

INDICATE

International Network for a Digital Cultural Heritage e-Infrastructure

Grant Agreement no. 261324

Paris Declaration

The members of the International Network for a Digital Cultural Heritage e-Infrastructure (INDICATE) at the Strategy and Future Plans Workshop in Paris on 7 June 2012, **adopt** the present Declaration:

Strategic Commitment to Dialogue and Collaboration

Our shared vision is that in ten years' time, access and use of digital cultural heritage should be available to all and that collaboration with the e-Infrastructures community will facilitate realisation of this vision. Dialogue and collaboration between cultural heritage, ICT and e-Infrastructures stakeholders offer important benefits for all sectors. We commit ourselves to a **strategic focus** on such dialogue and collaboration, and declare as follows:

- a. That **Europe is particularly rich** in cultural heritage with a diverse range of materials, subjects and sources. That Europe should grasp the opportunity to capitalise upon this patrimony through education, research, creative re-use, tourism and other applications.
- b. That **dialogue and best practice** enable stakeholders across the sector to benefit from the experience and expertise of their peers. Common approaches to common challenges offer long term benefits in terms of cost efficiency, reduced technical obstacles, simplified collaboration and future joint activities.
- c. That **open sharing and publication** of best practice is the appropriate response to public and private support of digital cultural heritage; openness enables the maximum value to be derived from research and development in the sector.
- d. That best practice initiatives and further research should be **international** in scope and **supported** both by Member states and at the European level.
- e. That **systematic action** which brings together e-Infrastructures, digital cultural heritage and ICT actors is key to progress in the digital cultural heritage sector. That central to this is effective communication and collaboration between the relevant ministries and agencies.
- f. That **communication** across sectoral (cultural heritage, ICT, e-Infrastructures) boundaries underpins a shared understanding and appreciation of priorities, capabilities and constraints and is **strategically essential** for the further development of digital cultural heritage.

- g. That **end users** (the public, researchers, students and others) should be represented in the planning and delivery of new services initiatives. **Training** of such end users is essential to raise awareness of the applications for e-Infrastructures in the digital humanities and to effectively achieve the full potential of e-Infrastructures and digital humanities collaboration.
- h. That the opportunities and challenges facing cultural heritage in the digital age are **relevant across the globe**.
- i. That demonstration and validation through **joint implementations and pilots** serve to stimulate effective communication, verify feasibility and acceptability of nominated best practice, establish shared understanding and encourage cross-sectoral perspectives.

Future Plans and Perspectives

Recent work in digital cultural heritage across Europe and beyond has led to important advances, not least in the nurturing of relationships with new partners in ICT and e-Infrastructures. There is excellent potential to build on this work in the future. We commit ourselves to pursuing further progress in the following areas:

- a- The identification of **common priorities** for shared R&D and validation, involving stakeholders from the cultural heritage, ICT and e-Infrastructures sectors. These priorities will inform joint action plans for research and validation. Possible example focus points include preservation, geo-enabled services, end-user interaction, annotation and content creation, and semantic enrichment.
- b- **Standards** and mechanisms to ensure **interoperability** of digital cultural repositories will be agreed and developed to facilitate shared use of digital culture by users from around the globe.
- c- Establishing **shared research agendas and action plans**, in order to reduce redundancy and maximise the efficient use of resources across the sectors, across national boundaries and across initiatives, while still **respecting individual national contexts**, in terms of legal, social, cultural and economic priorities and constraints which may impact on collaborations.
- d- Evolving **from theory to practice** by shared validation activities, pilots and implementations.
- e- Promoting **greater use of e-Infrastructure facilities** by cultural heritage. Digital humanities represent an important user base for e-Infrastructures, including the application of e-Culture Science Gateways, repositories, interfaces, and other facilities. This will underpin the exploitation of cultural heritage material as outlined in the *Riding the Wave*¹ report.
- f- Taking into full consideration **related initiatives** at a national and international level, including Europeana and its ecosystem of projects, national cultural portals, other national and international research and innovation initiatives and also local and organisation-centred projects.

¹ <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/e-infrastructure/docs/hlg-sdi-report.pdf>

- g- Developing the national and international **policy contexts** which facilitate the collaboration of digital humanities, ICT and e-Infrastructures stakeholders. This includes the recognition of the humanities as an important target for e-Infrastructures technology and services. The involvement of humanities stakeholders in setting out roadmaps for the development of e-Infrastructures is an important enabler in this context.
- h- **Securing** the digital patrimony of Europe through research and validation in long term preservation, while **enhancing** social benefit through access, interaction and enrichment services.
- i- Maintaining and stimulating the **growth of the International Network** by encouraging new members, demonstrating tangible benefits and proactively engaging with actors from all three key sectors.
- j- Further development of **global relationships** through deeper engagement with existing partners in Africa, Asia and the Americas, as well as new outreach to cultural stakeholders across the globe. Our vision is of global shared activities and agendas in a manner similar to those developed within Europe.

Measuring Progress to Ensure Success

As best practice evolves and demonstration and validation are achieved through joint implementations and pilots, we need to measure progress in key areas by implementing indicators, such as the growth of digital cultural heritage presence in e-Infrastructures, capabilities of e-Infrastructures to support digital cultural heritage, uptake of e-Infrastructures by digital cultural heritage end users and dissemination of the use of e-Infrastructures by the digital cultural heritage community.