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ENRICH EUROPEANA

Impact Assessment Report (October 2020)

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Executive Summary

Transcribathon is an online crowdsourcing platform for the enrichment of European digital cultural heritage. Its goal is to engage the public in transcribing and annotating Europeana's vast collection of digitised items, amassed from libraries, archives and museums from all across Europe. Many of these items, especially those containing handwritten text, hold a treasure trove of hidden information not yet displayed in the metadata and therefore not readily discernible nor searchable. With the help of the public in transforming this digital heritage—by transcribing the text, annotating the contents and adding valuable descriptions—they can become rich and powerful sources of information. The data can then be sent back to Europeana Collections and become easily read, searched, and categorised to the benefit of the wider public.

The first prototype of the Transcribathon tool was created in 2014 by Facts & Files and Olaf Baldini/Piktoresk. In 2019, with the support of the partners in the Enrich Europeana project - the Austrian Institute of Technology, Facts & Files, Europeana, NET7, Biblioteca Judeteana "Octavian Goga" Cluj, the Austrian National Library and Poznań Supercomputing and Networking Center - the Transcribathon platform was updated, improved and extended, among other improvements, now enabling the incorporation of multiple digital heritage collections.

This impact assessment was commissioned as part of the Enrich Europeana Generic Services project. It presents an analysis of data collected during two Transcribathon events in Cluj-Napoca, Romania (December 2019) and Wroclaw, Poland (January 2020). Our focus was on the perspective of young people, relating primarily to skills development and connection with cultural heritage.

Methodology

Participant perspectives were captured using Mentimeter participatory data collection software during the introduction to the event and the closing presentation. This was then analysed and compared to past survey data.

Findings

These Transcribathon events encouraged participants to learn more about historical topics by creating a strong connection with and a desire to learn more about part of their history and culture. Interaction with the Transcribathon tool at the events encouraged



participants to think differently about cultural heritage preservation and reuse, with respondents suggesting different types of value this has, like preservation for future generations and the importance of heritage documents being available and accessible. Transcribathon, at least in the short-term, encouraged participants to engage with digital exhibitions and archives (more than museums and galleries).

Transcribathon is a valuable educational tool. The evidence suggests that it inspired the participating students and increased their subject knowledge. It supported the development of transcription and historical analytical skills (relating to working with historical sources), and to a lesser degree, on how they interact or engage with cultural heritage or use cultural heritage in their education. We also think that it supports the development of soft and digital skills, though this should be further investigated.

Regarding a sense of identity, the data suggests that Transcribathon's greatest outcome is in generating a sense of connection with one's local culture and history. The study did not isolate whether they *understand* more about their local community, nation or family, or if their feelings of its *value* changed.

This analysis and the data included in the report should be interpreted bearing in mind the short time-frame in which it was conducted, the acknowledged limitations to the approach and recommendations for future research. A longitudinal perspective is required to show if and how Transcribathon creates a concrete and longer term engagement with cultural heritage in their educational activities. The report provides some thoughts for future strategic development of Transcribathon, including, for example, how stronger impact could be created through increased engagement with the tool.

Transcribathon has positive outcomes for young people at Transcribathon events in the short-term, which sets the context for longer-term engagement with digital cultural heritage, better educational outcomes and a connection with the heritage of their local community, region or nation.

Recommendations

- Future research could prioritise counterfactual research (to assess young people's potential change in levels of knowledge and skills).
- Interviews may be a better way to understand if and how participant's understanding of their local community, nation or family changes as a result of attending Transcribathon.
- Spend more time considering the impact areas and test each of these for their relevance to the project. The language used in each of the long-term and short-



term outcomes should be similarly tested in more depth and more causal steps outlined between the identified outcomes and impact.

- Areas for additional research include: What is the value of Transcribathon as an online tool for (sustained) classroom use (e.g. soft skill and digital skills development)? What is the value of the increased reusability and findability of cultural heritage content (thanks to additional metadata and textual transcription by Transcribathon participants)? What is the value of hosting a Transcribathon event? Does the gamification of cultural heritage engagement relate to a desire for more engagement in (digital) cultural heritage for young people?

Validation and next steps

A first version of the report was submitted to the European Commission as part of the reporting of the Generic Services project. Project partners were involved in the drafting and sign off of the original report. The report was then restructured and simplified for publication, and partners were also involved in giving feedback on this version.

The short-term event data collection approach has been tested a few times, and is now a standard part of the workflow of a Transcribathon event. Some work on the change pathway for Transcribathon is needed. Future steps also include embedding data collection in online Transcribathon activity, as well as considering how to investigate any longer-term outcomes for participants of Transcribathons.



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Introduction

About Transcribathon and Enrich Europeana

The first prototype of the Transcribathon tool was created in 2014 by Facts & Files and Olaf Baldini/Piktoresk and funded by the German Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM). The tool was further developed in 2016 into the Transcribathon Europeana 1914-1918 website, which focused on the transcription of documents from the Europeana 1914-1918 collection, co-funded by the European Commission.

The Enrich Europeana project aimed to develop a set of tools, namely a crowdsourcing platform, a data exchange infrastructure and visualisation tools, to enable end users to transcribe and enrich cultural heritage material in Europeana and national aggregator portals. The newly-created resources will be integrated with the original collections and made available for the public user in the portals of Europeana, aggregators or content providers.

The project aimed to promote a deeper engagement with, understanding of and access to European digital cultural heritage, with a positive impact for European citizens, educational and research institutions alike.

Campaign and events

To maximise public interest, a dedicated enrichment campaign was set up on the theme of '1989, the Fall of the Iron Curtain', coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the various related social and political events.

The project could make use of various resources from the period, i.e. some of the crowd sourced materials collected on community collection days that were organised within the previous [Europeana 1989 project](#). In addition, new materials were added through a collection day event in Cluj-Napoca, organised by consortium partner BJC. The event took place on 9 and 10 July 2019 at the County Library Octavian Goga.



Figure 1. The advertisement for the Romanian event.

At [the launch event](#) on the 24 September 2019, the beta-version of the platform was inaugurated and a special mini-transcribathon was held at the Austrian National Library, with teams competing to transcribe documents from the Europeana 1989 Collection. The event was open to the public and welcomed over 50 participants.

Based on the outcomes of these events the consortium decided to build further on the theme of 1989. The following events were planned:

- On 11 and 12 December 2019, a combined 24h Transcribathon and Community Collection Day event in Cluj, Romania, organised by consortium partner BJC.
- On 24 and 25 January 2020, a 24h Transcribathon event in Wrocław, Poland, organised by consortium partner PSNC in close cooperation with the University of Wrocław and Lower Silesian Association for Health Culture and Sport NSZZ Solidarność.

It is these later events that the consortium considered as part of this Impact Assessment. Though the consortium later set up an online Transcribathon Run around the theme of 1989, this could not be incorporated into this report.

Introduction to this impact assessment

In the Europeana Impact Playbook, published in 2017, a short description of Transcribathon is given in which an 'unexpected' impact is the attractiveness of the tool



to educators.¹ This has led to a focus on using the Transcribathon in educational settings or in partnerships between CHIs and schools or universities. This is a helpful context to understand the core stakeholders of this project, that is, the young people involved in the two events.

The project group was tasked with delivering an impact assessment of its work. An impact assessment plan was delivered in November 2019, in order to inform the collection and narration of data that is used in this Impact Assessment (completed in February 2020). This impact assessment has been revised to follow the publication template later used in other Europeana Impact Assessment reports completed in the 2019/2020.

¹ [Europeana Impact Assessment Playbook](#) Pg 8

Methodology

The research question

We wanted to know what changed for **young people** (secondary school and university level) who had attended Transcribathon events, focusing most specifically on engagement with heritage, skills development and their connection with a local, regional, national and/or European identity.

The core stakeholders

The core stakeholders, or beneficiaries, of the activity and thus of focus in this Impact Assessment are **young people** - school students (approximately 16 - 18) and post-secondary students (from 18). We had hoped (in the initial Impact Assessment plan from Nov 2019) to also get the perspective of **life-long learners/online users** (of any age) via organising an online run (Jan-Feb 2020). Due to technical delays, it was not possible to focus on this activity. However, online audiences were considered as part of the preparations for this impact assessment and thus could be surveyed in future. We also hoped to capture the perspective of the CHI hosts, but this was not considered a focus within the context of this report.



Figure 2. An example of a Transcribathon event. Mini-Transcribathon Vienna, September 2019

Developing a change pathway

A Change Pathway for Transcribathon was developed, drawing on previous iterations that set out a number of areas where we feel Transcribathon has an impact. However, we were too ambitious. Previously, we were too many stakeholders and too many outcome areas to track; we had not prioritised enough. The current change pathway is simpler and more focussed, and it is summarised below. This simpler version of the Change Pathway was tested and validated with the Enrich Europeana project group. Young people were considered to be the priority beneficiary, and as such were prioritised in the research.

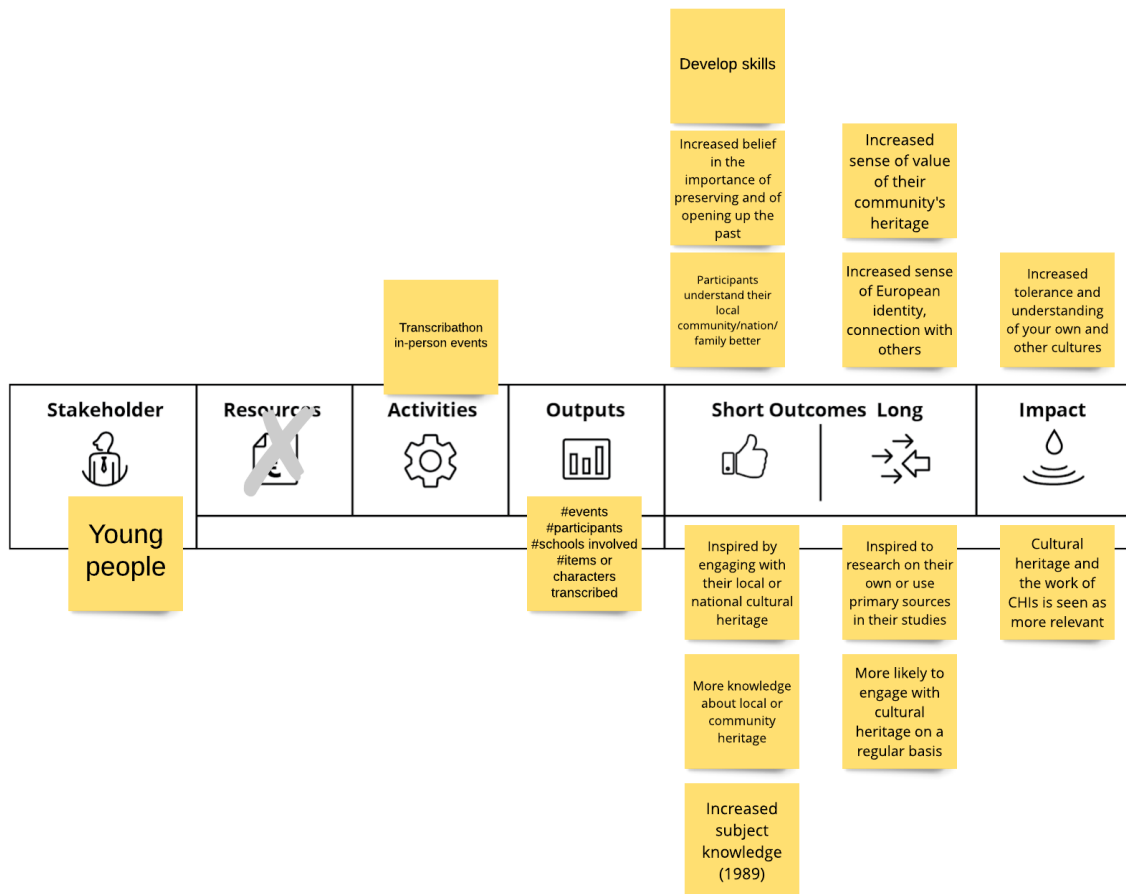


Figure 3. A preliminary change pathway for young people experiencing the Transcribathon tool

Learning from past impact assessment design and assessment

This Impact Assessment was completed in parallel with 10 case studies of the impact of Europeana’s services, commissioned under DSI-4. There was also an Impact Assessment plan being developed under another Generic Service project, Europeana Media.



The Enrich Europeana Impact Assessment benefits from previous work to evaluate and measure the impact of past Transcribathon events. From the past events we learned that:

- A previous logic model set out a number of areas where we feel the Transcribathon does have an impact, but we were too ambitious. There were too many stakeholders and too many outcome areas to track; we had not prioritised enough. [We simplified our approach for this impact assessment: we focus on impact for young people.](#)
- The process of agreeing questions and outcome areas was complex and involved too many contributors. [We simplified our change pathway and indicators, and used the 'best bits' of past surveys.](#)
- The mentimeter questions should be translated and the data captured in the original language (except online; online, they should be in English, other languages as available, but translation is not likely to be possible). [We learned to double check the survey when it was in English \(when translation was not possible\). For Enrich Europeana, we had one survey in English and one in the local language \(Polish, in Wrocław, Jan 2020\).](#)

Data collection plan

A data collection plan was developed following the validation of the approach outlined in the Change Pathway. The data collection plan focuses on the events held in Romania (Dec 2019) and Poland (Jan 2020).

Mentimeter surveys with event participants

We took the following steps. We created both a pre- and post-event Mentimeter survey. This was instead of sending post-event surveys sent by email. We predicted that we would have a higher response rate if we tracked short term outcomes immediately after the event.

Europeana has used Mentimeter to collect instant data from events for several years. There is value to using this tool:

- It is interactive and a large sample of the participating audience can be engaged at the event itself.
- Results are instantly analysed.
- Respondents can be guided through the questions.
- It can inform not only impact assessment and evaluation but the delivery of activity as well (e.g. by collecting user expectations and levels of knowledge, confidence and engagement live at the event).



- It is designed to be accessed by mobile and it is visually attractive, which is good for young audiences and to keep other audiences engaged.

There are of course limitations. This relates mostly to the timeframe in which participants are surveyed. Sending a survey one or several days after an event gives respondents more chance to reflect on their experiences. Surveying *at* an event gives less opportunity for reflection and it might positively bias the responses.

Comparison with previous events

Data was collected at previous Transcribathon events. We are able to compare some of this, although the approach during this impact assessment is slightly different from those taken previously. These Transcribathon events were held in May 2018 in Athens, Greece, and October 2018 in Rome, Italy.

Validation of the results

The partners collected the initial data from events - indeed, the results were shared instantly with participants at the events as well, thanks to Mentimeter's functionality.

During the interpretation stage, the draft analysis was presented to the project partners, who were asked for their feedback, namely:

- Do the results appear consistent?
- Was the wording and interpretation of the data correct?
- Did this match their understanding of the impact assessment process?
- Did they draw any additional or contradictory conclusions from the data?

All feedback was incorporated into this document.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations, explored below, that should be borne in mind when considering the findings presented below. These findings can inform future project and event development and future impact assessment and evaluation.



Different event types

Each Transcribathon event is held in a different location, hosted by a different organisation, and attended by different participants from different backgrounds and with different levels of exposure to culture and cultural heritage.

For this reason, it would be valuable to build up a database of data collected at events in order to understand and compare indications of change amongst participants. Furthermore, it is important to explore how demographic data can be collected so that it can inform the analysis of the post-event data, rather than 'setting the scene' and learning who is in the room (or ideally, that this information would support both).

Sample of students - history-focus vs. other students

It may increase validity if Transcribathon would employ controlled testing methods with a group of students who were interested or specialising in history and others who were not. Engagement in cultural heritage should not be limited to those with a pre-existing interest or exposure to culture or cultural heritage.

Further testing the Change Pathway

More time should have been spent testing and validating the Change Pathway and ideally, workshopping this with a wider spectrum of those involved in the project. The outcomes could have been more thought through; it emerged in this analysis that concepts of 'value' and 'understanding', as especially the indicators that show this change, require more thought. Furthermore the two impact areas identified need to be reassessed as whether this is the type of change Transcribathon is designed to have. If the answer is yes, then this report should influence changes in programme design, e.g. focus on the European perspective through national or local history.

Lack of a longitudinal perspective

As with most evaluations and impact assessments, this research is limited by the longitudinal perspective. However, this represents a start in ongoing impact measurement, and as such, future plans could build in this approach (e.g. by hosting interviews or focus groups with participants after a certain period of time).



Need for more depth in the data

This research was limited by a lack of interviews with participants. This would be valuable in order to explore the identified long-term outcomes and to investigate what change Transcribathon had for participants in their engagement with cultural heritage. It would help in the clarification of concepts like 'value' and 'understanding'.

Lack of comparison to online Transcribathon participants

This research and past iterations of impact assessment have not collected data from online run participants. This is a key area for comparison and it is curious how outcomes may be different. As discussed in the next paragraph, online runs may offer more 'dosage', that is, more engagement over time, potentially leading to stronger outcomes (behavioural change) for the participants.

Transcribathon events are short and intense, but there is limited 'dosage'

Transcribathons are usually held over one or several days. It may be intense but it is not a prolonged interaction. Transcribathon's impact will always be limited by the short time period in which participants take part.

Linked to dosage is the importance of understanding that the effort put into the impact assessment should not outweigh the effort of the event itself. Impact assessment focus should be directed to the areas where it is most likely that impact can be investigated where there is a sufficient availability of data and data collection points. The effort put into the assessment of short-term project activity (such as completed under Enrich Europeana) would be much better invested into a longer-term tracking of the impact of Transcribathon over time, which could explore in more depth the limitations noted above and support - more explicitly - future programme design.



About the events

Cluj, Romania

A 24-hour transcribathon took place at the Biblioteka Județeană "Octavian Goga" Cluj, Romania, from 11 am, Wednesday 11 December, to 12pm, Thursday 12 December, 2019. In commemoration of the 30-year anniversary of the Romanian Revolution, 4 teams competed in transcribing and enriching Romanian **documents from the [Europeana 1989 collection](#)**. The event was organised by [Biblioteka Județeană "Octavian Goga"](#), in cooperation with Europeana and Facts & Files.

Four teams composed of eight people, some of them students from the Faculty of Letters, participated in the Transcribathon competition. Each team had to present a PowerPoint presentation about the results and the experience they had. All teams were awarded and received a diploma of participation. Participants seemed to enjoy the experience.

The event coincided with a special engagement event called *Europeana in education* where the Cluj Library highlighted the use of Europeana in educational settings. It included the personal accounts of people who actively participated in the 1989 revolution in Cluj.

Wrocław, Poland

From 24 to 25 January 2020, a 24-hour Transcribathon took place at Region Dolny Śląsk NSZZ "Solidarność" in Wrocław, Poland. Teams competed transcribing and enriching **Polish documents from the [Europeana 1989 collection](#)**.

The Transcribathon was made possible by the following partners:

- [Region Dolny Śląsk NSZZ "Solidarność"](#) ("Solidarność" Lower Silesia regional branch)
- [Pracownia Reprografii i Digitalizacji / Biblioteka Uniwersytecka](#) (Wrocław University Library)
- PSNC, Poznan, Poland
- Facts & Files, Berlin, Germany
- AIT, Vienna, Austria
- Europeana Foundation, The Hague, the Netherlands



Earlier events for comparison

Rome, Italy

The Transcribathon Italia 2018 took place in Rome from Monday 8th to Friday 12th October 2018, as part of the Digital Innovation Week of the [ICCU](#). The four-day competition saw 30 students from [University of Roma Tre - Department of Humanities](#) battle in teams for the transcription and annotation of specially selected Italian **documents from the First World War**. The event was hosted by the [Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma](#) and organised by the ICCU, in cooperation with Europeana and Facts & Files, as part of the [Europeana 1914-1918 Centenary Tour](#).

Athens, Greece

The Transcribathon Athens was a 9-day transcription marathon, taking place from Wednesday 9th May 2018 to Friday 18th May 2018. Over the Transcribathon, 40 participants competed in 8 intergenerational teams to transcribe and annotate Greek **documents from the First World War**. The Transcribathon Athens was hosted by the [National Historical Museum of Greece](#), in cooperation with [Europeana](#), [Facts & Files](#) and [PostScriptum S.A.](#), as a contribution to the [ICOM International Museum Day 2018](#).



Who were the participants at the Transcribathon events?

Cluj-Napoca, Romania

The „Octavian Goga” Cluj County Library has a partnership agreement with the Faculty of Letters of the „Babeş-Bolyai” University. The seven students (students between 18 and 21 years old studying in the Department of Applied Modern Languages, within the specialization of Translation and Interpretation) who participated in the Transcribathon responded to the announcement posted on the library's website and Facebook. Some of them also participated in other competitions of this kind and already had experience in transcribing documents. One additional participant (female, between 40-50) also participated, demonstrating interest from the wider community. One volunteer at the library (a teacher) attended but did not participate.

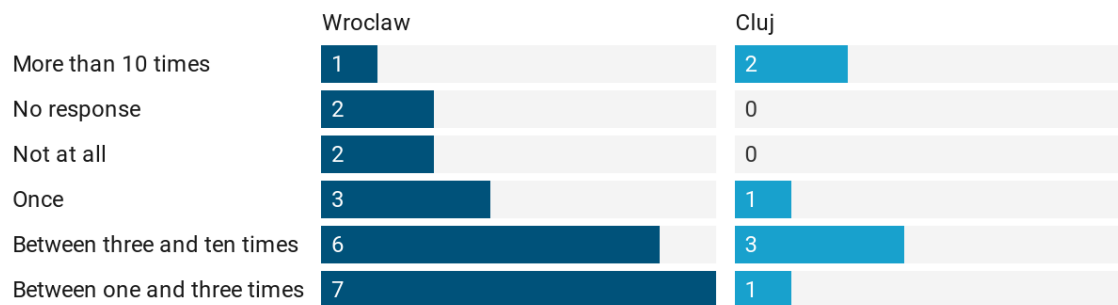
Wrocław, Poland

Students (aged between 16-18) were invited by University Library Wrocław. The focus was on secondary school pupils in Polish language, History and Computer science. Five teachers accompanied the pupils but did not participate.

Levels of existing participation with cultural heritage

In the pre-event survey, we asked the participants a question about their existing engagement with cultural heritage outside of education. This data was not shared on the screen (Mentimeter has the option to share data immediately on the screen). We collect this data to get an understanding of existing interest in cultural heritage. They may also be used to give an idea of general cultural participation rates, which can be compared with national averages. This can give us an idea of if the group of young people are average, higher than average or lower than average cultural attendees.

How often have you visited a museum or gallery in the past year, outside of your studies?



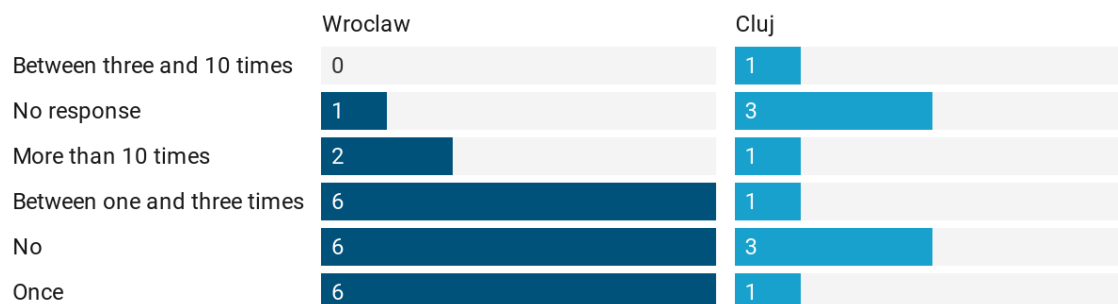
This question was shared with participants in the introduction to the event but no data was published on screen

Source: Enrich Europeana Impact Assessment surveys, 2019/2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 4. Cultural heritage engagement preferences of the participants.

The data suggest that almost all respondents (all respondents in Cluj) have at least some engagement with cultural heritage outside of the school setting. This could be assumed to be the result of personal or familial interest.

Have you visited an online exhibition in the last year?



This question was shared with participants in the introduction to the event but no data was published on screen

Source: Enrich Europeana Impact Assessment surveys, 2019/2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 5. Digital cultural heritage preferences of the participants.

The young people are less likely to visit a digital exhibition or exhibit. In the Wrocław event they are more likely to select that they do not visit or have only visited a digital exhibition or exhibit once.

Reflecting on the first set of participation figures (visiting a museum or gallery), within the Romanian context this figure is higher than the national average which for younger adults



(16-25 which is 48.5%, according to Eurostat statistics).² The figure for Poland is higher, at almost 80%³, which is in line with the data collected at the event. The data suggest, then, that **the audience for each event was in line with or above average in terms of cultural participation in each Member State.** Any change in interest or participation is starting from a high level. This also corroborates the assumed level of interest in cultural heritage by participants.

Note that the data is limited because we are unable to analyse the post-event survey with the pre-event demographic and cultural participation data (for example, to monitor how an already active cultural attender experienced change in comparison to someone who did not actively engage with cultural heritage). This is something that will be incorporated in future surveys.

Event expectations

Respondents were asked about their expectations in an open text question. The results from each event were fairly similar, although a competitive element emerged more strongly in the Wrocław event; this was not present in the responses of the Cluj participants.

What are your expectations about today's event?



The data has been manually coded from an open text question field

Source: Enrich Europeana Impact Assessment surveys, 2019/2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 6. Chart describing expectations of the event.

The chart above shows the competitive element in the Wrocław responses. It also shows that the majority of responses relate to learning something new or about 1989. Happily, several participants expect to have fun.⁴ The poem in Appendix 1, written by students at the Polish event, would also suggest that it was an enjoyable event.

² [Culture statistics 2019 edition](#)

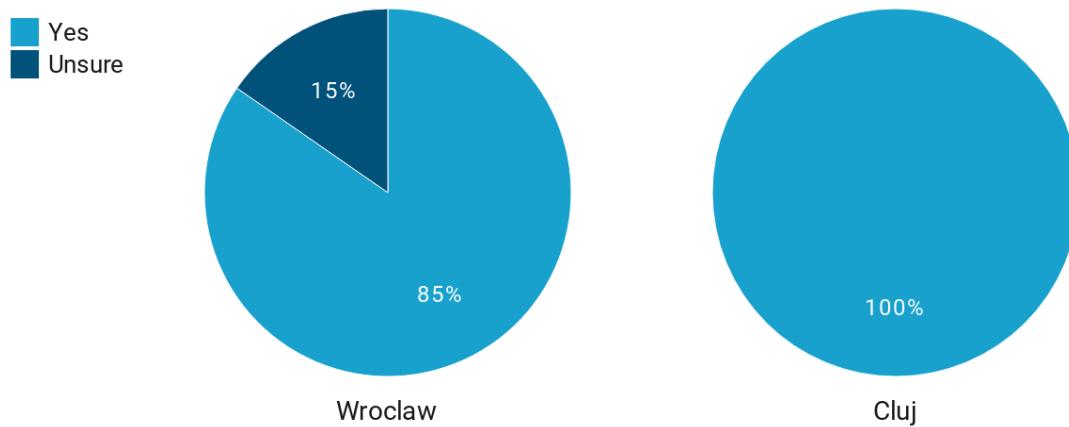
³ This and the previous statistics are averages of three different types of participation; cinema attendance, live performances and visiting cultural sites, so they should be approached with caution. [Culture statistics 2019 edition](#)

⁴ See Appendix 1 for a poem written by the participants

Repeating the experience

In Cluj, all respondents would repeat this experience (n=8) and in Wrocław, the vast majority would also take part again (only two of 13 respondents said that they were unsure).

Would you take part in a Transcribathon again?



Percentages are used to illustrate the proportion of the respondents

Source: Enrich Europeana Impact Assessment surveys, 2019/2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 7. Chart showing respondents' willingness to take part in another event.



Analysis - short-term outcomes

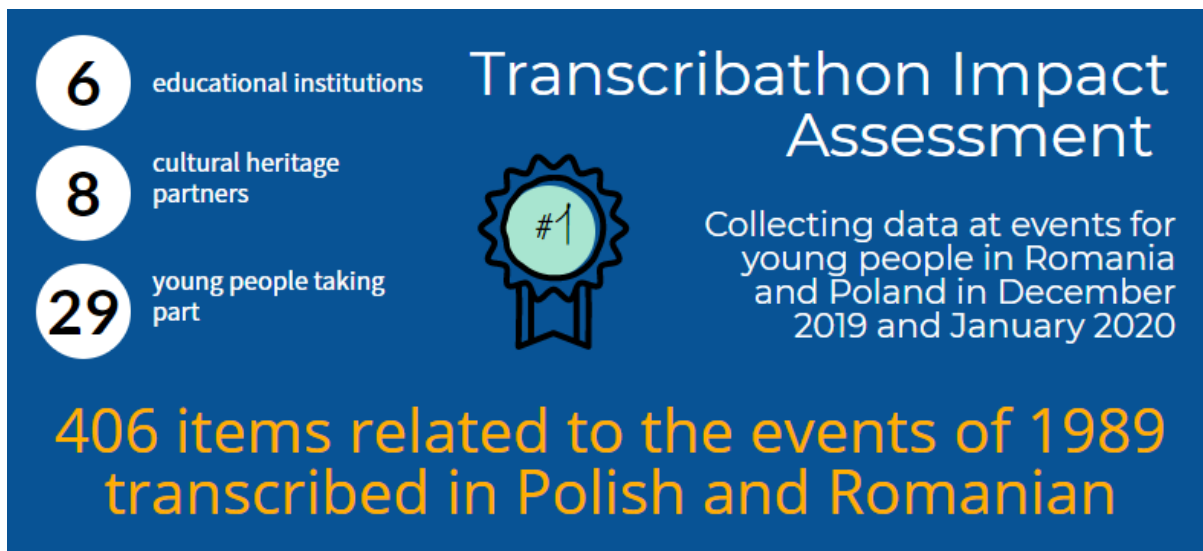


Figure 8. Infographic demonstrating some of the outputs of the events included in the review for this report.

Users are inspired by engaging with their local or national cultural heritage

We wanted to know what young people might do after the Transcribathon. We asked respondents a multiple choice question of what they might do after the event. The data show that they are most likely to use the skills they have learned somehow. The challenge remains, however, that we don't know concretely what they will do next. This was unavoidable due to the short-term nature of the data collection, as when designing the questionnaire, we didn't feel that students would know concretely what they would do next, but they could indicate a desire to do something. However, in the short-term at least, we can say that the data show that **Transcribathon inspires students to use the skills they have gained**. The data also show that the respondents may use what they have transcribed somehow. Regrettably, due to the short-term perspective, we are not able to know to what extent transcribed outputs were used in other ways. This, and how gained skills were used after the event, might be something we can explore in future impact assessments, where we could, for example, track a classroom cohort over time.

Respondents in Cluj picked 'Learn more about 1989' as their second most popular option. This was the third most popular option in Wrocław. These results indicate that **taking part in a Transcribathon motivates students to learn more about the event theme**.

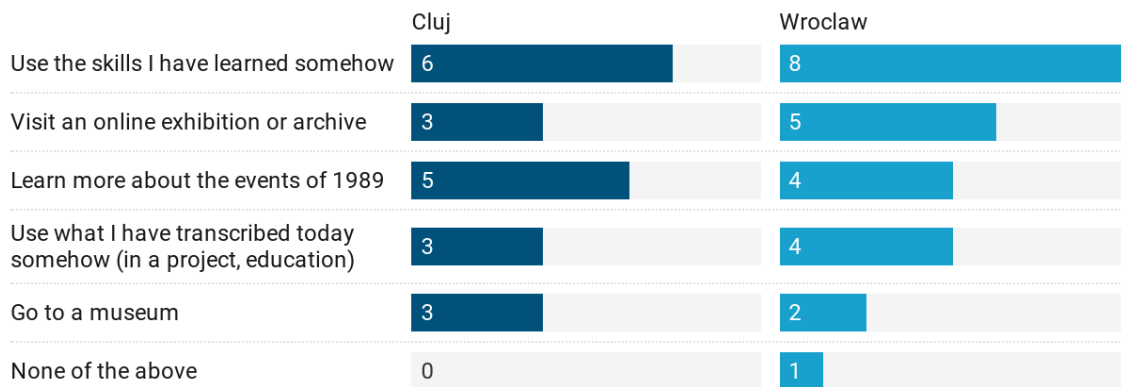
Interestingly, the responses suggest that the event has inspired participants to consider visiting an online exhibition or archive and to go to a museum, suggesting that



Transcribathon can **increase the desire to engage in cultural heritage**. The challenge, however, remains in that we do not have a long-term perspective if this inspiration to engage in cultural heritage resulted in an actual visit to a museum or online exhibition or archive.

Will you do any of these things after this event?

Respondents were able to select multiple options.



Source: Enrich Europeana Impact Assessment surveys, 2019/2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 9. Respondents reporting their likely activity relating to heritage after the event.

In future, students could be asked to suggest ways in which they might use what they have learned or transcribed.

Repeating the experience

In Cluj, all respondents would repeat this experience (n=8) and in Wrocław, the vast majority would also take part again (only two of 13 respondents said that they were unsure), which could suggest that **Transcribathon’s method of interaction with digital heritage supports the interest to learn more about one’s history and culture**. However, it should be noted that the students involved are likely to be history students or students already interested in history.

Existing audience participation and its impact on change

Above we see that the audience for both Cluj and Wrocław on average participated in cultural heritage at a fairly normal level. The participation rate for digital heritage was lower than visiting a museum. The data show that Transcribathon encouraged the event attendees to visit an online exhibition or archive more than it encouraged them to visit a museum. This may be a result of many factors, including the event focusing on digital



content, the event already being hosted in a museum (perhaps lacking engagement with the physical collections), or an already high interest in attending museums. To fully understand change in this regard, this would need to be explored in more detail in future through qualitative interview approaches or more in-depth questionnaires.

Summary

The data suggest that the participating pupils have been inspired to do something as a result of engaging with their local or national cultural heritage during Transcribathon, namely:

- Taking part in a Transcribathon motivates students to learn more about historical events
- Transcribathon's method of interaction with digital heritage supports the interest to learn more about one's history and culture
- Transcribathon can increase the desire to engage with cultural heritage through online exhibitions or attending museums

We lack the long-term data necessary to understand concretely if and what pupils might do next with the skills, knowledge, etc, gained from participating in the Transcribathon event.



More knowledge about and understanding of local or community heritage

We wanted to know if the participants would feel that they connect to their local, regional, national and/or European identity, and if they understood this better. **The participants felt they learned most about their local, regional and national identity.** It was not unexpected that they learned less about their European identity (though this was still strong) and other cultures and communities, because the content used in Transcribathon is language and therefore nation-specific, and linked to a specific period in time which has relevance for that community. The content transcribed will also vary, changing people’s experiences.

Did you learn something new about your:



Participants picked a place on a scale from nothing at all (0) to a great deal (5)

Source: Enrich Europeana Impact Assessment surveys, 2019/2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 10. Respondents reporting in what areas they had learned something new about their identities or the identities of others.

When asked to choose from a multiple choice question about what they might do next as a result of Transcribathon, participants of both events were motivated to learn more about the events of 1989 as a result of attending the Transcribathon (see later in this report about this analysis). This suggests that **Transcribathon participants are inspired to learn more about their local or community heritage.** We didn’t ask for free text responses about what else the young people might be inspired to learn more about.

Relevance of cultural heritage

The vast majority of respondents at the two events said that Transcribathon made them think about the preservation and use of cultural heritage. Further perspective is given [later](#) in this report.



Recommendations

- It would be interesting to compare online Transcribathon online run data, although we hypothesise that they would have a similar experience to event attendees because the transcribed material would be in language(s) they know to a high level.
- A differentiation in the indicators should be made to isolate what is meant by 'understanding' as distinct from gaining knowledge. This outcome should either be removed in future studies or further broken down.
- Interviews may be a better method to understand how participant's understanding of their local community, nation or family changes as a result of attending Transcribathon.

Summary

- Young people felt they learned most about their local, regional and national identity
- Transcribathon participants are inspired to learn more about their local or community heritage
- Participants learn more about local or community heritage, but the study did not isolate whether they *understand* more about their local community, nation or family. An interview or focus group could assess this better and we should hypothesise what this outcome would look like in practice, as distinct to new knowledge



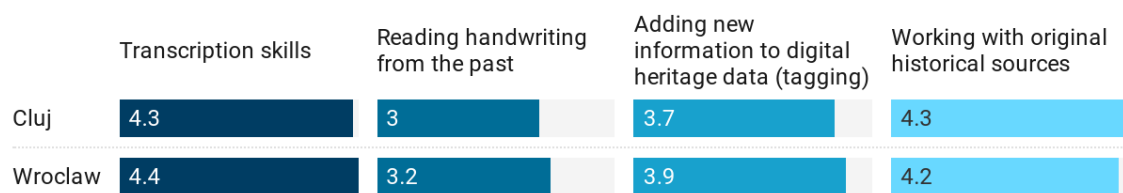
Participants develop soft and digital skills

Development of skills related directly to transcribing

We asked respondents to rate the change in four skill areas: transcription skills, reading handwriting from the past, adding new information to digital heritage data and working with historical sources. Respondents from both workshops report a significant change in all the skills areas we asked about and the responses follow a similar pattern (see image below).

How would you rate your skills after today's event?

Respondents could choose on a scale from 'no change' (0) to 'they really improved' (5)



Source: Enrich Europeana Impact Assessment surveys, 2019/2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 11. Respondents reporting changes to their skills after the event.

In particular, **Transcription skills developed the most, followed by respondents skills in working with original historical sources.**

Open text responses also show that in Wrocław, three respondents referenced transcription or reading the handwriting of the past when describing in their own words what they learned at the event:

- *Nauczyliśmy się odczytywać ręczne pismo nauczycieli/lekarzy > We have learned to read the teachers' / doctors' handwriting*
- *Nauczyłam się transkrypcji, znajdowania ważnych informacji w tłumie nieistotnych, cierpliwości do elektroniki oraz wiele i strukturach politycznych > I learned to transcribe, find important information in a crowd of irrelevant [information], patience with electronics and many political structures*

That the most significant changes were felt with regards to working with historical sources and transcribing (historical sources) supports our belief that **Transcribathon is a valuable educational (and classroom) tool** by supporting the critical analysis skills of participants.



The chart above also shows that participants developed to a good degree their ability to read handwriting from the past.

Another respondent in Wrocław referenced the development of **analytical skills**:

- *wynajdowania ważnych informacji w tłumie nieistotnych > find important information in a crowd of irrelevant [material]*

Transcribathon may help develop soft skills

Pupils in Transcribathon events work in teams and at the end, present their work to the other groups. We decided not to ask about these skills directly as part of the skills question, instead creating an open text for pupils to put in their own words what they learned at the event. In this response, two respondents in Cluj referred respectively to **skills** and **public speaking**. In Wrocław, two respondents referred respectively to **learning to be patient** and **how to work effectively**. However, this is only illustrated in a few examples in a very small sample. We could consider this perspective in future research.

Transcribathon may support the development of digital skills and improve typing proficiency

In the chart above, there is a high rating for the skill of adding metadata to heritage content. In Wrocław, it emerged in the open text responses that two participating students found the Transcribathon event valuable for the **development of their digital skills and/or typing skills**:

- *jak szybciej pisać na komputerze > how to write on your computer faster*
- *I learned a lot about efficient work and I think my slow typing got a little bit better:)*

However, this is only illustrated in a few examples in a small sample of pupils at only one event. We could consider this perspective in future research.

Summary

- The results suggest that Transcribathon is a valuable educational (and classroom) tool
- Respondents saw the most significant change in their transcribing skills and ability to work with historical sources (understood as analytical skills), followed by their



skills at adding metadata to cultural heritage data and reading handwriting from the past

- Transcribathon may support the development of typing proficiency and soft and digital skills, though this should be further investigated

Increased belief in the importance of preserving and of opening up the past

Responding to the free text question 'Did this event make you think about how cultural heritage is preserved and used?', all respondents at the Cluj event reported positively (yes or similar) (n=8). The free text responses show the depth of what the participants learned, referencing **preservation for future generations and the importance of the documentation being available for others:**

- *It did because it is interesting to see that people care about documents being preserved for future generations*
- *Yes, and it is really interesting to see how they typed the documents back then and how we do now.*
- *Yes, now these personal documents are available and accessible for others as well (sic)*

Furthermore, several responses also reference the value of **being part of the process [of preservation and reuse]:**

- *A lot and also how important [it] is to be an active part in this process.*
- *How we can all contribute to preserving our cultural memory*

The results were similar in Poland: 10 respondents (out of 12) indicated that it has made them think about how cultural heritage is preserved and used, though two also gave a mixed response ('yes and no', '50/50'). There were fewer elaborated answers (i.e. most respondents just indicated yes). One respondent said:

- *I think it is important to preserve all the history, and so in my opinion this event was a good opportunity to get to know more :)*

Learning about the role of heritage in preserving cultural knowledge
When asked to write what they learned at the event, **two respondents at the Cluj event suggested that they learned more about the role and importance of heritage in preserving cultural knowledge:**

- *More about the spirit of the time in 1989.*



- *I learned that documents such as the ones that we had to transcribe are vital for our cultural preservation and I look upon this process of transcribing with much more respect and importance now*

Recommendation

Future research should make more effort to understand any connections between the skill of adding additional information (tagging) to cultural heritage data with the value this has directly for CHIs (and potentially other users, e.g. education and research). Further causal connections could be made between the activity (adding metadata to cultural heritage data) and the long-term goal of increasing young people's engagement with cultural heritage.

Summary

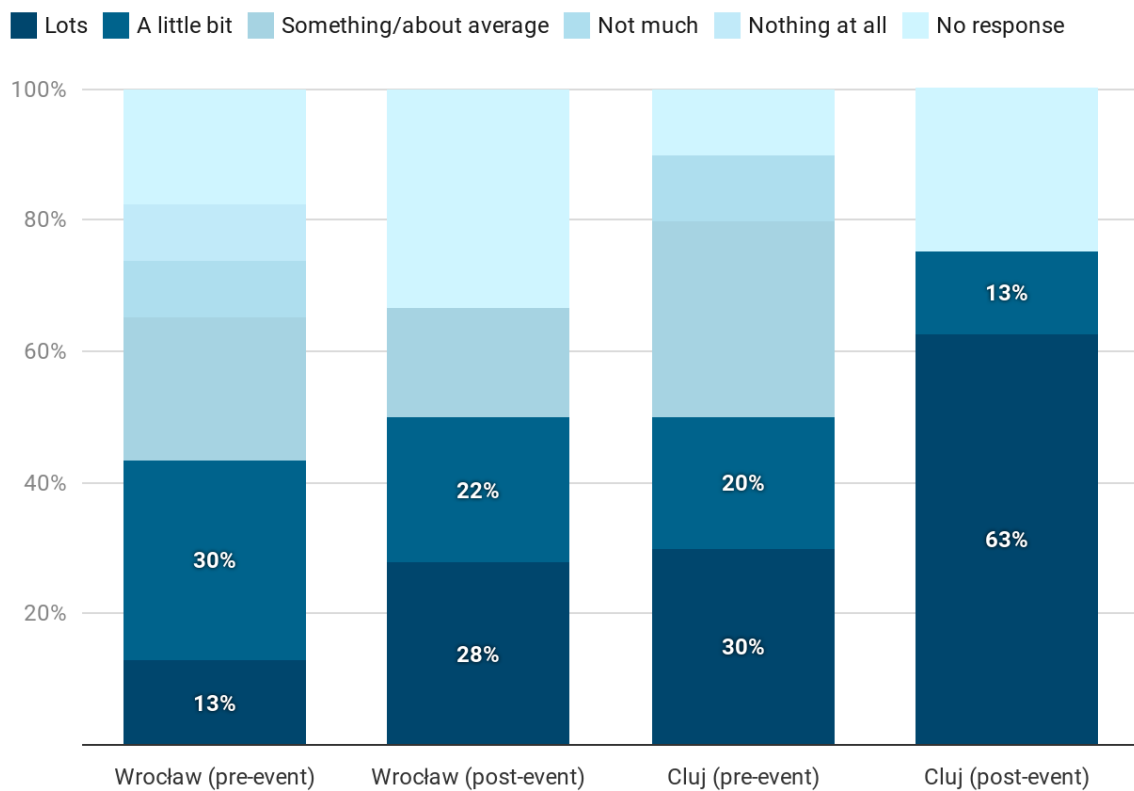
Transcribathon encourages participants to think about cultural heritage preservation and reuse, with many respondents noting different types of value this has. Respondents referenced the value of preservation for future generations, the value of being part of the process [of preservation and reuse] and the importance of the documentation being available and accessible. However, there was no clear indication that they connected their activity (adding additional information to digital heritage data) to value this could create for CHIs specifically.



Increased subject knowledge (1989)

The data show that respondents' knowledge about the events of 1989 increased as a result of Transcribathon. The chart below shows that both in Wrocław and in Cluj, the number of respondents that said they knew 'lots' about the topic increased, despite a lesser response rate for both post-event surveys. All respondents said they knew something after the event - no-one responded with 'not much' or 'nothing at all'.⁵

How much do you know about the events of 1989?



Source: Enrich Europeana Impact Assessment surveys, 2019/2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 12. Data showing levels of knowledge before and after each event, with the responses viewed as a percentage of the total rather than the number of responses (noting that there was a smaller sample after each event)

When asked to put into their own words what they learned at the Cluj event, **the greatest number of respondents (n=4 from 8 responses) referenced learning about the subject matter** (1989, Communist period history). In Wrocław, **one third of respondents (n=4 from 12 responses) referenced learning about Polish history.**

⁵ It is not recommended to reduce small samples to percentages, but for the purposes of additional illustration use it here



Recommendations

Future research should prioritise counterfactual research (to assess young people's potential change in levels of knowledge and skills) before and after the activity. This would require different data collection tools.

Summary

- Participants in Transcribathon increase their knowledge of the subject
- For many attendees, knowledge about the subject matter (in this case, 1989) is the most important outcome that they gain from the event



Analysis - long-term outcomes

In the Change Pathway developed for this project, four long-term outcomes were isolated.

- Students/pupils are inspired to research on their own or use primary sources / cultural heritage in their studies
- More likely to engage with cultural heritage on a regular basis
- Increased sense of value of their community's heritage
- Increased sense of European identity, connection with others across Europe

These and their related indicators will be analysed in the following section, noting that this research approach focused primarily on the collection of short-term outcomes.

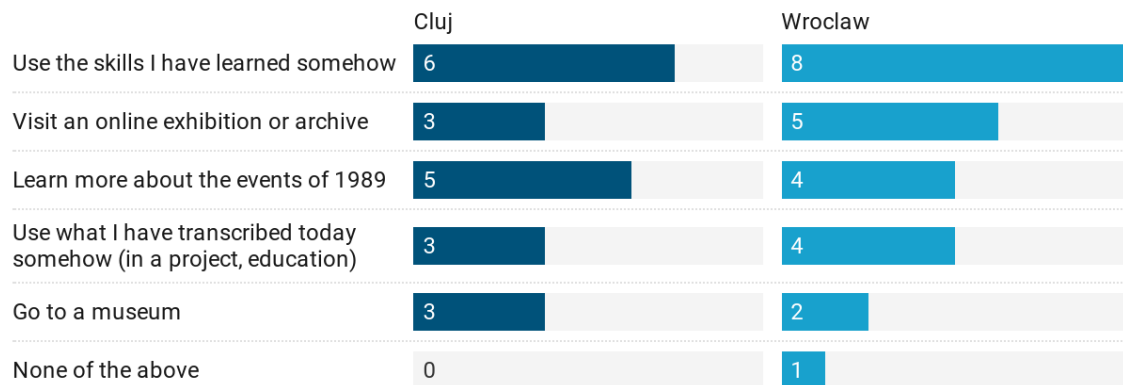
Students/pupils are inspired to research on their own or use primary sources/cultural heritage in their studies, and are more likely to engage with cultural heritage on a regular basis

The data tell us the following:

- All respondents would take part in a Transcribathon again, apart from two who said that they are unsure.
- The responses to the question 'Will you do any of these things after this event?' suggest that **Transcribathon inspires participants (to do something) and motivates them to learn more about the event theme** (1989). Transcribathon encourages an interest to learn more about one's history and culture and to visit a museum or online exhibition or archive, although it is not clear from what baseline this interest increases (further analysis of the attendee demographics and prior interest areas is important). The responses are as follows:
 - The top response was that they would use the skills they developed
 - Visiting an online exhibition or archive was the second most chosen result for Wrocław and the third most popular for Cluj
 - Learning more about the events of 1989 was the second most chosen result for Cluj and the third most popular for Wrocław
- Respondents suggested that **one of the strongest areas of skills development as result of participation was in working with historical sources** (this was the second highest out of the four skills areas)
- There was a **high response when asked if they would recommend this experience to a friend** - Cluj had a rating of 8.5 out of 10 and Wrocław 7.5 out of 10.

Will you do any of these things after this event?

Respondents were able to select multiple options.



Source: Enrich Europeana Impact Assessment surveys, 2019/2020 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 13. Likelihood of participants taking specific actions related to heritage after the event.

Similarly, the data show that respondents report that their skills improved with regards to adding additional metadata to cultural heritage data. However, it does not emerge anywhere in the data that they understood the direct value of this for CHIs. This could be explored further in interviews or in additional survey questions.

Summary

The evidence suggests that Transcribathon inspired the participating students and had an impact on their subject knowledge and historical analytical skills, and to a lesser degree, on how they interact or engage with cultural heritage or use cultural heritage in their education.

Transcribathon was an inspiring event for the participants, but, as noted in analysis of the short-term outcomes, a longitudinal perspective is required to show if and how Transcribathon creates a concrete and longer term engagement with cultural heritage in their educational activities. Similarly, counterfactual research and a more thorough analysis of the background of the event attendees would better help demonstrate change that can be linked to taking part in Transcribathon.



Increased sense of value of their community's heritage

An analysis of demographic data captured at the beginning of each event suggests that this group participates at a rate equal to or higher than the national average. As noted above, Transcribathon potentially has an impact on how young people are likely to interact or engage with cultural heritage or use cultural heritage in their education. A longitudinal perspective, however, is required to understand if Transcribathon has a tangible impact on engagement with local and community heritage. That was not possible within the boundaries of this assessment.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the outcome 'Increased sense of value of their community's heritage' is considered in more depth and that more indicators are created in order to fully explore long-term change in this area. An interview approach may be more appropriate to explore what values this might consist of (e.g. preservation).

Summary

We require further data to understand if Transcribathon increased participant's sense of value of their communities' cultural heritage. It would be valuable to take more time to explore what this might look like in terms of the young person's behavioural or attitudinal change.



Increased sense of European identity, connection with others across Europe

It is important to reflect on this long-term outcome against the objectives of Transcribathon. Transcribathon is a tool that facilitates the transcription by willing volunteers of documents in handwriting of the past into digitised text. The events organised by Transcribathon may be centred around a Europe-wide or local/national event. The most important example is Europeana's 1914-1918 campaign, in which Transcribathon played a large role. While 1989 is also a pan-European event, its ramifications and how the events played out were different in each location. Furthermore, this was a moment most significantly shared by those in Eastern Europe, rather than all of Europe (like World War One).

The data captured in the event questionnaires show that respondents are most likely to feel a connection with their local, regional or national heritage, over European heritage. This may be the result of several factors. Firstly, 1989 may seem like a more 'local' topic than World War One. Secondly, the data transcribed is in the national language and related to this more 'local' theme. Thirdly, the narrative around the event may be related to the 'local' impact and memories of 1989, which may reduce or not fully illuminate the shared experience of the year. The trend of Transcribathon supporting a connection with local heritage or identity is also found in the event data collected in Rome and Athens.

Recommendation

The organisers of Transcribathon should interrogate to what extent the programme tries to generate a sense of European identity over or alongside a stronger connection to national or local heritage. This should then influence future programme design.

Summary

The data suggests Transcribathon creates a strong connection with local or national history. This outcome needs to be investigated in further detail. Can (and how can) a sense of connection with others in Europe be achieved by events that focus on heritage in a certain language? If this is a desired outcome of Transcribathon, this should be considered more in project and event design, and in the narrative in which the data to be transcribed is introduced.

Comparison of the results with previous Transcribathon participants' data

Data from Athens and Rome (May 2018 and October 2018 respectively) was captured before the beginning of the Enrich Europeana and the development of the new functionality. For that reason, the Impact Assessment remains focused on the Romanian and Polish events (December 2019 and January 2020). However, the section below provides an interesting perspective on the trends emerging from the data collected during the Enrich Europeana project.

Connections with different communities or levels of identity

The data from Greece (captured in May 2018) show that, like in this analysis, participants are more likely to better understand their local and national identity over European identity or other cultures and communities.

At this event, the organisers were able to ask the question about expectations of how they might connect to their different layers of identity. While the sample of respondents is smaller and may consist of different people, Transcribathon users expect that the tool will help them to have more of a perspective on other cultures and communities that it does. Analysis in the image below shows this change, and also highlights what an unexpected result that could be investigated further, that the connection to local, regional or national heritage was lower than expected.

These findings also show the limitations of comparing groups before and after the event that might not include as many or the same people as had participated previously.

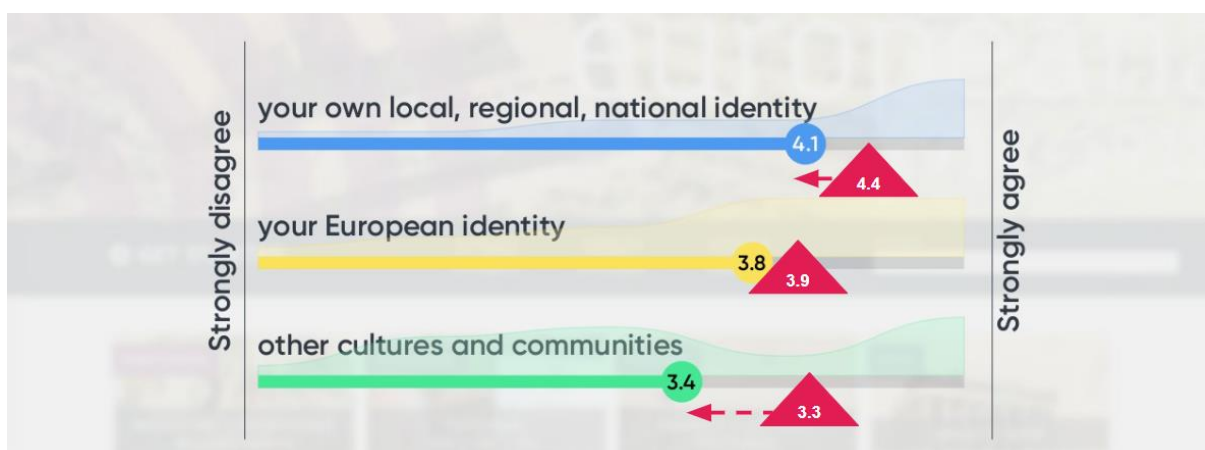




Figure 14. Image showing expectations of what layers of identity the tool might help participants connect with, captured after the event. The red triangles show the rating before the event. The arrows represent change. Image captured from Mentimeter.

Skills development

In the questionnaire amongst participants in Athens, it is also clear that **Transcribathon supported the development of skills and knowledge**, although we measured this differently in the Enrich Europeana events. The red indicates the pre-event results and the arrows signify a change. It shows that knowledge, experience in transcribing using the tool and confidence all increase.

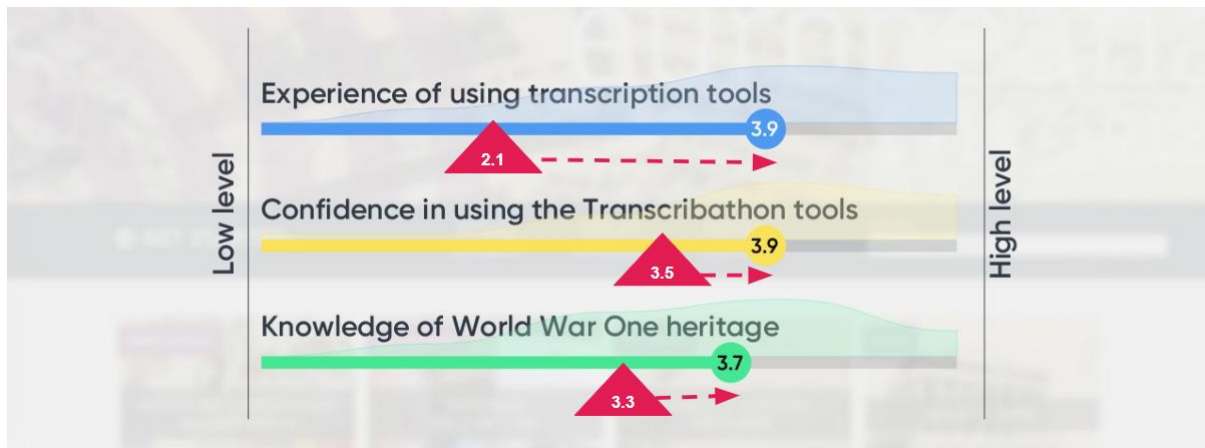


Figure 15. Image showing the development of skills and knowledge in the Athens event. Image captured from Mentimeter.

Soft skills development

Open text responses suggest the development of soft skills. This is also visible in the selection of open text responses from the event in Athens in May 2018. **Participants highlight developing teamwork skills and skills in evaluation and research.**



Figure 16. Image of responses from participants highlight a number of soft skill areas, including team-work.



The impact of Transcribathon

The Change Pathway developed for Enrich Europeana sets out two areas in which we think that Transcribathon's activities have impact. It is now the moment to evaluate the extent to which Transcribathon events contribute to:

- Increased tolerance and understanding of your own and other cultures
- A context where cultural heritage and the work of CHIs is seen as more relevant by young people across Europe

Europeana's Impact Playbook sets out a concept of the 'accountability line', which separates the areas where an activity can rightfully claim to create direct and measurable impact from those where the activity can only claim to support the creation of impact, acknowledging many other factors or variables and the challenge of measurement.

The accountability line generally falls on the Change Pathway between long-term outcomes and impact.

Increased tolerance and understanding of your own and other cultures

For this assessment, we will take this outcome in two stages.

Increased tolerance of other cultures

This impact area is linked to the long-term outcome, '*Increased sense of European identity, connection with others across Europe*'. As discussed above, the event provides more of a sense of connection to one's own local or national culture. It is unclear how Transcribathon would contribute to tolerance of other cultures (noting that this came third in each assessment, after local culture and European identity) without further research into the outcomes experienced by the participants. Furthermore, more effort should be made in the change pathway to work through a causal chain between Transcribathon's activities, short and long-term outcomes, and the result of *tolerance*.

Transcribathon organisers should reflect if this is a desired impact of the initiative. If yes, this should influence future programme design.

Increased understanding of your own culture

This is directly a consequence of the following long-term outcomes:



- Students/pupils are inspired to research on their own or use primary sources / cultural heritage in their studies
- Students/pupils are more likely to engage with cultural heritage on a regular basis
- Students/pupils have an increased sense of value of their community's heritage

Impact suggests a long-term change. Understanding, however, may occur in the shorter-term. We may therefore suggest that this is a medium- or long-term outcome rather than impact. Numerous short-term outcomes can be interpreted in a way that could show that this change has happened. As noted above, concepts of value and understanding should be further explored within future research.⁶

Recommendations for future

Spend more time considering the impact areas and test each of these for their relevance to the project. Similarly, the language used in each of the long-term and short-term outcomes should be similarly tested in more depth and more causal steps outlined between the identified outcomes and impact.

A context where cultural heritage and the work of CHIs is seen as more relevant by young people across Europe

This impact is also linked to the following outcomes:

- Students/pupils are inspired to research on their own or use primary sources / cultural heritage in their studies
- More likely to engage with cultural heritage on a regular basis
- Increased sense of value of their community or nation's heritage

The short term indications are that participants are more likely to engage with cultural heritage as a result of Transcribathon, and this could be further strengthened with longitudinal research. For example, a class involved in Transcribathon could be followed as a cohort and their perceptions tracked over time (though it should be assessed if this is worth the effort - it would only be more valuable if such a cohort had repeated interactions with Transcribathon).

⁶ This would also warrant an extended literature review



Summary

Transcribathon has a demonstrable impact for young people at Transcribathon events on a short-term scale which may lead to longer-term engagement with digital cultural heritage, better educational outcomes (thanks to new skills) and a connection with the heritage of their local community, region or nation.



Conclusions

Transcribathon **inspires** and encourages participants to **learn more** about historical topics by creating a **strong connection with and a desire to learn more about one's national or local history and culture**. It is a valuable educational tool, with participants learning more about a subject and developing transcription skills and then analytical skills (relating to working with historical sources). We also think that it can support the development of typing proficiency and soft and digital skills, though this should be further investigated.

Transcribathon encourages participants to **think differently about cultural heritage preservation and reuse**, with respondents suggesting different types of value this has, like preservation for future generations and the importance of documentation being available and accessible. Transcribathon, at least in the short-term, **encourages participants to engage with digital exhibitions and archives** (more than attending museums and galleries).

The evidence suggests that Transcribathon inspired the participating students and had an impact on their subject knowledge and historical analytical skills, and to a lesser degree, on how they interact or engage with cultural heritage or use cultural heritage in their education. We can suggest that Transcribathon was an inspiring event for the participants, but, as noted in analysis of the short-term outcomes, a longitudinal perspective is required to show if and how Transcribathon creates a concrete and longer term engagement with cultural heritage in their educational activities. Participants learn more about local or community heritage, but the study did not capture data that could isolate whether they *understand* more about their local community, nation or family, or if their feelings of its *value* changed.

The data suggests that Transcribathon is most strong in generating a sense of connection with one's local culture and history. It creates a less strong connection with a European identity or other cultures.

This analysis and the data included in the report should be interpreted bearing in mind the short time-frame in which it was conducted, the small sample of data collected and the other limitations noted in the approach. The analysis has helped to provide some ideas for future research. It has also helped to shape recommendations for the future strategic development of Transcribathon, including, for example, how stronger impact could be created through increased 'dosage' (i.e. engagement) with the tool.



Reflection and learning about our approach

Successes

There were a number of successes:

- The surveys were short and had a good response rate, although the overall sample was low
- Data collection was integrated well into the format of the day, suggesting that it can be easily replicated in future events
- At one event, data was captured in the local language and this did not cause too much of a challenge or extra burden for the researcher or event organiser
- Pupils in Wrocław seemed to enjoy the ability to give their perspective via mobile phone; some survey pages had a good number of hearts (which suggests that they like or love the page)
- The survey question text was generally clearly understood by all participants
- The demographic data was useful in giving an overview of the class but collecting it at the beginning reduced the analytical potential

Limitations are presented in the earlier methodology and will not be repeated here. However, recommendations are listed below. This is a summary of the recommendations interspersed in the findings sections.

Recommendations for future impact assessment

This section responds to the limitations outlined in the methodology section, and gathers all the recommendations made in different sections throughout this report for ease of future reference:

- Many indicators (especially those related to motivation and inspiration) need to be further investigated with a longitudinal perspective to understand what (if any) concrete actions took place after participation. Where this is not possible, students could be asked to suggest ways in which they might use what they have learned or transcribed, though this is still projection.
- Future research could make more effort to connect the skill of adding additional information (tagging) to cultural heritage data with the value this has directly for CHIs (and potentially other users, e.g. education and research). Further causal connections could be made between the activity (adding metadata to cultural heritage data) and the long-term goal of increasing young people's engagement with cultural heritage.



- Future research should prioritise counterfactual research (to assess young people's potential change in levels of knowledge and skills). This would require more effort, time for planning and delivery, and different data collection tools.
- We should further explore what is meant by 'understanding' and 'valuing' in order to make them distinct from gaining knowledge.
- It is recommended that the outcome 'Increased sense of value of their community's heritage' is considered in more depth and that more indicators are created in order to fully explore long-term change in this area. An interview approach may be more appropriate to explore what values this might consist of (e.g. preservation).
- Interviews may be a better way to understand if and how participant's understanding of their local community, nation or family changes as a result of attending Transcribathon.
- Spend more time considering the impact areas and test each of these for their relevance to the project. The language used in each of the long-term and short-term outcomes should be similarly tested in more depth and more causal steps outlined between the identified outcomes and impact.
- The organisers of Transcribathon should articulate or balance to what extent the programme tries to generate a sense of European identity over or alongside a stronger connection to national or local heritage. This will inform future impact assessment design.

Areas for additional research

Additional areas for research have emerged. For educators, we might ask what is the value of Transcribathon as an online tool for (sustained) classroom use (e.g. soft skill and digital skills development).

For CHIs, we might ask what the value of the increased reusability and findability of their cultural heritage content is (thanks to additional metadata and textual transcription by Transcribathon participants). We might also ask in more detail what is the value for them of hosting a Transcribathon event, for example, in terms of creating or strengthening partnerships with educational institutions or encouraging new audiences.

For young people, we could investigate the value of the gamification of cultural heritage engagement for young people relating to desire to engage more in (digital) cultural heritage.

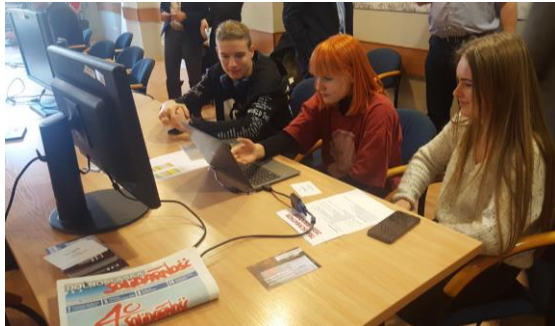


Appendix 1 - participants' poem

[Original in Polish]

Może nawet taki u nas zorganizujemy

Transkrypcja to trudna sprawa.
Nie myślcie, że to zabawa.
Dokumenty do odczytania trudne,
Godziny tu spędzone nie były nudne.
Lata 80. poznaliśmy lepiej:
Wiemy, że nic nie było w sklepie,
Że pewnie generał w okularach czarnych
Był dla Polaków przywódcą marnym,
Że samolotów różnych używano bez liku,
Zwłaszcza gdy o stanie wojennym było
dużo krzyku.
O konkursie na pewno w szkole
opowiemy,
Może nawet taki u nas zorganizujemy.



[English translation]

A transcription contest - doesn't it sound cool?

Truly transcription is hard and demanding
Not for fun, but those who are up for something
Documents illegible on the verge of scribbles
Hours we spent were amazing, no one giggles
1980s in Poland - like the land of plenty
You got the money - but the shop was empty
Land of plenty and a general in dark-rimmed glasses
Wrong man in the position to lead Polish masses
Many different planes built the sky that wasn't bright
Martial law was the craze when talking quietly at night
Now let the children use it - a contest at school?
A transcription contest - doesn't it sound cool?

Poem by Team Wrocław-7 - Natalia Krystians, Paulina Zwierz, Paweł Przybył; 25/01/2020 from Liceum Ogólnokształcące nr II im. Piastów Śląskich z Oddziałami Mistrzostwa Sportowego. Translated by Marek Misiak, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Medycznego we Wrocławiu.



About the Europeana Impact Playbook

The European Impact Playbook is being developed for and with cultural heritage institutions around the world to help them design, measure and narrate the impact of their activities. It helps guide professionals through the process of identifying the impact that their cultural heritage institutions have, or aim to have, as the sector works towards creating a shared narrative about the value of digital cultural heritage.

Two phases of the Impact Playbook have been published alongside tools and a growing library of case studies. Phase one introduces professionals to the language of impact assessment and helps them make strategic choices to guide the design of their impact. Phase two builds on the design brief in the first phase and focuses on data collection techniques. Phases three and four are in development and will focus on how to narrate impact findings and evaluate the process taken.


Find out and join the Europeana Impact Community by going to [impkt.tools!](https://impkt.tools)



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