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Olvasó nő madárral, Rippl-Rónai Megyei Hatókörű Városi Múzeum - Kaposvár, Hungary, CC BY

# EUROPEANA AS A POWERFUL PLATFORM FOR STORYTELLING TASK FORCE

## Report and recommendations



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## Section 1- Overview and recommendations

### Overview of outcomes

Why is digital storytelling important to Europeana?

- The European Commission sees Europeana as ‘a powerful platform for storytelling’ and Europeana visitors are more likely to return to editorial pages.
- Responses to storytelling and engagement activities run by Europeana throughout 2020 have shown that there is appetite among the Europeana Network Association and beyond for discussion on digital storytelling with cultural heritage.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has increased online engagement activity for cultural heritage institutions, but a digital divide is evident.
- With a mission of empowering the cultural heritage sector in its digital transformation, Europeana is well-placed to support institutions to develop their capacity for developing and using digital storytelling practices, whether their final publication place is on Europeana or elsewhere.

This Task Force [recommends](#) that:

- To harness the Europeana website’s full potential as ‘a powerful platform for storytelling’, Europeana should explore how to develop storytelling techniques and methods within its editorial.
- Europeana should introduce a formal commitment to digital storytelling techniques and explore ways of developing its practices with partners.
- To respond to a clear appetite for discussions on engaging with audiences through storytelling, Europeana should make storytelling an area of focus for its community activities as well as its editorial.
- Europeana should support institutions to develop their capacity for developing and using digital storytelling practices, whether their final publication place is on Europeana or elsewhere.
- Europeana should consider the emotional design of its editorial and ensure storytelling is given planning and development time and professionals with storytelling skills are involved.

### [7 tips for digital storytelling with cultural heritage](#)

1. Be personal
2. Be informal but expert
3. Tell those hidden stories
4. Illustrate your points
5. Signpost your journey
6. Be specific
7. Be evocative

Explore our [Longlist](#) of examples as a [google sheet](#) or via [Padlet](#).

And explore our [case studies](#) : A picture of change for a world in constant motion, #MetKids and You are Flora Seville.



## Task Force brief

The purpose of this Task Force is to identify research and develop recommendations based on examples of interesting, engaging and effective storytelling practices found around the web - particularly those that incorporate cultural heritage - with the intention of feeding into the development of the Europeana website as a 'powerful platform for storytelling'.

Its outcomes are to produce:

- A list of inspiring digital storytelling practices from around the web (see Task 2).
- An insight into and evaluation of what makes them engaging (see Task 2 and 3).
- Recommendations for the types of practice that could be developed for Europeana in line with the Collection Engagement team's strategy and contribute to editorial KPIs (see [Recommendations](#)).

Members of the Task Force include cultural sector communications professionals, academic researchers, PhD students, teachers and tech professionals and bring a range of interests and expertise from archaeology to narratology. For some, this is their first contribution to Europeana Network Association activities, while others are continuing a long-standing relationship with Europeana by joining the Task Force.

## Europeana Strategy 2020-2025

The new [Europeana Strategy 2020-2025](#) puts great emphasis on sharing best practice and developing digital tools that empower the digital transformation of Europe's cultural heritage institutions. It talks about innovation and harnessing state-of-the-art tech, and it calls for Europeana's collections website to harness its full potential as 'a powerful platform for storytelling'.

This Task Force explores the question 'What does a 'powerful platform for storytelling' mean?' and how can we help it become a reality for Europeana? To address this, we look at several other questions. What do we consider to be the components of an engaging story? What kind of new presentations and experiences does digital provide? Who is doing interesting things right now, and what can both Europeana and the broader cultural heritage sector learn from them in order to create really engaging storytelling experiences in future?



## Europeana's role in the digital transformation

The Europeana Initiative will bring together key actors from across the sector to ensure that the region's cultural heritage institutions fully realise their potential, contributing to the digital transformation of Europe.

Digital transformation isn't just about how cultural heritage institutions operate. It is about how they think. It isn't just about technology and assets. It's about people and skills.

Cultural heritage institutions differ significantly, depending on the type of collections they manage, their domain, their funding, their relation to Europeana, and their experience with and openness towards technical innovation.

No matter where they are in their journey, all cultural heritage institutions will be supported to create good quality digital assets in standardised formats, allowing them to share, explore, interrogate and use their collections in ways that fulfil their institutions' own 21st century missions.

As cultural heritage institutions progress in their digital transformation, more will be able to contribute to and work collaboratively with the Europeana Network Association and the Europeana Aggregators' Forum, and with third-party platforms enabled by Europeana's standards and tools (e.g. APIs).

As both the common multilingual access point to digital European heritage and a powerful platform for storytelling, Europeana will enable cultural heritage institutions to transcend cultural and national borders and place their collections in the European context - to be part of the story of Europe.

The heritage shared through Europeana, from all domains, from all countries and in all languages, will be used and enjoyed by citizens, creatives, researchers, educators and students across the world.

STRATEGY  
2020-2025

[Europeana Strategy 2020-2025](#), p.17. Europeana is referred to as 'a powerful platform for storytelling' (at the top of the right-hand column).

## Recommendations

*'We love stories. We want stories. Stories keep us alive. Stories that come from a place of deep insight and with a knowledge wink to their audience, and stories that tease us into examining our own feelings and beliefs, and stories that guide us on our own path. But most importantly, stories told as stories<sup>1</sup>.'*

**Joe Lambert, Digital Storytelling:  
Capturing Lives, Creating Community**

Humans have always told, retold and listened to stories. They allow us to make sense of the world, to learn, and to empathise and connect with each other.

Digital storytelling is simply this age-old act of storytelling but using digital media, perhaps introducing elements of images, audio, video and interactivity with the more traditional text or narrative. It is employed widely by cultural heritage institutions to attract, engage and inspire audiences.

<sup>1</sup> Lambert, J., & Hessler, B. (2018). *Digital storytelling: Capturing lives, creating community*. Routledge.





This section of the Task Force report is in two sections. First a summary of the recommendations that this Task Force suggests should be followed up by Europeana - both the Foundation and more widely, for example by the Europeana Communicators, then a fuller essay into which the recommendations are integrated which explores why digital storytelling is of interest to the cultural heritage sector's communities and audiences and therefore should be a strategic focus for Europeana. Following this is a list of seven good practice techniques for storytelling with digital culture based on the examples of good practice that the Task Force has examined.

#### Summary of recommendations

- a. To harness the Europeana website's full potential as 'a powerful platform for storytelling', Europeana should explore how to develop storytelling techniques and methods within its editorial.
- b. Europeana should introduce a formal commitment to exploring digital storytelling techniques, as a way of highlighting and promoting high quality content. It should consider how such a commitment will change the approach and processes of the editorial team, and that of partners involved in producing exhibitions and blogs. This commitment could be articulated in the next iteration of the Collections Engagement team's editorial strategy.
- c. The response to Europeana's storytelling activities so far demonstrates that there is appetite among the Europeana Network Association and beyond for discussion on how to engage with audiences online generally, and how to do that using digital storytelling more specifically. Europeana should respond to this by making storytelling an area of focus for both its editorial and its community activity, particularly via the Europeana Communicators community.
- d. The number and range of storytelling activities with digital culture available show that storytelling is important in the cultural heritage sector. It can be used to help institutions in their missions of supporting communities in an economic, environmental and social context. As part of its mission, Europeana should take the position that it is well-placed to support institutions to develop their capacity for developing and using digital storytelling practices, whether their final publication place is on Europeana or elsewhere. To do this, it must lead by example, and explore ways of developing its practices with partners, e.g. by coordinating storytelling workshops or webinars, or proposing a session at the Europeana 2021 event to bring partners together to discuss the most useful next steps from the perspective of the cultural heritage institutions. The outcome of such discussions should be formulated in subsequent strategic documents.
- e. Europeana should consider the emotional design of its editorial. To achieve emotional engagement with the audience, storytelling should be given planning and development time and professionals with storytelling skills should be involved. The good practice digital storytelling techniques described by this Task Force should be considered and integrated into the editorial strategy.



## The Europeana Initiative and digital storytelling strategies

The [Europeana Strategy 2020-2025](#)<sup>2</sup>, a publication from the European Commission that sets the direction of the work done by the Europeana Initiative, puts great emphasis on sharing good practice and developing digital tools that empower the digital transformation of Europe's cultural heritage institutions. It talks about innovation and harnessing state-of-the-art tech, and it calls for Europeana to harness its full potential as 'a powerful platform for storytelling'. The strategy links Europeana as a storytelling platform with an outcome of enabling cultural heritage institutions to 'transcend cultural and national borders and place their collections in the European context - to be part of the story of Europe.'

- a. To harness the Europeana website's full potential as 'a powerful platform for storytelling', Europeana should explore how to develop storytelling techniques and methods within its editorial.**

### Europeana's storytelling so far

The Europeana Foundation's Collections Engagement Team publishes editorial about cultural heritage on the Europeana website, blog and social media channels. Topics and sources are diverse, and each piece of editorial is aimed at culture lovers across the world. The editorial aligns with the following objectives:

- encouraging audiences to discover and engage with content;
- telling compelling stories about collections, people and objects;
- showcasing Europeana as a diverse and rich resource.

The editorial strives to be welcoming and inspiring, reflecting the diversity of global culture and fairly representing pan-European partners.

Europeana produces a range of exhibitions, galleries and blogs. However, to date, there has not been a formal articulation of 'storytelling' as a specific area of focus or interest. The [Europeana Foundation Business Plan 2019](#)<sup>3</sup>, for example, said of the team: 'Our efforts will be geared to getting more people to Europeana Collections and making it more attractive so they stay a little longer.' It also states that thematic campaigns managed by the team are designed to 'highlight and promote high quality content on Europeana and elsewhere.' There was no direct reference to using storytelling as a way of achieving this. The most recent Implementation Plan (August 2020) does include brief reference to 'stories' but does not suggest that there is a focus on developing stronger storytelling methods; it states that the Europeana Foundation's editorial strategy 'aims to present audiences with engaging cultural heritage on various topics and from diverse

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<sup>2</sup>'Europeana Strategy 2020-2025 Empowering Digital Change', (2020), Publications Office of the European Union, Available at <https://pro.europeana.eu/page/strategy-2020-2025-summary>. (Accessed 17 March 2021).

<sup>3</sup>'Europeana Foundation Business Plan 2019 Our common culture', (2019) Europeana Foundation, Available at [https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana\\_Professional/Publications/Europeana%20Business%20Plan%202019\\_V1.1.pdf](https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Publications/Europeana%20Business%20Plan%202019_V1.1.pdf). (Accessed 17 March 2021).



sources, for learning, for work or just for fun. Our editorial tells stories and presents a wide variety of materials through formats such as blogs, galleries and exhibitions.’<sup>4</sup>

In the last year, Europeana’s Collections Engagement Team increased annually published editorial with 40% more blogs and 160% more exhibitions.

Year	Blogs	Exhibitions
2019	95	5
2020	133	13

The shift to highlighting more stories was driven by the general boost in online presence with partners’ elevated interest in digital publications, likely enhanced by the pandemic, and by the fact that Europeana’s audience is more likely to return to editorial pages (12-13% returning visitors).

Thematic approaches connect directly with current affairs (like the pandemic and social distancing) but also with annual events like Women’s History Month, Pride Month or Black History Month, centred around underrepresented communities and their lesser-told stories.

- b. Europeana should introduce a formal commitment to exploring digital storytelling techniques, as a way of highlighting and promoting high quality content. It should consider how such a commitment will change the approach and processes of the editorial team, and that of partners involved in producing exhibitions and blogs. This commitment could be articulated in the next iteration of the Collections Engagement team’s editorial strategy.**

Note: Europeana has been collecting stories from the public since 2011 in campaigns such as Europeana 1914-1918, Europeana Migration, Europe at Work and now Europeana Sport. While these stories hold the seeds for enriching and engaging editorials, this Task Force’s focus is on professionally curated editorials and experiences, and so user-generated content did not form part of our discussions. This could, however, be an interesting and valuable area to focus on developing once the Collections Engagement team has an articulated digital storytelling strategy.

### Digital storytelling and capacity-building for digital transformation

The Europeana Initiative’s mission is to empower cultural heritage institutions in their digital transformation.<sup>5</sup> In February 2021, Europeana defined digital transformation as:

<sup>4</sup> ‘Deployment and Maintenance of Europeana DSI core services = SMART 2017/1136: B.1 Implementation Plan M24’, 31 August 2020, Management team and Julia Schellenberg, Europeana Foundation, Dissemination Level: Confidential (Consortium only)

<sup>5</sup> ‘About Us’, <https://pro.europeana.eu/about-us/mission>, Europeana Pro. (Accessed 17 March 2021).



*'[B]oth the process and the result of using digital technology to transform how an organisation operates and delivers value. It helps an organisation to thrive, fulfil its mission and meet the needs of its stakeholders. It enables cultural heritage institutions to contribute to the transformation of a sector powered by digital and a Europe powered by culture.'*<sup>6</sup>

Over the last 12 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the activities required to meet the needs of the stakeholders of cultural heritage institutions have turned increasingly online. Effective digital storytelling can be a powerful tool in sharing and engaging audiences with cultural collections in an online environment.

### The cultural heritage sector and the COVID-19 pandemic

The current COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need for cultural heritage institutions to share their collections and stories online, using a variety of formats, media and platforms and targeting different segments of the public. A survey from the Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO) revealed that during the lockdown in Europe, over 60% of museums increased their online presence.<sup>7</sup>

The first measure put in place to stay in touch with the general public is often a use of social media: the NEMO survey shows that over 70% of museums increased their social media activities. This is confirmed by the report from The International Council of Museums (ICOM), stating that social media posting has increased significantly by 47.49%.<sup>8</sup>

Despite social media proving to be crucial in promoting the core initiatives of the museums, only 13.4% had increased their budget for online activities at the time of the survey (NEMO). The most popular activities that institutions have started since the lockdown, according to ICOM, are live events and online exhibitions, with an increase respectively of 12.28% and 10.88%.

The project 'Museum digital initiatives during the Coronavirus Pandemic', run by Chiara Zuanni (University of Graz), offers an immediate overview of various digital initiatives

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<sup>6</sup> McNeilly, N., Berg, S, t. 'Defining digital transformation for the cultural heritage sector', (February 2021), Europeana Pro. Available at <https://pro.europeana.eu/post/defining-digital-transformation-for-the-cultural-heritage-sector> (Accessed 17 March 2021).

<sup>7</sup> NEMO (2020) Survey on the impact of the COVID-19 situation on museums in Europe. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3jkkW1A> (Accessed: 1 March 2021).

<sup>8</sup> ICOM (2020) Museums, museum professionals and COVID-19. Available at: <https://icom.museum/en/covid-19/surveys-and-data/survey-museums-and-museum-professionals/> (Accessed: 1 March 2021).



launched by museums during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>9</sup> Started in March 2020, this aggregation website takes the form of a world map and groups its digital events into nine colour-coded categories: online exhibitions, virtual tours, streaming contents, and educational contents are the most numerous. A high number of these initiatives transposed physical exhibitions online;<sup>10</sup> some of them adapted the content for online consumption, especially related to educational purposes;<sup>11</sup> others collected memories on how COVID-19 impacted daily life.<sup>12</sup>

Other initiatives reported in the map are contemporary collecting projects, games and tweets. Regarding the latter, it has been noted that especially during the first phase of the lockdown in spring 2020, Cultural Heritage Institutions (CHIs) have strengthened communication via social networks, relying on Twitter for the dissemination of cultural initiatives through the use of #hashtags created specifically to support and spread these initiatives.<sup>13</sup> Among the #hashtags that have conveyed content and initiatives through social networks, we can distinguish those spread nationally only (e.g. #laculturanonsiferma @it; #OnlineArtExchange @en) and those that have been adopted by multiple countries (e.g. #MuseumFromHome, #betweenartandquarantine).

Another similar census has been run in the USA by MCN (formerly the Museum Computer Network), with a list continuously updated through a form.<sup>14</sup> One of the interesting points highlighted within this initiative was that most of the various online exhibitions and educational portals are based on open content, freely reusable and re-mixable under Creative Commons licensing.

Certainly, the pandemic crisis has given a strong boost not only to the digitisation of collections but also to the formulation of new strategies that could maintain an active dialogue with the public. However, we believe that the presence of useful indications on how to exploit digital tools within a CHI's communication plan is fundamental to guaranteeing long-lasting experiences.

In March 2020, museums and cultural institutions responded very rapidly to the new challenges raised by the pandemic. However, despite this initial effort, a digital divide emerged among those institutions that had already started their digital transformation

<sup>9</sup> Zuanni, C. (2020) Museums in time of COVID-19, Digital Museums.at. Available at: <https://bit.ly/34gO9pP> (Accessed: 1 March 2021).

<sup>10</sup> For example, Naturalis (2020). *Collection - Virtual exhibition*. Available at: <https://www.naturalis.nl/en/collection> (Accessed: 1 March 2021).

<sup>11</sup> For example, Parco Archeologico di Ostia antica (2020). *Ancient Ostia for the school*. Available at: <https://www.ostiaantica.beniculturali.it/it/servizi-educativi/ostia-per-la-scuola/> (Accessed: 1 March 2021).

<sup>12</sup> For example, The Estonian National Museum (2020). *Kuidas koroonaviiruse epideemia mõjutab sinu elu?*. Available at: <https://erm.ee/et/koroonaviirus> (Accessed: 1 March 2021).

<sup>13</sup> Carlino, C., Nolano, G., Di Buono, M.P., Monti, J. #LaCulturaNonSiFerma: Report on Use and Diffusion of #Hashtags from the Italian Cultural Institutions during the Covid-19 outbreak. Available at <https://arxiv.org/abs/2103.11865>

<sup>14</sup> Byrd-McDevitt, Lori. The Ultimate Guide to Virtual Museum Resources, E-Learning, and Online Collections [on line]. MCN, 14 March 2020. Available at <https://mcn.edu/a-guide-to-virtual-museum-resources/>



before the pandemic and those that still need to improve their online presence. The digital divide concept preexisted the pandemic. Nevertheless, the spread of COVID-19 has accentuated the effects not only among CHIs, but also among users. There is a significant gap between those who have easy access to an internet network and those who do not. It has also been noted that the sudden phenomenon of COVID-19 has highlighted how the digital divide has affected not only socially, but also territorially, to the disadvantage of some Developing Countries and rural areas<sup>15</sup>.

In reference to CHIs, as our main group of interest, we believe that recommendations for effective digital storytelling can be useful in both cases: for those that already have a digital strategy and for those that need to implement one.

### An appetite for storytelling within the Europeana Network Association

Amid the first wave of lockdowns in Europe, the Europeana Pro website had a focus on resources and best practices for cultural heritage institutions operating in this time of crisis. A Pro News post entitled 'Ideas for digital engagement in the time of COVID-19'<sup>16</sup> achieved more than 11,000 page views in the year 2020 - more than 10 times the average number of page views for a Europeana Pro News piece<sup>17</sup>.

At the same time, the Europeana Communicators community presented a series of 'Culture From Home' webinars<sup>18</sup> which invited specialists to share the activities and approaches they were using to engage audiences with cultural heritage online - the majority of which included digital storytelling techniques such as use of social media, film/TV, podcasts and computer games. Speakers came from libraries, archives and museums as well as events/festivals and education settings. The response to this webinar series from Europeana's professional audience was very positive. 500 individuals from 51 countries registered and 260 attended<sup>19</sup>; more than half were not already Europeana Network Association members, which demonstrates that the topic had appeal both within and outside of our network.

In November 2020, this Task Force's contribution to the programme of the Europeana 2020 conference - 'Love stories - digital storytelling experiences we can't stop thinking

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<sup>15</sup> Esteban-Navarro, M. Á., García-Madurga, M. Á., Morte-Nadal, T., & Nogales-Bocio, A. I. (2020, December). The Rural Digital Divide in the Face of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Europe—Recommendations from a Scoping Review. In *Informatics* (Vol. 7, No. 4, p. 54). Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute.

Unesco (2020), Museums around the world in the face of COVID-19. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373530>.

<sup>16</sup> Evans, G., Linden, G, v.d., 'Ideas for digital engagement in the time of COVID-19' (April 2020), Europeana Pro. Available at: <https://pro.europeana.eu/post/ideas-for-digital-engagement-in-the-time-of-covid-19> (Accessed: 17 March 2021).

<sup>17</sup> Data taken from Google Analytics - not published.

<sup>18</sup> The webinars are available at <https://pro.europeana.eu/search?q=culture+from+home>

<sup>19</sup> Data collected from sign-up surveys by the Europeana Foundation - not published.



about<sup>20</sup> was the best-attended afternoon 'parallel' session of the three-day event, with 224 people attending - almost twice as many attendees as the next most popular afternoon session.

- c. The response to Europeana's storytelling activities so far demonstrates that there is appetite among the Europeana Network Association and beyond for discussion on how to engage with audiences online generally, and how to do that using digital storytelling more specifically. Europeana should respond to this by making storytelling an area of focus for both its editorial and its community activity, particularly via the Europeana Communicators community.**

The Europeana Communicators community in cooperation with the ENA Management Board, Europeana Aggregators' Forum and Europeana Foundation will look at activities to involve its members in workshops, trainings and other events, and also collate information online on Europeana Pro, for example, by integrating the gathered resources and information into a storytelling hub.

#### Digital storytelling and the cultural heritage sector

*'We love stories. We want stories. Stories keep us alive. Stories that come from a place of deep insight and with a knowledge wink to their audience, and stories that tease us into examining our own feelings and beliefs, and stories that guide us on our own path. But most importantly, stories told as stories<sup>21</sup>.'*

**Joe Lambert, Digital Storytelling:  
Capturing Lives, Creating Community**

This reflection by Joe Lambert can be the starting point to reflect on the importance of stories and how they make us human. Humans have always told and listened to stories, because, as Silvaggi (2020)<sup>22</sup> says, stories allow us to decode facts, make sense of reality, develop new meanings, relate to others and to ourselves. Harari (2018)<sup>23</sup> explains that 'We are the only mammals that can cooperate with numerous strangers because only we can invent fictional stories, spread them around, and convince millions of others to believe in them.' According to some scientific studies, they are not only a valid learning

<sup>20</sup>A recording of the session is available at <https://pro.europeana.eu/event/love-stories-digital-storytelling-experiences-we-can-t-stop-thinking-about>

<sup>21</sup> Lambert, J., & Hessler, B. (2018). *Digital storytelling: Capturing lives, creating community*. Routledge.

<sup>22</sup> Silvaggi, A. *Il Digital storytelling. Uno strumento utile per i musei per migliorare la relazione con i propri pubblici*, in *Musei, pubblici, tecnologie*, (a cura di) Valentina Gensini, Pisa University Press, 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Harari, Y., N. Yuval Noah Harari extract: 'Humans are a post-truth species' The Guardian, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2018/aug/05/yuval-noah-harari-extract-fake-news-sapiens-homo-deus>



tool, but they also determine a positive response at a neurological level, stimulating the hormone cortisol, which increases attention, and that of oxytocin, which is the hormone of empathy. So, since stories allow us to be empathetic and open to others, they are adopted in different areas, such as marketing, politics, education, or fundraising (Zak, 2014<sup>24</sup>).

The practice of telling stories is referred to as storytelling; if the stories are spread through digital media, then storytelling becomes digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is defined as a form of digital narrative that may encompass many alternative techniques and tools (e.g. interactive stories, multimedia presentations, web-based games). It can be employed to attract and engage audiences in many areas in a revolutionary way (Podara et al. 2021)<sup>25</sup>, cultural heritage preservation included (Psomadaki et al., 2019)<sup>26</sup>.

Visiting a cultural site in the company of a guide who tells fascinating stories about the exhibits is a special experience. When human guides are scarce resources, digital technology offers the chance to bring these experiences to a wider audience and also to broaden the space of discovery. Technology also supports new ways of telling stories. Digital stories can combine visual and spoken communication, and be supported by different types of media such as audio, pictures or videos (Floch & Jiang, 2015)<sup>27</sup>. Digital storytelling has been widely explored in the context of cultural institutions. For instance, institutions can provide interactive on-site displays allowing the discovery of stories. Accessing these stories on smartphones and tablets while on-site is also popular.

This Task Force has noted via the analysis of its [longlist](#), that almost none of the examples studied are multilingual by design, 70% are available in a single language only, and there is a strong leaning towards the use of English. Work to improve accessibility to digital storytelling experiences should include considerations of multilinguality, and where Europeana is concerned, be in line with the Europeana DSI-4 Multilingual Strategy<sup>28</sup>.

One aspect of the use of storytelling in the cultural sector concerns the story itself and the fact that from a single object or archaeological find it is possible to create very different stories. However, despite the diversity, stories must be compact, as stated in the second of the seven principles of museum storytelling that Margaret and Raymond DiBlasio (1983)<sup>29</sup> identified. To say that a story has to be compact is to say that it should

<sup>24</sup> Zak, P. J. (2014). Why your brain loves good storytelling. *Harvard business review*, 28.

<sup>25</sup> Podara, A., Giomelakis, D., Nicolaou, C., Matsiola, M., & Kotsakis, R. (2021). Digital Storytelling in Cultural Heritage: Audience Engagement in the Interactive Documentary New Life. *Sustainability*, 13(3), 1193.

<sup>26</sup> Psomadaki, O.I.; Dimoulas, C.A.; Kalliris, G.M.; Paschalidis, G. Digital storytelling and audience engagement in cultural heritage management: A collaborative model based on the Digital City of Thessaloniki. *J. Cult. Herit.* 2019, 36, 12–22.

<sup>27</sup> Floch, J., & Jiang, S. (2015, September). One place, many stories digital storytelling for cultural heritage discovery in the landscape. In *2015 Digital Heritage* (Vol. 2, pp. 503-510). IEEE.

<sup>28</sup> Neale, A. *Europeana DSI-4 Multilingual Strategy* (October 2020), Europeana Pro, available at <https://pro.europeana.eu/post/europeana-dsi-4-multilingual-strategy>

<sup>29</sup> DiBlasio, M., & DiBlasio, R. (1983). Constructing a cultural context through museum storytelling. *Roundtable Reports*, 8(3), 7-9.





have a scalable narrative structure, made up of characters, places and actions, immersed in a time and a place.

Indeed, as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions<sup>30</sup> (IFLA) says: 'All good stories need a plot. If we are aiming to win someone's support, then we should focus on a subject that matters to them'.<sup>31</sup>

For this reason, IFLA and the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Association<sup>32</sup> (EBLIDA) internationally support the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - a framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals<sup>33</sup> (SDGs) spanning economic, environmental and social development. Although IFLA and EBLIDA operate for the same purpose, they diversify their activities. Specifically, IFLA's Library Map of the World<sup>34</sup> (LMW) provides a unique digital space for libraries to share their stories that demonstrate the libraries' contribution to achieving the SDGs, and to help libraries elsewhere in the world show the potential they have to decision-makers and win their support. So far there are 45 stories from 28 countries around the world. In this context, IFLA has also prepared 'Libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals: A Storytelling Manual'<sup>35</sup>, with the aim of helping librarians and library advocates in their advocacy efforts, by providing guidance on how to tell compelling stories about their library activities, projects and programmes, and their impact on communities and people's lives.

- d. The number and range of storytelling activities available show that storytelling is important in the cultural heritage sector. It can be used to help institutions in their missions of supporting communities in an economic, environmental and social context. As part of its mission, Europeana should take the position that it is well-placed to support institutions to develop their capacity for developing and using digital storytelling practices, whether their final publication place is on Europeana or elsewhere. To do this, it must lead by example, and explore ways of developing its practices with partners, e.g. by coordinating storytelling workshops or webinars, or through a session at the Europeana 2021 event to bring partners together to discuss the most useful next steps from the**

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<sup>30</sup> International Federation of Library Association. Available at <https://www.ifla.org/>

<sup>31</sup> *Libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals, a storytelling manual* (2018), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Available at: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/sdg-storytelling-manual.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> The European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA). Available at: <http://www.eblida.org/>

<sup>33</sup> *The 17 Goals*, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Sustainable Development, Available at <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<sup>34</sup> *Library Map of the World*, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Available at <https://librarymap.ifla.org/>

<sup>35</sup> *Libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals, a storytelling manual* (2018), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Available at: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/sdg-storytelling-manual.pdf>



**perspective of the cultural heritage institutions. The outcome of such discussions should be formulated in subsequent strategic documents.**

Stories are a capital that cultural institutions can draw on, to place themselves in a position of listening and creating dialogue with society, through the versatility of the medium they decide to use (social media, immersive technologies, etc.).

From the experiences shared within this Task Force, it was found that digital storytelling is a widely used practice and of great interest in the cultural sector. The diversity that characterises the experiences also demonstrates the inexistence of a single narrative formula, but rather that each object or cultural topic can be narrated in different ways and with different purposes.

The collection of these various experiences has shown the centrality of the use of digital storytelling in a cultural context, as the main element for the creation of different experiences. For instance, the choice to exploit the effects of digital storytelling through the implementation of digital technologies such as AR, VR or gamification, as recommended by the EU project ERA Chair<sup>36</sup> Mnemosyne which aims to ensure user-centered experiences, can be identified. Sometimes, digital storytelling becomes a tool to share a specific aspect of cultural heritage, such as archaeology, with the broadest possible audience, exploiting the technologies of computational linguistics and gamification, coming to create, as in the case of the ArcheoPark project<sup>37</sup>, applications usable especially by an audience of very young users.

It can also be seen, as in the case of the project I dig stories<sup>38</sup>, that digital storytelling can be a tool to ensure that each user, through a participatory and interactive mode, becomes a storyteller themselves.

Finally, in some cases digital storytelling is treated as a topic of study itself, transmitted to a community of specialists and non-specialists through a series of webinars. Those organised by the Story Center, for example, provide practical guidance on:

- how to reach an audience not particularly sensitive to digital storytelling<sup>39</sup>
- how to create a manual for working with community groups in a physical setting, with an ongoing look at storytelling and narrative<sup>40</sup>
- how to leverage digital storytelling in times of crisis, especially as it relates to mobile journalism<sup>41</sup>.

There is no lack of examples for digital storytelling being used as a tool to demonstrate the need to digitise cultural heritage. One such application was used to support two

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<sup>36</sup> *This is Mnemosyne*, Digital Heritage Lab, Available at <https://digitalheritagelab.eu/era-chair/>

<sup>37</sup> *Archeopark*, available at <https://www.archeopark-campiflegrei.it/>

<sup>38</sup> *I Dig Stories*, available at <http://idigstories.eu/>

<sup>39</sup> *Online workshops*, Storycenter, available at <https://www.storycenter.org/workshop>

<sup>40</sup> *Results*, Storyteller, available at <http://learnstorytelling.eu/en/results/>

<sup>41</sup> *Mobile journalism: The MoJo of Truth, Engagement and Impact* (2020), Digital Communication Network, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIT-Zxgl2PM&t=688s>



online courses promoted by Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona<sup>42</sup> and focused on video animations aimed at making cultural content understood by a non-expert audience. In other cases, however, the digitisation of cultural heritage combined with the expressive potential of storytelling has given rise to the narration of hidden stories: objects, works of art, stolen or misappropriated, with the intent to raise awareness among the general public. In this regard, the projects stories in Ciutadella Ibèrica de Calafell<sup>43</sup>, El patrimonio artístico durante la Guerra Civil y la Posguerra<sup>44</sup>, Hidden Stories of Jewish Lublin by Brama Grodzka<sup>45</sup> are pertinent examples.

The range of diverse experiences from our Task Force members shows that digital storytelling is a topic that is of great interest to the cultural heritage sector. Experiences are wide-ranging and ongoing, suggesting that further exploration into digital storytelling with digital cultural heritage would be useful to the sector as a whole at this moment in time.

### Storytelling as emotional engagement

A central element of digital storytelling is its ability to create emotional engagement with the audience.

The importance of enhancing the emotional aspect of audience engagement is demonstrated by the fact that ‘museums are moving away from the mere display of objects and are now making their stories central to the visitor experience. Furthermore, they are exploiting the power of stories to foster emotional engagement.’<sup>46</sup>

Stories are also of crucial importance to achieve emotional engagement because they are unique in fostering psychological proximity. People are more interested in events that happen to them personally than those that happen to others or to strangers. When stories are not self-referential but concern someone else, that could be tricky. However, skilled storytellers have the ability to create characters that the public can easily relate to. The more the public empathises with the characters, the more interesting the events happening in the story are to them. When people put themselves in the place of the characters, psychological proximity is really tight. Stories about cultural heritage are very effective from this perspective since by connecting people to the past and past lives, they usually manage to touch personal memories.

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<sup>42</sup> *Medicina, literatura i cinema*, Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona, available at <https://www.upf.edu/web/mooc-upf/medicina-literatura-i-cinema>; *Understanding Ramon Llull*, Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona, available at <https://www.upf.edu/web/mooc-upf/understanding-ramon-llull>

<sup>43</sup> *Ciutadella Iberica*, Calafell Historic, available at <http://www.calafellhistoric.org/index.php/2017-04-07-15-33-29/ciutadella-iberica>

<sup>44</sup> *El patrimonio artístico durante la guerra civil y la posguerra*, available at <http://pgp.ucm.es/PGP/#/>

<sup>45</sup> *Projekty realizowane przez Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka - Teatr NN”*, Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka - Teatr NN”, available at <http://teatrnn.pl/osrodek/projekty/>. See also: *Exploring a non-existent city via historical GIS system by the example of the Jewish district ‘Podzamcze’ in Lublin (Poland)*, in: *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, Volume 46, November–December 2020, Pages 328–334, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.culher.2020.07.010>

<sup>46</sup> <https://mw2015.museumsandtheweb.com/paper/the-museum-as-digital-storyteller-collaborative-participatory-creation-of-interactive-digital-experiences/>



This process can happen within museums and in archaeological sites, archives, and libraries, but it is also possible in the digital realm. In fact, if taking into account an interactive environment, psychological proximity can be reached even more easily since the public can play the role of the main character. In a video game set in the past, the player has the opportunity to influence the plot and the story world.<sup>47</sup> The same effect may also be achieved in more simple ways. One successful case is 'You are Flora Seville', a storytelling experience from Egham Museum in the UK which makes wise and creative use of the possibilities provided by the social network Twitter. The public can direct Flora into different branches of a fictional story set in the 19th century at the Royal Holloway College for Women.<sup>48</sup>

Regarding this type of application, when structuring stories it is important to consider details as supporting elements, since they can contribute largely to an emotional engagement of the users (Pujol et al., 2012)<sup>49</sup>.

In the last few years, emotive engagement has raised a wide interest in the cultural heritage sector. Several applications of emotional storytelling in digital cultural heritage have been explored within the framework of the EU-funded EMOTIVE project (<https://emotiveproject.eu/>), especially in terms of interactive narratives for Immersive Technologies.

Moreover, in 2020, the Learning Museum Working Group (LEM WG)<sup>50</sup>, after having previously investigated the binomial education and learning in reference to differentiated audiences, decided to concentrate its research focusing on the learning processes fostered by emotion. The LEM WG has collected the results of two previous initiatives that have considered emotions as a central aspect of museum activities conducted in recent years. The first was The Role of Emotions in Audience Engagement, which took place in Berlin in April 2019, organised by KulturAgenda and the Institute for Learning Innovation in collaboration with the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and NEMO. The second was a series of workshops, Emotional Museums, which have been taking place in Italy since 2016 on the initiative of the Media Integration and Communication Centre (MICC) of the University of Florence, a member of NEMO and the LEM WG. Both were aimed at emphasising the role that emotions play within the museum experience, from the moment of the actual visit to the post-visit one, in order to ensure an effective learning process for visitors. With regard to the latter, museum institutions must be aware of the fact that they cannot be ascribed to a single category, since users differ in terms of age, cultural background and information needs. Therefore, it is necessary to study communication strategies and approaches that are tailored to each individual.

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<sup>47</sup> Schell, J. (2005) Understanding entertainment: story and gameplay are one, ACM Computers in Entertainment, pp. 1-14.

<sup>48</sup> <https://twitter.com/EghamMuseum/status/1311453097462575104>

<sup>49</sup> Pujol, L., Roussou, M., Poulou, S., Balet, O., Vayanou, M., & Ioannidis, Y. (2012, March). Personalizing interactive digital storytelling in archaeological museums: the CHES project. In *40th annual conference of computer applications and quantitative methods in archaeology*. Amsterdam University Press (pp. 93-100).

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.ne-mo.org/about-us/working-groups/working-group-the-learning-museum-lem.html>



The report published by NEMO<sup>51</sup> in 2021, *Emotions and Learning in Museums*, focuses on the emotional aspect as a key element to ensure good visitor experiences. Starting from a series of reflections formulated on the need for museums to move from being places of collection and display of objects to places where mechanisms of empathy and emotional engagement are implemented, the creation of the empathetic museum<sup>52</sup> formula was arrived at. This definition has a lot to do with what museums, and places of culture in general, have had to face in the year 2020. Indeed, the global crisis has caused, in many places, a halt to in-person activities, encouraging the development of digital tools that could compensate for the absence of live experiences. With this view, ways of enjoying works of art have been reinvented so that cultural institutions can continue to offer themselves as restorative, but also inclusive, user-centre oriented and participatory environments.

Continuing to reflect on the importance of stories, mentioned above, Silvaggi (2021)<sup>53</sup> argues that in addition to being a powerful tool that museums can use to make connections with their own collections and reveal new meanings, they are what encourage our empathy and lead us to engage in emotional relationships with others. They are an element of lifelong learning and enhance knowledge acquisition. They also make it possible to create relationships not only with the community that gravitates around the CHIs, but also with the community that is not yet aware that it can be attracted from the outside.

So, in terms of audience engagement, storytelling is a powerful advocacy tool and, with the help of digital technologies, offers great opportunities for Europeana and CHIs.

- e. Europeana should consider the emotional design of its editorial. To achieve emotional engagement with the audience, storytelling should be given planning and development time and professionals with storytelling skills should be involved. The good practice digital storytelling techniques described by this Task Force should be considered and integrated into the editorial strategy.**

## Seven tips for storytelling with digital culture for and from the cultural heritage sector

This Task Force has drawn on a range of expertise and considered a variety of storytelling approaches, formats and platforms. There is an exciting - and sometimes overwhelming - array of possible storytelling methods available online. But while digital storytelling can take many different forms, the best examples all engage people on a personal and emotional level.

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<sup>51</sup>[https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/Publications/NEMO\\_Emotions\\_and\\_Learning\\_in\\_Museums\\_WG-LEM\\_02.2021.pdf](https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/Publications/NEMO_Emotions_and_Learning_in_Museums_WG-LEM_02.2021.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> <http://empatheticmuseum.weebly.com/>

<sup>53</sup>[https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/Publications/NEMO\\_Emotions\\_and\\_Learning\\_in\\_Museums\\_WG-LEM\\_02.2021.pdf](https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/Publications/NEMO_Emotions_and_Learning_in_Museums_WG-LEM_02.2021.pdf) p. 42



Audiences want to feel informed by digital stories, but also curious, immersed, inspired and connected by them. It is this that sets storytelling apart from other content types; and it is this that gives storytelling such a role to play in engagement and community-building across the cultural heritage sector.

Based on the emotional engagement experienced by Task Force members and the trends identified in the numerous examples we considered, we recommend the following guidelines for creating emotionally engaging storytelling with digital culture. These should work well for all forms of digital cultural heritage, and be applicable to different content types.

A note on scope: We are not looking at elements of visual or platform design here. But when developing a storytelling experience, there is a need to involve a range of experts. You may want to consult on content production, design and technical usability/accessibility as well as engaging professional storytellers.

### 1. **Be personal**

Personal stories can bring the past to life and help people relate to history on an emotional level.

- a. Present individual stories that include personal experiences as well as historic deeds. This helps people imagine themselves in that person's shoes.
- b. Consider the human significance of cultural artefacts and sites. Who designed, made and used them, and why?
- c. Show the storyteller's personal passion for their subject - it's infectious.
- d. Be sensitive to social and cultural contexts, and the emotional impact of personal stories on different audience groups and communities.
- e. We like:

[\*Your Story, Our Story\*](#) (Tenement Museum, New York) invites and shares personal stories of US immigration and migration, with a focus on cultural objects and identity.

[\*Wellcome Stories\*](#) (Wellcome Collection, London) explores the links between science, medicine, life and art by commissioning people to reflect on their lived experiences.

[\*The stories\*](#) of the National Archaeological Museum of the Marche on its storytelling channel take archaeological objects and create fictional accounts of their original owners, helping people imagine how they would have been used and loved.

### 2. **Be informal but expert**

People want to learn from experts, but it shouldn't be a chore. Overly academic language can put people off, but stories should not be 'dumbed down'. Finding the right balance is important.

- a. Use expert storytellers: heritage staff, educators, journalists and writers.
- b. Try conversational language. How would you explain the story to a friend?



- c. Avoid jargon and specialised terms. If you must use it, consider explaining the most unfamiliar words in lay terms.
- d. Consider having a style guide so that all contributors understand the tone they need to set.
- e. Be clear about the audience(s) you are trying to reach, and adapt your language to meet their specific needs.
- f. As long as the content is expert and well-informed, the format of a story can be experimental and playful.
- g. We like:
  - [\*There is a bat in the library\*](#) (Museum of English Rural Life, Reading) uses an informal event and Twitter thread format to entertain and then inform people about bats and their conservation.
  - [\*The Royal Game of Ur\*](#) (British Museum, London) introduces an ancient board game by inviting educational YouTube host Tom Scott to play a round against curator Irving Finkel, who deciphered its rules.

### 3. Tell those hidden stories

So much cultural history remains untold. Bringing hidden heritage to light engages audiences and creates a sense of community, identity and shared history. When creating content it helps to ask: can you find stories that haven't been told elsewhere?

- a. When choosing subjects, consider who is missing from the picture, and try to give a voice to a range of people and communities.
- b. Look for hidden gems in historic collections. Digital platforms are the perfect place to show items that are stuck in storage or difficult to access.
- c. Audiences can be a great source of ideas, and collaborating on cultural storytelling can ensure that different voices are heard. Storytelling can be used as a starting point for engagement rather than an end in itself.
- d. We like:
  - [\*People Not Property\*](#) (Historic Hudson Valley, USA) is an interactive documentary that explores the history and impact of colonial enslavement via personal historical stories.
  - [\*Minority Report: The Jews of Lebanon\*](#) (Arab News) uses personal accounts, photographs and graphics to explore Jewish experience in Lebanon.
  - [\*Hidden Histories of Exploration\*](#) (Royal Geographical Society, London) uses materials from the society's collection to tell the stories of local interpreters, guides and other intermediaries who worked with European explorers.

### 4. Illustrate your points

A key strength of the cultural heritage sector is its wealth of visual imagery. This can be used to powerful effect in storytelling. Formats don't have to be fancy, but do consider how visuals and text work together in the stories you share.

- a. Do the images illustrate the story, or are they its main focus? This might help you choose the best format.



- b. Long written or spoken narratives can be hard to engage with. Breaking up the story with visual (or audio) material, and building in time to reflect on it, can enrich the experience.
- c. Zooming in to large, high-quality images increases curiosity. It can help direct people to key details that they might have overlooked.
- d. Consider your target audience: what sort of imagery would they find most engaging? For example, historical photographs and artworks might appeal to some groups and illustrations, gifs and memes to others.
- e. We like:
  - [\*Las hilanderas. Una historia en imágenes\*](#) (Museo del Prado, Madrid) uses an interactive image viewer to highlight details and reveal the narrative behind a famous painting by Velázquez.
  - [\*Met Kids\*](#) (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) uses illustrations, colours and animation to bring the museum and its collection to life for young visitors.
  - [\*Gods In Color\*](#) (Liebieghaus, Frankfurt) incorporates large, high-quality images and video into its scrolling page layout to break up and enliven the text. It also makes good use of a before-and-after interactive image comparison tool.

## 5. Signpost your journey

The best stories take people on a clear journey. In digital storytelling - particularly on complex or experimental platforms - good signposting can help keep people on track. Having a clear sense of both the narrative and digital structure will help keep your story compact, and capture and direct people's attention from beginning to end.

- a. Consider mapping out the narrative path. Does your storytelling platform support it? If not, can you change one or the other to find a better fit?
- b. Whatever your chosen storytelling platform, keep the navigation simple so the visitor knows where they are and how to get back to previous content. Subheadings, numbered posts, and clearly signposted links are some possible solutions.
- c. If the platform is complex, consider adding introductory instructions or help for new visitors so they know what to expect.
- d. Digital makes it easy to link to new stories and information. Make the most of this, but ensure that each storytelling element can stand on its own, too.
- e. We like:
  - [\*Things that Talk\*](#) overlays multi-step storytelling 'tours' onto a high-quality image of the object under discussion. The reader progresses at their own pace by clicking the arrows, and knows which step they are on at all times.
  - [\*A Picture of Change for a World in Constant Motion\*](#) (New York Times) links the storytelling text sidebar to a dynamic image gallery that zooms in on Hokusai's Ejiri in Suruga Province as you scroll, revealing the details at the same time as you are told about them.





## 6. Be specific

Storytelling that focuses on specific topics can still engage a broad audience. Generally speaking, it works best to proceed from details to the big picture, rather than the other way round.

- a. Find and keep your focus. Is there a particular image, character or event that lies at the emotional heart of the story you want to tell? Begin with that, and return to it throughout the story.
- b. Take time on the details. If a story is chronological, make space to talk for longer about the key events; if it is thematic, give examples of each theme.
- c. Avoid overly-generalised language or sweeping statements.
- d. Personal stories and well-chosen images can help give your story a specific focus (see Recommendations 1 and 3).
- e. We like:
  - [Artwork in Focus](#) (Art UK) invites curators and writers to discuss a single work of art and its impact on them, society, or the artist who made it.
  - [A Closer Look](#) (Louvre, Paris) invites people to look closely at a high-resolution image of a single artwork, before telling the story of its subject and creation and providing interesting comparisons with other works.

## 7. Be evocative

Of course, cultural history stories need to be based in fact, but the facts don't need to be dry. Don't be afraid to use poetic, descriptive and evocative imagery and approaches - they are more likely to engage people.

- a. Use descriptive terms and imagery in your stories. Invite the viewer to imagine an event or place and place themselves within the scene.
- b. Consider all the senses. If you are able to use audio or video, this might help bring something to life. If not, you can describe it.
- c. However, avoid flowery or overly-complicated language. Evocative doesn't have to be complicated.
- d. We like:
  - [You Are Flora Seville](#) (Egham Museum) allows people to choose their own adventure as Flora, one of the first 28 students to attend Royal Holloway College for Women. The interactive Twitter thread combines imaginative, relatable events with historical detail to help people respond with empathy.
  - [Faint Signals](#) (British Library, London) invites people to explore a digital forest environment brought to life by the institution's extensive collection of sound recordings from Yorkshire. The audio adapts to reflect the changing environment and includes sounds that have been lost.
  - [80s.NYC](#) overlays historical photographs of New York City onto an interactive map, inviting people to explore different neighbourhoods. Clicking on an item reveals more images and information and the familiar phrase 'You are Here'.



### **And remember...be digitally accessible**

People use the web and access stories in different ways. To make sure your storytelling does not exclude people, follow web accessibility guidelines wherever possible. This can include: providing alt text descriptions on visual content; subtitles on videos; transcripts of audio material; and avoiding low contrast combinations of text and image. Making sure your text is simple, with clear language and a lack of jargon, keeps it accessible to all readers, including those who may not be reading in their first language.

Then, consider how people can find, engage with, share and reuse your stories. See if you can promote them on your website homepage or landing pages, social media, and e-newsletters. Make it easy for people to share stories online (for example using social media sharing icons) and consider how and where you might invite them to comment. Make the most of SEO advice and, if resources allow, digital advertising, to increase your digital reach. Finally, be aware of any copyright, intellectual property rights, or cultural restrictions relating to your storytelling materials; this may affect how you choose to share them online.



## Section 2 - Approach and tasks

### Approach

Humans have always told, retold and listened to stories. They allow us to make sense of the world, to learn, and to empathise and connect with each other. Digital storytelling is simply this age-old act of storytelling but using digital media, perhaps introducing elements of images, audio, video and interactivity with the more traditional text or narrative. It is employed widely by cultural heritage institutions to attract, engage and inspire audiences.

The phrase this Task Force is built upon - a 'powerful platform for storytelling' - is a subjective one. 'Powerful' can mean many things. Likewise, a single story can evoke many different reactions - some may love it, some may hate it. This Task Force acknowledges that it will rely on members' opinions, experiences and reactions - their subjectivity.

The Task Force takes the assumption that successful storytelling is not measured in the same way as technical success. One person could read two books, for example, and show the same technical success indicators - spending the same amount of time reading, turning the same number of pages - but have two very different experiences, one they enjoy and one they don't, or one that makes them laugh and one that makes them cry. The same is true of digital experiences. Following the journey intended by the creator successfully does not necessarily tell us a great deal about how the user has perceived the experience. In storytelling, subjectivity plays an important role as the experiences take place within the individual audience member and differ from person to person.

So, rather than taking quantitative technical measurements as success indicators, this Task Force takes its expert members' own personal responses as its guiding criterion. We collect qualitative examples that our members believe to be storytelling exemplars and then draw out data and evidence in a consistent and reflective way, for example using an extensive data collection form for the longlist and applying the Europeana Impact Playbook's Empathy Map to our case studies, to see what those experiences have in common.

We intend to create recommendations that would be scalable for any kind of institution, large or small, so wanted to include some smaller-scale examples in our selection, and a personal insight has meant that we have some really interesting examples that if we were looking only at large-scale commercial success, for example, would not have made it to the list. We do not suggest that our list of examples is exhaustive - it is a snapshot of what members encountered at the time of study.

This Task Force is unusually large for an ENA Task Force due to the COVID-19 pandemic making physical meet-ups (and so travel reimbursements) out of its scope. Having a larger group is useful to mitigate the potential weaknesses of a narrow subjective



approach in that a consensus developed through collaboration and discussion in a larger group is stronger and more convincing than that conceived within a smaller one.

This is of course only one approach of many we could have taken. We have used the Europeana Impact Playbook tool, the Empathy Map, in our case studies; it would, for example, be interesting in future to explore applying the fuller Europeana Impact methodology to digital storytelling experiences.

## Europeana's storytelling formats in 2020

The Europeana Foundation publishes editorial about cultural heritage online on diverse topics and from diverse sources. Each piece of editorial is aimed at culture lovers across the world and aligns with one of the editorial's objective:

- encouraging audiences to discover and engage with content;
- telling compelling stories about collections, people and objects;
- showcasing Europeana as a diverse and rich source.

The editorial strives to be welcoming and inspiring, reflecting the diversity of global culture and fairly representing pan-European partners.

In order to reach the editorial objectives Europeana's Collections Engagement Team uses 3 main formats at the moment: [galleries](#), [blogs](#) and [exhibitions](#).

### **Galleries**

[Galleries](#) are sets of around 20-50 items about a certain theme. They focus on a single defined topic (an artist, a type of object, or a time/place).

They showcase curated visual material with a short introduction to the underlying theme and the connection between images.

Every Monday Europeana's Collections Engagement Team publishes and promotes a chosen gallery as a #GalleryOfTheWeek.



## Surimono - the finest Japanese prints



Surimono are a genre of Japanese woodblock print. Produced in small numbers for a mostly educated audience of literati, surimono were often more experimental and extravagant than commercial prints.



Drie tabakszakken



Courtisane met koto



Krijger met waaijer tussen zijn tanden



Theeceremonie van een wasbeer



Nummer acht: De zeldzame fortuinlijke bloem



Toneelspeler Ichikawa Danjūrō VI



Busteportret van een samoerai



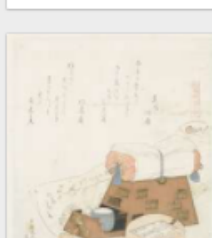
Waiers



De God Jurōjin



Fuji boven de wolken



De berg Fuji en een bloeiende pruim

## Blogs

[Blogs](#) are the brief pieces that illuminate a topic. They are designed to tell a concise story - story of an individual artist, of particular artwork, of an institution or sometimes a story of a place or a concept. They provide an engaging text illustrated with a mix of striking, or interesting images.

A couple of times per year European Foundation runs an overarching theme grouping its activities and aiming to publish a series of connected pieces. For example, in March to celebrate Women's History Month only blogs about remarkable women are published.



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Exhibitions   Explore Europeana   Galleries   About Europeana

**Europeana**

On this blog, we share stories from Europeana, providing access to millions of digitised cultural heritage items – books, artworks, recordings and more, written by cultural heritage professionals from across Europe.

Europeana works with thousands of European archives, libraries and museums to share cultural heritage for enjoyment, education and research. Find out more about how Europeana supports digital transformation of cultural heritage.

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There are more than 900 botanical gardens in Europe.

**Max Schmeling: the first German world heavyweight boxing champion**

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German boxer Max Schmeling was world heavyweight boxing champion of the world in the 1930s.

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The origins of the shipping company Cunard Line

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## Exhibitions

[Europeana Online Exhibition](#) is a long-form narrative designed to engage readers with text and imagery. It aims to provide a storytelling experience where the audience can immerse themselves in the story as much as possible.

It can also present multiple stories connected within a topic, in order to make it as informative as possible. The exhibitions are usually divided into chapters and the reader can follow it in a linear way or choose their own order. The most important element of an exhibition is a well-written story that can captivate the audience. The narrative is much longer than in a blog but it is still a very visually focused format that includes interactive elements and various types of media to enhance the experience. For instance, as an illustration to an appropriate paragraph, a reader is encouraged to compare two images representing the same object by using a slider providing before/after effect. What is more, the exhibitions are designed to be available in multiple languages (up to 24 official EU languages) and whenever that is possible, they are translated in order to make them accessible to a wider audience.



<p>EXHIBITION</p> <p><b>Solidarity: A Peaceful...</b></p> <p>Learn about a peaceful revolution: the August 1980 shipyard strike in Poland.</p>	<p>EXHIBITION</p> <p><b>Echos of an Empire</b></p> <p>Explore images of Byzantine instruments found in manuscripts and objects from daily life.</p>	<p>EXHIBITION</p> <p><b>François Crépin and the...</b></p> <p>Learn about self-taught botanist and rose-specialist, François Crépin, and his studies on 'the queen of flowers'.</p>	<p>EXHIBITION</p> <p><b>The Silk and the Blood</b></p> <p>Join on a travel outward from Byzantium's epicentre in Constantinople to emergent sites in Ravenna, Crete and Mount...</p>
<p>EXHIBITION</p> <p><b>70th anniversary of the...</b></p> <p>On 9 May 1950, against the backdrop of the Cold War, Robert Schuman issued a declaration which marked the beginning of...</p>	<p>EXHIBITION</p> <p><b>Edible Plants from the...</b></p> <p>Discover how Christopher Columbus's journeys greatly influenced Europe's eating habits.</p>	<p>EXHIBITION</p> <p><b>Celebrations in Europe</b></p> <p>Explore a variety of customs and traditions across Europe in this online exhibition.</p>	<p>EXHIBITION</p> <p><b>The Sound of the Trenches</b></p> <p>Learn about the importance of music in World War I - before, during and after battle.</p>







sector to establish that a) this is a topic that is of interest at the current time and b) provide insight that could help lead the question(s) to be investigated by Task 3: Case studies.

Task Force members participating in this task met in three online meetings in this period, and communicated throughout via Basecamp.

## Projects

Members were asked to provide a brief summary and personal reflections on projects they are involved in or aware of that investigate or make excellent use of digital storytelling techniques. Nine members shared 17 project examples in the course of this task. See [Appendix 1](#) below for full details. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but one that is large enough to get a flavour of the kinds of investigations currently being undertaken in the sector.

The examples of current or recent research contributed by members are varied, but many put emphasis on creating experiences in which audience members can be active participants and in creating emotional engagement. Several projects result (or will result) in storytelling methodologies or tools for use in the cultural heritage sector.

- **Research activity linked to EU ERA Chair Mnemosyne** looks at how digital storytelling practices can effectively connect with digital technology (VR, AR, game engines etc). Here, storytelling is being implemented as an audience-centred and context-aware process. Ultimately, Mnemosyne will create a 'library' of storytelling methodologies.
- **Research activity linked to ArcheoPark** combines several disciplines such as computational linguistics, natural language processing, artificial intelligence, gamification and storytelling in order to create new modalities for engaging different audiences. It intends to use the potential of storytelling in order to enlarge the audience for a particular set of archaeological finds.
- **'I dig stories'** encourages ordinary people to use digital tools to tell their personal stories, presented in compelling and emotional engaging formats. An emphasis is on active participation and creation.
- The **EMOTIVE consortium** has researched, designed, developed and evaluated methods and tools that can support the cultural and creative industries in creating narratives and experiences which draw on the power of 'emotive storytelling'.
- **The Science Museum Group's 2018-21 Digital Strategy** includes storytelling as part of an objective to increase online audience reach. Their audience research concluded that audiences are driven by inquiry. Its recommendations for content were that it should be : well-structured; findable (SEO); use a mix of media; be enjoyable (and lead to new questions); be a trusted starting point (include bibliographies, links and sources).
- A piece of research linked to the CHES (Cultural Heritage Experiences through Socio-personal interactions and Storytelling) project outlined and



workshopped a story-authoring methodology of scripting, staging, producing and editing. Amongst its conclusions is the fact that 'Digital storytelling requires synchronous, collaborative work among different departments, even with external experts, which clearly breaks open the traditional institution as we know it.'

- **A series of webinars from StoryCenter** present workshops on how to involve hard-to-reach and vulnerable audiences in digital storytelling.
- An **EU storytelling project, StoryTeller**, has developed a storytelling manual for working with community groups in a physical setting which includes acknowledgment of the use/effect on engagement of emotions related to hope, fear, expectations, power, trust and vulnerability, and looks at how storytelling and narrative are linked to identity.
- Another **webinar series from 2020, this time from DCN**, addresses questions of using digital storytelling for engagement and in a time of crisis, as well as the concept of mobile journalism.

Other examples contributed by members show how digital storytelling techniques are used to achieve specific goals of greater reach and increased understanding of hidden or hard-to-reach topics.

- **Two online courses from Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona** that incorporate video and animation in their storytelling techniques are cited as good examples of how digitised content presented attractively can be used to deepen an audience's understanding of a complex subject.
- Another proponent of the video as an engagement tool is **the Proyecto Arqueológico Cerro Bilanero**. Again, video is used to make complex concepts, in this case the layers of an archeological site, accessible to a broad audience.
- Digital storytelling reveals hidden **stories in Ciutadella Ibèrica de Calafell**, with the use of an app that can turn AR points hidden on walls within the physical site into video, text and other 3D resources.
- And in **El patrimonio artístico durante la Guerra Civil y la Posguerra**, a database is populated with information about stolen and returned or lost artworks, including their storytelling with images and maps, sourcing information from the people who owned them and from their exile journey.
- Digital storytelling is put to use in revealing **hidden stories in Brama Grodzka** too, presenting an area of Lublin completely destroyed during World War II. The project's organisers use digital storytelling to reach a broad and geographical distant audience.
- The experience of contributing a personal story to the **Europeana 1989 Project** was a cathartic and emotionally engaging one for the contributor (an example of an active audience authoring content), but also contributed to an increase in knowledge for the cultural heritage team processing the submissions, creating a useful inter-generational conversation.
- **DanceMe UP** is a project based on audience development via digital means using the DanceMe app in which the dancers develop a choreography within the



'virtual rehearsal room' visible to users, the future audience. It aims to deepen the levels of engagement between artists, cultural organizations and audiences.

## Discussion - themes

Having introduced these projects to the group, members then undertook a group exercise and discussion to pull out the storytelling elements that they feel have the most impact - they were asked to write down the most important keywords for the projects they brought to the table - and then to cluster them into themes.

The themes/trends that arose are broadly classified below. Text in italics shows members' keyword contributions to the group 'jamboard':

- Relating to the audience experience
  - **Emotion** - *Surprising, empathy, powerful emotions*
  - **Connection** - *Engaged, connecting, disadvantaged/hard to reach audiences, collaboration/co-authoring stories, relate dimensions, pathos formula*
  - **User journey** - *Immersive, user/audience centred, active audience participation, exploration, be enjoyable*
  - **Awareness of motivation of narratives** - *History, Herstory, local heritage, historical events, heritage interpretation, contested heritage, showing invisible, hidden story, context aware, testimony, identity formation*
- Relating to the storyteller
  - **Content** - *well-structured content, knowledge based, be a trusted source, cosmograms, educational*
  - **Skills** - *mixing tools, digital dialogic skill, training, digital mobile journalism skill-gaining, digital mojo skills, knowledge enhancement, storytelling workshops*

We could summarise then that, according to the research and personal experiences brought to this task, successful digital storytelling experiences are those in which the audience has **agency to be actively involved** in a **well-structured, trustworthy and knowledge-based experience**, and as a result **feel engaged and connected** either with the content or with other people/groups/philosophies.

The group noted that emotion is noted as the priority from these themes because, besides being denoted as a category in itself, it is also central to the other themes listed under 'audience experience' - connection, user journey and awareness of narratives.

Unsurprisingly, the presentation of history, or the awareness of different narratives, is central to digital storytelling experiences derived from the cultural heritage sector, with an emphasis on revealing previously hidden elements or original interpretations.



We can also see that the examples brought here from the cultural heritage sector provide some dialogue and development opportunities around the value of digital storytelling skills.

## Discussion - prioritisation

In group discussion, members were then asked to prioritise these elements. Elements felt to be most significant/important were moved towards the centre of the circle, while those that are less important are further out.



The group agreed that the most crucial elements were to do with active engagement and powerful emotional/empathic response. Content being trustworthy and well-structured plays a part in the audience's ability to connect with it and feel empathy. This emotional state allows the content of the experience to be well-received, which in turn can affect the audience's understanding of identity - both relating to the subject matter and their own personal identity.

## Summary

The range of diverse experiences from Task Force members shows that digital storytelling is a topic that is of great interest to the cultural heritage sector. Experiences are wide-ranging and ongoing, suggesting that further exploration into digital storytelling with digital cultural heritage would be useful to the sector as a whole at this moment in time.

This task demonstrates that there are many elements at play when analysing digital storytelling good practice but that creating emotional engagement is at its heart.



Comparing the group's instant reactions to the question about what makes for effective storytelling and their considered responses based on the evidence of their chosen projects, we see the outcome is the same - engagement is central in both diagrams. When this Task Force moves on to look at individual case studies in detail, it can use the priorities acknowledged here to shape its approach. As this task shows that emotional engagement is the central element to an engaging digital storytelling experience, our subsequent case studies task could endeavour to analyse exactly how our case study examples achieve it.

## Task 2: Longlist of examples of cultural heritage digital storytelling

### About Task 2: Longlist

'Task 2: Longlist' was coordinated by Beth Daley, Lisa Peter and Maribel Hidalgo Urbaneja. It ran from October to December 2020. Its aim was to produce a longlist of good practice digital storytelling experiences that could a) serve as inspiration for cultural heritage professionals designing their own online storytelling activities and b) provide the examples to be used by Task 3: Case studies.

Task Force members participating in this task met in three online meetings in this period, and communicated throughout via Basecamp.

Members first undertook a brainstorming session to discuss the types of information that it would be useful to collect. The categories were then refined and grouped and recorded in a draft Google Form. This form was then tested and further refined by Task members before the [final form](#) was made available to all Task Force members to record their examples.

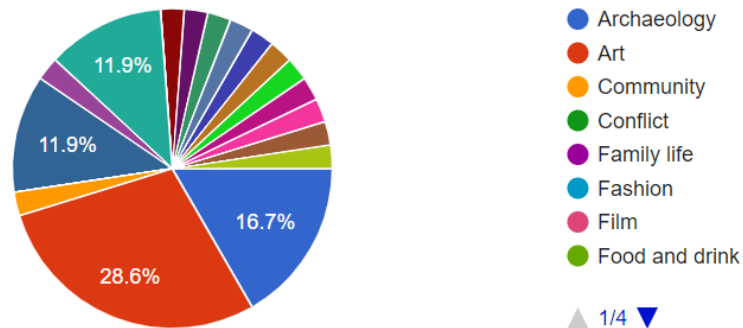
The criteria for inclusion was simple - these must be examples that the members of the Task Force believe to be good practice in digital storytelling. We asked members to be selective and to choose no more than five examples each. We valued the usefulness (ability to search, browse and explore) of the final longlist as a resource for inspiration over the desire to produce an exhaustive list.

The outcome of the task is a list of 43 examples from across the globe, which is available as [a spreadsheet](#) containing all the information collected. This can be used by cultural heritage professionals to search for specific information, e.g. examples in a particular language or examples that use audio. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of good practice in digital storytelling - it is a snapshot of what our members encountered at the time of study.



What is the main topic of this resource? Choose just one.

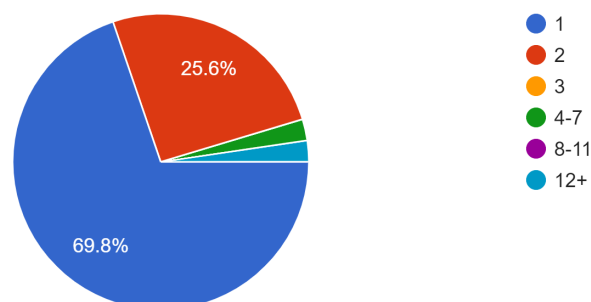
42 responses



The main topic was art (28.6%), followed by archaeology (16.7%). History and local history both came out at 11.9%.

How many languages is this resource available in?

43 responses

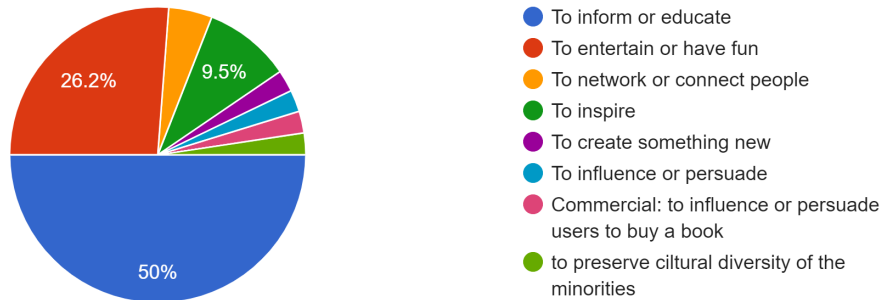


Of our 43 examples, 69.8% were available in one language only. A further 25.6% in two languages. **Almost none of our examples are multilingual in design.** Although there are 16 languages recorded in our sample, there is a heavy leaning to English - 79.1% are in English. The next highest language in our sample is Italian (14%), followed by Polish (9.3%) and Dutch (7%).



In your opinion, what appears to be the main aim of this resource? Please choose just one.

42 responses

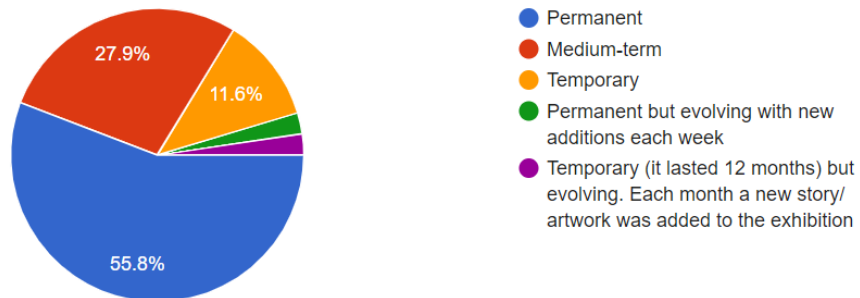


We asked our contributors to say what appeared to be the main aim of the resource. Note that this is their opinion as audience members. Exactly half selected 'To inform or educate'. Another 26.2% chose 'To entertain or have fun'. Next was 'to inspire' at 9.5%. Other aims recorded once or twice each were 'To create something new', 'To influence or persuade' and 'To preserve cultural diversity'.

**The tendency is for storytelling experiences that inform or educate, and then entertain.**

As far as you can tell, is this resource permanent or temporary?

43 responses



We asked contributors to assess whether they thought the resource had been designed to be permanent or temporary. Despite the often fleeting nature of internet content, these digital storytelling experiences appear to be largely permanent (55.8%) or medium term (27.9%). One reflection from the group here is that this could be because funding is unlikely to be granted for short-term content only.

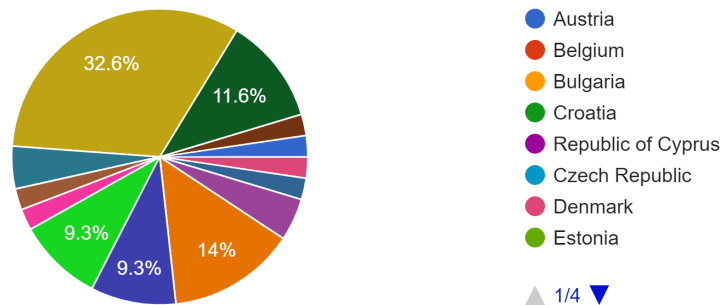
**Who created this resource?**





In which country is the main creator that produced this resource based?

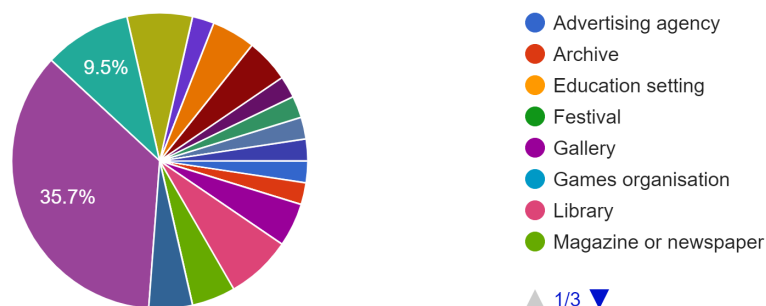
43 responses



13 countries are listed as being where the main creator of a resource is based. Top is the United Kingdom (32.6%) followed by Italy (14%), the USA (11.6%), the Netherlands (9.3%) and Poland (9.3%). The spread of countries listed here is interesting to compare to the top languages used. **English is being used by far more than just the Anglophile countries.**

What type of organisation does the main creator represent?

42 responses



Our sample loved storytelling examples from a range of types of organisations. The chief one being museums (35.7%). Besides the GLAM CHIs we would expect to see here are independent people or companies, non-profit organisations, local government institutions, and media/advertising agencies. There are also collaborations.

## Format and channels

We asked contributors to select all the format(s) that their examples use, and then to choose just one as the main format.

When responding with all formats used, the result is a list of 24 different format types, ranging from GIFs and memes to podcasts and blogs. The most frequently occurring

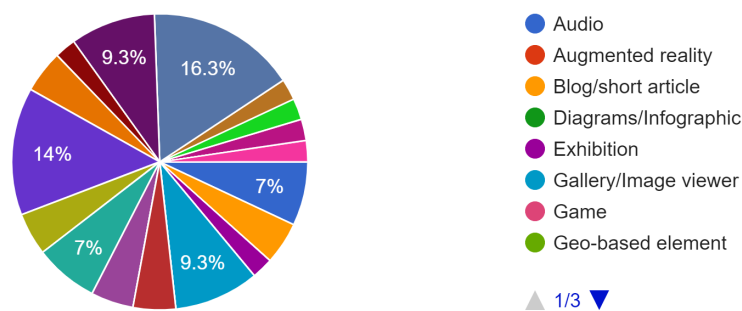


responses here were video (used in 44.2% of examples), audio (41.9%) and gallery/image viewer (34.9%), followed by text-based formats like blogs/short articles (30.2%), scrollytelling (27.9%) and long-reads (23.3%).

Note that although the form supported virtual, augmented and mixed reality as responses - none of the examples fit these categories. One reflection from the group was that perhaps these modes are not mainstream enough at this time to be top-of-mind when people think of online storytelling experiences.

What is the main format used? Please select one.

43 responses

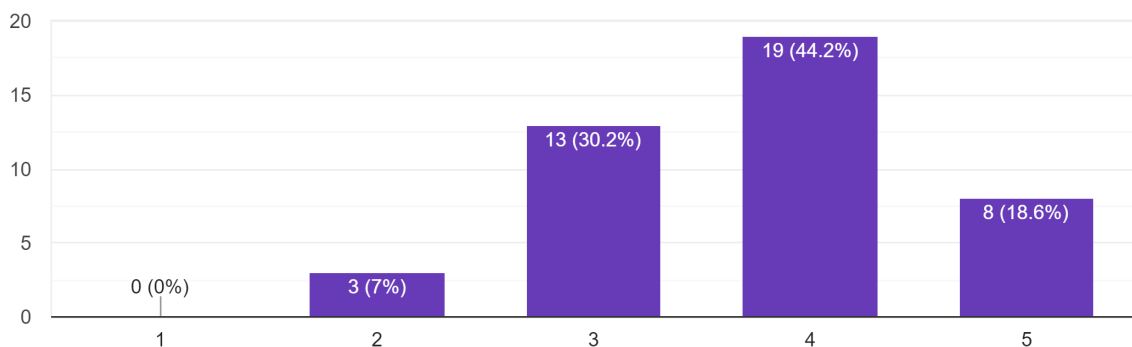


The main format is a mixed picture, in which video content is the top response at 16.3%, followed by scrollytelling at 14% then long read and gallery/image viewer both at 9.3%.

**There is no one singular format that constitutes the main format used. Instead, we see a range of approaches, with a trend to using more visual content over text-based content.** This is also represented in a question in which contributors were asked to express the ratio of text to other elements, with 1 denoting 'mostly text' and 5 denoting 'mostly other elements'.

What is the ratio of text to other elements?

43 responses

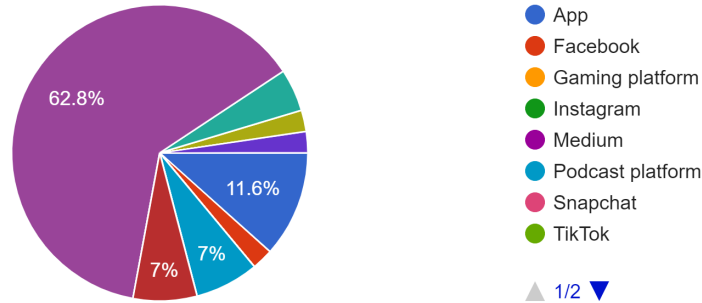


**The tendency here is to lean towards 'mostly other elements' over text.**



### What channel/medium is used?

43 responses



We asked contributors to state what channel/medium was used by the examples they were recording. The majority here are websites (62.8%), unsurprisingly as we had asked for online digital storytelling experiences. Other channels were apps at 11.6%, podcasts and a range of social media.

### About the narration

This section looked at how the narrator connects with the audience - who they represent and how they present themselves.

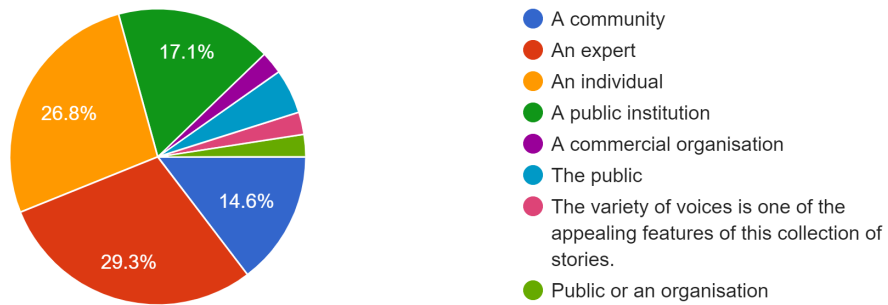
The examples use a mix of narrative points of view. In 69% of examples, the narration uses the third person. In 47.6% they use the first person, and in 11.9% the second person. We did not record how many examples use just one of these points of view, instead asking contributors to select all that applied.

In terms of style or tone, we asked contributors to choose whether the style could be classified as 'corporate/business-like' (0%), formal (28.6%), informal (52.4%) and/or 'personal' (45.2%). **Here we see a tendency for a narrative style that is informal and personal.**



Who does the narrator seem to represent? Please pick one.

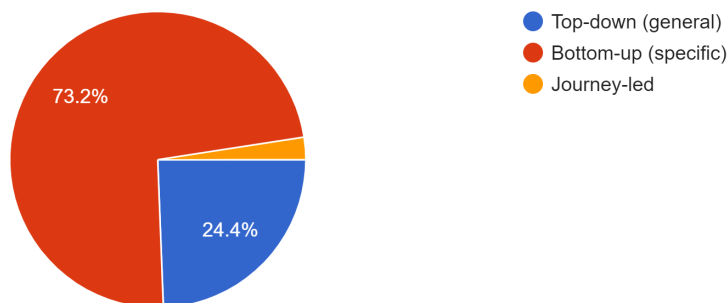
41 responses



The personal perspective is also demonstrated in a question asking who the narrator seems to represent. **In more than half of examples, the narrator represents either an expert (29.3%) or an individual (26.8%).**

Is the narrative 'top-down' (starting from a general focus) or 'bottom-up' (starting from a specific focus)?

41 responses

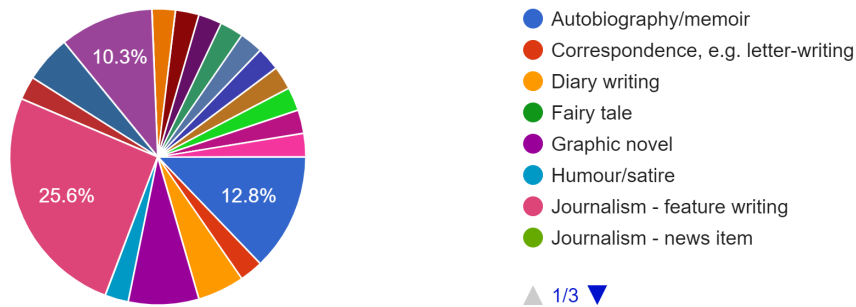


The narrative focus of the examples is overwhelmingly bottom-up (73.2%) - that is, it has a specific focus or topic, rather than a general or broad one.



Does the narrative style fit a traditional storytelling genre? Please choose one.

39 responses



We asked whether the 43 examples fitted a traditional storytelling genre in terms of narrative style and saw a mixed picture emerge. 19 styles were identified, with just over a quarter (25.6%) selecting 'Journalism - feature writing'. Auto-biography/memoir was 12.8% and quest/adventure was 10.3%. **There is no 'winner' in terms of narrative genre - a range of approaches can be effective.**

We asked contributors whether the resource represented the experiences or perspectives of traditionally underrepresented groups or voices. The response here was mixed. Some made no visible efforts to do this, focusing on a single institution's own national collections, for example. **Approximately half of the examples had some kind of representation for traditionally underrepresented groups**, including women, indigenous people, culturally diverse social groups in a particular time and place, D/deaf, disabled or marginalised writers, migrants, trans and non-binary people.

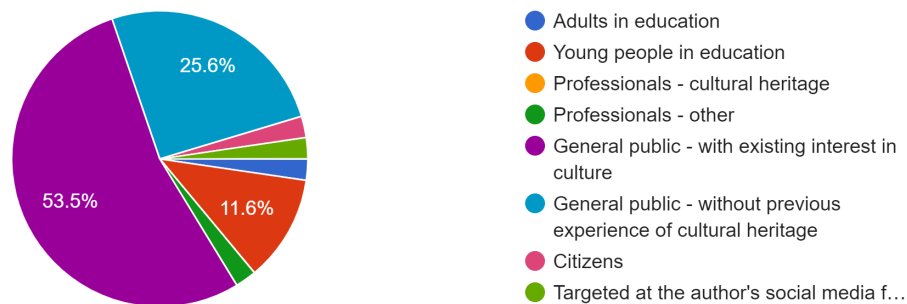
### Who is this resource for?

In this section, we asked questions of the intended audience of each example. Note that contributors are responding as audience members themselves, so their responses reflect how they perceive an experience, rather than what the creator of the experience may have intended.



In your opinion, which group is the main target audience for this resource?

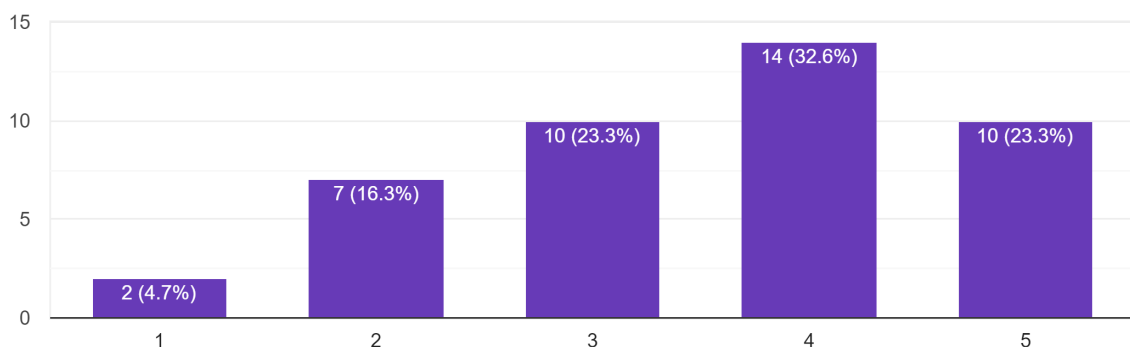
43 responses



Looking at who the main target audience seems to be for the examples, we see a general public audience, split into those with an existing interest in culture (53.5%) and those without previous experience of cultural heritage (25.6%). The next highest group is young people in education (11.6%).

How broad do you think the intended audience is?

43 responses



In terms of how broad the anticipated audience seems to be, the scale is tipped towards 5 - 'Broad - it appeals to everyone', rather than 1 - 'Narrow - it appeals to a specific demographic'.

**The tendency is for a specific topic or focus (see section above) but for a broad audience who are already invested in cultural heritage.**

We asked contributors to describe whether the example was evidently adapted to support people with visual, audio or physical impairments. Again, this was answered from the perspective of an audience member. We did not look into coding or using adaptive technology such as screen readers. These results are indicative of elements identifiable by the layperson.



Only ten responses denote some kind of increased accessibility. Responses included that examples were easy to navigate by scrolling using either mouse or cursor keys, that videos contained subtitles, that colours were well-contrasted, that an example was screen-reader friendly and that one met the WCAG 2.0 standard.

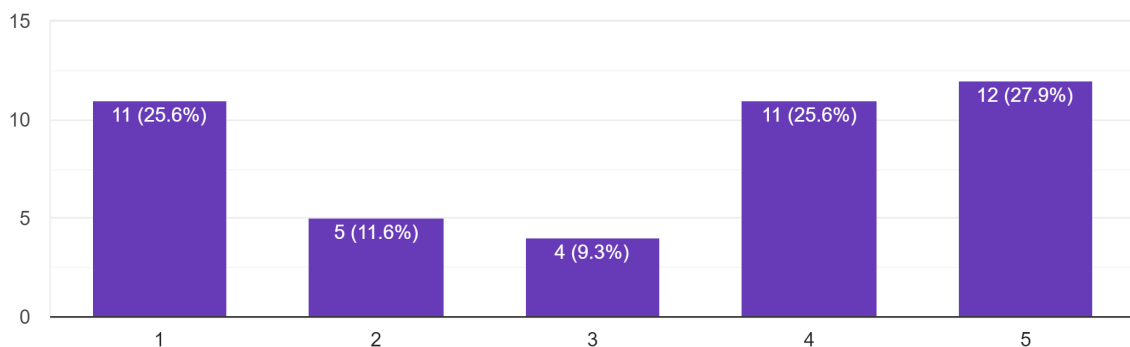
**A reflection here is that there is more scope to make digital storytelling experiences accessible and to make this evident to all.**

### What does the audience do?

This section of the questionnaire looks at the user experience - what do they do and feel?

How much agency does the audience have to navigate this resource?

43 responses



We wanted to know what the user has to do to navigate this experience. We asked 'How much agency does the audience have to navigate this resource?' 1 being 'None - the audience is guided step by step'. 5 being 'Complete - the audience chooses where to go and what to focus on'.

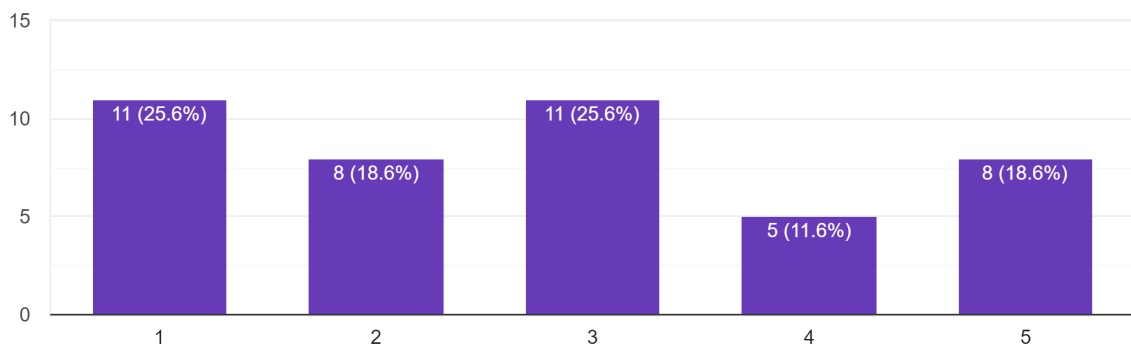
There is a broad range of results. The responses are skewed slightly to greater agency over less, but still one quarter of examples that our contributors love give the audience no agency at all, they simply follow the journey step by step. **A good storytelling experience is not necessarily one in which the audience has control over their journey.**

In describing the navigational experience, we see a division of three broad categories, approximately the same number of responses in each. First, we see many linear experiences navigated by scrolling up and down a single page website, or a Twitter thread or by listening to a podcast from beginning to end. Second, we have experiences split into chapters or sections, which can be selected at will (but then often have a linear



structure within each section). Third, we have more open-ended navigational structures in which the audience has a more complex experience in which they can 'wander at will', exploring video, audio, clicking on or zooming into images or maps. **A linear storytelling approach is equally as valuable as a more complex one.** This finding maps onto the most-used formats identified above, in which video, scrolly-telling and long-read were top of the list: all linear formats.

How much interactivity is there in the resource? For example, zooming into detail, manipulating an image, answering questions, adding comments or annotations, influencing what is displayed  
43 responses



We asked contributors to rate the level of interactivity in the resource from 1 - 'None - the audience cannot interact', to 5 'Lots - the audience can interact with the resource throughout the experience'. There is a broad range of responses, with less interactivity slightly 'winning' over more interactivity in these examples.

**Good digital storytelling practice is not necessarily related to levels of audience interactivity.**

Then we asked contributors to express how they think the examples make the audience feel. The form included a list of emotions, plus an 'other' element so that all responses could be submitted. Here, in line with the 'main aim' question earlier, the audience feels 'informed' in 65.1% of examples, followed by 'curious' in 60.5%. These are the two main responses here. Next is 'immersed' at 41.9%, 'inspired' in 37.2% and 'connected' in 34.9%.

The vast majority of emotions were positive ones (negative emotions were available to be selected too). At the bottom of the list of responses were 'anxious' (2.3%), 'reassured' (2.3%), 'sad' (4.7%) and 'scared' (2.3%).

'Nostalgic' was an emotion in 25.6% of examples and 'amused' in 25.6%.

**A good storytelling experience gives audiences a feeling that they are informed, that they want to know more (are 'curious').**



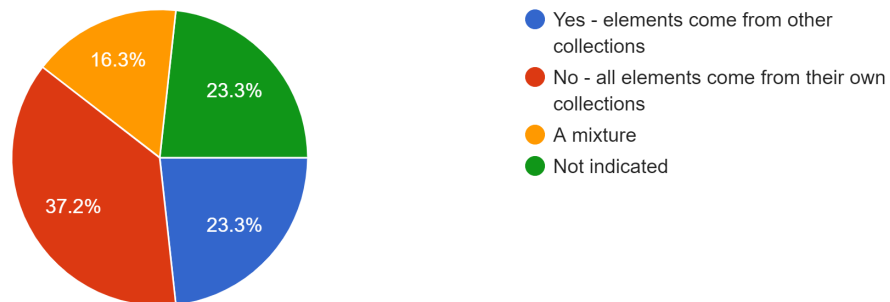


## Further information

In the final section, we asked contributors to say, if indicated, whether the works/collections used had been commissioned specifically for this resource (30.2%), whether the works were available elsewhere (37.2%), or had been co-created with the audience (18.6%).

Does this resource use works that are not part of the organisation's own collections? (e.g. open data or copyrighted data from elsewhere?)

43 responses



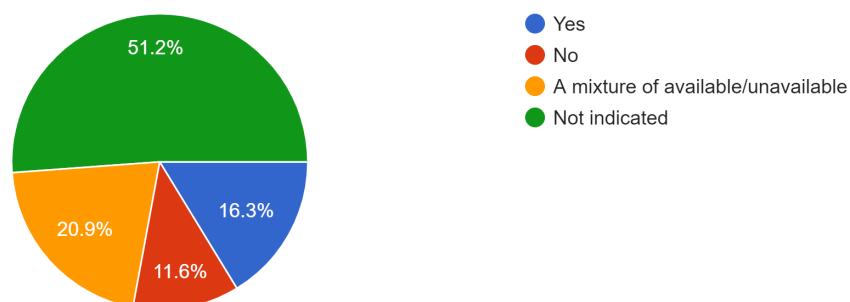
We also asked whether it was possible to see that the works were directly from the creating organisation's own collections or had been brought in from elsewhere. Over a third use exclusively material from their own collections, with 23.3% using elements from elsewhere only and 16.3% using a mixture.

**A good storytelling experience can be created using existing material and material that is available elsewhere.** This could be reassuring for smaller institutions who don't have the capacity or resources to create new material or have enough of their own.

We wanted to know whether it was clear that the works/collections used in the examples were themselves available for reuse.

Are the works/collections used in this resource available for reuse by others?

43 responses







## Task 3: Three case studies

### About Task 3: Case studies

'Task 3: Case studies' was coordinated by Beth Daley, Milena Lato, Caterina Ruscio and Lorenza Stanziano. It ran from January to February 2021. Its aim was to produce three case studies taken from the Task 2 longlist of good practice digital storytelling experiences, that focus on providing a response to the question 'How does the storytelling of the case study create emotional engagement?' These case studies would in themselves be useful to cultural heritage professionals setting out to create their own digital storytelling experiences, and provide further information for the final Task 4: Recommendations.

Task Force members participating in this task met in three online meetings in this period, and communicated throughout via Basecamp.

### Selecting the case studies

The coordinators of this task first reviewed the outcome of Task 2 - the 43 longlist examples and the votes (likes) they each received on the Padlet. Coordinators took into account the top-voted examples, plus other factors to produce a shortlist of six examples which covered a range of formats, target audiences and resources required to realise them.

The shortlist was:

- [A picture of change for a world in constant motion](#)
- [Jews of Lebanon](#)
- [People not property](#)
- [Things That Talk](#)
- ['You are Flora Seville' - Egham museum](#)
- [Met Kids](#)

In the first all-member meeting, members were presented the scope of the Task, and asked to vote on and discuss the examples that would be the chosen case studies.

The chosen case studies were:

- [A picture of change for a world in constant motion](#)
- [Met Kids](#)
- ['You are Flora Seville' - Egham museum](#)



### **A Picture of Change for a World in Constant Motion**

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/07/arts/design/hokusai-fuji.html>

A long-form text/image blog ('close read') from Jason Farago of the New York Times, focusing on Katsushika Hokusai's woodblock print "Ejiri in Suruga Province."

See line 7 in the [spreadsheet](#) for information about this resource.

### **#MetKids**

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/online-features/metkids/>

It is a digital resource composed by an interactive map and a discovery digital storytelling strategy made for, with and by kids 7-12 years-old in the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York City.

See line 3 in the [spreadsheet](#) for information about this resource.

### **'You are Flora Seville' - Egham Museum**

<https://twitter.com/EghamMuseum/status/1311453097462575104>

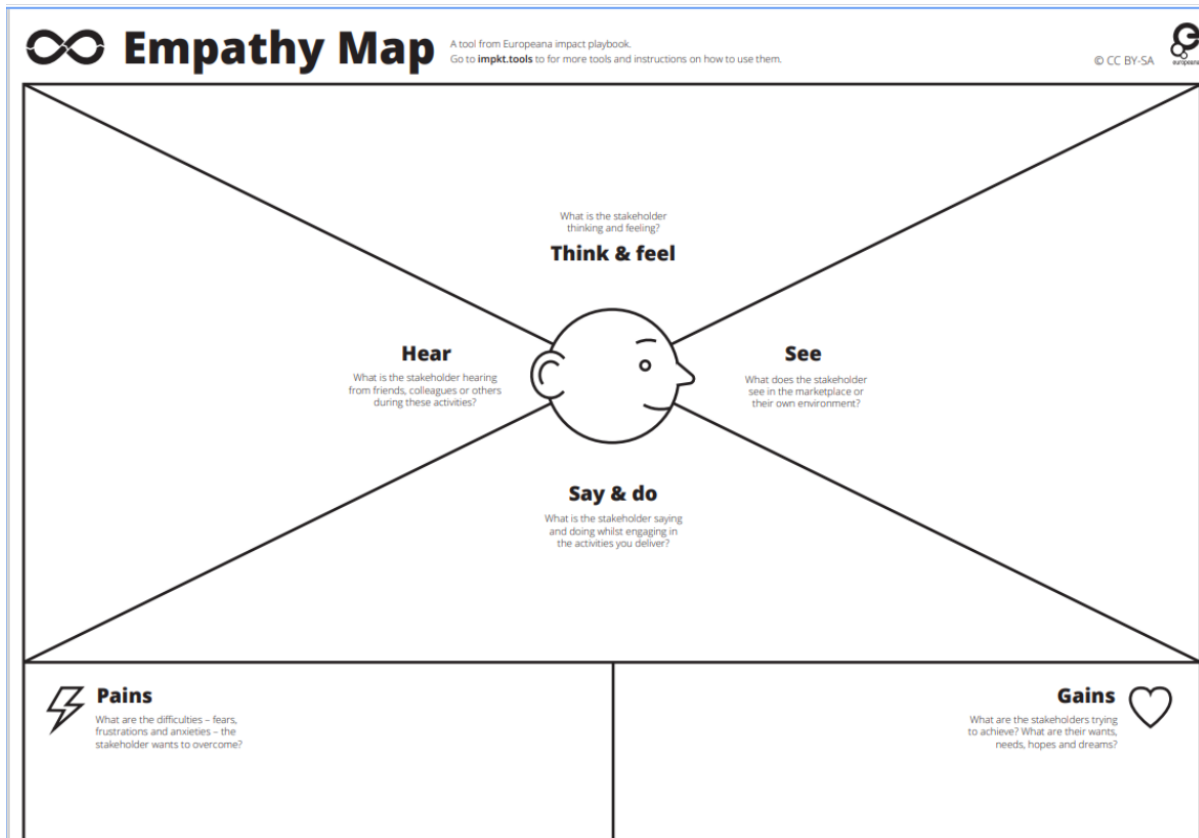
A choose-your-own-adventure click through from the Egham Museum, where you follow your own story based on Flora Seville and the museum's collections

See line 10 in the [spreadsheet](#) for information about this resource.



## Creating the case studies

Each coordinator (Milena, Caterina and Lorenza) took responsibility for one of the case studies. The task members each chose a case study that they wished to work on and then worked in small groups, each led by a coordinator to discuss their experiences as a visitor (or stakeholder) of the example.



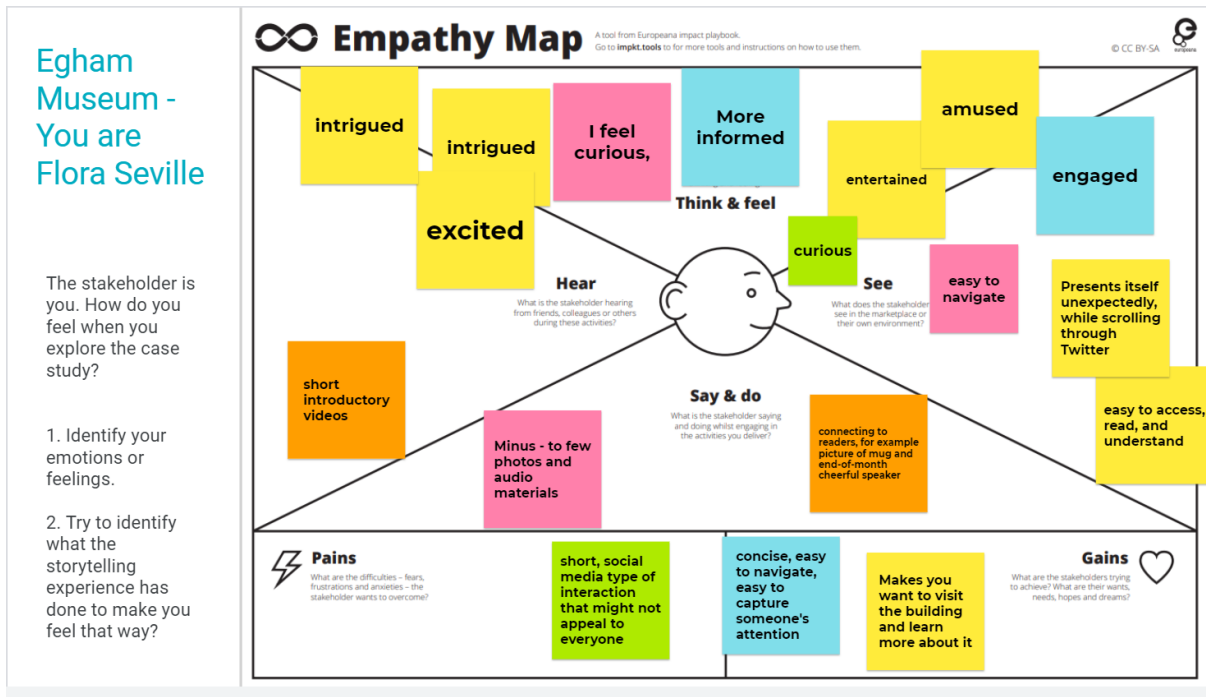
The [Europeana Impact Playbook's Empathy Map](#) was used as a tool to help members identify the emotional engagement they felt as the user, and to discuss how the experience led them to feel that way.

An empathy map is used to support a discussion about a person's needs. Our goal using it here was to gain a deeper level of understanding of the audience experience.

The empathy map is split into sections, allowing the discussion to focus separately on what the visitor sees, hears, thinks and feels, says and does. It also allows you to record their 'pains', that is frustrations/obstacles, and 'gains', the motivations or benefits from the experience.

Collecting ideas about how the visitor feels as they work through the experience guides us in understanding the digital storytelling experience itself.





*Empathy Maps for each case study*

The groups were then asked to start to consolidate their discussion by creating a list of storytelling techniques used in each case study. The coordinators then used this discussion as the basis for a draft of the case study.

The case studies were discussed by both the coordinators and the full group of task members to create three case studies consistent in style and structure.

The outcome of the task is three short case studies of very different digital storytelling experiences that provide an overview of the kinds of emotional engagement that different storytelling techniques can generate. Those case studies can be used by cultural heritage professionals to provide inspiration and to help them to think about the kinds of emotional engagement they wish to create and some of the techniques that could be used to help them achieve this.

## Case studies

### #MetKids



<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/online-features/metkids/>

### What is MetKids?

MetKids is a digital resource from the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York City. It is composed of an interactive map and a digital storytelling discovery strategy made for, with and by kids aged 7-12 years-old. MetKids informs and educates children about historical pieces of art and cultural heritage, providing an opportunity to learn from historical facts and to discover and play with the items.

### How does the audience feel?

- Surprised - the visitor feels surprised to find so many things to look for and explore.
- Intrigued - the visitor feels intrigued that they can travel in a 'time-machine' that takes them to past times by simply selecting items and pushing a red button.
- Invited - the visitor is welcomed in, and invited to travel in the time machine and to imagine new stories.
- Involved - the visitor feels involved in a learning process based on a gamification strategy, they feel like an active participant, creating their own 'story'.
- Motivated - The opportunity to reimagine and create through cultural heritage motivates both teachers and pupils to work and learn together.

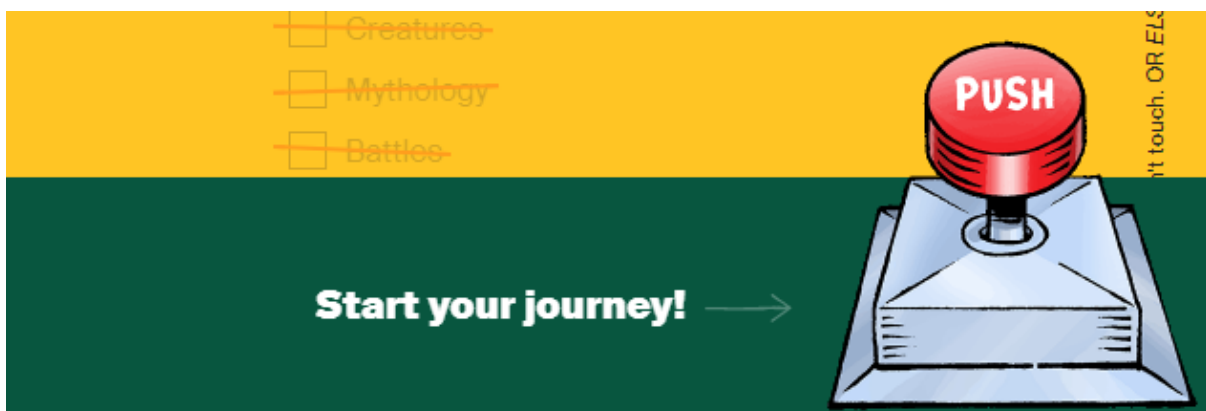
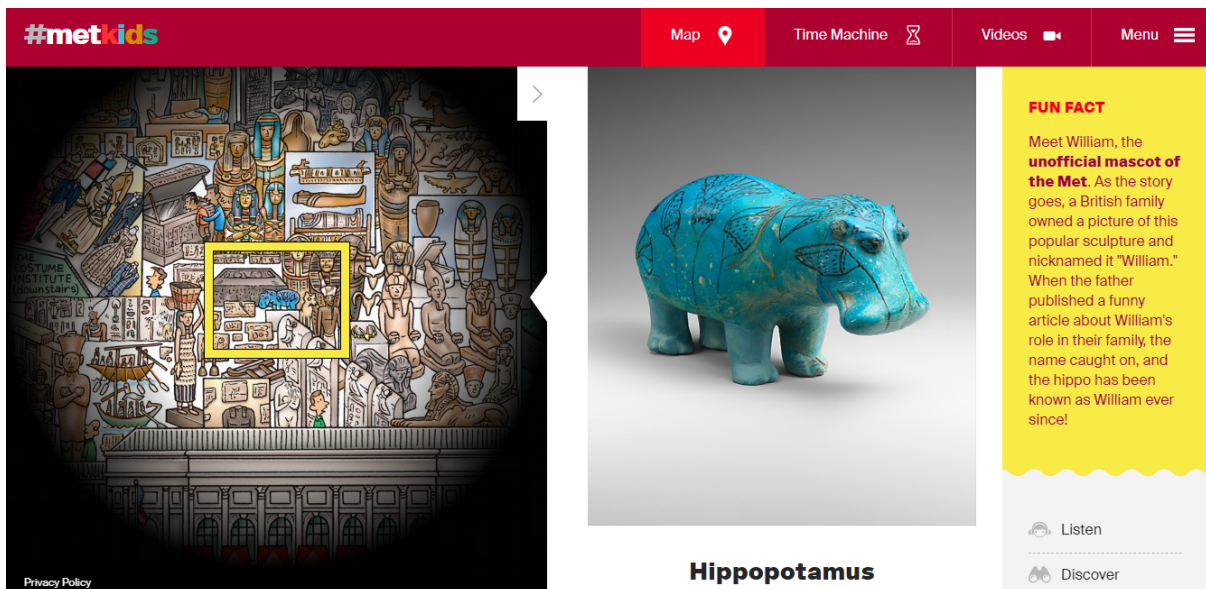
We must also acknowledge negative emotions throughout the experience, and the visitor may feel confusion at the first sight of the interactive map - what to do, where to click? A simple guide would have been useful here.





## Storytelling features

- Gamification - This storytelling experience shares many characteristics typical of a game-based environment: riddles, pictures, animations and colours. The visitor is able to reimagine the past by the simple act of jumping from child-friendly and sometimes amusing illustrations, to archival photos and videos. The illustrations, animations and colours are reminiscent of an illustrated children's book (see image above), and are combined with a game-like environment full of adventures and gifts.
- Multimedia - The experience is aural as well as visual. Sound effects are activated when the time-machine button is pressed, and real sounds associated with the exhibit items and the videos make the visitor feel directly involved.
- Accessible - The storytelling is informal and accessible, because of its tone and style (of language and illustration) and an accessible structure, e.g. the use of 'Fun fact' boxes and a big red 'Push' button, and easy to explore because of a simple structure containing few but essential sections.





The screenshot shows the #metkids website interface. At the top, there is a red navigation bar with the #metkids logo and links for Map, Time Machine, Videos, and Menu. The main content area is divided into two parts. On the left, there is a large, detailed illustration of a museum gallery with various artifacts on display. A yellow box highlights a specific artifact, a glass garland bowl. On the right, there is an information panel for the highlighted artifact. The panel has a yellow header with the title 'Glass garland bowl' and a 'FUN FACT' section. Below the header, there are four rows of information, each with a question and an answer. The 'FUN FACT' section contains a paragraph of text. At the bottom of the information panel, there are three icons: Discover, Imagine, and Create. A 'Privacy Policy' link is visible in the bottom left corner of the gallery view.

**#metkids** Map Time Machine Videos Menu

**Glass garland bowl**

**FUN FACT**  
The flowery designs decorating the four parts of this glass bowl are in the style called millefiori, which means "a thousand flowers" in Italian.

What is this made of? **Glass**

When was this made? **late 1st century B.C.**

Where was this made? **Roman Empire**

Where can I find it? **Greek and Roman Art**  
Gallery 166

Discover  
Imagine  
Create

Even more information ↗

Privacy Policy

- Trustworthy - The storytelling is knowledge-based and trustworthy, sharing both facts and expert opinion, and relatable - see this example relating the capacity of a bronze head to 10,000 litres of lemonade:



Map Time Machine Videos Menu



**Bronze head of a griffin**

**FUN FACT**

This monstrous head once decorated the rim of a giant pot, or cauldron. Some of these types of cauldrons were enormous—**one historian described a cauldron made for a king that could hold two-thousand, seven hundred gallons of liquid.** That's large enough to hold almost ten thousand liters of lemonade!

Discover

#metkids Map Time Machine Videos Menu

Show me:  Create  Q&A  Made by Kids  Celebrate  All



**#MetKids—How Do We Make**

**#MetKids—How Can Art Tell Us About Who We Are?**  
Q&A



- Discovery - MetKids engages the visitor with its content, allowing them to choose the content to focus on - to search and discover new things. It involves the visitor directly by encouraging them to create their own stories.

### **Summary**

The emotional engagement 'Met Kids' produces is based on creating connections with the past, involving the audience actively, fostering a sense of wonder and the thrill of getting close to an object in order to discover the hidden stories behind the exhibit items.



'You are Flora Seville' - Egham Museum

### What is this case study?

<https://twitter.com/EghamMuseum/status/1311453097462575104>

A choose-your-own-adventure click-through Twitter storytelling experience from the Egham Museum in the UK. The Egham Museum experience is based on a fictional story set in the 19th century, in which the character Flora Seville moves in a real historical context - the Royal Holloway College for Women.

You are Flora Seville. The year is 1887 and you are one of the first 28 students to enter the wondrous new institution, [@RoyalHolloway](#) College for Women.

How will your first day unfold?

### How does the audience feel?

- Curious and intrigued. The story is captivating and invites attention by immediately placing the reader into the place of Flora Seville. Readers want to know more about Flora and learn how her story progresses. Readers can choose different sequences of events each time they click to progress, which makes people feel like they are truly exploring the building in which the story is set.



**Egham Museum** @EghamMuseum · Sep 30, 2020

You are Flora Seville. The year is 1887 and you are one of the first 28 students to enter the wondrous new institution, [@RoyalHolloway](#) College for Women.

How will your first day unfold?

Just remember to stay out of trouble and avoid being sent to the Principal's Office



51

930

1.8K





### *Flora's fictional experience*

- Comfortable. Readers are guided through the options, which are easy to navigate on Twitter. Regardless of their selected plot lines, readers are enjoying historical details of the historical College for Women. The audience becomes co-creator - they can choose the way the story evolves in a collaborative way.
- Immersed. The readers enjoy being in Flora's storyplace: the historical details and reconstructions are accurate, and objects of the late nineteenth century are shown in their original contexts, through the Egham Museum collections. The reader can connect to the story through the use of these details and the presentation of images.
- Connected. A playful note in the opening tweet shows an emotional connection to Flora's early days at college: 'Just remember to stay out of trouble and avoid being sent to the Principal's Office'. This personal touch combines well with the use of historical details and imagery to foster a feeling of connection with the audience.
- Informed. Readers have the opportunity to understand the historical context in which Flora lives, as well as the customs of the time.
- Entertained. Flora's story is charming, and its readers become invested in her journey and experience.

The 'You are Flora Seville' Twitter-based experience addresses those who already have some interest in the culture of that area and historical period. Visitors who are already familiar with Twitter formats will feel comfortable using this resource and find it easy to navigate and interact with.

### **Storytelling features**

This experience uses a straightforward navigation using a channel many people are familiar with - Twitter.



**Egham Museum** @EghamMuseum  
Replying to @EghamMuseum

One of the college maids wakes you at 7.30am, bringing you some hot water for you to wash yourself. As she leaves, she reminds you to be ready by 8.

As the bells chime 8 do you:

7:49 PM · Sep 30, 2020 · Twitter Web App

5 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 108 Likes

**Egham Museum** @EghamMuseum · Sep 30, 2020  
Replying to @EghamMuseum

**Egham Museum** @EghamMuseum · Sep 30, 2020  
A) Go to chapel  
[Show this thread](#)

2 35

**Egham Museum** @EghamMuseum · Sep 30, 2020

**Egham Museum** @EghamMuseum · Sep 30, 2020  
B) Go to the Dining Hall  
[Show this thread](#)

*Should Flora go to the Chapel, or the Dining Hall instead? Readers will choose which tweet they will follow.*

- Quest and adventure – these are two significant elements that give great potential to this story. We pay attention to the story because we want to increase our knowledge, and we look out for the risks Flora faces and try to find a solution for her to overcome complicated situations .
- Reconstruction of a historical context – The historical context is important. References to daily routine, the places where people meet, eat, study, the objects used at the time are precise and documented by historical sources and material culture evidence.
- Documentary – the use of the real historical context gives this experience a documentary element reconstructing a female student’s routine.
- Informal and casual, chatty language helps to capture the audience’s attention and draw us in.



- Personal history – the fact that it is a story in which another person is in different situations makes it personal because visitors can identify with and become invested in Flora.
- The element of surprise – unexpected discoveries engage readers as they journey to the story's end in different ways, depending on the options chosen, which makes this storytelling very intriguing.

Good storytelling does not have to be interactive, however, more photographs, audio elements, or video assets related to the context in which the character moved would be useful in this experience.

This is an example of digital storytelling on a platform whose demographic tends to be a fairly well-educated audience. It could also work well on other social media platforms, covering a broader audience than Twitter does.

### **Summary**

This story creates emotional involvement as visitors are made to be part of the story and are drawn into the atmosphere of the historical context. There is an element of surprise along with the possibility to choose how to continue the story.

The history of Flora Seville is well-structured; readers can feel immersed in the historical context in which Flora lived through the museum's showcased collections, and drawn into her personal (fictional) life through the informal, personal style and agency to choose what Flora does next.





## A Picture of Change for a World in Constant Motion

### What is this case study?

A long-form text/image blog ('close read') from Jason Farago of the New York Times, focusing on Katsushika Hokusai's woodblock print 'Ejiri in Suruga Province.'



Screenshot of <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/07/arts/design/hokusai-fuji.html>, courtesy of The New York Times

### How does the audience feel?

- Curious and surprised - because of the content and the style of the narration, which is personal and passionate.
- Informed - because of the level of detail presented about the target image and the further historical context presented that relates the main image to the wider world.
- Inspired - by the ideas and the view of the writer.
- Comfortable and guided - because they are taken on a journey by an expert who wants to share their passion and knowledge.
- Engaged and intimate - by the language and structure used by the author and the sudden automated close-up of the images. The close-up helps the audience to focus on the details outlined in the text, to see for example how the wind is affecting each of the characters. The evocative language and close-up images have a (multi) sensorial effect that encourages a feeling of closeness and intimacy.
- Melancholy and transience - The author illustrates a fleeting/ephemeral/transient quality to Hokusai's painting through the text: 'There, even a big mountain can be represented as something small and



secondary.’ And, ‘An ordinary artist would picture Fuji as a vision of beauty, a symbol of permanence. But Hokusai, the sharpest of ironists, does the opposite.’ And later when comparing the Jeff Wall photograph, ‘And where Fuji once loomed, we see the treeline of suburban Vancouver’.

- Empathy and compassion - The considerations of different religions and cultures within the text inspire feelings of compassion in the reader and the close detail and personal approach of the writer encourage us to empathise with both the painter and the characters in his work.

## Storytelling features

Early spring. A heavy sky. Chilly, but not bitter. We're near Suruga Bay, on the south coast of Honshu; maybe you can taste the salt in the air.



Screenshot of <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/07/arts/design/hokusai-fuji.html>, courtesy of *The New York Times*

- Linear journey. The structure of a single scrolling page, combined with the historical detail and the sequence of images make the audience feel like they are on a journey and travelling through space and time.
- Personal perspective. We know immediately we are hearing a personal viewpoint. ‘It’s not his most famous work, but this is my favorite woodblock print by Katsushika Hokusai: “Ejiri in Suruga Province.” It’s the 10th image in his renowned cycle “Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji.”
- Evocative and informal language. The storytelling inspires engagement, intimacy, and compassion for the characters. It is written with evocative, informal and multisensory language: ‘maybe you can taste the salt in the air’. The mention of the wind blowing draws the eyes to the kite, the hat, the papers blowing in the wind and a sentence like ‘maybe you can taste the salt in the air’ transmits a sense of presence that, even if there are only images, is like all the senses are engaged. The language and narration activate many senses.
- Close-up imagery and detail. The images are shown with close-ups showing the beauty of small details that are capable of ‘capturing an instance’ and transmitting the transience of life: ‘An ordinary artist would picture Fuji as a



vision of beauty, a symbol of permanence. But Hokusai, the sharpest of ironists, does the opposite.'

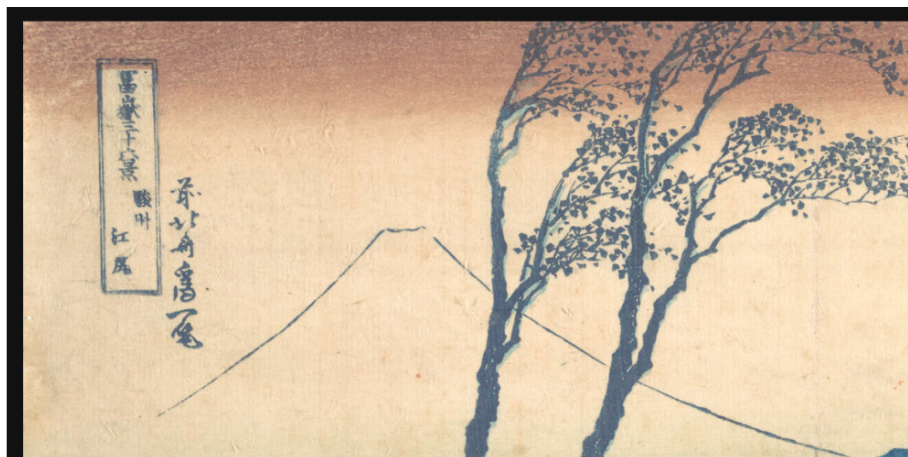
The sudden automated close-up of the images is very persuasive and really pulls the audience into the story.

You hold on to what you can in this explosion of images. But the mountain fades in the distance, and the papers end up in the air.



Screenshot of <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/07/arts/design/hokusai-fuji.html>, courtesy of *The New York Times*

An ordinary artist would picture Fuji as a vision of beauty, a symbol of permanence. But Hokusai, the sharpest of ironists, does the opposite.



Screenshot of <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/07/arts/design/hokusai-fuji.html>, courtesy of *The New York Times*

- Participatory. Despite the linear scrolling format, the author manages to involve the reader actively by calling upon their participation with some hypothetical questions or sentences, like 'How does a single artist — of mass-market pictures, no less — come to embody a national culture?'
- Humour. There is a humorous narration and some unexpected stories within the story: 'And where Fuji once loomed, we see the treeline of suburban Vancouver'.

## Summary

To sum up, this storytelling is perceived by the audience as very engaging and inspiring, on one hand, because of the style of the narration and of the language: informal,



personal and evocative (multisensory); on the other hand, for how the images are presented, with a close up technique that produces compassion for the characters and makes the audience feel like they are traveling through the time and the space with the author.

## Case studies summary

The three examples studied by this Task Force are very different from each other in their scope, their format and channels used, their target audiences, the content they are highlighting and the resources needed to develop and deliver them.

However, all three are examples of great digital storytelling practices - our Task Force members felt emotionally engaged with them all. So what do these three case studies have in common?

At the heart of all three examples, we feel there are two important strategies that emerge.

1. Use of language - each example draws us in through its accessible language. There is an emphasis on the personal and informal, on language that is intimate, direct and evocative.
2. Joy of discovery - each example draws out the audience's curiosity and actively connects them with the content, for example, by the engaging use of media such as video or close-up images or a quest/journey format.

## Task 4: Recommendations

### About Task 4: Recommendations

Task 4: Recommendations was led by Beth Daley, Carola Carlino and Francesco Ripanti with editorial support from Maggie Gray. It ran from February to March 2021. Its aim was to consider the outcomes of Tasks 1, 2, and 3 and to produce recommendations based on their learnings, that are intended to be of use to the Europeana Foundation and to the broader cultural heritage sector.

Again, discussions were collaborative, using jamboard to pinpoint the most pertinent elements from the previous tasks.

Task Force members participating in this task met in four online meetings in this period, and communicated throughout via Basecamp.

The outcome of Task 4 is the Recommendations section found at the start of this document.



## Task 5: Communications

Alongside Tasks 1, 2, 3, and 4 was a Communications task led by Beth Daley, which has run from September 2021 on Basecamp, with at the time of writing, three online meetings from January 2021 to March 2021.

The purpose of this task is to identify the elements of the Task Force that should be communicated and to produce audience-appropriate formats to do so.

At the time of writing, we intend to produce a series of news posts for Europeana Pro, which members may translate and share on their own channels, as well as a short video and a webinar.

Members are also encouraged to share news about the Task Force with their own channels and networks, and to record where they have done so in a [Google sheet](#).

This group will continue to work together beyond the submission date of this report as smaller working groups on particular activities, e.g. video, webinar, to communicate the Task Force's outcomes.

The Task Force contributed a session to the Europeana 2020 conference in November 2020. 'Love stories - digital storytelling experiences we can't stop thinking about' was the best-attended afternoon 'parallel' session of the three-day event, with 224 people attending - almost twice as many attendees as the next most popular afternoon session.



## Appendix - Task Force member reflections on storytelling research projects

Task members were asked to provide a brief summary and personal reflections on projects they are involved in or aware of that investigate or make excellent use of digital storytelling techniques.

**Contributor: Eleanna Avouri**

**Project: Mnemosyne**

1. ERA Chair Mnemosyne, Digital Heritage Research Lab, Cyprus University of Technology

Mnemosyne, the EU ERA Chair on Digital Cultural Heritage, is a research project that focuses on the concept of holistic documentation of digital cultural heritage (DCH). More specifically, its objective is to create pipelines and standardise the entire lifecycle of DCH data, articulated in the sequence of data acquisition, processing, modelling, knowledge management, preservation and use and reuse, in order to better address the needs of the multidisciplinary groups of users.

As an early stage researcher in the project, I am working on the area of use and reuse, on which I will also do PhD research. My interest is to effectively connect digital technology (VR, AR, game engines, etc) and digital storytelling practices with the needs and knowledge profile of the potential users, as well as with the specificities of the various cultural heritage (CH) contexts (museum, heritage sites, monuments) on which they are applied. In other words, CH digital storytelling is being implemented here as a user/audience centered and context aware process.

Mnemosyne is a work in progress and still on its initial steps. Currently, we are building a DCH user classification that will be able to link aspects, such as area and level of expertise and motivation, with the possible user needs. Among others, the project aspires to create a 'library' of storytelling methodologies to deliver different and adapted information based on the user classification. Both of these tools, the user classification and the storytelling library, can be perfectly applied to the rich and vast CH content that is available in Europeana.

<https://erachair.web-view.eu>

<https://digitalheritagelab.eu>

**Contributor: Jochen Buechel**

**Project: Massive Open Online Courses - 'Medicina, literatura i cinema' and 'Understanding Ramon Llull'**

1. 'Medicina, literatura i cinema' aims to bring the worlds of medicine and the humanities closer by observing how the classical humanities (literature) and the



modern humanities (cinema) have become interested in areas traditionally linked to medicine.

<https://www.upf.edu/web/mooc-upf/medicina-literatura-i-cinema>

2. 'Understanding Ramon Llull' - Ramon Llull, born in Mallorca in the 13th century, was an influential philosopher, writer and pioneer thinker, who was able to inspire such opposite feelings as admiration and contempt among the intellectuals of his time. This course explores his work and the influence he has exerted on the arts, literature, science and technology.

<https://www.upf.edu/web/mooc-upf/understanding-ramon-llull>

These two MOOCS from Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona (UPF) showcase the use of animation. The magic of moving images helps us to understand how dimensions are connected. In molecular medicine and ecological debates, this deep understanding of relation between dimensions is missing. A good rhetoric with a nice voice is important to attract the audience. The values of complex history need arts like films and literature. Most of European science and arts history is hardly understood in its value. Llull is a beginning. For example, Wolfgang Pauli impulses on synchronicity which he developed with Carl Gustav Jung are still not used in Personalized medicine.

The arts showcased in these Moocs is, in my understanding, an example of further use of digitised content, helping a broader audience to understand, for example, systems of medicine.

**Contributor: Carola Carlino**

**Project: ArchaeoPark**

1. ArchaeoPark - a virtual museum mainly addressed to children, from *Conorzio Glossa*. The idea at the basis of the ArchaeoPark project was the reconstruction of the underwater archaeological park in the city of Baia, in southern Italy, through interactive activities, including the use of virtual and augmented reality technologies and gaming activities.

My research deals with computational linguistics and digital storytelling on cultural heritage. The main scope of the research is to create new modalities for engaging different audiences, in order to evaluate and preserve our cultural heritage. To do so, several disciplines are combined, such as computational linguistics, natural language processing, artificial intelligence, gamification and storytelling.

Currently, my research group, the Unior NLP Research Group, and I are putting in practise some collaborations with the Archaeological Museum of Taranto (MARTA), whose intent is to digitise the archaeological finds, implementing, according to a multilingual perspective, the potential of storytelling to enlarge the audience and to promote knowledge.

<http://www.archeopark-campiflegrei.it/?fbclid=IwAR2VtiEYCnm99KA3xVt9VdsMaGHyf6U8tr4lzsYM7eY085pRIkCFW2vVp6c>



**Contributor: Roberto Gamboa**

**Projects: 'I dig stories – Stories Educational Learning Facilities', EMOTIVE and DanceMe Up**

1. 'I dig stories – Stories Educational Learning Facilities' is an EU-funded project that evolved from the needs analysis of a EU population ever evolving under the contribution from new populations, arriving or in transit, and for the large diffusion of digital media.

It developed a project that unites new digital educational tools with entertainment, in order to discover emotional and creative group dynamics, which allow the participants to emerge from their condition of social invisibility.

Digital StoryTelling (DST) refers to a short form of digital film-making that allows everyday people to share aspects of their life story. DST is a relatively new term which describes the new practice of ordinary people who use digital tools to tell their personal 'story', presented in compelling and emotionally engaging formats.

In DST, participants take an active role in learning, rather than passively receiving information; they become knowledge creators, producers, editors, evaluators and knowledge inter-actors.

The project has a storytelling methodology proposal and developed a toolkit and several documents that can be interesting to Europeana digital storytelling.

<http://idigstories.eu/>

[http://idigstories.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Digital\\_Storytelling\\_in\\_Practice.pdf](http://idigstories.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Digital_Storytelling_in_Practice.pdf)

2. EMOTIVE is an EU-funded research project that works from the premise that cultural sites are highly emotional places. That regardless of age, location or state of preservation, they are seedbeds not just of knowledge, but of emotional resonance and human connection. From 2016-2019, the EMOTIVE consortium has researched, designed, developed and evaluated methods and tools that can support the cultural and creative industries in creating narratives and experiences which draw on the power of 'emotive storytelling'. The output of this process is a number of prototype tools and applications for heritage professionals and visitors that produce interactive, personalized, emotionally resonant digital experiences for museums and cultural sites.

EMOTIVE aims to explore new ways audiences feel and experience cultural heritage and to define methodologies for their evaluation. Through emotive experiences, visitors are able to interact with the site's interpretation, change it and move it in the direction they want.





The project uses a variety of digital tools to tell emotive stories related to heritage developing a methodology with emphasis on the emotion.

<https://emotiveproject.eu/index.php/summary/>

<https://emotiveproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/EMOTIVE-booklet-2019-web.pdf>

3. DanceMe UP is a project based on audience development via digital means which aims to build an international production-oriented network related to dance and digital storytelling. DanceMe built an app in which the dancers develop choreography within the 'virtual rehearsal room' visible to users, the future audience.

This digital instrument represents the important evolution and a virtual space where artists present their own research to the audience, discuss and debate with each other by using texts, images, videos and music. It also aims to broaden UP the EU cultural scenario deepening the levels of engagement between artists, cultural organizations and audiences in Europe.

<http://www.danceme.eu/dancemeup/>

**Contributor: Raul Gomez Hernandez**

**Projects: Proyecto Arqueológico Cerro Bilanero, Ciutadella Ibèrica de Calafell and El patrimonio artístico durante la Guerra Civil y la Posguerra**

1. Proyecto Arqueológico Cerro Bilanero (Cerro Bilanero Archaeological Project) - a community archaeological project started in 2015 over a Bronze Age settlement of Cerro Bilanero (Alhambra, Ciudad Real). The specialists and archaeologists who work there are volunteers from universities, commercial archaeology workers and local people living in the town of Alhambra who aim to research Cerro Bilanero and disseminate to the local community. Due to lack of funding opportunities during the year to make visits, they make [3D documentation](#) to build models and virtual visits using digital storytelling techniques on [Youtube videos](#) about the different layers of the archaeological site.

As Europeana is developing ways of integrating 3D documentation, this project could help us to have an idea of how to disseminate this information, build new resources from 3D Europeana models and develop engaging stories. There are other projects working similarly in Spain and other international projects and platforms like [Global Digital Heritage](#) with virtual visits from 3D models to Spanish Archaeology.

[Proyecto Arqueológico Cerro Bilanero \(Cerro Bilanero Archaeological Project\)](#)

2. Ciutadella Ibèrica de Calafell is an iberian settlement in Calafell (Tarragona, Spain) where archaeologists using experimental archaeology have rebuilt the settlement with very rigorous documentation.



The important fact from the digital storytelling point of view is the use of a mobile app where they combine AR in their virtual visit with in-person visits. They build an [App](#) for iOS and Android where you need to make the in-person visit focusing on the archaeological site because the AR points are hidden on the walls and on the places. This AR mixes videos, texts and other 3D resources.

What Europeana can learn from this project is to take this AR point of view, making AR points on the Europeana page and 3D resources and invite users to navigate through Europeana resources focusing with their cameras to the page to find them and learn more interesting facts. It's a way of engaging users with digital cultural heritage and a way of applying gamification to the Europeana website.

[Ciudadella Ibèrica de Calafell](#)

3. El patrimonio artístico durante la Guerra Civil y la Posguerra (The Artistic cultural heritage during the Spanish Civil War and the Post-war era) is a research project from Complutense University of Madrid. Arturo Colorado Castellary, a full professor of Digital Art Communication and Digital Cultural Heritage, is researching the story of all artistic cultural heritage items from Museo del Prado and other public and private collections which were driven during the Spanish Civil War to a refuge in the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland) and returned some years later. The problem research is the undocumented pieces which were stolen, sold and gifted during the war or sold and gifted to the Franco partners in the post-war period in the returning process. This project aims to populate a [database](#) with all the information about the artworks including their storytelling with images and maps, sourcing information from the people who owned them and from their exile journey.

What Europeana can learn from this research project is how to make sense of a database of metadata and research and present them through maps and digital storytelling.

[El patrimonio artístico durante la Guerra Civil y la Posguerra \(The Artistic cultural heritage during the Spanish Civil War and the Post-war era\)](#)

**Contributor: Maggie Gray**

**Projects: Science Museum Group audience research and The museum as digital storyteller: Collaborative participatory creation of interactive digital experiences**

1. Science Museum Group (SMG) audience research. Summary:

The project reviewed SMG storytelling, used audience insights to analyse reach, traffic and impact, and produced new content recommendations. In their 2018-21 Digital Strategy, storytelling was included as part of the objective to increase online audience reach.

The project found that audiences were inquiry-led and did not distinguish



between narrative content and collection object records. *'Rather than having a passive audience who wanted to come and browse to read stories, our audience was driven by a question on a topic or theme - big or small. They were bringing their own starting point and looking to us - as a trusted source - to provide an answer or open a gateway to more information.'* Their recommendations for content were: Well-structured content; Findability (SEO); Media choices (mix different media); Be enjoyable (and lead to new questions); Be a trusted starting point (include bibliographies, links and sources).

The research includes useful insights into how users interact with websites that combine collection-records and narrative content.

<https://lab.sciencemuseum.org.uk/using-audience-insights-to-improve-the-science-museum-group-collection-stories-online-5768ed6e2820>

1. 'The museum as digital storyteller: Collaborative participatory creation of interactive digital experiences.'

This research project reports on collaborative digital storytelling workshops at the Acropolis Museum (Greece), Çatalhöyük archaeological site (Turkey) and the Stedelijk Museum (Netherlands), presenting the 'story-authoring methodology' and key lessons learned. It includes useful summaries of the history of museum storytelling, key research, and story-authoring methodology and tools - specifically the CHESS authoring tool (CAT), desktop software that facilitates the design and implementation of interactive stories. The case studies reveal the nature and complications of co-authoring stories in an institutional setting.

This is useful as an insight into how individuals can collaborate on storytelling and content creation. With its emphasis on museum practice it also highlights some of the priorities and challenges of Europeana's key partners.

<https://mw2015.museumsandtheweb.com/paper/the-museum-as-digital-storyteller-collaborative-participatory-creation-of-interactive-digital-experiences/>

MW2015: Museums and the Web 2015. Published January 31, 2015. Consulted November 6, 2020.

**Contributor: Emil Majuk**

**Project: Brama Grodzka - Lublin's digital stories**

1. Brama Grodzka - Lublin's digital stories

Ośrodek 'Brama Grodzka - Teatr NN' is a municipal institution of culture which deals with local multicultural heritage interpretation. We combine artistic activities with education and memory work. Our digital narratives usually combine the use of archival materials, photographs and recorded oral histories with various types of interactive elements (e.g. 3D models, videos, interactive maps, augmented reality).



The main axis for the Center's programme is the history of Lublin, especially its Jewish district, which was completely destroyed during World War II. The gate stands on the border of this non-existent world and tries to talk about it. We want to commemorate murdered Jews from Lublin, but also restore the knowledge of the forgotten heritage for the contemporary inhabitants of the city. Digital methods of storytelling are very helpful in telling about a no longer existing world. The use of digital means of communication also allows us to reach many different audiences, often geographically very distant from each other.

Over 20 years, we have developed our own methods of digital storytelling, which sometimes are a bit chaotic, but allow for an original interpretation of cultural heritage, in many dimensions and aspects.

The Centre has created an integrated system of websites to publish our narratives. It combines web platforms with a digital library framework, a regional encyclopedia, as well as databases and hGIS. One of the main aims of this system is to ensure longevity of resources for all users despite the changing landscape of Internet technologies, and providing a stable framework for all projects.

In our work we often use 3D models. Since 2010 they have been available using the Google Earth plugin. We have also used the Layar app. Currently the 2010 3D models are available for download using an app based on the Unity engine, and we are in the process of migrating many of our models onto the Sketchfab platform. The story of our online work is also the story of trying to stay on top of the ever changing modes of resource presentation.

Also the negative experience can be instructive - unfortunately many digital tools and frameworks we used for digital stories are deprecated now (Google Earth, Unity Web Player, Layar, Adobe Flash). Migration is complicated and not always possible.

Our digital library <http://biblioteka.teatrnn.pl/> is already connected to Europeana through FBC - Polish Federation of Digital Libraries. Some of our ways of creating digital stories from archival documents, old photos and memories can potentially be adapted into digital stories by Europeana. The experience in storytelling about the urban cultural heritage using hGIS interactive maps and 3D models can also be interesting.

<http://teatrnn.pl/osrodek/projekty/>

Broader description:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KHj894-9vh8Lhkjpl7t3-91w7AmPmDp-dXuZnvemK00/edit?usp=sharing>



**Contributor: Cristina Roiu**

**Project: The Europeanana1989 Campaign in Romania**

1. Project: Europeanana1914-1918, European Migration and Europeanana 1989 Romania.

The Europeanana 1914-1918 project was the most successful crowdsourcing project of Europeanana in terms of peoples' engagement .

During its roadshows it managed to gather more than 14 000 WWI stories and memorabilia from people across Europe and even from other continents.

During the four roadshows I have coordinated in Romania between 2013-2016 I have witnessed the great desire people have for sharing their World War One related family's stories.

An 101 years old contributor woke up at 5'o clock in the morning in order to be the first to share his story, other contributors aged 87 and 89 have travelled a day long for the same purpose.

We also had unexpected contributors like the nuns from a monastery who wanted to share the story of the first military enrolled nun in the Great War in Romania.

Usually the nuns and monks living in monasteries are very isolated communities not interacting with the outside world

The same engagement we found during European Migration and Europeanana 1989 collection days I have coordinated in Romania.

From this point of view we have noticed that people are very eager to tell stories that involve them personally or their families, especially when these are related to important historical events.

"Roiu Cristina :All our memories : the outcomes of the Europeanana 1914-1918 campaigns in Romania: <http://library.ifla.org/1730/>

2. IFLA's "Library Map of the World' and the Storytelling Manual

Storytelling is important for GLAMs also from the perspective of their missions of supporting communities in an economic,environmental and social context .

A good example is the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development - a framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) spanning economic, environmental and social development which are strongly supported by major international Associations like the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Association (EBLIDA) .

In this sense, IFLA's [Library Map of the World \(LMW\)](#) provides a unique digital space for libraries to share their story that demonstrate the libraries' contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals , and to help



libraries elsewhere in the world show the potential they have to decision-makers and win their support.

Libraries around the world offer a wide range of products and services that promote the achievement of each and every of the 17 SDGs, including the indispensable support of dedicated staff with a deep understanding of local needs.

From promoting literacy, to offering free access to information, libraries are safe welcoming spaces, at the heart of communities. They advance digital inclusion through access to ICT, internet connection and skills. They promote innovation, creativity and access to the world's knowledge for future generations. But IFLA recognized the urgent need of a good storytelling manual to help libraries 'tell their stories' with a maximized impact.

As IFLA said : "All good stories need a plot. If we are aiming to win someone's support, then we should focus on a subject that matters to them. "

IFLAs "Libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals: A Storytelling Manual" has the aim to help librarians and library advocates in their advocacy efforts, by providing guidance on how to tell compelling stories about their library activities, projects and programmes, and their impact on communities and people's lives.

The LMW team has worked with IFLA's [International Advocacy Programme \(IAP\)](#) and Associates of IFLA's [International Leaders Programme \(ILP\)](#), as part of their "Stories that Matter" project, to prepare this manual to help libraries put together and tell their digital story.

IFLA's Handout : " How to tell your story ":

<https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/sdg-storytelling-manual.pdf>

IFLA Storytelling Manual :

<https://www.ifla.org/publications/libraries-and-the-sustainable-development-goals--a-storytelling-manual>

EBLIDA's Campaign for supporting SDG's is a 'Matrix Story': Implementing Sustainable Development Goals in European Libraries:

<http://www.eblida.org/activities/libraries-un-sdgs-matrix.html>



**Contributor: Olga Terenetska**

**Projects: Storycenter, StoryTeller and Digital Communications Network's (DCN) webinars**

1. Storycenter - online webinars and tutorials on creating and facilitating digital storytelling practices with examples from the field of cultural memory and the arts. Workshops address specific themes such as how to involve hard-to-reach and vulnerable audiences in digital storytelling. This rich collection of material aligns with Europeana's educational value and its digital transformation goals: <https://www.storycenter.org/workshop>
2. StoryTeller - an EU Storytelling project implemented in five EU countries with online course on storytelling and a manual on storytelling in five languages. The materials of the project address the problems of unequal development and exclusion in the EU. This volume of work seems to be an important contribution towards including storytelling as a common study subject in media and communication and providing the necessary scope of basic/foundational knowledge which could be offered in the respective fields. The project is aligned with Europeana's values and ethos through its EU and multilingual origins and its influence towards sustainable economic development through digitisation and inclusion. <http://learnstorytelling.eu/en/results/>
3. Digital Communication Network webinars - storytelling's purposes, unique features, tools and approaches are instrumental in addressing COVID19-induced challenges. The material also discusses patterns of audience development, which are important for multicultural media educational professionals, grassroots youth NGOs and for the digital transformation of societies. For Europeana, this connects with the question of how adaptive and innovative features of storytelling could impact digital transformation, help resolve crises and promote multicultural cooperation using new media education tools.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fl4um-pmSL4&t=4093s> - Digital Storytelling for Engagement in COVID-19 Era  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GiTdcBAVnU> - Storytelling in a time of Crisis with Yiannis Mylopoulos  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIT-Zxgl2PM&t=688s> - MOBILE JOURNALISM: The Mojo of Truth, Engagement and Impact



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