EuropeanaLocal

Annual Report

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1   Introduction

Europeana, the European Digital Library, is developing as the embodiment of the European Commission's vision for a common multilingual access point, which will make it possible to search Europe's distributed digital cultural heritage online. It will give users direct access to some 2 million digital objects, including film material, photos, paintings, sounds, maps, manuscripts, books, newspapers and archival papers. The first prototype was launched to the public in November 2008 by Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Information Society and Media.

EuropeanaLocal is one of a suite of additional projects, funded by the European Commission, to help further develop Europeana. EuropeanaLocal will play an important role in ensuring that the enormous amount of digital content provided by Europe's cultural institutions at *local and regional* level is represented in Europeana, alongside that held at national level. Such involvement will not only bring together a rich diversity of content of all types, cultures and languages but also people, making it possible to establish integrated services with great variety and depth which will provide added value for communities and individual users.

EuropeanaLocal is a Best Practice Network, funded under the European Commission's eContentplus programme, which started on 1 June 2008.

2   Our Approach

EuropeanaLocal builds on existing networks of local institutions to bring together a consortium that represents 27 countries with broad ranging experience of the cultural sector, digital libraries, standards; and aggregation services. The partners have already identified and listed some 28 million items of content which they plan to make available over the course of the project. This is a very large amount of content in the context of the content available to Europeana. The potential of local/regional sources may be better appreciated when this figure is extrapolated to all cultural institutions in Europe, especially when viewed in the context of predicted continued growth in digitisation at local and regional levels in the years to come.

 EuropeanaLocal will work with the EDL Foundation, which is overseeing the development of the Europeana service, to establish simple, efficient and sustainable business, governance, administrative and technical processes through which local and regional institutions can easily make their content available to Europeana during and after the project.   As part of this, EuropeanaLocal will enable aggregators and individual content providers to make their content available for harvesting, indexing, enriching and other operations by Europeana, and indeed any other service.

EuropeanaLocal partners are committed to conforming with/adapting/utilizing whatever technologies and standards the Europeana service adopts or creates as it develops. At this stage it is expected that these will be feature OAI-PMH repositories, Europeana metadata application profiles and SKOS in the first instance, moving on to include semantic web technologies later on. EuropeanaLocal will ensure that the approaches, standards and tools developed by Europeana are adopted widely across the cultural heritage sector, thereby supporting the interoperability of content within Europeana beyond that which is held by purely national level institutions.

Through its policy and dissemination work, EuropeanaLocal also seeks to support the growth of consistent and rational levels and types of metadata aggregation, building on existing work from a wide variety of starting points across the localities, regions and countries of Europe.

3   Expected results

The expected results of the project include:
- the establishment of a network of regional OAI-PMH compliant repositories that are highly interoperable with Europeana
- an integrated Europeana-EuropeanaLocal prototype service
- and the aggregation of content at levels which makes sense in terms of local situations and which complements the existing and planned Europeana network.

4   Preparatory surveys

The work began with two surveys. One to determine: the range of content; metadata schema and approaches; metadata harvesting activities and repository aggregation levels in use by Europe's museums, archives, libraries and other cultural content holders at local and regional level, and the other to establish in greater depth the available infrastructure (e.g. repositories) and relevant skills within each partner region or organisation.

Analyses of the results provide much valuable information, both for Europeana and for EuropeanaLocal, to support planning future service development and the take-on of new content providers. The surveys give, for the first time, a detailed picture of the both the content available and the metadata and other standards in use in a number of local and regional cultural heritage organisations across Europe, and also provide valuable insight into aggregation activities.

The results show that cultural organisations, in the great majority of cases, are using the common technical standards, including many open standards. They also indicate that there are a small number of key metadata standards that are in use across the three major cultural domains in Europe. However from the evidence of the survey, there is still a long way to go to achieve total standardisation, even if this were considered possible or desirable. Information was also collected about the standards for date, geographic co-ordinates and vocabularies (terminologies) used in the by the candidate collections. The resulting analysis shows that there are a substantial number of organisations submitting content to Europeana without using terminology standards in key areas for search and retrieval.

The surveys also investigated the degree to which EuropeanaLocal partners and content providers are involved in, or aware of, other metadata aggregation initiatives. The results indicate a very mixed picture of aggregation activity across Europe. It ranges from countries with well established national, and usually domain-based, initiatives to countries where none of the content providers are part of a larger aggregation.

5   Standards and infrastructure

Another part of the work completed during the past year focused on standards and infrastructure. The prototype version of Europeana, launched in November 2008, uses a metadata set called the Europeana Semantic Elements (ESE). It is a Dublin Core-based

application profile[2] providing a generic set of terms that can be applied to heterogeneous materials which provides a baseline to allow contributors to take advantage of their existing rich descriptions.

In order to provide metadata in the ESE format, EuropeanaLocal contributors need to map elements from their own metadata format(s) to the ESE. After that a normalisation process needs to be carried out on some values to enable machine readability. Guidelines on metadata and normalisation were produced by the Europeana office to assist content providers with the preparation of their data, which explain in more detail the use of the elements and the mapping process.

The EuropeanaV1.0 project has the objective of setting up the overall infrastructure to support the ingestion of metadata from the various content providers and projects which are contributing content to the Europeana service. Each will be allocated an individual test area, called a sandbox, which will enable contributors to carry out test harvesting of their data and then to validate (and correct if necessary) the metadata mapping and normalisation. Once all the processes and checks have been completed and the metadata is deemed acceptable, the content will appear in the live Europeana service.

EuropeanaLocal will be the first project to make use of the content test environment provided by Europeana and can therefore be seen as a real 'test bed' not only for Europeana and the other Europeana related projects, but in helping to ensure that the systems and facilities developed by Europeana meet the real world needs of the organisations contributing content, especially the many thousands at local and regional level.

EuropeanaLocal has established an Evaluation Group to develop and implement processes and mechanisms which will be used by the project to monitor quantitative and qualitative aspects and also assess the impact on the content providers, at key points in the 'lifecycle' of content on its journey from source to Europeana. These will provide invaluable evaluative data which will then be fed back to Europeana and other interested parties. This feedback loop will provide Europeana with an important source of user information which can be used to inform both modifications and further developments.

Part of the remit of EuropeanaLocal is to identify the best technical route for each partner to supply their metadata to Europeana. This must be seen in the context of two main constraints: the desire of Europeana to streamline its own organisational activity, and the technical and organisational situation of each individual partner. EuropeanaLocal is the first of the Europeana-related projects to begin to supply data to Europeana since its initial launch, and many aspects of how the process will work are still undefined.

EuropeanaLocal is playing a key role in helping to define the optimal workflows for a range of different types of provider. To do this, four activity models (UML diagrams) were devised, and validated with the partners, that show alternative scenarios for **Who** will do **What** activity and **Where** it will take place. The scenarios encompass the sequence of activities through which the data flows from one point to another, the different Actors who are responsible for a part of the activities of the flow and the different system locations / environments where activities take place.

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[2] http://dublincore.org/documents/

6 Repository selection and installation

During the early part of the year the technical partners in the project completed a review of available repository software and tools and provided guidance to EuropeanaLocal partners on repository software and selection. They concluded that if partners already had repositories or a system which supports harvesting, they should continue to use that.

For those without either existing repositories or the capability to expose their metadata for harvesting, a distinction was drawn between partners who were planning to simply supply their own data and those who were planning to act as aggregators. For pure content suppliers, simplicity was felt to be the overriding requirement and so three choices of repository software were recommended - Celestial and either Fedora or the current version of Repox (depending on which skill set their technical partner has). For aggregators the requirements were seen to also encompass customisability, so the choices were either Fedora (which requires an additional harvester if used for aggregation) or the new version of Repox, or PKP Harvester.

Over the next few months EuropeanaLocal partners will be installing and populating their repositories, where required, and working with EDLF to test the harvesting of EuropeanaLocal content so as to identify any initial problems and requirements for adjustment in either the central test environment or local repositories. This initial testing will be carried out by a number of content co-ordinators from countries with existing or well-advanced OAI-PMH repositories. Following this the main implementation phase of the project will begin and partners will be incorporated according to the implementation timetable and plan established as part of the technical workshops. The implementation plan indicates that a small number of the most 'mature' content providers) will be harvested in Q3 and Q4 this year (2009), the bulk of the partners will be harvested in Q1 and Q2 of next year (2010), and the remaining content providers will be added from Q3 of 2010. The objective is that the main group of partners should have their metadata harvested during the in the first half of 2010 in order to be ready for and correspond with the Europeana Rhine release which is scheduled for July 2010.

7 Training and knowledge transfer

One of the main goals of EuropeanaLocal is to make it easier for institutions at local and regional levels to contribute their rich content to Europeana. Knowledge and skills are integral to this and the project has undertaken a range of training and knowledge transfer activities during the first, largely, preparatory year of the project.

The EuropeanaLocal Knowledge Sharing Workshop took place in the Hague on 13 and 14 January 2009. The main purpose of the meeting was to provide for an exchange of knowledge between Europeana and EuropeanaLocal personnel on the planned technical infrastructure and tools to be adopted in the EuropeanaLocal project and to align implementation plans for the two projects. An invitation to share in the event was extended to Athena and the useful and interesting meeting was attended by some 60 people from across the three projects. A wide range of topics was covered, as can be seen from the Agenda, which together with

copies of the presentations, is available from the website. The workshop ended with an intensive planning and alignment session where next steps were identified and plotted, responsibilities clarified, and timescales aligned between Europeana and EuropeanaLocal.

The first series of three regional training workshops was also completed this year. The agenda was carefully constructed so as to put the project into context for the participants (vis a vis Europeana and the other family projects) and to cover all the information they would need to begin implementation, including sessions on metadata mapping and the ingestion workflow. During the workshops guidance on the selection of repository software was provided and by the end of the workshops all participants had had practical hands-on experience of installing and configuring repository software on their laptops. The final part of the workshop focused on implementation planning where partners planned the work required to establish metadata repositories and complete test harvesting with the aid of an online checklist.
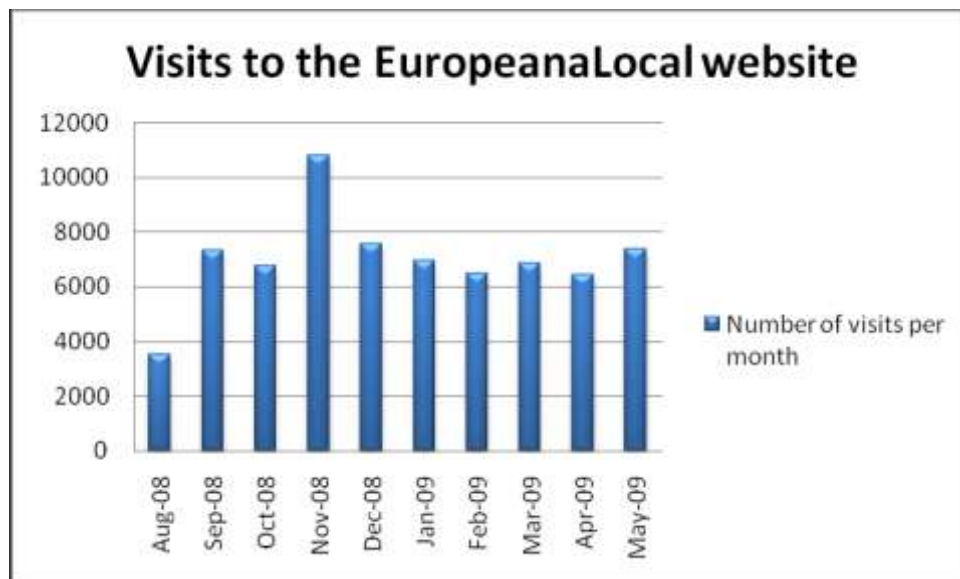
Nearly 50 participants, one or more from each EuropeanaLocal partner, took part and the workshops provided an excellent opportunity for partners to get to know each other and share experience and ideas. The workshops were deliberately targeted at technical staff, either those employed directly by the partners or in some cases from the outside companies they have brought in to support them. Again, the agenda and presentations are available on the website. Since the workshops the Technical Guidance manual has been revised and expanded and an online help desk has been made available.

Europeana have set up a number of cluster groups to help co-ordinate activities across the ever growing number of Europeana and Europeana 'family' projects – and EuropeanaLocal will participate in all of them. To date there are cluster groups on Communications, IPR, a Content and Partners group and a project co-ordinators group.

8   Dissemination and awareness raising

Another important part of the project is dissemination and awareness raising, which will promote the results and availability of the EuropeanaLocal service. It will also address future expansion and extension of Europeana. EuropeanaLocal will agree straightforward administrative and technical procedures whereby providers of content/metadata may become contributing members of Europeana. Future governance mechanisms and procedures, and a basis on which any charges, other costs or conditions of joining may be determined will also be addressed.

A project website www.europeanalocal.eu has been established and has been continuously developed. Discussions have taken place with Europeana to develop a consistent approach to branding and design between projects in the Europeana 'family' (including the adaptation and use of Europeana logos and styles). A redesign of the current site is currently underway on this basis. Visits have been steady at between six to seven thousand visits per month, with a peak in November which probably coincides with the launch of the main Europeana service.

Visits to the EuropeanaLocal website

Partners were asked to contribute the names of stakeholders in their country with an interest in the work of EuropeanaLocal in order to help establish a distribution list for news and the results of EuropeanaLocal. Each of these was subsequently invited to register with the website and to date some 920 stakeholders in 24 countries have registered.

There was unexpectedly heavy demand for EuropeanaLocal to present its work at international conferences in the area of digital libraries during the first six months and where possible these opportunities to raise the visibility of the work were accepted. These presentations are available from the project website. EuropeanaLocal will present at the Europeana – UK Conference in London on 26th June, and will host a workshop on "Harvesting metadata: practices and challenges" at the ECDL 2009 conference in Corfu in September (see: http://www.ecdl2009.eu/ for more information). During the second six months the focus largely shifted to dissemination at national and regional level. Between them EuropeanaLocal partners have been extremely active in disseminating information about the project and about Europeana in general.

End users will be involved in the validation of the work of EuropeanaLocal through the establishment of a user testing groups in each partner region. These user groups will be called upon to carry out structured usability testing of Europeana prototype interfaces at various key stages of the project during the next year, and will contribute to work on user participation which is being lead by the by the Europeana V. 1.0. project, building on the results of their recent user survey.

9   Consortium members and their roles

Participant name	Country	Role in the project
Sogn og Fjordane County Municipality	NO	Co-ordinator
Stichting European Digital Library	NL	Technology, standards and business model provider
MDR Partners	UK	Project manager and scientific co-ordinator

Public Library 'Pencho Slaveykov' (Public Library of Varna)	BG	Regional content co-ordinator
Cyprus Research and Educational Foundation	CY	Regional content co-ordinator
Cross Czech a.s.	CZ	Regional content co-ordinator
Roskilde Kommune	DK	Regional content co-ordinator
City of Helsinki	FI	Regional content co-ordinator
Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin	DE	Regional content co-ordinator
Veria Central Public Library	GR	Regional content co-ordinator
Békés County Library & Human Service Centre	HU	Regional content co-ordinator
An Chomhairle Leabharlanna	IE	Regional content co-ordinator
Regione Marche	IT	Regional content co-ordinator
National Library of Latvia	LV	Regional content co-ordinator
DIZI UAB	LT	Regional content co-ordinator
AcrossLimits Technologies Ltd.	MT	Regional content co-ordinator
MDA (Europe)	UK	Regional content co-ordinator
Instytut Chemii Bioorganicznej PAN	PL	Regional content co-ordinator
Fundacao Museu Nacional Ferroviario	PT	Regional content co-ordinator
Biblioteca Judeteana "Octavian Goga" Cluj	RO	Regional content co-ordinator
Slovenské Národné Múzeum (Slovak National Museum)	SK	Regional content co-ordinator
Narodna in Univerzitetna Knjižnica	SI	Regional content co-ordinator
Stiftelsen Länsmuseet Västernorrland	SE	Regional content co-ordinator
EEA s.r.o.	SK	Technical implementation support
Asplan Viak Internet AS	NO	Technical implementation support
Angewandte Informationstechnik Forschungsgesellschaft mbH	AT	Regional content co-ordinator

Provincie Limburg	BE	Regional content co-ordinator
Eesti Rahva Muuseum (Estonian National Museum)	EE	Regional content co-ordinator
Conseil Général de la Gironde	FR	Regional content co-ordinator
Stichting Brabantse Regionale Geschiedbeoefening	NL	Regional content co-ordinator
Ministry of Culture, Spain	ES	Regional content co-ordinator
ABM-Utvikling	NO	Technical and service adviser

10 Underlying Content

EuropeanaLocal's main purpose is to mobilise and assist the huge number of museums, archives and audio-visual archives **at local and regional level** to make the enormous amount of digital content that they hold available through Europeana. EuropeanaLocal is setting out first of all to exemplify how this can be done by working with a single co-ordinator of local and regional digital content in each EU Member State. The amount of content digitised by the content providers co-ordinated in this way amounts to a staggering 5 million items in various types and formats including film material, photos, paintings, sounds, maps, manuscripts, books, newspapers and archival papers. We plan that by the end of the project around 10 million of these will be visible through the Europeana portal.

However, the project aims to go beyond the delivery of even this large subset, by establishing with our colleagues in Europeana a widely understood process and infrastructure which will enable any local or regionally-based digital content provider to contribute their content to Europeana or for that matter, any other portal service provider. The preceding sections of this report illustrate that the work necessary to achieve this is already well underway in the EuropeanaLocal partner regions, involving as it does the normalisation of existing metadata schemas in use with the Europeana Semantic Elements (ESE), the installation of repositories, harvesting by Europeana, together with the staff training and support.

At the same time project partners are keenly aware that there are national initiatives designed to aggregate metadata for digital content underway at various stages of progress in a substantial number of EU countries. EuropeanaLocal very much wants to support these and where possible to stimulate the spread of similar initiatives, promoting especially the use of Europeana-compliant standards. To this end, we plan during the third year of the project (2010/11) to support a series of meetings, one in each Member State, which will be designed to enable discussion, to build consensus and support progress from whatever the current position may be on national aggregation issues, especially those which involve local and regionally-sourced content. Europeana will work best if it is able to harvest a manageable number of metadata aggregations. For this reason, EuropeanaLocal stands squarely behind national and major thematic aggregation initiatives such as those being established by other

projects in the expanding Europeana 'family'. See the [Europeana Group](#) website for a complete and up-to-date listing.

11 Further Information

You can keep you up to date with progress on this major initiative if you register with the project website. You will then receive copies of the news bulletin and other information. In the meantime, we encourage you to visit the [EuropeanaLocal](#) website where you will find information on who our local and regional partners are, all our activities and the suite of technical reports and guidance that the project is developing for use by those interested. Please don't hesitate to contact us, either using the form on the website or directly.