



europæana
think culture

'We transform the world with culture'

Europeana Strategy 2015-2020

Acknowledgements

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- Rijksmuseum for the Stonehenge picture. (Public Domain)
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Introduction

Europeana started 5 years ago as a big political idea to unite Europe through culture by making our heritage available to all for work, learning or pleasure. A deeply felt belief that our shared cultural heritage fundamentally belongs to all of us, and is therefore too important to leave to market forces alone to digitise and make available. We still believe in this big idea. We are Europeana, the network for the cultural heritage sector in Europe, and we think we are in a unique position to make these ideals come true. We are expanding our network with thousands of cultural institutions, politicians, tech entrepreneurs, open data activists, developers and researchers all with one thing in common: a shared dream of a world where every citizen will have access to all cultural heritage. We transform the world with culture.

We have come a long way in a short time. In 5 years, we built an infrastructure that connects more than 30 million (33.9) objects from over 2,500 institutions. From the Rijksmuseum to the Institut Cartografic de Catalunya and from the British Library to the National Audiovisual Institute in Warsaw, we have made all the descriptive data available under the most open licensing conditions. And we have started experimenting with the creative re-use of that material through hackathons, in co-creation spaces and apps like Open Culture.

In the meantime, the world around us has changed. The ubiquity of smart phones and tablet computers is a significant new challenge. It is now not good enough to deliver scant detail or low quality images; we need to serve carefully curated content designed to work with today and tomorrow's technology. Our vision is an infrastructure that connects Europe's culture digitally in the same way that roads and railways do physically. A laboratory that innovates for our new world using the richness of our past. We need a backbone that allows us to store, to access, to improve and to share. A place where copyright is respected, but ease of use is the mantra. We need to become the cultural innovators servicing the holders of cultural heritage and the users in equal measure.

We have investigated thoroughly how to best achieve this. We have spent over 6 months talking with the best and brightest in our network to understand what is going well, and what needs to be improved. We understand that we



need to make it easier to participate and that it needs to become clearer what the rewards are. We know that we need to continue to provide the catalyst to improve the way we can access our heritage. We know we need to improve the quality of the data we make available to the world. We think we have developed a plan that will take us into the future and we invite you to join us.

Allez Culture!



Nick Poole,

Chair of the Europeana Network
(CEO Collections Trust)



Bruno Racine,

Chair of the Board of the Europeana Foundation
(Président de la Bibliothèque nationale de France)



Jill Cousins,

Executive Director Europeana Foundation



Who we are

We believe that culture can transform lives

We are a network, representing more than 2,500 cultural heritage organisations and a thousand individuals from these and other walks of life, passionate about bringing Europe's vast wealth of cultural heritage to the world. We believe that doing so will unlock untold economic and societal benefits, transforming lives in the process. Culture unites Europe, and making it more accessible promotes understanding and new economies.



To help us achieve this and keep us focused, Europeana is shaped by three working principles. They sum up everything we do and what matters to us.

Usable

We believe culture is a catalyst for social and economic change. But that's only possible if it's readily usable and easily accessible for people to build with, build on and share. We are on a mission to unlock Europe's cultural heritage, harnessing technology to help people make new things and pass them on.

Mutual

We are a network, a partnership of connected organisations - from cultural institutions to commercial software developers. We can make an impact on the world because together, we're greater than the sum of our parts. We believe in the power of creative collaboration and teamwork, working towards common goals and for mutual benefit, fostering innovation and new working practices.

Reliable

We represent the cultural organisations that have safeguarded our heritage for hundreds of years. Who have organised it, structured it and made it accessible with great care and precision. We are committed to ensuring that our digital data is always authentic, trustworthy and robust, that it's easy to create with and that our network partners benefit from sharing it.

We call all of this cultural innovation. We use it to improve the status quo of society, to transform people's lives and through them, the world.

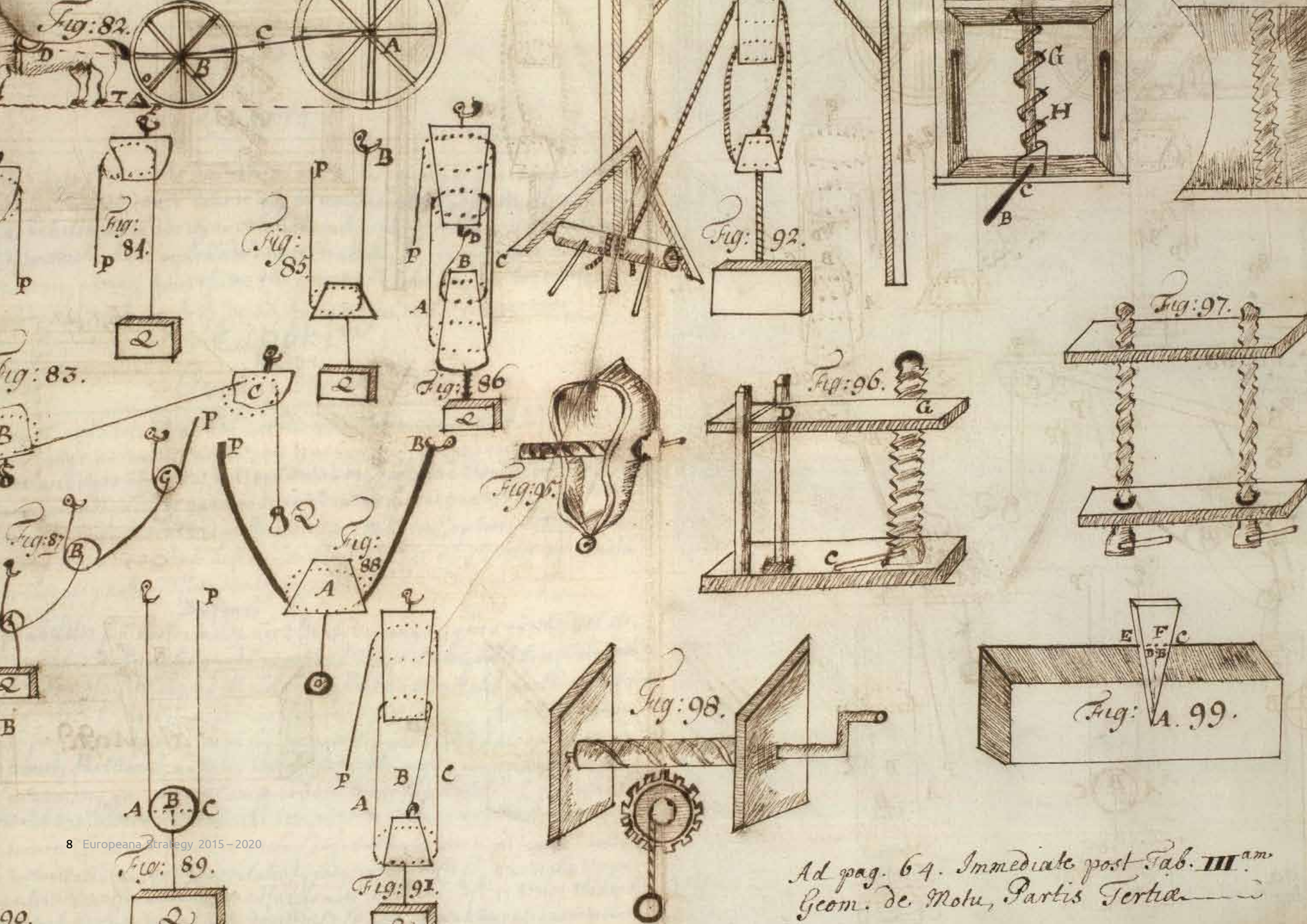


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What we do

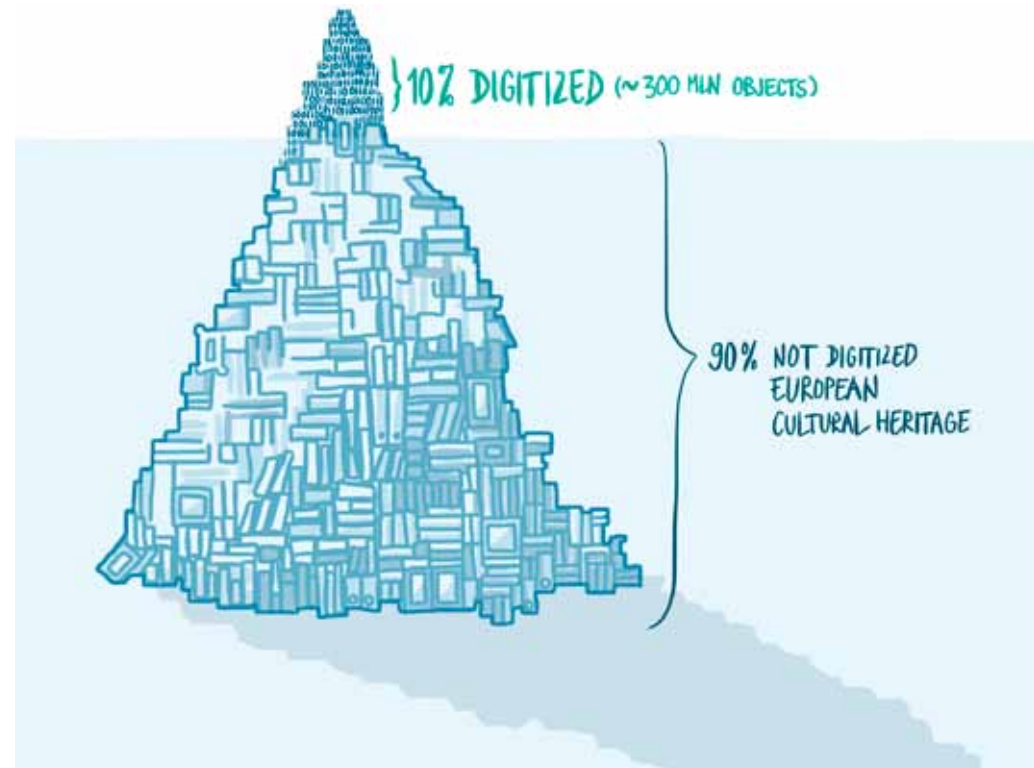
What's been achieved so far?

Digital heritage plays a crucial role in developing a deeper understanding of ourselves and of each other and it can help fuel a booming creative economy. But this can only happen when it is digitally available under appropriate licensing conditions and when it is brought to life using interoperable, standardised metadata. We are a long way from harnessing everything - in fact 90% of our heritage has not yet been digitised. We will continue to work with cultural institutions and Member States to try to tackle the rest. In the meantime, we should focus on making the digitised 10% more usable for work, learning and pleasure.

This digitally available 10% represents an astonishing 300 million objects, reflecting the many facets of European culture captured in books, paintings, letters, photographs, sound and moving image. Only one third of that (34%) is currently available online, and barely 3% of that works for real creative re-use (for example in social media, via APIs, for mash-ups, etc.).

We believe that if we can make this material available online, and preferably in open formats, we'll start to see the benefits for society and the economy.

We have a shared responsibility for making this happen and we will support our memory institutions, to help them open up their collections as widely as possible. By developing standards, by embracing new technology, by changing copyright, by developing new business models.



‘The dark matter of the internet is open, social, peer-to-peer and read-write’

Michael Peter Edson



We have worked together for the past 5 years to collect and create structured information (metadata) about the objects held in our combined collections. We've developed data standards to make that information interoperable on the web using the Europeana Data Model, and we have agreed to share that information as widely as possible by applying the Creative Commons Public Domain Mark. We've made all this data available through a single interface, www.europeana.eu. At the same time, we have started to engage users very personally in their shared history through collection days across Europe, www.europeana1914-1918 (the largest repository of personal stories about the First World War) and www.europeana1989. We think these are incredible and inspiring achievements. Yet there is still a long way to go.

From portal to platform

To continue our success, we need to reconsider our initial aim of building a single access digital museum, library and archive for Europe – a place where you're invited to look back at the great achievements of the past. We still believe that this is a good idea, but technology allows us to do so much more and we have to work much harder to meet rising user expectations. People want to re-use and play with the material, to interact with others and participate in creating something new. To enable this, we need to build a bigger set of high quality material and a shared infrastructure that enables re-use and creates value for all stakeholders. We need to start behaving like a platform - a place not only to visit, but also to build on, play in and create with.

A 'Multi-sided Platform' is one of the prevailing business models of the internet economy. It creates value by facilitating interaction between two or more distinct, but interdependent groups. As such, the platform is of value to one group of customers only if the other groups are sharing the experience. A good example is a platform such as Airbnb, that brings together people who are looking for a place to stay with people who have apartments for rent.

Europeana is well-positioned to be this platform for cultural heritage, a cultural innovator that brings together people and businesses who want to view, use and re-use heritage, and people and organisations who have heritage to share.

To keep it simple to manage, welcoming to use and intelligently dynamic, we have designed a three-level structure for this platform:

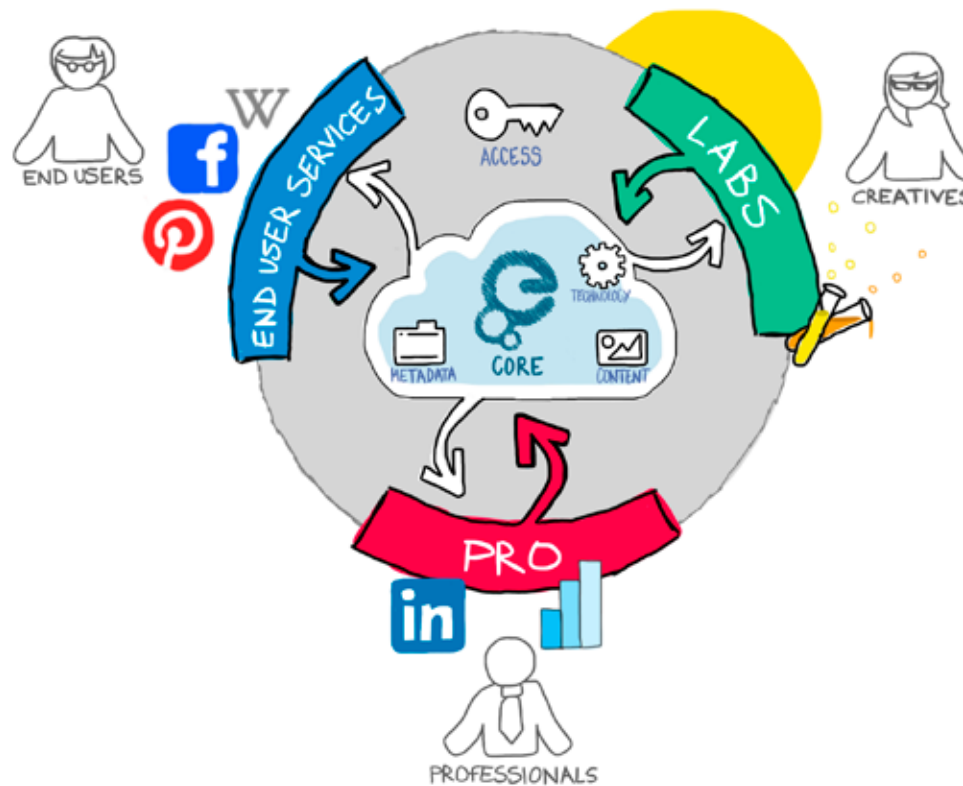
A **Core** where we collect the data, content and technology.

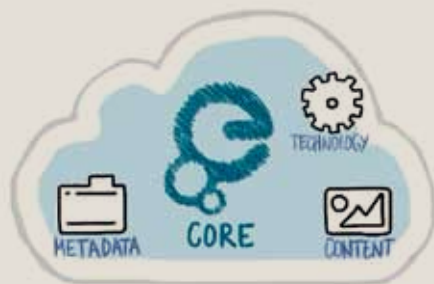
An **Access** level where we standardise and enrich the core, define the rules of engagement and provide the interfaces for access.

And a **Service** level, where we develop tailored user experiences for our 3 customer groups: **Professionals, End-Users and Creatives.**

'Portals are for visiting, platforms are for building on'

Tim Sherratt, Trove





Core

The core is where we store and manage cultural assets and metadata with open source technology for use by all. Currently containing over 30 million metadata records, covering all [28 Member States](#) and [EFTA countries](#) and every cultural domain, it is a unique and visionary achievement, one we are very proud to make available to the world.

You might be thinking, 'So what? I can find this material elsewhere on the web via [Google](#), [Flickr](#) or [Pinterest](#).' True, but what's unique about our repository is that our metadata describes the original material, authenticated by reliable, sector experts. Our aim is to become the largest trusted repository of cultural heritage in Europe as research tells us this is what users want - unobstructed access to credible, quality material. But to do this well, we need to step up our game.

- We need to make sure that the links from the metadata always lead directly to the original items and not to webpages that describe the material in languages that the user may not understand.
- We need to make use of emerging technology to permit our cultural heritage organisations to store their digital assets in cheaper, more accessible forms. We must make immediately clear what you can do with this material and that the rights information is both human and machine-readable.
- We need to continue to invest in structures such as [Linked Open Data](#) to make the data fit for the future.

This leads to the first priority of our new strategic plan.

Priority # 1 Improve data quality

To do this, it needs to be more attractive for institutions to share their very best material. We must continue to be inclusive with a low threshold for entry so that everyone who wants to, can participate, even with little time or money to spare. We will also develop an infrastructure that allows the surfacing of higher quality material with more [open licensing conditions](#) to service end-users and creatives better, resulting in corresponding higher returns for the contributing partners. We will innovate and transform the aggregation process, moving away from linear data delivery into a central repository towards a distributive, technology-driven architecture giving unobstructed access to the digital objects, according to the conditions applied by the rights holders. This will allow us to triple the amount of material available through Europeana while, most importantly, also making it more fit for purpose.

'We can have centuries of culture in our pockets. On our phones, on our computers. What we do with it is down to our own curiosity'

Georgi Gospodinov, writer

Access

The second layer of our platform deals with access to the material: 'how can I access it', 'what can I do with it', 'what am I allowed to do with it', and 'what do you want in return'? Because trust is such an important part of our offer, we consider this a crucial component of our platform activity - a 'Commons' or place where we have agreed upon the rules of engagement. A lot of the material that institutions want to make available is locked up because of copyright restrictions. Or bound by policies and business models that restrict wider accessibility. Or it is simply not in a data format structured enough to allow broad distribution via, for example, [Linked Open Data](#). We need to work together to find solutions for this and we can best do this on a pan-European scale. Which is where priority number 2 will help:

'Ecosystems only survive if you deliver more value than you capture'

Tim O'Reilly



Services

Making high quality material available under favourable conditions is a great start, but it is not enough when you operate in an innovative space where demand is not yet fully established. This requires an additional level of effort, a much deeper level of involvement to bring the potential of the material to fruition: highly curated special interest channels for foodies, for fashionistas, for historians. We need co-creation formats, creative labs, business model workshops and access to capital for creative entrepreneurs. Detailed statistics, better tools, cost reductions, and knowledge sharing for contributing partners. We know we have limited resources and that it will be impossible to be both broad and deep. So we want to be the incubator of great ideas, to develop demonstrators and then leave it to others to take this further. This is the third level of the platform. The three market sectors we want to service are:

Priority # 2 Open the data

We are committed to making our partners' data more openly accessible so that it may be viewed, and re-used within its copyright. We will work with our contributing partners and policy-makers in Europe to make all digitised Public Domain material freely available for re-use without any restrictions. We will lobby to have the principles established in the Europeana Public Domain Charter and the New Renaissance Report applied to all publicly funded digitisation projects in Europe. We will also support our partners in making content that is not subject to third party rights openly available. We want to be a voice for publicly accessible libraries, museums and archives and their users and to make sure that their interests are properly represented at the European level during the upcoming copyright review. Most importantly, we wish to use open metadata to open up access to out-of-commerce and in-copyright cultural heritage so that more users can find it.

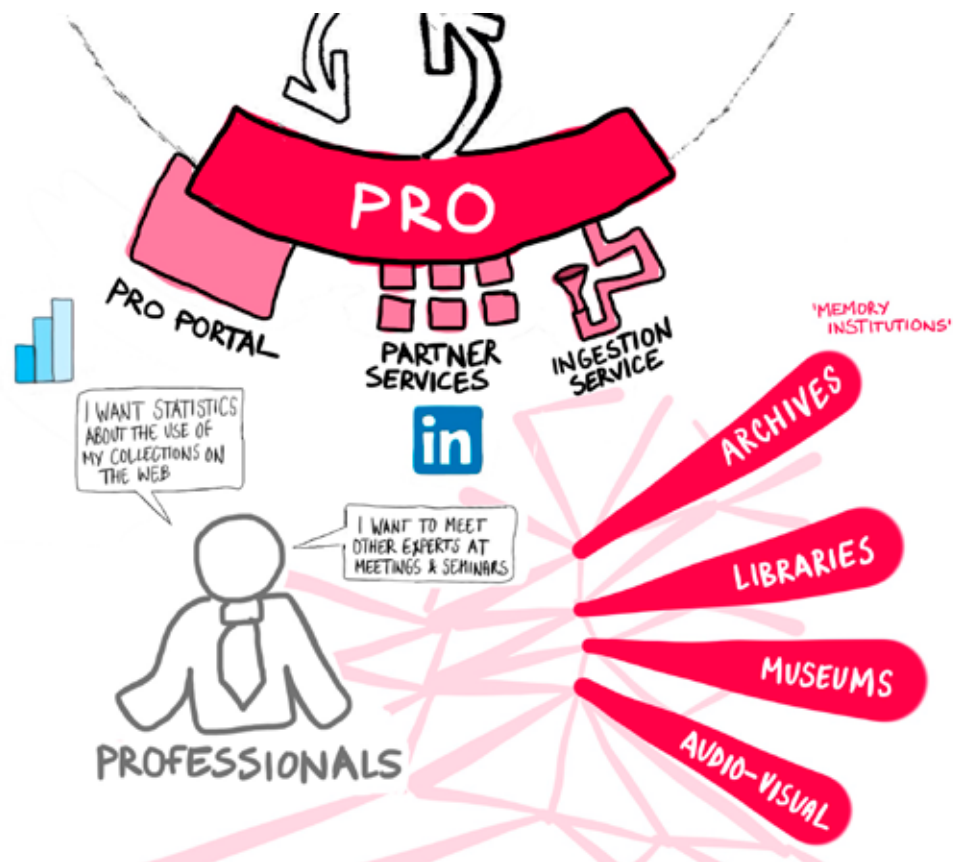
We will continue to invest in R&D so that your heritage is made available in a wide range of languages. We want to become the first port of call whenever you are looking for cultural heritage, for authentic and trusted content that's ready for use and re-use.

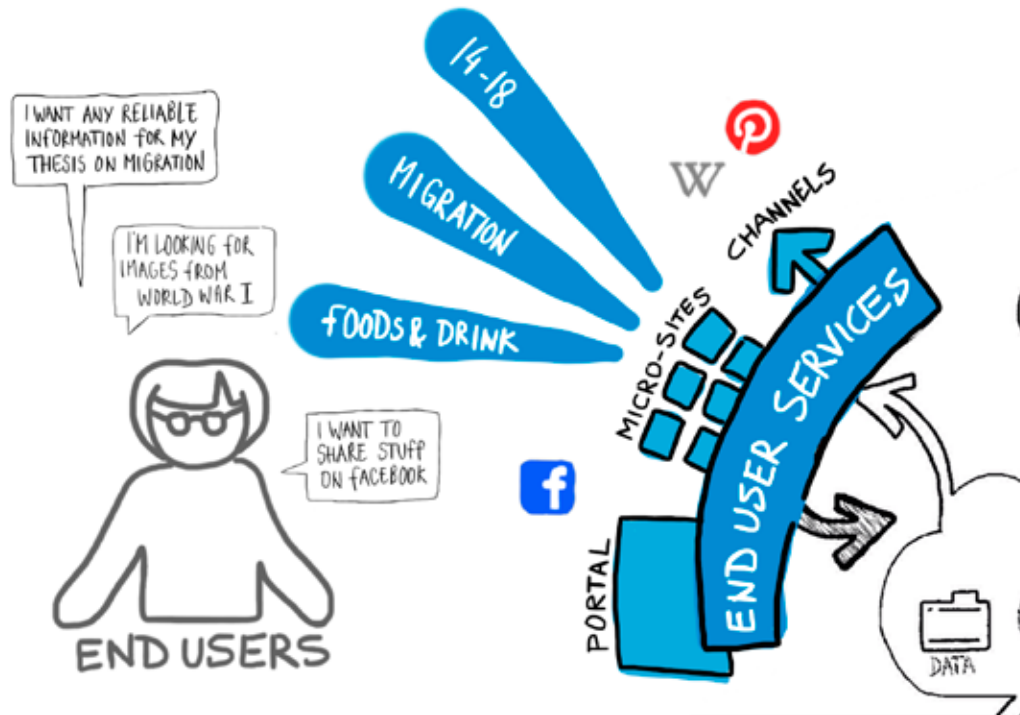
**'Europeana should be the incubator,
where great ideas are developed'**

Lizzy Jongma, Rijksmuseum

Professionals

Contributing partners - the cultural institutions who digitise and share collections - are the lifeblood of Europeana. We hope to increase the current 2,500 to 10 times that number. This means improving our professional service mechanisms: by providing easier ways to participate; better statistics to track visibility and more opportunities to develop projects and business with partners. This final point is particularly relevant for smaller institutions with limited resources. To this end, there are new publishing tools for Wikimedia, and Europeana Pro is being revamped to make our main interface a respected and accessible knowledge exchange platform. In the next couple of years, we hope to completely transform the aggregation process by building on our cloud infrastructure.





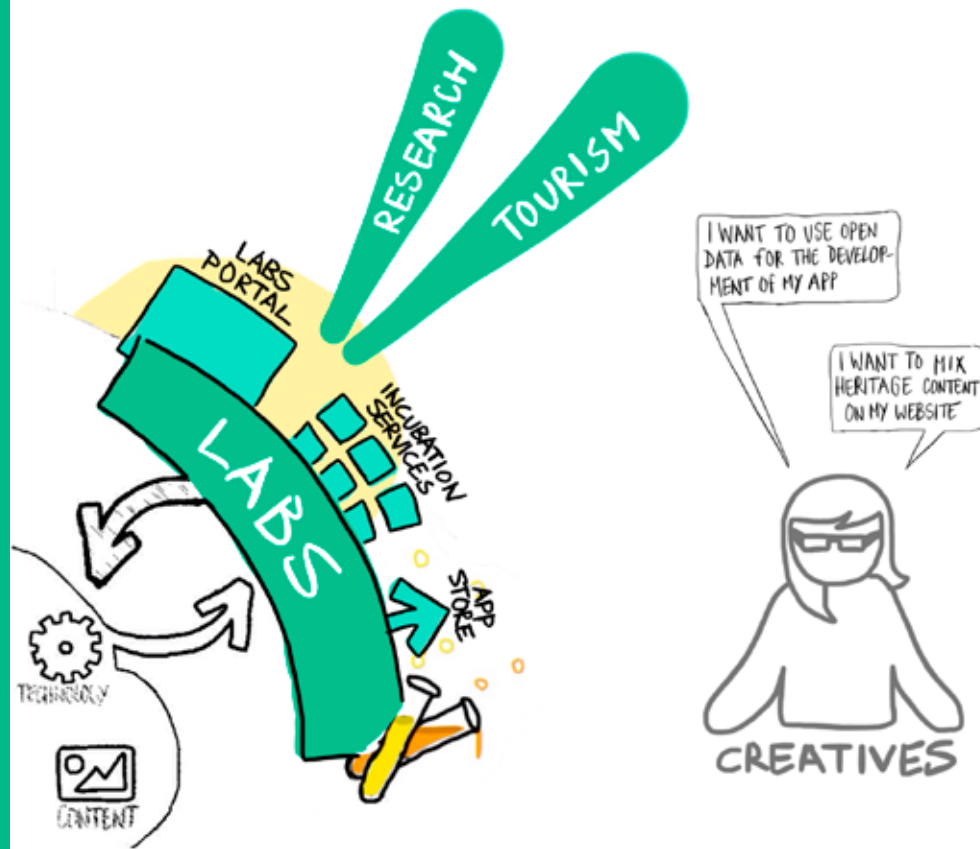
End-users

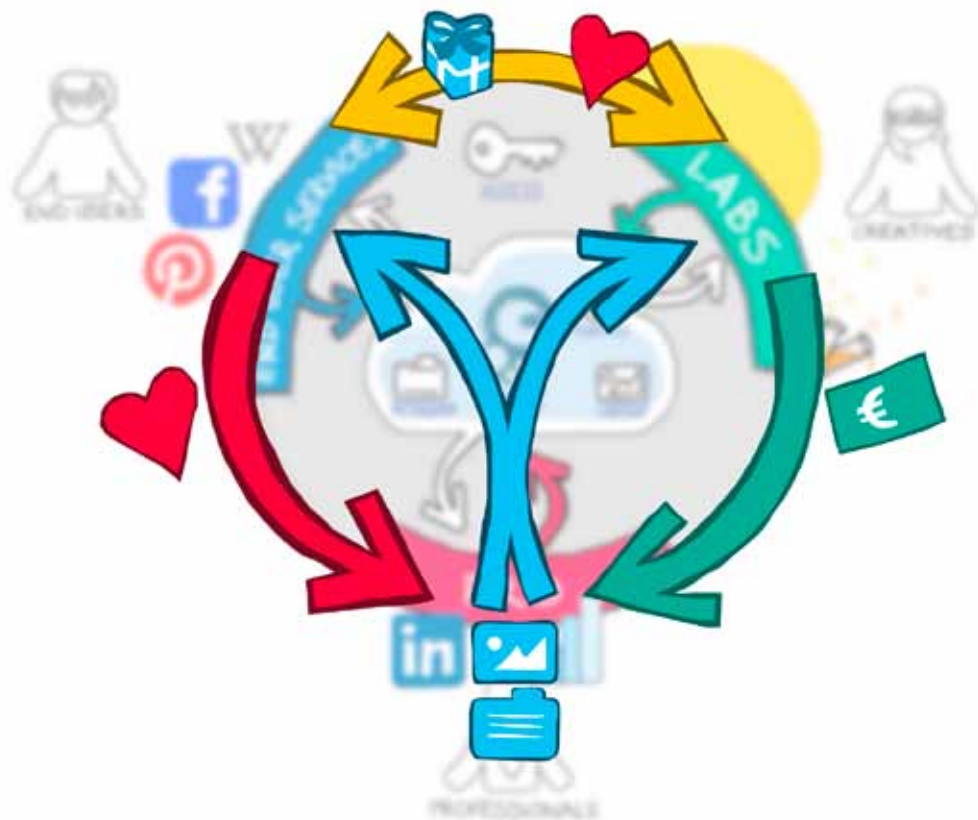
The change in technology has changed user expectations and we need to catch up to be able to build the ultimate library, museum and archive of Europe. A place where you can find everything you ever wanted to know about European culture, from early Renaissance paintings to the [letters of Vincent van Gogh](#) to his brother. We believe we can build this together over time. The first step is building high quality micro-sites on big pan-European themes, such as [1914-1918](#) and [1989](#). Or migration. Or Art Nouveau. We believe that we need to think big, but start small by engaging with active communities who are deeply connected to specific fields of interest, and who can and will help.

We also want to reach people through the channels they are already familiar with such as Wikipedia and Pinterest. We want to use social media so that our heritage becomes part of popular discourse, integral to the school curricula, to the digital humanities research, in fact relevant to everyone's lives.

Creatives

Our third customer group is made up of the developers and entrepreneurs who come up with the new ideas and applications – collectively known as the ‘creative industries’. This part of the economy currently represents 3.3% of the European GDP and we believe Europeana can help to fuel more growth. With ready access to our cultural heritage, this group will use it to develop new services to attract tourists to Europe, inspire new business ideas, create new jobs and find completely new ways to interpret our past. Making the digital material from our memory institutions available to this group in a useful way is difficult and not uncontested. The demands these professionals make are often high. They need guaranteed stable service levels and access to re-usable, high quality content. They long for collaborative platforms that give them greater latitude and space to think. That’s why we have developed Europeana Labs as an interface for this customer group. We will continue to evolve and improve our co-creation physical and virtual spaces and increase our incubation capability so that we meet their growing needs and expectations.





Priority # 3 Create value for partners

We believe that it's our duty to nurture a space of shared interest, a 'Commons' that we can hand over to future generations. We can only manage this by being generous to each other and by finding ways to let value flow in all directions through the system. We will work hard so that people can find rousing cultural references however they like. So that memory institutions get the visibility, cost reductions and return they deserve from tapping into a shared infrastructure. And so that creatives can invigorate our economy with innovative ideas and new businesses.

Why this is good for you

So why is this good for you, as a citizen, a creative, a cultural professional? We have carried out qualitative research and sought insight from established consultancy firms to calculate our expected economic impact and the investment required to make it happen. We have analysed our log files and cross-referenced them with user behaviour. This has given valuable insight into where we can expect positive effects, or 'impact' from our actions. We now know that we are most effective when we take the lead in organising solutions that concern a large part of the sector – such as copyright. And also, when we use our reach to develop big pan-European themes such as Europeana 1914-1918.

A culturally connected Europe is a better Europe

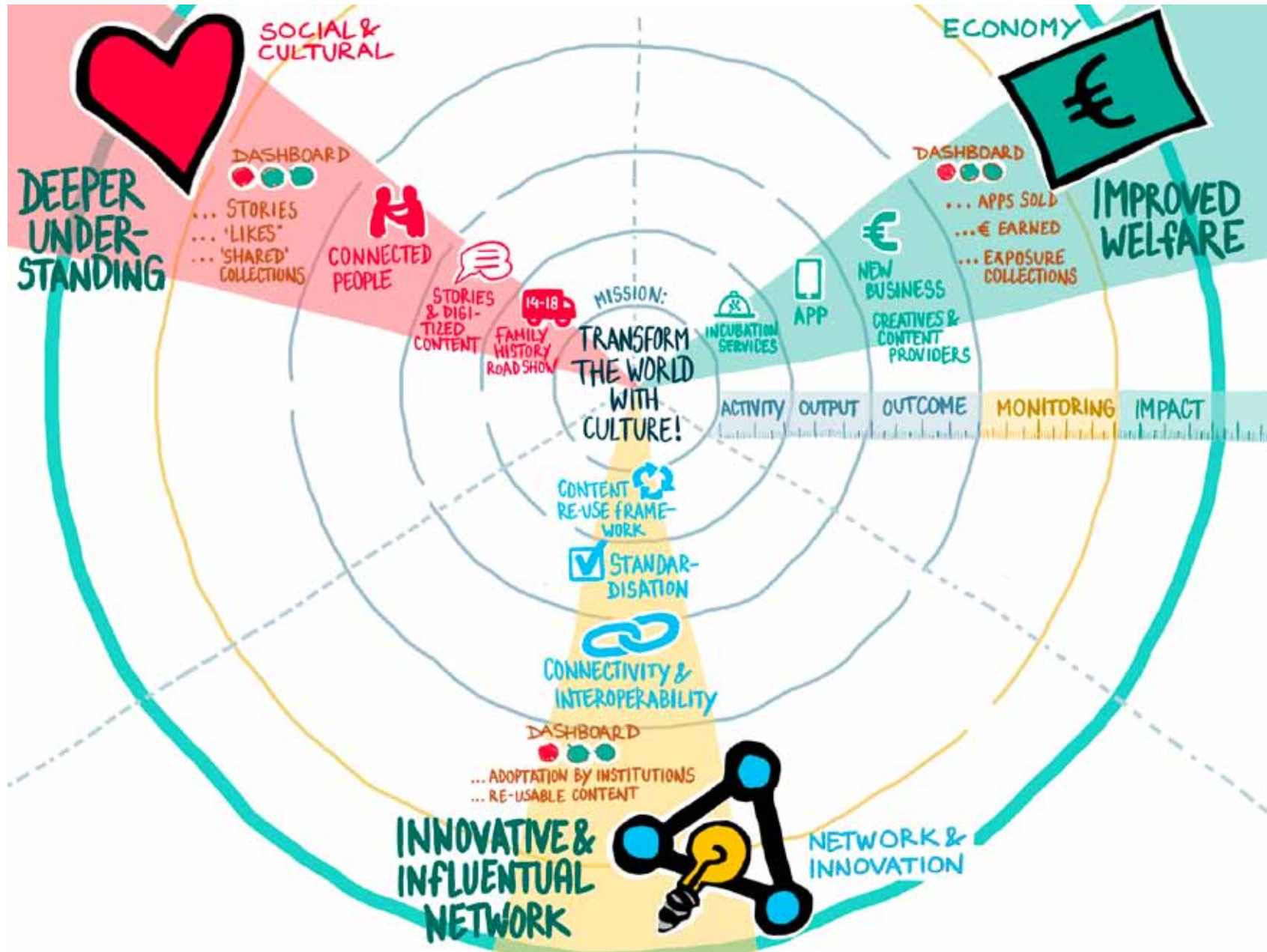
The largest economic contribution expected from Europeana is likely to be in uplifting tourism numbers and research quality. We also know that the education sector is excited about the material we have digitised and the imaginative potential it unlocks. Bearing all that in mind, it is difficult to base our investment decisions on directly measurable economic outcomes. That's why we have settled on a framework that takes a balanced view on success and is firmly rooted in our mission and values.



'If Europeana can help us do the things we do better, cheaper and faster - that would be enormously valuable'

Lucie Burgess, British Library

This 'Balanced Value Impact Model' was developed by Simon Tanner at King's College, and has proved to be a very helpful way to guide our actions. In particular, the model challenges us to think beyond the measurable, direct output of our activities. All too often, we underestimate our influence by only looking at what is happening right outside our door, instead of what occurs beyond our immediate reach, where the impact may be much greater. For example, we need to understand that the visits to the website are just one measure of impact. That's because it is likely that many other



people will be experiencing our heritage in more familiar places - Wikipedia for example, where people have shared it.

Our Task Force of experts says that success should be measured by the balanced impact we have in 3 key areas:

1. What have we contributed to a deeper social and cultural understanding of ourselves?
2. What have we contributed to our collective economic welfare in a fair and sustainable way?
3. What have we done to improve the strengths and influence of our network so that we are better equipped to meet the challenges that lie ahead?

The answers to these questions will vary year on year, dependent on what needs to be done. We want to establish what we should measure and how we should measure it year on year, thinking about performance indicators like: 'how many objects in Europeana comply with the new re-use framework', 'how much exposure have we been able to realise for our partners' collections', and 'how many institutions have implemented the new data model standard'? Always ambitious, always SMART. One constant however will be our determination to make all key stakeholders and partners feel that something meaningful has been achieved.

► **More information:** ['Europeana Strategy 2020 - IMPACT'](#)



How we are going to finance this

End-users need to have free and unobstructed access to their heritage. This is a fundamental principle for us. So the Europeana Network doesn't believe in cluttering that space with advertising or in investing in image licensing infrastructures. Developing services that people really love will yield their returns in different ways. Awareness and attention is a valuable payback for partners, as are co-creation projects that lower costs for institutions and create new revenue streams. But inevitably someone needs to pick up the tab.

Europeana provides innovation, interoperability and access on a grand scale. We are a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to make our heritage widely available for everyone. The business model therefore acknowledges the value that we can provide for each stakeholder group with a corresponding return.

Logically, as we are doing this on a European scale with the largest proportion of benefits enjoyed within our continent, the project is primarily the responsibility of the European Union. Europeana will therefore be substantially funded through the new financial instrument of the EU, the

Partners	Activities	Value proposition	Relation	Clients
European Commission	End-user Creative Partner services	Free & Open	Engaged	End Users
	Resources	Innovation	Channel	Cultural Inst.
	50 FTE + Network	Easy & reliable	Platform	Member States
		R&D		Creatives
				EC
Costs		Benefits		
10 million euro/year EF + Network		① attention ③ project funding ② service fee ④ revenue		

Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). But due to severe budget cuts in this framework, from 9 billion to 1 billion, all services funded under CEF are being asked to develop their own sustainability plans, or diversify their income streams.

► [More information: 'Europeana Strategy 2020 - Network and Sustainability'](#)

Partners become co-owners

We will therefore seek other ways of supporting the platform financially. On the 'supply' side, to sustain ourselves in the future, we invite partners to become investors; co-owners of Europeana. As this is not cost effective, or indeed fair, on an individual institution basis we will seek these strategic investment partnerships at the Member State level. These investors will get access to premium services in the Europeana Cloud that allow them to move quickly from their legacy systems, share their data and content in ways that will improve the reach, data quality, and efficiency for institutions.

Consumers become customers

On the 'demand' side, we will invest in a commercial arm whose task will be to generate revenue to subsidise the activities of the Europeana Network. Obviously this should not interfere with our commitment to open sharing, but as cultural innovators we should not shy away from commercial activities where appropriate. In fact, we believe it is good to develop a more entrepreneurial spirit. This could include consultancy services, such as the development and nurturing of digital libraries in other parts of the world, the creation of new products such as electronic books, or cultural tourism microsites for travel companies.

We become more efficient

We believe we can run a successful core service for approximately €10 million a year. This is less than one third of what Europeana and the related projects had to spend on average over the past 5 years, but we are in a different position now and must work more efficiently than in the past. This amount covers a significant part of the

aggregation infrastructure, run by partner organisations who are currently also dependant on central EU funding; the technical shared cloud infrastructure, the employees of the Europeana office and everything we need to operate as a distributed, networked organisation.

► [More information: 'Europeana Strategy 2020 - Network & Sustainability'](#)

How will we govern the new Europeana?

In order to guide and govern under the new strategy, the Europeana Network is reviewing the management and accountability of Europeana. We want a more transparently democratic organisation, with representation of its members on a Board that can make a difference in this new environment.

We will create a new structure whereby Europeana is the Network. It will have responsibility for electing a Members' Council to run the Task Forces and work to achieve our goals. They will also appoint at least half of the Board, who will then appoint the other half from industry, creative and entrepreneurial backgrounds. The Board will be responsible for the legal and financial management and the strategic direction of the organisation, but remain under the auspices of the Network. An executive arm will serve the needs of the Europeana organisation, reporting to the Board and assisting the Network.

'We need to transition from an office of 50 to a movement of 5,000'.

Nick Poole, Collections Trust

A word of thanks

Europeana is an expansive, ambitious and complex organisation and we realise this can sometimes make it hard to understand. Simplifying our strategy, making it as accessible and inspiring as possible, has been a collaborative task, with a programme of workshops, strategic discussions and creative exercises designed to gather rich input and ideas from many quarters. Your insights, critical remarks, drawings and videos have been truly inspirational.

