

Executive Summary

OBJECTIVE

Digitising culture is strategic ... but it needs coordination ...

The Lund Principles identified that the diversity and richness of Europe's cultural resources are extremely important for the future information society. However, digitisation is highly fragmented, involves duplication of efforts and risks failing to make the best use of the investment, so needs coordination across Europe. The Lund Action Plan proposes a set of actions to be undertaken by the European Commission and the Member States.

... and technical and organisational guidelines.

It is recognised that cultural institutions need both technical and organisational guidelines, as well as specific sets of practical recommendations if they are to meet the challenges inherent in large-scale digitisation activities.

The first step is the exchange of experience and good practice towards ...

The overall objectives of the initiative "coordinating digitisation in Europe", promoted by the European Commission and the Member States, can be summarized as:

1. Increasing the visibility of on-going activities and sharing experiences.
2. Identifying, promoting and exchanging good practices.
3. Adopting common standards and moving towards a European platform.

... a common European cultural area based on a common platform...

The adoption of common standards and compatible procedures will allow the creation of a common cultural area offering e-services to citizens and researchers, that is interoperable and extendable, as well as opportunities for the content industry in Europe.

... and the interoperability challenges.

Increasingly large and heterogeneous collections of digital resources are being created. The challenge now is to build a comprehensive and interoperable European infrastructure which provides quality of access and new services for the citizen. Even if much work has already been done on metadata and standards, among the next big challenges are technical and organisational interoperability and multilinguality.

PROGRESS

National Representatives Group reinforcement

The National Representatives Group (NRG) with the MINERVA project support are continuing the implementation of the Lund the Action Plan. In 2003 some important actions have built consensus and awareness about the initiative.

- Distribution of the 1st NRG progress report through official channels by Member States and the European Commission. Successful presentation at the Committee des Affaires Culturelles.
- "Rolling agenda" of activity between following Presidencies of the Union increasing impact and visibility of results. Joint 12-months programme proposed by the Greek and the Italian Presidency was an outstanding example of coordination.
- Newly Accession States NAS have been invited by the Italian Presidency to nominate representatives for the NRG group.
- the "Charter of Parma" was adopted at the 5th NRG meeting as a strategic report on progress to date, and inviting further support to the initiative.

The MINERVA network practical progress

Major progress has been achieved with significant results and impact. Some activities and expert workgroups reached full maturity. All the documents are available also on the Web (<http://www.minervaeurope.org>).

- Quality for cultural Web sites: the workgroup produced some principles and guidelines, a Handbook and a series of training events. Accessibility and usability by all is crucial, with particular attention to the people with special needs such as the disabled and elders.
- Good practice in digitisation: the key lessons learnt have been extracted from the examples proposed by Member States and published in a Handbook. A new campaign for data collection is planned by the beginning of 2004.
- Benchmarking: the European workgroup has completed a large survey, now activity is developing at national level. Benchmarking as a tool for exchanging experience and learning from good practice, as a way to measure progress, as well as a useful approach for evaluating candidate projects for funding.
- Interoperability: MINERVA, with the EMII-DCF, PULLMAN and ERPANET projects have produced some technical guidelines resuming current developments for digitisation and interoperability. The work on DC.Culture is carrying on.
- Inventories: It has been completed the common description model for a European Inventory. A French-Italian experiment has been launched: in this pilot, the French platform for the on-line access to the inventory of digital repository has been customised for the Italian implementation and it has been filled with data from some major cultural digital collections.
- Cooperation with other EC-funded projects has been developed both through the wide participation at the Workshops in Corfu and Parma, and through the creation of a "digitisation cluster" proposing some practical terms of cooperation among projects.
- MINERVA Plus extends the network towards the 10 NAS countries, Russia and Israel.

Preservation of digital memory ... a challenge !!

Following the Council Resolution of 25 June 2002 on preserving tomorrow's memory – preserving digital content for future generations (2002/C 162/02), an experts workgroup was proposed to identify the state-of-art and plan the developments needed to implement the resolution principles. The workgroup has been led by the ERPANET and MINERVA projects, chaired by the European Commission and the Italian Presidency. The output of a conference was the "Firenze agenda" that will try to stimulate and coordinate on-going initiatives in Europe: first progress will be presented under the Dutch Presidency later in 2004.

Digitisation policies

Member States now see digitisation as a component of wider information society activities, and the Lund Principles have become a reference point for common strategies and new policies for digitisation. Most of the countries have now established programmes and coordination bodies. Contact points and technical workgroups have been created, and new pilot projects have been launched. In many cases, tenders for funding must adopt mandatory standards, respecting rules and guidelines. There is an increasing recognition that the introduction of the new

technologies into the world of culture must be seen as an investment, and not just a cost. And such an investment must be both productive and sustainable over time. A particular issue is the funding and support needed to enable the collections and knowledge of small museums, libraries and archives to be made more widely available. It's needed a funding scheme for digitisation, with prioritisation plan, including small and medium sized museums, libraries, archives. Only in rare cases additional funding for digitisation are made available creating difficulties in particular for small institutions.

Cooperation developments

EC-funded projects remain the most effective tool for cooperation among Member States different institutes and for testing telematics applications in Europe.

It becomes clear that for small and regional cultural institutions the essential question is not technology, but the lack of staff, skills, training and support. Some initial pilot projects are investigating the effectiveness of delivering expertise and know-how from large centres to small cultural institutions.

Cooperation with other national bodies is under development, in particular with Ministry of Education and schools for training initiatives in the framework of e-learning.

Emerging issues

- Decentralisation of responsibilities and resources is a reality for many countries but with different approaches.
- Cultural portals are the reference access-points for thematic users or for tourism; networks for citizens and 'community memory' are important in helping to build communities and to develop bridges between different communities.
- e-learning is a pillar of the information society and the first broadband-services are being developed in this field.
- The digitisation of audio and video archives and the development of electronic magazines on-line are important drivers in the adoption of broadband.
- Hybrid collections are emerging from the mix of physical and digital libraries, they enrich each other and are transforming cultural organisations and paradigms.
- Web archiving and harvesting strategies under study and testing are facing the challenge of preserving Web temporary contents.
- Microfilming is being substituted for by digitisation and technology migration is at the heart of strategies for preservation
- Despite the existence of IPR legislation and digital rights management technologies, IPR remains a significant barrier to progress, and particularly to accessibility or making resources available online
- Suitable business models are needed to promote the start-up of commercial applications and produce revenues.

FUTURE STRATEGIES

MINERVA Progress Assessment Plan

The implementation of the Lund Action Plan is proceeding as scheduled. Concrete actions in 2004 are identified, and a clearer focus on results, "products", and success indicators has been maintained. The Progress Assessment Plan has been launched by the Italian and Irish Presidencies to review progress, and will be integrated with the on-going work of the Netherlands on EU-added value and the development of post-Lund strategy. This will include a set of concrete objectives and success indicators for each action in the Lund Action plan. It will also define a set of possible priorities for a next action plan to be developed in 2005.

EU-added value

A position paper led by the Dutch representatives within the NRG draws future scenarios and identifies the benefits of managing this initiative at a European level. The aim of the paper is to trigger discussion on the elements that could make up a successor to the Lund Action Plan, while taking into account and building on the results, conclusions and recommendations of the Progress Assessment and various strategic documents. Long-term sustainability both as resources and as political commitment as well as user community consensus will be one of the key pillar of the proposal under study. The concrete elaboration of a post-Lund strategy will be actively supported by the Netherlands presidency in 2004 together with the NRG and MINERVA.

Coordination of Digitisation Programmes and Policies National Representatives Group

Country	Organisation
AT	Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
BE	Ministère de la Communauté française de Belgique
BE	Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap
DE	Institut für Museumskunde
DE	Landesarchivdirektion Baden-Württemberg
DK	Kulturarvsstyrelsen
ES	RED.ES
FI	Museovirasto
FR	Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication
GR	University of Patras, High Performance Information Systems Laboratory
IE	Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism (National Museum of Ireland)
IT	Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali
LU	Ministère de la Culture, de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche
NL	Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap
PT	Ministério da Cultura
SE	Riksarkivet
UK	The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries

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Country	Organisation
CY	Ministry of Education and Culture
CZ	Ministerstvo Kultury
EE	Kultuuri-Ministerium
HU	Nemzeti Kulturális Örökség Minisztériuma
LT	Lietuvos Respublikos Kultūros Ministerija
LV	Latvijas Republikas Kultūras Ministrija
MT	Heritage Malta
PL	International Center for Information Management Systems and Services
SI	Ministrstvo za Kulturo Republike Slovenije
SK	Slovenská Národná knižnica
Observers	
IL	Ministry of Science and Technology
IL	eJewish.info - The Jewish Agency for Israel
RU	Russian Ministry Centre PIC
RU	Russian Ministry Centre PIC

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