

## **IST 2004 Event – Networking Session N 72**

**Den Haag, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/istevent/2004/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/istevent/2004/index_en.htm)

### **Results and Experiences in digitizing and accessing cultural and scientific resources**

The networking session on “Digitizing and Accessing Cultural and Scientific Resources” was one of approximately 70 networking sessions that took place during the IST 2004 Event between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 2004. It was accepted among almost 160 proposals for such sessions and was attended by about 35 persons. The session was organized and coordinated by Vittore Casarosa, from ISTI, an institute of the Italian National research Council, on behalf of the “Digitization Cluster”. A number of projects funded under the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Program, addressing the digitization of, and access to, cultural and scientific resources have joined an informal cluster to share experiences and coordinate their dissemination activities. The cluster also addresses national environments to capture the results of research programmes and encourage industry involvement. Please see below for more information on the cluster.

The session briefly presented some of the results of the cluster and its projects, with the aim of opening a dialogue with organizations interested in joining some of the cluster projects. The program of the session was the following, which unfortunately left very little time for discussions.

***Digital memory preservation and long-term sustainability of digital archives, presented by Maurizio Lunghi (independent consultant, m.lunghi@culturalheritage.it).***

Attention to and coordination of digital memory preservation must be raised by the policy-makers at all levels, by administrative and national authorities, by the cultural institutions, by the research community. After the initial resolution “Council Resolution on preserving tomorrow’s memory - preserving digital content for future generations”, the Commission has given a strong impulse to the development of a coordination framework, introducing the vision of a ‘European Continuum of Digital Heritage’ that could be accessed any time from any place by all European citizens. A National Representatives Group (NRG) was established, which first defined a “Lund Action Plan”, dealing with digitization standards and best practices, and which is now broadening the scope of the plan, based on past experience and results, to include not only the digitisation issue but also the preservation or persistency of digital memory.

***BRICKS: some experiences in managing an Integrated Project for Digital Culture***

*(<http://www.brickscommunity.org>), presented by Francesco Nucci (Engineering SpA, francesco.nucci@eng.it).*

BRICKS is an Integrated Project for Cultural heritage Access, it aims at establishing the organisation and technology foundations of a Digital Library at the level of European Digital Memory. A “digital library“ in this context refers to a networked system of services over globally available collections of multimedia digital documents, providing a variety of knowledge layers for a variety of users and access modalities. The presentation described some of the first project results,

stressing the experiences in eliciting user needs and in aggregating an open community around a Digital Cultural Peer2Peer Network

**DELOS: Building the next generation Digital Libraries** (<http://www.delos.info/>), presented by Vittore Casarosa (ISTI-CNR, [casarosa@isti.cnr.it](mailto:casarosa@isti.cnr.it)).

DELOS is an FP6 Network of Excellence, whose main objective is to integrate and coordinate ongoing research of the major European research teams in the field of digital libraries. In this frame DELOS recently conducted a brainstorming workshop to identify some of the research issues that could help the development of the next generation of digital libraries. The main conclusions of the workshop were presented.

To fulfill their new role as universal knowledge infrastructures, Digital Libraries are pushing the technology front in several important new directions. In particular, future Digital Libraries will be developed in a user-centered fashion, offering diverse and unique experiences to their users. Furthermore, they will not be mere passive repositories of society's information and knowledge, but will incorporate functionality that facilitates collaboration, communication, and information creation. Finally, they will be created on top of generic Digital Library Management Systems, which will already provide all the basic system infrastructures, focusing only on the particularities of their individual environments.

**ICT and tangible cultural heritage - the role of EPOCH NoE** (<http://www.epoch-net.org/>), presented by Franco Niccolucci (PIN- University of Florence, [niccolucci@unifi.it](mailto:niccolucci@unifi.it)).

EPOCH is an FP6 NoE involving a large consortium of leading European institutions on ICT applications to tangible cultural heritage. Its activities cover all aspects of such applications. EPOCH has as yet produced showcases improving the confidence of culture professional and managers in the potential of IT, promoting new partnerships and projects. EPOCH has also produced significant technological contributions, and the awareness of the peculiarity of IT cultural applications has greatly enhanced inter-disciplinarity. Spreading excellence has been based on providing training and mobility opportunities, augmented by a successful Marie-Curie training project submitted by a group of EPOCH partners.

**MINERVA: a Ministerial Network for valorising activities in digitisation of cultural heritage** (<http://www.minervaeurope.org/>), presented by Antonella Fresa (Promoter snc, [fresa@promoter.it](mailto:fresa@promoter.it)).

MINERVA network was created by EU Member States, with the international participation of Israel and Russia. It runs the operations of the NRG, the group of the national representatives officially nominated by the 25 Ministries of Culture in Europe, established to enhance the digital diffusion of European cultural heritage.

MINERVA tangible result is a common European platform of standards and guidelines, to create digital cultural content and interoperable cultural portals, offering easy access for all. Cooperation of MINERVA with other EU projects has a twofold benefit: to reinforce the impact of the MINERVA results enlarging its audience and to receive input from the research and industrial communities about forefront technologies.

**Prestospace: Preservation towards storage and access. Standardised Practices for Audiovisual Contents in Europe** (<http://www.prestospace.org/>), presented by Werner HAAS (Joanneum Research, [werner.haas@joanneum.at](mailto:werner.haas@joanneum.at)).

The project's objective is to provide technical solutions and integrated systems for digital preservation of all types of audiovisual collections. The project intends to provide tangible results in the domain of preservation, restoration, storage and archive management, content description, delivery and access. Economic factors supporting preservation services are being addressed. The principal aim is to prepare the way for preservation factories providing affordable services to all kinds of collection custodians in order to manage and to allow access to their assets. During the first

year some preliminary results have already been obtained in the areas of user requirements, preservation, restoration, storage and archive management, media access and delivery.

In the framework of the IST program (both under FP5 and FP6), the European Commission has funded a number of projects related to digitisation of and access to cultural and scientific resources. Practically all the funded projects have joined an informal “cluster”, to encourage exchange of experiences and promotion of good practice and results. More specifically, the objectives of the cluster can be divided into two main groups:

- benefits to the cluster projects, such as sharing of knowledge, common dissemination activities, promotion of the cluster results, increased impact on industry and target communities, etc.;
- extension of the cluster activities, mostly directed towards the national environments, both for research programmes and industry involvement; the NRG (National Representative Group) established by MINERVA could be the main avenue to achieve those extensions.

Some of the participants in the cluster (namely, BRICKS, DELOS, EPOCH, MINERVA, PRESTOSPACE) have taken the initiative to organize this session, with the aim of briefly presenting the results of the cluster and its projects, and to open a dialog with potential new members that would be interested in joining some of the cluster projects. Many of the projects have started the planning process for the next period, and this would be the right point in time to establish new contacts and to start discussions for cooperation in 2005.

## **The Digitization cluster**

In the framework of the IST program (both under FP5 and FP6), the European Commission has funded a number of projects related to digitisation of and access to cultural and scientific resources. Practically all the funded projects have joined an informal “cluster”, to encourage exchange of experiences and promotion of good practice and results. More specifically, the objectives of the cluster can be divided into two main groups:

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In the coordination framework, the Spanish Presidency started the initiative with the Council Resolution on “Preserving tomorrow’s memory - preserving digital content for future generations”. Following Presidencies carried on, with the workshop launched by the Greek Presidency on “Digitization of Cultural Content”, held in Corfu on 28 June 2003, followed by the Italian Presidency with the meeting of cultural networks, held in Rome on 30 October 2003 (see <http://www.minervaeurope.org/events.htm>), and finally with the “Meeting of Culture Networks and Projects”, held in Florence on 31 March 2004, organized by the MINERVA project, under the auspices of the European Commission. As a follow-up of that conference an expert workgroup was established and it approved the “Firenze agenda”, a document with some preliminary actions that the workgroup set up as priorities for its activity.

The Netherlands Presidency has given a strong impulse to the development of a coordination framework introducing the vision of a European Continuum of Digital Heritage that could be accessed any time from any place by all European citizens. In particular, the Netherlands

Presidency is driving the National Representatives Group NRG towards definition of the successor of the Lund Action Plan, that will be more complete, built on past experience and results, including not only the digitisation issue but also the preservation or persistency of digital memory. A detailed position paper, by Hans Hofman on behalf of the Netherlands Presidency, draws the current scenario worldwide and future possible strategies through identification of priorities and recommendations at the European level.

In summary, the initiative aims at maximizing the impact and effectiveness of some activities and projects funded by the European Commission, in the framework of the IST programme, and the Member States on digitization of cultural and scientific content. The main objectives of the initiative can be resumed in:

- sharing knowledge and exchanging experience;
- promoting results like studies, reports, guidelines;
- adopting common standards and agendas;
- avoiding duplication of activities and wasting of resources among projects;
- merging efforts together to maximize the impact of the single projects;
- creating a large community of users.

More information about the cluster can be found at: <http://www.minervaeurope.org/digicluster.htm>

### Participants in the cluster

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