Further information

DigiCult on the Web
www.cordis.lu/ist/directorate_e/
telearn-digicult/index.htm

On-line publication

The eCulture newsletter, available from this site, provides up to date information on calls and highlights news and results from the research projects.

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DigiCult

'Technology-enhanced Learning; Cultural Heritage' is the name of one unit of the European Commission's Directorate-General 'Information Society'. It is part of the Directorate responsible for 'Interfaces. Knowledge and Content Technologies. Applications. Information Market' which is based in Luxembourg.

The unit manages funding of research into leading edge technologies for more efficient learning processes (TeLearn) and for the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage (DigiCult).

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Preserving access to and creating tomorrow's memory

DigiCult
Digital Cultural Heritage

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Information Society
Technologies

European Commission

Accessing and preserving Europe's cultural and scientific resources

Europe's cultural assets reflect a common history enhanced by regional diversity. Easy access to scientific and cultural information and dependable availability for future use are priorities in building the knowledge society.

Information and communication technologies provide new opportunities for Europe's cultural heritage, both in terms of improving access and of supporting preservation of content. They open up new ways to describe and discover the content of archives, libraries and museums and to present artefacts and archaeological sites. To exploit leading edge technologies applied to storage, classification and retrieval, preservation, reconstruction and visualisation, opens an important potential.

By adopting innovative tools and services, museums, libraries and archives, the traditional repositories of European memory, are working together to provide digital access to everyone, anywhere, at any time.

European research into digital cultural heritage

Research in this field is part of the European Commission's work programme for **Information Society Technologies (IST)**. IST is one of the thematic priorities in the 'Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development', the major instrument for research funding by the European Union. Supported projects are chosen through competitive selection procedures, initiated by public calls for proposals.

The current Framework Programme, **FP6 (2002-2006)**, aims primarily at the integration of research efforts and at strengthening transnational partnerships to build a 'European Research Area'.

What are the objectives?

The first FP6 call for proposals in the IST domain targeted 'Technology-enhanced learning and access to cultural heritage' as one of its strategic objectives. The goals of research into 'access to cultural heritage' were

- to improve the **accessibility, visibility** and recognition of the value of Europe's cultural and scientific resources

- to develop **new forms of cultural experiences**

What is being funded?

Eight projects were selected for funding from 2004 onwards. They cover research in the field of **digital libraries services,** the **digitisation and restoration** of audio-visual and film heritage, and research into **new virtual representations** or reconstructions of cultural and archaeological objects and sites. Two coordination actions target **community building** between stakeholders, firstly between national bodies responsible for digitisation policies and programmes and secondly between the different types of cultural and memory institutions operating at local/regional level.

Who are the actors?

The collaborative research projects each bring together a wide range of actors from the public and the private sector, such as institutions and organisations holding cultural and scientific content (libraries, museums, archives, archaeological sites), academic institutions, research centres, ICT companies, electronic publishers, Internet providers, multimedia specialists and others.

Previous work

Ongoing research on EU level is based on expertise and knowledge on technologies for cultural heritage which has been built up since the 'Telematics for Libraries' programme (1990-1994). Recently, work has concentrated on the following areas:

- **Digital libraries** – addressing major challenges for content management, and for providing the user with high-bandwidth access to distributed and highly interactive repositories of European culture and science, in text, audio and film

- **Digitisation** – research into techniques for scanning, storing and retrieving information, and coordination of digitisation policies under the Lund Action Plan

- **Heritage for all and Community memory** – creation and use of community heritage resources using evolving digital technologies for classification, storage and access

- **Intelligent heritage** – research into the interface between technology and heritage sites and visitor experiences

- **Preservation of audio-visual objects and films** – hardware devices for reading old formats, restoration algorithms, content management and assessment tools

- **Supporting activities** – surveys, studies, reports and roadmaps, collaborative networks for the exchange of knowledge and experience

Research goals from 2005 onwards

Research should respond in an innovative way to the new challenges posed by the huge increase in digital cultural information assets and the emergence of new channels of information delivery. It should support the emerging complexity of cultural heritage environments including their multilingual and multicultural aspects. The objectives are:

- to develop enriched conceptual representations of cultural and scientific knowledge backed by systems and tools which optimise their potential for a wide variety of user interests. This will encourage innovative use of cultural heritage through creative online communities.

- to create adequate mechanisms for the sourcing, appraisal, validation, management and long-term preservation of digitised and born-digital cultural information. Ultimately, this will require the development of increasingly automatic approaches using intelligent systems for understanding and managing digital memory, including how to cope with very high volume, dynamic and adaptive content.