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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