Project no. 015685

TEL-ME-MOR

The European Library: Modular Extensions for Mediating Online Resources

Specific Support Action

Integrating and Strengthening the European Research Area

Deliverable 1.2

10 national awareness workshops

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National Library of the Czech Republic

Version 1.0

Introduction

WP1 of TEL-ME-MOR, Analysis of research requirements, aims to investigate the research requirements of national libraries and their clients from the research and technological application sector, focusing on research and new services to build the knowledge societies in the NMS in areas relevant to the IST programme. The main outcome of this work is successive versions of the report on the research needs of national libraries and their principal clients [D.1.1 and D1.3]. The present deliverable, D1.2. was a meeting in each NMS designed to publicise FP6 and help clarify the national libraries' possible future roles in research by considering and contributing to an earlier draft of D1.1, the report on the research needs of national libraries in the NMS. The analysis of the reports on these workshops provided by the national libraries reveals their high awareness of the national and European context in which they operate and the ability to assess critically both strength and weaknesses. Notably, most NL are very active participants in the development of the national cultural heritage policy and, therefore, in many cases they are aware of how to improve the current situation both on the national and European levels

Dates of events

The timing of the 5th call in relation to the start of TEL-ME-MOR meant that these events needed to be held closer to the start date of the project than had originally been envisaged. This meant that less notice could be given to participants than would normally be necessary. One event was held in

In most reports NL stress issues related to the **national cultural heritage policy and RD infrastructure**. Majority of the New Member States are only in the beginning of establishing the national cultural heritage policy. Only CZ and EST reported the presence of strategic documents that provide an overall direction for the preservation of and access to the national cultural heritage. While research and development activities in CZ are supported by the national RD programmes, EST reported the lack of links between policy and research programmes to support cultural heritage initiatives, especially as to the projects based on inter-institutional collaboration between museums, archives, and libraries. Many NL emphasized the absence of comprehensive cultural heritage policy on the national level (HU, LT, SLO, and SK), though there are some positive shifts in the development of strategic approaches to cultural heritage in HU, LT, and SLO which stated such documents being at the stage of preparation. The management of cultural heritage is often a part of broader strategic documents, defining cultural and information policy; however, this is frequently indicates the lack of proper attention to the relevant issues and absence of national mechanisms to support research and development activities. The lack of strategic directions and mechanisms at the national level negatively impacts RD activities in the national libraries. Most common of them are:

> *[…] The strategy should determine both financial and human resources for the cultural heritage field as well. Cultural heritage enjoys a lot of support when it comes to discussion, but in different documents there is no breakthrough for positive change in staffing and financial priorities. Politicians find it hard to deal with the complexity of cultural heritage problems.*
>
> Report of the Slovenian National TEL-ME-MOR Workshop

- **Inappropriate distribution of funds**. Absence of clearly articulated priorities in the cultural heritage domain leads to the lack of objective criteria and mechanisms for funding of appropriate initiatives. This leads to fragmentation, duplication of efforts, limited collaboration of the all parties responsible for the preservation of and provision of access to cultural assets. Often, financial capabilities instead of strategic priorities become the main measure for participation in the RD projects thus preventing the systematic development of RD in the national libraries.

> *[…] Both the governing agencies and memory institutions in Estonia should let go of divisive interests and approach the problems from the standpoint of national interests and necessities. The results of the activities of the National Library are usually acknowledged by different parties, however, there is not enough financial support for innovativeness.*
>
> D.1.2. – National awareness raising workshop report: Estonia
>
> *It is important to set valid criteria for funding as well as objective evaluation of the research results.*
> TEL-ME-MOR
> WP1 National Workshop – Cyprus: Report

- **The lack of sustainability in implementation of strategic objectives**. Sustainable implementation of cultural heritage strategies is endangered because of two reasons: 1) impact of political changes on the content of the national strategies (highlighted by SLO and HU); and 2) insufficient collaboration between ministries – NL functions and RD needs usually exceed the competency of one ministry to which they usually report (most often, Ministry of Culture), while the participation in RD usually depends on collaboration of several governmental bodies. Lack of synergies between ministries also prevents collaboration between memory institutions.

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Zinaida Manžuch & Adolf Knoll

3

Insufficient attention to the cultural heritage domain, as well as to institutions, performing relevant research leads to limited presence (or absence) of the cultural heritage in national programmes and, as consequence, to gaps in the national infrastructure necessary to perform RD activities in this area. These gaps cover not only issues of coordination and funding, but also weaknesses related to the legislation, recognition and quality management of NL research and development results.

> *The problems mentioned inspired memory institutions to seek the optimum digitized and born-digital cultural heritage management methods in the virtual setting, common management, methodical and technical solutions, to join the common networks, create access to cultural heritage using modern methods for information provision and management.*
>
> Report from Lithuanian
> national workshop (WP1)

Most NL stressed the need for and acknowledged the benefits of **collaboration between memory institutions**. However, success of such partnerships, as pointed in the reports, usually depends on the national policy and mechanisms that may either promote or hamper collaborative initiatives in the domain of cultural heritage. The inter-dependency of policies and partnerships between libraries, museums, and archives was obvious in the discussions that took place at the national workshops. Issues of partnerships were usually discussed in line with policy issues. Comments on the present state-of-the-art of the collaboration between memory institutions indicated fragmented approach to the management of the cultural assets, dispersed efforts and different interests as well as the lack of supportive political mechanisms to encourage co-operation within cultural heritage sector. However, these challenges enabled NL to look for such solutions that converge in initiation of joint projects (LT) as well as for suggestions of constructive solutions on the national and European level (EST, SK).

Attempts to evaluate the national context and internal NL potential in the domain of cultural heritage resulted in formulation of the important theme – **cultural heritage and society** – that will surely need further discussion. What are the factors that influence strategic priorities in cultural heritage policy? Does the society at a whole realize the benefits of application of ICT in cultural heritage domain? Are research and development in NL possible at all without a dialogue with society? These questions encourage thinking about the necessity for a mutual dialogue between all memory institutions and society. Technological innovation would not be adopted if the users did not realize the benefits of the products and services they are offered. Management of

> *The results of the research projects should be made available to the public, as much as possible.*
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> TEL-ME-MOR
> WP1 National Workshop – Cyprus: Report
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> *We have to convince the society nation-wide that a co-ordinated effort and strategy on the national level, supported by adequate resources, is called for. NUL [National & University Library*] has found itself in a situation when it sees itself integrated in the TEL portal following all standards and receiving support from EU, but on the other hand we do not obtain proper support from the State.*
>
> Report of the Slovenian
> National TEL-ME-MOR Workshop
> * inserted by the authors

digitized and born-digital cultural heritage still remains an *elite* theme and it is present only in small and closed circles of professional and academic communities. However, there is still certain lack of broader debates of what digitized and digital heritage brings to the life of the citizens. There is also an obvious need of societal recognition of the value of NL research and development activities in the area. It is a pre-requisite for increased understanding and awareness of the society of the value of cultural assets and it will encourage better implementation of the technological innovation in real-life situations.

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Zinaida Manžuch & Adolf Knoll

4

Reflections on NL experience in RD, as well as participation in the European initiatives, critical evaluation of internal potential encouraged the participants of the workshop to draw attention to the current state-of-the-art in **education for cultural heritage management** in the digital environment. Most NL pointed out the lack of competent specialists as a factor that negatively affects either the general

> *In cooperation with universities a system for educating (digital) preservation specialists has to be created, but it requires mutual interest. Providing universities with research topics and facilities could be used for getting them interested in this kind of system.*
>
> D.1.2. – National awareness raising workshop report: Estonia

development of RD in the library or more specifically, participation in the European research initiatives. In general, the limited presence of cultural heritage digitization disciplines in the curricula of higher schools, lack of theoretic research in digitization and management of born-digital materials were pointed out as obstacles for building competent teams in the national libraries. EST pointed out the need for active involvement of NL in education of library and information science specialists and collaboration with academic community. However, the national libraries demonstrated an ability to identify internal weaknesses that in some cases revealed resistance to changes or low motivation.

The national libraries reported a lot of work done in the field of **digitization and management of born-digital materials**. Achievements covered a creation of technological infrastructure, standardization, digitization of cultural heritage collections, harvesting born-digital heritage, etc. However, the national libraries also continue the work in the field of preservation of analogue materials. This NL domain requires

> *[…] Most funding is spent for RD in the area of modern communication technologies, but sometimes too much concentration on these technologies works in contradiction with safeguarding of our analogue heritage in its original shape.*
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> Report from the TEL-ME-MOR WP1 National Workshop held 16 June 2005 in the National Library of the Czech Republic

the same attention as application of innovative technological solutions. Digitization can solve preservation problems only partly by extending limited access to original materials and thus allowing creation of a more favourable environment to ensure their longevity. In future, preservation of analogue materials should remain the priority area of the national libraries on the same level as digitization and management of born-digital resources.

Conclusions

National libraries in the NMS are conscious of the national and European context in which they operate and have the ability to assess critically both strength and weaknesses. They are very active participants in the development of the national cultural heritage policy and, therefore, in many cases can influence the discussion on how to improve the current situation both on the national and European levels. In spite of multiple challenges for sustainable development of RD, the current situation as well as some positive shifts in policy-making and research point to the start of breakthrough in the area of cultural heritage in the New Member States.

10 national awareness workshops. Deliverable 1.2. Final Version, July 2005.
Zinaida Manžuch & Adolf Knoll

5

Research and Development Needs in the National Libraries of the New Member States

Guidance for national workshops

Dear colleagues,

National **workshops are intended to find out** comments and opinions on the current RD situation and demands in the national libraries of the New Member States. The workshop would help to clarify and complement the answers to the questionnaire on the research requirements of national libraries (distributed in March 2005), as they were reflected in the first draft of the report about RD activities and needs of the New Member States national libraries.

In this guidance you will find the list of **main themes and questions that should be discussed** during the workshops. The **results of discussions should be summarized in the report,** which should provide the main points and conclusions of discussions. It is recommended to the workshop organizers to distribute this guidance and the draft version of the report (WP1, analysis of the RD demands in the national libraries of the New Member States) to all participants of the workshop in advance.

The **discussion should follow main themes** (listed below), while the participants should try to answer the questions referred to each theme. Due to the limited workshop time it is advised to **provide a general view on each topic and avoid concentration on details**.

THEMES AND UNDERLYING QUESTIONS

Questions in each theme mostly follow the same model: achievements/gaps/action for improvement. Please, think of the situation in your country and your national library and offer your general vision of the current situation.

I. Cultural heritage policy

- What are the main statements (strategy) on heritage preservation and access in the national policy documents? Do they encourage RD activities in your national library?

- Does your library participate in cultural policy-making? How your NL can contribute into implementation of cultural heritage policy both on national and European levels?

- What are the main obstacles or gaps in national cultural heritage policy that limit RD activities in your NL?

- What should be done on the national and European levels to overcome these obstacles or gaps?

II. National RD infrastructure

The programmes, administration, and funding issues are the three most usual factors that can prevent NL from participation in project or encourage them to participat.e

- Do national programmes, project application/administration procedures, or funding mechanisms support RD activities of the national libraries? What are the advantages of national programmes, project application/administration procedures, or funding mechanisms that encourage the national libraries to take part in the national initiatives?

- What are the main reasons that prevent national libraries from participation in national RD initiatives (irrelevant programme themes, project application/administration procedure, funding mechanisms)?

- What should be done on the national and European levels to improve the situation and encourage NL to become an acknowledged RD player both in the country and in Europe?

III. Participation in European RD projects

- What were the benefits of participation in European RD projects for your national library (in case you have no such experience try to make assumptions on what the benefits could be)?

- What are challenges/obstacles that limit opportunities of your NL to participate in European RD projects?

- What should be done on the national and European levels to improve the situation and foster participation of NL in European RD projects?

IV. Collaboration with other players on the arena of cultural heritage RD

- What are the benefits of collaboration with archives, museums, research institutions, or commercial partners in RD projectst/initiatives for cultural heritage? Please, rely on your experience if any.

- What are the main obstacles that appear when collaborating with the institutions mentioned above?

- What should be done on the national and European levels to encourage networking and collaboration with archives, museums, research institutions and commercial partners?

V. Internal RD potential in national libraries

- What are the main internal strengths of your library that have led to important achievements in relevant RD areas (cultural heritage: access and preservation)?

- What are the main internal weaknesses of your library that limit achievements in relevant RD areas?

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Zinaida Manžuch & Adolf Knoll

7

- What are the actions your library needs to undertake to fill in the existent gaps and exploit achievements in more effective manner? Have your formulated any strategic directions for improvement in these areas?

VI. Digitization, preservation of and access to the digitized/born-digital cultural heritage

- What are the main achievements/strengths of your national library in the fields of digitization/preservation/access to the digitized/born-digital cultural heritage? Please, rely on your experience, accomplished projects, related RD, or benefits from participation in EU/national projects.

- What are the main gaps/weaknesses of your national library in the fields of digitization/preservation/access to the digitized/born-digital cultural heritage?

- What could be done by your library/by national authorities/by European authorities to fill in the gaps? What assistance on the national and international level would help you to solve the current problems?

Please, send the report from your national workshop to mailto:adolf.knoll@nkp.cz by 30 June 2005.

10 national awareness workshops. Deliverable 1.2. Final Version, July 2005.
Zinaida Manžuch & Adolf Knoll

8