Monitoring digitisation of cultural materials in the European memory institutions

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Numeric Study - Statistical assessment of the digitisation of Europe’s cultural heritage
Outline

- Context
- Introduction of NUMERIC project
- Research under NUMERIC project
- Framework for collecting data on digitisation
- Conclusions
Monitoring digitisation: needs & context

• Large-scale digitisation projects:
  – Political significance of digitisation
  – Large partnership networks
  – Significant national & international investments

• The European context:
  – Recommendation on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation (2006)
  – Council Conclusions (2006)
NUMERIC project

- NUMERIC (May 2007–May 2009)
  http://www.numeric.ws/
- Objectives:
- To define the empirical measures for digitisation activities
- To establish the current investment in digitisation and the progress being made by Europe’s cultural institutions
Implementation

desk research
- Identifying existing data, sources, statistics, indicators, concepts
- Drafting basic definitions and classifications, sample frame for each country

Nov 2007

testing
- Testing the basic framework

Mar 2008

actual data collection
- Implementation of the methodology framework through full data collections, including historical data
- On the basis of which a full statistical analysis will be produced

May 2009
Desk research & testing

• Aim: to identify data sources, compile a first dataset, look at relevant methodologies and indicators, test assumptions

• Actions:
  – Evaluation of previous digitisation surveys
  – Consultation with stakeholders & pathfinder questionnaire
  – Establishing a foundation database
Research of previous surveys: findings

- Survey should not be the only option to collect the data
- Institutions – provide a space for multipurpose institutions (type of collections)
- Reconcile top-down & bottom-up perspectives
- Necessity of simple uniform framework for accounting costs
- The need for standard digitisation output measures
- Ambiguous differentiation of digitisation objectives should be avoided
- Usage information is crucial
Consultation with stakeholders & pathfinder questionnaire: results

• Consultation:
  – A link between investment in digitisation and benefits to users should be established
  – Hard facts informing policy decisions are crucial

• Pathfinder questionnaire:
  – Cost information: quantitative & qualitative data combined
  – Input/output measures: consider institution data collection practices
  – Goals: distinction between access/preservation has no statistical relevance
Objective: to complement incomplete survey results by compiling information on the universe of cultural heritage institutions.
Survey design

• Collaboration with national representatives
• Development of relevant sample of institutions
• Questionnaire (generic & monuments):
  – Context
  – Standards
  – Activity
  – Projects
  – Comments
Conclusions

• NUMERIC survey stage – data collection
• Future of monitoring digitisation – data collection by international organizations
• Importance of involvement of national institutions & governments
Thank you for attention!

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