Web-based documentation system – new opportunities for documenting museum objects

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A museum must be interesting and attractive. Keyword here is *involvement*

- exhibitions and programs = part of a museum’s work is to provide entertainment and knowledge.

  to try visitors own hands-on and mental skills at an exhibition or in a program.

  several engagement projects that invite people to send their material to a museum (especially digital images).

  To result to make a connection between the museum and the community, to be visible in society = to increase the number of visitors.

- designing of collections = the work of documenting collections, think about organizing future collections.

  What are possibilities to make the work of the designing collections more attractive?
In a situation, when the resources in the department of collections don’t increase

- As communicating with the audience is the number one priority of a modern museum, then the number of employees in this department will be increased.

- The salary base of a museum remains the same.

All this has led to looking for and also finding new solutions to facilitate the documentation processes in museums.
The web-based documenting system, has given new opportunities and changed the daily work processes of documenting museum objects much more efficient.

cooperation between museums:
• allows document and data exchange between museums.
• access to the information in collections and the management of collections have become more open.
• to involve additional workforce in the documentation process - to do telework

community involvement:
• to involve a audience in the documentation process - to do telework?
How?
Examples of involving the community in designing collections with the help of the web-based documentation system MuIS.

1. In MuIS, each interested person can comment and elaborate the description data of a museum object by typing this information in the “Feedback data” field. **Commenting and elaborating museum objects in MuIS**

2. To co-operate with the person who is handing objects over to a museum, and an opportunity to systematically organize work by describing museum objects **Co-operation with the transferor**

3. New technical facilities and a flexible base of MuIS (*the structured description model of MuIS and the OAI-PMH* The Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting) for the communication in community. **Technical facilities and a flexible base**
1st example of involving the community in designing collections with the help of the web-based documentation system MuIS – Commenting and elaborating museum objects in MuIS

- In MuIS, each interested person can comment and elaborate the description data of a museum object by typing this information in the “Feedback data” field.
1st example - Commenting and elaborating museum objects in MuIS

in MuIS portal, each interested person can improve and elaborate the description data of a mu’seum object by typing this information in the “Feedback data” field.

For example: After the houses were set on fire, the people were given apartments and their houses were demolished,.....
1st example - Commenting and elaborating museum objects in MuIS

The feedback is sent by email

The information is visible for the museum (look at the e-mails), and the staff adds this description according to the description requirements.

To save background information about the added information: the data of the sender; time of receiving. the direct link to the described museum object
2nd example, of involving the community in designing collections with the help of the web-based documentation system MuIS.

Co-operation with the transferor

• to co-operate with the person who is handing objects over to a museum, and an opportunity to systematically organize work by describing museum objects. In a way that they are already documented by the sender.

Rely on the option that MuIS allows to make the part of the record of a museum object public immediately, even if there is no object ID.
2nd example, Co-operation with the transferor

Examples from the handover photos

A retired photographer has handed over the photos that he made in Tartu between 1970 and 1980. There are about 300 images in total.
All the photos entered under one single name "Tartu linna olustik aastatel 1981-1989." are separated by their unique number and image.

"Everyday life of the city of Tartu in 1981-1989."
As a result of the confirmation of the acquiring document in the MuIS user environment, the number, name, image of the photos become visible to the public.
2nd example, Co-operation with the transferor
To start the co-operation, I send an email with the instructions on how to find these specific photos.

An image from the MuIS portal - so they can make a corresponding search.
After opening the MuIS Portal, the owner of the object can find the relevant photos and describe the items they are handing over to the museum by typing information in the Feedback data field.

For example, The birthday party of a hobby group teacher at the House of pioneers in Tartu who presented self-made gifts to the staff on her birthday.
After the information has been received through the Feedback data field to museum and a museum employee enters it into specific description data fields. The amount of the received emails including feedback indicates how active the work has been with the transferor.

2nd example, Co-operation with the transferor

The received emails
After a museum employee has entered it into specific description data fields of the system becomes the add data visible for public in MuIS portal. The context of the event is specified.

2nd example, Co-operation with the transferor

MuIS Portal
2nd example, Co-operation with the transferor

Being at home behind the desk it is good to describe the transferred photos.

The owner, who you can see in this photo, can describe the photos online, meaning anywhere where there is an internet connection.
3rd example - involving the community in designing collections with the help of the web-based documentation system MuIS.

**Technical facilities and a flexible base**

MuIS includes:

- the OAI-PMH (The Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting)
- and the well structured description model
3rd example, Technical facilities and a flexible base

The interactive thematic mapping "Estonians in Siberia 1940 - 1960,,

http://eestlasedsiberis.spordimuuseum.ee/
3rd example, Technical facilities and a flexible base

Here are the items which are related to a specific location on a map.

When you click on any object, you can see the information about the object.
3rd example, Technical facilities and a flexible base

The description of the object displayed in the map application.

Thanks to the OAI-PMH and to the structured description model of MuIS, it is possible to download the data entered into MuIS during the documenting process in a machine-readable form and present them here.
Here are the data fields: name, number, image, events that have been downloaded and presented in the interactive thematic mapping "Estonians in Siberia - 1940-1960"
3rd example, Technical facilities and a flexible base.

The interactive thematic mapping "Estonians in Siberia 1940 - 1960,“
Specifications and added data and information related to the objects on the Siberian project reaches the museum through the existing "Feedback data" field in MuIS portal.
Relying on the experience - to see new opportunities.

The actual work of involving the public or community in the documenting process by using the web-based documentation system has given us a good opportunity

• to use and test the existing opportunities of the system and

• relying on the experience, have a possibility to see new opportunities.
Where are we now?

MulS in 2017:

• 3 mln objects
• 1 mln objects with images
• 59 museums
• 9 years old
• Updates are not enough?

I'm not saying he's too old, but he has a five-inch floppy disk drive.
“Estonian public services must be up-to-date with emerging technical possibilities and correspond to common quality requirements.

Moreover, the so-called “no legacy principle” will be introduced, i.e. the public sector should not have any important ICT solutions that are older than 13 years.”
Business Analyses 2015 – 2017

• Carried out by the Centre for Registers and Information Systems
• Together with the museums, the ministry and the users

➢ 350-page requirements document

"Good news! He said he only needs a few more weeks to finish the first draft of the Requirements Document."
intjbizanalystwanderlust.weebly.com/ba-humor.html
New public portal – new possibilities

• Self-service portal – personified actions, such as:
  o Creating „own“ collections, galleries
  o Exchanging documents with museums and signing these online

• Direct communication between museums and users
New public portal – new possibilities

• Possibilities for the users to participate in describing collections
  o General feedback and comments
  o Structured feedback
New public portal – new possibilities

• Actively involving users in collecting objects and data
  o Creating collection projects
Some of the questions discussed

• Who and how should be “allowed” to describe the objects?
• How to preserve the different pieces and layers of data coming from different sources and make these available?
• Which would be the best ways to engage the public users in documenting?
What’s next?

- Usability analyses and testing the future processes with users – UI/UX design
- ...
- ...

➢ Better system for everyone
To conclude ... 

• A web-based museum documentation system should support museums in collecting data and making it available, but also make use of the knowledge possessed by the people outside the museums

• Involving the users in collection documentation process:
  o Enables to improve the quality of data, increase its use and reuse
  o Through these activities the museum becomes more visible and has more positive influence in the society

• The main problem is how to involve the user in a way that it would be useful for both parties, not only the museum, but also the user. How to make documentation attractive?
The boundaries of a museum do not equal its concrete walls, but reach far beyond – a museum is everywhere!
Thank you!

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