

DISMARC

discovering music archives

What happens to that live concert you just heard on the radio? Or that specially commissioned broadcast from a visiting musical legend? It all gets archived. Music archives, whether owned by broadcasters, museums, institutions or private collections, are home to a treasure trove. And the contents are not only music – videos, books, documents, manuscripts and music instruments are all part of Europe's cultural heritage. But due to lack of interoperability between data catalogues, this material often lies hidden from the outside world. Searching in European archives by theme requires separate visits to each archive, whether via your mouse or your feet. DISMARC, a two-year EU-funded project initiated in September 2006, addresses the problem.

The demand for DISMARC comes from both content providers and content users – archives, broadcasters, content aggregators, download platforms, educational publishers, media, performing artists, music labels, researchers, students and the general public. The results will be available in over twenty languages and make a significant contribution to overcoming the twin bottlenecks of technology and rights management that hinder access to some of Europe's greatest musical treasures.

Initial participants: German broadcaster and consortium leader RBB, Austrian technology company AIT, Norwegian educator GME, German university HMTH, Polish research institute/archive ISPAN, the Phonogram Archive from Berlin, British university SOAS, Swedish archive SVA, Finnish national broadcaster YLE and dissemination partner WOMEX. Partners will provide copies of their metadata (data which describes their collections) to AIT, who will map it and make it available via the DISMARC website. All data will be searchable from one point of access. The project will also conform to the EU's i2010 Digital Libraries Initiative, and will provide a means of delivering music to 'The European Library'. Other archives, museums and broadcasters from all over Europe have already expressed interest in joining in.

Call for proposals: DISMARC is funding four archive projects, at €2500 per project. All will be published on line, with a possible CD version. Proposers should select the majority of their music – any music in any style – from archives participating in DISMARC. For more details and project requirements write to WOMEX (email dismarc@womex.com).

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