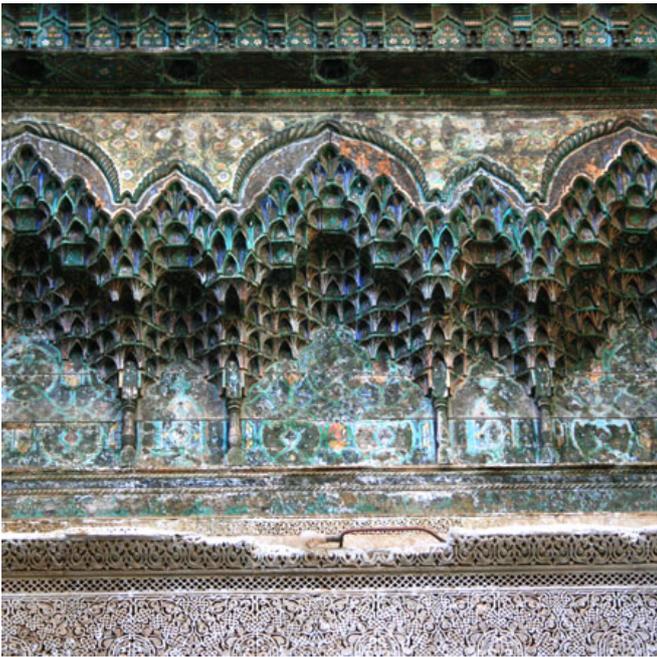


DIGITAL MEETS HERITAGE



Heritage generally refers to something inherited from the past. The word has several different senses, including natural heritage, food heritage, tradition.. but what these pages will be focused on is ? of course - **Cultural Heritage, in other words the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible values which have to be transmitted to future generations.**

Archaeological sites and monuments represent the most visible aspect of cultural heritage, while smaller objects such as books, artworks and other cultural items are collected in museums, archives and libraries, which are also known with expressive term of ?Memory Institutions?.



Heritage, however, is not only the traces of past society and past times, but includes also the evidence of the present ones, which has to be passed down to our progeny, too. Therefore, also the contemporary heritage has to be treated accordingly, just like the ancient monuments or centuries-old paintings.

Cultural heritage is unique and irreplaceable, and the current generation holds the responsibility of preserving it for future generations' benefit.

The deliberate act of keeping cultural heritage from the present for the future is known as preservation, and the **digital technologies**

offer new modern tools for cultural heritage preservation; they also play a leading role about key issues as providing access, interaction and sharing knowledge.



Furthermore, our society is unlike before accumulating a large amount of **born-digital heritage**, especially documents, art-works, softwares, and the Web itself: keeping them for the future generation raises a specific range of demanding matters related to the preservation of the digital heritage. For example, a CD-ROM has unfortunately a shorter life than the Egyptian papyrus: how to guarantee to the stored data a long-lasting future?

Worldwide, preservation - both the preservation of tangible heritage through the digital technologies and the preservation of the digital cultural content - is felt as a matter of the highest importance, being so strictly connected to the true essence of the human culture.



Archives, libraries and museums in the past years have faced demanding challenges as the need of raising competences about digital technologies and opportunities, and the unavoidable matter of developing cooperation with each other in order to reach a smart integration of the information systems. A methodological and coordinated approach to digitization involves many other actors as academies, researcher centres, national and local institutions, private companies, to support properly this on-going process. Last, but definitely not least, digital technologies represent the future of cultural heritage not only for preservation intended as a Memory Institutions' concern, but also as a **device the community will benefit from:**

by providing a **growing and open access** for investigating and/or general purposes related to cultural heritage: to researchers, students and teachers, impaired people, and users in general

by enhancing the **interaction** with every user, thus enhancing a deeper intellectual enjoyment of cultural heritage

by developing new and challenging **learning resources** which will improve knowledge in all senses



This section **DIGITALMEETSHERITAGE** collects articles and information about projects and initiatives for the **digitization and access to the digital cultural heritages all over the world**. We aim to **give visibility to the institutions** which work for preservation, **to companies** which develop tools and problem solving, **to users** who get benefit or gratification from digital cultural heritage. And this is also ?shared knowledge?!