

Digital Curator Vocational Education Europe:

Overview of the DigCurV Project

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Abstract—This paper provides an overview of the EC-funded DigCurV project, its context, methods, main findings, and the project's initial framework for a digital curation curriculum and the Curate! game.

Keywords – *DigCurV; digital curation; vocational training and education; curriculum development; Europe*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Digital Curator Vocational Education Project (DigCurV) [1] is funded by the European Commission's Leonardo da Vinci programme [2]. The project began in January 2011 and runs until the end of June 2013. The main aim of the project has been to establish an initial curriculum framework from which vocational education and training in digital curation can be developed.

DigCurV brings together a network of partners [3] with a strong track record of international work in the field of digital preservation and digital curation to address the availability of education and training for staff working with digital collections in the library, archive, museum and cultural heritage sectors. The project has a particular focus on the training needed to develop the new skills and competences that are essential for the long-term management of digital content.

II. A STAKEHOLDER NETWORK

The DigCurV project consortium brings together partners from across Europe with two from Canada and the USA. The European partners include HATII (Scotland, UK), the Fondazione Rinascimento Digitale (Italy), Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (Germany), Trinity College Dublin (Ireland), Vliniaus Universiteto Biblioteka (Lithuania) and MDR Partners (England, UK). The Leonardo da Vinci programme allows for organisations from countries outside Europe to join project consortia which enabled the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto (Canada) and the Institute of Museum and Library Studies (USA) to be affiliated with the project.

From the beginning DigCurV has aimed to build a network of stakeholder organisations with a strong interest in training and education in the field of digital curation. The founding members of the DigCurV network included the Digital Preservation Coalition (UK), the nestor qualification

consortium (Germany) and the Digital Curation Centre (UK) amongst other organisations from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, the UK, Canada, the USA and a number of European Commission funded projects [4].

Membership of the network is open to organisations and individuals. Over the last two years, as the project has progressed membership has grown to include 44 organisations and 168 individuals. Membership is worldwide with members based in Argentina, Australia, Canada, Guatemala, Israel, New Zealand, South Africa and Uruguay, USA and twenty-one European countries. In addition to the registered members, the DigCurV network includes individuals who have registered to receive our newsletter or who are following the project on Twitter.

The membership of the DigCurV network demonstrates that there is a large community of interest in education and training in digital curation. As a project we are grateful to the members of this network for their willingness to contribute to the project's activities by taking part in surveys, focus groups, workshops and events.

III. MAIN ACTIVITIES

The main project activities have included:

- Identifying and analyzing existing training opportunities and the methodologies in use;
- Completing a survey and analysis of the need for vocational education and training amongst the staff of cultural institutions;
- Identifying the key roles, skills and competences of digital curation;
- Establishing an initial framework for a digital curation curriculum, working with the stakeholder network to evaluate and inform the framework as it has been developed via focus group meetings, workshops and other activities;
- Disseminating and promoting the project's activities and its results, with a specific aim of promoting the

IV. BACKGROUND

Europe's digital sector has seen strong growth in recent years in all sectors. Since 2005, the European Commission has been actively encouraged this growth, particularly in the digital infrastructure for the economy and ICT skills for jobs, initially through its i2010 strategy and currently through the 2020 initiative and the Digital Agenda for Europe [5]. There has been investment in digitizing and in making cultural content available online justified by the importance of the cultural heritage sector in the European economy.

Research carried out in 2009 by the Numeric project [6], estimated that there were more than 77,000 cultural institutions in Europe (national libraries, university libraries, public libraries, special libraries, museums, national archives and audio visual archives) with more than 82,000 staff. Many involved in digitization of analogue materials or in collecting born-digital materials.

The pace of development and change in information technology has been very rapid which presents particular challenges to institutions responsible for the management and long-term preservation of digital collections. For cultural heritage institutions the availability of staff with the skills and competences needed to care for the digital objects in their collections is an increasingly pressing issue. Traditionally the staff in libraries, museums, archives and galleries have qualified in the care of physical objects through well established professional and vocational courses. But as digital content becomes increasingly prevalent in the collections held by cultural institutions new skills and competences are required.

Surveys and informal research has been carried out in several countries, including the UK, Germany and the USA, which have found that both the recruitment of staff with the experience and qualifications needed for digital curation, and providing training for existing staff members are challenges faced by institutions. In 2004, work by the Digital Preservation Coalition for the JISC had already established the need for digital preservation skills and training in multiple sectors in the UK [7]. Research by DigitalPreservationEurope underlined the need for professionals to regularly refresh and update their skills as techniques in digital curation practice evolves [8]. A growing demand for the skills of digital archivists was recognized in the New York Times in 2009 [9]. In 2010, Gartner Research identified the new role of "digital archivist" as one which IT departments required to remain effective – this research estimated that 15% of all businesses would employ digital archivists by 2012 [10].

Yet, in spite of this background, when the DigCurV project began in 2011 there were only a small number of institutions offering digital curation as a part of professional courses in library and information management or archives management courses. In June 2011, the JISC organized an International Curation Education Forum (the ICE forum) at which fewer

than a dozen European institutions were registered as including digital curation training as part of their curriculums [11].

V. PROJECT RESULTS

DigCurV set out to build on the results of previous initiatives by surveying and analyzing the current situation.

A. *Analysing existing training opportunities*

At the beginning of April 2011, DigCurV launched a survey of existing training opportunities with the aim of:

- Identifying institutions, projects and individuals offering training in digital curation mainly in Europe but some responses were also obtained from North America;
- Analysing and mapping the training opportunities on offer to identify topics, skills, learning objectives, training methodologies and course formats, and methods of assessment;
- Establishing a registry of training opportunities [12] based on the findings of the survey and capable of accepting details of forthcoming courses from network members; and
- Developing an Evaluation Framework [13] intended to help inform the DigCurV curriculum framework.

B. *Analysing training needs*

In July and August 2011, DigCurV launched a survey of training needs in the cultural sector [14]. The survey collected information about:

- Institutional contexts including for example whether the institution was currently (or planning to) carry out digital preservation of its collections, had plans for recruiting new staff or for training existing staff members;
- The skills and competences being called for including both general skills and those specific to digital curation;
- Training preferences for example for the means of delivery (online, in person), the length of course, the type of assessment;
- The training needs being expressed for specific skills, competences, roles, access to training etc.

In addition to this survey, DigCurV collected job advertisements throughout 2011. This enabled it to obtain a snap-shot of the state of recruitment and the level of skills, competences, qualifications and experience being called for by employers.

C. *Developing an initial Curriculum Framework*

Throughout 2012-13 DigCurV has been building on the results of the surveys completed in 2011 and on experience within the consortium and from related initiatives to develop an initial Curriculum Framework [15]. The Framework indicates

the core digital curation skills and competences and pathways of progression through these. There are three main 'lenses' to reflect the roles of 'practitioner', 'manager' and 'executive' which indicate the skills and competences required in these roles.

During the summer and autumn of 2012, the DigCurV team ran a series of workshops and presented initial versions of Curriculum Framework at a number of events to invite feedback [16]. This series culminated in a workshop held in Florence in December 2012 [17]. The feedback from these workshops was invaluable in informing the development of the Curriculum Framework.

The Curriculum Framework was launched at the project's final conference in Florence in May 2013. The framework has three main intended uses:

- To build or develop training courses
- To compare existing courses
- To plan professional development

D. Curate! The Digital Curator Game

DigCurV first developed the Curate! game for a workshop which was held at the DISH conference in Rotterdam in 2011. It was designed to provide a way for curators to explore their changing roles in creating, managing and curating digital content as they advance around the board.

Following the positive feedback received from players of the game at the first trial session, the Curate! game has been made available to registered members of the DigCurV network as a download package [18]. Curate! is currently being translated into several languages by members of the network. It has been played at conferences, workshops and staff development sessions worldwide.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper provides a brief overview of the activities and results of DigCurV, separate papers in these proceedings describe the projects main activities and results in more detail.

DigCurV has been a highly participatory project. We set out aiming to involve both educationalists and culture sector professionals in our activities to inform the development of the Curriculum Framework. The international network that has grown up around DigCurV is open and we invite new members to join and to exploit the resources that project.

Ultimately, the project's aim has been to stimulate an increase in the availability of vocational education and training opportunities for digital curators. We look forward to hearing news of the Curriculum Framework and the Curate! game being put to use and about new training courses being developed in future.

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