



EUROPEANA NETWORK ASSOCIATION 2021 Impact Assessment Report

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Contents

Executive Summary	3
Methodology	3
Findings	3
Conclusions	4
Validation and next steps	4
Introduction	5
Methodology	5
Online questionnaire	5
Distributing the questionnaire	5
Response rate and validity	6
Analysis and validation	6
Findings	7
Who were the respondents?	7
Perceived activity in the Network	8
Satisfaction with membership	9
Importance and value of the Network	9
Support during the Covid-19 pandemic	9
Creating value for members	10
Building capacity and knowledge in digital cultural heritage	11
Economic impact and sector sustainability	11
Building a professional network	11
Future Network activities	11
Desire to build capacity through Network activities	12
Increase networking and collaboration opportunities	13
Conclusions and recommendations	13
About the Europeana Impact Playbook	16



Executive Summary

The Europeana Network Association is the driving force of Europeana and is made up of over 3,100 professionals¹ interested in digital cultural heritage from Europe and beyond. Since 2020, we have been measuring on an annual basis members' satisfaction and the outcomes of their participation, while considering what this means in terms of longer-term sector impact.

Methodology

A digital questionnaire was developed based on the questionnaire shared with the Network in 2020. Some questions were revised, deleted or added. The digital questionnaire was shared with the Network via the newsletter, as well as directly with the Members' Council and with the communities. We received 323 responses, which, with around 3,000 Network members surveyed, represents at least a 10% response rate. This is the minimum that we aimed for in order to have a representative sample. The data were then analysed on Excel.

Findings

About the Network

- Fewer than half of Network members identify as heritage professionals.
- The Network is made up of those with many years' experience, with those with over 20 years' experience most represented and students or those still in education least represented.
- Members are most likely to have been a member for two years or less (45%), with members for 5-6 years being the next most frequently selected category (28%).

Engagement in the Network

- 12% of respondents consider themselves very active in the Network. These respondents were most likely to be long-term members of 5-6 years.
- 25% of respondents report not being very involved in the Network or Europeana's activities, and of this group, 34% would like to be more involved.
- 32% of respondents would like to be more involved in the Network but 34% of this group don't know how to get more involved.
- 55% of respondents suggested that they'd like to be more involved in the work of Network communities, Working Groups or Task Forces.
- Significantly fewer respondents encourage others to explore Europeana's services (2020: 64%, 2021: 50%) and there is a very small decrease in encouraging others to join the Network (a drop of 1%).

Satisfaction with the Network

- 67% of members were either satisfied or completely satisfied with their Network experience, but 29% reported being neither dissatisfied or satisfied, perhaps reflecting a lack of engagement and activity.

¹ At the time of writing - October 2021



- 45% of respondents reported that Europeana Network activities have been beneficial for them throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Developing sector capacity

- 65% of members suggest that the Network is important to some extent for their daily work with 31% suggesting it has little or no importance.
- 16% of respondents report that the Network had value in some way when applying for funding. 8% report that it helped secure funding.
- Increase in members reporting that they have expanded their professional network (from 34% in 2020 to 41% in 2021) and that the Network has helped them collaborate with others (a rise from 20% to 31%). 45% of respondents would like the Network to organise more networking events and 20% would like more informal catch-ups.

Conclusions

The interdisciplinarity of the Network is clear, as is the desire for more opportunities to meet (either digitally or in person) and to collaborate. Interactivity with the Network appears to have decreased between 2020 and 2021 on all levels measured. There are encouraging signs, however, relating to a desire to be more involved. Bearing this in mind, somewhat unexpectedly Network members report that membership had even greater value for them in all areas measured in 2021 than they did in 2020. This may be the result of increased digital activity (and the wider accessibility of digital formats) since the beginning of the pandemic. The lack of engagement of many Network members may play a role in their level of satisfaction with their experience, so increasing opportunities for members to get involved is strongly recommended.

For the first time, we investigated economic impact directly as a result of Network membership, namely through securing project funding. This was reported by 8% of respondents, strengthening our argument that convening and strengthening a Network of professionals supports the sustainability of the sector. Furthermore, participants desire the Network to further support the capacity-building of the sector, though there are many ways in which the Network is asked to do this.

Validation and next steps

This report will be shared with the Membership Working Group, the ENA Members Council, and colleagues at the Europeana Foundation.



Introduction

First launched in 2015, the Europeana Network Association (ENA) is a movement of over 3,100 professionals located across Europe and beyond who are united by a shared mission to expand and improve access to our digitised cultural heritage. In this democratic and inclusive community, members share knowledge and experience and engage in creative cross-border and cross-domain collaboration to address shared challenges, exchange knowledge, and support the development and digital transformation of the sector.

Network members are formally represented in the governance of the Europeana Initiative by representatives who they elect to the ENA Members Council (MC) and Management Board (MB), who then take decisions on their behalf. Network members nonetheless have opportunities to be involved through specialist communities, Task Forces and Working Groups, as well as to participate in Europeana Initiative events and knowledge sharing opportunities and channels (e.g. Members-only newsletters).

Since 2020, we have been measuring on an annual basis members' satisfaction and the outcomes of their participation in the Europeana Network Association, while considering what this means in terms of longer-term sector impact. This report sets out the findings from the second such investigation.

Methodology

2021 was the second year in which we have conducted an annual review of the Europeana Network. In 2020 we were able to establish a baseline in several areas which we report on in this report.

Online questionnaire

Following on from the approach taken in 2020, an online questionnaire was sent to Network members. Similar questions were asked, with some new ones being added, some questions being taken out for brevity and some revisions made to improve existing questions. The questionnaire was reviewed by representatives of the Members' Council as well as by Foundation colleagues.

Distributing the questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed via the main Network newsletter as well as via Europeana Communities and directly to the Members' Council members. The majority of responses came from those clicking through from the main Network newsletter. There was some cross-posting due to the overlap between different Europeana Communities but participants should only have been able to complete the survey once.

Response rate and validity

We received 323 responses, which, with around 3,000 Network members surveyed, represents at least a **10% response rate**. This is the minimum that we aimed for in



order to have a good sample. We also assess validity by comparing what we know about respondents and the make-up of Network membership in terms of years of experience in the heritage sector and how long they have been Network members.

Analysis and validation

The analysis was completed in excel. Open text responses were not edited when used in this report. An interim version of the findings was submitted as part of Europeana's DSI reporting in August 2021.

Limitations

- Such a questionnaire would benefit from a qualitative study to give further insights into membership experiences. The ENA Membership Working Group should bear this in mind.
- This study does not measure progress after a certain point of Network membership, e.g. six months after joining, like the UK's [Digital Culture Network](#) has attempted to do. This is an opportunity to be considered by the ENA Membership Working Group.
- There is a likelihood of survey bias, that is, that those with something positive or negative to share might be more likely to respond. The data can be interpreted to suggest that there is a bias at play, and thus these results should be read with this potential bias in mind. Randomised surveying (e.g. picking a random sample of Network members) could be a more appropriate method to trial in the future, even if this resulted in a smaller sample of respondents. This could mean that the satisfaction and impact surveys are separated in future which, however, may have further limitations relating to survey fatigue and low response rates and more survey bias.



Findings

Who were the respondents?

Members were most likely to identify as heritage professionals and researchers (including PhD candidates), chosen by 38% and 25% of respondents respectively (noting that respondents could pick multiple options). It is notable that like in 2020, 62% of respondents did not identify as heritage professionals.

Similar to 2020, respondents were most likely to have been a member for two years or less (45%), with members for 5-6 years being the next most frequently selected category (28%).

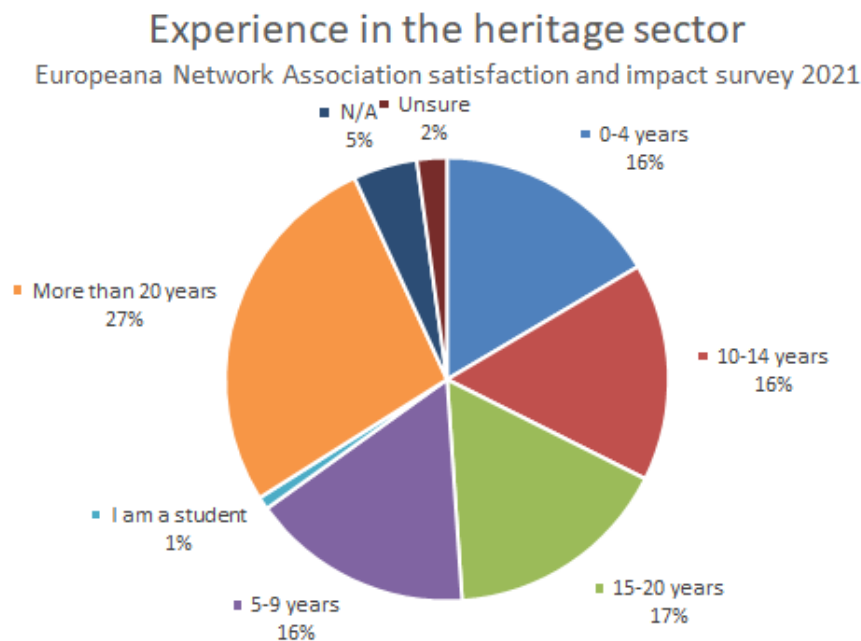


Figure 1. Chart illustrating Network members' years experience in the sector. The largest category is more than 20 years at 27%. There are few students in the sample.

There was a roughly even split of membership experience in the sector. However, less than 3% of respondents identified as being a student or in higher education. When asked how long they had worked in the heritage sector, only 1% of respondents noted that they were a student. Those with over 20 years' experience were more represented in the sample.²

Perceived activity in the Network

12% of respondents report being very active in the Network (this was not measured in 2020 and so can't be compared in 2021). The majority of these respondents (66%) have been a Network member for 5-6 years.

² These findings reflect findings from a piece of work undertaken by Europeana Foundation colleagues and reported on in 2021 that shows that of the job titles given, most suggest a level of seniority. The lack of newer professionals was also highlighted as a concern in this analysis.



25% of respondents report not being very involved in the Network or Europeana’s activities, and of this group, 34% would like to be more involved.

32% of respondents would like to be more involved in the Network but 34% of this group don’t know how to get more involved. In general, 18% of respondents don’t know how to get more involved. When asked specifically about Europeana Network Association communities, Working Groups or Task Forces, 55% of respondents indicate that they would like to be more involved, with 24% unsure and 8% saying no.

There are indications that there is a decrease of involvement in the Network between 2020 and 2021.

- Significantly fewer respondents encourage others to explore Europeana’s services (2020: 64%, 2021: 50%) and there is a very small decrease in encouraging others to join the Network (a drop of 1%).
- More respondents report being not very involved in the Network and slightly fewer respondents report wanting to be more involved in the Network.
- There is a small drop in Network members reporting to follow Europeana on social media.

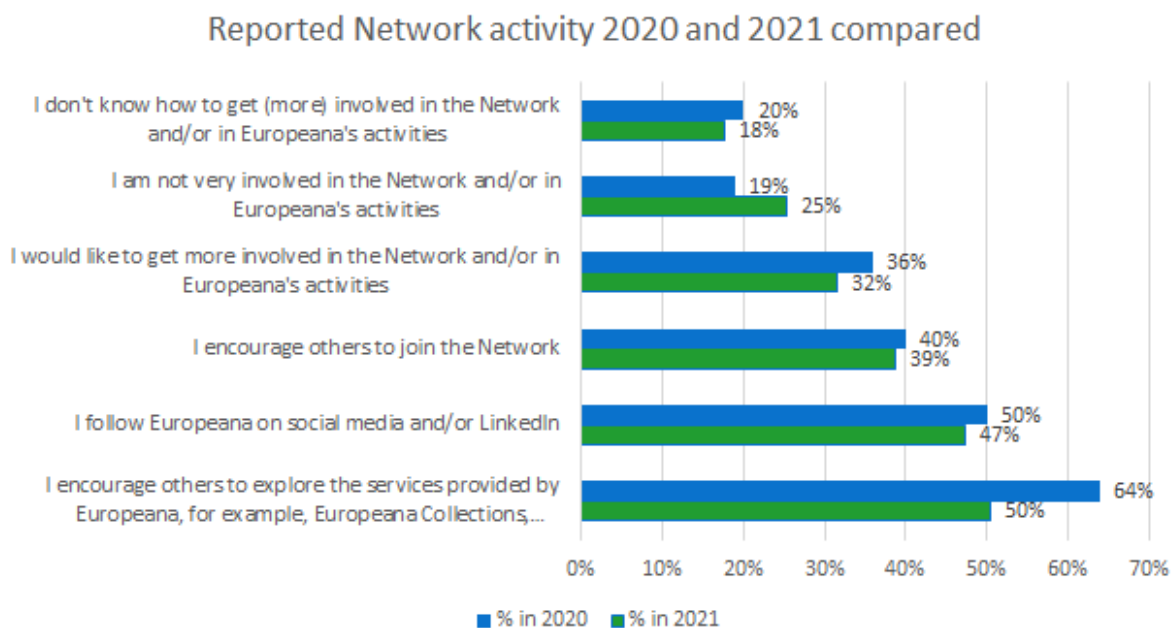


Figure 2. Chart showing reported Network activity in 2020 and 2021.

Satisfaction with membership

- 67% of respondents were either satisfied or completely satisfied with their Network experience. In 2020 we only collected the NPS score (at the time, an agreed Key Performance Indicator for our reporting to the European Commission). This score can be monitored going forward.
- While only 4% of members were dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied, a relatively large number of people (29%) expressed that they were neither dissatisfied or satisfied, suggesting that they have little to say about their membership.



Importance and value of the Network

65% suggest that the Network is important to some extent for their daily work (combining the responses of absolutely essential, very important and of average importance, 4%, 23% and 38% respectively), with 31% suggesting it has little or no importance (22% and 9% respectively). The data collected in 2020 were collected using a different question and so can't be accurately compared.

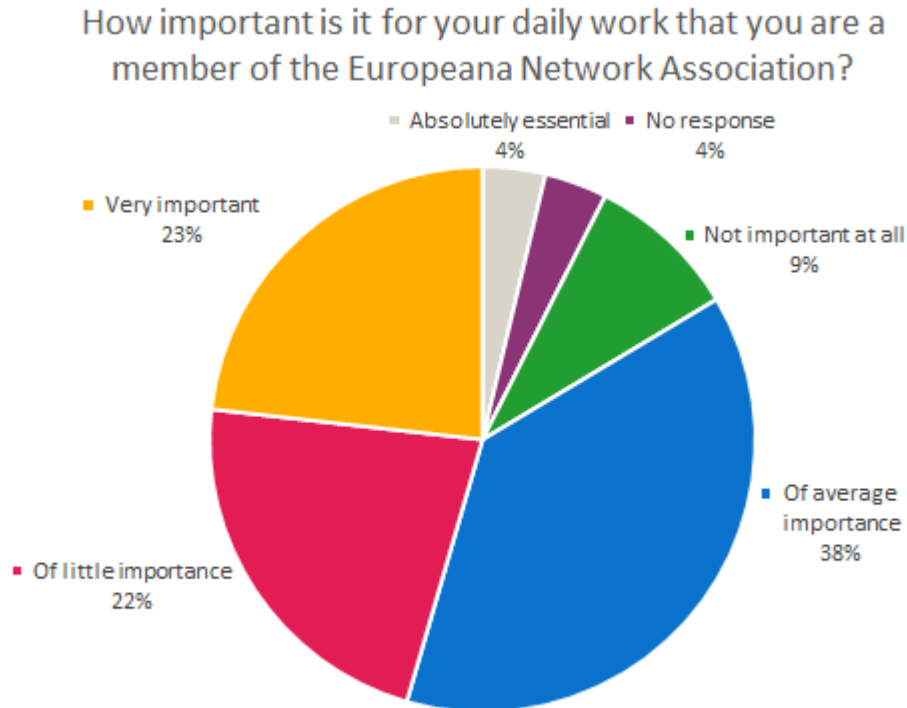


Figure 3. Importance for Network members that they are part of the Europeana Network Association. The most commonly selected category is that it is of average importance (38%).

Support during the Covid-19 pandemic

45% of respondents reported that Europeana Network activities have been beneficial for them throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Quite a large number (34%) of respondents responded 'unsure' or N/A.

The open text responses showed that the question might not have been clear enough. Some didn't see pandemic-related activity, e.g.:

- *Cannot point to anything that is specific for the pandemic period but [sic] have used news, webinars, and more*
- *nothing pandemic specific*
- *not aware of covid specific activities*



Some were able to attend the conference or other events (e.g. TechxAI webinars, sensemaking sessions, webinars) online.

- *I was able to attend the last (2020) Europeana Conference because it was online and free!*

Information sharing, including finding project partners through a call published through EuropeanaTech community newsletter, was referenced.

Creating value for members

When asked to select up to three areas where the Network might have had value for them, responses show an increase on the baseline collected in 2020.

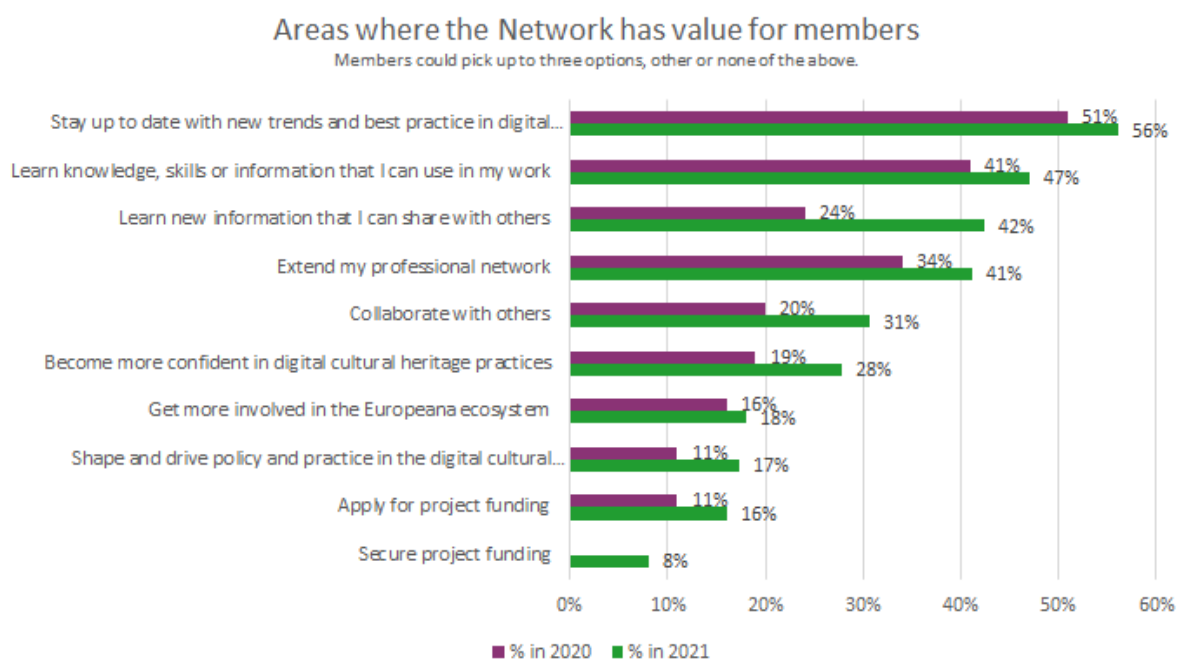


Figure 4. Chart showing how the Europeana Network Association has benefited for its members, comparing 2020 and 2021 responses (with one new option reported in 2021).

The data show that there are increases in the numbers of those reporting value in certain areas. The main themes to draw out will be discussed below.

Building capacity and knowledge in digital cultural heritage

Like in 2020, the most frequently-selected outcome was *staying up to date with new trends and best practice* chosen by 56% of respondents. The second most frequent outcome was *learning knowledge that can be used in your work* chosen by 47%. This knowledge also has a ripple effect, namely that the knowledge can be shared with others (selected by 42% of respondents).



Economic impact and sector sustainability

In the 2020 impact assessment, 11% of respondents reported a link between membership and applications for project funding. We wanted to be more specific and to understand to what extent Network membership had value for both *applying to* and *securing* project funding. We wrote that 'there is a relatively small but discernible link between Network membership and the leverage of funding for activity in digital cultural heritage.'³ In the 2021 questionnaire, we see that:

- 16% of respondents report that the Network had value in some way when applying for funding.
- 8% report that it helped secure funding.

In future impact assessments and Network activities we should try to better understand the connections (and causality) between Network membership and funding opportunities.

Building a professional network

We see an increase in Network members reporting that membership has helped them to expand their professional network, from 34% in 2020 to 41% in 2021. At the same time, we see an increase in those who report that the Network has helped them collaborate with others, with a rise from 20% in 2020 to 31% in 2021. This is despite the pandemic and completely digital format of all Europeana activities since the end of March 2020. This may be related to the surge in digital events led by Europeana as well as the digital conference in 2020, in which almost 1,000 professionals participated.⁴

Future Network activities

Participants were given a number of options that they could select and an 'other' column to help shape future Network activity planning. We also asked members how the Network could better support the capacity-building of the sector.

³ Europeana Network Association impact assessment 2020

<https://pro.europeana.eu/post/impact-assessment-report-europeana-network-association>

⁴ Read more about the Europeana 2020 conference in the Impact Assessment on Europeana Pro <https://pro.europeana.eu/post/convening-for-change-the-impact-of-our-annual-conferences>



What type of activities would you like to see the European Network Association organise in the future?

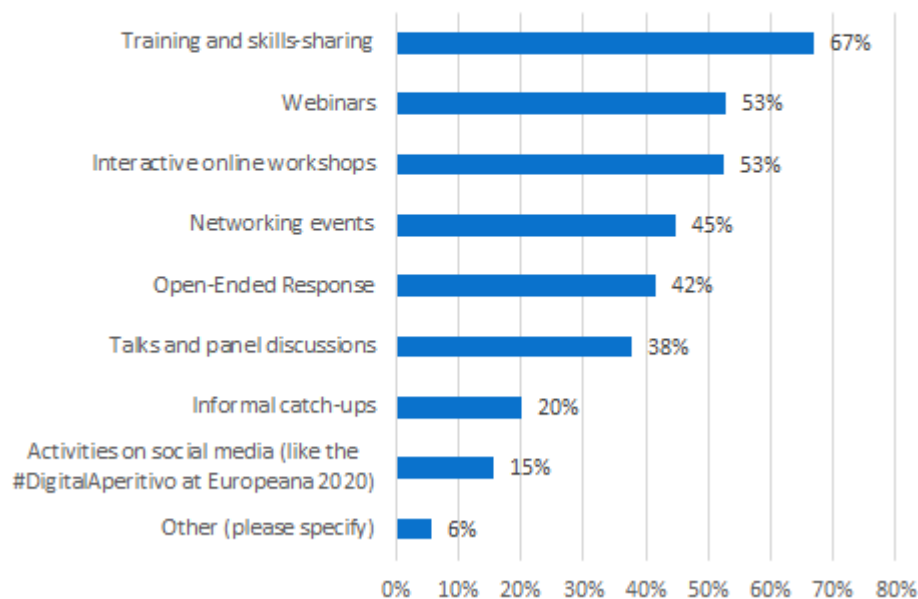


Figure 5. Types of activity that the Network would like to see organised in future.

Desire to build capacity through Network activities

The most commonly selected response to the question of what the Network should do more of was the result 'Training and skills-sharing' with 67% of respondents selecting this option. Webinars and workshops came next with 53% of respondents expressing a desire for each of these activities.

When asked how the Network could better support capacity-building for digital transformation in the sector, responses varied. The main themes emerging from the open text responses were as follows:

- Creation of case studies/training etc (16) and broader information sharing (10 responses)
- Work on inclusivity in terms of:
 - Multilingualism (3 responses)
 - Representation of underrepresented countries (1)
 - Wider geographic (e.g. non-EU reach) (4)
 - Supporting newer members, those with less experience (8)
 - Supporting BIPOC communities (1)
- Increase advocacy and showcasing of digital cultural heritage (10 responses) and support activity that occurs more at a national level (4 responses)
- Improve partnerships with education and research stakeholders (11 responses)
- Increase financial support and funding opportunities (6 responses)
- Increase the activity in the Network (5 responses)



Various open text responses suggest a need for hands-on activity and training, for example:

- *The AI sessions were good but you need to train people in Machine learning not just being passive viewers...*
- *provide more substantial and certificated training, like a 3 to 6-month course*
- *practical training on how to prepare collections (also AV) for educational purposes.*

Increase networking and collaboration opportunities

45% of respondents would like the Network to organise more networking events and 20% would like more informal catch-ups. When respondents were asked how the Network could best support capacity building, the theme of ‘convening the sector’ came out quite strongly (13 responses) in the open text responses, for example:

- *Create opportunities to share experience and skills among members*
- *Facilitate the networking between the members by a group in social media channel, by having access to members emails and any other formats and events that could contribute to the networking*
- *share contacts, meeting, convergence on projects*
- *promote exchange with other organizations*

Conclusions and recommendations

The Europeana Network Association is the interdisciplinary driving force of the Europeana Initiative and is made up of over 3,100 professionals interested in digital cultural heritage from Europe and beyond. The Network is made up of those with many years’ experience, with those with over 20 years’ experience most represented and students or those still in education least represented. The latter finding has implications for the work of the Membership Working Group and with regards to the delivery of the New Professionals Task Force recommendations.⁵

We are united by a shared mission to expand and improve access to Europe's digital cultural heritage. The Association is free to join and we encourage our members to get involved and benefit from all the ENA has to offer.⁶

For the second year in a row we were able to ask Network members about their level of interaction with the Network. Interactivity with the Network appeared to decrease between 2020 and 2021. For example, Network members are less likely to report that they recommend others to explore Europeana’s services or join the Network. There are encouraging signs, however, relating to a desire to be more involved. About a third of those who report not being very involved in the Network would like to be more involved. 55% of respondents suggested that they’d like to be more involved in the work of Network communities, Working Groups or Task Forces. In all, 12% of members report

⁵ Download the recommendations on Europeana Pro

<https://pro.europeana.eu/project/new-professionals>

⁶ <https://pro.europeana.eu/network-association/sign-up>



being very active in the Network - these respondents were most likely to be long-term members of 5-6 years.

The level of inactivity of many Network members may play a role in their level of satisfaction with their experience. 67% of members were either satisfied or completely satisfied with their Network experience, but 29% reported being neither dissatisfied or satisfied, perhaps reflecting a lack of engagement and activity.

At the same time, we see good signs that the Network has value for a member's work. 65% suggest that the Network has some importance for their daily work and 45% of respondents felt that the Network had value throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Somewhat incongruent with the reported decline in interactivity with the Network, we see a rise in all areas where we asked if the Network has value for its Members. Like in 2020, the Network has the most value in terms of staying up to date in terms of trends and best practice (a rise of 4%) and learning knowledge that can be used in their work (an increase of 6%). The rise in digital activity (e.g. webinars, online meetings) brought about by the pandemic may have attributed to an increase in Network members suggesting that they have extended their professional Network, rather than the anticipated decrease seen, for example, in the [impact assessment](#) of the online Europeana 2020 conference.

For the first time, we also learned that 8% of Network members suggest that Network membership has helped them to secure project funding. The Network, then, by convening the sector around digital heritage, has positive implications for the economic sustainability of heritage professionals in Europe. This connection, however, must be explored in more detail.

Going forward, however, it's clear that the Network is not needed for financial support alone - in fact, this wasn't referenced as often as expected in the open text responses. Rather, the majority of participants want the Network to be used as a channel for what we can define as capacity-building efforts, like, for example, offering *training and skills-sharing* (desired by 67% of respondents, with further open text responses emphasising the need for hands-on training), *webinars* (53%) and *interactive online workshops* (53%) and sharing case studies, advocacy and embracing a more inclusive approach.

Recommendations

- Efforts are needed to continue to build a Network that is welcoming and valuable for all of its participants. The Network should consider in particular how it can welcome early career professionals (students) and those who are new to the Network and perhaps less confident in digital cultural heritage.
- Cohort tracking (e.g. tracking new Network members over a longer period of time) might be time consuming but would provide valuable insights into the opportunities of how to increase engagement from the beginning of a professional's membership.



- Future satisfaction and impact studies could be separated into two separate activities, e.g. a questionnaire for all participants to ascertain the reporting metric of satisfaction coupled with a more qualitative study with randomised sampling.



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.

Three of the anticipated four 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. Phase three introduces tips and toops on how to build a narrative around your impact and take it to the audiences that need to see it. Phase four is in development (to be published by August 2022) and will focus on how to narrate impact findings and evaluate the process taken.


Download the Europeana Impact Playbook, find out more and join the Europeana Impact Community by going to impkt.tools!



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