2023

OPEN DIGITAL LIBRARIES

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THE NATIONAL LIBRARIES OF AUSTRIA, ESTONIA AND THE NETHERLANDS

OPEN YOUR DIGITAL LIBRARY!

As National Libraries, our work is fueled by the power of the written word. The written word preserves culture, stories, essays and ideas, both printed and digital. When people come into contact with words, whether through reading, studying or conducting research, it has an impact on their lives. To create an open atmosphere for library users and European libraries need to rethink their position in the digital age, and experiment creatively with opportunities of new technologies. The purpose of the Open digital libraries project is to bring together three National Libraries in Europe to build capacity for using digital library collections creatively.

The National Libraries of Austria, Estonia and The Netherlands, are all part of multiple European networks and found each other in their shared interest to see the digital age as an opportunity to open up their institutions to creatives/artists. The status quo of libraries is that people no longer are obliged to visit the locations to consult a great part of the collections. This makes it even more important that the libraries also digitally celebrate and enhance the value of the written word, its importance for knowledge and its creative potential.

BUILDING A VIRTUAL LAB: TRANSFORMING CONTENT INTO ENGAGING EXPERIENCES

Introduction: the objective of this project was to construct a virtual lab within the library, transforming traditional content into engaging experiences. It aimed to provide journalists, academics, and researchers with access to extensive digital collections using innovative approaches and technology.

Preparation: key elements were put in place to initiate the project. Connections were established with the target user groups, understanding their needs. A comprehensive collection of shareable digital content and metadata was gathered and organized for easy accessibility. Support from library management was obtained for project success.

The Team: the project team consisted of a Coordinator, Digital Humanities Specialist, Service Designer, and Department Lead, providing diverse expertise.

Step 1 seeking inspiration: guidance was sought from the GLAM Labs community, studying successful examples to inspire the project.

Step 2 (parallel with 3): service design: user groups were identified through interviews with key users and organizers. Insights were incorporated into the design and functionality of the virtual lab.

Step 3 (parallel with 2) legal analysis: a thorough legal analysis ensured compliance with intellectual property and data protection laws, safeguarding rights and privacy.

Step 4 taking a deep breath: user needs and legal considerations were consolidated into a well-defined project plan, setting goals, milestones, and resources.

Step 5 (parallel with 6) developing the access point and web platform: a user-friendly web platform facilitated easy access to datasets and tools. Interactive examples enhanced user engagement.

Step 6 (parallel with 5) developing and preparing data and tools: efforts were made to make data easily discoverable and accessible. Tools enabled analysis, visualization, and manipulation of data.

Step 7 presenting to the board and internal audience: the final product, including the virtual lab and its features, was presented to the board and stakeholders. Feedback was gathered for further improvements.

Step 8 launch and gather an audience: a carefully planned launch event engaged the community and showcased the virtual lab's capabilities. Relevant stakeholders were attracted.

Step 9 taking care of the audience and looking ahead: user involvement and support were sustained through continuous improvements and community engagement strategies. Future steps were outlined for growth and enhancement.

Conclusion: the virtual lab, created through collaboration, open data utilization, and expertise, serves as a platform for collaborative data sharing, tool utilization, and storytelling. It inspires the GLAM community while remaining open for exploration and development.

Access the final product at: digilab.rara.ee/

COLLABORATING WITH ARTISTS TO ENHANCE ARTISTIC EXPERIMENTS

Introduction: this project aimed to collaborate with artists to bring fresh perspectives to the library's digital collections. By inviting artists to explore the archives, the project aimed to reveal hidden treasures, gain new insights, and foster organisational innovation.

Step 1 getting started: the project began by inviting artists to engage with the library's digital collections. Planning decisions included the program format (virtual due to the pandemic), team composition, budget considerations, and involving stakeholders. Legal aspects, such as terms and conditions and intellectual property, were addressed.

Step 2 data: artistic experiments focused on producing data-based artworks using image data, text data, or metadata. Carefully selected data sets, including postcards, historic newspapers, botanical illustrations, and maps, inspired contemporary artists. Access to data was provided through integrated viewers, file dumps, graphical interfaces, and APIs.

Step 3 participants: artists and art students from various fields were the target participants. The library team consisted of a project manager, a web developer, and an artistic supervisor. Collaboration with universities and artistic communities emphasized clear communication and understanding.

Step 4 open call: An open call for artists was designed and promoted through the library's website, social media, art schools, and mailing lists. Reminders and promotion helped attract a diverse pool of artists.

Step 5 presentation planning: An online exhibition platform was created to showcase the artworks. Considerations included duration of availability, usability requirements, and accompanying texts about the works and artists' backgrounds.

Step 6 kick off: kick-off meetings familiarized artists with the collections, access methods, and the institution. Artists were encouraged to document their creative process.

Step 7 guidance: ongoing support included virtual meetings, feedback, and data/advice provision. A mid-term workshop allowed artists to present work and receive feedback. Studio visits offered insights into the creative process.

Step 8 showcase: the exhibition launch was celebrated, and results were communicated through press releases, blog posts, social media, and institutional communication channels. Internal communication introduced artworks and gathered feedback.

Step 9 preservation and reuse: preservation, cataloging, and archiving of artworks were tailored to each experiment. Discussions with artists about future collaborations and considerations for reusing digital artworks took place.

Legal aspects: copyright, artwork changes, showcasing, and result re-use were carefully addressed.

By collaborating with artists, the library enriched its digital collections, inspired creativity, and engaged new audiences. This project demonstrated the value of artistic experimentation and innovative collaborations within the cultural sector.

INSPIRING ARTISTIC EXHIBITIONS AND INTERACTIVE INSTALLATIONS

Introduction: the goal of these projects was to inspire creativity and engage with digital collections through artistic exhibitions and interactive installations. Key elements such as funding, network/partnerships, and clear goals were essential for their success. Collaborations with the art academy of The Hague and the technical university of Delft provided valuable expertise and resources.

Step 1 collaboration arrangements: collaboration involved aligning schedules with academic courses, brainstorming with teachers, defining roles, and creating a briefing for students. The schedule, final presentation, final presentations, and contact moments with students and teachers were determined, ensuring effective coordination.

Step 2 groundwork within the organisation: engaging colleagues in the process was facilitated through stakeholder mindmaps and building mailing lists. Specialists within the organisation contributed to content creation, datasets, and instructions on using collections. Kick-off activities provided introductions, tours, and instructions, while considerations were given to facility management and security for exhibitions and installations.

Step 3 engaging and having fun: teachers and students embarked on their assignments, supported by regular check-ins, feedback, and adjustments. The process was documented through videos, posters, blogs, and infographics. Collaboration tools were utilized to facilitate communication and collaboration, ensuring a dynamic and enjoyable experience.

Step 4 working towards the final phase: results achieved during the project phase were explored for further collaboration. By inviting artists for preserving installations or exhibition materials. A script and planning for the final presentation were prepared, taking into account legal arrangements for the usage of student installations. The most promising idea was selected, and a pitch was made to board members and specialists for potential implementation.

Step 5 finishing and evaluating: prioritizing the collection of necessary information and evaluations from students before the course ended ensured a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact. A final presentation showcasing the project's outcomes was organized for colleagues, and evaluations with teachers were conducted based on the project plan. Formalizing plans for future collaborations through letters of intent helped establish a foundation for ongoing partnerships.

Key considerations:

– Consider the target audience for the final presentation, including colleagues and the general public.
– Ensure timely communication and collection of required materials from students before course completion.
– Invite board members to presentations and pitches. • Establish letters of intent for future collaborations, specified by sponsors/funds. • Fulfill evaluation requirements specified by sponsors/funds.
– By implementing these collaborative approaches, artistic exhibitions and interactive installations can inspire creativity, engage audiences, and pave the way for continued partnerships and innovation.
– Toolbox online: https://open-digital-libraries.eu/toolbox

We visited the premises of the university 6 times. Students showed their progress and we gave us 5 beautiful installations at the final phase. Collaborating like this was very productive and gave us 5 beautiful...

Our first meeting with all three partner institutions in Vienna

Reflect installation build by TU Delft Industrial Design students. One layer of visually attractive presentation of the digitized collection and a second layer of context and information about the collection. Your reflection when passing by exposes the second layer.

Throughout the 3 years of collaborating with the KABK for this ODL project, we organized exhibitions with them at the KB and at the academy. On this picture you see the students of the NLN Master holding a book presentation book based on their interpretation of the alba amicorum.

Satellite is an installation made by the TU Delft students of Industrial Design. With this traveling installation we can enhance the knowledge of students throughout the country about all the different kind of sources that can be found in our national library
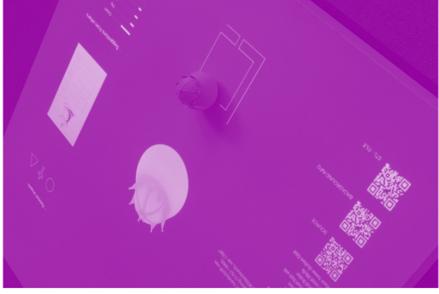
This art object made by a student of the KABK (art academy) was a 3D printed visualization of an image from our alba amicorum collection. Creating a tangible experience and by putting the object on this designated table we received information about this album.

These colleagues from the Estonian library visited the KB to gather information for their virtual lab from our KB lab specialists. And of course they got to see some beautiful pieces from the collection of the National library of the Netherlands.

Artists working on their project with parts of a final collection. Making the digital tangible again.

Showing the collection as a kick-off for the collaboration with the artists in the web-residencies.

Open Call — ONB Labs Art Program — Nov. 22– Feb. 23

Created posters for the call to attract potential artists to collaborate with library collections.