



Digital Transformation Report

Building capacity for digital transformation
across the Europeana Initiative stakeholders

By the Europeana Initiative-wide Digital Transformation Task Force

Culture24, May 2022

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1. Introduction

This report sets out the work of the Digital Transformation Task Force that Culture24 was commissioned to guide and support. It covers the Task Force's activities between appointment in October 2021 and the publication of this report in May 2022 and introduces the ['Guide to Digital Transformation in Cultural Heritage'](#) that has been produced collaboratively by the Task Force as a separate stand alone document.

The Task Force brought together representatives from the three pillars of the Europeana Initiative - the Europeana Foundation (EF), Europeana Network Association (ENA) and Europeana Aggregators' Forum (EAF) - alongside two independent representatives and was facilitated by Culture24.

The Guide was developed through a process of community authorship with the task force members acting as representatives for the different stakeholder groups. Part of the process also involved 44 workshop participants from 19 countries who, across three open workshops, together mapped 800 considerations around digital activities and digital skills.

This report and the associated Guide are the first important steps towards digital transformation in the cultural heritage sector. They are both deliberately bold and ambitious. They reflect the belief that taking a united and collaborative approach, with shared understanding, is the only way for us to understand how to harness the potential that digital transformation offers individuals, organisations and networks.

In this report we set out the thinking behind the Guide and the research and work carried out by the Task Force that led to its creation. We also make recommendations for actions to ensure the Guide will have the reach and impact needed to successfully support the digital transformation of the cultural heritage sector.



2. Why a Guide?

The original brief for the Task Force was to bring stakeholders together to build on the work done in this area so far, respond to the current challenges facing the sector, and to collectively understand and agree on a clear, practical plan of action for digital transformation for the cultural heritage sector across Europe.

Through its work, the Task Force concluded that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for digital transformation and it can only happen in response to individual and organisational contexts - size, location, domain, purpose, audience etc. Digital transformation will take a different form for everyone and it is not possible to make recommendations in the form of 'step 1, step 2, step 3...' that would apply to anyone and to any situation.

In response to this, a Guide was produced that offers recommendations that **frame an approach to digital transformation** for the whole cultural heritage sector.

The Guide addresses the capacity building needed to support the digital transformation of the cultural heritage sector across Europe. It is in response to the current challenges facing the sector, and seeks to help us to collectively understand those challenges and to work together to address them.

This transformation is not a matter of choice. Globally, across all industries, it is already happening and there is still much to be done in our sector in order to see the opportunities it offers become a reality for everyone. The moment is right for us to learn from our pandemic experience and not let this moment of profound change go to waste.

The approach the Guide recommends is values-led, guided by a commitment to be purposeful, inclusive and ethical so that we can address wider societal issues such as social justice, equity and the climate crisis. It is also centred on people's needs and written in a way that can be responsive to the many different contexts across our sector.

The Guide supports Europeana's mission to 'empower the cultural heritage sector in its digital transformation' and its view that digital transformation is 'made possible through capacity-building efforts that lead to actions, outcomes (changes in behaviour and attitudes) and impact'.

The Guide is written for the people who work in, around and for the many different museums, galleries, archives, libraries, heritage sites, arts organisations etc. that hold and protect cultural collections and seek to engage audiences with them. In the Guide we have chosen to use the term 'cultural heritage sector' to mean all of these individuals, organisations and networks.



3. How we got here

3.1 Background to the framings in the Guide

The Guide uses framings and definitions for digital activity, digital skills and digital maturity that are drawn from [One by One](#), a multi-stakeholder, University of Leicester-led, international initiative working to build digital confidence in museums, of which Culture24 is a founding partner.

Culture24 has been using the framings to underpin all of its digital skills and leadership development activity, building them into strategic policy work wherever possible.

For reference One by One's framings are outlined in this report in [Appendix 2](#). In addition, the framing on digital skills is explained in full in [this resource](#) and the framing on digital activities is explained in full in [this resource](#).

These framings were used by the task force to shape its thinking and in the open consultation workshops. They form a key component of the Guide and underpin the recommended approach.

3.2 The work of the Task Force

After a successful open call for members in September 2021, the Digital Transformation Task Force was established in October 2021 with eight members:

- Rob Davies and Vera Kriezi - Europeana Network Association
- Kerstin Arnold and Chiara Latronico - Europeana Aggregators' Forum
- Sebastiaan ter Burg and Ariadna Matas - Europeana Foundation
- Marta Peinador and Susanna Ånäs - Independent

Culture24 guided and facilitated a total of eight zoom meetings with the Digital Transformation task force between October 2021 and April 2022. Within this period, we also planned and facilitated a series of three open consultation workshops that took place on:

- Workshop 1. Monday 29th November 2021
- Workshop 2. Monday 13th December 2021
- Workshop 3. Monday 10th January 2021

Across these three workshops we had a total of 92 registrations to attend which resulted in:

- Workshop 1. 11 participants and 6 task force members from a total of 11 countries.
- Workshop 2. 18 participants and 6 task force members from a total of 12 countries.
- Workshop 3. 15 participants and 4 task force members from a total of 9 countries.



The 44 workshop participants came from 19 different countries: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, UK.

All three workshops were run to the same format which introduced and used the One by One framings for digital activity and digital skills. This approach was suggested by Culture24 and unanimously agreed by the Task Force. The appeal of this suggested approach was that it has been collaboratively developed and extensively tested with cultural organisations.

All workshops began by mapping how participants felt about digital transformation. Comments were collected using Padlet, an online collaborative tool. This was followed by a brief explanation of how to frame digital activity around what we USE, MANAGE, CREATE and UNDERSTAND (see the [square in Appendix 2](#)), which led into a group exercise to map responses from all participants to each of the four areas.

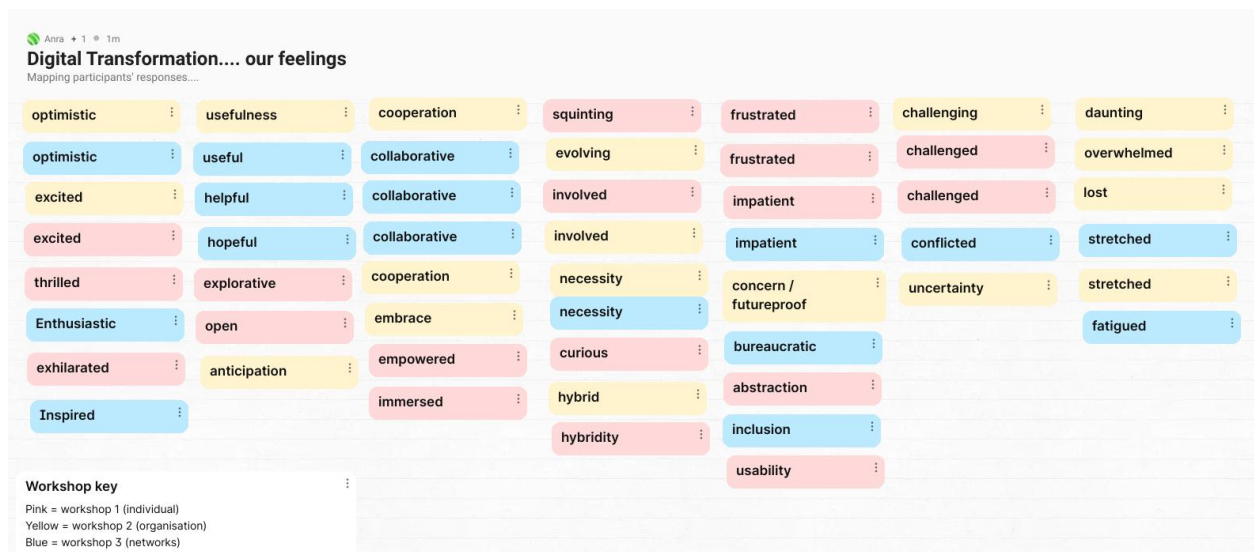
We then moved onto explaining how to break digital skills down into competencies, capabilities and literacies (see the [triangle in Appendix 2](#)), which led into a group exercise to map responses from all participants to each of the three areas.

Across all three workshops we mapped a total of:

- 572 comments mapped around digital activities
- 228 comments mapped around digital skills

A summary of all the comments that were mapped for both subjects across all three workshops can be [viewed on this google sheet](#).

Below is an image of all the words describing people's feelings that were collected across all workshops. They reflect the duality of negative and positive feelings towards digital transformation and underlines the need for a human-centred and contextual approach to it.



3.3 Foundational research and initiatives

As well as drawing on the conversations, mapping and views from the task force and the open consultation workshops, the Guide also acknowledges, incorporates and builds on the previous work in this area including:

- The [sensemaking workshops held in 2020 by Michael Edson and Jasper Visser](#),
- Culture24's 2020 research report on [The Digital Transformation Agenda and GLAMs](#)
- The draft version of Europeana's [Capacity Building Playbook](#)
- The Digital Culture Compass [Charter](#)
- The Digital Culture Compass [Tracker](#)
- The [One by One](#) project and research
- Work done by ENA Members Council and Management Board in 2019/20
- Work on digital principles (European Commission)
- Work on the Community Pact (Lauren Vargas)
- Capacity-building framework (Sebastiaan ter Burg)
- Theory of Change (AMB Consultancy) and impact assessment development
- [ENA strategic paper published in 2021 on The Digital Public Space for Culture 2030](#)
- Culture24's work on [digitally literate leadership in the UK](#)

3.4 Overview of the recommendations in the Guide

The Guide sets out three priority areas. Each priority comes with related recommendations. For each recommendation we have set out:

- Why this is so important
- What needs to happen
- How to do it and who actions are for - individuals, organisations or networks

Priority one - language and approach

Recommendation: Understand and adopt the Guide's shared way of approaching, thinking about, discussing and planning digital activity and skills, personally, in organisations and in networks.

Priority two - mindset and culture

Recommendation: Create optimum conditions for change through a mindset and culture that is open to learning and collaboration on all levels and in all contexts; recognises the importance of people-centred practice and emotional skills and intelligence and takes a holistic approach to digital transformation.

Priority three - purpose and values

Recommendation: Ensure your digital transformation is purposeful and values-driven.



4. Next Steps

This section of the report details the work that needs to take place after the publication of the Guide, to ensure its recommendations are acted upon. It offers suggestions, thinking and activities that the Europeana Initiative will need to address in order to support the creation of realistic action plans across its multiple domains, countries and situations.

As set out in the Guide, any detailed action plans need to be made more locally, according to context as there is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to digital transformation. The Guide offers an **approach** to framing any future action plans and is a way for people to shape their thinking around a shared understanding.

Following and adopting the Guide will offer individuals, organisations and networks within the cultural heritage sector a way to develop their own digital maturity in ways that suit their own circumstances. It provides a foundation from which to build digital capacity and confidence and to improve the digital literacy of cultural professionals at all levels.

The Europeana Initiative stakeholders will need to adopt the Guide and implement its recommendations into their work. For example they will need to ensure that a close relationship is nurtured between the thinking in the Guide and any other Europeana Foundation work such as InDICES, Theory of Change, the [Impact Playbook](#) and the development of the capacity-building framework.

4.1 Publish the Guide across the sector


The '[Guide to Digital Transformation](#)' should be published on the Europeana Pro website and made freely available in a variety of accessible formats. We need to do the work to get it out there to be seen, read and adopted as widely as possible.

Alongside the Guide there should be a clear articulation of the benefits and opportunities that digital transformation offers and the urgency of the need for the sector to act collaboratively (some of the text included in section 2 of this report will be a useful start for this).

Time and consideration will need to be given to the task of publishing the Guide in a variety of European languages in addition to English e.g. the EU's three official languages (English, French, German), Italian and/or Spanish, one Nordic and one Slavic language. This issue is of particular importance as a key part of the Guide is the definitions of key terminology - digital, digital transformation, digital maturity and capacity building. The development of shared understanding across our sector will be helped if these definitions could be translated into different languages.

Alongside publication of the Guide is the need to advocate for widespread engagement with it through a concerted communication and community-building drive. This work will need to be





planned and carried out by all three of the Europeana Initiative stakeholders using all their channels.

Europeana Foundation has a communications style that has historically made good use of user-friendly graphics, illustrations, animations and videos. It is suggested that assets of this kind could be very useful in helping to spread the word about the Guide.

4.2 Establish an ongoing role for the Task Force

It is vital there is a mechanism to drive the digital transformation agenda forward across the Europeana Initiative stakeholders, firstly to champion and advocate for the Guide and then to take ownership of the overarching process of implementing the recommendations.

It is recommended that initially, the best way to do this would be through the continuation of the existing task force, carrying on its work on a voluntary basis. However, the amount of work required to lead this process should not be underestimated and this report wishes to flag a reality check about what can be done by any group without proper funding. Adequate levels of resourcing and support will be required to carry out the task successfully.

In the medium term, a new Europeana Initiative-wide working group could be instated with a long-term mandate. It may also be worth considering a more Generic Services-style project under the next Europeana contract, which would include funding for all partners and which the Task Force or working group could oversee. The existing Task Force is made up of two representatives of each of the Europeana Initiative stakeholders, plus two independent members. The individuals on the Task Force were chosen from an open call. Membership of any future Task Force or working group would need to consider similar levels of representation, collaboration and transparency going forward.


To help introduce the Guide to the Europeana Initiative stakeholders, Culture24 is offering to attend a meeting with each of the three initiatives (Foundation, ENA and EAF) to present the Guide and the recommended actions in this report.

4.3 Support the sector to implement the Guide's recommendations

Beyond the publication of the Guide, and agreement on a Task Force or similar group to drive the process forward, support needs to be given to ensure its recommendations can be implemented by as many people as possible.

To do this we will need to establish mechanisms to set up the partnerships and/or commissions that will deliver the training, resources and support required for the Guide to be implemented and digital transformation to happen. Specifically this means supporting the people and/or organisations that will do the legwork of making change happen and to ensure they follow the strategic direction and approach set out in the Guide and overseen by the Task Force or similar.





These people and/or organisations will need to develop strategies for sustainable, cost-effective activities that can meaningfully support digital transformation and digital capacity-building in specific contexts, guided and prioritised by network needs.

They will also need to identify barriers to digital transformation and capacity-building activities within the network and find and support people who can act as digital transformation champions to speak to those barriers.

This work will need to include the following:

4.3.1 Developing the ‘starting points’ in the Guide

The Guide provides a set of ‘starting points’ - prompts and questions to help you find a focus or a way in to beginning digital transformation that best suits your context.

The next step is to encourage and support communities of practice and specific user groups to develop their own versions of domain-specific ‘starting points’ and to localise and translate other relevant case studies and resources (see for example the resources mentioned in Appendix 3 of this document).

The concept of starting points can be used in a range of ways, including:

- Informally, as conversation starters or more formally, documenting responses to inform strategies
- As a solo, reflective exercise
- With a colleague or team
- As the basis for a workshop or planning session
- In larger organisations, via online surveys to gather feedback
- As a one-off, using the prompt to kick-start exploration
- Regularly, in team meeting agendas, or setting separate meetings
- Flexibly - adapt them to your setting and context and build on them in ways that work for you.


4.3.2 Creating resources to support implementation

The cultural heritage sector’s ability to implement the Guide and to take action on its recommendations can be usefully supported through the provision of supporting resources and training programmes.

Signposting people to the right resources - ones that are fit for purpose and appropriate to the cultural heritage sector - will be a vital layer of support that will need to be offered to individuals and organisations as they seek to build their digital capacity. This task should not be underestimated in both its complexity and its transformative potential if we get it right.

We will need to audit, collate, contextualise and disseminate existing case studies, resources and training opportunities that support the Guide’s approach.





These could include:

- practical case studies
- downloadable learning resources
- online courses and learning (available within scheduled programmes and asynchronously)
- networking events
- conferences and events
- communities of practice
- mentoring and coaching

Thanks to the ongoing work of Europeana Initiative partners, stakeholders and Culture24 there are already some well researched and tested resources that exist which offer a starting point to the cultural heritage sector (see [Appendix 3](#)).

It is also important to remember that digital transformation is not new and there have been many resources created by cultural heritage partners beyond the Europeana Initiative and in other sectors such as the wider creative industries, education, business and the third sector that can be drawn upon, used and learned from.

As we move forward, there will be a need for new resources to be created, in response to specific gaps or cultural heritage sector specialisms.

4.3.3 Advising on best practice approaches

There is an important role to advise on best practices for the following key areas:

- evaluating and assessing digital capacity, maturity and transformation
- revising collective qualitative and quantitative performance indicators, to help us understand what success and impact look like
- auditing digital skills and literacies

All three of these are concerned with understanding and defining impact - what successful digital transformation looks like for a particular individual, organisation or network and how benchmarking where they are can help them to progress on their journey.

Some thought should be given to the important role of leadership in this context and the positive power that can come from leaders who are digitally confident and literate.

4.3.4 Embedding the framings in the Guide into future work at all levels

For the Guide to have real impact, individuals, organisations and networks will need to embed its approach in their organisational strategies and business plans. Where possible, it should also be woven into any policy work and proactively shared with other policy makers at regional, national and European levels.






5. The specific role of the Europeana Initiative networks

The Guide offers specific advice to cultural heritage networks on how to take action against each of the recommendations, within each of the three priority areas. Some of the recommendations reflect the existing practices of the Europeana Initiative stakeholders and some are new.

The taskforce has taken the ‘network’ recommendations from the Guide and suggested specific actions needed by the Europeana Initiative stakeholders to start the process of creating more detailed action plans for each stakeholder group. These include suggestions for actions that are immediate, medium and long term.

These actions are gathered in a separate document that is being discussed in the participating bodies at the time of publication of this report.



Appendix 1: Original Problem Statement

Understanding digital transformation and knowing how to build the digital capacity of individuals, organisations and networks is not simple. People's understanding of the issues is defined in part by their own digital literacy, confidence and maturity, which for many working in the sector is still low. Added to this, the sector faces other multifaceted and complex challenges. To quote the Initiatives 'Theory of Change' report written by Ann-Murray Brown on 'Capacity Building for Digital Transformation':

"A forthcoming report by the InDICEs consortium sets out the policy and institutional context and drive for digitisation in the cultural heritage sector in Europe. The Covid-19 pandemic has recently rapidly accelerated the demand for and increased recognition of the value of digitised cultural heritage content, as has the increase in natural disasters and conflicts which damage or destroy physical heritage. While the focus on what value the digitisation of cultural heritage content has for the public and to different sectors, there is little parallel focus on how the digitisation of cultural heritage must be accompanied by the digitalisation and the digital transformation of a heritage organisation as a whole, where digital becomes a transversal aspect of how a heritage institution functions."

These issues are not simple to fix, they will need shared values and approaches:

- An honesty and openness that acknowledges that the Initiative does not yet know how to best proceed
- A shared understanding and agreement about the definition of what digital transformation is - see [Europeana definition](#)
- A shared understanding and agreement about the definition of what digital maturity is - see [One by One](#) definition
- Agreement by the Initiative on a set of values through the completion of the Community Pact work
- Agreement on shared digital principles - see [Europeana statement](#)

These things are all necessary to ensure that the next steps - specifically the DT Task Force action plan - can build confidence, acknowledge negativities and improve the digital literacy of professionals at all levels. To quote from the Culture24 report into the '[The Digital Transformation Agenda and GLAMs](#)', "sometimes people's fears and anxieties around digital are well founded, as there are negative aspects as to how digital plays out in our lives. It is part of the digital literacy and maturity of GLAMs to understand the kinds of support and care people need."

Considerations

The Digital Transformation Task Force and the final action plan will take into consideration and build on the:

- Efforts of the Members' Council in 2019
- [Sensemaking workshops](#) held in 2020 by Michael Edson and Jasper Visser

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- Research conducted in 2020 by Culture24 [‘The Digital Transformation Agenda and GLAMs](#)
 - Definition of digital transformation published by EF in 2021
 - Work on digital principles (European Commission)
 - Work on the Community Pact (Lauren Vargas)
 - Capacity-building framework (Sebastiaan ter Burg)
 - Theory of Change (AMB Consultancy) and impact assessment development
 - [ENA strategic paper published in 2021 on The Digital Public Space for Culture 2030](#)
 - Expectations will need to be managed at a variety of levels as the consultation and recommendation will not and cannot seek to address every perspective
 - Consideration must be given to safeguard perspectives shared during the consultation and reporting.

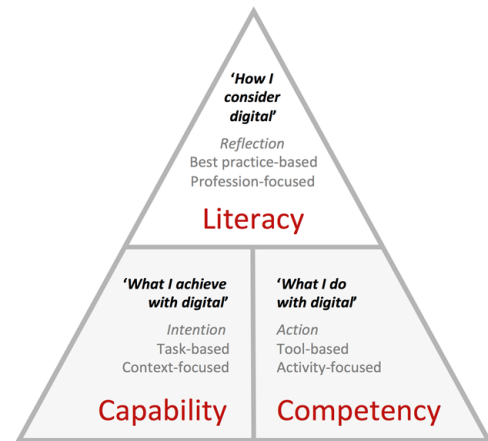


Appendix 2: One by One Framings

Digital skills and literacies

Digital skills break down into two types - a *competency* is action-oriented, the ability to use a tool or system. A *capability* is more contextual and achievement-oriented, knowing how to successfully apply that ability to a certain task.

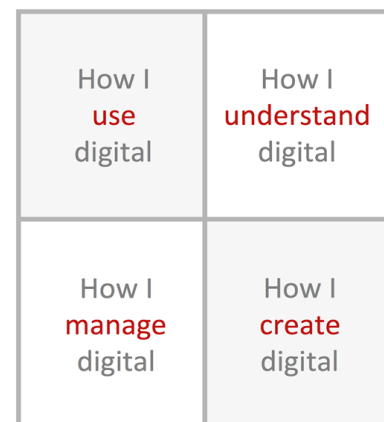
Digital *literacy* is more reflective, being able to evaluate the appropriateness of those competencies and capabilities in a specific context and taking a holistic, strategic approach to all aspects of digital.



Digital activity

All digital activities (*online publishing, content management, video production etc*) and all activities supported by digital (*finance, recruitment, fundraising*) within a cultural heritage organisation, can be usefully broken down into these four elements -

- What will we need to **use**?
- What will we need to **manage**?
- What will we need to **create**?
- What will we need to **understand**?



Digital maturity

An individual's or an organisation's ability to use, manage, create and understand digital, in a way that is contextual (fit for their unique setting and needs), holistic (involving vision, leadership, process, culture and people) and purposeful (always aligned to the institution's social mission).

Source: [One by One project](#)



Appendix 3: Existing Resources

1. [Digital Culture Compass](#)

Commissioned by Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, this is an online toolkit to support arts, culture and heritage organisations to integrate digital technology into their work. It has two elements: a [Charter](#) that outlines digital best practices and a [Tracker](#), or digital maturity index, that allows organisations to assess their approach to digital technology and develop plans for future work.

It was launched in February 2020 and was developed by a partnership led by [The Space](#) with Culture24, [The Audience Agency](#), [Golant Innovation](#), the [University of Leicester](#) and [Creative Coop](#). One of the most striking things about the toolkit is the breadth of collaboration involved in its creation. It was developed following [a research and consultation process](#) that included workshops in all four UK nations, attended by people from more than 80 different arts, cultural and heritage organisations with various levels of digital confidence, expertise and experience.

2. [Digital Pathways](#)

Culture24's online resource bank contains relevant, relatable and inspiring resources for the cultural heritage sector on digital skills and leadership, drawn from Culture24's programmes and beyond. Specific resources that relate to 'Starting points' from the Action Plan include:

- [Understanding and mapping digital skills](#) - explaining the framing recommended in the Action Plan and applying it to an exercise that helps you audit and reflect on your skills and literacies
- [Understanding and mapping digital activity](#) - explaining the framing recommended in the Action Plan and applying it to an exercise that helps you understand and reflect on what 'digital' means in your cultural heritage organisation
- [Developing digitally literate leadership in heritage organisations](#) - a multi-step resource, with case studies, to help senior leaders of cultural heritage organisations to take stock, reflect and develop their personal digital leadership and their organisation's digital confidence and capacity.
- [Why and how might small museums use the Digital Culture Compass?](#) - a step-by-step guide to using this wide-ranging, multi-layered tool
- [What does digitising collections involve?](#) - a step-by-step guide to the considerations and issues involved in digitising collections, by Collections Trust and The National Archives.

This list is just a starting point from Culture24 and links to any other existing resources produced by the Europeana Initiative Stakeholder need to be added.

Credits

This report was written by Anra Kennedy, Partnerships Director, and Jane Finnis, CEO, Culture24. It was written alongside the [‘Guide to Digital Transformation in Cultural Heritage’](#). With support from Alec Ward and the Culture24 team.

It covers the work undertaken between October 2021 and April 2022 through the work of a Europeana Initiative Digital Transformation Task Force that Culture24 was commissioned to guide and support. The Task Force brought together representatives from the three pillars of the Europeana Initiative - the Europeana Foundation (EF), Europeana Network Association (ENA) and Europeana Aggregators’ Forum (EAF) - alongside two independent representatives.

Digital Transformation Task Force members:

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- Chiara Latronico, Europeana Aggregators’ Forum
- Sebastiaan ter Burg, Europeana Foundation
- Ariadna Matas, Europeana Foundation
- Marta Peinador, Independent
- Susanna Ânäs, Independent

A very special thanks to the 44 cultural heritage professionals from 19 countries who, across three open workshops, together mapped 800 considerations around digital activities and digital skills who generously gave their time, expertise and energy during the open consultation workshops held as part of the work of the Task Force.

May 2022



[Culture24](#) is an independent UK charity that helps arts and heritage people drive positive change inside their organisations, building resilience and capacity so they can respond to the challenges and opportunities today and to come <https://www.culture24.org.uk/>