

eInfrastructure – the Cultural Heritage perspective

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Opportunities

- The cultural heritage sector has invested millions of Euro in converting knowledge in analogue format into digital format
- 83% of Europe's cultural heritage institutions have active digitisation programmes
- Roughly 20% of collections have been digitised (with very significant variances between professional communities)
- 34% of Europe's cultural heritage community have or are part of a Digitisation Strategy
- 23% of Europe's cultural heritage community operate under a Digital Preservation policy (note: very considerable variances between museums, archives, AV and libraries)

Challenges

- The value chain is broken – cultural heritage institutions do not see how publishing large datasets contributes to their success model
- The chain of understanding is broken – very few cultural heritage institutions would recognise the term ‘eInfrastructures’
- The business model is broken – institutions can easily see the cost of data provision, but the benefit is unquantified (and that was in the *good* times – now the economics are much more acute)
- The technical model is broken – the technical (and legal!) approaches to e-infrastructures tends to normalise when every data source is different

Looking ahead

- Large-scale aggregations/digital libraries represent a point of failure
- Interrogating/preserving large datasets is hard + relatively little value flows back to the institution
- We're applying digital value propositions to organisations that are still 80% analogue
- Big Data, semantics and massively distributed/open API offer scalable technical solutions
- These solutions still miss the human element – motivation. Any project which presumes people are motivated will not succeed

Suggestions

- Deliver value at ground-level to individual cultural institutions
- Stop articulating e-infrastructure as a 'centralised system' and start presenting it as a distributed service (eg. The Cloud)
- Focus more on collaboration and joint value and less on open access as a value proposition or theoretical ideal
- Develop consistent, reliable metrics which make the flow of value real
- Acknowledge that institutions work at different speeds & help them develop their facility with data-sharing

Data

Evidence, metrics and data-gathering methodology available from:

<http://www.enumerate.eu>

Thankyou!

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