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EuropeanaTravel

**Report on minimum standards required for participation in
EuropeanaTravel**

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eContentplus

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1. Introduction

This report describes the minimum standards agreed for partners to participate in the *EuropeanaTravel* Projectⁱ and the reasons behind the decision to adopt those standards. The standards have been agreed with the Europeana Office to ensure that the metadata for the digitised material produced by the *EuropeanaTravel* Project can be conveniently added to Europeana during the lifetime of the project.

The *EuropeanaTravel* Project is funded by the *eContentplus*ⁱⁱ programme and will run for two years from May 2009. It has 19 partners, 17 of which are libraries contributing content on the theme of travel. They are drawn from 16 countries across Europe and come equally from the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL)ⁱⁱⁱ and the Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche (LIBER)^{iv}. The project will digitise text, images, maps, manuscripts, glass plates, film negatives, photographs, journals, shellacs, postcards, and graphic sheets. This digitised content will be accessible to the public through Europeana^v.

The contributing partners are all experienced in digitisation, and the CENL members already contribute data to Europeana through The European Library (TEL)^{vi}. For this project the CENL partners will continue to use their existing methods as already agreed for TEL as an aggregator for Europeana. Content created by the LIBER partners will be aggregated by a new service set up in Work Package 3. No partners will submit content direct to Europeana; all content will be harvested either by TEL or by the new LIBER aggregator, and the standards used must facilitate that aggregation.

Milestone 1.1 of the *EuropeanaTravel* project was a two-day workshop to be held in month 2 of the project, at which minimum standards essential for the collaboration to work were to be discussed and agreed. This workshop took place on 15th and 16th June at UCL in London. Prior to that workshop, at the kick-off meeting in Tallinn in early May, it had already been agreed that there were only two standards that were essential for successful collaboration in the project. These were conformity to the recently approved Europeana Semantic Elements (ESE) as a metadata standard; and OAI-PMH compliance for participating repositories, to allow harvesting of all content by the relevant aggregators for delivery to Europeana. This approach is fully compatible with the Europeana Outline Functional Specification, produced in March 2009 by the Europeana Thematic Network.^{vii}, which specifies the technical architecture for the development of Europeana.

2. Repository Standards

The Europeana Outline Functional Specification is quite clear on the requirements for content providers to Europeana. Paragraph 2.3.1.1 states:

“The interaction of content providers with Europeana lies in the area of data provision (exposure from the repository’s side of view) to content aggregators. They must publish the data in appropriate forms to achieve the proper visibility for the repository’s content taking into account possible usage restrictions and associated Europeana requirements. This means submitting content (and associated data) to content aggregators in a controlled and automatic way. The OAI-PMH protocol is a widely used mechanism employed for this purpose regarding metadata, and Europeana has decided to make this a prerequisite for the data collection procedure and content aggregators will accordingly collect data from content providers.”

Guidance to libraries on the implementation of OAI-PMH was produced by the TELplus project in May 2008.^{viii} This was the product of Work Package 2 of the TELplus project, the purpose of which was

“To provide the participating partner libraries with tools, guidelines and resources for the implementation of OAI-PMH on their catalogues/collections, and to expand The European Library central index in functionality and storage capacity in order to be able to harvest and index the partner libraries' catalogues/collections”^{ix}

The latest version of the protocol for OAI-PMH is Version 2, dated December 2008 and includes instructions for migrating from version 1.1 to version 2.

Partners in Europeana*Travel* contributing data via TEL are already expected to meet the TEL requirements as defined in TELplus. The LIBER aggregator will also use OAI-PMH, and all contributors have confirmed that they can meet this requirement.

3. Metadata Standards

Europeana does not collect digital objects from content providers. It simply harvests metadata using OAI-PMH. The requirement for the content providers in *EuropeanaTravel* is to provide metadata in a form most useful to Europeana.

When the project proposal was in preparation, there was no agreed standard for metadata in Europeana beyond basic Dublin Core and it was thought that it would be necessary to decide on a minimum standard within the project. This changed in February 2009, when Europeana itself published the *Specification for the Europeana Semantic Elements (ESE)*.^x This is now the approved metadata schema for all contributors to Europeana, and almost all project partners in *EuropeanaTravel* report no problems conforming to it. Where partners are unable to comply in the short term their metadata will be collected in OAI-DC and mapped to ESE by the aggregator, with the expectation that all partners will move to ESE as soon as possible. The project strongly recommends that metadata is exposed in ESE by partners. All output from the aggregator will be in ESE, converted if necessary from OAI-DC.

At the workshop in London information was shared about other metadata schemas to be used by the partners in their local digital services. The range of original content in *EuropeanaTravel* is wide and therefore a variety of schemas will be used, but they will all be mapped to ESE for exposure to Europeana. The project will monitor work being done in Europeana V1.0 on the development of a Europeana Data Model (EDM) to preserve original metadata.

It was agreed at the London workshop that the standards already being used by partners exceeded the minimum level needed for Europeana and that the project should share good practice between partners as far as possible, taking advantage of the high degree of expertise among project partners. Information on all standards to be used by partners is being collected in Work Package 1 and will be sent to Europeana for approval before being finally accepted as an approved digitisation plan for *EuropeanaTravel*.

4. Other digitisation-related standards

The issue of potential agreement by the *EuropeanaTravel* partners to adopt other standards than those essential for meeting the objectives of the project was discussed briefly at the kickoff in Tallinn and again at the London workshop. Potential areas for consideration might have been OCRing or scanning resolution and so on.

It was considered unnecessary to agree further standards for non-core areas because it would not have contributed to meeting the project's objectives. In addition, the 17 libraries contributing content have production processes [and in some cases external contracts] in place which could not in many cases be easily modified to meet requirements imposed by the project. To attempt to do so would have been likely to create uncertainty, conflict and delay.

The preferred approach is that already envisaged in the project's Description of Work, namely to encourage maximum learning in the *EuropeanaTravel* consortium by moving ahead to exchange good practice by sharing knowledge of all relevant standards used by all partners through D1.2 and D2.2. The related topic of good practice in digital preservation will be covered by D1.3. Additionally, many of the project partners have close links with the IMPACT Project^{xi} whose core objective is to develop and share good practice in digitisation. *EuropeanaTravel* will continue to follow its progress and that of related projects and draw important developments to consortium members' attention.

5. References

i www.europeanatravel.eu

ii http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/econtentplus/index_en.htm

iii <http://www.cenl.org/>

iv <http://www.libereurope.eu/>

v www.europeana.eu

vi <http://search.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/en/index.html>

vii *Europeana Outline Functional Specification for development of an operational European Digital Library. Version 1.7, 1 March 2009.* Europeana Thematic Network.
http://group.europeana.eu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=a9e29cb4-a9b3-462a-a43d-0b480c677088&groupId=10602

viii *OAI-PMH implementation and tools guidelines.*
http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/telplus/documents/TELplus_D2.1_31052008.pdf

ix <http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/telplus/outcomes.php#WP2>

x *Specification for the Europeana Semantic Elements*
http://dev.europeana.eu/public_documents/Specification_for_metadata_elements_in_the_Europeana_prototype.pdf

xi <http://www.impact-project.eu/home/>