DigiCULT

Virtual Communities and Collaboration
in the Heritage Sector

Thematic Issue 5

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THE WEST INDIES: BARBADOS.

      Barbados, the most easterly of the West Indian islands, is
a comparatively flat island which rises in a series of terraces to the
highest point at Mount Hillaby (1,115ft.)   The rainfall varies from
50" in some coastal areas to 75" in the high central district; the
average temperature is about 80°F.   Barbados has an area of 166 square
miles and a population of 236,812 (end-1958 estimate), which gives the
island a population density of over 1,400 to the square mile - one of
the highest in the world.   The capital and only port of entry is
Bridgetown (population about 18,650).   The island's economy depends
on the sugar crop which occupies over 70% of the 66,880 acres of
farmland.   Sugar with its by-products rum and molasses are the chief
exports; the main industries are those producing rum and sugar, while
the chief occupation is the cultivation and harvesting of sugar cane.

D. 106640.   Newsboys waiting to collect their copies of "News" -
                 a Barbados daily paper.

November 1960.

Virtual Communities and Collaboration in the Heritage Sector

Thematic Issue 5

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

By Guntram Geser

FUNCTION AND FOCUS

DigiCULT, as a support measure within the Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme, provides a technology watch mechanism for the cultural and scientific heritage sector. Backed by a network of peer experts, the project monitors, discusses and analyses existing and emerging technologies likely to benefit the sector.

To promote the results and encourage early take-up of relevant technologies, DigiCULT has put in place a rigorous publication agenda of seven Thematic Issues, three in-depth Technology Watch Reports, as well as the DigiCULT.Info e-journal, pushed to a growing database of interested persons and organisations on a regular basis. All DigiCULT products can be downloaded from the project Website http://www.digicult.info as they become available. The opportunity to subscribe to DigiCULT.Info is also found here.

While the DigiCULT Technology Watch Reports address primarily technological issues, the Thematic Issues focus more on the organisational, policy and economic aspects of the technologies under consideration. They are based on the expert round tables organised by the DigiCULT Forum secretariat. In addition to the Forum discussion, they provide opinions of other experts in the form of articles and interviews, case studies, short descriptions of related projects, together with a selection of relevant literature.

TOPIC AND CHALLENGE

This fifth Thematic Issue concentrates on the question of how heritage institutions might benefit from fostering virtual communities related to core activities such as exhibitions, educational programmes or in support of scholarly communities.

In recent years 'community' has become the buzzword of the Internet. Through community building many commercial online players hope to attract customers to their sites, 'sell eyeballs' to advertisers, or reap subscriber fees. But apart from niche areas such as search communities (e.g. Classmate.com) or some successful online universities, the commercial vision of virtual communities has failed to materialise. As an analyst from Forum One consultancy bluntly declares: 'Most online community sites are not economically viable and never will be.'[1]

However, virtual communities continue to boom. A scan of Big-Boards.com's overview of 360 large international online forums on the Web[2] reveals a high propensity of forums concentrating on video games, computer-related topics, cars and music. Vault Network, based on role-playing games discussion boards, demonstrates the level of activity and reach with 70,707,941 posted messages from 415,349 members. Another example is Apolyton, with 2,346,204 messages from 45,041 members sharing an interest in Civilization games. The Apolyton Website, founded in July 1998, is also 'dedicated to the continued storage and retrieval of the most comprehensive collection of Civilization-related material on the Internet'.[3] Other large forums include: Hardware.fr (computer hard-/software); VW vortex (Volkswagen and related car brands); and The Bridge (Dave Matthews Band). Not to mention the highly active communities devoted to Tolkien's *Lord of the Ring*s trilogy, or in the categories comics, online art, philosophy, culture and politics, architecture or tropical fish.

There is a growing volume of evidence to suggest that cultural heritage institutions' adoption of virtual communities in support of cultural history, genealogy, performing arts, design, monuments, literature, film or digital art works will broaden the reach, value and relevance of cultural heritage. Linking the collections and work of heritage institutions with virtual communities will considerably change the way we access, communicate about, share our understanding of, and participate in the experience of cultural heritage (for illustrative examples, see also the case studies in the chapter on virtual community technologies of the forthcoming Technology Watch Report 2[4]).

But, for most cultural heritage institutions, the challenge will first be to embrace the idea of co-operating with a (non-professional) online community, and then to nurture an evolving and thriving community that crosses the virtual as well as physical space.

[1] Jim Cashel: Top Ten Trends for Online Communities (2001), http://www.onlinecommunityreport.com/features/10

[2] http://www.big-boards.com

[3] http://www.apolyton.net

[4] These case studies will concentrate on the eStage puppetry community Website, http://www.epuppetry.com, the Urban Tapestries project on location-based wireless co-creativity and collective memory building, http://www.proboscis.org.uk/urbantapestries/, and the multi-user networked environment Vroma, which concentrates on the teaching and learning of Latin and ancient Roman culture, http://www.vroma.org

Overview

Setting the context for this Thematic Issue, the position paper by Susan Hazan, Curator of New Media at the Israel Museum, concentrates on how heritage institutions could (and already do) extend their horizons through synergies with online community activities. She explores a number of online 'interpretive communities', the technologies and strategies they employ and considers their potential for the heritage sector.

Three interviews provide different perspectives on virtual communities:

Kristóf Nyíri, director of the Institute for Philosophical Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, points out that professional virtual communities, people who collaborate to achieve something of cultural or scientific importance, need to be anchored in real life. On the other hand, he sees online communities as highly instrumental in pooling people's experiences and working on solutions for problems that are increasingly on a global scale.

Paul Mulholland, research fellow in the Knowledge Media Institute of the British Open University, draws on experiences from the CIPHER project.[5] This project develops cultural heritage forums, associated with regions, and empowers communities to create, own and sustain online cultural content for themselves. Mulholland emphasises that via such forums not only do many people get involved in cultural heritage, but through activities such as oral history interviews they can add previously hidden information and new insights.

Isabelle Vinson, editor-in-chief of *Museum International*, published by UNESCO, stresses that virtual communities can play a role in safeguarding the intangible or living cultural heritage. She points out that, in a world of increased globalisation, migration streams and cultural transition, they will become forums of people who cherish, preserve and stimulate traditional narratives, arts and traditions.

Michael Steemson summarises the Edinburgh Forum's discussion, which was probably the most argumentative so far, not least because of the topic's psychological and anthropological aspects. The Forum also set out to explore many dimensions of virtual communities such as professional/non-professional, open/closed, cognitive/emotive and synchronous/asynchronous, to name but a few.

This Issue contains two case studies, one of which concentrates on a professional community, while the other describes the involvement of migrant
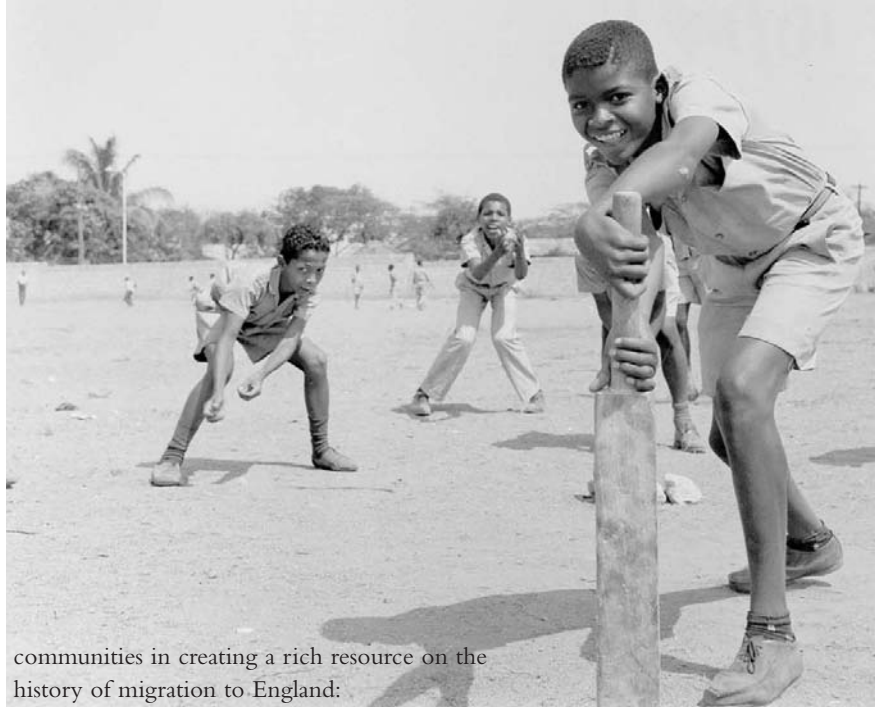
communities in creating a rich resource on the history of migration to England:

Angela Spinazzé, ATSPIN consulting, describes the fabric of the virtual community, involving art historians and IT experts, that developed the virtual Este Court Archive. Their work represents a new way of collecting, sharing and presenting scholarly information (in five languages) on a massive but dispersed collection of Renaissance works of art.

The case study on Moving Here, written together with Helen Wood from The National Archives, describes a large-scale digitisation project involving thirty partners, which combines records on, and personal stories from members of four migrant communities who settled in England. In particular, the project highlights the importance of working together with community centres and experts.

Finally, Cary Karp, Director of Internet Strategy and Technology at the Swedish Museum of Natural History, Director of Internet Strategy for the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and President and CEO of the Museum Domain Management Association (MuseDoma), addresses the policy of museum communities on the Web. In particular, he draws our attention to museum activities that concentrate on born-digital creative works and are not operated by bricks-and-mortar heritage institutions. He calls on the established heritage agencies to face the challenge of such born-digital initiatives that set up virtual museums and provide access to valuable resources solely on the Internet. This should lead to a productive co-operation or at least coexistence with born-digital initiatives (which would eventually come together under the subdomain virtual.museum).

We thank The National Archives for their kind permission to use selected images from the Moving Here project to illustrate this Thematic Issue. Special thanks are also extended to Crystal Hendrix-Hirschorn who provided valuable help in the selection and timely delivery of the images.

[5] http://www.cipherweb.org
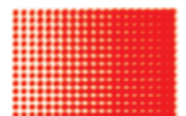
Weaving Community Webs:
A Position Paper

By Susan Hazan

Finding the WELL was like discovering a cosy little world that had been flourishing without me, hidden within the walls of my house; an entire cast of characters welcomed me to the troupe with great merriment as soon as I found the secret door. Like others who fell into the WELL, I soon discovered that I was audience, performer, and scriptwriter, along with my companions, in an ongoing improvisation. A full-scale subculture was growing on the other side of my telephone jack, and they invited me to help create something new.

Howard Rheingold, from the Introduction to *The Virtual Community*.[1]

What makes people devote their time online in a virtual community? What is the net gain for participants for such an activity and how can the museum, library and archive community extend their horizons to accommodate this kind of online activity – and should they? This brief paper explores a number of online communities, the technologies and strategies they employ, and considers their potential for the heritage community.

Gated gardens

The cosy little world such as the one that Rheingold describes hidden away on the other side of his telephone jack has engaged audiences/performers for nearly two decades but not all communities instil such moments of merriment. Professional organisations extend their bricks and mortar activities across institutional intranets, accessible only via the company gateway. These asynchronous conversations usually take place through e-mail and online Web-based postings and are often vital extensions to the shared pool of knowledge and information of the physical workspace. The exchange of information and corporate knowledge across sister institutions enables networks to extend the exclusive space for the exchange of specialised knowledge across other organisations and other knowledge pools. Together these networks share resources and flourish as veritable knowledge-enriched, gated gardens. Digital marketplaces for business-to-business communication foster their own community loyalties, as learning communities come together to enable teachers and students to meet in a shared electronic arena and to access pooled resources on the topic or course they have all signed up for.

The social interaction that takes place across other communities evolves to satisfy a specific cultural or social goal, such as the WELL online community illustrates.[2] Unlike the professionally structured intranets, these Web-based activities perhaps fall into the same category as a hobby – an activity you are prepared to invest in because it fulfils a social or cultural need, not because you have to. These kinds of gatherings resemble a town square or marketplace, but instead of exchanging traditional goods or services people barter knowledge, ideas, news, gossip and personal narratives. These are intrinsically social spaces where people are drawn together with a common sense of purpose, a shared value system and a tacit understanding of the group dynamic.

Online communities can be compared to embodied or real life communities, but, instead of the daily gathering around the water cooler for a chat or dropping into the pub, you can join a community at the click of a mouse from the comfort of your own armchair. They already span the globe, slip silently across geographical and cultural boundaries, and reaffirm trans-national and diasporic connections through a common language and shared experiences. At the same time, other communities connect people across cyberspace from different cultural backgrounds enabling them to exchange ideas and stories and to indulge in their mutual passion - may it be flint arrowheads, Van Gogh sunflowers, or woodlice.

Intangible threads

The invisible crossing of national or cultural borders of virtual communities opens up new opportunities for memory institutions. Through Web-based discussions around the (digital) artefact, i.e. photographs, audio files or short movies and narratives, new threads are woven around the collections giving voice to new interpretations of the objects. These evolving social clusters can give rise to what

[1] Rheingold, H.: The Virtual Community: Finding Connection in a Computerized World. Ebury: Vintage, 1994, see http://www.rheingold.com /vc/book/.
[2] The Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (WELL) was founded by Stewart Brand and Larry Brilliant in 1985, http://www.well. com/aboutwell.html

the American literary theorist Stanley Fish calls 'interpretive communities',[3] communities that coalesce around a certain reading of a (literary) text in Fish's case, or, where museums are concerned, around a specific theme represented through the museum collections, an opportunity to pursue lifelong learning in a culturally satisfying exchange.

Archives, libraries and museums can harness virtual communities to build new synergies around these shared interests. As collections become accessible online, members of a community – including museum-based curators and educators, alongside the remote visitors may all share and contribute their own knowledge and narratives to the communal knowledge base. Virtual communities can be instrumental in expanding the knowledge woven around the objects that surround us in daily life, or in collating scientific data distributed over vast geographic distances.

The traditional mandate of the museum is to preserve, display and interpret extraordinary objects. A virtual community is a space where people can bring in their own objects and, with these (digital) surrogates, their own interpretations. A virtual community however cannot replace a museum when it comes to the singular and extraordinary objects, but it can be instrumental in collecting digital artefacts or scientific data, giving meaning to them and thus building on and enriching shared knowledge and community narratives. Reversing the traditional relationship of museum and visitor, museums can build horizontal fraternities allowing leadership to shift from one participant to the next where the community is predicated on the offering (and accepting) of each other's views seriously. This is the essence of a socially driven virtual community, a democratic space where everybody can become an expert and where each member may learn from one another.

> 'All the members of the family would do their thing in the week, making hats, cocoa, cinnamon, brooms, and they would set off from Grand Bay to sell them at the market. That was their weekly money to feed the family.
> 'If your parents are going to the market, its something that you would do with them and carry your share – however small, they made the bundle according to your size to carry.' *

CURATING THE CLOTH

Museums are already drawing from their online constituencies as resources for different kinds of explorations and participatory activities. *Moving Here*,[4] a partnership of 30 heritage institutions across the UK, explores records and collates why Caribbean, Irish, Jewish and South Asian people came to England over the last two centuries. This evolving fraternity reverses the role of curated and curatee, granting everyone with a journey to share an opportunity to contribute his or her own story using an intuitively designed Web-based upload. The idea that this is a space for anyone to participate in is reiterated by the invitation – 'Your life is history. Your experiences are history. Your story is history'.

Benedict Anderson[5] describes three institutions that contribute to the formulation of the national imagination – the map, the census and the museum. Each one enables the citizen to imagine the parameters of his or her nation, and each institution, in its own way, sanctions a national history. The *Moving Here* project opens up many questions about who may participate in the narration of history, who may author national narratives, and who is authorised to compile them for the national memory. Museums, libraries and archives are the acknowledged compilers and preservers of national narratives for society and this kind of authorship reflects a more porous kind of gated community and new opportunities not just for access to holdings, but for individuals to actually author histories and narratives and deliver them directly into the belly of the institution.

Like histories, knowledge is a valuable and powerful commodity, especially once it is free from the restrictions of the traditional tethering of institutions like archives, libraries and museums. Unlike the *Moving Here* fraternity, not all communities are willing to reveal and exchange knowledge quite so freely. Laura Peers, lecturer and curator at the Pitt Rivers Museum, University

* From: *Memories From the Islands: Market*, story contributed to Moving Here by Haringey University of Third Age, http://www.movinghere.org.uk/stories/story51/story51.htm

[3] Fish, Stanley: Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.

[4] Moving Here, http://www.movinghere.org.uk

[5] Anderson, B.: Imagined Communities. London: Verso 1991.

6 Peers, L.: Electronic correspondence, 24 November 2003.

7 Latour, B.: We Have Never Been Modern, trans. Catherine Porter, New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993.

8 Walking with Woodlice, http://www.nhm.ac.uk/ interactive/woodlice/

9 Country Cures, http://internt.nhm.ac.uk/ cgi-bin/country_cures/

10 The Portable Antiquities Scheme, http://www.finds.org.uk

11 Buried treasure: Finding our past, http://www.thebritish mu seum.ac.uk/ buriedtreasure/

12 Every Object Tells A Story, http://www.vam.ac.uk/ vastatic/microsites/ 1303_every_object/

of Oxford, explains '… the problem is cross-cultural. In many non-Western societies, knowledge is transmitted/transferred either on a "need to know" basis or else only to persons who have been educated/initiated to a point where they are able to assimilate the new bit of information. Uncontextualised knowledge, floating free of these social webs, has no significance, and may indeed be dangerous to the holder; individuals themselves have power and knowledge within social networks, and learn and deploy information only within those networks.' 'Indigenous people', Peers points out, 'are concerned to protect their intellectual and cultural property, and so are wary of sharing information, often seeking to place conditions and restrictions on how information is disseminated. Western society, on the other hand, sees free access to information as socially liberating and as promoting the ideal of the autonomous individual. The Web is a creation of Western society.'[6]

Cultural narratives are not only kinds of knowledge that inflect the meta-narratives of society. Bruno Latour replaces science and technology into its social context, blurring the boundaries between nature and science, between human and thing, inscribed into the rationalising project of modernity.[7] Obliquely referring to our prioritising of some creatures over others, the Natural History Museum, London, asks its Web visitors – 'Why woodlice? You may think that, once you've seen one woodlouse, you've seen them all'.[8] The museum urges young scientists to help the museum-based scientist find out how many different kinds of woodlice live in their vicinity out of the 37 species of woodlice in the UK, using a printable key, and to send in their results. The National History Museum explains how scientists still don't know everything about woodlice – and this is where *you* can help. *Walking with Woodlice*, inspired by the BBC series *Walking with Dinosaurs*, aims to get children to take part in a nation-wide scientific study to use the Internet to share scientific information, to

develop their scientific skills through challenging the online results, and in doing so nurture an enthusiasm for biodiversity.

Reaching out in a similar way to the community, the Natural History Museum also gathers information about herbal remedies, 'not those from ancient books or old scientific journals, but those kept alive by word of mouth between generations', according to the *Country Cures* Website explanation.[9] Visitors may then learn about a home cure that keeps gnats away - as long as the person is prepared to carry a sprig of basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) which evidently, when eaten, produces a foul-smelling sweat that insects don't like in the least. This particular contributor, from Glamorgan, also claims that basil has been traditionally used to keep mosquitoes away.

VIRTUAL FABRIC

Museums already welcome visitor participation, and recognise that their contributions and collaborations are invaluable. Hunting for treasure has always been a popular hobby and every year amateur archaeologists discover thousands of archaeological objects using metal detectors. Through the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS)[10] these objects are reported, recorded and often included in museum collections.

Opening at the British Museum, November 2003, the exhibition *Buried treasure: Finding our past*[11] showcases precious artefacts that have been discovered by chance. Over the next few months these treasures will go on tour and be displayed in four major museums around the country. Not all museum/public collaborations are quite as tangible. *Every Object Tells a Story* illustrates a series of events that took place at the Victoria and Albert Museum over the summer of 2003 where visitors were able to create their own artwork and upload to an especially designed Website. *Photostories*[12] illustrates the stories that adults and children wove around the collections

and showcases the artwork that was created inspired by their favourite objects. The example of a museum extending activities to draw its online constituents into new opportunities for community participation still replicates the traditional educator/educated scenario to a certain extent, but it also illustrates the potential to extend the new paradigm as remote visitors take on all kinds of roles, as moderators, hosts, sysop etc.

Computer mediated and narrative communication often takes place across synchronic architectures. Participants may invoke a 'handle' or purported name commonly used across IRC (Internet relay chat) discussions or may prefer to go online with a Web-cam in real-time video conferencing meeting in shared spaces. Over VRML environments players may choose to present themselves with either a home-made or designer avatar, but in most cases the promotion of self can be confusing – both for the chatter and the chatee and neither can truly know whether the person they are relating to on the 'other side' is really the person he or she claims to be.

Sherry Turkle discussed these alternative models of identity in her book *Life on the Screen*, noting that MUD players soon discover that the idea that they are a unified self is simply fiction.[13] This is not a space that necessarily inspires trust, but memory institutions, whose institutional mandate does inspire a sense of trust and integrity, may appear more attractive for users who wish to seek out a social or culturally directed community when it is hosted by a local or national institution.

COMMUNITY PROSPECTS

The sense of trust that resonates from memory institutions may stem partly from the public's understanding that they function in the 'non-profit' sector, and therefore are not there to rip you off, nor to obscure identity from you; rather they might be out there with a mandate to do you some good. Unfortunately, this is not what has been driving so many of the VRML worlds, but in spite of the price ticket many of them are becoming more and more enticing.

Active Worlds, 3D virtual reality environments,[14] sprawl across millions of square kilometres of virtual territory and are already enthusiastically signing up their own citizens who wish to stake a claim to their own piece of land. Avatars can be evoked as the *surrogate-you*, so that you may run, jump, fly, dance and communicate through dynamic emotions (there is a wonderful little dance routine you can do on

greeting a friend). These micro worlds offer novel opportunities for virtual players to feel at home, such as the pleasure of sharing a real-time moment with that someone special in the comfort of your own 'penthouse'. The Active Worlds browser is a small 1.5-megabyte download which, according to their Website, has been downloaded by more than 1.5 million users worldwide.

The cybertown rival supported by Blaxxun[15] welcomes its own potential citizens, and targets e-commerce customers. The 3D environment encourages product placement, profiling and tracking for more effective marketing and, if the corporate world can benefit from brand positioning, think about what an institution like a museum with perhaps some of the most exquisite objects globally available at its fingertips could do with such a lucrative location.

To return to the economy of our 'non-profit' institutions, virtual communities, hosted by memory institutions, whether avatar or people-driven, could augment the consumption of ideas/knowledge/gossip, and inspire the exchange of creative skills. While these environments demand new resources and sustained participation by both host and participants, they can also expect a substantial reward for the time and energy invested. As memory institutions open their collections and archives to the public in new ways to develop new virtual communities, new kinds of meaningful participatory collaborations, and contributions by the public could extend expertise across invisible geographic borders, harness a lot of creative energy, and extend knowledge bases across society in novel ways.

I'm not alone in this emotional attachment to an apparently bloodless technological ritual. Millions of people on every continent also participate in the computer-mediated social groups known as virtual communities, and this population is growing fast. (H. Rheingold, 1994)

[13] Turkle, S.: Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

[14] Active Worlds™, http://www.activeworlds.com

[15] Blaxxun Technologies, http://www.blaxxun.com

Cultural Skirmishes around the Tribal e-Realms of Virtual Communities

By Michael Steemson

They argued a lot about virtually everything in this DigiCULT Forum Number 5. In fact, it was probably the most argumentative Forum yet because the thirteen specialists were charged with getting a grip on the intangible and making it work for them and their heritage institutions.

But, perhaps it was also because the six women and seven men meeting in beautiful Edinburgh's Napier University constituted the first DigiCULT Forum to approach gender egalitarianism.

They had to find ways in which virtual communities – online groups of like minds, Internet tribes, almost – and collaborations could be harnessed to the exciting, taxing business of exploiting and enhancing cultural heritage holdings. It was easy to say, devilish hard to do.

'Professional virtual communities are, in a fundamental sense, impossible,' said the Moderator. 'If that is true, why are we even here?' asked a museologist. 'I disagree with both of you,' said a curator.

It went on for a little while but, when eventually they reached understanding, they fell to discussing subjects like the virtual communities they were tasked to encourage. By the end, the Edinburgh experts concluded that cultural heritage virtual communities would and must happen despite potential snags like authenticity, resistance from some heritage institutions, and 'moon and green cheese revisionists'.

Their exploration was part of a 30-month series of seven round table debates for the European Commission's Information Society Technologies Directorate, enlightening cultural institutions – museums, libraries, art galleries, archives and the like – on how digitisation can improve their lives. Previous gatherings have teased out knotty issues such as the Semantic Web, digital learning objects and digital asset management. Now the adepts of the Fifth Forum of DigiCULT were to do battle with virtual reality.

Moderator **Kristóf Nyíri**, a philosophy historian at Budapest's Institute for Philosophical Research[1] of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences[2] (*Magyar Tudományos Akadémia*), outlined the Forum discourse, reminding the group that information and communications technologies (ICTs) had become indispensable to the solution of world problems such as the preservation of cultural heritage. He posited that virtual communities fell into two categories: the non-professional groups that could remain virtual 'because there are no big stakes' and the professional ones that were, as he put it, 'just phases in face-to-face meetings'.

He reinforced the idea: 'I believe professional virtual communities are just virtual dimensions of underlying real physical professional communities.' Professionals had a grave time management problem, he said, caused largely by 'the rhythm and pattern of life generated by these ICTs'.

He went on: 'This state of affairs is serious. We are not allowed to say this in public but privately all of us realise that life has become hell. In terms of cultural heritage, what we have is too much of everything; where there is too little well-organised, well-articulated, well-preserved and well-presented material. In preserving and digitising it, the main question is how to channel, distil, sell and organise it … which technologies to use to make this flood manageable.'

It seemed to need the question that Dr **Cary Karp**, President and Chief Executive of Sweden's Museum Domain Management Association,[3] put soon afterwards. He agreed with the Moderator by saying: 'The only thing that the digital platform will ever be is an adjunct mode of communication for a pre-existing physical community.' But then he added: 'And if that is true why are we even here today?'

Moderator Nyíri insisted: 'I am not dogmatic about this but fundamentally if there is no physical backbone to a virtual community in a professional sense that virtual community is not likely to get off the ground.'

The Curator of New Media at Jerusalem's Israel Museum[4], **Susan Hazan**, disagreed strongly. 'There is a lot of documentation on *fanship*,' she said, 'people who have started an online community because they have watched a TV show. They will continue to re-visit this online experience day in, day out and may or may not meet at conventions. This is based on TV, which I don't think is reality.' She asked how else a 'community' could be perceived.

The Moderator turned to a sociological defin-ition: 'Since Ferdinand Tönnies, there is distinction be-tween *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*,[5] between "society" and "community". Society tends to be big and formal, community tends to be intimate and closed.'

Mobile Telephony Communities

There were suggestions, too, that people who spent much time in virtual communities lost contact with the real world. This was false, Mr Nyíri said. These were people who were *not* losing contact with reality. And he thought that, for example, mobile communication created communities, a fact he con-sidered relevant to the heritage sector because of its ability to handle images. In fact, he was surprised that multimedia messaging (MMS) had not been as big a success as the single media (SMS) forbear.

Ms Hazan considered that, on the contrary, MMS was indeed very big but **Bruce Royan**, a visiting professor in communications at Napier University,[6] argued it was rather a matter of 'noise made by the operators' making it just seem big.

Dr **Seamus Ross**, Director of Glasgow University's Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII),[7] questioned Mr Nyíri's assertions on virtual community reality checks. A recent article by American author Naomi Wolf [8] suggested that virtual communities took over lives of people and changed the nature of their communication in the real world, he said, adding:

'I believe some people will participate in the virtual world and become just like drug addicts because they become totally immersed in it.'

Another moot point came from **Isabelle Vinson**, editor in chief of UNESCO's *Museum International* [9] journal. She was not convinced that cultural heritage yet had much to gain from mobile telecommuni-cations technology, which was still largely the pro-vince of wealthier countries only. She said: 'There is the question of language and the need to interpret, to give meanings to cultural heritage when using the Web. True, it is an economic question. But it is also a question of languages and understanding what cultural heritage is in education.' She wanted to know, too, what the sector thought it could gain by expanding into virtual communities.

And so they talked of the economics of open archives initiatives, of the World Wide Web's 'gift economy', of reaction to the 'commercialisation of the publication', of the needs of the museum community and the 'digital divide'.

'I loathe the term "digital divide",' growled Stockholm's Dr Karp. His most vivid memory from helping museum communities 'on the other side of the digital divide' was their reaction to his help. Personnel had chastised him for creating an Internet resource suitable only for their limited needs. They had, he said, scolded him with: 'If you do that we will never get access to the Internet'.

Dr Karp went on, fiercely: 'If we, those on the privileged side of all of this, are constantly talking about the digital divide as something that needs to be considered and the resources that we develop need to recognise this, then we guarantee that the people on the other side are going to remain there. There is a paternalistic, colonialistic aspect baked into the notion of the digital divide, which is why I loathe the concept.'

Dr Ross asserted that the success of open archives and 'the e-print stuff' were assured. It was less to do with freedom of information and removal of middle-

* From: *Memories From the Islands: Chapman Lane*, story contributed to Moving Here by Haringey University of Third Age, http://www.movinghere. org.uk/stories/story58/ story58.htm

4 Israel Museum, Jerusalem, http://www.imj.org.il
5 Ferdinand Julius Tönnies (1855-1936), German sociologist, co-founder German Society for Sociology. His study, *Gemeinschaft und Gesell-schaft*, published 1887. See Mathieu Deflem, Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward Craig, London: Routledge, 2001, http://www.cla.sc. edu/socy/faculty/deflem/ zToennies.html
6 Napier University, Edinburgh, http://www. napier.ac.uk
7 HATII, http://www.hatii. arts.gla.ac.uk
8 Naomi Wolf, US feminist writer, 'The Porn Myth: in the end, porn doesn't whet men's appetites, it turns them off the real thing', *New York Magazine*, October 20, 2003, http://www. newyorkmetro.com/ nymetro/news/ trends/n_9437/
9 *Museum International* journal, UNESCO, http://www.ingenta.com/ journals/browse/bpl/muse

men publishers than with the return of publication control and power to the academic sector. 'That is in the end why this is really going to take off,' he said.

Bruce Royan added another factor, what he called 'the attention economy'. He explained: 'The academic wants to get his stuff read and indeed the funding agency that paid for the research to be done wants it to be read too.' Internet publication avoided the traditional, expensive ways of 'getting your ideas and your research more widely known.'

Pay attention:
The new Web economy

The 'attention economy' theory is attributed to US economist Michael H. Goldhaber, a visiting scholar at the Institute for the Study of Social Change at the University of California at Berkeley. He has enlarged his original 1997 thoughts *The Attention Economy and the Net*, http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue2_4/goldhaber/ and *Attention Shoppers!* in http://www.wired.com/wired/5.12/es_attention.html to a series of polemics applying his theories to modern politics, see http://www.heise.de/tp/english/kolumnen/gol/default.html

His thesis is that in the 'New Economy' the new currency will be Attention rather than money. In *Attention Shoppers!*, he wrote: 'Attention can ground an economy because it is a fundamental human desire and is intrinsically, unavoidably scarce.' His ideas have been expanded in a book *The Attention Economy: Understanding the New Currency of Business*, by Thomas H. Davenport and John C. Beck (Harvard Business Review, 2001), http://www.attentionbook.com/.

The authors wrote: 'The Attention Economy, where the scarcest resource for today's business leaders is no longer just land, capital, or human labor, and it certainly isn't information. Attention is what's in short supply.'

Security before Sharing

Italian archaeologist Dr **Sofia Pescarin**, a computer scientist at Rome's *Istituto per le Tecnologie Applicate Ai Beni Culturali* (Institute for Technologies Applied to Cultural Heritage),[10] wanted greater security in virtual communities. Cultural heritage institutions, especially those in Italy it seems, needed to know that communication channels were secure before they shared information, she said, and wondered if, perhaps, peer2peer technology would serve the purpose.

Dr Karp thought not. But public key encryption would, he said. It was a technology that had 'been around from the very start, that everybody truly needs and that is never used'. It was, he said, 'another grand mystery of the Internet'.

Moderator Nyíri thought Web security was 'trivially easy because if it is not linked to an index page and if the URL is complicated enough …' Dr Karp interrupted: 'No, no! That is one of the Internet engineering taskforce's mantras. Security by obscurity is not a good idea.'

The Forum was concerned. Members wondered why nobody ever changed Internet passwords, why telecommunication surveillance was accepted, how the average user avoided getting 'lost in the ocean of information', as Mr Nyíri put it.

The Edinburgh 13 now engaged with Dr Karp's next challenge: 'What about all the cultural heritage material that exists originally in digital material and resides only on the Internet? We have not confronted the issue of people conducting cultural heritage exclusively in the digital environment.'

The Moderator was pleased with that approach. 'It is important to realise that increasingly scholarly and scientific researches are only publishable on the Web because they contain material which cannot be committed to hard copy – videos and so on. I think this is an extremely important point to realise.' This began another troubled debate on matters like the
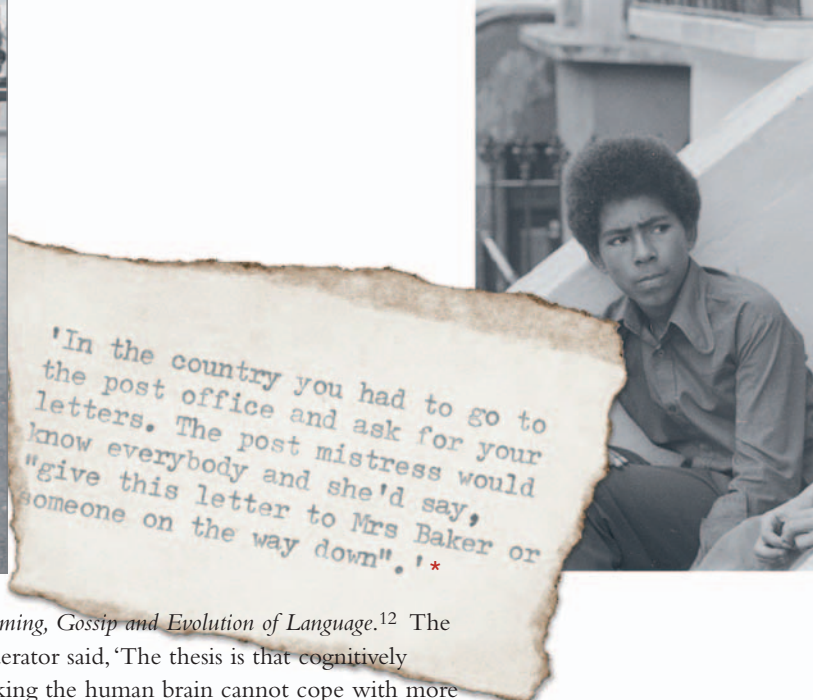
digital dark ages, subversive born-digital high cultural artists, digital happenings, the notion of impermanence 'baked' into tangible modern art, Internet 'spam' as chromatic art and virtual orchestra performance.

Napier University's social informatics researcher **Hazel Hall** pulled them back to virtual communities, asking: 'Shouldn't we be looking at the user base as well as the artefacts, because that is where a lot of new things can happen?'

Jerusalem curator Susan Hazan agreed. A digital community was one where the power of the 'virtual moment' was passed to the contributor. She described it as: 'The agency that has been transferred from a central control to the periphery.'

Dr **Nils Tomes**, Director of e-Networks and Communications for the British Council,[11] picked up the point: 'Virtual communities are channels to a constituency, to an audience. They are means for discussing something, initiating something, continuing and closing something. We have to think in terms of how these different channels weave together or whether they are things in their own right,' she said.

'Is a virtual community something that has a wall or is it one amongst many ways in which users can deal with collections they want to access? What is there about the community that we create around these collections that will help people move from one communication channel on to another, one dimension to another?'

Dr Karp warned against too large virtual community groups. 'More than 200 people cannot possibly be cohesive enough for some of the problems we are describing,' he said.

THE 150 GROUP BENCHMARK

Moderator Nyíri had a useful benchmark for group numbers, 150, the number suggested in a book by British primatologist, Robin Dunbar,

Grooming, Gossip and Evolution of Language.[12] The Moderator said, 'The thesis is that cognitively speaking the human brain cannot cope with more than 150 people as a circle to whom to turn for advice. Firms with more than 150 staff acquire a more rigid, bureaucratic structure. Under 150 you can have an informal firm. The same number appears in scientific organisations. Those people who really work together on a sub-disciplinary problem would be 150. If there are more, the sub-discipline breaks up and you have two research directions.'

Hazel Hall remembered that the same was true in primitive tribes and, indeed, for a manufacturing company who built a new factory whenever staff at a site exceeded around 150. It was, she said, a question of trust. 'In a group of 150, you cannot misbehave without other people knowing or you cannot *not* contribute without other people knowing.'

DigiCULT Project Manager, **John Pereira**, of Salzburg Research, the Forum co-ordinators, characterised the virtual community as 'the sum of activities based on agreed technologies by people with common motivations towards a common goal'. He went on: 'What interests me is what drives and sustains a virtual community and what are its goals both individual and combined.'

'Exactly!' said Ms Hall. 'It is the social infra-structure of the community that is important.'

Concord was bursting out all over and Forum Five was on a roll.

UNESCO's Isabelle Vinson agreed, too. She urged: 'The substance of a virtual community is the people. People are brought together around a subject, to share information and new interpretations of meaning. It is the added value of a virtual community. It relates to intangible functions like sharing ideas and creating new meanings.'

Dr Nils Tomes had an example of that from her days on a Scottish project to teach upper secondary school pupils online *or* in class. Her study of the learners showed they interacted with others working online as well as their teachers and classmates.

* From: *Memories From the Islands: Newspaper*, story contributed to Moving Here by Haringey University of Third Age, http://www.movinghere.org.uk/stories/story73/story73.htm

11 British Council, http://www.britishcouncil.org

12 Professor Robin Ian MacDonald Dunbar: Grooming, Gossip and Evolution of Language, Faber and Faber Ltd, London, 1996; ScienceBookGuide.com review, URL: http://www.sciencebookguide.com/book.html?book=32

They increasingly worked out of formal school hours, often later at night, involving their families, neighbours. She had discovered: 'They were bringing extra people into this. It was a different dimension, something they were doing that the formal education system did not see.'

Ms Hall applied it to cyberspace: 'In virtual space, you can link into other groups of 150 much more easily. You can have the power of your immediate 150 and, if you have got good people at the boundaries of other groups, you get into those networks too.'

What were the demands and expectations of a virtual relationship? asked John Pereira. The Moderator said: 'The operative word is trust. If you do not have a minimum of trust you do not have a real virtual relationship and there is a problem how to build up trust in a merely virtual space.'

'Virtual Trust Easier'

It was a word they had touched on briefly before, but now the 13 focused hard on it. The UK Open University's Dr **Paul Mulholland** picked it up and ran with it. He's a research fellow with the Open University's Knowledge Media Institute[13] and he thought trust was actually most easily acquired virtually. He told the 13: 'There is a lot of influence and information you can derive and analyse to create trust in a virtual situation. I think it is slightly deterministic to say that it is hard virtually and easy physically. There is a process that you have to go through.'

Dr Karp agreed: 'Yes, there are any number of useful ways for injecting notions of trust or rendering a digital presence recognisably trust-able. If you are certain where something comes from and you have some external sense of trust for the origin then you will trust the digital thing.'

Dr Ross, Glasgow University HATII director, spoke of the number of issues surrounding trust in the virtual environment. He called them 'trust horizons', the often wildly different levels of authentication required by different communities, such as 'those communities looking for authenti-cation of the notion that the moon landing was a staged event'. Dr Karp took the point. It was difficult what he called 'identifying the wackos'. It kept the Forum amused until lunchtime.

The debate continued about risks and opportunities of virtual communities. Netherlands National Library (*Koninklijke Bibliotheek*)[14] expert **Margariet**

13 Knowledge Media Institute, Milton Keynes, UK, http://kmi.open.ac.uk

14 Netherlands National Library, The Hague, http://www.kb.nl

Moelands was concerned about justifying time, effort and money only to have virtual communities die out for lack of interest. Dr Karp wondered: 'What is the inter-relationship between a community of libraries acting on the Internet and a community of libraries acting in the physical realm.'

Ms Moelands, a team member on the National Library's language, history and culture knowledge domain Alfa@ned, had an answer: 'I think a digital library can serve inter-disciplinary activities more than a physical library.'

INTER-DISCIPLINARY HOPES

Moderator Nyíri grasped delightedly at that concept. 'Trans-disciplinarity is enhanced by the digital environment much more than the pre-digital one, so that is one of the valid answers to your question "what can the digital world do better?",' he said.

'Trans-disciplinary research is much better done in a digital environment because the physical walls do not intrude. Whatever the nature of a physical library, there is a classification scheme and that works against trans-disciplinary approaches.' There was, he said, a new flow towards unification and unity in the scientific field. A virtual scientific community could achieve better trans-disciplinary results than a physical one because of this environment and because it was less hierarchically structured.

He added: 'Disciplinary differences are to a great extent political ones. The influential professor wants to keep the disciplinary field to herself and so a disciplinary wall is erected. It is much more difficult to be an anti-democratic scientific manager on the Web than in the physical world.'

The talk of walls struck chords right around the Forum. Susan Hazan wanted to know: 'Are we creating walled gardens just by professionals for professionals or do we allow other people in to share the beautiful attributes of our work?' Hazel Hall saw tensions between committed communities that lived and thrived through their members' obsessions and exclusive, gated groups of experts reluctant to admit outsiders for fear of diluting the expertise that kept their interest live. Margariet Moelands remarked dryly: 'What we have found is that a professional community does not want lurkers.'

There was talk of digital platforms, mergers, bridge building, but Mr Nyíri was not happy about it. In the real world, is was difficult for non-philosophers to address questions to a professional group but, the historian of philosophy added darkly, 'In the digital world,

alas, sometimes I must say, it has become very easy.'

Open University's Dr Mulholland was more optimistic. He expressed it: 'There are methodologies for how to design online communities and how to support and moderate online discussions, by how many people you have and so on. They have to be "fit for purpose".'

The university had, over years, developed processes such as how to seed questions for the first people who joined. He explained: 'When people try to create a virtual community, they create discussion software and say "There you go. There is your discussion software, go discuss". The result is that nobody discusses anything because they go there and there are no roles, no rules, no-one knows who they are supposed to be talking to and the purpose is not clear. But, if you take a discussion space and seed it with some questions, answers and dialogue from previous years, then people get an idea of what it is for and how they can benefit. They say "I see the rules of the game and this has to be established". I think this is the key.'

Dr Tomes had another concern: costs. Was the community adding something or substituting for something? she asked. 'It is going to cost something to run a community in effort or other resources. So are you going to spend more to get a community or what are you going to stop doing in order to sustain that community?'

KEY TERMS FOR VIRTUAL GROUPS

Dr Tomes introduced yet another angle: 'These are really a set of learning communities that we are part of.' Not everyone agreed this was always so, but learning could be another element to add to the list of key terms the Forum then drew up to describe the structure of a virtual community:
| Communication / Sharing
| Commitment / Passion
| Trust
| Interactivity / Inter-dependence
| Hybridity / Inter-mediation
| Authenticity
| Identity and
| Sustainability

The Forum was still anxious about the 'authenticity' aspect. DigiCULT Project Manager John Pereira felt there were risks in creating a public access platform without controls although these would limit 'synchronous communication possibilities'. Moderator Nyíri reassured the Forum with a story about the massive virtual encyclopaedia project the

Hungarian Science Academy was launching the following month and, he joked: 'I guess it will kill me for the next twenty years.'

The encyclopaedia's entries would come from the 'first circle' of leading experts in the fields. Each would be given separate shadow links to the best Hungarian and non-Hungarian sources – the 'second circle'. The 'third circle' would be user commentary. Nyíri explained: 'Imagine someone who believes that the moon is made of green cheese. If our leading astrophysicist has an entry that the moon is made of rocks and so on, then, in the third round, our user has the opportunity to say "no, it is made of green cheese" and everyone interested can read it.'

Thus, the encyclopaedia would produce a virtual community of users, he said, explaining: 'Without that feedback, all we have done is just put something on the Web. But, with feedback, it becomes a kind of community with experts on the one side and non-professionals on the other, all sort of bound up in a healthy interaction – at least this is what I am hoping for!'

He conceded that the idea had its risks, adding the sobering thought: 'As long as it is about the moon and green cheese it's OK. But, when it is concerning the reality of Auschwitz, for instance, then the situation gets difficult. I have no good answer. I just hope and pray that the crucial issues do not come up too early.'

The Edinburgh 13 turned to its recommendations. Virtual communities were not just luxuries, they thought, but they needed clear visions of their purpose. There was value in a fluid, but clear, division between professional and non-professional communities with aims that the two should interact.

To begin, the institution must recruit its keenest members, with passionate interest in their subjects and skills to pass that on to their constituents. Users must be left in no doubt about the subject under discussion and its boundaries. There must be stern observance of professional, academic and disciplinary standards in order to earn and retain public trust. As the Moderator said: 'The only way to say something is trustworthy is to have an institution in which people have trust.'

GREY GHOST OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Forum 13 was beginning to think its purpose had been served. But then it grounded on another seemingly insuperable obstacle. The Swedish museum management chief executive Dr Karp raised the spectre of the disinterested, resistant curator, chief librarian or gallery boss with 'deep physical traditions that are resisting change and modification'. He conceded that they did business through e-mailboxes and Websites that they regarded as useful adjuncts to their real activity but, he went on:

'What we as a group of renegades sitting here are saying is, well, virtual activity can be as legitimate in terms of our societal mission as the physical stuff.'

Warming to his subject, the museologist went on: 'Personally, this is the challenge I face. I know how to put something up on the Web and identify it so that a naive user will recognise it and hopefully derive benefit from it. What I do not know is how to get to the morons in the museum sector who refuse to realise that digitality has a cultural value.'

Israeli curator Hazan tried to lighten the mood with a cheerful 'the good thing is that they retire', but Dr Karp was not to be mollified. 'The danger is that museums become irrelevant in the meantime.'

The world was filling with young people who knew how to meet physical and digital needs without any institutional help, he said. If cultural heritage institutions wished to retain relevance, they must assume control of the situation not as they wished it to be but as it really was.

The Doctor of Philosophy went on: 'We need to help our institution siblings despite themselves because, if we fail, we are going to see our institutional relevance dwindle. To continue being perceived as important to society demands that institutions address the issues that we are here today to talk about. We are convinced about all this, but how do we go about convincing everybody else?'

Fortunately, he had an answer. The Luddite radicals could be convinced that 'we are not turning our backs on the living tradition, the bearers of which we are', he said. 'We are simply accommodating those traditions to present today's circumstances which, because they were inconceivable fifty years ago, obviously aren't reflected in traditions.'

The Moderator was encouraging, too. Libraries and museums had changed widely in the past 300 years, even in the last 20 years. He concluded: 'The changing communication environment obviously induces changes in the functions of these institutions – it would be strange if it did not. To put it differently: it is silly to believe that it doesn't!'

The Edinburgh experts, communicators and enthusiasts all hoped fervently that he was right.

POINTERS IN DESIGNING A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL MULHOLLAND

By Joost van Kasteren

If you want to involve the general public in cultural heritage, it is not enough to let them browse through the pages, how well designed they may be. You have to give them something to do. A virtual community can be very useful to make them active in cultural heritage, for instance by challenging them to do research or interviews for oral history. Apart from increasing involvement of the public it also stimulates the collection of previously hidden information and the development of new insights.'

Dr Paul Mulholland is very keen on the use of virtual communities to involve the general public in creating new knowledge. As a research fellow in the Knowledge Media Institute of the British Open University, he is involved in CIPHER, a 'Heritage-for-All' project. To illustrate the added value of public involvement, he describes the Bletchley Park project.[1]

'In the Second World War Bletchley Park was the place where German codes were broken, thus providing the Allied Forces with vital information. A lot of what happened there is still not known in detail. Members of the recently established virtual community around Bletchley Park interview people who have worked there, thus collecting new information and gaining new insights.'

'The interviews are made accessible for other members, for scientists, tour guides and the general public by capturing, indexing and classifying them. We provide the tools to do that. With these tools it is even possible to compare descriptions of the same event in different stories. Apart from increasing public involvement, they are also instrumental in keeping up scientific standards and methods. So the general public gets actively involved in scientific research, without compromising the results.'

Virtual communities like the one around Bletchley Park are not just a bunch of people exchanging information over the Internet, says Mulholland. But they are much more fluid than a union or a brass band with strict rules and regulations. 'From my perspective, a virtual community has certain characteristics that are comparable with real life communities. To be successful they have a purpose, are limited in their scope, and have certain rules or habits. During its existence certain roles will develop in a virtual community. Some members will be more central than others in defining scope and purpose. Others will act like gurus teaching the rookies the unwritten rules and habits. On the other hand these new members will bring new perspectives to the community.'

In order to function smoothly, the members of a virtual community do not have to meet in real life. 'You have to work harder to be successful', says Mulholland, 'but it can be done. At the Open University we have virtual communities with a life span of six to eight years. Compared to the virtual communities around a certain course, which typically have a life span of nine months, the long-lasting communities tend to be more informal. More like a group of friends than a group of student colleagues formed around a certain theme.'

An important issue with respect to virtual communities is trust. You cannot look your colleagues in the eyes, like in a real life community. 'Still, mutual trust can be built', says Mulholland. 'For instance by giving every member some space to present him- or herself including some background, a picture, and the motivation to get involved in the community. It is not the same as a real life encounter, but it certainly goes a long way.' Apart from that, mutual trust is also being built by everybody's contribution to the community. Mulholland: 'Through your dealings with the group you are building up a reliability record. You can compare it with the reliability record you build up when you are dealing in eBay or some other Internet auction. Instead of points or stars next to your name, members of the virtual community will assess your trustworthiness in the same way as they would do in real life.'

Mulholland thinks that virtual communities can be a real asset for cultural heritage institutions. They can be used to actively involve people in research or educational activities. Mulholland: 'The important thing is that people really feel part of a community. If they feel they are exploited or not taken seriously by the institution or the experts, they will drop out and go somewhere else.'

Knowledge Media Institute
http://kmi.open.ac.uk

[1] http://www.cipherweb.org

THE EVOLUTIONARY ROLE OF VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES IN SCIENCE

AN INTERVIEW WITH KRISTÓF NYÍRI

By Joost van Kasteren

To fulfil their potential, virtual communities have to be anchored in real life', says Kristóf Nyíri, Director of the Institute for Philosophical Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences of which he is also a Member. 'They are capable to act only if their members, at least some of them, actually meet. Because if you really want to do something, you have to trust the people you work with. And for that kind of trust you have to meet someone face to face.'

Although he is well known for his research on the history of philosophy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Kristóf Nyíri also thinks and writes about the impact of communication technologies on the formation of ideas and on social and political organisation. He has written about the concept of knowledge in the context of electronic networking and has developed a philosophy of virtual education. Being a philosopher it is no surprise that Nyíri first goes back to the root of the word 'virtual'.

'In our world "virtual" means digitally mediated, but originally, in the mediaeval scholastic philosophy, "virtual" meant "potential" in the sense of capable to act. And indeed, virtual is very much linked to the real world, because it refers to very real effects. In the same way virtual communities are linked to the real world. They cannot just exist in cyberspace. That is, if you talk about virtual communities that are "capable to act". I am not talking about virtual communities that are meant for pleasure like, for example, communities around a popular television programme. They can remain virtual and still be able to function. What I am talking about are virtual communities where people collaborate to achieve something. What I would like to call "professional communities" can only be sustained if their members actually meet each other face to face. Empirical evidence shows that virtual contacts very often lead to face-to-face contacts. The latter seems to be necessary to sustain the former.'

According to Nyíri the virtual communities of professionals, which include communities of hobbyists, play a crucial role in safeguarding and extending our cultural heritage. 'Culture', he says, 'is not here for fun. It is an instrument that has developed in the course of evolution to cope with practical problems. We have to surmount these problems in order to survive. Culture has been instrumental because it binds people together by giving them a common denominator. As problems related to our survival are becoming more global – partly due to the instruments we developed to survive locally – a community based on face-to-face contact is not sufficient any more. Knowledge is scattered around the world. That is where virtual communities come in; they are necessary to overcome global problems by combining the knowledge. So a virtual community is not something exotic, but it is an extension of real life communities that is indispensable for our survival.'

The virtual community not only combines knowledge but it can also help in identifying and defining these global problems. Nyíri: 'You could say that they are diagnostic communities, that pool people's experiences. Through the exchange of messages, new suggestions can come up for solving problems. But that is just about how far it will go. As suggestions crystallise into solutions, certain people will crystallise from the virtual community that have the necessary communication and organisation skills to really do something about the problem and take action.'

When it comes to really doing something, you have to have face-to-face contact, says Nyíri. 'You are going to invest time, skills and maybe even money by taking action. You are not going to risk these investments by working together with people you do not know. You have to have an idea of what somebody thinks, not only about the problem that you are about to tackle, but also how he or she stands in life. In short, you have to be able to trust someone. The Internet just does not have enough bandwidth to build up mutual trust. You have to see him or her in the eyes. Even a Web camera would not be sufficient, because it does not allow you to smell people. To smell out a rat, as the saying goes. It is as basic as that.'

Institute for Philosophical Research of
the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
http://www.phil–inst.hu

The Este Court Archive – A Case Study on Virtual Collaboration in Art History

By Angela Spinazzé

Figure 1: Hydra, a silver coin minted by Ercole I d'Este in 1493, serves as the project emblem.

A Family Reunion

From the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, the Este family made Ferrara a cultural capital of Renaissance Italy. Their efforts as patrons of the arts ensured that the Este Court was at the centre of one of the greatest periods of artistic expression in Europe. As their influential reign came to an end, the massive collections they had amassed began to be dispersed. Today, many of the works of art - painting, sculpture, coins, tapestries, drawings, musical instruments, and the like – both commissioned by and collected by the Este family, reside in the world's great museums. The Este Court Archive project aimed to engage a community of professionals and the power of the World Wide Web to re-unite this great artistic legacy in the only way possible – virtually. [1]

The project was initiated by the Ferrara Castle Museum. At the heart of the project is the desire to expose the vast body of knowledge known about the Este family and their art patronage activities. Research about the Este family is vast, but very little of it resides in a commonly held location to be maintained and used by the professionals working with it on a daily basis. With this idea in mind, the museum set out to bring together experts in the fields of art history, and library and information science, to develop a new way of collecting, sharing and presenting scholarly information related to the

Este family. The project was managed by the Ferrara Castle Museum, with co-organising partners the Musée du Louvre, Národní galerie v Praze (National Gallery, Prague), Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (Paintings Gallery, Dresden), and the Visual Information Technology Lab (VIS.I.T.) of the Consorzio Interuniversitario (CINECA). Other affiliated partners included the Istituto dei Beni Culturale of the Emilia-Romagna region, and the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, Russia. Angela Spinazzé provided expertise as information architect for the project and was responsible for the database design, standards and controlled vocabulary implementation, and data entry guidelines.

The prototype phase of the project ran from November 2001 to November 2002. This phase was funded under the European Commission's Culture 2000 programme, and had a total project budget of € 293,369.

The Virtual Collection

The design and development of a virtual collection of art objects is nothing remarkable these days. There are many such attempts made each year involving any number of museums, universities and software providers. What most do not attempt, however, is to challenge traditional methods of sharing expertise. That is what the Este Court Archive

(ECA) project did as a result of its initial phase of development. For a short time, twelve months in all, specialists in Renaissance art history came together to consider the possibility of using a Web-based cataloguing tool to contribute information to a shared repository of knowledge that would begin to expose the large body of knowledge about the Este family and their art collections.

This group of distinguished scholars, along with a technical and managerial team, agreed to:

| develop an online scholarly catalogue having as its point of reference the relationship between the person who commissioned and/or collected the work of art, the purpose of its creation, its physical characteristics, and artistic significance;

| use a common set of descriptive standards rooted in scientific and scholarly research;

| use a multilingual approach to content development, presentation, search and retrieval of information;

| use Web-based cataloguing and presentation tools.

People

The art history community has not actively participated in a collaboration such as that which took place within the context of the ECA. Much of what is available online under the heading of art history can be categorised as catalogue entries presented on a museum Website to accompany an exhibition, or as support materials, a set of links with long descriptive summaries of themes used for teaching. [2] Research into the vast holdings of fine arts museums such as those represented by the ECA project partners continues to be published primarily

Figure 2: Entry for the artist Battista Dossi from the ECA virtual collection

in book form: the exhibition catalogue that generally involves several scholars publishing joint articles, catalogues raisonné that delve into the complete oeuvre of a single artist with detailed descriptions of the works of art, the history of their ownership, and current location, as well as critical essays written primarily for other art historians.

For scholars who are also curators of collections, research is also carried out to document collections, validate potential acquisitions, relate objects to other objects in the museum's collection, and much more. The ECA project asked scholars to share their expertise and their research publicly and to emphasise the importance of the person who collected or commissioned the work, rather than the artist who created it or the museum where it resides. This approach was new and unique and represented a step away from traditional practice.

Standards

Like many documentation projects, the ECA project required a common set of descriptive standards that met community-specific requirements. Rather than defining the visitor to the Website in a generic sense, the ECA project identified its primary contributor of information and reader of content as a scholar of art history and subsequently defined a descriptive vocabulary that was meaningful for them. This placing of both the contributor and consumer of information at the centre of the discussion also helped keep the focus narrow and the data structure uncluttered.

To begin the process, partners were asked to first identify the types of objects to be included in the initial version of the virtual collection and to agree on a comprehensive set of elements to describe them. The initial list of identified works included paintings, sculpture, tapestries, medals, ceramics, jewellery, miniatures, musical instruments, and arms and armour. To determine the descriptive elements, partners were asked to consider how best to describe the objects in terms of physical, contextual and administrative characteristics. For example, what is required in order to provide an art historical description, define the relationship between the artwork and a member of the Este family, provide a history of where the object has been since it left the Este Court, and what known scholarship currently exists about the object?

Existing standards were reviewed and used where applicable. For example, subject keywords a re associated with the Iconclass standard while The Art and Architecture Thesaurus and the Categories

for the Descriptions of Works of Art were considered and in some cases used for vocabulary related to classification of works.[3] Artist names were standardised against the Italian national database of artist names and a minimum record description was agreed to and based on the art historical standards at the national level in each of the participating partner countries.[4]

To group like objects, scholars agreed on several sets of keywords based on best practice. Controlled vocabulary was agreed for almost every descriptive aspect including provenance (history of ownership), materials of composition, category, technique(s),

provenance information; who created it, including a link between the object and artist and biographical details about the artist and their connection to the Este Court; the current physical location of the artwork; and the relation-ship between the artefacts and a select set of themes taken from the Este family archives that link the works with each other and with the castle. In the context of the ECA project each theme has three components: the name of the project, its philosophical or elemental theme, and the family member with whom it is associated. Two examples of thematic clusters are included in table 2.

Category	Sculpture	Scultura	Sochařství
Object Type	Relief	Relievo	Reliéf
Object Name	Plaquette Preparatory model – modelletto Preparatory model – bozzetto	Placchetta (Plaquette) Modello preparatorio – modelletto Modello preparatorio – bozzetto Basso rilievo Alto rilievo	Plaketa Sochařský model – modello Sochařská skica – bozzetto Basreliéf Vysoký reliéf

Table 1: A sample from the three-term hierarchy of object classification developed to aid in grouping objects for cataloguing, search and retrieval.

process, place and dates. In addition, administrative information such as the name of the cataloguer, the language of the initial entry, and metadata details about associated images were identified.

The database design went through fourteen iterations during the prototype phase. The final design includes twelve unique entities each with a set of descriptors and relationship definitions. The four primary entities are Object, People, Place and Project. Together these entities form the basis for a single entry.

The artwork is described in terms of its physical characteristics such as materials and techniques of composition and markings; how it relates to the Este Family, through a link to the family member that commissioned or collected it, and through extensive

Language

This brings us to the third and probably the most important aspect of the project – language. The common language of the project was Italian – not surprising, given the subject of the virtual collection. However, it also became clear that all languages represented by partner institutions would be required in order to meet the needs of the potential visitors to the site. As a result, all cataloguing was contributed first in the native language of the cataloguer – French, German, Czech or Italian, with two subsequent records contributed in Italian and/or English. After meeting these initial requirements, cataloguers could either continue contributing records in any other official project language or request that another cataloguer transcribe the Italian language record.

Project	The Gilded Dressing Rooms	The Apartment of the Mirror
Theme	The myth of Bacchus	Greco Roman Games
Family Member	Alfonso I	Alfonso II

Table 2: Project themes link specific rooms within the castle and adjacent apartments with the artistic themes found in them and the member of the Este family associated with their development.

Tools

The database was developed using ORACLE9 on an IBM H80 (6 CPU 500 MHz, 3 GB RAM in cluster HM). The programming language was PHP (4.2.0).

Two interfaces were developed. Scholars logged into a private section of the project Website and used an interface designed specifically for them that included checks against controlled vocabulary, as well as indicators for level of completeness and related cataloguing activities. The second interface is the

Figure 3: ECA catalogue entry with image

current public interface for the collection and has been used mainly for demonstration purposes.

For most project partners, the ability to be in virtually any location and use the Internet to access the database and contribute to it using an online form was a new experience. Many scholars worked from multiple locations to build the descriptions. And, in some cases, teams of scholars contributed to common entries. These new tools and subsequent approaches to documentation and research are unique to the ECA project and merit further consideration by the scholarly community.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

The ECA project partners set out to virtually reunite a collection of thousands of works of art within their original context. The result was not only a set of tools through which scholars could share their expertise from any Internet access point, but also new ways of working for scholars. A new focus for art historical research underlined the importance of patronage during the Renaissance as well as helping to reveal the often times lost relationships between objects and the people who originally collected or commissioned them. Finally, bringing all of this information together in five languages on the Web offers online audiences access to a vast repository of knowledge about how and why these objects were originally created, where they currently reside, and their connection to a city with a rich artistic heritage.

One of the unfortunate outcomes of many Culture 2000 projects is that the proof of concept remains just that, proof that the idea is viable. The ECA project is no different. Due to lack of follow-up funds, the project has seen little progress since the completion of the prototype phase in mid-2002. Some work continues on the site to improve the public interface and incorporate another documentation standard; however, the potential that the site holds for promoting new ways of bringing art historical experts together to tell the story of this influential family remains elusive.

References:

[1] The ECA can be found at http://eca.cineca.it. The project team included a project manager, database architect, programming team, scholars from partner organisations, and representatives from the province of Ferrara.

[2] Many fine art institutions offer online access to their collections catalogue as well as lengthy descriptions that accompany online exhibit features such as those found on the Website of the Hermitage Museum. Website viewed 4 December 2003, URL: http://www.hermitagemuseum.org Support materials, such as those found on the Best of History Websites, offer an overwhelming amount of material brought together through a set of hyperlinks. Website visited 4 December 2003, URL: http://www.besthistorysites.net/ArtHistory.shtml

[3] Iconclass and the associated Website are maintained by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), http://www.iconclass.nl/index.html. The Getty Research Institute provides access to its vocabularies online at http://www.getty.edu.

[4] Joconde, the database of the Ministère de la culture et de la communication in France, was consulted, as were several standards authored by the Istituto Nazionale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione (ICCD) in Italy, and others. Websites viewed 4 December 2003, URL: http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/joconde/pres.htm, and URL: http://www.iccd.beniculturali.it/.

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A RENAISSANCE IN CULTURAL DIVERSITY: A UNESCO VISION FOR VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

AN INTERVIEW WITH ISABELLE VINSON

By Joost van Kasteren

Virtual communities can fulfil the cultural needs of people to enrich or rediscover their ancestry by creating a social digital space for people sharing a common memory. Whether it be of genealogical origin, common place of origin or other common ground, 'such virtual communities could play a role in safeguarding the intangible or living cultural heritage', stresses Isabelle Vinson, editor-in-chief of *Museum International*, published by UNESCO.

'People's needs are at the centre of virtual communities', states Vinson, 'whether these needs are professional, economic or cultural. With respect to the latter one can assume that due to globalisation more and more people want to get back to their roots. That could be their country of origin or the traditions of the group they feel they belong to. Do not forget that migration is a major phenomenon in our world of today. But even people who live in the same area where their parents and grandparents have lived revert to old customs and traditions to make them feel they belong somewhere.'

'Virtual communities are a means to overcome geographical and cultural barriers. In a sense they are a way to reconstruct something that has collapsed in the modern world. It is a bit awkward that you need sophisticated technology to re-create these forlorn entities. You use modern technology to compensate for the changes that are brought about by, at least in part, post modernity. But it seems to work. Actually people do not have to come together in real life to make a virtual community work.'

Based on the cultural needs of people to coalesce, virtual communities can play an important role in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO defines this type of heritage as the practices, representations and expressions, as well as the associated knowledge and the necessary skills of communities, groups and individuals. It manifests itself in narratives, performing arts, traditional craftsmanship and knowledge. Vinson: 'For virtual communities to play a part in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, a more universal role is needed. At the moment less than 10 per cent of the world's population has access to the Internet.' The 'digital divide', the subject of UNESCO world summits in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005), continues to inhibit this. Vinson: 'The digital divide is not just a matter of opening up Internet cafés in developing countries and giving people access to the Internet. The barriers are not only a lack of infrastructure and money, but there are also cultural barriers. Literacy in certain languages, for instance. Or familiarity with certain concepts. Or the fact that in some cultures women do not have access to education or information. To create a culturally sophisticated virtual community, a lot of conditions have to be met. On the other hand, the Internet provides a much cheaper way of communicating with the rest of the world. So it is definitely worthwhile to address these questions and make the digital world accessible.'

The question is whether better access to the Internet and virtual communities does not lead to a decrease of cultural diversity and the gradual decline of the intangible cultural heritage. Vinson does not think so; in her view the virtual community is a pre-eminent place to stimulate and cherish traditional narratives, arts and traditions. 'It already happens', she enthusiastically points out, 'several institutions get involved in virtual communities and use them to collect narratives and indigenous knowledge and customs.' However, she cautions that future developments are hard to predict, because we live in a time of cultural transition. 'That gives us the opportunity to explore and compare old and new ways of communication. Unlike science, for instance, the cultural heritage sector is not forced to use ICT. You can still make an exhibition without using the Internet. So the cultural sector and cultural institutions in particular are in a very good position today to test the cultural implications of virtual communities and other effects of the use of ICT on cultural diversity.'

Museum International
http://portal.unesco.org/culture/

MOVING HERE – MIGRATION RECORDS AND EXPERIENCES

By Guntram Geser and Helen Wood

INTRODUCTION

Today heritage organisations are called on to ensure that their collections are accessible to as many people as possible. Making content available online is seen as key to removing barriers to access. One need not physically visit an archive, museum or library to appreciate the treasures once locked within its four walls.

Sarah Tyacke, Chief Executive of The National Archives, on the occasion of the launch of the Moving Here Website, http://www.movinghere.org. uk, on 30 July 2003 said: 'Moving Here is a step forward because for the first time all this material has been digitised so that you can see it in your living room. Archives are moving away from their "dusty and musty" image by making these documents available at the click of a mouse.'[1]

Drawing on a grant of £2.65 million (€3,76 million) from the New Opportunities Fund (digitisation programme), Moving Here has developed a Website that provides access to a wealth of material on the history of migration to England. It started in January 2003 and will run until March 2004 under NOF funding. Its success is already reflected in the fact that Moving Here was recently voted the Best History Site 2003 by *Internet Magazine* in its December 2003 issue. It tells the story of Caribbean, Irish, Jewish and South Asian people leaving their homelands to move to England over the last 200 years. The Website gives an insight into the reality behind migration and the contributions of migrant communities to the social fabric of England.

However, ensuring that memory institutions are socially inclusive is not an easy task. Working towards achieving this goal demands preparing for a major shift in the user base and their interests and requirements. With this shift comes the need to not only serve scholarly and higher education communities, but to mediate more strongly the value of historic material, stimulate curiosity, provide contexts, examples and guides on how to get to resources all users might be interested in.

The Moving Here Partnership

There are thirty partner organisations involved with Moving Here. They are located in areas where there are large minority ethnic populations (London, the Midlands and the North West), and represent a wide range of size and type of organisation. The partners are:

Birmingham City Archives • Black Cultural Archives • Bradford Heritage Unit • British Library • Croydon Museum & Heritage Service • Hackney Museum • Haringey Museum and Archive Service (incorporating Bruce Castle Museum) • Hull City Archives • Imperial War Museum • Jewish Museum, London • Lancashire Record Office • Leeds Museums & Galleries • Liverpool Record Office • London Metropolitan Archives • London School of Economics • Luton Museum Service • Manchester Central Library • Manchester Jewish Museum • Museum of London • The National Archives • National Maritime Museum • North West Film Archive • Oxfordshire Museums • Public Record Office of Northern Ireland • Royal Geographical Society • Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives • Victoria & Albert Museum • Walsall Local History Centre • Wandsworth Museum and Local History Service • West Yorkshire Archive Service.

Lead Partner and Central Team

The lead partner of Moving Here is The National Archives (TNA), which was created in April 2003 when the Public Record Office and the Historic Manuscripts Commission came together to form one organisation. The central Moving Here team has twelve members and is based at the TNA offices in Kew, as are the servers that run the Website. The budget is also controlled centrally.
URL: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

'Then, after moving to Croyland Road Infant school, Edmonton (at age 9 years plus) life was still crazy but one teacher showed an interest in my writing (English) and encouraged me to express myself through my stories.'*
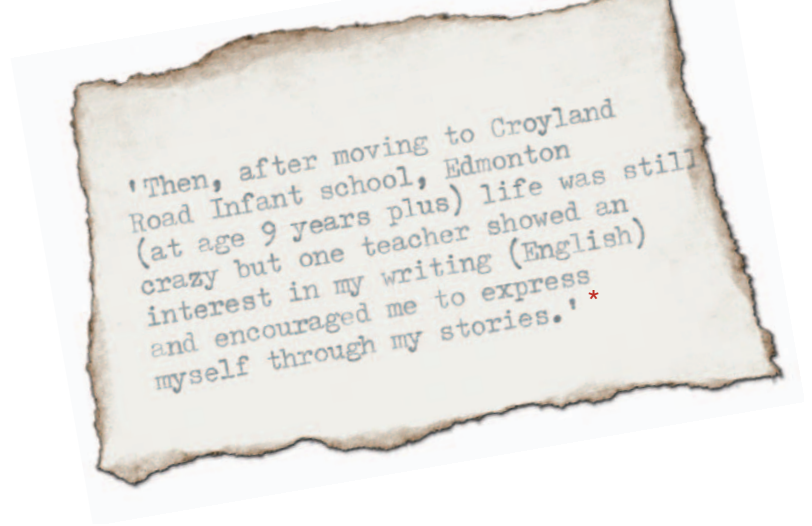
People's Own Memory and Stories

'People don't realise how much material about their communities is stored away in museums and archives. When I have gone into community groups and been able to show them images of the Asian lascars in the Docks and the Asian suffragettes on the "Moving Here" Website they get really excited.'

Chandan Mahal, Diversity Manager at the Museum of London (one of the Moving Here partners)

Many cultural heritage institutions hold records and collections that are relevant for local or widely distributed social communities. However, often people do not realise that such material exists, and that some archival records and collection items contain historic traces of their family and of communities they feel part of. Bringing such material online and offering various opportunities to study, use and add personal information and experiences to records and collection items can greatly enhance the social relevance of 'memory institutions'. In a way, this means giving memory back to the people, by stimulating them to think about social and cultural history, to explore historic traces related to themselves (e.g. their family or local environment), and to tell their own stories. This also includes bypassing to some degree the privilege of interpretation traditionally held by curators and historians.

The Moving Here Website wants to attract lifelong learners, in other words people engaged in learning outside formal education. In particular, Moving Here will be of interest to anyone from the Caribbean, Irish, Jewish and South Asian communities in England and beyond. Besides lifelong learners, scholars, teachers and students will of course find plenty to discover on the Website.

Moving Here has put in place a mechanism that allows people to access a wealth of material on the history of immigration to England, and to contribute their own stories, whether or not they belong to the four main migrant communities. The uniqueness of Moving Here's approach is that it has brought together material from national and regional organisations, which represent institutional documentation practices, along with personal stories and images contributed by users of the Website. This allows for presenting a richer picture of the history of migration, also fostering a deeper understanding of what immigration means for the people themselves. But, let us first look into the material that has been digitised for the Moving Here Website.

Building a Rich Digital Resource

Moving Here draws attention to the wealth of information available which records the history of minority ethnic communities before and after immigrating to England. It does not pretend to be comprehensive but there is certainly significant material on the site to merit being called the biggest online collection of this kind. To date, the Moving Here catalogue has over 160,000 items (with about 200,000 expected by the end of the project in March 2004), which are digital versions of documents, newspapers, photographs, maps, objects, sound clips and videos.

The material digitised in the Moving Here project relates to the migration of four communities – Caribbean, Irish, Jewish and South Asian. Definitions of these terms themselves have been difficult to establish and caused much debate.
Caribbean: communities from former British Caribbean protectorates - Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St Lucia, St Vincent, Trinidad, Tobago.
Irish: this includes both Northern and Southern Ireland.
Jewish: primarily covers Eastern Europe (Poland, Baltic States, Hungary, Czech Republic, etc.) and

* From: *Leaving Gran, Ta, and Bimshire*, story contributed to Moving Here by Ms Aishah Bilal, http://www.movinghere. org.uk/stories/story11/ story11.htm

Central Europe but there is also material from Holland, Iraq and Syria.

South Asian: content on the Indian Sub-Continent – India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka. It also includes references to Ugandan and Kenyan Asians.

The decision of Moving Here to concentrate initially on these communities was based on two criteria: a significant amount of relevant records relating to each community needed to be available in the existing collections of museums, libraries and archives – as it is a digitisation project, there had to be the records to digitise; and the communities chosen needed to have a substantial presence at the present time or in the heyday of their arrival in England. Subsequently many other communities have asked why they have not been included. Obviously projects like Moving Here have to start somewhere but it is very encouraging that other communities would like similar representation. It is heartening that some of them appreciate that this is only the beginning despite being frustrated by the lack of their presence. One Italian man wrote: 'I applaud the introduction of this site. However, I was saddened to see that the Italian community does not warrant early inclusion …'.

Moving Here chose to cover a period of the last two hundred years of migration to England. However, the 'Migration Histories' section of the Website includes information before 1800 in order to make it clear that migration to England goes back much further. One common question Moving Here receives via its online feedback form is why it only looked at England. The project does not deny that migration was equally as important in the rest of the UK (just as it was beyond the last 200 years) but, as The National Archives is the lead partner and is the national archives for England, this is where the focus fell. In addition, there are other Websites that explore earlier migration to the UK, such as The National Archives' 'Pathways to the Past' site.[2]

The 160,000 items digitised so far contain a substantial body of content for each community, although the amounts vary. The Irish content is lower, perhaps because as a group they are difficult to separate from within records that talk about people in England as a whole. However, it may be simply that organisations that would have significant material for this community were not partners of the project. (Since the launch of the project other organisations have come forward asking if they can contribute material relevant to the four communities. This possibility is being looked at if subsequent specialised funding can be obtained. However, feedback from users and existing partners suggests that it would be preferable to include material from new communities, thus expanding its breadth rather than its depth.)

There are data sources such as Asian and Caribbean ships' passenger lists and the 'Internees at Liberty in UK' records detailing Jewish refugees granted asylum between 1939 and 1942, Irish Reproductive Loans for 9 Irish Counties 1848-1854 – all searchable by name; 'The Keys', a periodical from the League of Coloured People, 1933-1939; highly valuable personal recollections such as interviews with Caribbean RAF pilots from WW2; letters from a kindertransport child; correspondence from Gandhi; clips of jazz

[2] 'Pathways to the Past' is a resource for lifelong learners which includes a series of online exhibitions. See in particular the exhibition 'Black Presence. Asian and Black History in Britain, 1500-1850' which has been developed together with the Black and Asian Studies Association, http://www.pro.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory

'I met Usha, my future wife at a tour organised by the British Council to see the Reeves Paint Factory. We both got married in 1962. Although Usha's parents were settled in London, the wedding took place in Nairobi as my parents were in Kenya.' *

music; cartoons of playwrights Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw; and registers of the Jews Temporary Shelter.

The Moving Here content also includes material available in languages other than English, such as booklets and leaflets which were originally produced by councils and other public bodies to help people come to terms with UK education, health, housing and social systems. Languages include Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Gujerati, Yiddish, Russian, German. Not all of these sources have translations available in the catalogue metadata. This has not caused a problem so far for users because the thrill of finding material that can be easily read in a mother tongue often outweighs the need to have an English translation or summary. However, if improvements to the catalogue data are made later, this may be looked at. In addition, there are several phrase books designed to help new arrivals with common questions and phrases. The database also includes various first-person accounts of people's lives, and some of the oral histories are with people speaking in their mother tongue.

INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNITY EXPERTS

The decision on which content to digitise for Moving Here was left to each partner organisation for each group of communities. However, several meetings were held to make everybody aware of other partners' contributions and to build up a complementary selection. Indeed, as time went by, complementary material was often selected deliberately to provide added value and depth to the site. Much material contains people's names and needed to be read and considered carefully before being digitised and included in the database. Records that might reveal too much personal information and could cause distress to a living individual were not included. Staff at The

National Archives who are well versed in data protection legislation gave advice to the project.

Some partner organisations have a strong relationship with the communities chosen, or consulted community experts for advice on what to include and for more information about specific items. For example, the Jewish Museum and Black Cultural Archives are project partners and the former takes part in the Moving Here Project Board. This board meets monthly to guide the progress of the project. In addition to this all the senior partners meet quarterly for a Programme Board in order to be updated on project progress and to ratify decisions.

Other institutions consulted individuals and organisations such as the Black and Asian Studies Association and Leeds Irish Association for advice. The Moving Here partners also used researchers with specific community knowledge to find and collect more information about items which were to be digitised for the project. Individuals writing narratives for the Website had specific insight into and understanding of the communities, such as Abi Hussani (South Asian narrative), Mike Phillips (Caribbean narrative), Carol Siegel (Jewish narrative) and Aidan Lawes (Irish). All texts were also reviewed by other scholars with expert historical knowledge of the subjects addressed. This peer reviewing process was very important. The text available online would represent all the partners contributing to the project and therefore it was essential that it was historically accurate and represented the reality of people's experiences.

DIGITISATION GUIDELINES AND USE OF FUNDS

After several content meetings where partners talked about which records they felt could be offered to the project each partner was supplied with digitisation guidelines produced by the central team and a metadata template. This template was put

* From: *Moving to London*, story contributed to Moving Here by Mr R. Shah, http://www.movinghere.org.uk/stories/story1/story1.htm

together based on talks with individual partners about their cataloguing processes. A template was devised which it was felt could best match the levels of cataloguing undertaken by different partners. It contained core information fields, compatible with the Dublin Core standard, which partners had to produce for each catalogue item. Some fields were mandatory such as descriptions, dates, copyright status and access conditions. (A catalogue item is usually defined as a discrete object. This may be a photograph, a volume, an object, a leaflet and it may have many parts to it – for example, one catalogue entry might be for a volume, which will obviously have many pages (and therefore several pdfs) attached to it.)

Despite this template there are still large variations in the quality of metadata, which means the user may have search experiences of varying success. In a truly cross-domain project like Moving Here it is inevitable that the array of cataloguing styles and standards used across three professions would produce variances. What was meant by a description to one partner would not mean the same to another. Use of subject, person and place index fields was not obligatory and this is another difference among the data. The central team had a policy of not interfering with the metadata submitted by partners because this would go against their integrity of cataloguing. Instead, if improvements to the catalogue are to be made they will have to come in the form of a layer of index terms imposed in uniformity across the whole catalogue from the central team at a later date. At the end of the day it is important to make sure the user has a consistent searching experience and manages to access the wealth of sources. If they lay hidden because people are searching on words not mentioned in the original descriptions, then the original descriptions should be enhanced.

Partners received funds from the NOF grant according to the amount of items they had agreed they could provide to Moving Here and the

resources required to provide them. These funds sometimes covered the cost of buying scanning equipment and, of course, staff to operate it or to fund the use of existing in-house reprographics units. Sometimes it included the cost of researchers to delve into the collections and select suitable material in the first place. For other partners the most practical approach was to outsource the digitisation and hire the services of a digitisation bureau – in some cases, this was in fact another partner who was better equipped for the digitisation of oral histories and flatbed scanning than some smaller partners.

On the whole, partners underspent their allowance from the total budget. Moving Here is an ambitious project of significant scale which had not been attempted before and it could therefore be true to say that costs were over-estimated to be on the safe side. In some cases there was an underspend because the full amount of material originally promised was too ambitious – either there were copyright issues or resource issues which meant targets now became unrealistic and the partner could not spend all they had been allocated. These underspends were put back into the project and directed towards further technical enhancements of the site, more marketing to maintain the profile or more community activity.

What is… the New Opportunities Fund (NOF)?
The New Opportunities Fund is the biggest of the National Lottery 'good cause' distributors, providing Lottery funding for health, education and environment projects across the UK.
Proposed projects should:
| improve the quality of life of people throughout the UK;
| address the needs of those who are most disadvantaged in society;
| encourage community participation; and
| complement relevant local and national strategies and programmes.
Furthermore, the project needs to assure sustainability

after termination of NOF funding. In mid-2003, the New Opportunities Fund had committed over £2 billion in funding to projects across the UK.

The NOF grant to Moving Here

In October 2001, as part of its NOF-digi programme, NOF awarded Moving Here a total grant of £2.65 million (€3,76 million) to digitise and make available on the Internet material recording Caribbean, Irish, Jewish and South Asian migration to England. The grant is due to end on 31 March 2004; thereafter the National Archives will begin funding the basic maintenance of the Moving Here Website for a further three years.

However, the Moving Here partnership is actively seeking to gain additional outside funding to incorporate improvements of the Website, prolong its life span and widen its audience by the further exploration of community activity and the development of materials for formal education.

ACCESS TO AND POSSIBLE USES OF MATERIAL

Moving Here's online system offers various opportunities to access, study, contribute, download or send content to friends. It has been tested to the capacity of 180,000 users – which was far exceeded in the days immediately after the launch – and survived. Although the Moving Here catalogue underpins the whole site (without this content there would be no site!), different learning resources were developed to enable users to approach it in ways that are most meaningful to them. It was recognised early on that not everybody wants to sit and type in keywords into a search engine. They may prefer to look at images, or learn how to do the research for themselves. There is so much material on the site that it was important to present it in as many exciting ways as possible.

The major sections of the Website are:

Migration Histories: Provides contextual information to the items submitted by the partners. Here specialists tell the story of migration of the four communities, drawing on resources from the Moving Here catalogue. The section offers an introductory chapter that outlines migration to Britain from the early to the present days, and a narrative on each community starting with a graphical timeline and chapters on Origins, Journeys, Settling, Growing Up, Working Lives, Culture and Festivals, and Politics. All these chapters are illustrated with original material from the Moving

Here catalogue. From these illustrations people can click back to the catalogue if they would like more details on that item or wish to print it.

The Gallery: Provides a shop window of visual highlights from the collection from where visitors can send over five hundred free e-postcards. The selection is grouped into nineteen categories such as Childhood, Learning, Friendship & Romance, Identity, Places, Sport, Celebration, Music & Dance, Keeping the Faith, Women's Lives, Making a Mark. This is an excellent and fun place to start exploring the range of content available on Moving Here.

Tracing Your Roots: Gives detailed advice for descendants of migrants from the four communities on how to trace their family history. It talks users through the sorts of documents they might need to look at and where to find them. Again this section is illustrated with items from the Moving Here catalogue. There are lots of external links in this section to useful genealogical Websites to help progress people's searching further.

Stories: Contains narratives related to migration experiences contributed by users of the Website and users who have worked with Moving Here on community projects (addressed in more detail below).

Search: The search function for exploring the whole site. This can be limited by site section. It is from here that the catalogue of 160,000 items can be explored. All material offered on Moving Here can be downloaded for personal or educational use without charge. If an item is to be used for commercial purposes then the interested party must go back to the partner supplying the image, which may be subject to reproduction fees. There are some pre-prepared popular searches, which are topics that are often asked about. These have been generated to get people started without their having to know what to type into the search box – it acts as a limited form of browsing.

News: Highlights new features of the Moving Here site or items the team found interesting, forthcoming events, exhibitions, talks, articles, etc.

Also noteworthy are the extensive *glossary*, which explains any terms used on the Website likely to be not easily understood by users,[3] a link to a site map at the bottom of each page on the site as well as a link to an online feedback form and of course Help pages.

There is also a game called Multi-Mart. This was developed in collaboration with students from the University of East London who were in their second year of a BA degree in multimedia studies. The Moving Here project acted as the outside client for this

[3] http://www.movinghere.org.uk/help/glossary.htm

group. It established a brief to design a game around the themes of food or sport in relation to the migration experience while capturing the look and ethos of the site. After a couple of collaborative stages the successful students had their design turned into a game and put on the site. The concept involves going into a supermarket. You are shopping for a dinner party to celebrate the launch of Moving Here and have to collect ingredients falling from the shop shelves to make different dishes from the four communities. You must collect these items before they fall on the floor and the shopkeeper gets so angry he throws you out of his shop. If you succeed in collecting ingredients on your shopping list, you win the recipe that those ingredients make – for example Irish stew – and the chance to move on to the next level.

Moving Here also gives *teachers* an overview of how the rich material could be used in National Curriculum History and Citizenship programmes.[4] Although Moving Here is not currently equipped to act as an education resource there is no doubt from feedback it has obtained already that the content is extremely valuable in the classroom and there is lots of potential. For example, an expert from the education community stated: 'I have had a quick look at the site and think there is a lot here we could recommend to schools. When you have teachers notes it will be even better.' Teaching resources must now be built in order to capitalise on this content. This can only be done if more funding is found after its period under NOF ends in March 2004.

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Moving Here partners promote the Website through their own sites, leaflets and events. This local-level promotion is very important as the partners are best placed to make use of their own local distribution networks. A set of free postcards produced by the central team has been very popular with partners who put them in their lobbies and send them out via their mailing lists. 100,000 of these were also distributed free from 76 cinemas around the country in a two-week marketing campaign. They have had an impact, as one woman testified: 'I was surfing your site (address found on a postcard my daughter brought recently)…'.

Local public libraries also have an important role to play making Moving Here leaflets available and providing free computer access to the Website through the People's Network.[5] 'I would love to publicise your site in our library – have you any

flyers', said one woman in a local heritage library in the north of England. Libraries will become even more important to Moving Here as it launches its training manual for librarians. As more librarians become ICT trainers to work with users of the People's Network, they are interested in taking up Moving Here as a tool and source of content in their sessions. The ability to navigate around the site, send your own story and perform searches builds up useful ICT skills. The site has already been used in Leeds and Manchester Libraries for this purpose. The guide, which has been designed by a library ICT trainer in collaboration with Moving Here, will be launched on the People's Network site in January 2004. It is envisaged that this guide will in fact become a very useful tool in other training arenas.

Some training sessions and demonstrations to community groups undertaken by Moving Here take place in libraries because they have the equipment and space to house such a session. Libraries have also been involved in housing an exhibition from a community project called Memories for the Islands (read about this later). An extra copy was made for Moving Here which could be provided on loan and tour libraries or any space where it was requested. So far it has been to libraries in Birmingham, Walsall and Bristol.

CONTRIBUTING PERSONAL STORIES

'Your life is history. Your experiences are history. Your story is history.'[6]

Currently the stories contributed to the Moving Here Website by users themselves, either remotely or by means of a Moving Here community project, represent the most important *virtual* community aspect of the project.

There is no chat room or bulletin board on the site that allows users to communicate with each other. To date, this has not been explored due to the issue of moderation, which is very resource intensive. In a project that is funded externally you cannot set up a function on which you may later have to pull the plug when funding runs out. This is irresponsible to the users who use that function and withdrawing such a service would lead to the withdrawal of any trust between the user and Moving Here. It was preferred not to set this up at this stage. Where people may have recognised somebody from another's story and want to get in touch with the contributor, then the Moving Here team will act as a go-between and provide the contributor with

4 http://www.movinghere. org.uk/help/teachers.htm; the National Archives has also developed 'Learning Curve', an online teaching resource structured to tie in with the History National Curriculum: http://learningcurve. pro.gov.uk

5 http://www.peoples network.gov.uk

6 Introductory statement on Moving Here's Stories section, http://www.moving here.org.uk/stories/

contact details. The decision is then very much with them if they wish to follow that contact up. The team will never give out a contributor's details.

The story contributors relate themselves to the goals and values fostered by the project, add their viewpoints, experiences, recollections, and non-academic styles of narration, explanation and inter-pretation. At the beginning of December 2003, there were 190 stories on Moving Here. How do stories get there? There is an online template where anyone can type or paste in a short or longer text (up to a suggested maximum length of about 1000 words). The story should have a title and also the covering dates for the period for which it is relevant. Contributors can add up to ten of their own images or link to up to ten digitised images from Moving Here. This might, for example, also be a name in a passenger list or an official public record. Stories can only be contributed in English. Again, this is some-thing that may be looked at if further funding is obtained.

The authors are asked to provide their name, and can decide whether they wish to have it published along with their story; also an e-mail address and/or phone number is requested. This helps the Webmaster keep a list of copyright owners. In addition, contri-butors can add a link, e.g. to their personal or a project Website (URLs given in the text of the story are not active). This can serve as an incentive for people to contribute as it gives them a chance to showcase local activity on a national platform.

Anyone can submit a story to the Moving Here Webmaster, not just those from the original four communities, and, if it is about migration experi-ences, it will be published within ten days of its submission. However, if there are any concerns about copyright infringement, commercial nature, offensiveness or other legal considerations, Moving Here reserves the right not to add the story.

By submitting the story the contributor grants Moving Here the permission to edit it and the right in perpetuity to publish the work on its Website and through The New Opportunities Fund (NOF), the People's Network, the National Grid for Learning or any similar public sector entity nominated by the NOF, and to use it in publicity material. The authors retain the copyright in their own materials and are free to publish them elsewhere.[7] In reality no addi-tional editing is done to the story. If it meets the criteria, then it is mounted as it is sent to the Web-master. Moving Here believes it is important to let people talk in their own words.
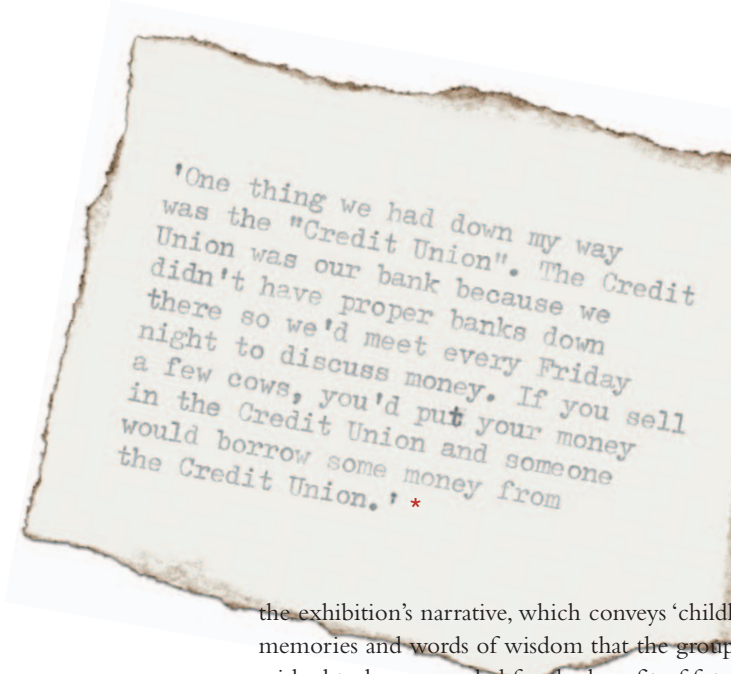
LINKING MOVING HERE WITH COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Moving Here runs a programme of outreach work which will continue until March 2004. This shows people how to use the Website and how to contribute their stories. However, it is much more involved than just demonstrating what Moving Here can do and giving out a few leaflets. This part of Moving Here's works is about actively involving the target audience to engage with the material. This may be via reminiscence work, art or photography classes or even dance.

The main outreach project of The National Archives (TNA) for 2002 was the community-led exhibition *Memories from the Islands*, from which 26 stories were contributed to the Moving Here Web-site. The project was a partnership between the TNA Interpretation Team, Bruce Castle Museum in Haringey, representatives of Haringey's Afro-Caribbean community from the University of the Third Age, and Moving Here.

Members from this group selected photographs from the Public Record Office depicting scenes of Caribbean life taken in the 1950s and 1960s from the Ministry of Information series of records, for example, a lane with small wooden houses, a woman bathing her little boy or a girl with a piece of sugar cane. The chosen images provided the inspiration for

'One thing we had down my way was the "Credit Union". The Credit Union was our bank because we didn't have proper banks down there so we'd meet every Friday night to discuss money. If you sell a few cows, you'd put your money in the Credit Union and someone would borrow some money from the Credit Union.' *

the exhibition's narrative, which conveys 'childhood memories and words of wisdom that the group wished to have recorded for the benefit of future generations'.[8] (We have selected some sentences from stories contributed to Moving Here and placed them on pages throughout the Thematic Issue.) *The Memory from the Islands* exhibition was first shown at Bruce Castle Museum and then at TNA's site in Kew, where it received over 4700 visitors during its one-week run.

Other projects include the *Paintings of Migration* project with SUBCO Art Group, Newham Heritage Service, Museum of London and Moving Here. The Museum of London were interested in working with Moving Here's Community Co-ordinator to collect stories from the South Asian community as well as drawing attention to the content on Moving Here from the Museum of London. Chandan Mahal, Outreach Officer for Museum of London, had previously worked with Newham Heritage Service and contacted them with regard to working with people from Newham. Mads Sarley Pontin, Education Officer from Newham Heritage Service, was interested in the project partly because Newham Heritage Service were developing a portal to which residents from Newham could contribute their own stories. She was interested to find out how Moving Here was enabling people to contribute stories. This highlights the validity of Moving Here work as a model for other heritage institutions.

Ms Pontin had an existing relationship with SUBCO (South Asian Elders from the Sub-continent) Day Centre in Newham. The aim of SUBCO is to provide day-care provision to Asian elders of the sub-continent over the age of 55 years, with a particular focus on those who are frail, isolated and house bound. She approached them to see if they would be interested in being involved. There was interest particularly from the art tutor who thought that participants in the group would be interested in painting aspects of their migration experiences.

Support from the English language teacher meant that the participants, if they wished, would be able to write a short account of their image.

They were interested in the idea of painting aspects of their migration experiences and stories, so an initial introduction to the group was arranged. Participants particularly liked photographs of India and there was a lot of discussion about people's lives on the sub-continent as well as experiences of coming to Newham. Showing participants their stories at the end when on the site created a lot of interest at the centre, with staff and volunteers as well as participants all wanting to have a look. Some of the participants found it hard to see their stories on the screen and most had not used a computer before but there was a real sense of achievement from everyone. It was clear from the number and quality of the paintings produced and stories written that the participants had enjoyed the project. Initially there was some level of scepticism from a couple of individuals over why the Moving Here team wanted their stories - but by building up a relationship with the team and engaging people with Moving Here through photographs from the site this changed. There were several people who were interested in what The National Archives did and possibly visiting (though this was slightly confused with its proximity to Kew Gardens!). Staff and volunteers at SUBCO were very interested in where the stories and paintings would be shown and they all looked at Moving Here on the centre computer.

Another project undertaken was with the Luton Irish Forum and the Luton Museum. Essential to this project was the participation of Mr Frank Horan who is on the Luton Irish Forum committee and was involved with the Luton Museum's Oral History project in which members of Luton Irish Forum were interviewed. The response to an initial Moving Here presentation at the Forum was very positive, and it was agreed to record and transcribe stories from their members. Several people also brought

* From: *Memories From the Islands*: Mandeville, story contributed to Moving Here by Haringey University of Third Age, http://www.movinghere.org.uk/stories/story63/story63.htm

[8] TNA: Annual Report 2002/2003, p.37, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/news/stories/report_6.pdf

records and photographs with them, which were photographed using the digital camera and would then be uploaded on Moving Here with their story. To show as many people as possible their stories once online it was suggested that the Moving Here team attend the regular bingo session and make an announcement there about the involvement of people in Moving Here. The team was able to attract a lot of interest in the Website by showing people the site on laptops and hard copies of photographs. 'I've been emailing my family in the States about the site so they can look at my story. They were very impressed.' There was also pride in the fact that the Luton Irish Community were finally able to tell their experiences as part of the whole of Luton's history after 'keeping their heads down for so long', as Mr Horan put it.

Mr Horan described himself very much as the man on the street – and his views and comments on Moving Here were very helpful. As the voice of potential users, he was a very crucial part of the feedback. He also came to a user testing session for the site at TNA. During the launch of the project he was very happy to talk about it to the press and his enthusiasm was invaluable. He also took part in a documentary about Silver Surfers after Moving Here was approached by a production company. During the documentary he mentions Moving Here as part of the reason he uses the Internet so much. A temporary community radio station ran in Luton during September and October 2003 and Alison Taylor, Curator for Luton Museum, went on air with a couple of people from the Irish Forum to promote Moving Here. Moving Here 'adverts' were also broadcast on the station.

When people from the community groups who have experience of migration and its effects are willing to advocate a project, this is invaluable. This sort of free publicity is worth its weight in gold and should not be underestimated. As seen from the above projects, community activity is a way into the heart of a community. Some people who have come into contact with the Moving Here project have gone on to become great friends of the project and promote it to their own friends and family as well as being prepared to speak on its behalf.

A Peak in Community Work Ahead

From October 2003 to March 2004 the project is even more heavily involved in community activity. At this stage the major part of the content

has been mounted on the site and now is the time to utilise it and engage with those who can resonate most with the content. Thirteen mid-scale projects are being undertaken across the country. The staff for this area of work has increased from one community co-ordinator at the beginning of the project to three full-time equivalent posts, one of which is based in Leeds.

The difference between this period of community work and the earlier phase is that a specific budget has been allocated in order to ensure that the community groups with which Moving Here works will produce a physical outcome that they can keep after the project. This may be an exhibition, a booklet or a set of postcards. This is a big incentive and also means that the momentum of Moving Here can hopefully continue beyond the life-span of a central team. It will be the community groups themselves who can continue to spread the word by re-using the physical resources they created with Moving Here. This phase is also looking at communities other than the original four.

The six-month time span is very tight for delivering such projects. From experience, the project knows that it takes a long time to develop a bond of trust with participants to the extent that they are willing to tell their stories. For example, a member of a group of Bengali men recently told one of the Community Co-ordinators that he had not brought in his own documents to show the group because he thought she was from the government and wanted to check his papers. In addition, significant time can be required on a practical level – you need to approach the appropriate manager of a community centre and demonstrate the site to persuade them to work with you.

As far as possible, Moving Here has tried to work with existing partners and their own connections within the communities. This saves time because a link has already been established. Where this has not been possible, then the community groups who do become involved are those who are already set up with staff, equipment and enthusiasm to take on a community project. In both cases timing is crucial. There are many demands on these groups and they have many priorities. When Moving Here has been able to fit in with an organisation's current focus, this is where it has been most successful and for every community group that has agreed to work with the project there will be another two who were interested but could not commit at this precise time.

For example, so far the work that will be undertaken until the end of the NOF-funded period looks

as if it will be with, among others, volunteers from Manchester Jewish Museum reminiscing; a Bengali Day Centre in King's Cross; the Irish Centre in Camden; an Irish group in Huddersfield; a couple of Jewish Care Homes; Kensington and Chelsea Community History Group, with the Royal Geographical Society looking at Caribbean photographs and a Gudwara in Southall working with the Museum of London.

BENEFITS AND LESSONS LEARNT

The partner institutions and other organisations and individuals have been benefiting from taking part in the Moving Here project in many ways:

| For some partners it was an opportunity to explore and understand what they hold in their own collections that relates to the four communities. Partners with large and diverse collections even found interesting items that had gone unnoticed before the project.

| For organisations with special collections it was a chance for researchers to work towards finding out more information about existing items. At London Metropolitan Archives, for example, a couple of researchers were employed who had the time to read through individual papers in files which previously may have only been skim read. This meant that some extra detailed information could be added to their own cataloguing systems.

| By receiving funding to digitise their collections, organisations can now provide access to information in many more ways than before. For material in much demand, making it available digitally will now protect it from wear and tear.

| For some partners, Moving Here was the first opportunity to make major parts of their collection available online. For example, Sam Walker, director of the Black Cultural Archives (located at Brixton in south London), said: 'We tried some time ago to establish our own Website but we had limited resources and were not able to do anything on a large scale.'[9]

| Working with other organisations meant that there was the chance to learn about how to undertake the digitisation of various types of material. Part of the funding enabled some of the partners to buy scanners and cameras, which, along with the knowledge gained through the project, enabled them to digitise even more of their collections.

| In particular, Moving Here gave organisations the opportunity to develop links with the com-

munities, encouraging them to visit the actual museum, library or archive. For example, in December 2003 Moving Here's work with a community centre in the Kings Cross area will mean that some of the men from the day-care centre will visit the British Library nearby and look at the original items they have seen on Moving Here.

| In some cases Moving Here partners may be able to add items to their collections through new and improved contact with individuals from the four communities.

| Moving Here stimulated many members of the communities to explore historic traces related to themselves (e.g. their family history), and to contribute their own stories and images. This was also a unique opportunity for curators and scholars to reflect on how they document, contextualise and interpret public records and collection items.

| Other practical lessons learnt include: make sure your authors are also aware of the needs of an audience on the Web; make sure there is a common understanding of what metadata actually is and what is required; make sure all partners are equipped to deal with copyright issues etc.

Moving Here is currently undertaking an evaluation. This will look at the functionality of the Website itself, the impact of the site on the target audience and the partnership process. It is hoped that the results of this evaluation, available at the end of March 2004, will be able to feed into any subsequent bids for funding. In addition, it is hoped there will be a separate evaluation of the community projects. These should put on paper the lessons that have been learned by the partners and start to generate a more detailed picture of how the site is used.

Until then there can be no doubt that a solid foundation has been formed and that Moving Here has broken some boundaries. It worked with (and continues to do so), and kept on board 30 partners from three professions; it has mounted over 160,000 digital items; it has gathered 190 personal stories; it has had over 100,000 unique visitors to the Website in the first four months since the launch date; and has attracted major local and national press attention.

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[9] Cited in John Coutts: Heritage trail on the web. In: Guardian Unlimited, 25 September 2003, http://www.guardian.co.uk/online/story/0,3605,1048692,00.html

DIGITISING IDENTITY: THE MUSEUM COMMUNITY MEETS THE NET

By Cary Karp

Most people have a clear notion of what a museum is. Although there will be differences in detail, the consensus would surely evoke the grand bricks-and-mortar edifices behind which all sorts of physical objects are stored and displayed. The corps of people dedicated to amassing, conserving, analysing, exhibiting, and otherwise conveying information about this material is an equally well-defined professional community. If individual members of this specialist community were asked to list its salient attributes, responses would vary according to the narrower disciplinary community to which the respondent belonged. A vertebrate zoologist at a natural history museum and a musicologist at a museum of cultural history may have fundamentally differing perspectives on what nominally appears to be the same museological concern. Similar differences will be noted in national perceptions of museum activity. For example, in some countries botanical gardens are traditionally regarded as museums, while in others that is the last thing they are.

Museums are also often seen in the context of broader communities. When these constellations are culled from within the heritage management sector there are two common principles for their aggregation. One reflects institutional identity and defines museums as belonging to the 'ALM sector' (Archives-Libraries-Museums). The other reflects functionality and speaks of 'memory institutions'. This has the advantage of immediately accommodating heritage management agencies that are not conveniently labelled as A's, L's or M's. (The most glaring omission from that group is 'monuments and sites', which overlap and extend museum community concerns, and must be included if both fixed and movable property are to be given their full due.)

However fractal the professional museum community may be and regardless of the broader contexts in which it may be included, for the largest part of their existence, the central focus of museums has been on collections of physical objects. During the course of the community's development, emphasis has increasingly been placed on the need for the study and documentation of the context in which an object comes into being, the forces that cause it to do so, and the manifold purposes that it may serve.

Documentation became an increasingly greater community concern, resulting in the notion of 'collectionless museums' being introduced into the discussion several decades ago. The need for museums to embrace these intangible concerns has been further brought to the forefront by the now ubiquitous presence of community resources on the Internet (searchable collections, archival narratives, multimedia presentations, etc.). This adds an entirely new level of appropriateness to the term memory institution and confronts the museum community with a critical need for redefining its boundaries.

Similar impetus to reconsidering the scope of community concern was provided by the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* passed by UNESCO at its 32nd General Conference in October 2003. Quoting briefly from that document, 'the intangible cultural heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage'.[1]

The UNESCO definition of intangible cultural heritage does not make explicit reference either to born-digital creative activity or to its conveyance via the Internet. The definition places emphasis on performance events and orally conveyed tradition, which, in fact, have long been core considerations in the activity of specialist museums such as those dealing with music, dance and theatre. The Convention is being heeded by the broader museum community, which is actively examining the need for attention to intangible heritage in disciplinary areas that have not yet perceived intangible extension of their physical concerns. The museum community does not, however, appear to have taken as keen notice of another Charter passed during the same Conference. This UNESCO *Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage* states that 'born digital' materials 'should clearly be given priority' and unequivocally includes cultural material in this realm.[2]

[1] Full text at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf

[2] Full text at: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/ev.php?URL_ID=13366&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201&reload=1071506590; for information on the consultation process see: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001311/131178e.pdf

ACCOMMODATING DIGITAL CREATIVE WORKS

The action leading to the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage had been under way for quite some time and the heritage sector NGOs had begun considering means for accommodating such property well before the formal adoption of the Convention. At its latest triennial General Assembly in Barcelona, in 2001, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) expanded its definition of 'museum' to include 'cultural centres and other entities that facilitate the preservation, continuation and management of tangible or intangible heritage resources (living heritage and digital creative activity)'. Although this wording does not make explicit reference to born-digital action, it was deliberately crafted to be inclusive of it.[3] With this, hooks were coincidentally in place for the consideration of the issues subsequently to be delineated in the UNESCO *Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage*.

Despite the presence of museums at the absolute forefront of digital activity, a large segment of the professional community takes the concept of 'digital' exclusively to denote digitised surrogates for physical objects. The Internet is in widespread use for the dissemination of such material. It has, however, by no means as clearly been recognised as a creative arena in its own right, where new kinds of activities take place independent of the institutional constructs of the physical realm.

Where digital creative works are duly recognised as a museum concern, the situation is reversed. A physical surrogate is made of the born-digital thing, thereby migrating it into the realm of the tangible, where its conservation and curation can be addressed in familiar terms. The fact remains, though, that, whatever significance a storage medium may have in museum participation in intangible creative activity, at some point the recording – whether it is a magnetically stored sequence of 0's and 1's or the spiral groove on a vinyl disc – needs to be rendered intangible again in order to be experienced.

There is nothing earth shattering about the preceding statement. Any number of museums comfortably conduct activity in both the physical and digital realms and those that do not are likely to anticipate the expansion with some eagerness. The primary motivating force is, however, most likely to be harnessing the radically extended outreach that the Internet enables. The term 'virtual museum' is often used to distinguish between a bricks-and-mortar

museum and the digital projection of its activities. Maintaining a presence on the Internet may be a core museum activity but, for some reason, an appellative distinction is still felt to be necessary and often causes much confusion.

VIRTUAL MUSEUMS

All that has been said thus far is based on perspectives of the museum community in the centuries-old stable sense of the term. The Internet is, however, most decidedly not a product of that community. The architectural forces that underlie the Net were not conceived in anything even vaguely related to heritage management. Although measured in decades, rather than centuries, the history of the Internet's development has seen its significance expand into one fundamental aspect of human activity after the other. This has, for quite some time, included the presentation of information about heritage. The Net is also a vibrant arena for boundless creative activity, much of which may arguably be seen as intangible cultural property in the born-digital sense discussed above.

This action is as clearly a statement of Internet community as anything else described here may be a statement of museum community. Both are digital communities and many concerns are shared across their boundary. The full synergistic potential of their co-ordinated action is, however, far from being recognised and even farther from being utilised. There are individuals and agencies in the Internet community with a keen interest in the presentation of heritage material but without any familiarity with the values and practices of traditional heritage management institutions. 'Virtual museum' is also an obvious and frequently used metaphor in non-establishment contexts. It is not possible to know the origin of any given one of the virtual museums that abound on the Net without considering more than its designation.

The museum establishment is divided in its response to this. Positions range from a blanket dismissal of the legitimacy of anything calling itself a virtual museum but not operated by a bricks-and-mortar museum, to recognition of the need for defining the essential attributes of museum activity independently of physical locus. This has now been extended to include action conducted exclusively on the Internet. Intangible creative activity has developed its own equally intangible organisational infrastructures. Members of the traditional museum community variously perceive this as a threat or a

[3] Full definition at: http://icom.museum/statutes.html#2
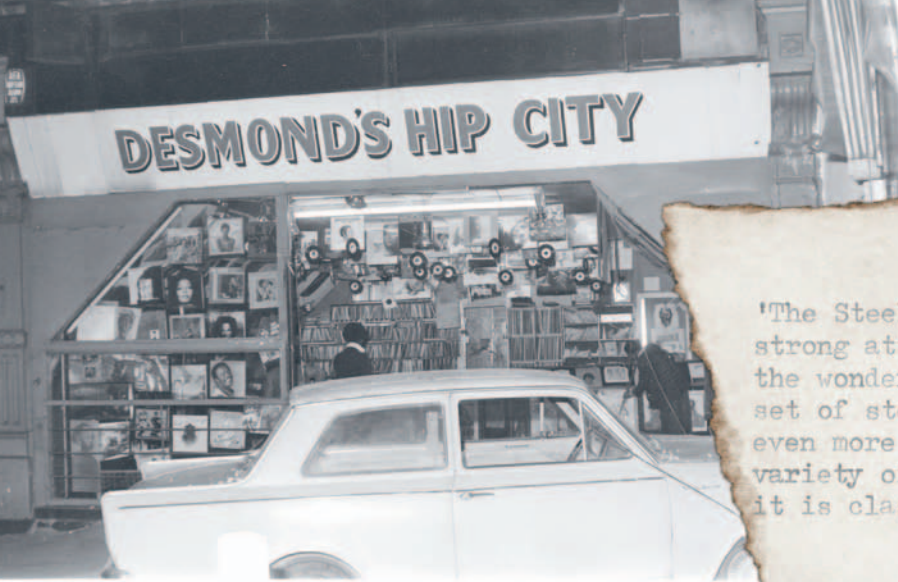
challenge. Is the application of the term museum on the Internet by entities outside the museum profession to be welcomed and guided, or is to be shunned and ignored? The controversy is visible in the discussion of the next revision of the ICOM definition of museums currently under way on the ICOM-L e-mail discussion list.[4]

The ICOM General Conference in Barcelona is relevant to the present discussion in one further regard. It was on that occasion that a newly created top-level Internet domain exclusively for the use of the museum community was launched. Details about the history and purpose of .museum ('dot-museum') have appeared in several articles in venues supported by the European Commission, Directorate-General Information Society, and elsewhere, and will not be repeated here.[5]

BATTLE FOR DOMAIN DOMINANCE

The Domain Name System is one of the most fundamental elements of the Internet. The decision, taken in late 2000, to add seven new top-level domains to it was a major development. The recognition of the museum community in the process was a profound statement about the high regard in which the Internet community holds the heritage management sector. Although some of the more daunting hurdles along the path initiated by this action were not immediately apparent, one was abundantly clear from the outset. The Internet people assumed that the museum community embraced born-digital activity, and that the normative basis for inclusion in the .museum domain would allow for the recognition of eligible entities, regardless of the extent to which their activity overlapped the boundary between the physical and digital realms. This was, however, not reflected in the .museum Charter, which bases domain policy on the ICOM definition of museum, extended as might be necessary for the operation of the domain, 'provided that any such extension is in accordance with community

perceptions about the prevailing scope of the field of museum activity'. It was thus possible for born-digital action to be included in .museum whether or not it was explicitly recognised in the ICOM definition. Before dealing with this externally to the ICOM document, and in light of the attention being paid to intangible cultural property, an attempt was made at wording the revised definition in a manner that would serve both purposes. The resulting clause was taken to have done precisely that, even if it does not make direct mention of virtual museums. The subsequent .museum policy statement recognises 'entities that conduct qualifying activity in born-digital contexts but do not operate physical museums', but distinguishes between them and 'physical museums that also operate digital museums'. The v-word makes its sole appearance in the naming rules that are applied to the first of these categories, which must 'register in the generic second-level domain virtual.museum or in an unambiguous equivalent, such as digital.museum, online.museum or cyber.museum'.

This policy is a compromise. On the one hand, excluding born-digital activity from something as utterly digital as an Internet domain is oxymoronic. On the other hand, the perceptions of the professional museum community are fundamental to .museum policy. Since the inclusion of digital-only museums in the pre-existing museum community is clearly a subject of debate, means were provided for their special identification in .museum. This passed almost entirely without comment from the museum establishment, but was a subject of complaint for its discriminatory nature by digital-only museums. The next .museum policy revision will probably be more accommodating of entities that do not operate physical museums but conduct Net-based activity which is otherwise indistinguishable from that conducted by bricks-and-mortar museums. (A discussion of what the relevant evaluative criteria might be would require more space than is available here.) Quite a bit depends on the extent to which the

* From: *The Steel Band*, story contributed to Moving Here by Ms Brenda La Rose, http://www.moving here.org.uk/stories/ story28/story28.htm

[4] Archived at http://icom.museum/ lists/icom-l.html
[5] A review of the underlying goals was included in DigiCULT.Info, Issue 3, pp. 24-25, February 2003, http://data.digicult.info/ download/digicult_ info3.pdf

museum community ascribes relevance to the UNESCO *Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage*.

One Museum Community on the Internet or two?

The issue of top-level domain administration has far-reaching implications. The self-styled virtual museums that originate and exist solely in cyberspace, and the virtual projections of the physical museum establishment, are both well established on the Internet. Given the vastness of the potential audience, it may be safe to assume that a significant number of non-specialist users would benefit from being given means for discriminating between the real museums and those that are only coincidentally labelling themselves as such. It is difficult to imagine how that might be done without the active participation of the museum community. It is equally safe to assume that a significant number of Internet users are more interested in the way material appears than they are in the sectoral identity of its source. Here again, the active efforts of the professional museum community are needed to avert the deflation of the value of 'museum' as it appears on the Net.

One obvious line of approach would be to provide means for recognising the origin of an Internet-based resource as clearly being within the museum community. The .museum top-level domain was established precisely for this purpose, providing immediate means for users to recognise *bona fide* museum activity on the Internet. The extent to which this may include digital-only museums is, however, determined by the traditional museum establishment. The conceptual framework within which relevant domain policies are developed must itself be expanded to be able to deal with the unfamiliar but ever so demanding new situation. There is no suggestion here that an individual who has spent an afternoon placing digital images of a stamp collection on a 'virtual museum' Website can

expect the professional community to accept that as a legitimate museum; no more so than the public being given physical access to the same collection would justify a claim to any other form of recognition.

There are, however, numerous extremely valuable information resources that are being made available on the Internet by individuals and groups which increase the public understanding of its heritage in a manner that in all qualitative and quantitative regards is on a par with the efforts of established agencies in the heritage management sector. If the authors of any of these born-digital initiatives wish to present them using the virtual museum metaphor, doing so with establishment guidance would clearly benefit the consolidation of a single museum community on the Internet. The subdomain virtual.museum was envisaged as a useful means for providing an identity for such resources. It provides means for indicating the special status of born-digital initiatives that are adjacent to, but not a clear part of mainstream museum activity. However, it is imperative that born-digital museums that are identical to the digital projections of physical museums, and are supported by organisational constructs conforming to the terms of the ICOM definition except for the maintenance of physical installations, can be included in the .museum domain without any restrictions deriving from their born-digital status.

The blanket dismissal of born-digital virtual museums can only result in there being two museum communities on the Internet. There is great risk in assuming that the user community will automatically recognise the one that is restricted to the digital projection of physical museums as the more significant. There is, however, no doubt that only one force is capable of ensuring that this development reflects well-established museum values. That is the museum community itself. Its significance is as important here as it has ever been, and much depends on the way it responds to this grand digital challenge.

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Tutorials:

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How To Turn Lurkers Into Posters, by SitePoint Community (January 2003), http://www.sitepoint.com/article/983;
Keep Your Forums Friendly, by James Ross (August 2002), http://www.sitepoint.com/article/850

Virtual Community Software:

Overview on discussion boards, instant messaging, chats, conferencing, MUDs & MOOs in J. Preece: Online Communities, http://www.ifsm.umbc.edu/onlinecommunities/resources/software/index.htm

Overview of forum software, bulletin and message boards at http://www.big-boards.com/resources/software/

Groupware: Virtual Communities, a rich resource on collaborative technologies, computer mediated communication & negotiation, CRM, profiles, privacy, http://www.insead.fr/CALT/Encyclopedia/ComputerSciences/Groupware/VirtualCommunities/

Lee Bryant: Smarter, Simpler Social: An introduction to online social software methodology (18 April 2003), http://www.headshift.com/moments/archives/sss2.html

Conferences & workshops:

Virtual Communities Conference 2004, The Hague, 14–15 June 2004; presentations 1998-2003, http://www.infonortics.com/vc/

Web Based Communities 2004: IADIS International Conference, Lisbon, Portugal, 25-26 March 2004, http://www.iadis.org/wbc2004/

3rd International Workshop on (Virtual) Community Informatics: Electronic Support for Communities - Local, Virtual and Communities of Practice, Budapest, Hungary, 20 May 2003, http://is.njit.edu/vci/vci-www2003/

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Dr Tom Gross is a senior researcher in the research group for Computer-Supported Co-operative Work at the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied IT. His research interests include computer-supported co-operative work (CSCW), human-computer inter-action (HCI), and global Internet-based information systems. In these areas he has written numerous papers, and served on the organising and programme committees of several scientific events. Dr Gross teaches CSCW and HCI at the Johannes Kepler University of Linz and University of Vienna, Austria, as well as Technical University of Aachen, Germany. He has participated in and co-ordinated activities in several EU-projects (e.g., the Requirements Engine-ering Network of International Co-operating Research Groups (RENOIR), the Theatre for Work Enabling Relationships (TOWER), the Open Collaborative Virtual Archive Environment (CYCLADES). He holds a diploma and a doctorate degree in Applied Computer Science from the Johannes Kepler University, Linz, Austria.

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Susan Hazan is Curator of New Media and Head of the Internet Office at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, identifying and implementing electronic activities for the gallery and outreach programmes. Responsibilities include interactive, 2D and 3D educational projects, an online school curriculum (museum@school) as well as the comprehensive institutional Website in English and Hebrew. Her Masters and PhD research at Goldsmiths College, University of London, in Media and Communications focuses on the impact of new media in the contemporary museum. Hazan has published numerous publications on digital technologies in education, art and museums and is currently visiting tutor in the Media and Communications Department and Computing Department at Goldsmiths, teaching Critical E-Museology and Digital Media, which emphasise the correlation between cultural theory and contemporary practice.

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Cary Karp is the Director of Internet Strategy and Technology at the Swedish Museum of Natural History and serves in the same capacity for the International Council of Museums (ICOM). He is also the President and CEO of the Museum Domain Management Association (MuseDoma), the organisation responsible for the operation of the .museum top-level Internet domain. He holds a PhD in musicology from Uppsala University where he is Associate Professor of Organology. He was curator of the musical instrument collections at the Music Museum in Stockholm from 1973 to 1990, and its Deputy Director for the final ten of those years. During the same period he became increasingly active in a variety of initiatives directed towards the establishment of a clear presence for the museum community on the global electronic communications networks. He currently manages the MUSENIC Project (Museum Network Information Centre – Europe, IST-2001-33538), one of the objectives of which is to inform the archive and library communities about

the benefits that may be derived from their establishing further top-level domains equivalent to .museum, and to provide support in any action that may be taken towards that end. The longer-range goal is the creation of a 'heritage cluster' of top-level domains as a basis for an extension of the well-established notion of ALM community into the digital realm, and the further development of this to include other sectors within the heritage management community.

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Efthimios C. Mavrikas, MEng ACGI, joined the Cultural Informatics Laboratory (CILab) at the Department of Cultural Technology and Communication, University of the Aegean, in 2001, and the Equipe de Recherche en Ingénierie des Connaissances Laboratory (Labo ERIC) at the Université Lumière Lyon 2 in 2002, as a research/teaching assistant and PhD candidate. He holds a Master of Engineering (Hons) degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering with Management from Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, University of London. His research interests include cultural applications of peer-to-peer computing, ontology engineering, KDD and agent-based systems, and the field of human-computer intelligent interaction. He has been a Project JXTA community member since 2002, attempting to apply the CIDOC CRM to an Edutella-type infrastructure for peer-to-peer applications. He is currently involved in the Socrates/Minerva project WebDANCE, where he has extended the National Curriculum and the IEEE LOM-based Virtual Teacher Centre RDF Schemas (both educational extensions to the Dublin Core) with a set of MPEG-7 descriptors, to propose a more elaborate annotation solution for performing arts' audiovisual resources. He has previously been employed by Intrasoft International SA from 1996 to 2000, on a part-time basis; he gained extensive experience in the field of IT services while working with the EIC, SURE and INSEM3 project teams as a subcontractor for the European Commission. URLs: http://www.aegean. gr/culturaltec/ and http://eric.univ-lyon2.fr/

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Born in 1943, Margariet Moelands studied law at the University of Amsterdam. Since 1972, she has worked for the NCRD (Dutch Centre for the Documentation of Legal History and Legal Iconography, www.kb.nl/ncrd). She has specialised in Legal Iconography and was one of the developers of an educational pilot for the National Library: Huwelijk en relaties 1500-1800 (Marriage and relationships 1500-1800: http://www.kb.nl/kb/kbschool/hr/site/index.html). Margariet has been involved in creating new possibilities for the library by means of new search software. She is a member of the team working on the development of Alfa@Ned, a knowledge domain for Dutch history, language and culture. For the ongoing development of Alfa@Ned, the National Library hopes to obtain a grant from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research.

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Paul Mulholland is a Research Fellow in the Knowledge Media Institute of the Open University and investigator on the CIPHER project. CIPHER is a 30-month Heritage For All project supported by the IST Programme. He has been involved in a number of previous and current research projects, of which Enrich (Esprit 4 funded project in organisational learning, 1998-2000), Clockwork (Framework 5 funded knowledge management project, 2000-2003), Empowering Learning Communities (industrially funded project, 2000-2002) and RichODL (EU Socrates programme, 1999-2001) are examples. Dr Mulholland's profes-

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Kristóf Nyíri, born in 1944, is a Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and Director of the Institute for Philosophical Research of the Academy. He studied mathematics and philosophy at the University of Budapest, where he has been Professor of Philosophy since 1986. He was visiting professor in Austria, Finland and the US. His main fields of research are the history of philosophy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the impact of communication technologies on the organisation of ideas and social and political organisation. Some of his main publications include: *Tradition and Individuality*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1992; 'Electronic Networking and the Unity of Knowledge', in Stephanie Kenna and Seamus Ross (eds.), *Networking in the Humanities*, London: Bowker-Saur, 1995; 'The Concept of Knowledge in the Context of Electronic Networking' (*The Monist*, July 1997); 'Towards a Philosophy of Virtual Education', in Marilyn Deegan and Harold Short (eds.), DRH 99, London: King's College, 2000; 'The Picture Theory of Reason', in Berit Brogaard and Barry Smith (eds.), *Rationality and Irrationality*, Wien: öbv-hpt, 2001; and 'From the Information Society to Knowledge Communities', in Kristóf Nyíri, ed., *Mobile Communication: Essays on Cognition and Community*, Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2003. URL for further information: http://www.phil-inst.hu/nyiri

Sofia Pescarin, National Research Council ITABC, Istituto per Le Tecnologie Applicate ai Beni Culturali, Rome, Italy
Sofia Pescarin has a degree in Archaeology from the University of Bologna and a PhD in History and Computing. She specialises in the field of information technology applied to cultural heritage. Since 1996 she has been involved with the CINECA Supercomputing Centre of Bologna, in the Visuali-sation Lab (VIS.I.T.: http://www.cineca.it/visit). Since 2002, she has been a fellowship researcher at CNR ITABC (Institute of Technologies Applied to Cultural Heritage, Rome) in the Virtual Heritage Lab. Here she is involved in the Appia Antica project (http://www.mlib.cnr.it/itabc/appia) and in the creation of Desktop Virtual Reality applications for

archaeological missions in Ethiopia and Kazakhstan. Dr Pescarin has worked on numerous national and international projects, such as NUME (New Electronic Museum for the city of Bologna); the Scrovegni Chapel project as technical director (realisation of a multimedia room opened in Padova in March 2003: http://www.mlib.cnr.it/itabc/giottoVR), and the E-Culture Net project. She writes for the magazine *MondoGIS* and is responsible for the Web content management of the GeoEsplora portal (http://www.geoesplora.net). She has published various articles on archaeology, GIS and Virtual Reality. In 2000, WhiteStar Edition published Dr Pescarin's book: 'Rome. Archaeological guide to the eternal city'.

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Dr Seamus Ross is Director of Glasgow University's Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII). He is also Director of ERPANET (Electronic Resource Preservation and Network) (IST-2001-32706), a European Union funded accompanying measure to enhance the preservation of cultural heritage and scientific digital objects. Previously he was Assistant Secretary for Information Technology at the British Academy, and before that worked for a company specialising in expert systems and software development, as a software engineer and then in management. He researches, lectures and publishes widely on information technology and digital preservation. Dr Ross acts as ICT advisor to the Heritage Lottery Fund and is a monitor for a number of large ICT-based projects in the UK. He is a member of a number of international organisations including the DLM-Monitoring Committee of the European Commission, the Research Libraries Group's PRESERV Working Group on Preservation Issues of Metadata, and InterPARES (as well as Co-Chair of its European Team).

Bruce Royan, Concurrent Computing, UK
Bruce Royan has over 30 years' experience in the field of digital cultural, information and learning support services, working initially with British Telecom, the London Borough of Camden and The British Library. In 1976, he moved to Scotland as Head of Systems at the National Library and during the mid-80s he established a national information network for schools, universities, colleges and libraries in Singapore.
He returned to the UK as Principal Information Systems Consultant with Infologistix Ltd, consult-

ing and lecturing worldwide. After seven years as University Librarian and Director of Information Services at the University of Stirling, in 1996 he set up the Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network (SCRAN), a learning objects repository licensed to all the schools in Scotland, and, via a JISC contract, to Universities and Colleges throughout the UK. Bruce serves on the Technical Standards Working Group of the UK's Curriculum Online, and is Chair of the Metadata for Education Group (MEG). He is also CEO of the e-Culture, e-Learning and Distributed Systems consultancy, Concurrent Computing Ltd.

Angela T. Spinazzé, ATSPIN consulting, USA

Angela T. Spinazzé assists museums, government agencies and other heritage institutions with projects that employ new technologies to document, interpret and present our creative past. Her experience in-cludes feasibility studies and strategic planning for new technologies, the design of metadata schemas and associated standards, professional development workshops and seminars, and project management. Angela holds academic credentials in Art History, Theory and Criticism, and is an invited expert to international working groups on issues such as interoperability, digital museums and libraries, and visual literacy. For more information about her consulting services, visit http://www.atspin.com.

Nils Tomes, British Council, UK

Since August 2003, Nils Tomes has been Director of E-Networks and Communities at The British Council. This new post brings together and builds on The British Council's experience over more than seven years in building electronic virtual communities throughout the world. Previously, Dr Tomes was Director of the Learning Technology Centre at Heriot-Watt University. Her information technology-related work has included multimedia technology forecasting for the European Com-munity; constructivist task-based learning approa-ches; an international study of software engineering achievement for the Department of Trade and Industry and a consortium of British companies; and the development of a knowledge-based system to support biotechnology drug design. She has published on knowledge-based systems and soft-ware development approaches.

Isabelle Vinson, Museum International, UNESCO, France

Isabelle Vinson is Editor in Chief of UNESCO's quarterly journal *Museum International*. Since her appointment in 2000, she has developed a new editorial approach for the international magazine and a communication policy making full use of ICT. Before joining the journal, she was in charge of the New Technology for Culture Unit where she co-ordinated the early creation of the UNESCO Culture Website and the implementation of various ICT projects relating to heritage, including the CD-ROM series *Understanding Civilizations*. She was closely involved, as author and co-ordinator of chapters on Heritage, Museums and ICT, in the publication of two UNESCO World Culture Reports (1998, 2000) and was secretary of the Plan of Action Drafting group during the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, 1998). Isabelle Vinson is an Alumna, Ecole Nationale du Patrimoine (France). An archae-ologist and curator by training, she also holds an MA in Ancient History from Paris IV Sorbonne and a DEA in Contemporary History from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (France). Her professional and research interests focus on museum, informatics and international heritage.

Helen Wood, The National Archives, UK

Helen Wood has been the Project Manager for Moving Here at The National Archives since January 2003. Before that she had worked on Moving Here at one of the partner organisations (London Metro-politan Archives), which gave her a view of the project from the other side of the table. She qualified as an archivist in 1998 from Liverpool University, having studied for a Bachelor's degree in History and Italian at University College London. After a brief spell working in banking archives in Italy she worked for the Business Archives Council in England as an Advisory Service Archivist. After that she was engaged as an Archivist at London Metropolitan Archives. Here, as well as undertaking cataloguing duties, she supervised a ground-breaking project called 'Black and Asian Londoners: 1536–1840. Presence and Background'. This was a comprehensive examination of the presence of Black and Asian people in parish registers and has gone on to be the basis for many interpretation projects there. This work tied in nicely with London Metropolitan Archives' contribution to the Moving Here project, which was a natural progression.

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THE WEST INDIES: JAMAICA.

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Jamaica, area 4,411 square miles, is the largest and most westerly
island of the British West Indies, lying 90 miles south of Cuba.
Its climate is tropical at sea level but temperate in the mountains;
the average annual rainfall is about 77". A mountainous island
(highest point Blue Mountain Peak, 7,402ft.), nearly half Jamaica
is over 1,000 ft. Agriculture, the main source of employment, is
confined mostly to the coastal areas; the chief crops are sugar and
bananas. Jamaica is the world's largest producer of bauxite, some of
which is processed locally into alumina. These two products account
for nearly half the total value of exports; bananas and sugar are
also important exports. The climate, scenery and good beaches
attract many visitors and the tourist industry is second to bauxite
and alumina as a dollar earner. The population is 1,651,000 and
Kingston (population about 158,700) is the capital and chief port.

D107955 (Temporary caption)
The Main Street, Mandeville.
January 1961.

DiɢiCULT: Pʀoject Iɴformation

DigiCULT is an IST Support Measure (IST-2001-34898) to establish a regular technology watch that monitors and analyses technological developments relevant to and in the cultural and scientific heritage sector over the period of 30 months (03/2002-08/2004).

In order to encourage early take-up, DigiCULT produces seven Thematic Issues, three Technology Watch Reports, along with the newsletter DigiCULT.Info.

DigiCULT draws on the results of the strategic study 'Technological Landscapes for Tomorrow's Cultural Economy (DigiCULT)', that was initiated by the European Commission, DG Information Society (Unit D2: Cultural Heritage Applications) in 2000 and completed in 2001.

Copies of the DigiCULT Full Report and Executive Summary can be downloaded or ordered at http://www.digicult.info.

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DigiCULT Thematic Issue 1 – Integrity and Authenticity of Digital Cultural Heritage Objects builds on the first DigiCULT Forum held in Barcelona, Spain, on 6 May 2002, in the context of the DLM Conference 2002.

DigiCULT Thematic Issue 2 – Digital Asset Management Systems for the Cultural and Scientific Heritage Sector builds on the second DigiCULT Forum held in Essen, Germany, on 3 September 2002, in the context of the AIIM Conference @ DMS EXPO.

DigiCULT Thematic Issue 3 – Towards a Semantic Web for Heritage Resources builds on the third DigiCULT Forum held on 21 January 2003, at Fraunhofer IPSI, Darmstadt, Germany.

DigiCULT Thematic Issue 4 – Learning Objects from Cultural and Scientific Heritage Resources builds on the fourth DigiCULT Forum held on 2 July 2003, at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek – National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague.

DigiCULT Thematic Issue 5 – Virtual Communities and Collaboration in the Heritage Sector builds on the fifth DigiCULT Forum held on 20 October 2003, at Napier University, Edinburgh, Scotland.

IMPRINT

IMAGES

Images for this Thematic Issue have been kindly provided by:

Moving Here, a NOF digitisation programme project

Cover: A young woman teacher photographed with her pupils at the Margaret McMillan First School in Bradford during a computer lesson, 1994. © Bradford Heritage Unit (Moving Here catalogue ref. 316148)

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Page 9: Chapman Lane, adjoining Emerton Alley, where the houses are small and close together. Barbados, March 1955. ©The National Archives (Moving Here catalogue ref. INF10/50/001)

Page 9: The bus station at Mandeville, Jamaica, January 1961. ©The National Archives (Moving Here catalogue ref. INF10/148/002)

Page 12: Lifeboat drill. Lascars, or Asian sailors, lined up on one of the decks of the ship Viceroy of India wearing lifejackets for a lifeboat drill in 1929. In 1942 during World War Two the ship was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine. ©National Maritime Museum (Moving Here catalogue ref. P85288)

Page 13: Passenger/cargo liner Circassia manoeuvring off landing stage with tug, North Quay, assisting, 1963. ©National Maritime Museum (Moving Here catalogue ref. N33608(2S)B Apr 1963)

Page 13: Getting ready for a family outing at the home of a Sikh family in Pudsey, West Yorkshire, 2001. ©Bradford Heritage Unit (Moving Here catalogue ref. 81 Boys Turban)

Page 14: A young Sikh boy and girl walk along a London street of terraced houses. From a series of images showing cultural diversity in London, 1973-1983, taken by Henry Grant. ©Museum of London (Moving Here catalogue ref. HG2826A/13)

Pages 14/15: Three adolescent boys sit deep in conversation on the front steps of a house in London. From a series of images showing cultural diversity in London, 1973-1983, taken by Henry Grant. ©Museum of London (Moving Here catalogue ref. HG2826F/32)

Page 15: A boy lines up to play a shot in a snooker game at the Bangladeshi Youth Organisation in the Manningham district of Bradford, 1990. The mural on the wall behind shows the journey of people from rural Bangladesh to urban Britain. ©Bradford Heritage Unit (Moving Here catalogue ref. 22 Snooker at BYO)

Page 26: A demonstration in Trafalgar Square in 1970 or 1971 against the Colour Bar Immigration Bill which restricted the right of Commonwealth citizens to remain in Britain. ©Museum of London (Moving Here catalogue ref. HG2123/18)

Page 27: A dressmaking class at an Asian Women's Centre in Bradford, 1994. ©Bradford Heritage Unit (Moving Here catalogue ref. 316128)

Page 27: An Urdu class taking place at a Bradford school, 1994. Urdu is the official language of Pakistan and one of the 15 official languages of India. It developed in the Punjab in India about thousand years ago and uses words borrowed from Arabic, Persian and Turkish. ©Bradford Heritage Unit (Moving Here catalogue ref. 316156)

Page 28: A typical black wedding in Brixton, 1968. ©Black Cultural Archives (Moving Here catalogue ref. Photograph 14 Wedding)

Page 29: Washing a Sikh groom with yoghurt the night before his wedding in Huddersfield, 2002. ©Bradford Heritage Unit (Moving Here catalogue ref. 67 Sikh Mendhi)

Page 29: A West Indian couple on their wedding day. From a series of images showing cultural diversity in London, 1973-1983, taken by Henry Grant. ©Museum of London (Moving Here catalogue ref. HG2826F/16)

Page 32: Mas cafe, a West Indian shop where you can obtain fry fish, dumpling, soups and other meals. Ma standing behind the counter in her shop in 1980. A photograph from the Vanley Burke Collection. ©Birmingham City Archives (Moving Here catalogue ref. MS2192/4/41)

Page 33: Playing bingo at the Subco Elders Day Centre in Upton Park, London, 1998. ©Bradford Heritage Unit (Moving Here catalogue ref. 78 Bingo)

Page 38: Desmond's Hip City, Brixton's first black record shop; shop front c.1973. ©Black Cultural Archives (Moving Here catalogue ref. Photograph 17 Desmond Hip City)

Page 39: Afro-Caribbean teenagers playing at an open-air concert. From a series of images showing cultural diversity in London, 1973-1983, taken by Henry Grant. ©Museum of London (Moving Here catalogue ref. HG2826D/21)

Page 39: Dancing to celebrate the festival of Navaratri at the Shree Hindu Temple in Bradford, 1994. Navaratri is a major Hindu festival and lasts nine days. ©Bradford Heritage Unit (Moving Here catalogue ref. 316106)

Page 42: Members of the Leeds Carnival Committee photographed outside Cowper Street School in Chapeltown, Leeds, 1974. ©West Yorkshire Archives Service (Moving Here catalogue ref. WYL5041/2/3/2)

Page 45: The Main Street, Mandeville, Jamaica, January 1961. ©The National Archives (Moving Here catalogue ref. INF10/143/006)

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Page 20: Hydra, a silver coin minted by Ercole I d'Este in 1493
Page 21: ECA virtual collection, entry for the artist Battista Dossi
Page 23: ECA virtual collection, entry for 'Justitia', oil on canvas, 1544, by Battista Dossi

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DigiCULT Publications offer a valuable resource of mission-critical information in the selection and use of digital technologies for Europe's heritage organisations

Virtual Communities and Collaboration in the Heritage Sector:

This fifth Thematic Issue concentrates on the question of how heritage institutions might benefit from fostering virtual communities related to core activities such as exhibitions, educational programmes or in support of scholarly communities.
There is a growing volume of evidence to suggest that cultural heritage institutions' adoption of virtual communities will broaden the reach, value and relevance of cultural heritage.
The vision to link the collections and work of heritage institutions with virtual communities promises to considerably change the way we access, communicate about, share our understanding of, and participate in the experience of cultural heritage.
But, for most cultural heritage institutions, the challenge will first be to embrace the idea of co-operating with a (non-professional) online community, and then to nurture an evolving and thriving community that crosses the virtual as well as physical space.

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