Europeana Libraries Final Report

www.europeana-libraries.eu

Europeana Libraries was a 2-year project that primarily aimed to make more digital content available from European research libraries, and to lay down a scalable infrastructure to continue this work past the initial lifetime of the project. Twenty-five project partners were involved, including 19 European research libraries and key cultural heritage organisations of CERL, Europeana, LIBER and The European Library.

- **5.6 Million Objects:** digitised books, films and images from national and research library collections were made freely available on The European Library and Europeana websites. The total number reached 5.6 million – significantly above the project's initial goal of 5 million digital objects. The content included Oriental manuscripts, Spanish civil war photographs, historic medical films and thousands of theses, journals and academic articles.
- **Full-text Indexing:** technology was developed that made it possible for users to search within digitised text, thus creating the potential for in-depth academic study of all texts brought together by Europeana Libraries.
- **Representation:** research libraries were given a platform via the redesigned website of *The European Library* to collectively promote their collections to the widest possible audience. This new website was designed with tools and services for researchers as its highest priority, including integration with popular reference management services such as Mendeley and Zotero.
- **Aggregation:** a single channel was created for contributing library content to Europeana and The European Library. This model is efficient, cost effective and capable of being extended to research libraries across Europe.
- **High Quality Metadata:** The quality and structure of library metadata was improved and new features were added to make online searching more accurate and user friendly.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Building the network

The project began with a kick-off meeting in The Hague on January 26-27th, 2011, attended by all the partners and captured in this video. That was followed by multiple workshops for partners and meetings.

In 2011, meetings were held at LIBER's 40th annual conference in Barcelona (June) and at The European Library's network meeting in Belgrade (November). In 2012, the network came together at LIBER's 41st annual conference in Tartu (June), and at The European Library network meetings in Bucharest (May) and Madrid (December).

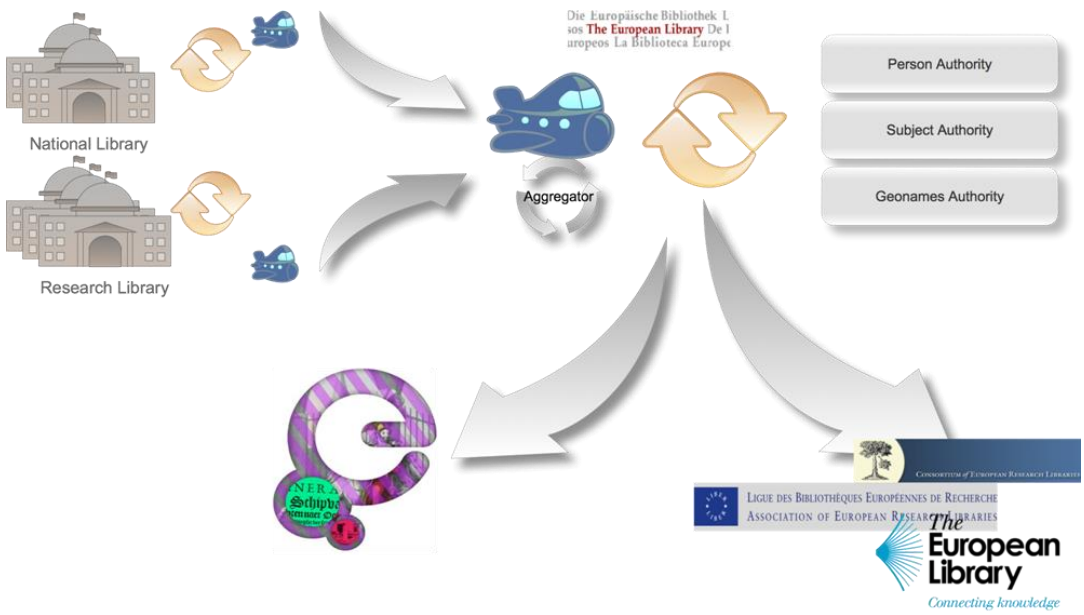
In addition to physical meetings, communication was regularly maintained via the project communications system (Basecamp), and news items and updates via the blog, newsletter, mailing lists and project website http://www.europeana-libraries.eu/.

Content and infrastructure

The aggregation of data and development of a supporting infrastructure was a key project activity. The work commenced with a survey of data contributors and based on these results a content ingestion schedule was created. This schedule was followed and resulted in 5.6 million objects being aggregated – surpassing the official total of 5 million. Nineteen project partners provided content for harvesting, with a total of 75 libraries represented.

An explanatory "Handbook for Aggregators" was also produced in the first year of the project and updated in the second year. Its primary aim was to support and inform content providers who wished to aggregated data through the infrastructure set up by the Europeana Libraries project.

The aggregation infrastructure was also significantly extended and enhanced. It is now capable of processing 160 records per second (the original target was 100 records per second). Overall, it is capable of supporting the harvesting of digital content from individual libraries, and flexible enough to be transformed according to the needs of each library.



The modern aggregation infrastructure developed by the Europeana Libraries' project is capable of taking content from many providers and redistributing it widely.

The existing business processes of The European Library were realigned to bring the aggregation processes into line with those of Europeana and a new version of REPOX, the data aggregation and interoperability manager, was developed and released. In addition the capabilities of the Unified Ingestion Manager (UIM) were extended to allow it to act as the central system for aggregation and process moderation and the existing Content Relationship Management System (SugarCRM) was enhanced to better control customer processes and oversee aggregation activities.

Aggregation and business modeling

The project worked to develop a sustainable business plan that would ensure the services developed through Europeana Libraries could be extended beyond the lifetime of the project. Initially, this was expected to involve libraries within the membership of project partners LIBER and CERL.

As a first step partners created a business model. This included desk research on the existing pattern of aggregators of library metadata in Europe. An astonishing 140 aggregators operating in 28 countries were identified. Work then began to interview as many as possible, asking for their views on topics such as current library domain aggregation, the added value aggregators can provide and possible methods of financing the expanded aggregator.

Early work also included research via a number of workshops, where participants were asked to identify the services of most value to libraries and researchers. Two key elements were identified as essential to sustaining a portal for researchers:

- Based on aggregated metadata and full-text from national and research libraries;
- Funded mainly by partnership fees for a basic service, which could be supplemented by chargeable services.

This information was compiled in a scenario report, which in turn supported the development of a full business plan in the second year of the project. The development of the Business Plan was a collaborative effort with the Boards and member libraries of *CENL*, *CERL* and *LIBER*. In particular, market research was conducted with national and research libraries to test simulations and finalise planning.

The foundations of the finished Business Plan were:

- National and research libraries working together
- Co-governance of The European Library (by CENL, LIBER, CERL)
- The European Library remains a vital part of the Europeana ecosystem - as the aggregator for libraries
- New strategic partnerships, eg DARIAH, CLARIN
- A Membership model
- Plan shaped with library community input throughout

Enhancing searchability

Another part of the project explored how to enhance the searchability of the content by adopting the new Europeana Data Model. This was a main topic of discussion during the May 2011 project meeting. *A* metadata working group was formed, comprising representatives from the research library partners in Europeana Libraries and the former members of The European Library Metadata Working Group for the National Libraries.

This group produced the “Report on the alignment of library metadata with the Europeana Data Model (EDM)”. It positioned this work within the current library metadata context, and led to the decision to define a model showing how library *materials* could be represented in EDM.

By the end of the project, consensus had been reached on the alignment of library data with EDM and feedback provided to Europeana for their implementation of EDM. By providing content using EDM, the work of the Europeana Libraries project ensures a continued interoperability with Europeana and an improvement in searchability of library content in Europeana.

This work will continue beyond the project. There are plans to regularly improve the mapping to EDM in The European Library aggregation framework, to continue working with the Metadata Working Group in the frame of the new Europeana Cloud project and to follow the work being led by the Library of Congress as part of the Bibliographic Framework Transition Initiative.

Dissemination, communication and promotion

During 2011, members of the communications group laid out a brand strategy for the new service, as well as communications plans to target stakeholders and end users. This work was helped by all members of the project, who spread the word about *Europeana Libraries* to libraries and researchers across Europe.

In total, the project's activities, goals and successes were presented at some 250 conferences, interactive workshops, journal publications and press articles. Printed factsheets and brochures were also distributed by the thousand and sessions from Europeana Libraries network meetings were streamed live and recorded for later playback.

Two of the biggest events happened at the 2011 and 2012 conferences of project-partner LIBER. In June 2011, Europeana Libraries was presented directly to over 50 members of the library community via a workshop. Neelie Kroes, European Commission VicePresident for the Digital Agenda, also mentioned Europeana Libraries to the conference's 400 attendees. At LIBER's 2012 conference, another workshop was held and the redesigned European Library website was officially launched.

Other notable events included seminars, paper presentations and booths at the London and Frankfurt book fairs, the *Dublin Core* metadata conference in The Hague, the *Supporting Digital Humanities* in Copenhagen and *Digital Humanities 2012* in Hamburg.

Two virtual exhibitions were also launched on The European Library website. One, Manuscripts and Princes, focused on medieval illuminated manuscripts, while the second, Science and Machines, looked at scientific and technological development since 1800.

All of these activities were covered by the attractive and informative public website and associated blog for the project, as well as via private communication and file sharing platform for partners. PowerPoint presentations, project factsheets and communication materials such as logos, images and videos were all widely distributed.

This comprehensive campaign to share the purpose and achievements of Europeana Libraries has raised Europe-wide awareness of the project. Our presence at conferences alone promoted the project to as many as 7,000 people in 2011 and 2012 (see D6.6 for more details).

Impact and sustainability

By the end of the project, it had created:

- A valuable resource for scholars, with full-text search capabilities for written works
- A robust network of national, university and research libraries
- An efficient aggregation model that can be used by research libraries across Europe

Contact

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25 organisations are collaborating on the Europeana Libraries project, including major library networks and 19 research libraries. Participants come from 14 European countries.

See http://www.europeana-libraries.eu/web/guest/project-partners for details.