

Measuring the benefits of civic participation in academic research

CitizenHeritage

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In a nutshell

The main premise is that coordinated knowledge generation within HEIs can serve for sustainable community participation in furthering engagement with cultural heritage.

Benefits can be measured in:

Social terms: effects of engagement with cultural activities

Economic terms: capitalization on the resources available

Beneficiaries: HEIs, citizens, heritage institutions



Citizens and HEIs

The role of HEIs in society is to support knowledge-driven economic growth strategies and poverty reduction by:

- (1) training a qualified and adaptable labour force,
- (2) generating new knowledge, and
- (3) building the capacity to access existing stores of global knowledge and to adapt that knowledge to local use.

Bassett (2010)



First evidence

We ran two *online* events to improved metadata annotations on images in Europeana with university students in:

Sofia: 'History in Pictures from Bulgaria'

Digital humanities students (21) with collections from the University of Sofia from NIALIS.
Resulted in 2369+3095 contributions to 680 photographs from 4 collections.

Budapest: 'Facts and Fiction: Hungary in black and white photographs'

Digital humanities and film history students (13) from the Media and communication departments from the Pazmany Peter Catholic University with collections from the National Library.

Resulted in 538+549 contributions to 516 photographs from 3 collections.

Beneficiaries

HEIs:

- HEIs collaborated with international colleagues (KULeuven, EUR)
- Staff and students became familiar with local digital collections available online
- Staff and students learnt the crowdsourcing process
- Students engaged in methodological decisions

Citizens:

- Citizens were exposed to local heritage content
- Citizens improve their digital literacy

Institutions:

- CHIs reached new audiences
- CHIs gained metadata annotations

Previous models



UCL Museum Wellbeing Measures Toolkit



Authors
Dr Linda J Thomson & Dr Helen J Chatterjee



Measuring Well-being
A guide for practitioners



Social benefits

Benefits are associated with feelings of well-being, made up of self trust, and perceived happiness, as well as feeling the sense of belonging.

Participants enjoyed the event (4.5/5)

Positive experiences lead to greater desire to participate in the future.

The majority of participants (22) found the content related to things that have 'high emotional value', while some were not so emotionally attached (9).

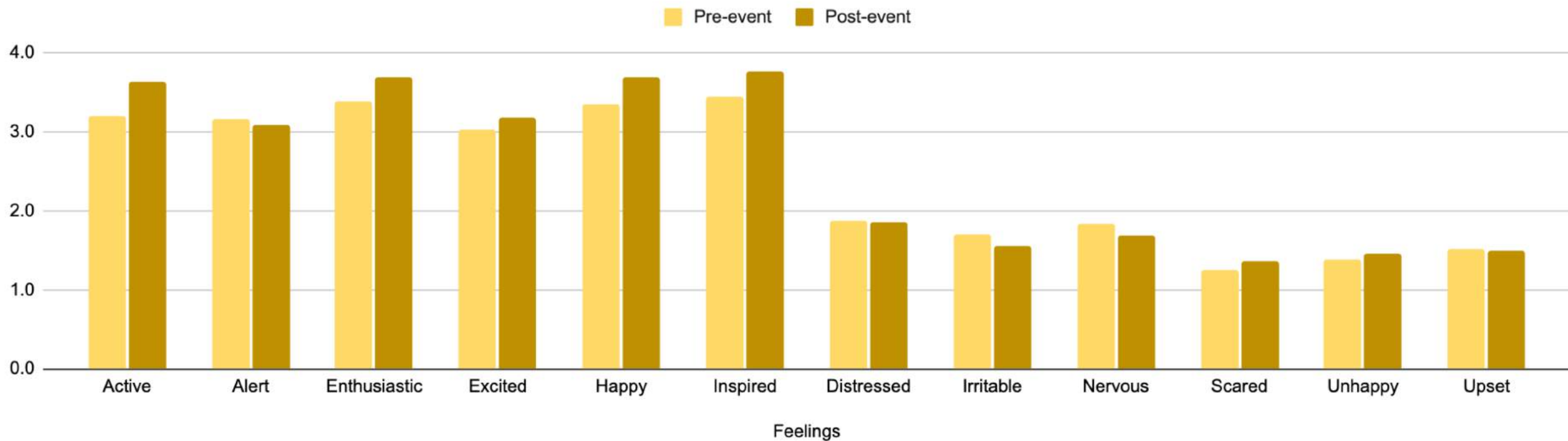
The selection of the images was meant to inspire regional identity.

Social benefits

On average, the positive feelings had a slight increase 3.3 → 3.5

While the negative feelings remained the same 1.6 → 1.6

Pre-event and Post-event





Economic benefits

The **reuse** of past investment is essential for a sustainable economy, particularly in times of (post)crisis. Digitization has required many resources and endured effort, yet collections remained unused. Greater reuse generates new **value** to the collections (and the consumption environment).

We reused materials, know-how, and infrastructures in place.

- 1,196 digitized photographs used as core materials for the activity
- Portal used for crowdsourcing activities
- Experienced staff led the activities (with experience also online!)



Economic benefits

The costs of digitization are largely associated with labour costs, particularly to increase findability through relevant metadata. Annotations to the 1,196 photographs represent staff time that can be allocated towards other activities by tapping into external **labour**.

We generated new annotations that reflect a population not always associated with consumption of black and white historic photographs, generating new (capture) **markets** with potential for repeat consumption.

We transferred and generated new **knowledge**, supporting the social role of HEIs.



Future research

We continue the clean up and analysis process, and will gather further data from physical workshops to compare experiences.

So far the workshops are one-time only. We anticipate a long-term relation to develop with collaborating HEIs.

We will run a follow-up survey to capture if participants have a different view on heritage collections or changes in heritage consumption in half a year.

We seek to find new perspectives on the synergy between HEIs and the heritage to generate value, advance research, and surely gain new future heritage lovers.