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User Engagement and Digital Cultural Heritage: Reflecting on the Kaleidoscope Project





The project 50s in Europe Kaleidoscope was concluded in February 2020. The project explored user engagement with digital cultural heritage by focusing on archival photographs related to the project theme ?1950s in Europe'.

Digital Tools

Kaleidoscope gathered user-experience feedback on two tools: the WithCrowd annotation tool and the Visual Similarity Search. The Visual Similarity Search draws on deep learning techniques enabling the linking of resources/images based on visual similarity. Both tools propose innovations in digital exhibition methods by using participatory approaches.

Content Collection and Curation

Digital storytelling was used as a strategy to engage stakeholders via a project exhibition entitled ?Blue Skies, Red Panic'. The exhibition was realized in various forms: as a travelling exhibition touring cities in Europe including: Pisa, Girona, Antwerp, and Berlin; and as a virtual exhibition showcased on Europeana.eu. The process of sourcing and sharing heritage photographs aimed to enhance the digital collections, increase user interaction, and explore innovations in curatorial practice.

Focus Groups and Workshops

During the Kaleidoscope project a number of events were organised by the consortium. Focus groups and workshops reached target audiences of cultural heritage professionals, academic researchers, students, artists and local citizens. The memories workshop in Girona entitled ?Family Photo Talks' used oral history as a co-creative methodology. The Crowdsourcing workshop in Athens invited participants to contribute to the Kaleidoscope annotation campaigns focused on the themes of 1950s Style and Design and 1950s Transport and Travel. While the Rephotography workshop in Coventry focused on repeat photography as a way of engaging users with ?then' (1950s) and ?now'.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

The projects educational focus has created an international outreach, which extends beyond the lifecycle of the project. Kaleidoscope collaborated with the Culture Moves team to develop the MOOC ?Creating a Digital Cultural Heritage Community'. Modules include a core module introducing user engagement theory, and modules focused on photography and museums. The MOOC currently (May 2020) has 2,035 registered users and is still open for enrolments.

For more information look at:

Impact and Future Exploitation Report

Photoconsortium webpage