



Digital Strategies for Heritage (DISH) 2013

2 & 3 December 2013, De Doelen Rotterdam

Chefs' Table session

Table Number: 15

Table Session: 03

Table Host: Tjeerd de Boer

Title: How to work out a national strategy for improving 21st century skills in heritage

Introduction

If you can't stand the cold you'll never leave the kitchen.

This session focusses on the need to develop new roles and competences, not only as an individual (heritage) institution, but as a community as a whole. After a brief introduction on why competence matters (a lot) and what skills we are talking about, the conversation will focus on sharing experiences and articulating building blocks for integral (national) strategies for the improvement of 21st century skills in the cultural heritage field. What can be gained from cooperation between institutions? Should they focus on specific assets and competences and benefit from each other's qualities and progress? Do we need shared (educational) services, and if so, who can deliver them? What need and possible gain is there from looking beyond the borders of the sector and connect to other policy-fields (education, science, innovation, ...)? So, finally: should we work on integral national strategies, or can we deal with only (sectoral) local and international policies and facilities as well?

Discussion

Tjeerd is Senior policy-advisor at the Cultural Heritage department of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in the Netherlands. Working with heritage institutions from different domains (documentary and audiovisual archives, libraries, museums, build, scientific and intangible heritage) on a communal network and infrastructure. National Roadmap in 2014. Twitter @tjeerddeboer

What the department is working on:

Triangle between Connectivity - Competence - Content

Usefull tool to check where the needs of makers are, so we used it also for heritage.

We put a lot of effort in the content side in The Netherlands. But competence is also really important, so we focus on that in this session.

Using the table cloths: write a grade for each of the aspects in heritage (connectivity, content and competence) your government is doing. There is no punishment here for bad grades!

The scores overall: Content is pretty good, Connectivity is worse, but the real pain is in Competence, which means this is a good topic for this table.

Q: What can government do to improve this situation for:

Management

Staff

Education

End users

(write on post-its)

Quote: The reason heritage institutions exist is to inform the public. Doesn't that mean less funding for staff editing content, but just release everything they have to the public and let them sort it out, put more funding toward opening content rather than keeping the content

Orgs are doing all this research, but have few communications staff. No wonder you're not reaching an audience

It's not just communications, it's also tools, ICT. Management tend to see ICT as a tool for managing the work process, tools for information professionals, not as a tool to connect with audience

Make stories easier to understand, show people what you're doing in a way they understand, don't stay on your high horse

What works is a bottom up education programme, let staff teach staff. Good example: social media. Some of the staff hates it, while mostly younger employees love it. Have the youngsters teach staff, and some of them will learn to love it. Same goes for wikipedia

There has to be a strategy with management to use these tools, whether it is social media, ICT, etc

In Switzerland they did research in heritage institutions asking them if they did have a long term strategy, which of course they had, and then they asked them if they had a long term E-strategy, which almost none of them had. Which is stupid, since 'E' is of course the future, so how can you have a long term strategy, but no E-Strategy?

There should be more education, new strategies often depend on too little people. There is much more now than there was 10 years ago, heritage institutions can't keep up with their old habits, we need to teach people

Staff often knows how to handle the 'instruments', they can find their way around, but have no idea what's behind it, or why. This also goes for children! If the teacher doesn't know, how would the student?