of legislation of different countries. It is a big deal and we have to find other solutions and that begins being more aware of the nowadays situation.

ML-T. BNF distinguish commercial use from non commercial use. In the first case, user it is charged. Instead, for non commercial use, contents are for free. However, the frontier between commercial and non commercial is not always clear in the digital field.

RC. It is important to differentiate licences of content from licences of metadata, because Europeana is only focused on licences for metadata. About works in public domain, the European Commission understands that they can also be charged because of services works.