



## EuropeanaLocal

Europeana (the European Digital Library) is developing as the embodiment of the European Commission's vision for a common multilingual access point, which will make it possible to search Europe's distributed digital cultural heritage online. It will give users direct access to some 2 million digital objects, including film material, photos, paintings, sounds, maps, manuscripts, books, newspapers and archival papers. The first prototype will be launched to the public in November 2008 by Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Information Society and Media.

EuropeanaLocal is one of a suite of additional projects, funded by the European Commission, to help further develop Europeana. EuropeanaLocal will play an important role in ensuring that the enormous amount of digital content provided by Europe's cultural institutions at *local and regional* level is represented in Europeana, alongside that held at national level. Such involvement will not only bring together a rich diversity of content of all types, cultures and languages but also people, making it possible to establish integrated services with great richness and added value for communities and individual users.

EuropeanaLocal is a Best Practice Network, funded under the European Commission's eContentplus programme, which started on 1 June 2008. It is designed to involve and help *local and regional* libraries, museums, archives and audio-visual archives:

- make the enormous amount of content that they hold available through Europeana
- and deliver new services.

EuropeanaLocal builds on existing multiplier networks of local institutions to bring together a consortium that represents 27 countries with broad ranging experience of the cultural sector, digital libraries, standards and aggregation services. The partners have already identified and listed some 20 million items of content which they plan to make available over the course of the next three years. This is a very large amount of content in the context of the content available to Europeana. The potential of local/regional sources may be better appreciated when this figure is extrapolated to all cultural institutions in Europe,

especially when viewed in the context of predicted continued growth in digitisation at local and regional levels in the years to come.

EuropeanaLocal will work with the EDL Foundation, which is overseeing the development of the Europeana service, to establish simple, efficient and sustainable business, governance, administrative and technical processes through which local and regional institutions can easily make their content available to Europeana during and after the project. As part of this, EuropeanaLocal will enable aggregators and individual content providers to make their content available for harvesting, indexing, enriching and other operations by Europeana, and indeed any other service.

EuropeanaLocal partners are committed to try to conform with/adapt/utilize whatever technologies and standards the Europeana service adopts or creates as it develops. At this stage it is expected that these will be feature OAI-PMH repositories, Europeana metadata application profiles and SKOS in the first instance, moving on to include semantic web technologies later on. EuropeanaLocal will ensure that the approaches, standards and tools developed by Europeana are adopted widely across the cultural heritage sector, thereby supporting the interoperability of content within Europeana beyond that which is held by purely national level institutions.

The expected results of the project include:

- the establishment of a network of regional OAI-PMH compliant repositories that are highly interoperable with Europeana
- an integrated Europeana-EuropeanaLocal prototype service
- the development of thematic areas for Europeana services which integrate content from both the national and the local/regional level.
- and the aggregation of content at levels which makes sense in terms of local situations and which complements the existing and planned Europeana network.

EuropeanaLocal is structured into a number of phases. The work will begin with a survey to determine: the range of content; metadata schema and approaches; metadata harvesting activities and repository aggregation levels in use by Europe's museums, archives, libraries and other cultural content holders at local and regional level. This will be related to the recommended architecture of Europeana in order to arrive at a workable approach to metadata interoperability. Following this there will be a period of content analysis in each participating region, in order to identify cross-border and Pan-European 'themes' of importance to potential users and to assist with the prioritisation of the addition of new content for the Europeana service.

A test execution environment will be established, which local content providers or aggregators will be able to connect with. It will be consistent with and linked to Europeana, and will also allow partners to try out and test modifications which could be beneficial to Europeana. Harvesting of content will be tested and a central service will be established to manage and synchronize harvesting of content across the network of EuropeanaLocal servers.

A further strand of the project will focus on the planned and phased adoption of tools and standards as they are developed and released by Europeana. EuropeanaLocal will test the tools recommended by Europeana against the real-world environment of its content providers, customising the tools as required, providing relevant documentation and installation support and reviewing the output. In addition EuropeanaLocal will seek to broaden the Europeana toolset by identifying and testing suitable tools from the wider technical environment.

The project will provide and deliver training and project-long technical support service for EuropeanaLocal partners and content providers. This will cover best practice in installation, implementation and use of tools associated with OAI-PMH repositories, database conversion, metadata mapping, collection level description, vocabulary conversion using SKOS, rights expression and semantic enrichment. A series of workshops will be organised and a help desk established, together with the publication of best practice guidance.

Another important part of the project will be dissemination and awareness raising, which will promote the results and availability of the EuropeanaLocal service. It will also address future expansion and extension of Europeana. EuropeanaLocal will agree straightforward administrative and technical procedures whereby providers of content/metadata may become contributing members of Europeana, future governance mechanisms and procedures and a basis on which any charges, other costs or conditions of joining may be determined.

End users will be involved in the validation of the work of EuropeanaLocal through the establishment of a user testing groups in each partner region. These user groups will be called upon to carry out structured usability testing of Europeana prototype interfaces at various key stages of the project.