

Slovenia

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During the period in which Slovenia has been a partner in the MINERVA Plus project a much bigger awareness of the importance of digitisation of cultural heritage has arisen between the institutions and other actors in the field. This report presents the current situation in Slovenia, shows some recent efforts to improve the involvement at national level, and brings information about the main national programmes and projects investing in digitisation.

A. Users and content

In Slovenia there is a need to make further steps towards coordinated activities in digitisation and to make use of solutions and good practices, which have been developed in different digitisation projects over EU, especially technical and normative concepts. Basic plans for digitisation of cultural heritage in Slovenia have been outlined in several documents, also in the Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia in the Information Society (2003), and The Resolution on the National Program for Culture (2004) as well as in a research project Information models of cultural heritage (2004). Their aim is to connect institutions of cultural heritage and make instruments for the development of digitisation programs and projects.

By joining the NRG and MINERVA Plus project, institutions, especially libraries, museums and archives in Slovenia have become more aware of the need for digitising cultural heritage they are responsible for. Libraries have shown a number of activities, and initiatives have been started as well in other fields. Target institutions have become more willing to share information about their projects. MINERVA (and CALIMERA) publications have been distributed to institutions.

The digitisation projects have been carried out through regular financial tools provided mostly by the Ministry of Culture and the Directorate for the Information Society at the Ministry of Higher Education.

Because digitisation is expensive Slovenia thinks of providing of financial resources also from the EU funds. It has become obvious that texts in Slovenian language on the Web should be more numerous, the lack of them means that users cannot benefit from all the possibilities the ICT offers in the areas of culture and education. There should be more information and digitised full text from all fields of knowledge accessible through the Internet. The aim is that users could enter the Slovenian cultural information space and through it the European as well. A plan of supporting development of several portals of cultural heritage on the basis of regional information & communication networks is an organizational task the Ministry of Culture is now working on intensively, hoping to be able to use the EU structural funds.

Among the key issues institutions have been instructed to avoid duplication of efforts and try to make synergies by cooperating in projects. It has not yet come to perfect cooperation between institutions because previously they have not been used to it but an awareness of the need to cooperate has been spread around by making public the MINERVA guidelines. Some institutions have started to develop priority lists of materials to be digitised and are selecting them by user interests and needs. This is especially important, as archival functions and possibilities of the digitisation have not yet been fully resolved. The National and University Library has been given the task to develop the national inventory or register of digitisation projects which should be a good information tool and should avoid duplications. Digitised cultural and educational content is expected to become the main resource for e-learning and creative industries. So it should be widely accessible through user friendly interfaces. Cultural portals have been recognised as possible driving tools for the development of e-learning. Portal KAMRA (planned to include libraries, archives, museums, associations and local study centres information) has been started by ten Slovenian regional libraries intending to connect not

only information but also give a tool for individual learning. It is in the testing phase and has been initiated with the strong awareness of the guidelines from projects MINERVA and CALIMERA. At the end of the project each regional library will start filling the portal with digitised information available in the region, thus connecting with museums, archives and other institutions. There is also a new portal of Slovenian museums being tested. The National and University Library in Ljubljana has recently started a portal «d-Lib.si» which intends to reach mostly academic and research communities and is aimed at providing access to cultural heritage and scientific e-contents. Services for users of digitised cultural heritage have not yet been fully developed in Slovenia. The awareness of this fact is present everywhere through cultural institutions, many of them planning to join their digitisation projects with future cultural portals and in this way bringing to life a more intensive user orientation. The development of cultural portals gives an additional push to making digitised collections user friendly and service oriented thus giving digitised materials an additional value. Main cultural institutions which keep cultural heritage have been mobilized during the MINERVA Plus project to make best use of existing knowledge and technologies to enable digital access to all citizens. To ensure sustainability of the digitisation processes online the registries or inventories of digitised collections are planned to be developed as well as the repository facilities for digitised archives.

B. Technologies for digitisation

Starting the knowledge management portal Digital Library of Slovenia (d-Lib.si) and the public library portal KAMRA is basic for the whole Slovenian library network. It will provide adequate services in the information society, put digital heritage to public use, develop information products with added value and motivate other cultural institutions to join in building the portal. The portals have been designed as an infrastructure for lifelong learning, research, cultural activities and access to virtual heritage kept by heritage institutions. Both projects have attracted the financial support of the government. The Ministry of Culture insists on using technical solutions and guidelines developed through MINERVA,

CALIMERA and other EU projects in creating portals. The technological accent has been even more stressed in the development of the multimedia centres network. The multimedia centres network (including 12 regional centres) is a program financed by the government and EU to develop public access to information infrastructure and services, information support to institutions and individuals, special expertise for the intermedia art production and use of open code applications. Multimedia centres have developed to become potential partners for all cultural and heritage institutions, especially in their technological and service functions, while it is also important that cultural institutions can play an important role in promoting these centre's art production and providing access points for entering their portals. The services that can be used by institutions in the field of digitisation are mostly connected with the ICT access and use, support to digital and Web services, graphic production, and ICT consulting. Of course this includes as well digitisation of cultural contents in libraries, archives and museums. Heritage institutions can cooperate with these centres by employing common project groups for carrying out technologically demanding digitisation projects. One of the important practical results from the MINERVA Plus project in Slovenia has been the decision of the national library to publish the guidelines for digitisation and to develop the inventory of digital collections in 2006.

C. Sustainability of content

Informatics and digitisation in all parts of culture has been defined as an important means to achieve better access to culture, information on culture, research and scientific evaluation in culture. The aim is not only the digitisation itself but as well making conditions for cultural institutions to be able to offer better services related to digitised cultural objects. Priorities ought to be set on making digital collections of cultural heritage not only in libraries, museums and archives but as well in other cultural institutions, like local studies centres, multimedia centres, broadcasting organizations and alike. By making digitisation strategies in different fields of culture and interconnecting of them by promoting the use of interoperable software, guidelines and technology as well as by joining the digitisation inventories and joint projects with added value Slovenian cultural

institutions will contribute to a sustainable development of e-content production. There is a great need to make systematic financing tools which could be available to any public institution, business firm or individual intending to enter the digitisation processes.

In Slovenia there is still a lot to be done to achieve a sustainable development in digitisation. We have only passed the starting point by making a more general awareness of the need for sustainability in digitisation of cultural heritage. MINERVA Plus project has helped a lot with the penetration of the project coordination idea into cultural institutions which at this time still tend to act separately.

In the library sector we can see the efforts to bring digitisation issues forward by developing new educational and training programs, which were started in 2005 and have been carried out by the national library. The topics of the courses are planning, preparing and evaluating digitisation projects, project management and sustainability of projects. The issues of visions and goals of digitisation projects, the assessment of the digitisation needs, selection criteria, risk factors, financing and others are discussed, thus developing a new awareness among the library specialists. Other issues connected with the digitisation have been tackled in these courses as well, like electronic resources in general, electronic journals, metadata, concepts of digital preservation, intellectual property rights etc. It is to be expected that in other areas, especially museums and archives, similar educational programs will develop in short time. Ministry of Culture has distributed MINERVA publications received from the project administration. The aim was to send publications to addresses of most important institutions that keep cultural heritage and start digitisation projects.

The Ministry of Culture has contributed to the translations of two MINERVA documents. It was decided not to translate the *Technical Guidelines for Digital Cultural Content Creation Programmes* into Slovenian language, because in 2005 the CALIMERA Guidelines have been translated. Since both projects have dealt with similar topics we estimated that the translation of both publications was not necessary. In 2005 the translations of two documents have been completed and will be accessible on the Internet: Načela kakovosti za kulturne spletne strani: priročnik (*Quality principles for cultural Websites: a handbook*) and Priročnik dobre prakse (*Good practices handbook*).

D. Digital preservation

One of the strategic goals is to collect and preserve Slovenian digitally born publication production. Again, the library sector has been the most proactive. The National and University Library has developed a portal Digital Library of Slovenia (d-lib.si) which is planned to function as a tool for harvesting Web publications, a repository for Slovenian digital publications and an access point for Web archive users. It is important that digitally born publications find themselves stored in national libraries' digital repositories as soon as possible. Slovenia is planning to start this activity by the end of 2006 with the new legal deposit legislation which is going to cover intangible digital publications as well. The digital preservation issues are included into the state strategy cited above as an important element in the development of the information society. It is stated in this strategic document, that «the ICT itself is not a sufficient condition for better use of the information services» and that «the lack of quality digital contents is the reason why the use of the Internet is not spreading fast enough in Slovenia». Digital library seems a good answer to this dilemma, making possible public access to digital contents, preserving cultural heritage, developing the national language and create possibilities for multiculturalism.

Slovenian cultural institutions also support the European Digital Library project, the National and University Library being actively involved in the EDL collection building.

E. Monitoring

Monitoring the development of digitisation in cultural institutions, following the implementation of guidelines and other documents of the MINERVA project is essential to track progress towards the creation of the Slovenian cultural information space. As soon as a sustainable system of supporting the digitisation projects is established it will be very important to measure the progress from a common baseline, using agreed indicators. This will be important also on the European level.

For this report the Ministry of Culture has gathered some data on the digital activities in 2005. By these, we can quantify first results of digitisation initiatives in Slovenia and identify some of the important actors in the area.

- The analysis was made on the data from 11 cultural institutions, 5 libraries (National and University Library in Ljubljana, regional libraries in Novo mesto, Celje, Koper and Ravne), 5 museums (National Museum, City Museum and Museum of Recent History in Ljubljana, regional museums in Kranj and Ptuj) and 1 archive (Archive of Slovenia in Ljubljana)
- Digitised collections are very different in content, there has been no cooperation nor record exchange in the projects between different institutions
- According to the kind of institution, digitised collections included mainly:
 - Libraries: monographic and serial publications, print music, pictures, photos and old postcards from local studies collections, manuscripts, maps, audio and video materials, research texts
 - Museums: numismatic materials, photos, graphic art, drawings of archaeological objects, archaeological objects, archives, letters, film negatives, posters, documents, negative photos on glass, drawings, paintings and sculptures, special collections, objects from exhibitions, and other museum objects
 - Archives: documents, diplomas, official certificates, seals, coat-of-arms, family trees etc.
- In most cases the digitisation projects were carried out inside institutions, bigger projects were executed in cooperation with business firms
- In all library projects the MINERVA documents were considered, three out of five museums also worked by them, while archives in their projects didn't take them into consideration.
- The estimated number of scans the analysed institutions have done in 2005 is 188 700. The biggest project is the digitisation of articles of older Slovenian authors in the national library which includes 100 000 scans
- Not all digitised collections have been put on the Web yet but the majority of them is accessible.

During the ongoing MINERVA Plus project there were also a number of awareness raising activities for the institutions, among them a special presentation of MINERVA Plus project for libraries at their conference in October 2004 in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, at the conference aimed at libraries, archives and museums working together in digital future. In 2005 we had the opportunity for a one day workshop at the conference

“Muzeoforum” which took place in May in Ljubljana. It was intended particularly to the museum people, the subject being “The European Frameworks”. There are some major issues we have learned during our cooperation in the MINERVA project. Too much isolation in planning and practising digitisation still exists which has resulted in the fact that it is not possible to make a single strategy. A new plan has been thought of joining strategies and linking their common elements. This would make all partners more aware of their respective responsibilities for making cultural heritage accessible by digitisation. It is also important that the government takes digitisation of cultural heritage as a permanent priority. People dealing with digitisation at the ministry level should specialize on this activity and get all possible support.

On the national level several activities have been planned to additionally raise awareness, some of them already going on:

1. Translation of the DAP into Slovenian language, its presentation and promotion
2. Translation of other MINERVA documents (two of them have been translated),
3. Linking Web-pages of cultural ministry and institutions to the Web-page of MINERVA
4. Development of cultural portals
5. Creation of national inventory of digitised collections and collections to be digitised
6. Support to develop strategy and operational plan of digitisation in each cultural institution
7. Clarification of organizational structure and staff responsible for digitisation inside Ministry of Culture (NRG member and national coordinator, support staff)
8. Organizing systematic financial support to digitisation projects from several government departments, creating a sustainable system which would help develop a number of new employment possibilities not only in cultural heritage but in the economic sector as well.