



Public consultation “Europeana - next steps”

CONTRIBUTION BY THE BIBLIOTECA GENERAL HISTÓRICA OF SALAMANCA UNIVERSITY (SPAIN)

November 18th 2009

These answers on the European Commission’s consultation “Europeana - next steps” are from **The Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL)**. The Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) is an active community of more than 190 libraries with notable holdings of early printed material. In close relationship with the community of scholars and researchers in the field of the European printed and written heritage, CERL has, since its foundation in 1994, provided services for both its member libraries and the scholarly community.

CERL’s mission is to

- support the study of the book heritage of Europe by developing services that support integrated access to high-quality data;
- develop and maintain a suite of sophisticated tools appropriate for the study of printed and written heritage materials of Europe by pooling resources and expertise;
- contribute to joint initiatives for the development of the digital infrastructure for the humanities, including the development and implementation of standards, especially those that facilitate interoperability.

CERL strongly supports the submissions made by **LIBER (Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche / Association of European Research Libraries)**. CERL and LIBER have a Memorandum of Understanding (at <http://www.libereurope.eu/node/151>).

General

Question 1

Which orientations would you suggest for the future development of Europeana as a common access point to Europe’s cultural heritage in the digital environment?

Answer

- 1.1. Europeana should continue to integrate all available digital content in libraries collections from every Member State and other European countries that are members of the Council of Europe, including universities and other cultural institutions.

- 1.2. Europeana should work as a catalyst for digitisation projects, through the avoidance of duplication, the adoption of appropriate standards, and a real concentrated effort by contributors to adopt a unified standard for metadata.

Question 2

Which features should be given priority in the further development of the site?

Answer

- 2.1. There should be much *more consultation* with users (academics, students, citizens). Closer consultation with academics at an institutional level would lead to a fruitful exchange of ideas on
 - where Europeana sits in relation to teaching, learning and research strategies
 - how Europeana needs to develop to meet these needs
- 2.2. Europeana should increase the chance that the user finds all he/she wants to find, by giving the user greater guidance in accessing the material.
- 2.3. Semantic web and ontologies.

Question 3

Has Europeana struck the right balance between making Europe's digitised cultural heritage searchable through a common entry point and at the same time giving visibility to the institutions that contribute the material, or should the material accessible through Europeana be presented in a more unified way?

Answer

- 3.1. Cultural organisations should standardise their metadata from the *provenance* point of view. This would ensure that the user would be able to identify the authority of the source, to create a profile for the contributing institution, and, when necessary, to clear further rights for re-use.
- 3.2. Open Access and Creative Commons should be the guidelines for accessibility.

Question 4

How should Europeana further develop its own autonomous identity?

Answer

- 4.1. Europeana should become a strong brand both for libraries and for European students, researchers and citizens.
- 4.2. Materials accessible through Europeana should also become much more visible through Google and other search engines. Europeana should provide a service through which libraries can make their materials highly ranked in Google search results.
- 4.3. *Post-coordinate the information* that is provided in a way that is meaningful for European culture (through exploitation and editing of metadata)

Question 5

Should there be minimum requirements for the content brought into Europeana by the contributing organisations (e.g. minimum viewing or use options)? If so, who should be responsible for defining and imposing these minimum requirements?

Answer

- 5.1. Minimum requirements should be defined by Europeana. All data should comply with one of the current world standards for Library, Museum, Archive and Audiovisual materials. These standards, their updating and maintenance are the responsibility of the professional Associations such as [IFLA](#), [IASA](#), [ICA](#) and [ICOM](#). Europeana should make use of these and not invent more unless a new standard is needed to facilitate cross-domain interoperability.
- 5.2. All digitised content should contain a persistent identifier and European-level resolving services are needed to make use of these effectively. Persistent identifiers will always take a user from a link to the content item; without them, users will be constantly frustrated by broken links and error messages.

Content for Europeana**Question 6**

Which categories of content are so important for the users that Member States and their cultural institutions should be encouraged to make them available through Europeana? What measures can be taken to ensure the availability of these works through Europeana?

Answer

- 6.1. Early printed books, manuscripts and portraits.

- 6.4. Documents that are fundamental for the history of a country and for the cross-border history of Europe.

Question 7

What is the best way to encourage cultural institutions and right holders to take into account cross-border access - including through Europeana - in their agreements on digitisation and dissemination of in-copyright material? Which legal or practical barriers to this cross-border access need to be addressed?

Answer

- 7.1. Harmonization of copyright in Europe is the only sustainable solution. New laws for Internet usage of copyrighted material are necessary for effective cross-border access.

Question 8

How can the difference in the level playing field for digitising and making accessible older works between the US and Europe (in particular the 1923 cut-off date in the US, that places all material from before 1923 in the public domain) be addressed in a pragmatic way (e.g. better databases of orphan and out-of-print works, a cut-off point that imposes lower requirements for diligent search in relation to orphan works)?

Answer

- 8.1. Current European copyright policies clearly disadvantage access of European citizens to a huge amount of works if compared with the USA ones. The development of ARROW as a database of orphan and out-of-print works, that could constitute the only requirement for diligent search of orphan works, seems necessary. Nevertheless, we must recognize that such a sophisticated tool will require many years to be trusted and fully operational. This is time lost for European users with regard to American ones. Several private companies are currently developing systems to find a solution to the orphan works issue (interrelation with databases of Copyright Offices or crossing with death notices of prominent authors as published in the press, etc.) This emerging new systems should be carefully examined. Nevertheless, setting a US-style cut-off date across the whole of Europe would be the most helpful pragmatic solution. Alternatives such as the creation of a basic level remuneration to rightholders via blanket licences with appropriate collecting societies, unless they are of permanent nature, will represent an increasingly heavy burden on digitisation budgets of contributing cultural institutions, already obliged to also finance the expensive preservation of their digital objects. (see answer by National Library of Spain)

Question 9

What policies should be adopted to avoid that the process of digitisation itself creates new types of sui generis copyright that, in turn, could create barriers to the dissemination of digitised public domain material?

Answer

- 9.1. The EU should develop policies which are more explicit on access to materials which are digitised. Where digitisation takes place with funding from the EU or other public bodies in Member States, the resulting digitised materials should be available in Open Access. The EU has already taken this step in terms of secondary publications which are the output of EU-funded projects. It is a relatively small step to extend this principle to digitisation outputs and we recommend that the EU does indeed take this step.

Question 10

*What measures can be taken to ensure that cultural institutions make their **digitised public domain material** accessible and usable in the widest possible way on the Internet? Should there be minimum requirements for the way in which digitised public domain content is made available through Europeana?*

Answer

See answer to this in Question 9.

Financing and governance

Question 11

Which financing model would reflect a fair distribution between Community funding, Member States' funding and private funding, taking into account that the aim of Europeana is to give the widest possible access to Europe's cultural heritage at pan-European level? Could Europeana be financed solely by national cultural institutions or by private funding?

Answer

- 11.1. Europeana has to be the principal European gateway to Europe's digital content. As such, it is appropriate that it is financed by the European Union. Structural funds could, for example, be used to provide sustainable financial support for Europeana. It is not realistic to think that the core funding for Europeana as a central gateway could consist of private resources.
- 11.2. Individual Member States' primary responsibility should be to fund national digitisation and national digital libraries to aggregate content for Europeana. The EU should give incentive financing for the development of pan-European digitisation programmes, especially in the fields of cross-border interest.

Question 12

Is sustained European Union funding for the basic operations of Europeana necessary and justified for the period after 2013? What type of European funding instrument could best be used?

Answer

- 12.1. Structural funding for Europeana should be part of the European long-term strategy for Europeana in order to ensure continuity in building meaningful digital collections, and continued access to these collections. Project funding imposes a huge administrative burden on the Europeana office, reduces flexibility and distorts strategic planning.

Question 13

Which governance structure for Europeana would best fit the preferred financing model (as indicated under question 11)? Should there be a role in the governance structure for organisations other than content providers?

Answer

- 13.1. The governance of Europeana should be entrusted to their persistent content providers, i.d. participating public cultural institutions whose mission is precisely to provide access to their collections and preserve them for future generations. The recently adopted governance is a step forward in the clarification of roles within the EDL Foundation, if compared to the previous one. In the long term, however, the Council and its emanating Executive Committee should be exclusively composed of major content providers and national aggregators. Pan-European Organizations should have a status of advisers to the Council while other interested holders of content - commercial and public - should have a status of observers. The EDL Foundation should be accountable to, both to an Assembly of participating Member States (strategic issues regarding overall orientations and content policies) and to the European Commission (technical and issues, user services and financial accountability). (See answer by National Library of Spain)

Question 14

How can private involvement in Europeana best take shape (e.g. through sponsoring, through technological partnerships, through links from Europeana to the sites of publishers and other right holders where the user can buy in-copyright content, or through another type of partnership)?

Answer

- 14.1. It should be noted that if Europeana is more broadly used and becomes a stronger brand than it is now, commercial companies will also be interested in getting visibility in Europeana and should be more willing to offer sponsorship to achieve this objective.

Question 15

How can private sponsorship of Europeana best be stimulated? Are commercial communications on the Europeana site acceptable, and, if so, what type of commercial communications (e.g. logos of sponsors, promotion of specific products)?

Answer

- 15.1. The first condition for sponsorship for Europeana is that Europeana will have to be able to show its value and a broad user base. Europeana will never be able to attract sponsors if sponsors do not receive sufficient visibility. In this context, logos, promotion of producers and adverts would be possible. The key is to segregate the search and retrieval facility from the displaying of, and links to, commercial content and products. The two should co-exist in harmony, but commercial coverage should not dominate the usability of the interface.

Question 16

Should there be a contribution (financial or other) in exchange for the links from Europeana to sites with content for which the user has to pay? Can a model such as that of Gallica 2, providing links from the site of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France to the content on the sites of French publishers, be transposed to Europeana?

Answer

- 16.1. Europeana should remain the place where users know they can find free content. Europeana should be the international showcase for European public cultural institutions. It is in this context that links to paying services that provide added value to the free content in Europeana should be encouraged.

Prof Dr E. Mittler, CERL Chairman
on behalf of
the CERL Board of Directors and the CERL membership

10 November 2009