

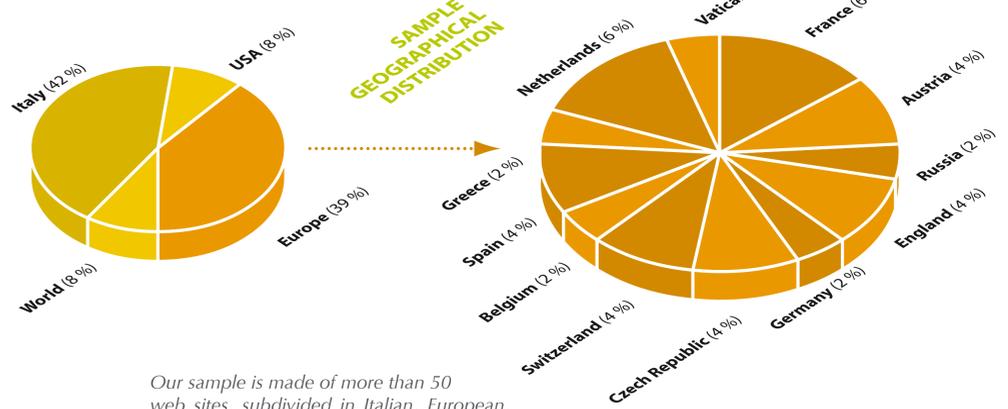
Analysis of web sites concerning cultural heritage

General outline about a representative sample, consisting of more than 50 web sites of museums and cultural institutions from Italy, Europe, U.S.A and other countries

Analysis of web sites concerning cultural heritage

This research has been developed during a work stage in the scope of Ecumene Project, with the goal of getting a general outline of web sites concerning cultural heritage, in order to project and realize a web portal for the access to the cultural heritage of Italian Catholic Church.

We have selected a significant sample of web sites and we have analyzed it, noting functions and services that each site offers, paying particular attention to accessibility and usability indexes. We have attempted to compare Italian sites with European and worldwide ones.



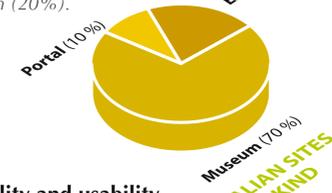
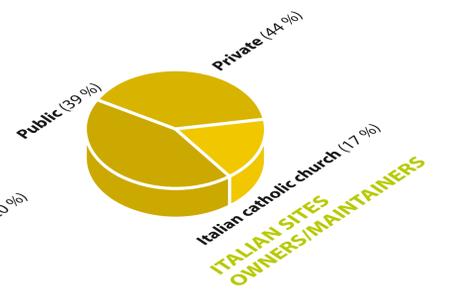
Our sample is made of more than 50 web sites, subdivided in Italian, European, U.S. and other countries. These sites belong to museums and institutions representative for artistic, archeological and cultural heritage. About half sites are based on a database (47%). The sample includes both important and minor institutions, from Italy, main museums only, from other countries.

Italian web sites are more than a 40% of whole sample. We could classify them on the base of owner/maintainer:

- public institutions (39%);
- Italian Catholic Church (17%);
- private subjects (44%).

or subdivided according to the site kind:

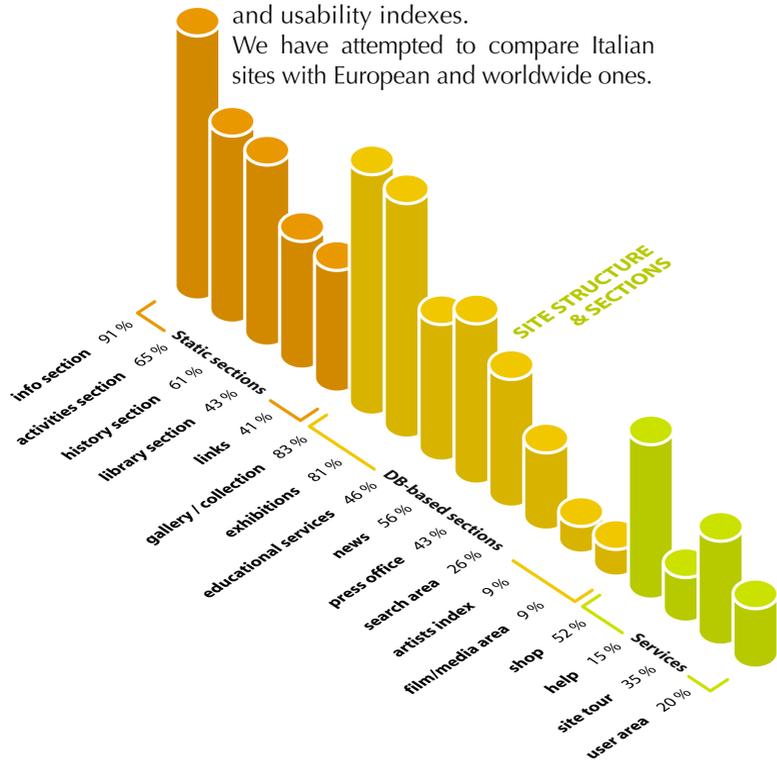
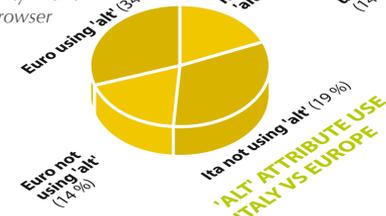
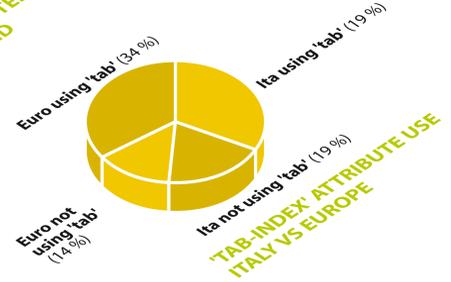
- museum (70%);
- portal (10%);
- exhibition (20%).



Accessibility and usability

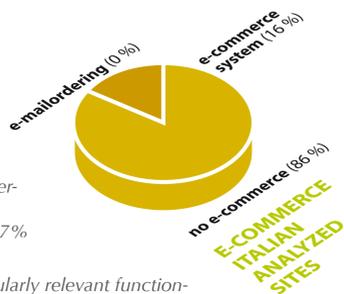
We have evaluated some accessibility and usability parameters:

- ALT attribute use for images (48%);
- use of Stylesheets (65%);
- use of frames (35%);
- use of Flash Macromedia (39%);
- site usability with a textual browser (43%).



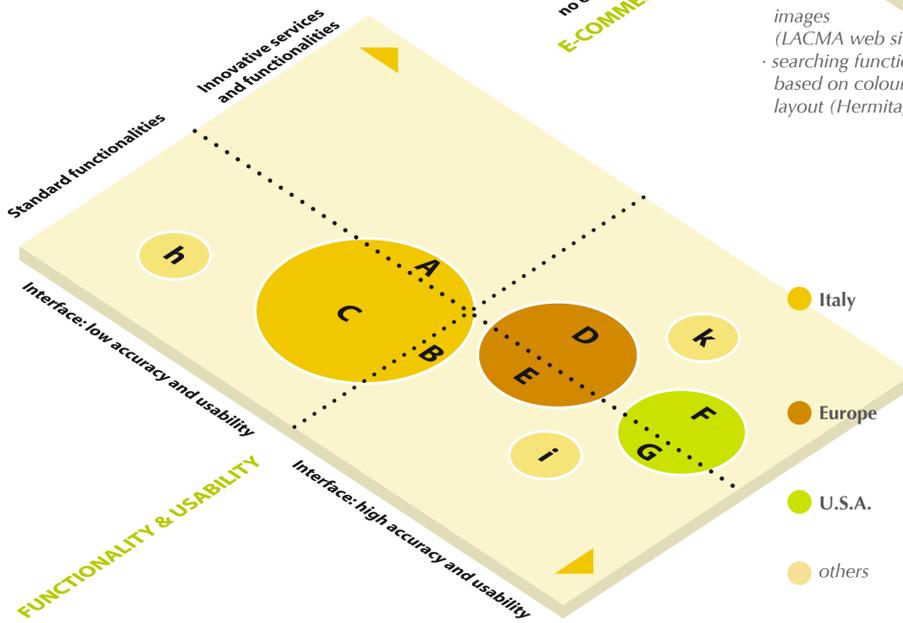
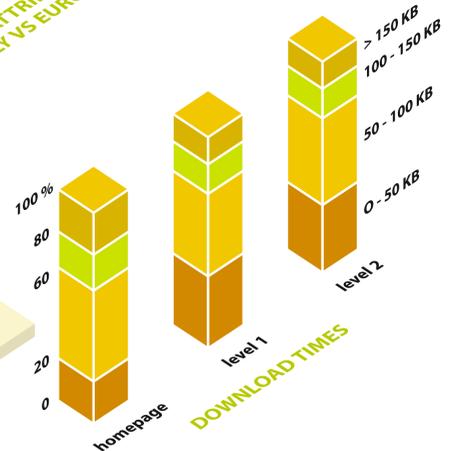
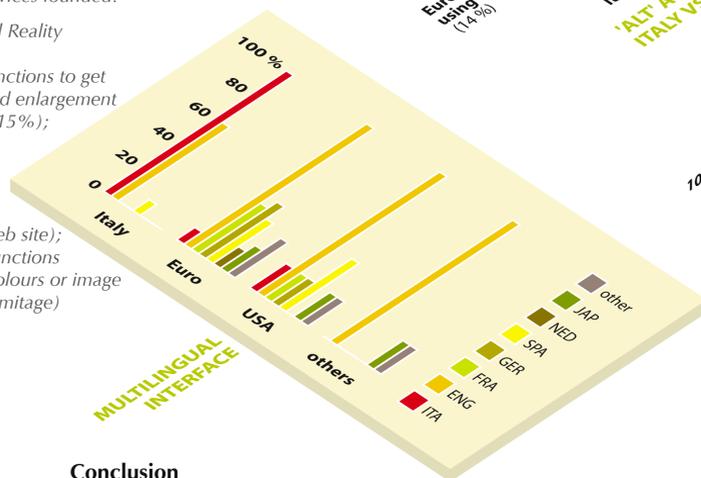
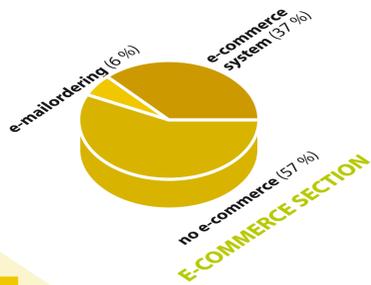
Typical functionalities

- E-commerce**
- ordering 4% (2) (euro 2/20)
 - buying 33% (18) (ita 3/23) (euro 9/20)
- Ticket service**
- booking tickets 2%
 - tickets selling managed by an external site 24% of whole sample
 - buying ticket in the shop section 7%



Particularly relevant functionalities and services founded:

- 3D & Virtual Reality (24%);
- zooming functions to get very detailed enlargement of images (15%);
- comparison among two or more images (LACMA web site);
- searching functions based on colours or image layout (Hermitage)



Conclusion

- A sites realized with the aid of public contribution (about 20% of sample)
- B some museums belonging to the Italian Catholic Church or to private subjects (about 10% of the sample)
- C the most part of Italian sample (These sites seem to be realized without pay any attention to the users' point of view)
- D main European museums (like Louvre, British, Hermitage, ...), the sites properly reflect the importance of the institutions that realized them
- E less important European museums, from countries with minor technological development
- F the most part of U.S. great museums, with an interface accurately realized and innovative technologies
- G other U.S. museums, well projected interface and standard functions. Some museum from other countries like Australia (k), Japan and Israel (i), Africa (h) and so on...

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