Digital Strategies for Heritage (DISH) 2013
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Chefs' Table session

Table Number: 13
Table Session: 01
Table Host: Marco de Niet en Gerhard Jan Nauta
Title: Invasion of the Hybrids! How digital heritage collections disrupt traditional domain boundaries

Introduction

How digital heritage collections disrupt traditional domain boundaries.

It has become more and more apparent, that the creation and maintenance of digital services are forcing archives, libraries and museums to change. New competencies are needed to engage with digital audiences; new business models are needed to sustain the digital services; new collaborations are needed to enhance the value creation. One aspect that is often overlooked, but that will have serious consequences for the traditional boundaries, are the digital collection policies.

ENUMERATE and other surveys show that a vast majority of heritage institutions are extending their digital collections beyond the scope of their physical collections. Not only do they collect new types of born digital heritage, they also breathe a new digital life into collection types that are not part of their core collections. They even collect object types in a digital format that they didn't collect as part of their physical collections. Archives digitise newspapers and paintings; museums digitise books and archival materials; libraries digitize photographs and manuscripts. And they all collect websites, games and other born digital cultural heritage, which they make accessible through heritage-wide portals like Europeana. In the ENUMERATE survey, many institutions mentioned that they felt uncomfortable with the label 'Archive', 'Library' or 'Museum' and they chose to classify them as 'Other type'. How much longer can the segregation of LAM's remain in the digital age? In this Chefs table we will share some remarkable data from recent research to feed the debate.

Discussion

Chefs' table: Invasion of the hybrids! with Gerhard Jan Nauta and Marco de Niet

There a different domains present at the table.

What type of collections have been digitized? Photographs are on top. Behind the figures, what are the domains digitizing? For example museums are the biggest in sharing paintings.

'We digitize the same kind of collections.'

'More institutions say the collect digital images, but they don't collect physical images.'

Discussion points:
 * the shift to more user driven services reduces the need for domain oriented services.
 * management of digital heritage collections is becoming more and more generic information management (cf. software for domain specific collection management).
 * if heritage institutions collect similar born digital object types, traditional domain boundaries (based on physical management) will make less sense in the future.
 * government funding in organized along domain boundaries. This will not be an effective way for the funding of digital services in the future.

Challenges when you start digitizing: it is also hybrid within the collection. What you need to do is to collect it all. Is the physical collection being replaced by the digital collection from the users perspective?

The example of yesterday's talk of Jason Scott is being used: Cultural institutions are nursing homes, digitizing is like the ambulance. Should that be the way we communicate to the government why digital services are necessary? Maybe it should be more focused on memory institutions.

Should we look more at the different domains more as functions? Every institution has its own knowledge based on the physical collection. The knowledge of the users should also be used.

The hybridization makes more layers.

We have to turn or own metadata or data into digital metadata or data.