Europeana Cloud:
a factsheet for aggregators

The Europeana Cloud partnership aims to provide members of the Europeana ecosystem with a new infrastructure for sharing, accessing and using metadata and digital objects. The project will also provide tools to enable new ways of working with the metadata and objects, which will be of particular interest to the research community. A wide range of partners are collaborating to create a sustainable infrastructure, offering efficiencies over existing systems, ensuring that the innovation sparked by the project continues well beyond it.

KEY FACTS

36 months from 2013 to 2016
20 content providers
10 strategic and technical partners
7.4 million records and content items
3 aggregators
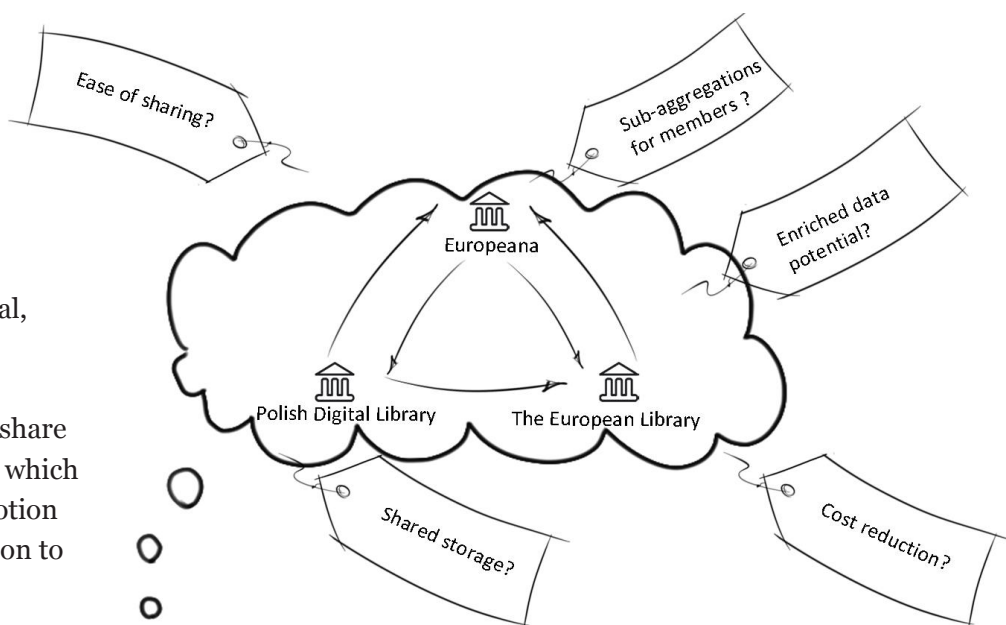
1 PROJECT

www.pro.europeana.eu web/europeana-cloud

The project has three main tasks:

1. INFRASTRUCTURE: Build a sustainable cloud-based infrastructure that provides cost-efficiencies for storing, sharing and providing access to cultural heritage objects and other stakeholder assets, with a legal framework that enables access to and re-use of the material.
2. CONTENT: Source, prepare and add new data (5m content items and another 2.4m metadata records, along with existing data from Europeana, The European Library and the Polish Digital Libraries Federation) to the Cloud infrastructure.
3. USE: Engage innovators and developers to build third-party services and tools so that audiences (eg. humanities and social sciences researchers) can access, work on and share the content stored in the Cloud. Enriched content can be fed back to the providers. Stakeholders work collectively to ensure that their content and services are used to best effect.

A new technical framework:

The traditional aggregation model, in which information travels in one direction from aggregator to Europeana is costly and unsustainable. Each aggregator uses different systems which all have their own transactional, maintenance and staffing costs.

With Europeana Cloud, aggregators share a single technical framework, within which information can flow in a circular motion – enriching metadata and passing it on to other organisations.

Ease of sharing?

Sub-aggregations for members?

Enriched data potential?

Europeana

Polish Digital Library

The European Library

Shared storage?

Cost reduction?

Working together:

The consortium of partners will explore how Cloud technology can:

- reduce IT costs for institutions
- lead to more efficient workflows
- lead to new ways of supporting each other

Cloud technology is all about sharing. We must also consider issues around access, trust, consensus and copyright. This project will bring partners together to discuss the approach we need to take in order to:

- build this shared space
- define the rules of engagement and community boundaries
- establish a long-term consensus, discussing:
    -who should be able to upload or download information
    -which groups of people should be granted access
    -how the tools, services and results should be shared.

To ensure that the work of Europeana Cloud remains available beyond the lifetime of the project, issues related to sustainability will need to be addressed:

- who will manage and govern the resulting cloud-based infrastructure?
- how will it be paid for?

Practical example: Aggregators

Once the Europeana Cloud infrastructure is established, other aggregators will be able to join and share their metadata and content. This will allow for storage sharing, cost efficiencies, greater potential for data enrichment, and for tools and services to be built for end-users on top of this content.

Practical example: Tools & Services

A partner uploads the digital files for a library collection of 19th century documents to the cloud. An innovator builds a tool that can be used to annotate documents. A group of researchers works with a subset of the library collection and makes annotations. The annotations are shared with anyone else looking at the documents, and these enriched records could also be fed back to the originating library.

The end result:

Europeana Cloud will deliver an efficient solution to storing, sharing and providing access to digital cultural heritage. A shared infrastructure benefits content providers by reducing IT hosting costs and freeing up time to focus on strategy and innovation, along with efficiencies such as speed of delivery, time-saving, and the provision of services that are reliable, secure, interoperable and easy to manage.
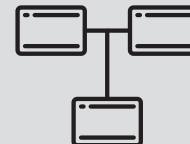
Uploaded collections will be accessible and shareable, and can be aggregated in different ways. The ability to work on them with new services and tools means the collections can be used and re-used in new ways, enriched results can be fed back to the institutions, and the collections can reach new sets of audiences.

Get involved:

Different groups of partners and audiences will be involved at various stages of the project. At this early stage, we want to hear from aggregators with offers of content (as opposed to metadata) to be aggregated into the cloud, or those who simply have views to contribute.