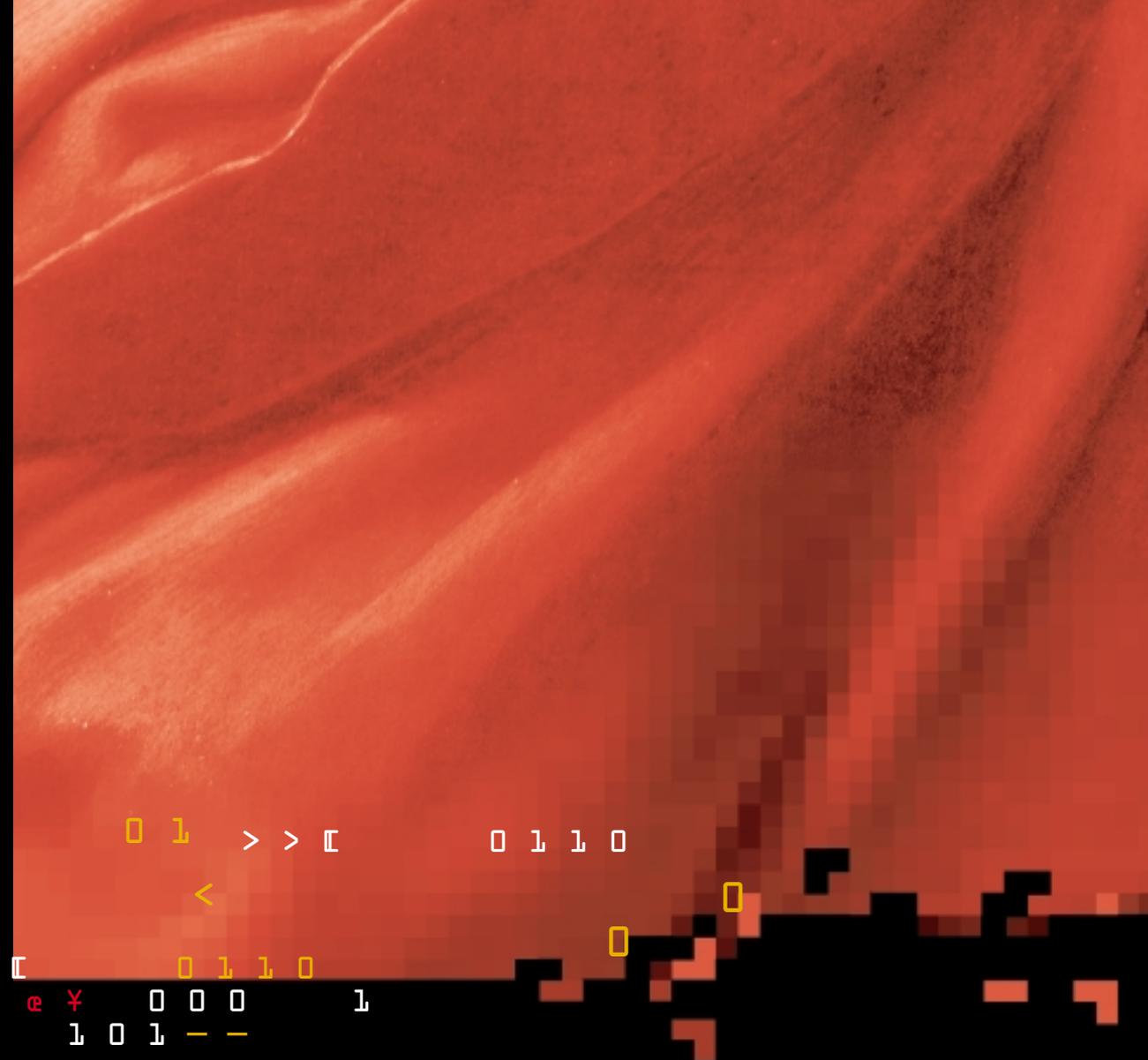


This work is the follow up of the booklet published on 2003 on the occasion of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the European Union outlining structure and goals of the MINERVA project. This new issue, based on the documentation produced in the framework of the MINERVA and MINERVA Plus projects by the coordinators and members of the working groups and by the editorial staff of the MINERVA Web site, is focused on the results achieved by the projects during the period 2003-mid 2004.



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Digitising
Content Together

Ministerial Network
for Valorising
Activities in Digitisation

Activities 2003 - 2004





Digitising
content together

Ministerial Network
for Valorising
Activities in Digitisation

Activities 2003 - 2004

Table of contents

3	Foreword
4	Introduction
6	The strategic impact of the network & the rolling agenda
11	The strategic documents
13	Outcomes and practical progress
20	International cooperation with non European countries
22	Publications
24	Keysteps 2001-2004
26	Annex <i>New opportunities for benchmarking the digitisation of cultural heritage in Europe</i>

Foreword



edited by Marzia Piccininno,
in cooperation with MINERVA staff
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La Tipografia, Roma, Italy
(September 2004)

This is the second booklet dedicated to the MINERVA project, following the edition published under the auspices of the Italian Presidency in 2003. The following pages illustrate and review the strategic objectives and the salient contents of the initiative: to advance the application of the principles endorsed at Lund in 2001, with which the Member States of the European Union committed themselves to increase their collaboration to strengthen the digital diffusion of European cultural heritage; and to realize a common European platform of standards and guidelines, in order to facilitate the creation of digital cultural content and the construction of interoperable cultural portals offering easy access for all.

The new edition considers the main activities and the objectives achieved by the National Representatives Group for digitisation, with the support of the MINERVA project, in the period comprising 2003 to mid-2004, while retaining the parts of a general character depicting the European framework.

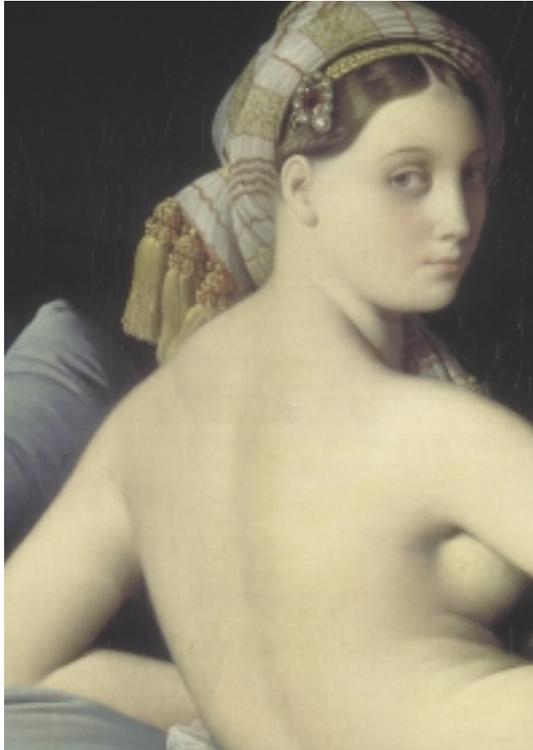
Among the most important outcomes are two new projects: MINERVA Plus, which opens up the network to the new accession countries of the European Union, as well as including Russia and Israel; and MICHAEL, born of the work carried out by the MINERVA working groups, which has the objective of creating a trans-European portal. This is intended to provide easy multilingual access online to the catalogues of digitised cultural resources of France, Italy and the United Kingdom, with the possibility of subsequently extending participation to all the countries involved.

Hence, the National Representatives Group, supported by the MINERVA project, really has become a stable and effective reference point in Europe, and has been able to construct solid institutional relations between the Member States and between the presidencies which succeed to the leadership of the European Union for each six month turn.

It is thus possible to create excellent cultural services for European citizens, who can therefore develop a common sense of membership and a shared identity, both prerequisites indispensable for a genuinely united Europe.

Giuliano Urbani
Minister for Cultural Heritage and Activities

Introduction



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*
Paris, Louvre

The European framework

In accordance with the eEurope initiative "An information society for all", the European Commission and the Member States have established trans-European coordination mechanisms for digitisation policies and programmes in the field of cultural content and applications.

The initiative began in April 2001 in Lund, when representatives from Member States met and discussed the issues related to the digitisation of cultural heritage; the results of the meeting were the Lund Principles and the Lund Action Plan for the implementation of these principles. The overall objectives addressed by this group of experts in the field of digitisation of cultural heritage can be summarised as:

- increasing the visibility of on-going activities and sharing experiences
- selecting, promoting and exchanging good practices
- adopting common standards and moving towards a European platform of guidelines and recommendations.

The National Representatives Group - NRG

The NRG was established during the Belgian Presidency in 2001 as the "guardians of the Lund Principles", following the promising results of the Lund meeting.

The NRG is a group composed of representatives nominated by the Member States' authorities in response to the eEurope objective to create trans-European coordination mechanisms and infrastructure to support the digitisation of cultural and scientific content. The NRG is based on the Terms of Reference document (ToR) which outlines the objectives and tasks of the national representatives' role. In most countries the ToR has been endorsed officially by national authorities which have given their full support to the initiative. The NRG meets every six months, under the aegis of the Presidency in turn and supported by the European Commission, to share national experience and work towards the creation of a common platform for cooperation and coordination of national activities throughout the European Union, as well as

for follow up at national level. It provides a stable, continuing focus for consensus building among Member States.

The NRG provides experts as needed to the MINERVA project working groups on themes related to the digitisation of cultural heritage: these workgroups prepare reports, studies and recommendations that are validated and approved by the NRG and distributed and promoted through the network. Each national representative is responsible for leading discussions and disseminating results on specific topics within her/his country. The role of the NRG has been strengthened through the *Charter of Parma*, a strategic document presented during the Italian Presidency, that re-proposes the basic mission of the initiative.

eEUROPE INITIATIVE – AN INFORMATION SOCIETY FOR ALL
http://europa.eu.int/information_society/europe/2002/index_en.htm

TERM OF REFERENCE
http://www.cordis.lu/ist/directorate_e/digicult/t_reference.htm

NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES GROUP
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg.htm>

LUND PRINCIPLES
http://www.cordis.lu/ist/directorate_e/digicult/lund_principles.htm

LUND ACTION PLAN
http://www.cordis.lu/ist/ka3/digicult/lund_ap_browse.htm

The MINERVA project

The MINERVA project, in the European framework outlined, supports the activities of the NRG with the objective of accomplish the Lund Action Plan.

MINERVA is a project financed by the European Commission in the ambit of the IST programme (Technologies for the Information Society) and the 5th Framework Programme; it was born thanks to the close collaboration between the Commission and Member States with the goal

of facilitating the creation of a common European vision in the definition of actions and programmes in the domain of accessibility and exploitation of cultural heritage through the Web.

Therefore, MINERVA was born as a network of the Ministries of culture of the Member States, coordinated by the Italian one, with the objective of harmonising the digitisation activities carried out in the field of scientific and cultural heritage. The project started in March 2002 and will end in July 2005.

Thanks to the involvement of national governments, MINERVA intends to coordinate corresponding national programmes, as well as to establish contacts with other European countries, international organisations, associations, networks and projects involved in the digitisation sector, fostering the convergence among archives, libraries, museums in a perspective of integration of the services offered by the memory institutions. The network's activities are undertaken in the framework of the eEurope Action Plan, whose general goals have been acknowledged in the cultural heritage domain through the Principles established in Lund.

MINERVA, therefore, operates on two levels, political and technical. The political level guarantees a close collaboration among Member States through high-level institutions, the Ministries of culture, that have responsibility of the cultural heritage, and between these and the European Commission. Moreover, in this perspective MINERVA intends to give visibility to national initiatives, to promote the exchange of good practices, and to ensure the diffusion and awareness of community policies and programmes at both national and local levels.

Finally, the technical level concerns the creation of a common European platform made up of shared recommendations and guidelines, metadata, standards related to digitisation, long-term preservation and accessibility of contents, quality of cultural Web sites.

MINERVA PROJECT
<http://www.minervaeurope.org>

The strategic impact of the network & the rolling agenda



© National Cultural Heritage Agency

Since March 2002 the MINERVA project had a major strategic impact on the bodies that preserve and manage cultural heritage. For instance, in many countries several new national programmes of digitisation of cultural heritage have been initiated under the aegis of MINERVA. The strength of MINERVA network also contributes to the creation of a process of institutional cooperation among the various presidencies of the European Union in the field of the digitisation of cultural heritage. This strategy, also known as the *rolling agenda*, allows the National Representatives Group, the institutional reference of MINERVA, to assure the continuity of the actions undertaken.

Greek Presidency

Corfu, 26th June 2003 the 4th NRG meeting

During the year 2003, under the aegis of MINERVA, the Greek and Italian Presidencies pursued a joint programme, *the Patras-Rome initiative – Enhancing the societal and economic value of digitization and digital preservation in Europe* – acting together on a work plan focused on the requirements of small and medium enterprises, elaboration of quality guidelines for cultural Web sites, and Intellectual Property Rights issues. These matters were discussed during the two day workshop “Digitization of Cultural Content” organized in June 2003 in Corfu together with the 4th NRG meeting, under the aegis of the Greek Presidency. The NRG meeting held in Corfu, hosted by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture (HMC) in collaboration with the High Performance Information Systems Laboratory (HPCLab) of the University of Patras, was crucial for the activities of the group because action lines were defined and developed by the MINERVA project during the following months:

- discussion about the updating of the Lund Action Plan 2005
- focus on practical products to support the activities of small and medium cultural institutions
- launching the topic of long term preservation of digital memory

- describing the state of the art on IPR issues and new technology through the conference on “Culture, copyright and information society” (7th-8th April 2003 Athens, Greece)
- involvement of new accession states: Latvia and Czech Republic were present in Corfu
- creating a European area for digitised cultural resources: the conference “Digitization of cultural content” launched the idea of establishing cooperation among the main cultural networks at European level in order to avoid fragmentation of the efforts and achieve a tangible European added value.

PATRAS-ROME INITIATIVE

<http://www.hdpweb.org/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=209>

4th NRG MEETING – CORFU. CONCLUSIONS

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/corfu.pdf>

CORFU WORKSHOP ON “DIGITIZATION OF CULTURAL CONTENT”

<http://www.hdpweb.org/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=268>
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/events/documents/corfu27280603.pdf>

CONFERENCE ON “CULTURE, COPYRIGHT AND INFORMATION SOCIETY”

<http://www.hdpweb.org/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=281>

Italian Presidency

Parma, 19th November 2003 the 5th NRG meeting

The digitisation of cultural heritage has been at the centre of some events organised by the Italian Presidency of the European Union for which the MINERVA/NRG network has acted as a platform to promote initiatives and to guarantee the exchange of experience.



All these events were supported by the NRG, whose 5th plenary meeting was held in Parma on 19th November 2003.

For the first time representatives from all new accession States were present at the NRG table as observers. Their nomination was due to the actions undertaken during the Italian Presidency through the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, which officially asked the Comité des Affaires Culturelles (CAC) representatives of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia to nominate national representatives for digitisation.

Israel and Russia were also represented thanks to the bilateral agreements with the European Union and their participation in the MINERVA Plus project.

Also during the NRG meeting in Parma the *Charter of Parma* was discussed and approved as the strategic document outlining future strategies, highlighting progress, and fostering the sustainability of the group.

The idea of defining a common European area for research launched by the Greek Presidency was realised during the Italian one by the creation of a cluster of the European networks and projects that met for the first time on 30th October in Rome.

Finally, the first practical products of MINERVA were presented and approved: firstly, the quality tools, the *Handbook for quality in cultural Web sites* and the 10 *Cultural Website Quality Principles*; secondly, the *Good practice handbook*, published in English with great success, and offered in Parma in a printed version.

The European conference “Quality for cultural Web sites” (Parma, 20th and 21st November 2003) was one of the main cultural events organised during the Italian Presidency of the Council of the Ministers of the European Union.

It was set up by the 6th Service Informatics & Statistics of the General Secretary of the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities (MiBAC), within the framework of MINERVA project, and in cooperation with the Parma local authorities. Further support was given by the Directorate General for libraries and cultural institutions of MiBAC, the Ministry

NAPLES, 23RD-24TH OCTOBER 2003
 "TERRITORIAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE
 CONSERVATION, PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT
 OF CULTURAL HERITAGE"
[http://www.minervaeurope.org/
 events/documents/napoliconclusion031024.pdf](http://www.minervaeurope.org/events/documents/napoliconclusion031024.pdf)

ROME, 29TH OCTOBER 2003
 "DIGITISATION: WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO DO IT"
[http://www.minervaeurope.org/
 events/bibliocom03/bibliocomprogramma.htm](http://www.minervaeurope.org/events/bibliocom03/bibliocomprogramma.htm)

ROME, 30TH OCTOBER 2003
 MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL NETWORKS
 IN THE SPHERE OF TECHNOLOGIES APPLIED
 TO CULTURAL HERITAGE

PARMA, 19TH NOVEMBER 2003
 5TH NRG MEETING - CONCLUSIONS
[http://www.minervaeurope.org/
 structure/nrg/documents/parma031119.htm](http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/parma031119.htm)

PARMA, 20TH-21ST NOVEMBER 2003
 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
 "QUALITY FOR CULTURAL WEB SITES"
[http://www.minervaeurope.org/
 events/parma/parmaconference.htm](http://www.minervaeurope.org/events/parma/parmaconference.htm)

Irish Presidency

Dublin, 28th-June 2004 the 6th NRG meeting

The institutional cooperation among the presidencies of the Council of the European Union is being pursued also by Italy, Ireland and The Netherlands in view of the events that were or will be organised by both presidencies during 2004. The 6th NRG meeting was held in Dublin on



© National Cultural Heritage Agency

for Innovation and Technologies, the National Centre for Informatics in public administration (CNIPA), the Emilia-Romagna Region, the Province of Parma, the University of Parma, the Teatro Regio foundation, and the European Commission. The conference was organized under the auspices of ICA and IFLA. The three sessions of the conference (*Accessibility and communication; Handbook for quality in cultural Web sites; IPR, copyright and data protection*) were led by representatives of institutions of national and international relevance, such as the Italian Touring Club, the Directorate General Information Society of the European Commission, and the Polo Museale Fiorentino. The round table on future perspectives gathered top managers of businesses that deal with technologies applied to cultural heritage, as well as representatives of authoritative international bodies: IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions), ICA (International Council on Archives), AVICOM (International Committee of Audiovisual and Image and Sound New Technologies), the European Museum Forum, and the European Commission. The aim of the round table was to present to the public and compare both the commercial point of view on the application of new technologies to cultural heritage, and that of international associations representing archives, libraries and museums that preserve and manage this legacy. Almost 800 people attended the two day conference, including 29 delegates from the European Union, Israel, Russia, Canada, and the United States. During the conference, two new projects, born within the ambit of MINERVA and funded by the European Commission, were announced, MINERVA Plus and MICHAEL, as well as the National multilingual portal for the cultural and tourist offering.

FLORENCE, 16TH-17TH OCTOBER 2003
 "THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL MEMORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE"
http://www.imss.fi.it/memorie_digitali

28th June 2004, together with the conference "Access all areas: serving the user"; both were hosted by the Irish Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism in co-operation with An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the National Museum of Ireland, and supported by MINERVA. The Irish Presidency followed up the activity undertaken by the Italian one in terms of extension of the group in view of the aggregation of New Accession States (NAS); in fact, the representatives of Norway were present and expressed their willingness to join the network NRG/MINERVA. During the meeting, a member of the Council of Europe presented the draft of the *Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society*, and the NRG set up a small sub-group to add a contribution on the information society and digitisation issues related to the cultural heritage. The international conference on digitisation "Access all areas: serving the user" took place on the 29th of June at Dublin Castle and was attended by the delegates from the NRG meeting, as well as local, national, and international representatives from the Cultural Heritage sectors: libraries, museums, and archives. Cultural Heritage Project team members presented a preview of the new version of Ireland's portal *AskAboutIreland*. This portal Website focuses on the public library sector and will serve as both a gateway to the local public libraries and a showcase of digitised cultural content created by the local libraries, museums and archives and the National Museum of Ireland. The future of portals and technology was discussed by Pat Manson of the European Commission, Paul Miller of the UK Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), and Gregory O'Hare of the University College Dublin, while Vladimir Skok, Director of the Canadian Cultural Observatory, introduced the Canadian portal.

6TH NRG MEETING – DUBLIN, CONCLUSIONS
[http://www.minervaeurope.org/
 structure/nrg/documents/040628.htm](http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/040628.htm)

DUBLIN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
 "ACCESS ALL AREAS: SERVING THE USER"
[http://www.eu2004.ie/templates/
 meeting.asp?sNavlocator=5,13&list_id=189](http://www.eu2004.ie/templates/meeting.asp?sNavlocator=5,13&list_id=189)
[http://www.minervaeurope.org/
 events/dublinfinalprog.rtf](http://www.minervaeurope.org/events/dublinfinalprog.rtf)

Dutch Presidency

The Hague, 15th September 2004 the 7th NRG meeting

The 7th NRG meeting and conference on long term preservation of digital memory, "Strategies for a European area of cultural resources" (The Hague, 15th - 17th September), aims at carrying on the work undertaken under the Italian presidency. Besides the technical topic of long term preservation, the Dutch presidency is also focusing efforts on the long term sustainability of the NRG. In Parma, in fact, Dutch representatives introduced a *Position Paper on EU Added Value and post-Lund Strategy*, that now is expected to be completed by a background report on the possible European organisation model that could help sustaining the network.

POSITION PAPER ON EU ADDED VALUE
 AND POST-LUND STRATEGY
[http://www.minervaeurope.org/
 structure/nrg/documents/positionpaper031115.htm](http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/positionpaper031115.htm)

HAGUE CONFERENCE "STRATEGIES FOR A EUROPEAN AREA OF CULTURAL RESOURCES"
[http://eu2004.digitaliseringerfg.
 oed.nl/asp/page.asp?alias=cultuurtechnologie&page_alias=eu2004](http://eu2004.digitaliseringerfg.oed.nl/asp/page.asp?alias=cultuurtechnologie&page_alias=eu2004)

The assessment

One of the main themes tackled during the Irish Presidency was the strategic progress assessment of the "Coordinating Digitisation in Europe" initiative. This review process was promoted by the Italian and Irish Presidencies (July-December 2003/January-June 2004),

in order to renew the focus of the work of the initiative and to provide a starting point for plans for a future roadmap, as envisaged by the forthcoming Dutch Presidency. The background of this initiative is the awareness that the political, economic and technological context has changed dramatically since the original Lund meeting and since the establishment of the NRG. Many of the original aims of the initiative have been met, while the importance of others has increased or decreased over time. New priorities have emerged as experience across Europe has grown. A review of progress to date and the identification of new opportunities and priorities was seen as a very worthwhile exercise. The focus of the assessment and analysis is on concrete results that have a demonstrable impact on the cultural landscape, and which underline the effect of the work of the initiative on the development of eContent and the contribution of cultural heritage to eEurope. In particular, the short term strategy of the NRG should consider the following:

- developing its best practice, quality and technical guideline products
- promoting multilingual cultural Websites, including working where feasible with the MICHAEL project
- supporting high level political awareness of the importance of long term preservation of digital material
- maintaining the high level of political buy-in and endorsement that the initiative enjoys
- developing a sustainable model, financially and organisationally, for the continued functioning of the initiative
- facilitating the full involvement of the new Member States in initiative
- working in concert with other projects.

Particular attention is paid to the benchmarking initiative carried out in the framework of work package 2 of MINERVA, and its positive and critical aspects, in as much as it is an initiative that has yet to achieve its full potential. The assessment document was presented on the 28th June 2004 during the 6th NRG meeting, held under the aegis of the Irish Presidency.

Comité des Affaires Culturelles (CAC)

Another indicator of the success of the network in terms of impact on the decision-making institutional bodies, is that the Comité des Affaires Culturelles (CAC) of the Council of Ministers of the European Union has been kept closely informed on the activities of MINERVA and has much appreciated the work undertaken. This committee has also been involved in the nomination of new NRG members from the countries that joined the European Union in May 2004; new NRG members have been nominated also by Russia and Israel.



The strategic documents



Sandro Filippi detto il Botticelli, *Allegoria della Primavera*
 Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi
 © Soprintendenza speciale per il polo museale fiorentino

During the year 2003, MINERVA, supported by the NRG, produced some strategic documents in order to address the outstanding issues related to the digitisation of cultural heritage and to plan future developments, in order to implement the Lund Action Plan on the basis of a uniform approach.

The Charter of Parma

The *Charter of Parma* was approved by the National Representatives Group for digitisation during their 5th meeting in Parma (19th November 2003). This document represents the natural outcome of one of the NRG's priorities (from the 4th NRG meeting conclusions): «consolidate the NRG position and high-level political commitment also using the tool of publications and recommendations by NRG», in order to promote the adoption of the recommendations and guidelines produced.

The Italian Presidency presented this collective work to CAC, the Comité des Affaires Culturelles of the Council of Ministers of the European Union, on 27th October 2003 and to the formal Council of Culture Ministers on 24th November 2003.

The contents included in the *Charter of Parma* are summarised in ten articles:

1. Intelligent use of the Internet
2. Accessibility
3. Quality
4. Intellectual property and privacy
5. Interoperability and standards
6. Inventories and Multilingualism
7. Benchmarking
8. Relations with European and international institutions
9. Enlargement and co-operation
10. Future perspectives

The charter must be taken as an evolving paper which integrates other initiatives such as the *Brussels Quality Framework*, and is open to improvements until the requirements described here are fully satisfied.

CHARTER OF PARMA

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/charterparma.htm>

The Firenze Agenda

Following the Council Resolution of 2nd June 2002 on *Preserving tomorrow's memory – preserving digital content for future generations* and on the occasion of the international conference held in Florence during the Italian Presidency on 16th and 17th October 2003, "The future of digital memory and cultural heritage", a working group made up of experts in the field was proposed to identify the state of the art and plan the developments needed to implement the resolution principles. This group is led by the ERPANET and MINERVA projects. Other projects or networks of excellence are key actors, such as DELOS, PRESTOSPACE, DIGICULT FORUM. The result of the conference was the *Firenze Agenda*, a document intended to stimulate and coordinate the ongoing initiatives in Europe in the field of long term preservation. The first progress will be presented in the second half of 2004 during the Dutch presidency. The group of experts is now working to build a strong consensus among decision makers and user communities, as well as establishing cooperation with other networks or projects in the field.



Block VI of the North Parthenon Frieze
Athens, Acropolis Museum

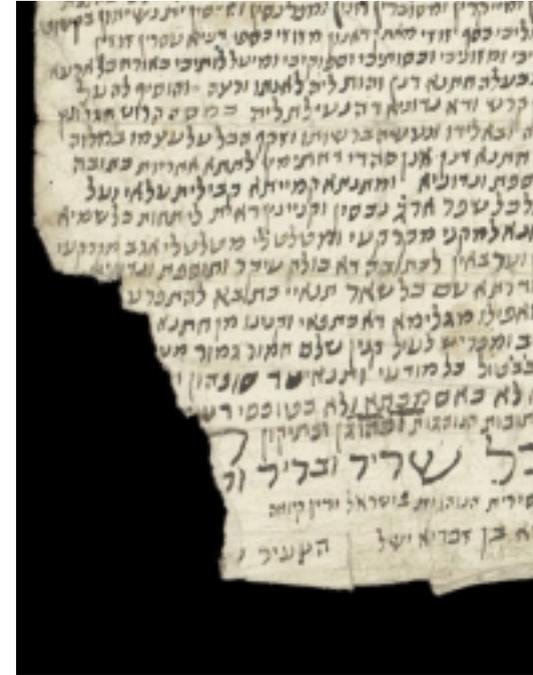
COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON PRESERVING TOMORROW'S
MEMORY (2002/C 162/02)

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/c_162/c_16220020706en00040005.pdf

FIRENZE AGENDA

<http://www.erpanet.org/www/workgroup/main.htm>

Outcomes and practical progress



Jewish Marriage Contract
Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library

Coordinating digitization in Europe: Progress Report of the NRG

The first edition of the *Progress Report*, edited by the MINERVA project on behalf of the European Commission, was born under the aegis of the Danish Presidency (July-December 2002) with the aim of giving the widest visibility to the national initiatives in the field of digitizations of the cultural heritage. The overview provided by each National Representative in his own country covers policies, programmes and projects elaborated at institutional level. With 3,500 copies published, and written in an accessible style, the report was a great success with digitisation project managers and particularly with decision and policy makers at institutional levels. The update of the Progress report reflecting the activities carried out in 2003 was recently published in 7,000 copies and also includes the contributions of the ten new accession States as well as those of Israel and Russia.

COORDINATING DIGITISATION IN EUROPE: PROGRESS REPORT
OF THE NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES GROUP

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/globalreport.htm>

The benchmarking report

The second phase of the benchmarking activity closed at the end of 2003. The aim of the benchmarking exercise for digitisation projects is that of finding a suitable instrument for the diffusion of information among Member States about digitisation initiatives, the exchange of good practices, and, in particular, checking the availability of benchmarking partners. Taking into account that the general aim of benchmarking is searching for best practices that produce superior performance, the work carried out by the MINERVA Working group 2 produced a tool available online, based on a data-base gathering information from the Member States. The final report was presented as *New opportunities for benchmarking the digitisation of cultural heritage in Europe* and is published in this booklet as annex.

BENCHMARKING WORKING GROUP

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/benchmarking/digitquestion.htm>

SECOND REPORT ON A BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK

http://www.minervaeurope.org/intranet/reports/D2_2.pdf

BENCHMARKING DOCUMENTS

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/benchmarking/docindex.htm>

The cluster

The ambitious long-term vision of MINERVA, in terms of coordination and solving the fragmentation currently wasting national efforts in the field of digitisation, is to promote the adoption and implementation of a common action plan (the Lund Action Plan) by other projects and initiatives under the coordination of the European Commission and the Presidency in turn. This aim was initially pursued by the MINERVA and EMII-DCF projects from October 2003, when they released the joint position paper bearing entitled *Encouraging IST research on European digital cultural content*. The aim of the document is to define a common strategic action line to ensure the transfer of new technologies to memory organisations.

In order to address this matter, MINERVA organised, during Bibliocom 2003, the first meeting of the European cultural networks. Many representatives from the most important cultural projects, in particular those funded within the 6th Framework programme, such as BRICKS, CALIMERA, DELOS, Digicult, EPOCH, EMII-DCF, ERPANET, EVA, HEREIN, MUSICNETWORK, PRESTOSPACE, took part in the meeting with the purpose of promoting reciprocal cooperation



Saint Basil the Blessed Cathedral
Moscow, Red Square

and creating a common research area.

A set of issues was agreed and, in particular, it was decided to meet approximately every six months to advance the work undertaken. The cluster meeting was repeated on 31st March 2004 on the occasion of EVA Florence 2004 including new participants, Euromed Heritage II and SCRAN, and further developments have been planned: a common calendar of the events, shared publications, and bilateral cooperation on specific topics. In particular, the following shared activities are ongoing with:

- DELOS on digital libraries
- BRICKS on IPR issues and semantic Web
- PRESTOSPACE on audiovisual inventories
- EPOCH on the publication of a joint report on digitisation activities across Europe
- CALIMERA on good practices collection and definition of technical guidelines.

Finally, it's worth mentioning that MINERVA Plus has already initiated a close collaboration with BRICKS, CALIMERA, DELOS, EPOCH, PRESTOSPACE, according with the bilateral agreements and specific terms of coordination described in the reciprocal technical annexes.

MINERVA-EMII DCF JOINT POSITION PAPER

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/intranet/documents/emiiMINERVA0310.pdf>

DIGITISATION CLUSTER

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/digicluster.htm>

BRICKS

<http://www.bricksfactory.com>
<http://www.brickscommunity.org>

CALIMERA

<http://www.calimera.org>

DELOS

<http://www.delos.info>

DIGICULT FORUM

<http://www.digicult.info>

EMII-DCF

<http://www.emii-dcf.org>

EPOCH

<http://www.epoch-net.org>

ERPANET

<http://www.erpanet.org>

EUROMED HERITAGE II

<http://www.euromedheritage.net>

EVA

<http://www.eva-conferences.com>

MINERVA

<http://www.minervaeurope.org>

MUSICNETWORK

<http://www.interactivemusicnetwork.org>

PRESTOSPACE

<http://prestospace.org>

SCRAN

<http://www.scran.ac.uk>

The French-Italian prototype

In the ambit of MINERVA, the French and Italian ministries of culture have launched a joint portal for digitised cultural collections. This task is the first step to build common cultural online services and it is based upon locally maintained catalogues of digital cultural content. The search engine allows the user to browse in Italian, French or English through some French and Italian digitised collections of archives, libraries, and museums. This prototype is one of the basic elements the project MICHAEL has been developed from.

PORTAIL FRANCO-ITALIEN DES FONDS NUMÉRISÉS

http://vernier.gamsau.archi.fr:9000/sdx/anum_portal/index.xsp

MICHAEL

The proposal of MICHAEL (Multilingual Inventory of Cultural Heritage in Europe), approved in the framework of the eTen programme, was born of the joint efforts of Italy, France and United Kingdom on interoperability and inventories carried out for MINERVA; it can be considered a MINERVA spin off.

The project will define a common approach and a model of digital cultural heritage services that will be applied across the participating nations. The MICHAEL project focuses on the integration and alignment of many national initiatives in the digital cultural heritage sector. The project will deliver interoperability of national cultural portal initiatives and a high-quality end-user service, which will facilitate the exploitation of European cultural content resources.

The project will establish an international online service, which will allow its users to search, browse and examine multiple national cultural portals from a single point of access. This online service will be actively supported and endorsed by the national governments and agencies responsible for cultural heritage. Based on standards and open-source technologies, built upon an existing platform, flexible and extensible in terms of adding additional nations

to the scope of the resource, it implements the newly-agreed pan-European standards and guidelines for digital cultural heritage initiatives, as approved by the NRG. The MICHAEL project builds upon the following existing assets:

- the methodology and resources established by the MINERVA project. MINERVA has already achieved certain of the Lund Action Plan objectives, while MICHAEL will make further progress towards the Lund Action Plan aims;
- the common meta-data standard for Inventories of digitisation projects developed by MINERVA and agreed by the National Representatives Group, in particular the French-Italian Prototype;
- the technical platform used in the French inventory project, which the French-Italian prototype is based on.

The end user will exploit the MICHAEL services to find and explore European cultural heritage material, which will be accessible, on a multilingual basis, over the Internet. The MICHAEL consortium is made up of the ministries of culture of France, Italy and the United Kingdom, supported by the private bodies Dedale, AJLSM and Amité for the technological and administrative aspects.

CATALOGUE DES FONDS CULTURELS NUMÉRISÉS

http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/mrt/numerisation/fr/f_02.htm

MICHAEL

<http://www.michael-culture.org>

Technical guidelines for digital cultural content creation programmes

The MINERVA project has completed *Technical guidelines for digital cultural content creation programmes*. These guidelines are based upon a range of existing developments and research, particularly the UK's NOF (New Opportunities Fund)-digitise Programme, and were developed in conjunction with the PULMAN, EMII-DCF and ERPANET projects. The *Guidelines* have been developed as a resource for policy-makers and managers of funding programmes, encouraging the development of interoperable content, and



Munising contract
about the reunification
of Württemberg, 1482
© Hauptstaatsarchiv
Stuttgart

aiming to promote approaches that support long-term preservation of digital materials. The *Guidelines* have been presented to the MINERVA partners, and are based on an approach that has already been adopted in countries such as Canada and Taiwan. In Europe, the *Guidelines* have been adopted in Greece and the Netherlands, will be soon implemented in Ireland, have been translated for adoption in France and Italy, and are about to be in Israel. As a result, the *Guidelines* should be a firm foundation for the development of interoperable services at a European level, building on the work achieved throughout the MINERVA project. In Italy these *Guidelines* are going to be revisited and harmonised with the national ones in order to define a set of recommendations for the forthcoming National Portal of Culture project.

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR DIGITAL CULTURAL CONTENT
CREATION PROGRAMMES
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/technicalguidelines.htm>

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FUND (NOF)
<http://www.nof.org.uk/>

PULMAN
<http://www.pulmanweb.org/>

EMII-DCF
<http://www.emii-dcf.org>

ERPANET
<http://www.erpanet.org/>

Handbook for quality in cultural Web sites

The *Handbook for quality in cultural Web sites: improving quality for citizens* was successfully presented during the Parma International conference on 21st November 2003. This work was carried out with the contribution of more than 30 experts from all over Europe and originated from the *Brussels Quality Framework*, the first document on the matter edited in 2001 on the occasion of the 1st meeting of the National Representatives Group in Brussels.

Starting from the conclusions of this discussion paper, in the framework of the activities carried out by the MINERVA Quality Working group, some steps have been gone through. The *Handbook for quality in cultural Web sites* should be considered as a working document, in need of further developments. It is not only a working document but also a work in progress, carried out in the context of all MINERVA work packages, of the documents that they produce, and of the principles and guidelines they formulate. The handbook has been published in English and was distributed at the Parma conference; a German translation will be soon available. The Italian Working group on quality supervised the translation into Italian of the handbook and its adaptation to the national scenario. This publication has been presented both to public and private actors during several seminars.

"IDENTIFICATION OF USER NEEDS, CONTENT AND QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR COMMON ACCESS POINTS" MINERVA WORKING GROUP
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/userneeds.htm>

BRUSSELS QUALITY FRAMEWORK
<http://www.cfwb.be/qualite-Bruxelles/pg001.asp>

HANDBOOK FOR QUALITY IN CULTURAL WEB SITES: IMPROVING QUALITY FOR CITIZENS (ENGLISH VERSION)
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/qualitycriteria.htm>

The handbook test bed

During the NRG meeting in Parma, Italy also proposed to check the criteria present in the handbook and, as a consequence, set up a programme of test beds. Almost 30 private and public institutions placed their Web sites at the project's disposal and started their restyling or, in some case, the creation itself.

These case studies have been selected from 8 categories of cultural subjects, as listed into the quality handbook: archives, libraries, cultural heritage diffused on territory, museums, institutes for administration and safeguarding, centres for research and education, temporary exhibitions, cultural projects. The results of this assessment will be presented in winter on the occasion of a national conference.

A long series of seminar on the MINERVA quality approach involving both private and public institutions across Italy is on-going.

MANUALE PER LA QUALITÀ DEI SITI WEB PUBBLICI CULTURALI (ITALIAN VERSION)
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/qualitycriteria-i.htm>

HANDBOOK TESTING
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/userneeds/handbooktest-i.htm>

Cultural Website Quality Principles

The ten principles for quality are the basic concepts, the quintessence of the content of the handbook on quality in cultural Web sites. They were presented during the MINERVA international conference in Parma and printed in English on a poster; many national translations are now available on the MINERVA Web site and will soon be printed on postcards. A detailed explanatory document for the criteria was prepared by the European Working group on quality issues and is going to be published. The draft version was presented at the 6th NRG meeting in Dublin for discussion.

CULTURAL WEBSITE QUALITY PRINCIPLES
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/userneeds/documents/cwqp-uk.htm>

COMMENTARY AND EXPLORATION OF THE TEN QUALITY PRINCIPLES PUBLISHED BY THE MINERVA PROJECT AND AGREED AT THE 5th NRG MEETING IN PARMA
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/qualityprinciples.htm>

The Good practices handbook

The *Good practices handbook* is the result of the MINERVA project's Good practice working group. It was conceived as a practical handbook intended to be a guide for the establishment, execution and management of digitisation projects, with particular focus on the cultural area. The target audience of this handbook is teams within and across cultural institutions who are contemplating, or are already executing, digitisation projects. The document substantially reflects the outcomes of the Working group and in particular the research completed in connection with the 2nd NRG meeting in Alicante, Spain, in May 2002.

The core text of the *Good practices handbook* is articulated into ten categories, corresponding to as many steps of the digitisation process: project planning, selection of source material for digitisation, preparation for digitisation, handling the originals, the digitisation process, preservation of digital master material, metadata, publication, IPR and copyright, managing digitisation projects. The handbook was presented to the public on the occasion of Bibliocom 2003 and endorsed at the 5th NRG meeting in Parma. Due to the great success that the first English publication of the handbook enjoyed (the digitisation guidelines and the references to the

MINERVA good practices have been detached and published separately online), a shorter edition has been published in English and French. German, and Italian translations are under preparation.

GOOD PRACTICES HANDBOOK
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/goodhand.htm>

DIGITISATION GUIDELINES: A SELECTED LIST
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/guidelines.htm>

MINERVA GOOD PRACTICES
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/listgoodpract.htm>

Future perspectives: new categories and the data collection campaign

MINERVA has started a new campaign for the collection of good practices in digitisation and information on competence centres, in order to update the MINERVA Knowledge Base. Each case can be nominated in one or more of the ten categories stated in the handbook:

1. Digitisation Project Planning (the goal of the project, human resources, research, risks)
2. Selecting Source Material for Digitisation (establish selection, criteria, selection against the criteria)
3. Preparation for Digitisation (hardware; software; environment)
4. Handling of Originals (moving and manipulating original material)
5. The Digitisation Process (using scanners; using digital cameras; software applications for optical character recognition - OCR)
6. Preservation of Digital Master Material (file formats; media choices; migration strategies)
7. Meta-Data (the scope of meta-data used for object description; appropriate meta-data standards)
8. Publication (image processing; 3d and virtual reality issues; online publication)
9. IPR and Copyright (establishing copyright; safeguarding copyright)
10. Managing Digitisation projects (digitisation process management; team development; staff training; working with third parties for technical assistance; working with third parties in cooperative projects and content sharing; costs)

Before publication in the MINERVA Knowledge Base, the forms submitted are validated by the competent National Representative for digitisation for approval. Both good practice and competence centre nomination forms have been updated according

staff for the national project of the Italian Digital Library.

QUALITY PRINCIPLES FOR WEB SITES IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR
TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR DIGITAL CULTURAL CONTENT
CREATION PROGRAMMES

<http://217.58.15.86:8086/login/index.php>

MINERVA Knowledge Base

This is the term by which the MINERVA Website is commonly known. It is a portal in the field of digitisation. It is an accessible site, made in HTML 4.01. It counts about 10,000 internal links, and 4,000 external links. Since 2004, it hosts also information on MINERVA Plus project.

The site is managed by a content editor and a technical editor who update the site almost daily. Primary sources for updating are: documents edited by working groups; documents edited by MINERVA Secretariat and Project Management; news sent to the editorial board; press; etc. Special attention is paid to preservation: a general backup of the site is effected monthly; all versions and drafts of a single documents are maintained online. The MINERVA Knowledge Base has been selected by the National Library of Australia to be preserved (PADI initiative). Through its Website, MINERVA publishes a newsletter in English and Italian, with more than 2,500 subscriptions.

MINERVA KNOWLEDGE BASE

<http://www.minervaeurope.org>

MINERVA NEWSLETTER

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/newsletter.asp>

MINERVA Plus

MINERVA Plus, led as MINERVA by the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, was proposed to the European Commission as an extension of the good results achieved by the MINERVA network to the countries that on May 2004 joined the European Union. The answer of New Accession States (NAS) was enthusiastic. The submission of the proposal was prepared by intense political activity carried out by the Italian Presidency, which officially asked NAS representatives at Comité des Affaires Culturelles to appoint their National Representatives for digitisation of cultural heritage to join the NRG. The action was successful. At the moment MINERVA Plus brought together ministries or cultural agencies from the following countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, and Slovenia, but the full involvement of all ten NAS is expected. Israel and Russia too,

thanks to bilateral agreements with the European Union, are partners of the project and are present in the NRG as observers. The continuity between the previous MINERVA project and the new initiative is assured by maintaining the same coordinator, the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, and other Member States partner of both tasks.

The action lines of MINERVA and MINERVA Plus are synchronised; the new partners are working on the same thematic issues of the previous project focussing the efforts on specific topics.

Working group	Specific topic	MINERVA coordinator	MINERVA Plus coordinator
WP3: inventories and multilingual issues	Discovery of multilingual thesauri	France	Hungary
WP4: interoperability & service provision	Business models for digitisation programmes	United Kingdom	Greece
WP5: quality of cultural Web sites	Small and medium cultural institutions needs	Belgium	Germany
WP6: good practices	Digitisation cycle cost reduction	Sweden	Israel

In the framework of MINERVA Plus, Hungary coordinates the WP3 activity; at the moment it is carrying out a survey at European level about the existence of multilingual thesauri and the use of controlled vocabularies in cultural Web sites in MINERVA countries. The analysis of the data collected will be presented in September at the 7th NRG meeting in the Hague.

The results achieved by this Working group will be integrated with the technical platform established by the MICHAEL project. The definition of a business model for digitisation projects is the aim of the research carried out by Greece, with the final objective of defining technical guidelines and a future observatory on the matter, and giving specific tool for the management of IPR and related issues. The activity on Intellectual Property Right is the follow up of the work undertaken by the English, Greek and Italian MINERVA Working groups on the matter, which edited a draft of recommendations on accessibility and the protection of data and rights, based on the national regulations and requirements, and aligned with a common European minimum. The objective of WP5, led by Germany, is to disseminate the quality products of MINERVA to all the small and medium cultural institutions, providing, in particular, concrete tools for the creation and management of quality cultural content for the Web.

On the basis of the products of the Working group

on good practices in digitisation, in particular the handbook mentioned above and the good practice examples gathered by MINERVA, Israel will propose a model for the validation through experimental actions of a model for digitisation cost reduction.

MINERVA PLUS

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/whatis/minervaplus.htm>

MINERVA AND MINERVA PLUS WORKING GROUPS

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups.htm>

HUNGARIAN MINERVA WEB SITE

<http://www.mek.oszk.hu/minerva/>

ISRAELIAN MINERVA WEB SITE

<http://www.ejewish.info/reka/minerva/index.htm>
<http://minervaisrael.org.il>

RUSSIAN MINERVA WEB SITE

<http://www.minervaplus.ru/>

SURVEY OF MULTILINGUALISM AND THE USE OF CONTROLLED VOCABULARIES OF CULTURAL SITES IN MINERVA COUNTRIES

<http://www.mek.oszk.hu/minerva/survey/survey.html>

to these categories and are available online. The goal of this new campaign is primarily to involve new partners of MINERVA Plus into the MINERVA activities that have already started, to collect a critical mass of examples and to define some general evaluation criteria through the activity of benchmarking. Interested institutions can submit the forms directly through the MINERVA Web site.

CAMPAIGNS ON GOOD PRACTICES AND COMPETENCE CENTRES

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/goodpractcamp.htm>
<http://www.minervaeurope.org/competencecentre.htm>

eLearning

An eLearning platform was set-up in the framework of the Lund Principles and MINERVA project, in order to allow people to access training materials.

Two eLearning courseware have been already developed and are available on line:

- Quality principles for Web sites in the cultural sector
- Technical guidelines for digital cultural content creation programmes.

The first topic is focused on the MINERVA quality framework, i.e. the *Cultural Web sites quality principles* and the *Handbook for quality in cultural Web sites*. The course is articulated in: *general definitions, principles, recommendations; quality in Web applications; the MINERVA model for cultural Web applications*. The technical guidelines course tackles the following issues on the basis of the *Technical guidelines for digital cultural content creation programmes* produced by the MINERVA Working group 4: *preparation for digitisation; handling the originals; the digitisation process; storage and management of the digital master material; metadata creation/capture; publication; disclosure; re-use and re-purposing; IPR and Copyright*. The Italian Central Institute for Unique Catalogue (ICCU) will use the MINERVA quality tools for an eLearning course within the project "eLearning centres", the goal of which is to train specialised

International cooperation with non European countries



Sandro Filippi detto il Botticelli,
Madonna del Magnificat
Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi
© Soprintendenza speciale per il polo
museale fiorentino

Italy Israel Bi-National Seminar on digital access to scientific and cultural heritage

The bilateral meeting Italy-Israel has been organised by the Italian Embassy in Israel, the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Science and technology of Israel and the eJewish.info agency, with the support of MINERVA project, in the framework of the agreement between Italy and Israel for industrial, scientific and technological cooperation. It is worth noting that both Israeli bodies are partners of MINERVA Plus. The main objective of the meeting was to increase reciprocal awareness about the ongoing initiatives in both countries on the digitisation of the cultural heritage. The interest by experts from museums, libraries, archives, e-government, research centres and technology providers was huge and this meeting aimed to increase cooperation and sharing common initiatives. The Italian delegation was led by the advisor for foreign affairs of the Minister of Cultural Heritage and composed of 14 experts in the field of digitisation of cultural heritage. More than 150 Israeli experts participated in the event; it was the first time that representatives from the archives, libraries and museums sector had the opportunity to work together.

Russia

A close cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Culture has started. The MINERVA project was presented at some important events: the tenth international conference "Crimea 2003: Library and information availability in the modern world - Digital resources of science, culture and education" held in June 2003; the National, Regional and International Information Policies Development of UNESCO in September 2003 and the international conference "Information for all UNESCO Programme: universal access to information" (St. Petersburg, 25th June 2004). This conference could be considered as a milestone in the dissemination of the MINERVA results because of the large number of Russian cultural institutions that expressed their willingness to take part in the MINERVA

activities, and for the cooperation activity planned together with UNESCO in the framework of the programme *Information for all*.

Thanks to the cooperation undertaken, a group of delegates from all the major Russian libraries came in October 2003 to Italy and had the opportunity to establish contacts with Italian colleagues.

Today, the Centre of Information in the Sphere of Culture of the Ministry of Culture of Russia is partner of MINERVA Plus, and furthermore, through its representatives, a cultural exchange between a group of experts from the major Russian public libraries and the libraries of Rome, Florence and Vatican has been organised.

Canada

Some preliminary contacts with Canadian institutions started and MINERVA was represented at the 4th meeting of Cultural Content Forum in Banff and the workshop "Beyond productivity: culture & heritage resources in the digital age" in Calgary, event held at the end of February 2004.

Mediterranean area

The long term sustainability of MINERVA is deeply connected with the dissemination of its results; the Mediterranean area is considered as a preferential basin of users and close contacts are ongoing with two main projects, coordinated respectively by Italy and France, that gather a large number of initiatives elaborated by the countries of this area: Euromed Heritage II-RMSU and STRABON. Euromed Heritage II is part of the programme MEDA and launched a tender for the creation of a Regional Management Support Unit (RMSU), won by the Central Institute for Cataloguing and Documentation of the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities. It manages 12 projects funded by the European Commission and 22 European and Mediterranean countries, from United Kingdom to Syria. Euromed Heritage recently built its own Web site taking into account the quality criteria defined by MINERVA. Another possible partner for the dissemination of MINERVA and MINERVA Plus results in the Mediterranean basin is the project STRABON. Coordinated by Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, STRABON aims at creating a platform for the production and dissemination of multimedia and tourist content on the cultural Mediterranean heritage. The consortium is composed by 12 partners: France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia.

South-eastern Europe

Preliminary contacts are ongoing with institutions of the countries from south-eastern Europe, in particular with IMI, the Institute for Mathematics and Informatics (IMI) of Sofia, Bulgaria, and the Mathematical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts of Belgrade, ex Yugoslavia; both of them signed the cooperation agreement with MINERVA. This relation was reinforced on the occasion of the third international conference "New technologies and standards: digitization of national heritage 2004", that was held in Belgrade from 3rd to 5th June 2004 which saw MINERVA participation.

ITALY ISRAEL BI-NATIONAL SEMINAR

<http://www.ejewish.info/reka/bi/default.html>

UNESCO

www.unesco.org

INFORMATION FOR ALL – UNESCO PROGRAMME

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/ev.php?URL_ID=1627&URL_D0=D0_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201

UNESCO CONFERENCE

"UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION"

http://confifap.cpic.ru/spb2004/eng/info/str_b.html

PRE-DCCF - DIGICULT CULTURAL CONTENT FORUM WORKSHOP

<http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/conferences-training/dcccf-workshop/index.html>

EUROMED HERITAGE II

www.euromedheritage.net

STRABON

www.strabon.org

THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

"NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND STANDARDS: DIGITIZATION OF NATIONAL HERITAGE 2004"
<http://www.ncd.matf.bg.ac.yu/?page=conferences&lang=en&file=radniskup2004.html>

Publications



J. Zrzavy (1890-1977)
Kleopatra 1942-1957
The National Gallery Kleopatra

Already published

Charter of Parma (2004)

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/charterparma.htm>

Available in English, French, German, Italian, Slovak

Cultural Web site quality principles (2003)

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/userneeds/documents/cwqp-uk.htm>

Available in English, Estonian, French, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Slovenian, Spanish

Digitising content together. Ministerial network of valorising activities in digitisation (2003)

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications.minervabooklet-e.pdf>

Available in English and Italian

Handbook for quality in cultural Web sites: improving quality for citizens (2003)

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/qualitycriteria.htm>

Good practices handbook (2004)

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/goodhand.htm>

Available in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese

MINERVA publications catalogue

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications.htm>

Manuale per la qualità dei siti Web culturali pubblici (2004)

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/qualitycriteria-i.htm>

Progress report of the National Representatives Group: coordination mechanisms for digitisation policies and programmes 2002 (2003)

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/globalreport/globalrep2002.htm>

Progress report of the National Representatives Group: coordination mechanisms for digitisation policies and programmes 2003 (2004)

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/globalreport/globalrep2003.htm>

Technical guidelines for digital cultural content creation programmes (2004)

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/technicalguidelines.htm>

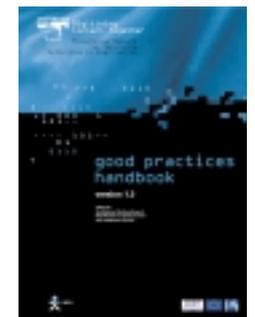
Under preparation

Commentary and exploration of the ten "Quality principles"

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/qualitycommentary/qualitycommentary040622draft.pdf>

Technical guidelines for digital cultural content creation programmes

Italian and French translations



Keysteps 2001-2004



Stanislaw Wyspianski
Artist's wife with son
1904

January 2001

Questionnaire on national/regional policies and programmes on digitisation of cultural and scientific content

March 2001

"An open method for benchmarking digitisation policies - objectives, methodology and indicators"

4 April 2001

Lund Principles & Action Plan.

17 July 2001

Workshop on "Internet & culture, experts meeting on European Cultural Heritage on the Web"

September 2001

EC Communication on "Accessibility of Public Web Sites" COM(2001) 529, Brussels, 25.09.2001

10 December 2001

The benchmarking Workgroup agreed the proposed model and launched the first data collection

11 December 2001

1st National Representatives Group (NRG) meeting in Brussels, Brussels Quality Framework, for accessibility and quality of Web sites for cultural content, was developed in cooperation with the Belgian Presidency

January 2002

Council Resolutions 2002/C C32/01 e C32/02 on "Culture in the knowledge society" and "Role of culture in the development of the European Union"

March 2002

MINERVA Thematic Network Project started

16 May 2002

2nd NRG meeting in Alicante, under the Spanish Presidency

17 May 2002

Workshop on "Digitisation good practices" in Alicante, organised by the Spanish Presidency and MINERVA project

September 2002

Council Resolution 2002/C 162/02 on "Preserving tomorrow's memory - preserving digital content for future generations"

17 October 2002

Workshop on "The Quality in Cultural Web Sites" in Rome at the Bibliocom Conference, organised by the MINERVA Project

10 December 2002

3rd NRG meeting in Copenhagen, under the Danish Presidency

11 December 2002

Workshop on "Preservation of digital memory" in Copenhagen, organised by the Danish Presidency

26 June 2003

4th NRG meeting in Corfu, under coordination of the Greek Presidency

27-28 June 2003

Workshop on "Digitisation of Cultural Content" in Corfu, organised by the Greek Presidency

16-17 October 2003

International conference on "Long Term Preservation of Digital Memories" in Florence, organised by the Italian Presidency

19 November 2003

5th NRG meeting in Parma, under coordination of the Italian Presidency

20-21 November 2003

International conference on Web Quality for Culture, in Parma, organised by the Italian Presidency and the MINERVA project

28 June 2004

6th NRG meeting in Dublin, under coordination of the Irish Presidency

29 June 2004

Digitisation conference, in Dublin, on "Access all areas: serving the user" examining cultural portals from an end-user perspective

15-16 September 2004

European Conference in The Hague, "Strategies for a European area of digital cultural resources"

17 September 2004

7th NRG meeting in The Hague, under coordination of the Dutch Presidency

MINERVA and MINERVA Plus events

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/whatis/minervaevents.htm>

ANNEX

New opportunities for benchmarking the digitisation of cultural heritage in Europe

Majken Bremer-Laamanen
Head of Preservation, Leader of Benchmarking
Framework Work Package
National Library of Finland
Helsinki University Library

Minna Kaukonen
Project Coordinator
National Library of Finland
Helsinki University Library

How to find good practices in digitisation?
How and where to find benchmarking partners
for digitisation projects and programmes? These
were the key guidelines in the work accomplished
by the MINERVA Benchmarking Working package,
which produced the online benchmarking
database for the digitisation initiatives of cultural
heritage. The system currently includes the data
of about a hundred European initiatives.

The Benchmarking Report – Second Edition was
published on the Website of MINERVA at the
beginning of October 2003. The report is based
on the work carried out by the Benchmarking
Framework Working package of the MINERVA
project since spring 2002, the related online
benchmarking campaign in Europe in
spring/summer 2003 and the summary
of the results. The first preliminary edition
of the report was presented at the NRG meeting
in Corfu in June 2003.

Benchmarking?

Benchmarking means an on-going search for
best practices that produce superior performance
when adapted and implemented in your own
organisation (Bogan-English 1994). Your own
performance can be improved by comparing
yourself with others and by learning from the
good practices of others – although this means
that first you have to admit that someone else
can do things better than you can. Benchmarking
has five phases:

1. describe the current situation: choose the
process to be benchmarked
2. find a benchmarking partner and compare
experiences
3. analyse the differences in performance
4. set a new goal
5. implement, evaluate and develop

Benchmarking is not a throw-away quality
management tool but has inherent the idea of
continuity and the improvement of performance
over the long term. Good practices are tightly
connected with benchmarking. The benchmarking
partners chosen should be organisations which
are on a slightly higher performance level than



Eduardo Afonso Viana (Lisboa, 1881-1967)
Guitarra minhota
Lisbon, Museu do Chiado
© IPM/DDF

yours. In addition they should employ good
practices. By implementing in your own
organisation what you have learnt in the
benchmarking process you create good practices,
yourself. Learning and implementation are
essential. Benchmarking is an active process and
not just comparing benchmarks: facts and
measurements.

The MINERVA benchmarking database facilitates initiatives

In order to facilitate the work of project,
programme and policy managers working
on digitisation initiatives, the MINERVA
benchmarking online database was launched
on 14th April in 2003. The online benchmarking
tool created by the Group has a dynamic and
on-going character. The online forms can be
filled in continuously. You are invited to get
acquainted with the system.
The Index page of the database shows 3 levels
of initiatives. You can fill in information about
your projects, your programmes or your policies.
The questions chosen are key questions for
benchmarking and good practices. The online
benchmarking database additionally includes
links to good practices in connection with the
questions. For instance, if you are interested
in Intellectual Property Rights you can click on
a Website address with more information
on the good practices regarding the subject.
It is also essential in the benchmarking process
that good practice is defined by the institution,
what it considers worth implementing in its
own activities.

The actual online forms in the benchmarking
tool have been divided into two parts: general
information and self assessment. General
information has quantitative questions about
funding, productivity, user statistics and so on.
Self assessment is further divided into the
management of digitisation initiatives and the
digitisation process. In the qualitative self
assessment part you evaluate your performance
against three statements. They represent basic,
good and best practice. Based on your answers
the programme will afterwards provide you with
information about your performance in different
fields of digitisation.

Interesting quantitative summaries

The number of answers and registrations in the
benchmarking online system at the moment is
over a hundred. The respondents include national
institutions, universities and other institutions
in the cultural heritage sector in almost all
the Member States of the European Union.
It is evident that institutions have been interested
in the exercise and have actively contacted the
administrator to ask questions or to express their
views. As 85,7% of the respondents are willing
to share their experience and information
of their projects/programmes/policies publicly
there should be a positive atmosphere in Europe
to promote benchmarking. It can be constructed
a valuable tool to enhance digitisation activities
in Europe.

The summaries of the online answers
are presented via the Website
[http://www.minervaeurope.org/
structure/workinggroups/
benchmarking/digitquestion.htm](http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/benchmarking/digitquestion.htm)
in the form of dynamic, updating reports.
There are many possibilities for searching
information in them. You can choose a filter
straight away, at the beginning of the search
and limit your results to your own country or
sector (museums, archives, libraries...) or both.
You can also look at the results question by
question and choose different search elements:
a country/countries or a sector/s or combine
these two categories. Certain questions have
also been linked.

At the moment the quantitative part, the general
information, tells more to the user of the database
than the qualitative self assessment part. In the
self assessment section the answers of the
digitisation initiatives are subjective and cannot
provide a scientific or an all-embracing picture
of the situation in the Member States. The
information collected should be analysed further
as well as the content of the statements in each
question. The benchmarking of the digitisation
of cultural heritage in Europe could thus develop.

Novelty: benchmarking partners available

The MINERVA Benchmarking Working group
produced the first part of the MINERVA
Knowledge Base and collected information

for the Good Practices Working package within MINERVA. Since benchmarking and good practices are two sides of the same coin, Finland and Sweden had a joint organisation, especially in summer-early autumn 2002. The co-operation of all the MINERVA partners and other participating persons and institutions has been valuable.

BENCHMARKING

<http://www.benchmarking-in-europe.com>

MINERVA BENCHMARKING

ONLINE FORMS AND AUTOMATIC REPORTS

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/benchmarking/digitquestion.htm>

BENCHMARKING REPORT

http://www.minervaeurope.org/intranet/reports/D2_2.pdf

on digitisation initiatives. In the next phase of MINERVA in 2003-2004 the knowledge base will be extended. It will include the accomplishments of the other working groups: inventories of digitisation projects, Website quality issues, more good practices and competence centres. The responsible partner for the further technical development is Italy. The knowledge base will provide a unique opportunity to look into the digitisation practices in the European Union. Good practices will spread more easily and detailed information about projects, programmes and policies will be available to the users of the knowledge base. The becoming opportunity to browse and to search the initiatives in order to learn about good practices and to find benchmarking partners will enhance the success of new projects and programmes by improving the quality of end products for digitisation. Institutions and Ministries will benefit from the various possibilities to exert data from projects/programmes/policies. The general information gathered is probably the most important tool for follow-up. The statistical analysis would give even more possibilities for the use of the data. The self assessment part is also important for each participating body.

Those involved in the work

The responsible partner for the work of the Benchmarking Working package has been Centre for Microfilming and Conservation/National Library of Finland - Helsinki University Library. The Centre is responsible for the digitisation activities and programmes in the National Library, for coordinating the National Digitisation Programme for Library Material and the digitisation cooperation of Finnish memory organisations.

The European Benchmarking Group was created in autumn 2002. It has provided the network for the Benchmarking Working package of the MINERVA project together with the NRG representatives. There have also been national benchmarking groups. The Finnish national group with members from the National Library, the National Board of Antiquities and the National Archives has been active. Swedish National Archives (Riksarkivet) has been responsible

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I-40123 Bologna
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www.cultuurtechnologie.net

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www.min-cultura.pt

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Plaza del Rey, 1
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www.mecd.es

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www.ra.se

UNITED KINGDOM

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for Museums,
Archives and Libraries
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www.resource.gov.uk

MINERVA Plus

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Bundesministerium für Bildung,
Wissenschaft und Kultur
www.bmbwk.gv.at/

CZECH REPUBLIC

Ministerstvo Kultury
Česke Republiky
www.mkcr.cz/

ESTONIA

Kultuuri-Ministeerium
www.kul.ee/

GERMANY

Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz
www.hv.spk-berlin.de/

GREECE

University of Patras
www.hpclab.ceid.upatras.gr

HUNGARY

National Széchényi Library
www.oszsk.hu/

IRELAND

Department of Arts, Sport
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www.arts-sport-tourism.gov.ie/

ISRAEL

The Jewish Agency for Israel
www.jafi.org.il/

Ministry of Science and Technology

www.most.gov.il/

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Ministero per i Beni
e le Attività Culturali
www.beniculturali.it

AMITIÉ

www.amitie.it

MALTA

Heritage Malta
www.heritagemalta.org/

POLAND

Ministerstwo Kultury
www.mk.gov.pl/

PORTUGAL

Biblioteca Nacional
www.bn.pt/

Ministério da Cultura

www.min-cultura.pt

RUSSIA

The Centre of Informatisation
in the Sphere of Culture of the
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Benchmarking - WP2

www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/benchmarking.htm

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Objectives

Benchmarking was chosen as a suitable instrument for disseminating information on the digitisation activities among Member States, exchanging experiences and good practices, and developing performance indicators.

Results

The first phase of the work has been concluded and the results collected in a data base. This database is accessible through the MINERVA Website for online research.

Reports and documents

www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/benchmarking/docindex.htm

Inventories, discovery of digitised content, multilingualism issues - WP3

www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/inventor.htm

Coordinator

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Objectives

To realise inventories of digital resources all over Europe and to analyse possible solutions to front multilingualism issues.

Results

A *Specifications for inventories of digitised content* was defined in November 2003 and applied to national programmes as well as for the MICHAEL project. A common online service. The "French-Italian prototype", based

upon locally maintained catalogues of digital cultural content was elaborated.

Reports and documents

www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/inventor/docindex.htm

Interoperability and service provision - WP4

www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/servprov.htm

Coordinator

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Objectives

To build a common European platform for creating integrated access to digital resources. This work package will analyse and compare national and international approaches, activities, research and best practice concerning technical and metadata standards.

Results

Technical guidelines for digital cultural content creation programmes were published on April 2004.

Reports and documents

www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/servprov/docindex.htm

Identification of user needs, content and quality framework for common access points - WP5

www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/userneeds.htm

Coordinator

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Objectives

The activities to be carried out by this work package refers to the definition of quality criteria and development of test and validation systems for cultural Web sites.

Results

Handbook for quality for cultural Web sites, translated in many European languages; the ten quality principles and their explanation.

Reports and documents

www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/userneeds/docindex.htm

Identification of good practises and competence centres - WP6

www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/goodpract.htm

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Objectives

To promote across Europe good practice examples in digitisation and competence centres.

Results

During the workshop in Alicante (May '03), 42 good practices were compiled by the national representatives. Centres of competence were subsequently identified and guide lines established. The *Good practice handbook* was published in many languages.

Reports and documents

www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/goodpract/docindex.htm

IPR, copyright and data protection - Subgroup WP4

www.minervaeurope.org/structure/workinggroups/ipr.htm

Objectives

Analysis of the problems in the field and proposals for recommendations at the European level.

Results

Analysis of the current situation and a draft of the document of proposals for the Italian model.