

The World Tourism Day 2020: Digital cultural heritage promoting tourism

During the lockdown, the cultural heritage sector has faced unprecedented challenges, yet institutions have quickly reacted with numerous online initiatives, to stay connected to their audiences through digital culture. Cultural heritage professionals have made heroic efforts digitising the treasures allowing people to enjoy culture online when travel was no longer possible enticing new and old visitors to come in person once the situation allows. The European Commission has worked on several digital cultural heritage initiatives to alleviate the blow to the sector.



Photo: A. Barry

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To help cultural heritage professionals in their quest to digitise the cultural heritage, the Expert Group on Digital Cultural Heritage and Europeana (DCHE) has come up with basic principles, recommendations and tips on how to digitise cultural heritage using 3D technologies. This study is available under [Basic principles and tips for 3D digitisation of cultural heritage](#).

In the article [Cultural Heritage @Home](#) you find many examples of museums, art galleries, sites and projects that have made exciting virtual tours and 3D images of their art and cultural heritage treasures.

Furthermore, Europeana, which provides access to millions of books, music, artworks and more, has brought together a number of initiatives and resources from across the sector, offering inspiration, support and guidance to institutions to adopt a digital approach to the crisis, including a series of webinars on the theme 'Culture from home'. In June, a special series of Europeana workshops on 'Digital Transformation in the time of COVID-19' were organised, with the aim to develop a shared understanding of what digital transformation means in practice for cultural heritage institutions, their

diverse needs with regards to capacity building, and what interventions would be needed to support them, in an inclusive way.

It has also has launched two sites to help the tourism industry:

- “Discovering Europe Professional” where professional cultural heritage professionals can get ideas and inspiration on how to digitise the content.
- “Discovering Europe” with collections of art and images inspiring tourist to visit their favourite places or finding new cultural gems in Europe.

EU funded projects in the digital cultural heritage sector are bringing technology to cultural heritage professionals. Many work on solutions with 3D, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality to transform the digital experiences and enticing visitors to the sites and museums and art galleries.

This is not the only benefit of digitising cultural heritage. Restructuring in the wake of fires, earthquakes or intentional damage is becoming increasingly important and the work of EU funded projects is helping to make this possible. Digitalisation can also provide a bunch of information for researchers that can have a better view of objects and sites without need travel Cultural heritage is not only contributing to the economy; it helps the development of research on historical sciences and it is a source of enjoyment for many Europeans and it contributes to togetherness as well as diversity.

- INCEPTION has offered their expertise and 3D scanning technology and its 3D model, which could be one of the keys to being able to reconstruct the fire-damage Notre Dame cathedral in Paris. INCEPTION solves the shortcomings of state-of-the-art 3D reconstruction by significantly enhancing the functionalities, capabilities and cost-effectiveness of instruments and deployment procedures for 3D laser survey, data acquisition and processing. It solves the accuracy and efficiency of 3D capturing by integrating Geospatial Information, Global and Indoor Positioning Systems (GIS, GPS, IPS) through both hardware interfaces as well as software algorithms. The project INCEPTION has continued to live on through its spin-off INCEPTION srl.
- ARCHES has brought together disabled people, technology companies, universities and museums. Together, they have developed technological solutions, such as tactile reliefs made with the latest 3D modelling techniques, barrier-free apps and games for smartphones and tablets, together with sign language avatars are the cutting-edge technologies. This is a video link to the presentation of the project by an avatar using sign language ARCHES was one of the finalists to this year’s Horizon Impact Award Price.
- PLUGGY is a social networking platform for those who would like to create and share their own cultural heritage stories with their mobile phones on the spot when visiting museums or cultural heritage sites. It has created a number of apps to help people create AR/VR experiences, an authoring app for games, creating sounds narratives using advanced 3D sound techniques and the PLUGGY Online web-based Creation and Access for cultural digital tours using geolocation information of cultural assets. PLUGGY was one of four projects nominated to the Horizon Innovation Radar prize “women-led innovation” for its geolocation app.
- iMareculture launched their games helping with the education and entertainment of children as well as working on an underwater tablet for archaeological dives and it has made several 3D models available online for gamification development, making puzzles and 3D printing at home. The project has also developed a valuable 3D amphorae library. which can be used as input to the 3D automatic recognition and localisation of amphorae, in shipwreck sites.
- I-Media-Cities has developed a platform that lets you watch and interact with unique historical films and images of cities from the collections of renowned European film archives made available by nine large cities from North to South of Europe.

The European Commission also launched an Open Public Consultation on the digital access to

European cultural heritage for the revision of the 2011 Recommendation the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation, receiving 565 contributions.

CORDIS result pack on digital cultural heritage projects was published earlier this year. In this pack, which will soon be updated with more digital cultural heritage projects, you can read more about what the projects do.

The European Commission has launched a website called Re-open Europe to help find information about travel rules and restrictions in the current situation making it easier for anyone who wants to travel to know what the rules are in their own country as well as the destination country.

The World Tourism Day 2020 (organised by UN's World Tourism Organisation UNWTO) sees many events taking place all over the world and you can check if there is anything happening near you by clicking on the interactive map.

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