

Reweaving the Cultural Web: Towards the formulation of a Digital Curation Strategy for the National Archive of Monuments of Greece

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Digital curation is quickly becoming an integral part of cultural heritage management, addressing the changes that are needed in curatorial approaches of digital as opposed to analogue assets and extending beyond traditional collections management by adopting new strategies for preservation, archiving, and re-use. Involving the long-term management of digital cultural assets, with the aim of ensuring accessibility and achieving interoperability, digital curation requires the formulation of appropriate procedures, which can be translated into manageable tasks of everyday practice.

The need to preserve digital material and to ensure its accessibility in the long term is widely recognised, even prompting changes in the legislative framework of cultural heritage management (e.g. European Commission Directives, implementation of UNESCO guidelines). Numerous initiatives both on national and international scale have been introduced in recent years proposing a variety of guidelines and strategies. This variation arises from the structural differences and particular needs of the organizations charged with the creation, curation and reuse of digital materials, and favours the implementation of data management and digital preservation strategies adapted to individual principles, practices and techniques.

The creation of the National Archive of Monuments, a register of all monuments in Greece, regardless of their type or date (i.e. moveable and immovable heritage, from the Palaeolithic to the present), raises distinct challenges for the digital curation of this material. The Hellenic Ministry of Culture implements a regional cultural management scheme, which is centrally coordinated and supervised. This scheme differs in many ways from those adopted by other countries, requiring the formulation of a digital curation strategy at a national level, while the sheer variability of the cultural material necessitates the application of tailored methodologies.

This paper explores these challenges and discusses the particular issues involved in coordinating the production and curation of digital assets, ensuring their accessibility and facilitating the collaboration within both a national and an international framework. Emphasis will be placed on the organizational and procedural aspects, rather than the technical facets, highlighting the interdependency of activities and the paramount importance of establishing effective communication channels between centre and periphery, as well as among all those who produce and manage digital cultural content across the country.