

Making a big impact on a small budget

How the Livrustkammaren och Skoklosters slott med Stiftelsen Hallwylska museet (LSH) shared their collection with the world

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“We wanted the collection to be as open as possible. This felt like the right thing to do. With this in mind we picked the licenses that best fitted with our mission”¹

¹ Karin Nilsson during interview 12/11/2014

² See for example the Europeana Strategic Plan 2020 which incorporates numbers from the ENUMERATE survey.



Introduction

This is the second paper in a series of case studies developed by Europeana which explores the effects of cultural institutions making available their digital collections for anyone to use without any restrictions. Goal of these series is to describe the complete process of an institution opening up its collection. Here, not only technical and legal aspects are of importance, but also the internal debate and the decisions made.

In the last decade, more cultural institutions have started to make their digital collections available in an open way². Hundreds of institutions now provide access to millions of cultural objects and contribute greatly to a world where anybody has access to culture and knowledge without any restrictions. The reasons for doing this vary. Some institutions see it as their public mission, for example, and believe that it is the right thing to do. Others hope to enrich their collections by connecting them to those of other institutions. An argument that is often voiced is that making the collection available online in an open way can greatly increase the visibility of the collection and the institution to which it belongs.

Several great case studies have been written about this topic, for example by the GLAMwiki community³, which has collectively helped a number of institutions sharing their collection and raise awareness. However, most of these look at the results of the collaboration. Where are the images being used? How many times have they been accessed? While these cases are great in showing the impact of opening up the collection, they focus less on the internal processes of the institution before the collection was made available. Why did the institution decide to look into this in the first place? What was the response from the other departments and higher management? Was this part of a digital strategy?

For that reason we at Europeana have started to write this down in more detail in a series of whitepapers. The first paper was published in mid-2014, and focussed on the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands. Publishing their digital collection without restrictions has proven very successful, and they have gained international recognition with the Rijksstudio⁴. However, this case also received the criticism that most institutions could not copy this model. The Rijksmuseum was largely closed during this period, which gave them a lot of room to work on their online presence. It is also one of the most visited museums in the world and has a considerable amount of resources for digitisation, marketing and copyright clearance. These are all things that are lacking for most institutions around Europe. It would therefore be difficult to fully

² See for example the Europeana Strategic Plan 2020 which incorporates numbers from the ENUMERATE survey. <http://strategy2020.europeana.eu/>

³ See: https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/GLAM/Case_studies

⁴ <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio>



compare smaller and mid-size institutions with the Rijksmuseum, or to wholly copy their model.

For this reason, this paper looks at an institution with a lot smaller budget to investigate how they have worked with their digital collection using limited resources. The paper explores the preparation, the decisions taken, the process and the results. The aim of this paper is to serve as a useful example for smaller and mid-size institutions.

In addition to describing this process, this paper will also take a closer look at some of the copyright issues that had to be dealt with. The Rijksmuseum paper discusses situations where digitisation generates new copyright and the issue of how to deal with the digitisation of public domain material. This paper will continue from there and look at the difference between the generation of copyright between two- and three-dimensional objects.

For this case study we have worked with the Livrustkammaren och Skoklosters slott med Stiftelsen Hallwylska museet (LSH) in Sweden. The information is based largely on interviews being done with the head of department of Digital Resources and previous reports about their work. The full transcript of the interview with head of department Karin Nilsson can be found in annex 1.



Skokloster Castle, Sweden. By Marcinek (Own work) (CC BY-SA) via Wikimedia Commons.⁵

About the Institution

The Livrustkammaren och Skoklosters slott med Stiftelsen Hallwylska museet⁶ (LSH) is a state administrative authority in Sweden. It consists of three museums. The Livrustkammaren (The Royal Armoury), the Skoklosters Slott (The Skokloster Castle) and the Hallwylska museet (The Hallwyl museum). The three museums are all located in the Stockholm area, but are managed by one group of centralised staff.

There is a total of 50 staff members working for all three museums and this includes curators, administration and some guides. Their annual budget is around 7 million euros.⁷ This combines revenue from the entrance fee and the funding they receive. In 2014, the three museums welcomed a combined number of approximately 393,000

⁵ <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skoklosterslott666.JPG>

⁶ <http://lsh.se/en>

⁷ Taken from the Annual Report of 2014: http://lsh.se/sites/lsh.se/files/pdf/lsh_arsredovisning_2014.pdf (Swedish only)



visitors. The collection is quite diverse, largely because it comes from three different institutions. The Skoklosters Slott mostly holds items and artworks that were collected by the original owners of the castle, the Royal Armoury holds a collection of military history items and the Hallwyl museum has, alongside its large collections of art and antiquities, a collection of photo albums from the Hallwyl family's extensive travelling. LSH also has a library with around 19,000 books. The total number of physical objects of all three museums combined is about 90,000.

Like a lot of other museums⁸, they have started to digitise their collection. The museum has two photographers and, depending on the type of work, they can digitise one to a few hundred items a day. After that, the digital collections team adds the relevant metadata and everything is published to their server. Today, around 40,000 objects are available online and the museums expect to complete the process for the entire collection by around 2025.

The Open Image Archive

In 2012 the three museums were reorganised and a digital strategy was written for their digital archive. Out of this came the project proposal for what is called the 'Open Image Archive'. This was set up with the following goals:

- Expand the existing public web interface of the database with a new module in order to be able to display high resolution images. This interface would also include a function for downloading the high resolution image.
- Improve the metadata quality with, for example, key words for improved searchability, licence templates and information about photographers.
- Set up a server which allows the collection to be harvested by (amongst others) Swedish Open Cultural Heritage (SOCH) - the national aggregator of Sweden.
- Provide all images with a rights statement.
- Donate, where copyright allows, all high resolution images to Wikimedia Commons⁹, linking back to their own database.

The proposal for the Open Image Archive was submitted to Vinnova¹⁰, a Swedish fund for innovation, and was funded. The total project costs were 290,000 Swedish Crowns in total, which is about 31,000 euros.

⁸ Exact figures can be found in the ENUMERATE core survey 2
<http://www.enumerate.eu/fileadmin/ENUMERATE/documents/ENUMERATE-Digitisation-Survey-2014.pdf>

⁹ Wikimedia Commons homepage https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

¹⁰ <http://www.vinnova.se/en/About-VINNOVA/>



The preparation phase

Before the project actually started a lot of thought went into the question of how to deal with the intellectual property rights of the digital representation of the cultural objects. The discussion was initiated due to the proposed amendments of the Public Sector Information (PSI). The PSI-Directive¹¹ encourages European Member States to make as much information available for re-use as possible. It addresses material held by public sector bodies in the Member States, at national, regional and local levels, such as ministries, state agencies, municipalities, as well as organisations funded for the most part by, or under the control of, public authorities (e.g. meteorological institutes). The proposed amendments would make sure that publicly funded cultural memory institutions would also fall under the Directive, where in the past they were excluded, which means they were asked to make data created with public funding openly available for re-use¹².

This upcoming amendment was the reason the digital collection department started discussions about making available the images in an open¹³ way and how to do this in the best way possible. As the museums are publicly funded it was argued by them that it had to make the data that was created by the museum (both metadata and the digital content) freely available to anyone without restrictions where possible, or 'open by default'. This means that open is the standard, unless this is not possible due to still existing copyright protection on a work or if living people are depicted. It was also argued that proceeding in this way would best serve the core mission of the museums:

“Our mission is to preserve our collections and contribute to a living and accessible cultural heritage that improves our understanding of both the present day and our origins.”¹⁴

This discussion prompted them to write the proposal of the Open Image Archive project. The word 'Open' was very deliberately added to the title. The digital department was, at that point, convinced that doing things this way best contributed to their public mission; they just needed to convince other departments and higher management.¹⁵

¹¹ The European legislation on reuse of public sector information: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/european-legislation-reuse-public-sector-information>

¹² J. Pekel, J. Fallon & L. Kamenov. Topic report: Public Sector Information in Cultural Heritage Institutions. (01/06/2014). <http://www.epsiplatform.eu/content/public-sector-information-cultural-heritage-institutions>

¹³ The Open Definition: <http://opendefinition.org/>

¹⁴ Full mission statement of LSH can be found at: <http://lsh.se/en/about-us/mission>

¹⁵ In the case of the Rijksmuseum, a similar process took quite a long period of time. This was because the institution had several departments that needed to approve the plan to make available the highest quality content for free. The fact that the head of collections supported and pushed the plan greatly helped the Rijksmuseum to achieve this within two years.



The head of the three museums was convinced that the mission of a museum is to share their collection and knowledge. It was therefore relatively easy to bring the idea from the digital department to the other departments and, after a few meetings; they all agreed that the way forward was to be as open as possible. The argument that they had to do this because of the PSI Directive combined with a strong belief that everyone should be able to have access to the historical collections convinced the organisation to release their digital collection under open licenses, or dedicate them to the public domain where possible. The museum felt that they were 'doing the right thing' by giving the public access to all of their digital collection. LSH benefitted greatly from the fact that they did not have that many people working in the institution and they were able to move forward quickly with the material they had.

Image sale

The decision to open up the collection did have implications for some parts of the museum. Mostly, this related to the image sale service, as the museums would no longer charge for giving people access to the highest quality image. The image sale service had been around since LSH started their digitisation efforts in 2005. When it began, the requested fee mostly covered the costs of finding the image, putting it on a CD-ROM, and sending it to the person that requested it. Moving their collection to a database that can be accessed online would radically decrease these costs, but the museum still charged when high resolution images were given out. When the Open Image Archive started, they decided to stop doing this entirely. In a statement on their website it was announced:

*"Up until the launch of Open Image Archive, we distributed images manually, through an FTP server solution. Just like most museums, we used to charge the users for both reproduction and usage rights. In January 2012, LSH decided that the images should be made public and available free of charge both for non-commercial and commercial usage, since the images have been produced within the organization, they have already been paid for through taxes and thus belong to the public."*¹⁶

Another reason the museums chose to no longer charge for the digital images was the fact that this service had not been making a substantial profit up until that point. The money gained from the image sales did not cover the costs of the staff handling the requests. The requests for images were taken care of by a curator as there were no resources for a dedicated person to do this. The museums realised that their curators had more important things to do and decided to abandon the sale of images all together. Now, someone is only charged if they request an image of an object that has not yet been digitised. The charge is marginal and covers the cost of digitising the work in question. If the person can wait for three months for their request, they will get

¹⁶ <http://skoklosterslott.se/en/explore/open-image-archive>



it for free. After that, the work is made available as openly as possible for everyone to re-use.



Frans de Vriendt "Florís" – Pomona. 1564. (Public Domain). From the LSH website¹⁷

“The museums realised that their curators had more important things to do and decided to abandon the sale of images all together.”

¹⁷<http://emuseumplus.lsh.se/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=literature&objectId=86704&viewType=detailView>



Choosing the right license

After the project proposal was approved it was time for LSH to look at copyright questions in more detail. The intention was clear: to get as many people as possible in touch with their digital collection.

When looking at a collection, the works can roughly be divided in three categories:

1. The work is still in copyright and the institution is not the rights holder, or there are additional third party rights
2. The work is still in copyright and the institution is the rights holder
3. The work is out of copyright (public domain).

Within LSH, the vast majority of the collection is old enough to fall in the third category. This means that the museum can make available the digital objects without having to ask anybody for permission. To indicate that a work is in the public domain the museum uses the Creative Commons Public Domain mark¹⁸ on their website. This to make it absolutely clear to the user that the digital representation of the painting, teacup, gun, dress, or whatever other object it might be, can be used by anyone for any purpose without any restrictions.

Licensing of two and three dimensional works

Most of the physical objects in the museum are out of copyright so LSH did not have to ask permission of rights holders to publish. The next question that needed an answer was what happens when you take a picture of it? Can a person or institution that digitises a work claim copyright on that digital object? And if they can, should they do so?

This is a question that we at Europeana regularly deal with, and it is difficult to give one clear answer because of a number of reasons. First, there are different rules, regulations and exceptions in each European country when it comes to copyright and digitisation. This has been clearly demonstrated by the work that can be found on outofcopyright.eu done by Dutch think tank Kennisland, the Institute for Information Law (IViR) and the Bibliothèque nationale de Luxembourg (BnL) alongside Europeana. Here, a map of all rules and exceptions for each European country is presented, and no two countries share a similar system. This makes it impossible to come up with one public domain policy for digital content in a transnational project such as Europeana.

¹⁸ Full license can be found here: <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/>



The second reason is that there are different ways to digitise a work. In short this comes down to the questions of 'originality'. Did the person making the digital object put enough of his or her own creativity into the process to claim copyright? You can put a pile of paper into a scanner and it will digitise it automatically with little human involvement, so one can argue this required not a lot of creativity from the person putting the pile in the scanner. A photographer can take an object, adjust the lighting, and then take a picture from a certain angle, and arguably they have therefore had creative input and can claim copyright on the digital object, which is now a new work in itself.

Thomas Margoni, researcher at the Institute for Information Law in the Netherlands has recently published his research about the creation of copyright in the act of digitisation. His main question was:

“Do acts of digitisation of physical items create new copyright or related rights (e.g. non original photographs)?”

Here he distinguishes three types of digitisation

1. Automated reproduction/digitisation realised in absence (or negligible presence) of human intervention (e.g.: Google automatically scanning all books within an entire collection).
2. Reproduction operated by a specifically hired professional with the objective to realise high quality outputs (e.g.: photographer taking different shots in different light conditions to create high-resolution images to be made available on the institution's website).
3. Automated reproduction realised by a human operator (e.g.: human operator taking pictures/manually photocopying collections for inventory/classificatory purposes).

Margoni concludes that in case one - automated reproduction/digitisation - no new copyright is generated and in the second case there will always be new copyright generated. The third option is the most problematic and the rules differ for each European country. To see the complete results and a map of the situation in each country you can visit outofcopyright.eu.



RESULTS 1

IMAGE NUMBER
DIG 8383

KEYWORD/TITLE
Ring, Ringar, Guld

CATEGORY
Dräktillbehör | Smycken och prydnader | Ringar

MUSEUM
Livrustkammaren

[Add to Portfolio »](#)

[Ladda ned högupplöst bild »](#)

[Wikimedia commons »](#)

Bookmarkable URL
<http://emuseumplus.lsh.se/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInte>



Screenshot of the LSH website where a 3 dimensional object is shown. Besides the metadata there is also the rights statement (CC BY-SA) and a link to the Wikimedia Commons page.¹⁹

How LSH dealt with copyright

In the collection of the LSH museums there are both two- and three-dimensional objects and they each require a different approach when determining if copyright exists. Before thinking about these issues, LSH took the approach to first think about what they wanted to achieve with their collection, and then look at how copyright enables or is a barrier to achieving their goals. Because of their open approach they decided that material that is already in the public domain would remain in the public domain when digitised.

When looking at the research done by Margoni, it shows that Swedish copyright law protects works generated semi-automatically. In the case of LSH, all of their 2-dimensional objects were digitised in this way. This means in theory they would have the legal right to protect their works. Instead, they followed the Europeana Public Domain Charter²⁰ and made sure that scans of two dimensional public domain works would be in the public domain as well. This was to ensure maximum openness and clarity for the user.

¹⁹<http://emuseumplus.lsh.se/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=literature&objectId=91554&viewType=detailView>

²⁰ <http://pro.europeana.eu/publications/the-europeana-public-domain-charter>





More discussion was needed for their three dimensional objects. With these, a photographer would take the object, put it on display, adjust the lighting and take a picture of it. This would clearly fall into the second category that Margoni describes in his research and therefore generates new copyright. In order to make sure the digital content could still be used in an open way, the institution decided to release the images under Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license.²¹ This means that anybody is free to use the images for any purpose as long as the rights holder is properly attributed.

By choosing their digital strategy first, LSH did not have to think long about which licenses the images were going to be made available under. They made clear that they wanted their collection to be as open as possible and they then chose licenses that best fitted with their mission in consultation with a legal expert.

The results

During the Open Image Archive project, all goals of LSH were achieved. By the end, they had one database for all three collections, a new interface with the option to download images, vastly improved their metadata and the data was connected with other Swedish institutions via the Swedish aggregator SOCH. 40,000 images were also uploaded in the highest resolution (.TIFF) to Wikimedia Commons²² and the collection can be found in Europeana.

Before the Open Image Archive, the collection of LSH was not seen much outside of the institutional walls and Sweden. This radically changed once they decided to make it available under open licenses and make the material easily accessible. By working together with the active Wikipedia community, the pictures were quickly used in a wide variety of Wikipedia articles. Most are being used on the Swedish Wikipedia as many of the artworks are from Swedish artists, but they are also on a large number of other language versions such as English, Japanese, Russian, Dutch, Vietnamese and Thai. After the first upload in 2012, the BaGLAMa 2 tool²³ was activated in July 2013. This tool tracks the page view numbers for pages on Wikipedia (and other Wikimedia sites) containing their Wikimedia Commons files in a specific category. The tool shows that up to February 2015, the images have been seen nearly 5 million times.

²¹ <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

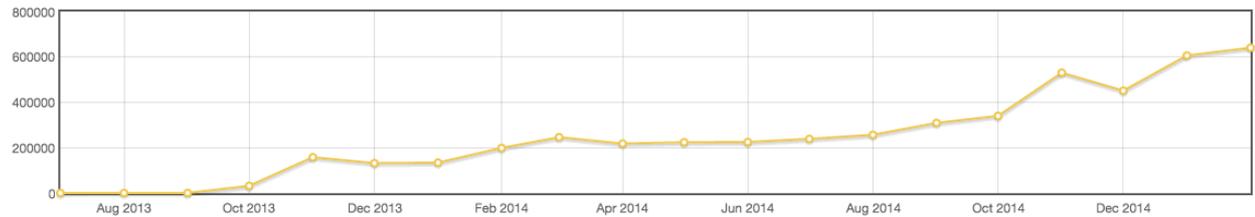
²² For an example see: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frukt_och_gr%C3%B6sakshandel._Pieter_Aertsen_-_Hallwylska_museet_-_86399.tif

²³ BaGLAMa shows you page view numbers for pages on Wikipedia (and other Wikimedia sites) containing Commons files in a specific category. <https://tools.wmflabs.org/glamtools/baglamma2/index.html#gid=36&month=201502>



Category details for Images from Livrustkammaren och Skoklosters slott med Stiftelsen Hallwylska museet

20 months have a data point, with 4,945,382 page views in total. Click on individual time points in the graph to see monthly data.



*Monthly views of LSH content on Wikipedia since July 2013. In November 2013 and 2014 they uploaded a next batch to Wikimedia which explains the increase that can be seen there.*²⁴

What the people at LSH are particularly pleased with and proud of is that their collection is being seen, for the first time, outside Sweden on a massive scale. For an organisation with a limited marketing budget they previously considered this not to be possible. They have acknowledged that their own website will never attract these numbers and, instead of trying to increase visitors to their own website, they have chosen to make use of platforms people already visit.

All the attention also had one other advantage - people started contacting them about errors in their metadata and suggested improvements. LSH set up an error page on Wikipedia where these suggestions can be made. They also indicate issues with copyright or when files are corrupt²⁵.

Overall the museum has been really happy with the outcomes of the Open Image Archive project. Not only have they been able to radically improve the quality of their dataset, they were also able to show their collection to an audience thought unimaginable. There is a strong sense of pride within the museum for 'doing the right thing'. This became even more pronounced when they received the 2014 MUSE award for the work they had been doing. This award recognises outstanding achievement in Galleries, Libraries, Archives or Museums (GLAM) media and is given out annually by the international Alliance Media & Technology Professional Network. Awarded are those institutions or independent producers who use digital media to enhance the GLAM experience and engage audiences.

²⁴ <https://tools.wmflabs.org/glamtools/baglama2/index.html#gid=36&month=201502>

²⁵ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:LSH/Error_reports



Lessons learned:

- Write a digital strategy before actually thinking about copyright. Describe your aims and goals and what you want to do with the digital material. This allows you to have a look at the possibilities of copyright, instead of it restricting your options.
- Review your metadata quality. With the millions of objects that can be found online an individual object easily gets lost. Make sure you provide accurate and meaningful descriptions and use finding aids where possible.
- You can start small. You don't need to have your entire collection digitised with perfect metadata. Take the part that is of good quality and see what you can do with it.
- Look for partnerships. There are many organisations and projects out there that are more than happy to help you share your collection far more widely than you would ever manage to alone.



About the author

Joris Pekel is the community coordinator cultural heritage at the Europeana Foundation. At Europeana he closely works together with memory institutions to open up cultural heritage data for everybody to enjoy and re-use. He is also coordinator of the OpenGLAM Network²⁶ that promotes free and open access to digital cultural heritage held by Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAMs) and brings together organisations, institutions and individuals that share this goal.²⁷

²⁶ <http://openglam.org>

²⁷ All his writings and publications can be found on <http://jorispekel.nl>



Annex 1. Interview with Karin Nilsson.

Hi Karin, welcome. Could you first tell me a bit about the institution?

We are three museums, but we have been an authority since 1978. In 2008 we started to work together. The Royal Armoury is regular museum. The castle is a museum in a castle, so is both the building and the collection. Same for the house Hallwyl. It is royalty, upper-class, novelty and posh things from rich families etc.

When did you start digitising?

In 2008 we started to work together and we realised we needed one structure for information. We had 6 different databases and then merged it all into one. We have 50 people working here together. The Rijksmuseum has about 1000 people on staff which is a huge difference so we can't manage that many different datasets and different databases.

So from then on, we started to structure our information and combine information about the objects, the historical event, the person that used the object and so on. For a long time we have had around 100,000 physical objects and we have been taking pictures of them, but not that many. Maybe one great picture a day at the most. In 2012 we reorganised the entire organisation and then we started the department of digital resources, and I am the head of that. After that, we started to work a lot with this area and on the Open Image Archive. That was a big thing that we did.

Was it the idea from the beginning to do this in an open way?

Yes, from when we did the reorganisation. Before that, we had the curators managing the image archive. People paid us for the use of the images. But during that reorganisation we realised that we needed the people doing this for other things. We basically didn't have anybody to do this work. We therefore thought it would be just so much easier if people could just use the images without asking us first. Then after half a year within this new organisation we applied for a fund from the innovation fund Vinnova. We got funding from them and we started all of this. The whole idea of it was to make the images as accessible as possible for people to be able to use and re-use them.

Were you making any profit out of selling the images when you did so?

No, never. We made around 100.000 Swedish Crown years ago, the year after 70.000, the year after 25.000. That, combined with the costs of the people doing it, did not make a profit at all. But we thought of it as a service to people to be able to use and access the images. And as we didn't have the technique to give people the



images without us sending it. In 2007 we would send it on cd-rom's because we couldn't share it otherwise.

Did you also use the money for digitisation?

No. We used the digitised collection we had already. We are still digitising at a slow pace. We have 1.5 fte for photographers and they do more than just digitising. They also work on the exhibitions and on the books and everything. So we don't have much time. But we made about 6000 new images of objects available last year. We used the funding to deliver Linked Open Data and deliver the data to SOCH, the Swedish National Aggregator.

We used it to improve the metadata quality and store the data in a better database. Then we developed the website so it allows you to search not only the collection, but also the image archive and gives people the option to download the image. And then we put 20,000 images with all the information and the links Wikimedia Commons.

How big is your collection?

91,000 objects with books, paintings, everything combined. One object in the database can be a table and 7 chairs that belong to each other. The goal for this year is to have 40,000 objects digitised. My prediction is that we are going to be able to digitise everything in 2025. We don't get new material added to the collection.

How many things do you have on display?

Almost everything. 99% or something. For books in the library, there are around 19,000 and we are still thinking how we can best digitise that collection. Skokloster Castle alone has 35,000 objects and when we started this digital department, only 900 of them had a digital image. So we thought we better start there. So we sometimes go there with the entire team and then we try to do everything of a particular type, so all the guns, or all the mugs, things like that. And then we help out so we carry material back and forth and also add the metadata right there.

It sounds like improving the metadata was one of the most important aspects of the project, which I think is really good.

We try to be as complete as possible right from the beginning, so during the process of digitisation we try to add as much as possible about the author the provenance, etc. So you don't need to add anything later which is always quite problematic and you just lose track of everything.

When the Open Image Archive was proposed, did everyone in your institution agree right from the start that it was a good idea?



(Laughing) I think I suggested it in the group of heads of departments of the museums, and for the first month or so, asked do you know about the new PSI-Directive that is upcoming? That means we have to give away our images as free for re-use. And they said 'ah all right, so we have to do something with this' and I responded with 'yes and I have a solution for that'. So we had agreement very quickly. So yeah I think that the thing that worked really well is that we are a really small organisation. It is very easy for me to communicate with my head of museums. Of course it has been difficult in that people found it hard to be able to use the licenses and were still struggling with using the licenses. It took us a while, for example, before the marketing department felt comfortable and used to using the licensing properly. But apart from that, I think that everyone has been quite proud of our work.

Did you publish the collection gradually, or in a big batch at once.

We published 40,000 images at once in March 2013. That is when we had developed the tool, the Ftp server, that allowed people to download the images from our server. But the hard part for that was the licensing we had to do before we could go live.

So how did you do that as a small institution? You are a pretty small organisation and probably not all of you have a legal background. Did you have external help, or got some training?

We made it quite easy for ourselves. We said that what is in the public domain should remain in the public domain and all the books, artworks and all other two dimensional objects would be labelled as public domain as our collection is old enough. And all the images that are taken by our photographers so three dimensional would be made available under an open Creative Commons license. I talked a lot about this with our colleagues here in Sweden and they asked "how can you do that, it is not according to Swedish law, etc.". Maybe it sounds extremely stupid, but I can't really imagine what would happen? I can't see any bad things happening to us. It would of course be different if we had artworks that are still in copyright, but we don't. Our collection is really old. Basically, it is all from the 17th century so it is in the public domain. After we talked about that for a while they understood and agreed with us. When you work in a museum you work for the public and they should be able to use our images.

Did you have any negative experiences after the release?

None. That is strange isn't it? The only people that are questioning it are actually colleagues from other museums.

So you didn't see people setting up their own shops for example?

No. None.



And what did you experience as positive results?

So we had positive experiences both inside and outside of the organisation. Inside the colleagues at our museum are really positive and think it is great. Obviously they see that we spend a lot of attention on the collection and that is always good for a museum. I haven't heard (or maybe they haven't told me...) anybody saying that this was a really bad idea. Outside the organisation, we got a lot of responses, mostly from researchers and students saying, wow this is great, why isn't it like this everywhere?

And now almost 2 years later, is there still this feeling of optimism within the organisation?

Yes, very much so. I think that it was in spring last year we got a gold medal from the American Alliance for Museums award for openness. After that I sent an email to all my colleagues saying 'hey we won!' and at 7 in the morning I received answers from almost everybody saying 'wow that is great, we are so proud!'

So the Rijksmuseum has been using their digital collection to raise more awareness about their physical collection and try to get more people to visit their museum. You probably have a smaller marketing budget. Did you find opening up had similar effects for you as a fairly small museum?

To be honest I don't know if we had more website hits, I should check that. Now the Rijksmuseum has about 10 million visitors a year and we are lucky to have 500.000 when we add up all three museums. [we checked and the website hits did increase. In 2012: 255 271 visitors, in 2013: 262 709 and in 2014: 302 865

Wikimedia Commons also allows you to track to some extent what happens with your collection. Do you keep track of that?

Yes this I know. When we started we just put all our images on Wikimedia Commons and we didn't do much with them such as linking them to articles or anything. We just said this is it and now we have to do something else. But the volunteers used our collection and now we can see a big increase in the amount of visitors using the tools provided by Wikimedia. And it is great. Now we have about 5 million visitors that looked at our images (number updated on 02/2015) in articles or on the Commons. For us as a really small organisation, over 5 million people that looked at our images...that is huge! That is the part that has really been most important for us. For the first time we can reach an audience outside of Sweden. Before this only a few of our masterpieces were known outside of Sweden, but now a lot more are known which is great.

What did the whole project actually cost you?



290,000 Swedish Crowns, which is about 31,000 euros, which is not a whole lot of money. This includes everything in the project, so the building of the ftp server, the search functionality and the tool that allowed our collection to be harvested by SOCH.

Do you give access to the full resolution images? Or is there an even higher quality version on your own servers?

We actually have made the highest quality we have available on Wikimedia Commons, and give access to a smaller image via our own server. We thought it would be easier this way as most people won't actually find their way to our website and we can't do anything about that. But a lot of people will find their way to Wikipedia, and Wikimedia told us that it would be fine to have the really high resolution. So we thought it would be better to have them there. They also automatically are made available in different resolutions and finally it saves us a lot of bandwidth on our own server. We provide the link to the jpeg on our own website and have added a link for people who want the super high resolution. This will bring them to the image on Wikimedia Commons.

Another reason for doing this is that we hope that other institutions will add information to our dataset. We have for example in the Royal Armoury, the horse of one of the Swedish Kings from the battle in Lützen. In the dataset we have the king, we have the horse, and we have the historical event and obviously it would be great if other institutions add their information about this event and connect it with each other. SOCH has developed an interface called Kringla that allows for this. With this you can combine the information and use the URI's from the objects to make those connections. We also add links to Wikipedia articles in the data by saying this `IsDescribedBy:` and then the link to the Wiki article. So it is all there and people can use it. We also invite other users to help with this. There is an incredible amount of knowledge out there that the institutions don't have and it would be great if we can all benefit from that.

Has the project ended now?

We keep adding images to Wikimedia Commons. This year this will be about 6,000 images and we are planning to add a new batch once every year.

And how do you do the upload?

We work closely with somebody from the Swedish Wikimedia chapter. He has been a great help.

Thanks for the nice talk Karin

Thanks!