

# **Cross-sector collaboration for digital museum and library projects**

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Thank you for the invitation to speak. Today I will provide some examples of cross-sector collaboration from the UK. I've also included some examples of different models for international collaboration. You'll know more about projects with Taiwanese collections or institutions than I will, and I'm looking forward to learning more in the discussion.

## Collaboration through...

- MCG, MCN: informal support through practitioner groups
- Culture24's Let's Get Real: action research
- Finland100, BnF: selective digitisation
- Sharing audience data: MHM, Audience Agency segments
- UK Libraries taskforce
- Sector-wide approach: DCMS #CultureIsDigital
- Europeana – international collaboration on shared infrastructure

An overview of the examples I'll be looking at today

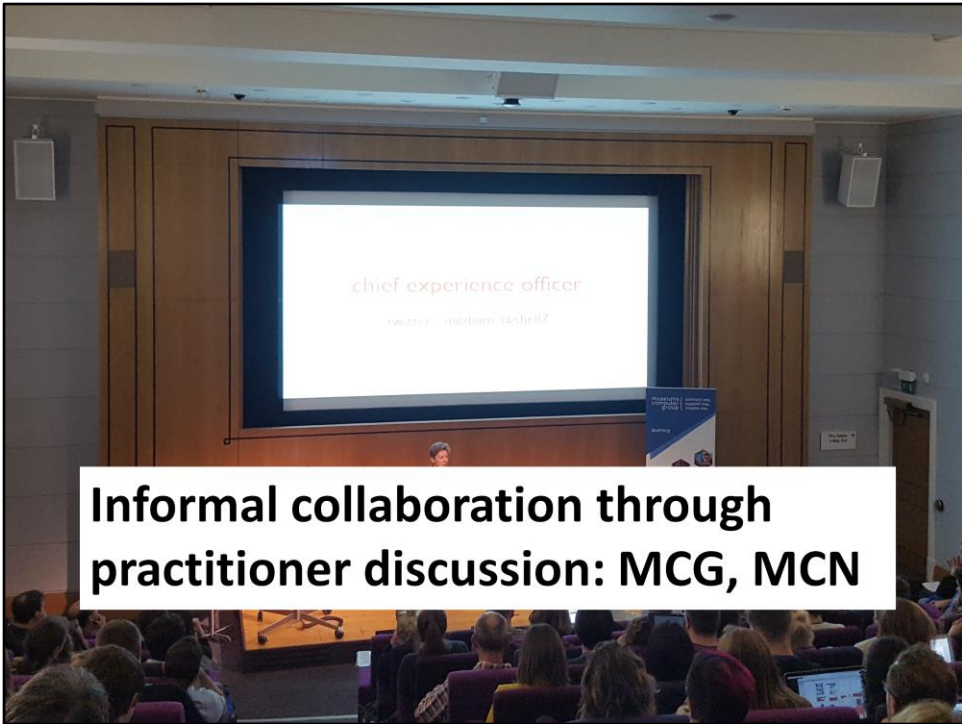
Museums Computer Group (MCG)

Museum Computer Network (MCN)

## About me

- Worked in web/database/digital teams in Museum Victoria (Australia), Museum of London (UK), Science Museum Group (UK), British Library; freelance consultancy
- Chair of the Museums Computer Group (2011-2017)
- Member of Executive Council for the Association for Computing in the Humanities (2013-2017)

Why am I here talking about this? Long-term digital museum and library practitioner. Blog at <http://www.openobjects.org.uk/> Research and publications mentioned at <http://www.miaridge.com/>



**Informal collaboration through  
practitioner discussion: MCG, MCN**

## Practitioner groups

- Museums Computer Group (1982, UK)
- 'Connecting, supporting, inspiring museum technology professionals'
- Annual conference and email discussion list - 1700 subscribers  
<http://museumscomputergroup.org.uk/>
- Museum Computer Network (1967, US)
- 'Advancing digital transformation in museums'
- Annual conference and email discussion list  
<http://mcn.edu/>

Combination of in-person events and discussion forums helps create community. As groups open to anyone interested, they connect the people responsible for devising strategies, implementing them by selecting or building software, running social media campaigns and education programmes, etc with each other. Wide-ranging discussions give people a sense of what other roles entail, and frequent job postings give people an opportunity to progress in their career and share experience between organisations.

## MCG discussion list

- Discussion forums: space for informal sharing of best practice, lessons learnt, new tech
- Sample subjects in July, August 2017:  
Bringing collections together, Digital Archives and Archaeology, intranets, eCommerce / Shopify, games in libraries, social media influencers, ticketing and membership systems, support for old web browsers, contactless donation, VR on a budget, maintaining gallery interactives, 3D digitisation, crowdsourcing, Minecraft, manuscript digitisation, rebranding  
<http://museumscomputergroup.org.uk/email-list/>

About 400 posts so far this year from a range of contributors. Archive goes back to 1998.

Effective in providing support and inspiration, at its best, but inconsistent – can depend on people being able to ask questions that both make sense to others and can be answered online. MCG committee worked hard to encourage constructive tone, discourage meanness on the list. The rest of the internet may be nasty, but the list should be a safer space. Less traffic as some conversation moved to social media, but still going very strong.



**Collaborating on research:  
Culture24's Let's Get Real action  
research projects**

Began in 2010, also North American versions more recently.

## Culture24's Let's Get Real

- First programme inspired by MCG discussion
- 'Action research' format means participants undertake and report on activities in their organisation e.g. on their website
- Format creates 'official' space for participants to think more strategically, experiment and learn together
- Supported by Culture24 staff and expert consultants

Began in 2010, now includes projects in North America.

Organisations contribute funds but also staff time. It's hard to find time to be more strategic or think about applying new methods to your work, but the 'action research' format means you are responsible for implementing some changes in your organisation. As an official work project, it's easier to block out the time required. It also means you have the support of your peers. It provides a chance to stop and assess the effectiveness of practices you might take for granted.



## Culture24's Let's Get Real

- Phase 1: How to evaluate success online?
- Phase 2: Digital Engagement
- Phase 3: Is your content fit for purpose?
- Phase 4: What's the story?
- Phase 5: What's the brand?
- Phase 6: Creating social value
- Let's Get Real – Young Audiences (Engaging children and young people online)

The projects to date.

Phase 4: develop a more coherent approach to online publishing.

Phase 3: Is your content fit for purpose? Get better at using digital tactics and building their own digital capacity. We all need to be better at understanding changing audience behaviours and to re-evaluate our current use of digital tactics.

Phase 2 report's recommendations provide invaluable insights and are a snapshot of the wider struggle the cultural sector faces to significantly improve its digital services. The Social Media Framework - a framework that summarises the relevant social media measurement methodologies, metrics and tools, based on specific strategic objectives. Social media tools comparison – a comparison of the tools identified during the project that can be used to track different social media channels.

## Culture24's Let's Get Real

Cross-sector data gathered through:

- Shared social media metrics to understand the effectiveness of your organisation's posts
- Applying the same Google Analytics user segments across a range of websites to benchmark visitor behaviours
- Running a one-question survey on why people were visiting a museum or venue website

Experiments include A/B testing of content

Some examples to make it more concrete... Each phase devised activities appropriate to the research question and participants

## **Collaboration through selective digitisation: Finland100, BnF**

Two models for collaboration through digitisation. Digitising items of interest to a specific country or theme can be a more lightweight way of cooperating than building shared infrastructure together.

# 'A Tale of Two Countries' by the Finnish Institute in London

Digitised historical material about the 'shared history of Finland and Britain and their cultural, political and economic relations'

[www.taleoftwocountries.fi](http://www.taleoftwocountries.fi)



GALLERY

VIDEO GREETINGS

GALLERY OF MEMORIES

SHARE YOUR MEMORY

ABOUT THE PROJECT

PARTNERS

THE FIN IN LON



**President Kekkonen meets the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan**

1961

CATEGORY

Society & Politics

PARTNER

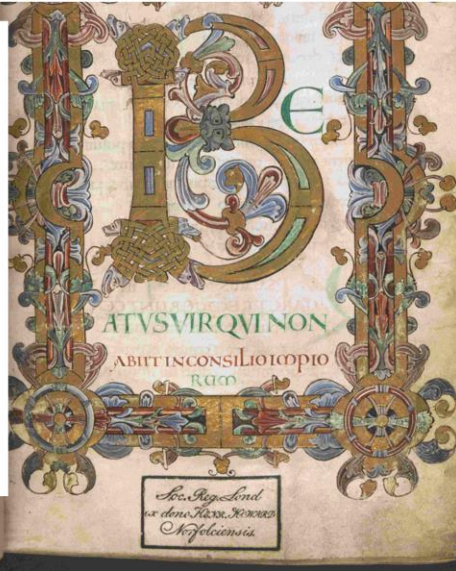
The Archives of Urho Kekkonen

The Finnish Institute in London supported a Finnish researcher working in the library to select items suitable for digitisation. She also had the opportunity to observe work of a range of departments in the BL.

Working directly with the library makes it easier to select items, as checking for copyright, conservation needs and other restrictions can take a lot of time.

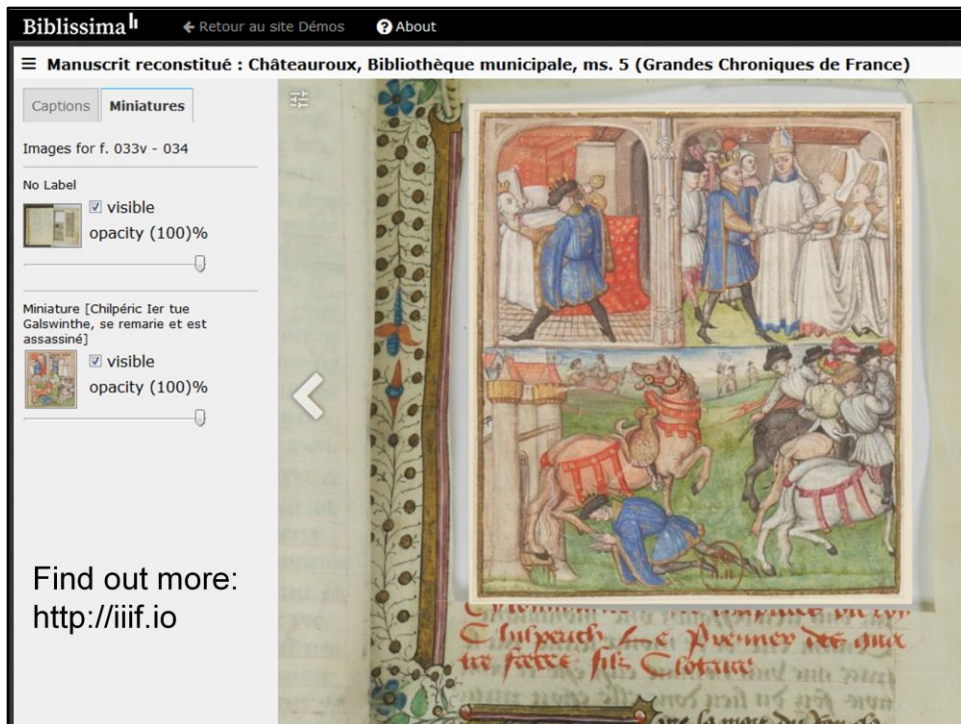
# Manuscript digitisation with shared standards

- BL and BnF each digitising 400 medieval manuscripts
- Using common technical standard (IIIF)
- Digitisation funded by the Polonsky Foundation



800 manuscripts from the years 700-1200 CE from the collections of the British Library and the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Original language is mostly French or Latin, so not easy for most of us to read! The websites created will help the general reader appreciate the manuscripts.

Find out more: <http://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2016/10/england-and-france-700-1200-manuscripts-from-the-biblioth%C3%A8que-nationale-de-france-and-the-british-li.html>



Using existing standards like IIF (International Image Interoperability Framework, <http://iif.io/>) means existing data mapping and publishing infrastructure can be used, and that the outputs can be re-used. It provides deep zoom and allows items to be embedded in other pages with all their metadata. There are a range of different viewers available for IIF images, and the same image can be viewed in different viewers, depending on the user's needs, including annotating images and comparing images side-by-side (e.g. two manuscript versions of the same text). This is an example from the IIF Mirador viewer.

In this example, an illuminated image was cut from a manuscript sometime in the past. Two different institutions might end up with part of the manuscript, but they can be recombined in the viewer to provide a view of the complete manuscript. (This also means the writing on the back of the image can be seen in the context of the whole page.)

**Collaboration through sharing  
audience data: MHM, Audience  
Agency segments**

# MHM 'Culture Segments'



## Enrichment

mature  
traditional  
heritage  
nostalgia



## Entertainment

consumers  
populist  
leisure  
mainstream



## Expression

receptive  
confident  
community  
expressive



## Perspective

settled  
self-sufficient  
focused  
contented



## Stimulation

active  
experimental



## Affirmation

self-identity  
aspirational



## Release

busy  
ambitious



## Essence

discerning  
spontaneous

<http://mhminsight.com/culture-segments>

Morris Hargreaves McIntyre created 'sector-specific segmentation system for culture and heritage organisations'. Not based on demographics, but on why people engage with cultural heritage. For a fee, you can include diagnostic questions in your visitor surveys to help understand who's visiting your venue (and who's not). Segments - groups of individuals with similar needs, wants, attitudes and motivations - can be targeted with specific marketing messages or products.

Find out more: <http://mhminsight.com/culture-segments>



## Audience Agency 'Audience Finder'

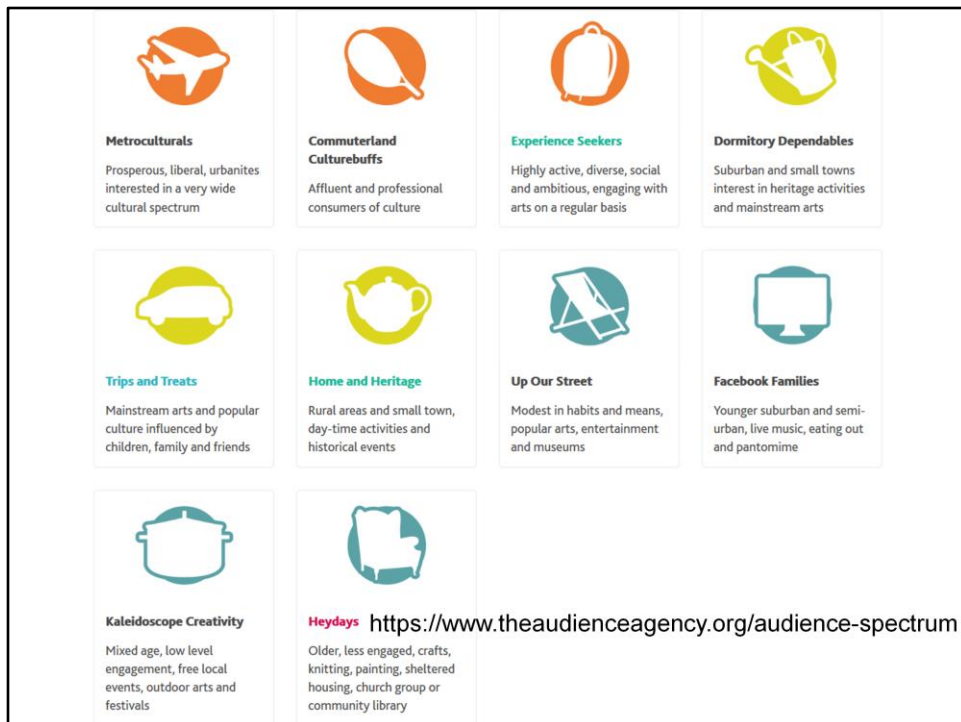
- Organisations funded by Arts Council England must contribute data; Audience Finder site helps people prepare standardised data.
  - Surveys: demographics, motivations
  - Box Office data: how far in advance do people book, how many book together, how much do they spend, how often do they book?
  - Website: visitor profiles and locations

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/npompm-funding-relationships-2015-18/npompm-funding-requirements>

<https://audiencefinder.org/about/>

<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/insight/data-collection-in-audience-finder>

Seems particular useful for performing arts, especially touring companies who don't have their own box office etc systems.



They also have their own segments... 'Audience Spectrum profiles the population at household and post-code levels and can be used as a tool for prospecting and data-tagging as well as profiling and mapping.'  
<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-spectrum>

### Taking Part Survey: Data Analysis Tools

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has published a set of online data analysis tools designed to make data from the Taking Part survey more accessible, allowing you to produce bespoke tables and explore the survey.

This application helps you to find the tool(s) that may be of interest to you. Simply select a category, question or question ID, or a tool and the table of contents below will update to show you the relevant questions and the tools in which they appear. Clicking on an arrow will take you directly to the tool.

Select Category: (All) | Select Question: (All) | Select Question ID: (All) | Search for Question: | Select Tool: (All)

Click on the arrow to navigate to the in depth analysis that relates to this question

			Tool 1 - Arts	Tool 1 - Other sectors	Tool 2 - Arts	Tool 2 - Free time etc.	Tool 2 - Other sectors	Tool 3 - Arts attendance	Tool 3 - Arts participation	Tool 3 - Other sectors	Tool 4 - All sectors	Tool 5 - All sectors
arcfreqr	How often in the last 12 months have you been to an archive centre or records office?	Archives	▶									
archiver	In the last 12 months have you been to an archive centre or records office?	Archives	▶						▶		▶	
intarc1	For what reason(s) did you visit an archive website in last 12 months? Complete a transaction (eg. order copies, make a viewing appointment)	Archives					▶					▶
intarc2	For what reason(s) did you visit an archive website in last 12 months? View digitised documents online	Archives					▶					▶
intarc3	For what reason(s) did you visit an archive website in last 12 months? Search a catalogue	Archives					▶					▶
intarc4	For what reason(s) did you visit an archive website in last 12 months? Find out about the archive (eg. opening hours)	Archives					▶					▶
intarc5	For what reason(s) did you visit an archive website in last 12 months? Some other reason	Archives					▶					▶
net5	In the last 12 months, have you used the internet to visit archive/record websites?	Archives										▶
voisec5	In the last 12 months, have you done any voluntary work connected to the archives?	Archives	▶							▶		▶
aachange	Has your arts attendance activity increased, decreased or stayed the same in the last 12 months?	Arts									▶	
aalfreq1	How often in the last 12 months have you been to a film at a cinema or other venue?	Arts	▶									
aalfreq2	How often in the last 12 months have you been to an exhibition or collection of art, photography or sculpture?	Arts	▶									
craftfreq	How often in the last 12 months have you been to a craft...	Arts	▶									

Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) also collect audience data. 'The Taking Part survey is a continuous face to face household survey of adults aged 16 and over and children aged 5 to 15 years old in England. It has run since 2005 and is the main evidence source for DCMS and its sectors. The survey's main objectives are to:

- provide a central, reliable evidence source that can be used to analyse cultural and sporting engagement, providing a clear picture of why people do or do not engage.
- meet the needs and interests of everyone who uses Taking Part data.
- underpin further research on driving engagement and the value and benefits of engagement. The survey is commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and three partner organisations (Arts Council England, Historic England and Sport England).'

Background: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/taking-part-survey>

Interactive visualisation:

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/taking.part.survey#!/vizhome/Dataanalysisistools-Home/TakingPartSurvey>

**Intra-sector collaboration: Libraries  
Taskforce**

## Libraries Taskforce

- Enabling 21<sup>st</sup> century libraries as 'vital community hubs' providing access to services and support
- Delivering recommendations from 'Independent Library Report for England' including 'a national digital library network'
- Find out more:  
<https://librariestaskforce.blog.gov.uk/>

2014 report recommended the 'provision of a national digital resource for libraries, to be delivered in partnership with local authorities', and a taskforce to provide a strategic framework. Digital network could help with basic things like providing wifi; overcoming disadvantages of distance for rural libraries; provide efficiencies and better customer service through shared services.

'Our ambition is for **everyone to:**

- choose to use libraries, because they see clear benefits and positive outcomes from doing so
- understand what library services offer, and how they can make the most of what's available to them
- be introduced to new ideas and opportunities, then given confidence and quick and easy access to tools, skills and information they need to improve their quality of life
- receive trusted guidance through the evolving information landscape and build the skills needed to thrive in a changing world'

<https://librariestaskforce.blog.gov.uk/2016/12/01/introducing-libraries-deliver/>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/388989/Independent\\_Library\\_Report-\\_18\\_December.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388989/Independent_Library_Report-_18_December.pdf)

## Libraries Taskforce 'core dataset for libraries'

Consistent dataset to enable decision-making to improve local library services, demonstrate impact on core outcomes, inform national advocacy

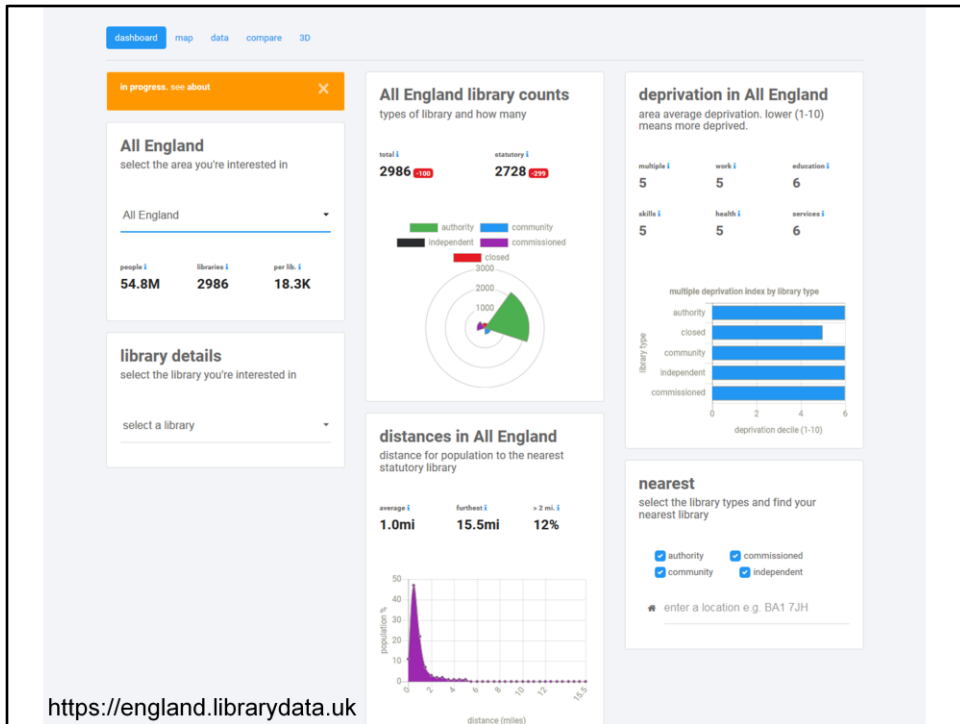
<https://librariestaskforce.blog.gov.uk/2017/07/20/a-core-dataset-for-libraries/>

Data on:

- Individual libraries
- Users
- Events
- Visits
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Public Lending Right (physical and e-books)
- Stock
- Finance
- Impact

As part of their work, 'establishing a core data set to support decision making'. 'We want the core dataset to be something which all library services will be encouraged to collect, use and publish. A consistent dataset can be used to help inform and improve local library service delivery, as well as being used for advocacy purposes at a local and national level (when aggregated). There may, of course, also be other data which authorities choose to collect in addition to this for their own local purposes.'  
<https://librariestaskforce.blog.gov.uk/2017/07/20/a-core-dataset-for-libraries/>

'We want to show the impact of libraries around the 7 Outcomes described in Libraries Deliver: Ambition: cultural and creative enrichment, increased reading and literacy, improved digital access and literacy, helping everyone to achieve their full potential, healthier and happier lives, greater prosperity and stronger, more resilient communities.'



A sample of reporting with collected data e.g. libraries per head of local population, how far they have to travel to get to a library branch. <https://england.librarydata.uk/>

## Single Library Digital Presence

Working towards a national 'standards-based digital platform', co-produced with library authorities, staff, readers to:

- Make libraries easier to find and use online, offline, increasing the number of people who can use the library; increasing how much each individual uses the library
- Help overcome the 'digital divide'
- Saving staff time; reducing costs

Find out more: <http://goscl.com/wp-content/uploads/151130-DigitalPlatformFinalReport.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/single-library-digital-presence-steering-group-terms-of-reference/single-library-digital-presence-steering-group-terms-of-reference>

Report: 'a standards-based digital platform is the only viable technology for realising recent strategic goals articulated by leaders for England's public libraries' 'primary mode of service on this platform must be co-production -- among library authorities, and among library staff, national and local partners, and importantly, end users. We show how new digital divides have made the mission of libraries -- literacy, learning, and community inclusion -- as relevant as it ever was. And that in order to provide an energetic response, libraries must invite their users into their digital spaces: their catalogues, their websites, their ebook readers, their online events calendars. We argue that these two measures, a standards-based digital platform and co-production of services, will reinvigorate libraries and create substantial, tangible outcomes in literacy, digital and social inclusion, health, education, and economic participation'



**Sector-wide approach: DCMS**  
**#CultureIsDigital**

UK government is keen on the 'digital economy'

## DCMS #CultureIsDigital

- DCMS = Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- 'How can culture and technology can work together to drive audience engagement, unleash the creative potential of technology and boost the capability of cultural organisations?'
- <https://cultureisdigital.dialogue-app.com/>

#CultureIsDigital is a conversation between Government, tech companies and the cultural sector, led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Background: <https://librariestaskforce.blog.gov.uk/2017/07/13/cultureisdigital/>

Responses: <https://cultureisdigital.dialogue-app.com/>

## DCMS #CultureIsDigital

- Access and Participation
  - How can digital content and distribution support new forms of engagement and attract more diverse audiences?
- Cultural Infrastructure
  - How can we position the UK as a world leader in digitised collections and digital cultural content?
- Cultural Content and Technology
  - How can we encourage innovation between content and technology?
- Skills, IP and Business Models
  - How can we build the digital skills and capability needed to drive innovation and ensure financial resilience?

Using a website <https://cultureisdigital.dialogue-app.com/> to collect responses to the four questions outlined above. Also have seconded experts to the project to lead discussion.

## Desire for...

- Efficiencies of scale – common services like events listings, donations, digital preservation
- Training tailored to cultural organisations (e.g. social media marketing, data analytics, VR, 3D)
- Lack of digital leadership from CEO, senior management and trustees?
- Rights frameworks appropriate for both new and orphan works

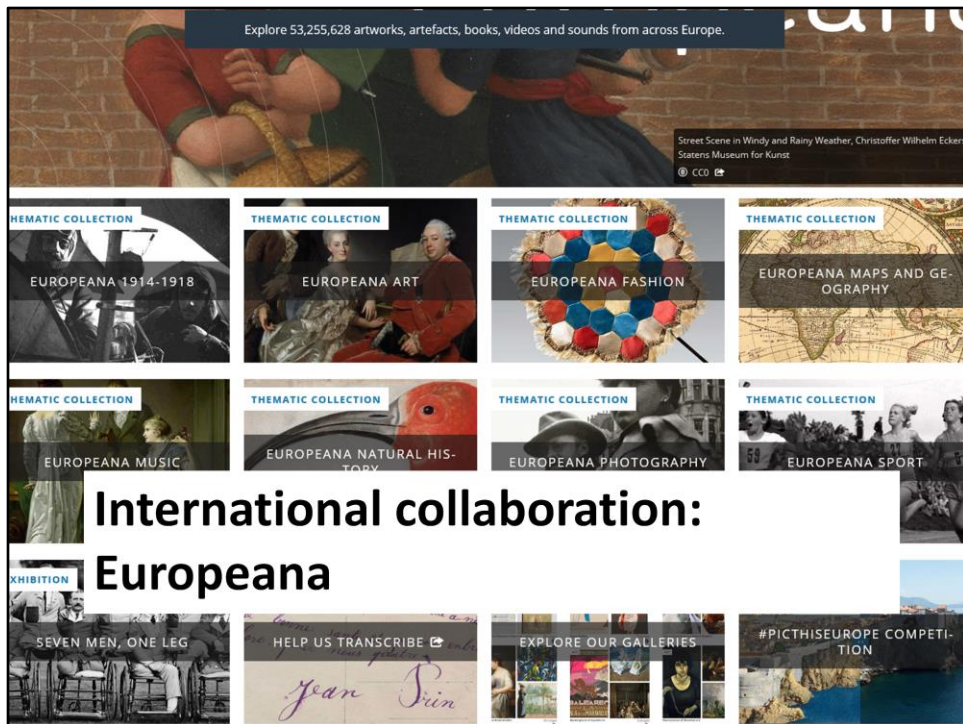
The consultation is still open, and this is a very quick and dirty analysis... Some findings in common with the Libraries report. There's a danger of siloed thinking about infrastructure, platforms, software as a service, as people post from their organisational perspective. Wider #CID project needs to ask when does it make sense to share infrastructure, and when is it more effective to work alone? Teasing out posts from the perspectives of performing arts organisations, archives, museums, etc, to understand where they appear to have commonality but don't, and where commonality exists but isn't immediately apparent will require some thought. It's still not clear when shared platforms for digitised content offer the most benefits across the sector (narrowly or broadly defined)? Who would benefit from a shared platform and who has the resources to manage bespoke systems? How should shared infrastructure be funded? Who's capable of building it and acting as a service provider to the rest of the sector?

How can you maximise the benefits of mixed ecosystems, where some orgs have their own digital services and others are yet to start? What lessons can we learn about data aggregation and the levels of support needed at the institutional level from Europeana and CultureGrid?

There are worries about failing to keep up with audiences (who arrive, smart phone in hand). Underlying questions like 'do you need tech expertise in-house?' 'What skills does the sector lack?' are intermingled with expressions of already being asked to do too much in the time available.

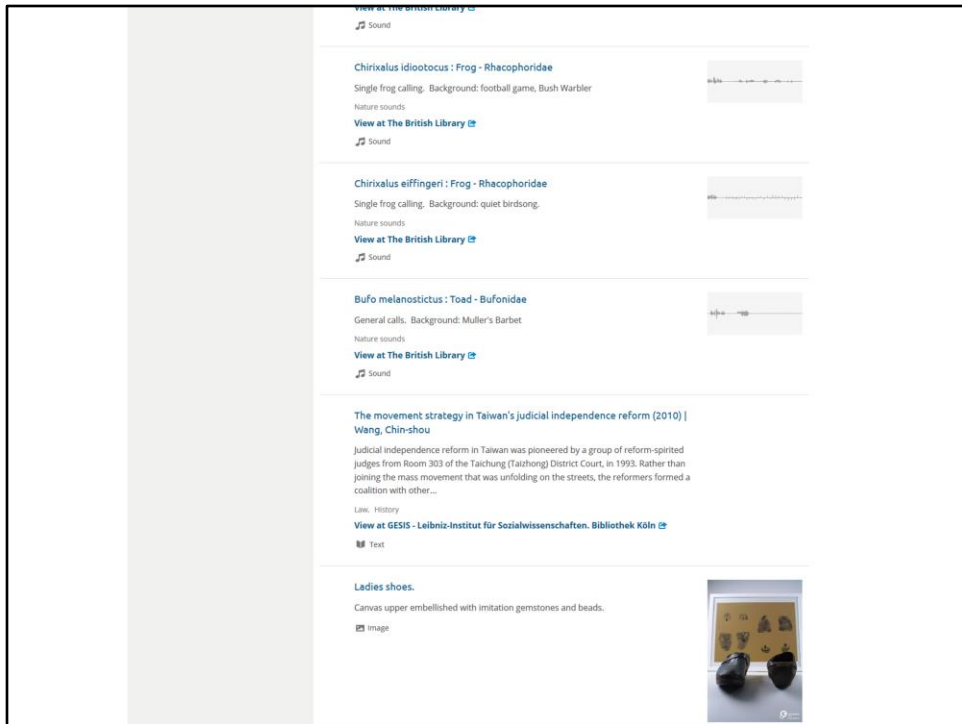
Looking through submissions, there's a tantalising sense that new audiences, better relationships are just out of reach, if only they (physical venues, cultural organisations) could find the right technology to reach them. Or somehow use the data they have more effectively.. Is there an underlying worry about how to meet current goals more effectively without getting distracted by shiny new technologies? It's hard to get new tech right - look at all the money wasted on apps. However, perhaps the benefit of apps isn't always directly related to use, but lies in PR value of letting people know you exist and that you're not what they might expect.

Orphan works are those where the creator/rights holder is unknown or untraceable. Risk-averse organisations often won't put them online in case someone claims them.



Explore 53,255,628 artworks, artefacts, books, videos and sounds from across Europe.'

<http://www.europeana.eu/>



Here's a sample of search results for 'Taichung' - sound files recording frog species, fashion / social history items, library documents...

Began in 2005 as the 'European Digital Library', launched 2008 to share Europe's cultural heritage for 'enjoyment, education and research'

## Europeana

- No direct digitisation. Aggregates metadata and thumbnails.
- Organisations had to figure out how to extract and share collections records with national or thematic aggregators.
- Tension between quality vs quantity of records
- Portal or platform?

'At Europeana we work with thousands of European archives, libraries and museums to share cultural heritage for enjoyment, education and research.'

Aggregation model can suffer when originating sites change their links, update or remove content - links back to the site may fail.

The Europeana model put all the work on the cultural heritage organisation, who may not have had the resources to map their internal metadata structures to Europeana's data model and figure out Z39.50 or OAI-PMH transfer protocols.

Funders had certain expectations which might have made the architecture less effective. Quantity useful for funders, quality better for users. A destination portal operates very differently than a platform upon which people could build services...

## 'Big data' and cultural organisations

- Lots of hype, not many cultural projects?
- 'Digital scholarship' researchers applying methods like data mining, machine learning to digitised text and images
- Sentiment analysis applied through social media tools
- Analytics applied to commercial data systems

I'm not aware of many examples working with really 'big' data. However, there are some examples within the sector working with other research questions, commercial or outreach goals, so big data methods are all around us.



谢谢

## Questions and comments?

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Taipei, Taiwan, August 2017