Europeana Sets out its Strategy for the Period 2011-2015

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On 14 January 2011 Europeana launched its Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2015. The plan can be seen "as a clear-sighted assessment of the route Europeana must take in order to fulfill its potential", Dr. Elisabeth Niggeman, Chair of the Europeana Foundation Board, states in her foreword.

Jill Cousins, Executive Director of Europeana, notes in her introduction to the Strategic Plan that it is Europeana's ambition "to provide new forms of access to culture, to inspire creativity and stimulate social and economic growth". However, while working towards the achievement of this ambition, several challenges have been encountered, for example intellectual property barriers to digitisation. To overcome these challenges, the Strategic Plan presents four tracks on which Europeana will focus in the coming five years. These tracks have been developed through consultation with stakeholders and analysis of the results. Amongst the stakeholders both users and policy makers were included.

The first track listed is named "Aggregate". Its goal is to build the open trusted source for European cultural heritage content. Several elements of the goal are mentioned in the plan: the source content must represent the diversity of European cultural heritage, the network of aggregators must be extended and the quality of metadata improved. The diversity-aspect, for example, will be addressed by covering content from under-represented cultures and countries. Another aim is to stimulate digitisation programmes to make sure that Europeana displays a proper level of visibility. Europeana especially aims to fill the lacuna that exists with regard to audiovisual and 20th/21st century content, making sure that it covers a range of formats from all domains. Where new types of cultural heritage develop, such as 3D visualisations, Europeana wants to ensure that these are included as well.

The second track, "Facilitate", aims for support for the cultural heritage sector through knowledge transfer, innovation and advocacy. Elements of this aim are the sharing of knowledge among cultural heritage professionals, fostering research and developments in digital heritage applications and the strengthening of Europeana's advocacy role. When it comes to the sharing of knowledge, Europeana plans to build on its previous achievements, while also seeking new platforms and methods to develop and reinforce digital competencies throughout

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the cultural heritage sector. It wants to promote dialogue and collaboration between parties such as librarians, curators, archivists and the creative sector to work together regarding interests they share. In addition, an online publishing programme will be launched to spread best practice guidelines, standards and positioning papers on policy issues. Conferences and workshops to broadly distribute information will continue to be organised as well.

The third track, “Distribute”, seeks to make cultural heritage available to users wherever they are and whenever they want it. In order to achieve this goal, the plan states that Europeana’s portal must be upgraded, content put in the user’s workflow and partnerships developed to deliver content in new ways. The portal Europeana.eu is the flagship for the content and services and will continue to be so, but it will be developed according to users’ evolving needs and expectations. The content is aimed to be made as findable, understandable and reusable as possible. Also, Europeana wants to bring the content to the places that the users often visit, instead of depending on the users seeking out content, for example by using web services to put content in places like social networks, educational sites and cultural spaces.

The fourth track mentioned by the plan is “Engage”, which aims to cultivate new ways for users to participate in their cultural heritage. This engagement should be realised through enhancing the user experience, extending Europeana’s use of web 2.0 tools and social media programmes and arranging a new relationship between curators, content and users. As the plan states, by enhancing the user experience, a richer and more intuitive service will be created that maximises users’ participation and interaction and increases usage of the content. It is believed that greater participation in the site will increase user interest and loyalty.

Lastly, the plan elaborates on the resources for Europeana in the period 2011-2015, including budget, cost allocation and Cost-Benefits.

Europeana Strategic Plan 2011-2015

http://version1.europeana.eu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=c4f19464-7504-44db-ac1e-3ddb78c922d7&groupId=10602

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