Cultural values, identities, participation and local communities

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Summary

Introduction: participatory approaches and cultural values

Experiences of participation and engagement:

- in digital collections' curation

- in open science and research

- in tourism development

Weaving knowledge

In our challenging time, citizens seek and need to live together in peace and mutual respect, and to value and enjoy the diversities they bring to their respective societies.

In this light, Cultural Heritage plays an important role in contributing to social integration in Europe.

It is a challenge to give culture and heritage a greater, more relevant and even transformative role in the economy, for the communities and on the territories.

The act of reflection on this challenge is a crucial part of establishing our identities, of managing the conduct of our daily lives as social beings and hence of **building a society which is inclusive and integrated**.

Cultural Heritage is a vital element in this reflective process: it is an instrument for exploring questions of identity and for overcoming barriers to mutual understanding and tolerance.

Acknowledging the importance of the role of culture to contribute in the creation of our 'idea' of Europe, the European Union implemented big investments in the CH sector with research projects that support the role of CH in societal improvement, promote the social value of culture and foster citizens participation and interest in Europeana culture(s).

Two ambits work are particularly relevant:

REACH Social platform for **participatory approaches** and social innovation in culture

UNCHARTED Research and Innovation Action about the **values of culture**

https://www.reach-culture.eu/

The REACH social platform investigated how participatory approaches can contribute to develop a common horizon of understanding, a deeper engagement of civil society in the research and the establishment of actual innovation processes in the CH sector.

Four dimensions of culture were explored in the REACH pilots:

- Minority heritage

- Institutional heritage

- Small towns' heritage

- Rural heritage

https://uncharted-culture.eu/

Focusing on the valuation **practices** developed by different **actors** involved in the cultural sector, the EU-funded UNCHARTED project is working to identify **Europe's plurality of cultural values** attached to specific cultural products, productions, services, activities and sites.

It considers the diversity of practices and the multiplicity of agents involved in cultural life, from audiences and visitors to artists, producers and politicians.

Experiences of participation and engagement

IN DIGITAL COLLECTIONS' CURATION

The annotation pilot in PAGODE – Europeana China

CEF project

IN CULTURAL HERITAGE RESEARCH

The citizens engagement methodology in Citizen Heritage

Erasmus+

IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF MARGINAL AREAS

Communities' participation in INCULTUM project

H2020

PAGODE brought new content relating to China heritage to Europeana and made a big effort for metadata improvement of existing collections. This was PAGODE Annotation Pilot.

Automatic enrichments

Update by content providers

Crowdsourcing

A story started a long time ago

Digitization of cultural heritage initiated more than a decade ago.

Europeana, the European gateway to cultural heritage, collects digital cultural records from partner Institutions since the very beginning.

This means that in Europeana we can find records provided many years ago, when the quality of metadata was in most cases too basic compared to today's expectations.

WHY METADATA MATTER?

- Metadata are the information attached to digital objects and they play a function similar to the description of the physical object in a museum

- Including relevant keywords is important to allow the users to find the digitized object on the Internet

Metadata creation and enrichment have a key role in the CURATION of digital cultural heritage.

A picture paints a thousand words

WHO IS ENTITLED TO CURATION?

Curation of digital cultural heritage is not only reserved to domain experts, as there are metadata properties which can be recognized by students, amateurs, citizens.

In PAGODE, we carried out an **online crowdsourcing campaign** which was very successful!

PAGODE Annotation Pilot

The PAGODE annotations campaigns involved

-over 50 contributors including Sinologists and expert curators, Colleagues from CHIs and Europeana Aggregators, metadata experts, University students, general public and culture lovers

-c 5,000 images of Chinese cultural heritage sourced from Europeana were browsed, producing c 100,000 keywords associated to Europeana records, added from controlled vocabularies

The impact of the crowdsourcing action of the PAGODE Annotation Pilot resulted in a two-fold benefit:

- Enriching with additional keywords metadata in need of improvement

- Enabling user engagement with Europeana content

The PAGODE recipe

An easy-to-use platform, possibly with a gaming/challenging element in it

Compelling content for users to explore

A structured system for metadata (controlled vocabularies)

A validation procedure afterwards, so to grant accuracy of the metadata additions

LESSON LEARNT IN THE PAGODE ANNOTATION PILOT:

If you allow people to easily offer their inputs, the response may be overwhelming!

citizen Heritage

Citizen Science Practices in Cultural Heritage: towards a Sustainable Model in Higher Education

- A multidisciplinary consortium of academic partners, associations and SMEs

  A comprehensive methodology for adopting citizen science in higher education

  A rich programme of co-creation events

A participatory methodology

Higher Education Institutions can play an active role to connect civic engagement with open science, in a virtuous circle that targets the Cultural Heritage sector.

CitizenHeritage is developing and testing with stakeholders a coherent methodology, based on university research and professional practice, to integrate crowdsourcing, citizen science and co-creation into the workflow of cultural heritage institutions.

A number of co-creation events is organized in the project to act as test-field for the methodology.

Avicenna Expounding Pharmacy to his Pupils. Welcome collection, CC-BY

Citizen Heritage Events in 2021-2023

- Budapest (2021)

- Sofia (2021)

- Antwerp (2021)

- Pisa (2022)

- Limassol (November 2022)

- Next: Athens, Rotterdam, Leuven

Participatory experiences across Europe

✓ To experiment citizen engagement in cultural heritage

✓ To validate the project's methodology

✓ To enable better collaboration between Civic Society, Higher Education and the Cultural Heritage sector

The events include dissemination and co-creation activities with students, citizens, domain experts, seniors, culture lovers, local communities.

INCULTUM

Visiting the margins: INnovative CULtural
ToUrisM in European peripheries

- Understanding challenges and opportunities of cultural tourism with the aim of furthering sustainable social, cultural and economic development.

- Exploring the full potential of marginal and peripheral areas when managed by local communities and stakeholders.

- Adopting innovative participatory approaches in 10 Pilot sites across Europe, to identify good practices to be replicated and translated into strategies and policies.

Community-led tourism development

Cultural tourism in secondary and under-rated territories can contribute to limiting negative impacts of tourism on local residents, such as touristification, gentrification, social tensions, reduction of the quality of visitor's experience

INCULTUM PROPOSAL:

- Adopting participatory and collaborative approaches

- Transforming local communities in protagonists

- Engaging stakeholders as dynamic agents of transformation

Example 1 - Altiplano de Granada

- To involve local irrigator communities in the development of the new INCULTUM product

- Farmers who are managing irrigation systems are the owners and the experts of the canals, agrarian spaces, traditional practices and their values

- The participatory approach will offer them a leading role in proposing, building and managing the routes

- They will keep control on the development and autonomy of choices, in the respect of their heritage, landscape and territory

- Benefits will return directly to local communities, generating positive impacts

Example 2 - Campina de Faro

- To contribute to the preservation of landscape's memory and (re)activation of its identity, starting with survey, diagnosis and architectural and hydraulic rehabilitation of a group of norias, aqueducts and tanks, in collaboration with university experts

- To revitalise, together with local growers, historic irrigation systems, practices and techniques, recovering traditional cultivation techniques

- To work with local horticultural communities and small associations of organic producers to promote traditional practices in the management of water for irrigation and in agricultural crop techniques

These reflections and experiences inspired the development of WEAVE projet, of which today we present the achievements.

Thank you for your attention

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