The Connected Open Heritage project: the digital preservation of the cultural heritage in danger in the Wikimedia projects.

by

Paolo Brambilla and Anna Maria Marras

OD4CH - Int. Conference, Milan, April 28, 2017

List of World Heritage in danger

List of World Heritage in Danger

The 55 properties which the World Heritage Committee has decided to include on the List of World Heritage in danger in accordance with Article 11 (4) of the *Convention*.

Unesco list of World heritage in danger

"The list may include only such property forming part of the cultural and natural heritage as is threatened by serious and specific dangers, such as the threat of disappearance caused by accelerated deterioration, large- scale public or private projects or rapid urban or tourist development projects; destruction caused by changes in the use or ownership of the land; major alterations due to unknown causes; abandonment for any reason whatsoever; the outbreak or the threat of an armed conflict; calamities and cataclysms; serious fires, earthquakes, landslides; volcanic eruptions; changes in water level, floods and tidal waves" (Article 11.4)

Cultural Heritage in danger

The Tetrapylon of Palmyra - Syria

By Marina Milella / DecArch, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

On January 2017 Islamic State militants have destroyed a **tetrapylon** and part of a **Roman theatre** in the group's latest attack on Syria's heritage. UNESCO received several reports and satellite imagery confirming the destruction of both of the sites.

UNESCO Director-General firmly condemned the action, speaking of "a **new war crime** and an immense loss for the Syrian people and for humanity."

This is just an example of how wars, disasters, negligence and poor maintenance make our built cultural heritage at risk of being lost forever.

The Connected Open Heritage project

"The greatest threat towards the cultural heritage is lack of knowledge and disinterest. The best way to protect the cultural heritage is therefore knowledge and information that is easy to find and free."

Lars Amrèus - Director-General of the National Heritage Board of Sweden.

The Connected Open Heritage project will use the experience from previous projects within the **Wikimedia movement** to gather as much information as possible about cultural heritage on Wikimedia projects and to build on the work done by volunteers all over the world.

Partners:
- **Wikimedia Sverige**
- **UNESCO**
- **Cultural Heritage without Borders**
- **Wikimedia Italy**

The project is funded by the **Culture Foundation of the Swedish Postcode Lottery** and will last until 30 September 2017.

Aims and goals

CONNECTED
OPEN HERITAGE

The aim of this project is to improve and create knowledge about the built cultural heritage of the world and make it available digitally, with **open and free licenses**. This will increase the awareness and interest to save the world's cultural heritage.

To achieve this the project has five goals:

1. Make the information on Wikimedia projects more **user friendly**.
2. Make cultural heritage data from more countries **available** on Wikimedia projects.
3. **Update** existing cultural heritage data on Wikimedia projects.
4. **Cooperate** with heritage organizations to make their media available on Wikimedia Commons.
5. **Spread** information about the resources created within the project.

The Wikimedia movement

Welcome to Wikimedia.
Wikimedia is owned and operated by the Wikimedia Foundation, a non-profit foundation dedicated to bringing free content to the world. The various Wikimedia projects are listed below:

Wikipedia

- An **online encyclopedia**
- Written, managed and controlled by **users**
- **294** languages, with more than **44 millions** of articles
- Aims to give **free and neutral informations**
- One of the **world's most visited websites**

- The italian edition has more than **1,3 millions** of articles

Wikimedia Commons

Wikimedia Commons is an **online repository of images, sound, videos** and other media files that are of educational value. The repository contains **10s of millions of files** – all under a **free license** so that anyone can reuse and work on them. This great collection is maintained by thousands of unpaid volunteers.

Files from Wikimedia Commons can be used across all Wikimedia projects in all languages, or downloaded for offsite use.

Wikimedia affiliates in close to **50 countries** work with museums, archives and many other types of organizations to bring their collections online. All the material is hosted by the Wikimedia Foundation.

Wiki Loves Monuments

It's the world's biggest photographic contest, which aims at:
- Promoting the cultural heritage on the Web
- Involving citizens to support their cultural heritage by means of sharing photographs of monuments thank to free licenses
- Protecting cultural heritage by preserving its memory digitally

The 2012-2016 Italian editions:
- **4000** photographers that have uploaded more than **70.000** pictures
- More than **18.000** Italian monuments
- **569** institutions which have made their monuments "free" by giving their authorizations to take pictures
- **51** visits in 13 Italian regions

Wikidata

WIKIDATA

- Free and open **knowledge base** that can be read and edited by both humans and machines.
- Central storage for the **structured data** of its Wikimedia sister projects
- **Multilingual** - Updated in one place for all the 294 language versions of Wikipedia
- Provides **support to many other sites** and services beyond just Wikimedia projects

The content of Wikidata is available under a free license (CC0), exported using standard formats, and can be interlinked to other open data sets on the **linked data web**.

Actions

1. Inform the experts, decision makers and the public
2. Wiki Loves Monuments on Wikidata
3. New Data on Wikidata
4. Images about cultural heritage to Wikimedia Commons
5. Wikipedia articles
6. Tools, visualization and documentation
7. Photo exhibition

1. Information

Communities

- Volunteers
- Experts
- Data providers
- GLAMs
- Hackers
- Re-users

Partners

- National Museums and Archives
- Small Museums and Archives
- Governments
- Companies
- Funding bodies
- ...

2. WLM on Wikidata

Monuments database

- Database serving the cultural heritage community and more specifically the Wiki Loves Monuments project.
- Contains **machine-readable data** on different objects of cultural heritage value from countries participating in Wiki Loves Monuments.
- Contains over **1,3 million listings** in over **50 countries,** in over **25 languages**
- Tracks over **1 million images** of cultural heritage objects on Commons.

This database lives outside of the Wikimedia infrastructure.
With the introduction of Wikidata, this is now the most natural place for this informations to live.

As part of the Connected Open Heritage project Wikimedia Sweden is investigating how this information can be **migrated to Wikidata**.
This involves both setting up a workflow for migrating individual datasets as well as trying to identify any issues which might hinder a dataset, or parts of it, from being migrated.

3. New data on Wikidata

Aim

Encourage data providers to share their data and datasets on cultural heritage in order to transfer them to Wikidata.

Provided by:

- National institutions (Sweden, Georgia…)
- GLAMs
- Any other data provider

Internal activities

- Support the national institutions responsible for gathering data about the country's cultural heritage
- Host the data online without any cost for the institution
- Give technical support to bring collections online in an efficient and valuable way
- Give support to find the best way to release data via free licences
- Encourage institutions to join and take advantage of this network

4. Images on Commons

Aims

- Encourage cultural institutions to upload images and metadata on Wikimedia Commons, under free licences.
- Connect image collections from different GLAM institutions and from the general public through the Wikimedia projects
- Make the media files easier to find for anyone that is interested

Example: **UNESCO** has recently released ca. 1500 images of World Heritage Sites

Wikimedia Italy activities

Batch upload (thanks the support of Wikimedia Sweden) of:

- More than **1000 images** of Syria, Jordan and Middle East countries released by **GAR** (Gruppo Archeologico Romano) and **Associazione DecArch**.
- **Metadata** related to these images - only in Italian at the moment, but we are working on the English version.
- Other images from the same institutions will be uploaded as soon as possible

5. Wikipedia articles

Integrate all these data into Wikipedia articles by:

- Adding images of cultural heritage provided by partners
- Integrating data in Wikidata into Wikipedia articles in many languages

Example of activity: UNESCO challenge

- A **public writing competition** around the UNESCO World Heritage sites
- **Goal**: to create articles and add images to improve Wikipedia's coverage of the sites into as many languages as possible, especially about the ones that are in danger.
- Organized by **UNESCO**, **Wikimedia Sweden** and the **Swedish National Heritage Board**
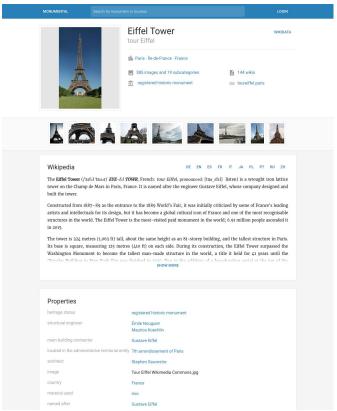
6. Tools etc.

Monumental

- A **web application** which displays information about cultural heritage monuments based on data gathered on Wikidata, Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons.
- Display:
  - Page for monument
  - Monuments in territorial entity
  - Map of all monuments located on visible part of map

Picture by Yarl (UI) / Benh (main Tour Eiffel photo) - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0

7. Photo exhibition

Partners:

- Wikimedia Italy
- Wikimedia Sverige
- Unite4heritage (a UNESCO project)

Hosted in:

- UNESCO Headquarters (Paris, Geneva and maybe New York)
- At least 3 locations in Italy
- Sweden

The exhibition will showcase a number of stories about built cultural heritage that has been lost, damaged or is threatened – but where there is **freely licensed** image available on Wikimedia Commons. These images have been shared by a museum, an archive or from someone in the general public.

In addition, part of the exhibition will be dedicated to **intangible cultural heritage** and **illicit trafficking**. UNESCO will support the exhibition by giving the layout

Thank you for your attention

For any other information please see:
https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Connected_Open_Heritage

paolo.brambilla@wikimedia.it
GLAM Project Manager
anna.maria.marras@wikimedia.it
Archives and Museums National Coordinator

Released under the following licence