Austria

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Policy

Policy scenario for digitisation

In 2002 Austria's activities concentrated on the planning of national co-ordination measures and the identification of experts and suitable practical examples. Since the area of responsibility and the allocation of digitisation projects are distributed to several institutions, ministries and regional promotion agencies, the main emphasis was put on preliminary information of the institutions concerned.

During the first stage a team of experts and representatives of the ministry explored the actual situation and stated the necessity of a national digitisation program for Austria based on the recommendations of Lund.

The situation in Austria can be summarized as follows: initiated and financed by the Federal Ministry of Culture larger projects for object digitisation are presently conducted by the Austrian National Library, the Albertina, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Academy of Fine Arts and the Austrian Mediathek at the Museum of Technology, as well as at the Universities of Graz and Innsbruck.

The Cultural Service Centre Austria has established an information and service network. It would be necessary to establish an infrastructure enabling large institutions to archive and give access to their mass data under justifiable costs on a long-term basis, and small institutions to make their holdings accessible via the Internet and to save their data on a long-term basis.

In the area of image digitisation the Austrian National Library offers the co-operation model bildarchiv.austria. In view of the international situation and in the context of the sixth framework program of the European Union, the creation of national networks in Austria will be necessary. The possibility of a co-operation among different institutions and the co-operation with partners in the field of the economy and multimedia industry should therefore be regarded as a so far barely used opportunity.

On the basis of these considerations, the ministry formed a working group, which in several meetings prepared a first draft for a strategic concept for the co-ordination of national digitisation projects in Austria. The draft states the establishment of three platforms: a digitisation platform, a research platform and an e-business platform, in which objectives, measures and strategies for digitisation, archiving, access and use of contents within the cultural sector are to be worked out. An elaborated version of the draft will become part of a National policy profile in 2003.

Terms of reference and National policy profile

After agreeing in the NRG on the Terms of Reference of the group, the terms have been formally endorsed by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. In effect, the ministry has thus firmly committed itself to the Lund principles and the mission of the NRG to monitor progress regarding the objectives stated therein.

Further, the terms of reference have been disseminated to the national co-ordination group described below as one of the means to create widespread visibility and consensus around the Lund principles.

The first Austrian national profile will be published on the Web page of the ministry 2003.

Since Austria is rather late in publishing its national profile it might be helpful to learn from other experiences. At the moment it is foreseen that two

experts, one from the ministry and one cultural expert will work close together in the NRG and represent Austria in the annual meetings to facilitate the exchange of information on national as well as international level.
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Co-operation activities

Co-ordination of national networks

At present, there is no formally established co-ordination network in Austria. The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is however working close together with CSC Austria in dissemination information and building up discussion forums on digitisation. Information on European and national initiatives are disseminated by the national NRG members. In fact most of the work consists in consulting for the preparation of digitisation projects and/or institutional strategies. Explanation and distribution of the benchmarking model and the good practise paper have been basic activities in order to raise awareness and building up an informal network of experts and institutions working together on the implementation of the Lund principles.
It has become clear, however, that without building up an infrastructure for this activities it will not be possible to establish an efficient network on national level. It is foreseen therefore for 2003 to support the NRG members in this sense.

Relationships and co-ordination with other national initiatives in connection with eEurope, e-government, e-learning
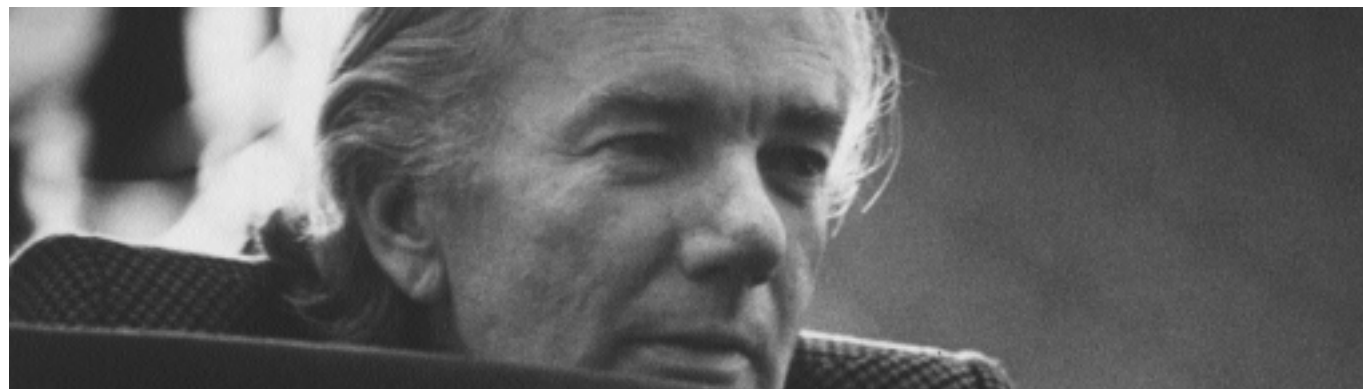
Related activities are the Austrian e-government initiative and the eFIT Austria programme, which provides electronic information for education, research and culture. For further information see: www.eFit.at.

European and international co-operation

Most of the major institutions working with digitisation take part in European and international networks within their respective fields (museums, libraries, archives, broadcasters etc.). In creating a broader network of experts with representatives from all the major players the dissemination of information is hoped to be achieved.

Benchmarking

Also in Austria the NRG benchmarking model has been distributed in different expert groups and in major institutions. It has not been decided however who could contribute to the European working group on benchmarking due to financial and organisational reason. It is planned however that on a national level the Austrian NRG members will be assisted in 2003 in data collection and the refinement and continuous development of the model by a national project manager.
It has become very clear that in promoting the benchmarking model on a national level a single bottom down approach cannot work. Most relevant cultural institutions are independent and the development of digitisation strategies lies in their own responsibility.

Therefore it is important to convince the directors of the memory institutions and to encourage them to develop their own strategic profiles for their institution and to support them in doing so via the NRG members.
At the moment the Austrian National Library is developing its digitisation strategy for the next five years and will provide good practise examples and a benchmark profile which should help other institutions to develop their own. In general Austria goes conform with the Danish suggestions and remarks.

Inventories and resource discovery

Available inventories

There exists no national inventory on inventory of existing and on-going digitisation and dissemination projects in Austria at the moment. A pilot study published in 2001 gives a general overview on digitisation initiatives in Austria and identifies the need for co-ordination also in this area: Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger, *Entwicklung von Kenngrößen und Kriterien zur Prioritätensetzung bei der Digitalisierung der Kultur- und Wissensbestände*, Wien 2001 (Gz.50.011/2-VIII/9/2000).The NRG has proposed to the ministry to use the database InfoNet Austria for collecting and publishing information.

Good practice and skills

Good practice exemplars and guidelines

All the major institutions with digitisation projects have been informed and asked to prepare a good

practise dossier. So far the following institutions have provided or are preparing at the moment good practise examples:
• Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
• Österreichische Mediathek
• Technisches Museum
• Universität Innsbruck
• Kunsthistorisches Museum
• Albertina
• Universitätsbibliothek Graz

Competence centres

As in other countries, there are no formally nominated competence centres within digitisation in Austria, but for pragmatic reasons a certain degree of specialisation has taken place. The following list gives a short (and uncomplete) overview, which should serve on a national level also as a first step for defining national competence centres:

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
digitisation of photographic objects, digitisation of newspapers

Österreichische Mediathek
digitisation of sound

Technisches Museum
virtual exhibitions, 3D-environment

Universität Innsbruck
digitisation of books, metadata

Kunsthistorisches Museum
digitisation of art objects

Albertina
digitisation of art objects

Universitätsbibliothek Graz
digitisation of manuscripts

Salzburg Research
multimedia, knowledge management

CSC Austria
Cultural Service Centre Austria, consulting,
collection management, metadata ontology

**Main digitisation training initiatives
for cultural heritage institutions**

Several ICT/digitisation training courses are conducted
yearly at the Donau Universität Krems.
The courses aim at different audiences (libraries,
museums archives, private persons), and are evaluated
and developed continuously. Further, the Cultural
Service Centre Austria provides courses in different
aspects of digitisation.
In addition to this, there is a substantial amount
of in-house training, especially in the major digitisation
institutions, where the skills are already acquired.

European added value
and content framework

Quality and accessibility for Web sites

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and
Culture supports the adoption of Brussels Quality

Framework, where applicable and suitable. As is also
the case for the benchmarking exercise, the guiding
principle for the adoption of such measures should be
volunteerism, instead of compulsion. The Ministry
therefore endorses the framework and encourages the
relevant institutions to apply it to their context.

Research activities on digitisation

Setting up and managing large digital collections needs
specific knowledge in different fields: digitisation,
collection management, Web hosting, licencing,
marketing. Developing protected online environments
that allow cultural heritage institutions to make a clear
distinction between commercial and scholarly or
educational use should play an essential role in research
activities. Defining new models of private-public
partnership for licencing of cultural heritage contents and
defining business plans for management and exploitation
of digital collections will be supported on national level
with concrete case studies.
Concrete research activities in the fields of digital rights
management, high quality imaging and business models
for co-operative licensing of photographic collections are
conducted by the Austrian National Library on national
level. Several institutions take part in European projects
with research activities in different fields, e.g. metadata
& standards (EU-project META-e), interoperability, topic
maps (EU-project REGNET, EU-project TNT).