

The Impact of Open Access on Galleries, Libraries, Museums, & Archives

Effie Kapsalis
Smithsonian Emerging Leaders Development Program

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Executive Summary

For the purpose of this document, “open access” is defined as making public domain materials open for use without any restrictions, and making copyrighted materials available under the provisions of fair use (non-commercial, educational).

More than 50 institutions have, to varying degrees, pursued open access over the last decade, removing technical and copyright barriers to their digitized collections and resources. A strengthened institutional brand, increased use and dissemination of collections, and increased funding opportunities have been some of the benefits associated with open-access initiatives.

A recent Andrew W. Mellon Foundation study, “Images of Works of Art in Museum Collections: The Experience of Open Access, a Study of 11 Museums,” found that among the museums studied, none that enforced copyright restrictions made any significant surplus or profit against their expenditures. It concluded, “real and perceived gains far outweigh the real and perceived losses for every museum in the study that has made a transition to an open access approach.”¹

Recently, several funders, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation, and William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, have made open access either a requirement for gift recipients or a factor in assessing potential gifts.

Furthermore, President Barack Obama’s Open Government Initiative, launched in 2009, has built an increasing expectation from the public that all government entities will move towards practices that are more open, which places federal entities at risk for public perception of not pursuing best practices.

Finally, as crowdsourcing initiatives gain traction in the cultural heritage space, it is the organizations that prioritize openness and sharing that are reaping the most benefits.

Introduction

Over the past 20 or more years, digital technologies have dramatically changed the way we consume information, impacting revenue-generating activities for businesses from music to publishing to education. Content is abundant and competition for attention is at an all-time high. This phenomenon has impacted cultural heritage, science and art

¹Kelly, Kristin, “Images of Works of Art in Museum Collections: The Experience of Open Access, a Study of 11 Museums,” p. 24. Prepared for The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Council on Library and Information Resources, June 2013. <http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub157/pub157.pdf>, accessed 7/8/2015.

institutions, as the public now expects our collections to be easily accessible without restrictions.

Early adopters in the gallery, library, archive and museum (GLAM) sector have tested the waters in opening digital representations of collections to unrestricted use, despite fears over loss of revenue, intellectual control and in-person visitation. While it was immediately clear that concerns about loss of intellectual control and in-person visitation were not well supported,² only now do we have information on the financial impact of open access (as defined below).

More than 50 institutions³ have pursued open access through some type of public domain or Creative Commons designation, removing, to varying degrees, technical and copyright barriers to their digitized collections (**Several of these efforts are summarized in Appendix A**). In some instances, organizations have gone further and made use of the Creative Commons “Free Cultural Works” designation, CC0⁴, which is an internationally-recognized license that allows users to copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, all without asking permission. Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that develops, supports, and stewards legal and technical infrastructure in order to maximize digital creativity, sharing, and innovation.

With over a decade of GLAM open access, several trends and insights have emerged for these organizations:

- While open access may cause a loss in rights and reproduction revenue in limited cases, it can also lead to significant new opportunities in fundraising and brand licensing.
- Open access results in cost savings associated with rights and reproduction management overhead.
- Open access allows organizations to realign staff with more mission-critical activities, resulting in more efficient and less costly image management and digitization functions.
- By furthering research, educational and creative activities, open access also advances the missions of these institutions.
- Open access significantly increases use and awareness of an institution’s collections.
- Open access creates a strengthened and more relevant brand.

² Kelly 2013, p. 23–24

³ <https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/GLAM>

⁴ <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0>

Defining “Open Access”

Open access means different things to different organizations. The Open Knowledge Foundation (OKF) defines Open Knowledge as, “what open data becomes when it’s useful, usable and used.”⁵ The key features of Open Knowledge, as defined by OKF, are:

- Availability and access
- Reuse and redistribution
- Universal participation

As part of its Open Definition project, OKF further elaborates, “Open means anyone can freely access, use, modify, and share for any purpose (subject, at most, to requirements that preserve provenance and openness).”⁶

For the purposes of this paper and its appendices, we will use the following definitions:

1. For public domain and other materials for which an institution has consciously relinquished its copyright (often expressed through a CC0 license), open access generally means full access and use without restriction.
2. For copyrighted materials, open access means access and use only when consistent with fair use, which is non-commercial, educational and/or transformative use.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that there is no universal consensus about the definition of open access, and among practitioners, much confusion persists about what constitutes open access. For example, the announcement of the online availability of the entire Freer Sackler collection under the brand “Open F|S” has created the mistaken impression that the Freer Sackler is providing open access as defined above. In reality, the Freer Sackler team avoided any mention of “open access,” while still trying to communicate that the completeness of information, as well as availability of high-resolution images, marked a new milestone in terms of the “openness” of its collection. Other museums, most notably the Metropolitan Museum of Art, have been roundly criticized by open access advocates for their use of the term “open access” when the actual terms of the data release fall significantly short of community expectations⁷.

⁵ <https://okfn.org/opendata/>

⁶ <http://opendefinition.org/>

⁷ “Metropolitan Museum of Art 400,000 Images, With Restriction,” by Jillian Steinhauer, Hyperallergic, May 19, 2014, <http://hyperallergic.com/127278/metropolitan-museum-of-art-releases-400000-images-with-restriction>, accessed 09/04/2015.

The Business of Rights and Reproduction

In 2004, a Mellon Foundation study, “Reproduction charging models & rights policy for digital images in American art museums,”⁸ examined “the cost and policy models adopted by art museums in the USA in arriving at pricing structures for delivering surrogates of unique or rare artworks and artifacts as digital objects.”⁹ Through a survey and interviews with over 120 U.S. art museums, the authors of the study found that:

None of the museums interviewed claimed to make any significant surplus or profits against their expenditure ... Everyone interviewed wants to recoup costs but almost none claimed to actually achieve or expected to achieve this. Internal transactions often account for 50-75% of service activity and are usually uncharged ... Even those services that claimed to recoup full costs generally did not account fully for salary costs or overhead expenses. Many had gained their equipment through special funding and thus equipment was again not a direct cost item in relation to the price tag offered.¹⁰

Open Access in U.S. Government

On his first day of office in 2009, President Barack Obama launched the Open Government Initiative¹¹ with three mandates:

- *Government should be transparent.*
- *Government should be participatory.*
- *Government should be collaborative.¹²*

The National Archives released its first Open Government Plan in 2010 with the goal of supporting greater access to their holdings online.¹³ The Library of Congress similarly does not reserve any rights to its collections¹⁴ and places the onus on members of the public to clear rights on their own.¹⁵ In April 2014, the National Gallery of Art announced

⁸ Tanner, Simon, “Reproduction charging models & rights policy for digital images in American art museums.” An Andrew W. Mellon Foundation study. King’s Digital Consultancy Services, August 2004. http://www.kdcs.kcl.ac.uk/fileadmin/documents/pubs/USMuseum_SimonTanner.pdf, accessed 7/8/2015.

⁹ Ibid, p. 5

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 33

¹¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/open>

¹² https://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/TransparencyandOpenGovernment/

¹³ <http://www.archives.gov/open/open-plan.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.loc.gov/legal#copyright>

¹⁵ <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/about/#rights>

the release of 35,000 images on its website into the public domain, for all uses including commercial.¹⁶

Open access in scientific research has become a priority with the White House in the last two years. In 2013, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) issued a memorandum mandating that Federal agencies with more than \$100 million in R&D expenditures needed to develop plans to make the published results of federally funded research freely available to the public within one year of publication.¹⁷ Later in 2013,¹⁸ the White House mandated that government information be both “open” and “machine-readable.” In March 2014, the administration issued a memorandum on scientific collections with the following directive:

*d) When available and where not limited by law, make freely and easily accessible to the public all digital files in the highest available fidelity and resolution, including, but not limited to, photographs, videos, and digital 3D models, and associated records and documentation, describing or characterizing objects in government-managed scientific collections.*¹⁹

In the education sector, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the U.S. Department of Education (ED) are working on identifying opportunities for implementing open access policies to inform the Administration’s open government initiatives, including the Open Government National Action Plan,²⁰ which will impact the terms associated with grants awarded by the Department of Education.

This has built an increasing expectation from the public that all government entities will comply with these mandates, which places federal and governmental agencies at risk for public perception of non-compliance.

GLAM Funders and Open Access

Recently, several foundations have made open access either a requirement for grant recipients or a factor in assessing potential grantees. Three large funders have made open access a requirement for content/publications created with grant dollars: the Bill

¹⁶ <http://openglam.org/2014/04/15/us-national-gallery-of-art-releases-35k-public-domain-images/>

¹⁷ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/02/22/expanding-public-access-results-federally-funded-research>

¹⁸ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/09/executive-order-making-open-and-machine-readable-new-default-government->

¹⁹ http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp_memo_scientific_collections_march_2014.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/open/partnership/national-action-plans>

& Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

In January 1, 2015, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation adopted an open access policy. The terms for future grants are as follows:

1. **Publications Are Discoverable and Accessible Online.** *Publications will be deposited in a specified repository(s) with proper tagging of metadata.*
2. **Publication Will Be On “Open Access” Terms.** *All publications shall be published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Generic License (CC BY 4.0) or an equivalent license. This will permit all users of the publication to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format and transform and build upon the material, including for any purpose (including commercial) without further permission or fees being required.*
3. **Foundation Will Pay Necessary Fees.** *The foundation would pay reasonable fees required by a publisher to effect publication on these terms.*
4. **Publications Will Be Accessible and Open Immediately.** *All publications shall be available immediately upon their publication, without any embargo period. An embargo period is the period during which the publisher will require a subscription or the payment of a fee to gain access to the publication. We are, however, providing a transition period of up to two years from the effective date of the policy (or until January 1, 2017). During the transition period, the foundation will allow publications in journals that provide up to a 12-month embargo period.*
5. **Data Underlying Published Research Results Will Be Accessible and Open Immediately.** *The foundation will require that data underlying the published research results be immediately accessible and open. This too is subject to the transition period and a 12-month embargo may be applied.”²¹*

In February 2015, the Ford Foundation adopted a similar policy, stating:

... grantees and consultants will be required to make foundation-funded materials subject to a Creative Commons license allowing others, free of charge and without requesting permission, the ability to copy, redistribute, and adapt existing materials, provided they give appropriate credit to the original author. ... Project grants from the foundation will include a requirement that the grantee widely disseminate all copyrightable products funded by a foundation grant — including white papers, research reports, and websites — and license them under the CC BY 4.0 license.²²

²¹ <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/General-Information/Open-Access-Policy>

²² <http://www.fordfoundation.org/newsroom/news-from-ford/934>

The CC BY 4.0 license²³ also allows commercial uses.

In September 2014, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation announced that:

*...beginning this year we will ask grantees to license materials created with our grant dollars. More specifically, the Hewlett Foundation now requires that grantees receiving project-based grants—those made for a specific purpose—openly license the final materials created with those grants (reports, videos, white papers, and the like) under the most recent Creative Commons Attribution license. We also will require that the materials be made easily accessible to the public, such as by posting them to the grantee’s website.*²⁴

The most recent Creative Commons Attribution license is CC BY 4.0, which again allows use for any purpose including commercial. Creative Commons licenses have become the global standard for sharing²⁵ across cultural, educational, governmental, and scientific institutions, and offer the public an easily understood summary of the license as a supplement to the actual legal terms.

The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR, see below) and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation²⁶ also consider open access as a criterion in awarding grants. In the last 10 years, CLIR has awarded the Smithsonian over \$800,000, and Sloan nearly \$13 million. The Sloan Foundation, which in 2011 funded a study on Science at Creative Commons,²⁷ funds basic scientific research.

CLIR’s Digitizing Hidden Collections program, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, is expected to award \$4 million in 2015 to support the digitization of “collections of rare and unique content in cultural memory institutions.”²⁸ Applications will be judged in accordance with the program’s five core values:

- **Scholarship:** *The program is designed to maximize its impact on the creation and dissemination of new knowledge.*
- **Comprehensiveness:** *The program supports the digitization of entire (or at least quantifiably substantial proportions of) collections of significant scholarly value, and encourage [sic] making these easily discoverable in context, alongside related materials online.*

²³ <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

²⁴ <http://www.hewlett.org/blog/posts/helping-good-ideas-go-further>

²⁵ <https://creativecommons.org/who-uses-cc>

²⁶ Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. “Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Grant Application Guidelines,” May 22, 2014, p. 6.

http://www.sloan.org/fileadmin/media/files/application_documents/proposal_guidelines_non_rese_arch_trustee.pdf, accessed 9/1/2015.

²⁷ <https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/Science>

²⁸ <http://www.clir.org/hiddencollections>

- **Collaboration:** *The program promotes strategic partnerships rather than duplication of capacity and effort.*
- **Sustainability:** *The program promotes best practices for ensuring the long-term availability and discoverability of digital files created through digitization.*
- **Openness:** *The program ensures that digitized content will be made available to the public as easily and completely as possible.*²⁹

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation that funds the CLIR Digitizing Hidden Collections program has funded the two main reports on open collections in art museums written in the past decade.

While corporations have been slower to adopt open access, some of the most innovative, forward-looking corporations have adapted the concept of “open,” especially in technology and biotech. Tesla has made all its patents open source, and Amgen, Merck, Sanofi and others are banding together in open source R&D. Autodesk, a leading company for design, engineering, and entertainment software is giving away all its software for free to educational institutions. The company has started to require a similar approach from the causes it supports: Brian Mathews, Vice President, Group CTO at Autodesk, stated “we were working closely with a 501c3 non-profit, donating well over six figures. Ultimately, as a direct consequence of lack of sufficient open access and related issues, we decided to redirect our monetary support elsewhere and reduce our involvement to basic consulting.”

Finally, while the J. Paul Getty Trust does not require open access in its grant making, the Getty Museum has taken steps to make its collections available for open access³⁰.

In all, GLAM institutions reliant on these foundations that now either require or prioritize open access when selecting grantees could lose out on this important institutional support. In the future, grant proposals to these same organizations might be rejected as a result of an organization’s restrictive terms of use.

Open Access and Brand Licensing

Some institutions, especially those which coupled strong marketing campaigns with their open access programs, have seen a major increase in brand licensing opportunities. In the case of the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands, their open collections initiative increased awareness of the Rijks brand so much that their name became synonymous with famous artists such as Vermeer and Rembrandt (see **Appendix A.**) This increased

²⁹ <http://www.clir.org/hiddencollections/applicants>

³⁰ “The Getty Open Content Program,” <http://www.getty.edu/about/opencontent.html>, accessed 7/8/2015.

brand reputation led to major Dutch and multinational brands seeking brand partnerships. The Rijk's partnership with Heineken has led to packaging design awards and their national grocery chain, Albert Heijn, has developed product lines inspired by master artworks³¹.

The New York Public Library made their open access announcement in January 2016. Within the first two weeks of their announcement, they were approached by a major retailer for brand licensing (see **Appendix A.**)

Replacing small revenues lost from a decrease in rights & reproduction activities was not a goal of many of the institutions interviewed for this report. However, if organizations desired to replace rights & reproduction income, brand licensing is certainly an avenue worth investigating.

Realities and Risks

There are risks associated with staying with restrictive terms of use, as well as with adopting an open access model. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on the risks that organizations reported in interviews conducted for **Appendix A**, as well as on risks reported in a 2013 report funded by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) and prepared by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation: "Images of Works of Art in Museum Collections: The Experience of Open Access, a Study of 11 Museums."³²

The risks and downsides of adopting an open access model are:

- Additional traffic to organizational websites from public demand resulting in increased demand on technical infrastructure.
- Increased workload for staff members in fulfilling requests, if self-service download is not implemented.
- Loss of revenue from rights and reproduction activities for public domain materials (but not from licensing the organization's brand).³³
- Some loss of intellectual control; however, this is likely much less than feared.³⁴

³¹ "Special Sinterklaas Rijksmuseum assortment in stores," <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/nu-in-het-museum/nieuws/albert-heijn-partner-rijksmuseum>, accessed 2/16/16

³² Kelly 2013, p. 23-29.

³³ While not the main impetus for adopting an open access policy, some institutions such as the New York Public Library and the Rijksmuseum, have seen increased activity around brand licensing.

³⁴ See Kelly 2013, p. 27: "Loss of control fades as a concern ... the worst fears of museum staff have not been realized. No one cited inappropriate uses of images thus far." As the National Gallery of Art reported (Kelly 2013, p.23), "The NGA had already lost control of many images of its most famous works of art, and it was better to make a high-quality, high resolution image available."

As is summarized in the Mellon/CLIR report, “Real and perceived gains far outweigh the real and perceived losses for every museum in the study that has made a transition to an open access approach.”³⁵

The risks/downsides associated with staying with more restrictive Terms of Use are:

- Decreased funding opportunities as more foundations require open access (see “Foundations and Open Access,” above).
- Decreased brand licensing revenue opportunities.
- Reduced opportunities for collaboration with other cultural heritage, art and scientific organizations, as well as with the federal government.
- As Wikipedia requires public domain media, organizations with restrictive terms of use can’t contribute to this popular online encyclopedia that is in the top 10 for most popular websites worldwide, and contributes to significant increases in exposure of GLAM content (see Figure A in **Appendix A**). Additionally, Wikipedia volunteers are less likely to write articles about material that is restricted.
- Reduced awareness and use of collections as more open institutions claim public attention.
- Reduced reputation as “world class” and relevant.
- Potential reduction in activity from online volunteers due to perception that their work is not supporting an open effort.
- Large amounts of staff time spent on non-mission-critical tasks such as responding to image requests.³⁶

Elevated brand recognition/reputation and increased use and dissemination of collections were the top two benefits associated with open access initiatives, as detailed in **Appendix A**. According to Smithsonian public affairs specialist, Sarah Sulick:

Opening up our collection lives up to the promise of our brand ‘for the increase and diffusion of knowledge.’ It not only is a public good, it’s also a wonderful public relations strategy; we give people the ability to use our content in ways we can’t even imagine and they become ambassadors for the vast cultural and scientific resources that the Smithsonian holds.

In terms of collections use and dissemination, once an institution makes its collections open, digital volunteers do the work to disseminate them even further. When the Wikipedia community migrated images from the Smithsonian’s Flickr Commons account to Wikimedia, the collections saw a huge increase in search engine placement. For the Smithsonian Institution Archives alone, the images on Wikimedia Commons have

³⁵ Kelly 2013, p. 24

³⁶ In a blog post entitled “Reusing Te Papa’s collections images, by the numbers,” Adrian Kingston, digital collections analyst at the Te Papa Museum of New Zealand, writes that since releasing the museum’s collections online without restrictions (in June 2014), staff members have been spared from approving 14,000 image requests — and writing at least 28,000 emails.
<http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2015/04/10/reusing-te-papas-collections-images-by-the-numbers/>

received 1 million times as many views as those on the Archives' own website. Additionally, Wikipedia volunteers in an edit-a-thon used the images to write articles about prominent female scientists,³⁷ resulting in more than 60 new articles — including one on our own former Under Secretary for Science, Eva J. Pell.³⁸

An increasing number of national and worldwide GLAM projects, such as the Digital Public Library of America³⁹ and Europeana⁴⁰, are embracing open access. While the more restrictive organizations are able to contribute data about its collections to these portals, organizations that are able to share digital media associated with their data do better in these spaces and have more opportunities for partnering (**see Appendix A.**)

Finally, as crowdsourcing initiatives gain traction in the cultural heritage space, it is the organizations that are most open (releasing collections as public domain or CC0 when possible) that are reaping the benefits. According to the Smithsonian Transcription Center's top volunteer, Siobhan Leachman:

The “don't want to feel taken advantage of” sentiment comes from my belief that if I'm donating my time as a volunteer, generating content and data, I regard that data/content as not just for the institution I'm working for but for everyone. If the content I've generated out of a “for the greater good” motivation is licensed under a restrictive license, I would feel taken advantage of. And I would quickly stop generating content for that institution. There are plenty of crowdsourcing/citizen science projects out there desperate for volunteers, and that “market” is only going to get more and more competitive. I regard my “pay” for being a volunteer as the open access to the content I generate.

Conclusion

The case studies examined in **Appendix A** find that fears about loss of intellectual control of collections, or reductions in the number of in-person visits, due to open access policies are largely unfounded. With an open access policy, revenue from rights and reproduction activities are reduced, but retaining more restrictive terms of use may cost organizations in funding opportunities, staff time, and reputation. As GLAM organizations consider their future sustainability as their “typical” audience ages out, they must examine the impact that more restrictive terms of use will have on their relevance as an organization. With information from a decade of open access programs

³⁷ Smithsonian Institution Archives “Women in Science” Wikipedia To-Do List:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Meetup/DC_30/To-do_list

³⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eva_J._Pell

³⁹ <http://dp.la/>

⁴⁰ <http://www.europeana.eu/portal/>

in the GLAM world, organizations now are in the advantageous position to assess their terms of use based on evidence and the sector's collective experience.

Appendix A: Open Access Case Studies

The following national and international case studies look at the results of galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM) pursuing an open access model. While they mostly pursued open access for mission-related reasons, several have noted increased opportunities for fundraising because of their open stance. Additionally, all report significant increased awareness and use of collections coupled with improved public image.

U.S. Organizations

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum

Interviewee

Sebastian Chan, former director of digital and emerging media, Cooper Hewitt

Overview

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, received in-kind work from 3D Systems to develop a 3D model and 3D data of the Carnegie mansion. Cooper Hewitt has also released its collections data⁴¹ with the Creative Commons “CC0” open license,⁴² which means that the Cooper Hewitt reserves no rights to these data—so essentially, they are in the public domain. Seb Chan, founder of Cooper Hewitt Labs, explains this decision:

Philosophically, too, the public release of collection metadata asserts, clearly, that such metadata is the raw material on which interpretation through exhibitions, catalogues, public programs, and experiences are built. On its own, unrefined, it is of minimal ‘value’ except as a tool for discovery. It also helps remind us that collection metadata is not the collection itself.⁴³

Finally, Cooper Hewitt released the font it uses for its identity and brand under an ‘Open Font License’ which permits unrestricted commercial and non-commercial use, as well as modification.⁴⁴

Scope

3D scan of the Carnegie Mansion, collections metadata, and Cooper Hewitt font.

Funding

⁴¹ Collections data provide descriptive information about the object, such as its title, author, medium, etc. The Smithsonian considers its metadata to be in the public domain, and it is freely shared through the Digital Public Library of America.

⁴² <http://creativecommons.org/about/cc0>

⁴³ Chan, Sebastian, “Releasing the collection on GitHub,” Cooper Hewitt Labs blog, February 2012, <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2012/releasing-collection-github/>

⁴⁴ <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/open-source-at-cooper-hewitt/>

In-kind work from 3D Systems.

Results

- Cooper Hewitt is seen as a leader in digital humanities.⁴⁵⁴⁶
- Public awareness of Cooper Hewitt's efforts has enhanced its new brand identity as a design resource to be used and "not just looked at."
- According to Chan, the use of open data and resources has helped shift the focus of curatorial and registration staff toward "the visitor point of view rather than the perfection of collections metadata. This has had innumerable implications but has been key to their organizational shift towards the visitor."

Dallas Museum of Art

Interviewee

Rob Stein, former deputy director, Dallas Museum of Art

Scope and Copyright Designation

In 2013, the Dallas Museum of Art received a \$9 million anonymous gift to support free admission and free online access to its entire collection of 22,000 collections objects.⁴⁷ Of that total, \$5 million was for digitization of the museum's permanent collection along with the creation of educational content to support "free online experiences with art." Public domain collection objects are listed as such, and whenever copyright allows, high-resolution images are available for download. The gift also includes resources to measure the educational impact of the project, information which is forthcoming.

Motivation for Adopting Open Collections

"As an institution it was important for us to publish our entire collection online," says Stein. "The reasoning went beyond transparency and openness: we felt that we needed to more positively and strongly broadcast the fact that the Dallas Museum of Art has a deep and encyclopedic collection."⁴⁸

Results

The donation has allowed the DMA to reconsider and increase the efficiency of its processes for collections digitization, data management, and publication. The museum

⁴⁵ According to the CUNY Digital Humanities Resource Guide (http://commons.gc.cuny.edu/wiki/index.php/The_CUNY_Digital_Humanities_Resource_Guide), "digital humanities" pertains to research and teaching at the intersection of computing and the humanities disciplines.

⁴⁶ Ridge, Mia, Editors' Choice: Exploring the Cooper-Hewitt Collection Round-Up, Digital Humanities Now blog, June 21, 2012, <http://digitalhumanitiesnow.org/2012/06/editors-choice-exploring-the-cooper-hewitt-collection-round-up/>.

⁴⁷ <https://www.dma.org/press-release/dallas-museum-art-announces-9-million-gift-support-free-general-admission-and-free>

⁴⁸ <http://mw2015.museumsandtheweb.com/paper/new-architectures-for-online-collections-and-digitization/>

built tools that, according to Stein, “[provide] staff with a unified resource to consult the level of completion for image and object information; analytics to track status of image production and ingest; and a simple toolkit to make adjustments to the presentation of this information online.” Hence, staff are able to easily view the status of an image in relation to its data, digitization, and publication.

Getty Open Content Program

Interviewee

Stanley Smith, head of collection information and access, J. Paul Getty Museum

Scope and Copyright Designation

There are 112,239 objects available on the Getty Museum’s collection webpages. Of these, approximately 18,000 are designated as “Open Content”⁴⁹ and high-resolution copies can be directly downloaded. Additionally, the Getty Research Institute has approximately 83,000 Open Content images available on its website.

Motivation for Adopting Open Collections

The Getty realized that the revenue the museum was collecting (about \$45K in FY2013) to license use of its images was outpaced by the expense of doing so (see related Mellon Foundation sponsored report, *Changing Models and Rights Strategy for Images in Museums and Beyond*).⁵⁰ But mostly the decision was related to the organization’s mission: “The Getty was founded to promote 'the diffusion of artistic and general knowledge' of the visual arts, and this new program arises directly from that mission," says James Cuno, President and CEO of the J. Paul Getty Trust. "In a world where, increasingly, the trend is toward freer access to more and more information and resources, it only makes sense to reduce barriers to the public to fully experience our collections."⁵¹

Results

The response has been “overwhelmingly positive,” according to Smith. There were initial concerns that open access would cause a huge increase in workloads, but since the delivery of images is largely automatic via the Getty’s website, this worry was unfounded.

The change in policy has freed up a number of staff members to concentrate on more mission-critical projects. Additionally, several institutions have followed the Getty’s lead, so it is perceived as a leader.

⁴⁹ Getty definition of Open Content: “The Getty makes available, without charge, all available digital images to which the Getty holds the rights or that are in the public domain to be used for any purpose. No permission is required.” <http://www.getty.edu/about/opencontent.html>.

⁵⁰ <http://www.kdcs.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/us-art.html>

⁵¹ The Getty Newsdesk, Getty Announces New Program Lifting Restrictions on Use of Digital Images, <http://news.getty.edu/press-materials/press-releases/getty-open-content-images.print>.

Finally, the change in policy has resulted in a large increase in downloads of collections from the Getty's website (over 325,000 downloads since launch), so they believe they are increasing the public's engagement with art.

National Gallery of Art

Interviewee

Alan Newman, chief of digital imaging and visual resources, National Gallery of Art

Scope and Copyright Designation

The National Gallery of Art (NGA) has released 45,000 public domain images with the following terms:

NGA Images is a repository of digital images of the collections of the National Gallery of Art. On this website you can search, browse, share, and download images. A standards-based reproduction guide and a help section provide advice for both novices and experts. More than 45,000 open access digital images up to 4000 pixels each are available free of charge for download and use. NGA Images is designed to facilitate learning, enrichment, enjoyment, and exploration.

Motivation for Adopting Open Collections

According to Alan Newman, chief of imaging and visual resources, it was mainly a mission-driven decision. Personally, he was inspired by Kenneth Hamma's paper from 2005, *Public Domain Art in an Age of Easier Mechanical Reproducibility*.⁵²

As an institution, NGA was frustrated that most of the great works in its collection were reproduced poorly on thousands of websites. They wanted to change this by releasing high-quality images to, over time, replace the poor reproductions.

At the time of this decision, NGA was re-evaluating the roles of staff members involved in fulfillment. They preferred to have the staff focus on helping the public find the right images for projects and to increase the amount of digitized collections available.

Potential revenue loss was not considered "at all" in policymaking according to Newman, although revenues had been decreasing for several years prior to this decision. Nearly all senior NGA staff members felt open access was the correct public policy for the gallery. Staff as well as public support for the open access initiative was nearly universal.

Finally, NGA received funding for rapid digitization of its collections from two foundations: the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and the Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz Foundation for the Arts. One of the foundations required that the collections be

⁵² <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/november05/hamma/11hamma.html>

published openly, while the other foundation funded the initiative as a result of NGA's open access policy.

Results

- Staff throughout the National Gallery, as well as the public, have benefited from a self-serve image repository. Scholars, staff included, are more easily able to access images for publications and research.
- The gallery was able to shift the emphasis of the remaining staff members to helping clients and digitizing collections rather than processing paperwork.
- "Universal goodwill." According to Newman, there was a "profound effect" on both the NGA staff and public with the publication of a self-service image website. There is little wait and little paperwork.
- The gallery has received two million downloads in three years, increasing the public's awareness and use of its collections.
- The gallery did not fill a recently vacated rights and reproduction staff position, but this has not negatively impacted the gallery's work.

New York Public Library

Interviewee

Shana Kimball, Manager of Public Programs and Outreach, New York Public Library Labs

Scope and Copyright Designation

In early 2016, the New York Public Library released 187,000 high-resolution images on their Digital Collections platform⁵³ as public domain removing any restrictions on re-use or necessity for permissions.

Motivation for Adopting Open Collections

The main impetus for their open access release was to better fulfill their mission, "...to inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen our communities." Building on the success of a 2014 release of 20K high-resolution cartographic works in the public domain, there had been growing desire to enhance access to all public domain works in NYPL's Digital Collections. A 2014 staff reorganization brought digitization, metadata, and rights & reproduction staff under the NYPL Labs team, which set the stage for a cohesive and unified project, with experimentation, openness, and engagement at its center.

Their open collections release was done in that spirit with a suite of announcements; enhanced API, enhancements to the collections interface for easy download and print orders, CCO metadata release on GitHub, new visualizations and demonstration projects

⁵³ <http://www.nypl.org/blog/2016/01/05/share-public-domain-collections>

built by Labs staff using their API (e.g. Fifth Ave Then and Now, Mansion Maniac, Navigating the Green Books, etc.), and a call for candidates for their remix residency⁵⁴.

Results

- They significantly grew their audience for their digital collections; doubling their previous baseline of traffic, receiving nearly 300 applications for their residency program, and dramatically increasing use of their collections API.
- They have not lost “significant” income from rights & reproductions activities and they continue to fulfill requests for collections items not in the public domain.
- Increased public participation - hundreds of user-generated remixes contributed on social media platforms.
- Since January 2016, they have received over 100 press mentions, covering all aspects of the release; the collections themselves, the remix residency, the R&D demonstration projects, and the broader story of digitization at NYPL.

Smithsonian: Flickr Commons Project

Interviewee

Effie Kapsalis, head of web, new media and outreach, Smithsonian Institution Archives

Overview

A special cultural heritage photography portal called Flickr Commons,⁵⁵ launched in 2008, has the goal of exposing “the hidden treasures from the world’s public photography archives.”

The Library of Congress was the first member, with the Smithsonian joining in June 2008. All images in the Commons must have the copyright terms, “no known copyright restrictions,” which is a designation the Library of Congress created since a large part of its collections are unpublished and the author hasn’t been dead for 75 years. This puts the onus on the public to clear rights for the images.

Scope

To date, the Smithsonian has contributed more than 3,500 images from more than 12 divisions, including the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Smithsonian Libraries, and Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory.

Funding

The Smithsonian receives no funding for participating in the Flickr Commons.

Results

⁵⁴ <http://www.nypl.org/help/about-nypl/fellowships-institutes/remix>

⁵⁵ <https://www.flickr.com/commons>

- Increased exposure: To date, the 3,200+ images (a small fraction of the Smithsonian’s entire collection) have received over 26 million views, which is an average of 30,000 views per month (see Figure A below). This is a significant increase in collections recognition and use. One unit participating in the Commons said, “After three months on Flickr, our collections received nearly as many visits as during the previous five years on our website.”
- Donation: The Smithsonian Institution Archives (SIA) received a donation of 10 rare photographic negatives from the Scopes Trial⁵⁶ as a result of sharing the Archives’ own Scopes Trial photos to the Commons. The donor’s stated reason for giving the Archives the photos was, “I appreciate the way the photos the Smithsonian has are available online for all to see.” The donor would not as easily have found these photos if they weren’t available on the Commons.
- New volunteers: Visitors to the Commons have spent many hours tagging photos as well as participating in SIA’s annual call for help identifying unknown female scientists in its collection for Women’s History Month.⁵⁷
- Press: The Smithsonian has received at least 760 press mentions since 2008 as a result of its participation in the Flickr Commons. News outlets include *Scientific American*, BuzzFeed, NPR’s Radiolab, CNET, CBS News, and the *New York Times*.
- Goodwill: The public gives the Smithsonian an enormous amount of credit for sharing this relatively small pool of images.

Smithsonian: Wikipedia

Interviewees

Karen Weiss, head of digital operations, Archives of American Art

Sara Snyder, former webmaster, Archives of American Art; current chief of digital at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Overview

In 2011, the Archives of American Art (AAA) hosted the first “Wikipedian-in-Residence”⁵⁸ at the Smithsonian. To date, more than sixteen Wikipedia edit-a-thons⁵⁹ have been held, inviting Wikipedia volunteers into the Smithsonian to create articles about the Smithsonian’s collections, people, and resources.

To make stronger Wikipedia articles, volunteers request images to illustrate articles. In order to contribute media to Wikimedia Commons, the media had to either be in the

⁵⁶ <http://siarchives.si.edu/blog/new-donation-scopes-trial-photos-smithsonian-archives>

⁵⁷ One example: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/smithsonian/3398615048/in/album-72157614810586267/>

⁵⁸ A volunteer who helps cultural heritage institutions navigate the Wikipedia culture and increase representation of content related to the institution on Wikipedia and Wikimedia.

⁵⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:GLAM/Smithsonian_Institution/Events

public domain or assigned a Creative Commons license that allows for commercial uses.⁶⁰

Scope

AAA contributed approximately 320 public domain Works Progress Administration (WPA) photographs.⁶¹ Many of the 3,500 Smithsonian images on Flickr Commons have been migrated to Wikimedia with the “no known copyright restriction” status.

Funding

Funding for food and drinks served during some of the edit-a-thons was provided by Wikimedia DC.

Results

- Goodwill: The Smithsonian gained trust with the Wikimedia volunteer community that persists to this day. Wikimedia DC provides funding for volunteer events and helps Smithsonian staff members to correct and enhance articles.
- Public image: Smithsonian collections are exposed to significantly larger audiences, as they are now used on Wikipedia in multiple languages to illustrate articles on diverse topics. In the case of AAA, the archive uploaded the images itself, including associated metadata and links back to the original source, which likely accounts for Wikipedia’s role as a top inbound Web traffic referrer to the AAA website.
- Volunteer labor: AAA has not quantified the hours spent on Wikipedia edit-a-thons and other activities. However, for the Smithsonian Institution Archives alone, over 50 new articles⁶² have been created on women in science, over 75 new articles⁶³ related to the Smithsonian’s history, and over 700 images uploaded.
- Diffusion of Smithsonian collections (*See Figure A.*)

⁶⁰ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Licensing#Acceptable_licenses

⁶¹ http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Images_from_the_Archives_of_American_Art

⁶² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Meetup/DC.30/To-do_list

⁶³

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:GLAM/Smithsonian_Institution_Archives/Outcomes/ToDo

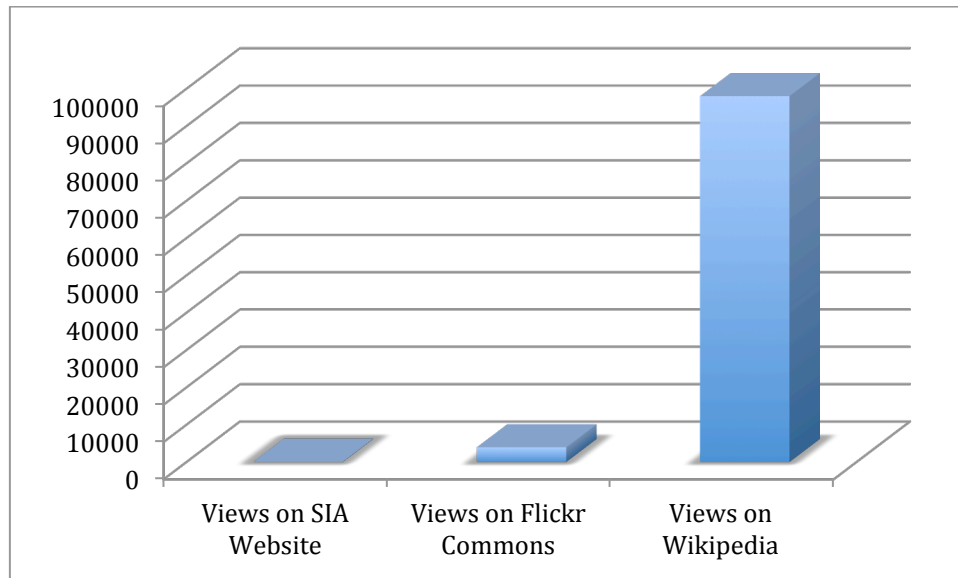


Figure A: Comparison of views received for an “average” image on different websites since 2008.

Yale Center for British Art, Yale University Art Gallery, Peabody Museum, and Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Interviewee

Melissa Fournier, manager of imaging services and intellectual property, Yale Center for British Art

Scope and Copyright Designation

250,000 images from Yale’s museums, galleries, archives, and libraries with the following terms of use:

Yale University’s Open Access Policy provides license- and royalty- free access to digital images of public domain materials in Yale collections. Open access digital images may be used by anyone for any purpose.⁶⁴

Motivation for Adopting Open Collections

According to Fournier, Yale’s images were never “a money-maker.” Additionally, there was pressure on Yale to not charge fees because of its mission, and most requests were scholarly in nature. Finally, Yale wanted to make delivery of images as seamless as possible for visitors.

Results

Response from the scholarly community has been overwhelmingly positive. There was anxiety as to what this would mean for jobs and workload, and there have been some

⁶⁴ <http://ydc2.yale.edu/documentation/faq-open-access-digital-representations-works-public-domain-museum-library-and-archive>

growing pains, but it's been "refreshing" for staff members to spend time on digitization rather than permission forms. Demand has been steady, so there hasn't been an overwhelming increase in workload. Additionally, it hasn't been difficult to let go of small revenue.

It has also been helpful for the Yale brand. Yale has received great press, and is now able to participate in attention-garnering projects: Google Art Project, Wikipedia, etc.

International Case Studies

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Interviewee

Martin Kalfatovic, associate director, Smithsonian Libraries, and digital services and program director, Biodiversity Heritage Library

Overview

"The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) is a consortium of natural history and botanical libraries that seeks to digitize the legacy literature of biodiversity held in their collections, and make that literature available for open access as a part of a global "biodiversity commons."⁶⁵ The goal of BHL is to digitize all public domain biodiversity legacy literature, and as much in-copyright material as they can obtain permissions for. Researchers need to consult this literature to prove that no one else has published the species, looking at publications all the way back to Linnaeus.

Scope

The Biodiversity Heritage Library includes 95,144 titles, 161,717 volumes, and 46,340,752 pages of natural history taxonomic literature, which have a mix of licenses: public domain, "no known copyright restrictions," and Creative Commons licenses. Additionally, over 100,000 images⁶⁶ from the literature have been published with a Creative Commons 2.0 license.⁶⁷ The digitized literature is available to researchers across the world via the BHL website and the Internet Archive.

Funding

The Biodiversity Heritage Library received a sub-award of the Encyclopedia of Life's grant from the MacArthur Foundation. The funds came with the following terms:

⁶⁵ BHL obtains literature from 24 member organizations, including Cornell University Library and the Field Museum Library, and from hundreds of nodes across the world, <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/>.

⁶⁶ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/biodivlibrary/sets/>

⁶⁷ Creative Commons 2.0 License means that users are free to "Share" ("copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format") and "Adapt" ("remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially") as long as they credit the original source, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>.

The Foundation encourages the widest dissemination of the Work Product so as to advance the public good and discourages Intellectual Property Rights from being used to limit or deny the public to the Work Product or for a grantee to claim exclusive use of such work product.

Subsequent grants have been received from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Richard Lounsbery Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the JRS Biodiversity Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Science Foundation.

Results

- Making the literature available online accelerates the pace of taxonomic science across the world. BHL is “infrastructure” for the taxonomic research community.
- Dr. Chris Thompson, entomologist at the Smithsonian’s Natural History Museum, says, “I love the BHL. I may have the finest private library on flies (Diptera), but now while I have a copy, I find it faster, easier, etc., to go to the BHL and get the page I want, rather than stepping into the next room and pulling my own copy off the shelf and then going back to make a copy of that page.”
- It’s a model project of multiple institutions working together to strengthen scientific research.
- It has inspired other projects, including the Medical Heritage Library for historic medical literature.
- Increased goodwill from the taxonomic community.
- Increased public participation: Libraries has held “tagging parties” to make better metadata for images in the literature.

British Library, U.K.

Interviewee

Nora McGregor, digital curator, British Library

Scope and Copyright Designation

Over one million images in the public domain with the following terms:

"Public Domain content": the Content on the Site marked "Public Domain" consists of Content from the British Library's collections, which the Library believes are in the public domain in most territories. Content marked "Public Domain" indicates that the Library is unaware of any current copyright restrictions on the Content either because: (i) the term of copyright has expired in most countries or: (ii) no evidence has been found that copyright restrictions apply.

Motivation for Adopting Open Collections

According to McGregor, the British Library’s first big foray into “open” was in 2003, with the release of “Collect Britain” materials on the Web under the public domain. The

library set up the Digital Research Team and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded BL Labs⁶⁸ in 2010, and has made a concerted push to open up an even larger percentage of the collections in a more systematic, business-as-usual way. The BL Labs project seeks to enable innovative research with British Library digital collections at scale—research (such as text mining/data mining, etc.) that requires the fewest restrictions on the greatest amount of material.

There was also a business need to enable curatorial staff seeking to communicate and promote collections online via social media to have greater autonomy in making decisions about releasing these materials under the public domain mark for wider sharing. At the same time, private funding organizations in the United Kingdom were increasingly requiring open sharing of digitization outputs, so the climate has been favorable for moving in this direction.

How it was done

The library developed guidelines stating that creative works that were out of copyright, or clearly under the copyright of the British Library, could be released into the public domain without prior approval by the IP and Licensing division. This policy was rolled out to the staff through a series of training events and was quickly adopted, particularly for curatorial blogging and sharing on Wikimedia Commons.⁶⁹

The Library also set up an internal and cross-departmental Access and Reuse group, which is chaired by the head of intellectual property and meets monthly to consider proposals for changing the status of large, complex digitized collections that do not fall within the above policy. This process has greatly increased the frequency and amount of material released by the Library into the public domain.

One of the major BL Labs and the Digital Research Team public domain activities was to publish on Flickr a collection of over one million images pulled from 19th century digitized books as public domain. This was done to test the library's "appetite for risk," and also to learn more about potential uses of such content from what people ended up doing with the collections when they had no restrictions.

Results

Moving to open access has helped British Library collections reach a global and diverse audience outside of the library's typical researcher profile, increased the institution's appetite for risk-taking, and enabled innovative research and experimentation with Library collections. The Flickr upload alone has received 254,363,839 image views since December 2013, with 383,742 tags added which will eventually be integrated into the library's collections. There have been numerous creative re-uses⁷⁰ of the images, data

⁶⁸ <http://labs.bl.uk/>

⁶⁹ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:British_Library

⁷⁰ <http://blpublicdomain.wikispaces.com/Creative+Projects>

research explorations,⁷¹ and visualizations.⁷² Recently, the Library announced a new platform, LibCrowds,⁷³ hosting experimental crowdsourcing projects with the British Library digital collections, the underlying data of which are also open and freely available for reuse.

National Gallery of Denmark (SMK), Denmark

Interviewee

Merete Sanderhoff, curator of digital museum practice, National Gallery of Denmark

Scope and Copyright Designation

25,000 images (160 available in high resolution with remaining pending scanning and availability in an upgraded Web interface) with the following copyright designation:

The copyright on all of these artworks has expired because they were made by artists who passed away more than 70 years ago. Therefore they are in the Public Domain. This also means that you are free to use the images for any purpose without asking permission from the SMK or anyone else.

Since the copyright on these images has expired, you are free to:

- *Share the images – i.e. to copy, distribute, and transmit them.*
- *Remix the images – i.e. modify and reuse them in new contexts.*
- *Use the images in any context – e.g. teaching, research, lectures, publications, film productions, etc. This includes commercial purposes.*

The images have been designated 'Public Domain' to clearly signify that they are no longer subject to copyright. They belong to the public – to you.⁷⁴

Motivation for Adopting Open Collections

According to Sanderhoff, the SMK's own licensing restrictions on its public domain images were standing in the way of interactions the museum desired to have with the public, other museums, and other organizations.

Additionally, the museum wanted to support creativity and learning, in line with its mission. Sanderhoff asserts that people need deeper and more interactive experiences with the art to better learn about it.

Results

1. Improved public image, increased artist collaboration, and inspiring creativity: SMK used to struggle with a dusty, "old aunt" image according to

⁷¹ <http://blpublicdomain.wikispaces.com/Research>

⁷² <http://blpublicdomain.wikispaces.com/visualisations>

⁷³ <http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/asian-and-african/2015/06/introducing-libcrowds-a-crowdsourcing-platform-aimed-at-enhancing-access-to-british-library-collecti.html>

⁷⁴ <http://www.smk.dk/en/use-of-images-and-text/free-download-of-artworks/>

Sanderhoff, and open collections is changing that. The museum now holds monthly SMK Friday public events and recently held one to celebrate its open collections, called *Set Art Free*.⁷⁵ The events in general are a “huge success” with around 6,000 people attending, and SMK has won numerous awards, which leads to the public perception that it is a welcoming place, even a “hip place in town.” Sanderhoff reports that it gives SMK a “human face.” The museum is also able to hold events that more deeply engage the public with the artworks since they are able to remix them.

2. Increased opportunity for cultural collaboration: As a result of the museum’s open stance, SMK was partners in Europeana’s Creative project that “enables and promotes greater re-use of cultural heritage resources by creative industries.”⁷⁶ SMK also collaborates with Wikimedia Commons and Wikipedia Denmark to foster reuse of the museum’s images in Wikipedia entries, and to contribute to updated knowledge about art in the museum’s collections for the open encyclopedia.
3. Increased public engagement: At many levels, the SMK has become more visitor/user-focused, and is able to work more closely with visitors and users core to its future user base: school children, local urban audiences, immigrants in cultural inclusion projects, young people needing creative outlets, etc.
4. Increased collections awareness: The museum’s collections are spreading across Denmark and internationally. For example, the Copenhagen Metro Company has hosted exhibitions of remixes of SMK public domain artworks on fences around metro construction sites in central Copenhagen.⁷⁷

Rijksmuseum, Netherlands

Interviewee

Lizzy Jongma, collections information system manager, Rijksmuseum

Scope and Copyright Designation

The Rijksmuseum has committed to digitizing its entire collections (one million artworks) by 2020.⁷⁸ Currently 200,000+ works of art in the public domain and 40,000+ works of art under copyright are available online. If an artwork is under copyright, the Rijks attempts to come to an agreement with the artist/copyright holder to allow publication of a high-resolution image on the Rijks website.

⁷⁵ <http://pro.europeana.eu/blogpost/set-art-free-and-the-rest-will-follow>,
<http://www.smk.dk/en/visit-the-museum/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/exhibition-mix-it-up/>

⁷⁶ <http://pro.europeana.eu/structure/europeana-creative>

⁷⁷ <http://openglam.org/2013/07/08/2353/>

⁷⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/14/arts/international/a-museum-at-the-forefront-of-digitization.html>

Motivation for Adopting Open Collections

- The Rijks' major artworks were already online, but of poor quality. Since the museum believed that the majority of the public, including students, downloaded images from the Web for use, the museum wanted them to have access to the highest quality images. The Rijks hoped that over time the high-quality images would replace the poor ones (see the Europeana report *The Problem of the Yellow Milkmaid*).⁷⁹
- The majority of the Rijks' collections are unknown to the public, colleagues, and book publishers. Without digitizing and sharing them, there would be no interest in these lesser-known collections.
- According to Jongma, the Rijks realized funders are more interested in sponsoring digitization projects if the results are openly shared.
- As stewards of the collections, the Rijks considers it its duty to share its collections in order to educate the public worldwide. Sharing, according to the Rijks, means making available the highest quality image possible.
- In the beginning, the museum shared its images, but made a distinction between commercial and non-commercial usage which confused the public. The Rijks was "flooded" with questions and requests and did not have the IT systems nor manpower to deal with it. The museum found sharing images for free was less expensive and time-consuming.
- The Rijks wanted to share its collections on "large internet portals" such as Wikipedia, Europeana, Flickr, Pinterest, etc. By sharing in these online spaces, there was an "exponential increase in use" of its collections.

Results

On the impact of open access on staff, Jongma had this to say:

No one in the image department got laid off. We lost all of our income on direct sales of images, but we gained a lot of new friends, sponsors, and new funding streams (more than we lost from revenue). We are in the amazing situation that we can choose what projects we want to do, and how we want to do them ... Thanks to our technical infrastructure, our curators can also collaborate in all projects that they like without a lot of technical or rights management support.

According to Joris Pekel, community manager at Europeana, the move to open collections has positively impacted the Rijksmuseum's finances:

In 2010, when nothing was available under open conditions, there was actually less revenue than in 2011, when the first set was made available in hi-res for non-commercial purposes. It is even more interesting to see that in 2012, there is an

⁷⁹ http://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Publications/Whitepaper_2-The_Yellow_Milkmaid.pdf

even more substantial increase in sales when they were released for all purposes. This shows that releasing the medium quality images to the public in 2011 still allowed them to have a viable business model, and in fact increased the amount of image sales.⁸⁰

Jongma says the Rijks has felt a positive impact on its brand both nationally and internationally, and the museum is one of the strongest brands in the Netherlands:

Everyone wants to work with us. We are preferred partner for Wikipedia and Europeana. I get at least a dozen requests for European digitization projects a month (we actually turn down most requests because we don't have the time to do all these projects).

On increased visibility of the Rijksmuseum collections, Jongma says:

So far 6,499 images from the Rijksmuseum have been uploaded to Wikimedia Commons which is the media file repository of Wikimedia — the foundation responsible for Wikipedia. 2,175 of these images are currently used in various Wikipedia articles. These images have been shown 10,322,754 times to users visiting the articles where the material is used.

According to Jongma, the Rijks' images are widely distributed online, which makes people want to come to the Rijks and see the original in person.

Finally, the Rijks gained revenue from brand licensing opportunities that didn't exist prior to their open access initiative. They have over a dozen brand licensing agreements with popular Dutch and multinational brands such as Heineken, Albert Heijn (national chain of Dutch grocery stores), and KLM:

Our Open Data makes our collection visible to the world, so everyone knows that the Nightwatch/Rembrandt/Vermeer = Rijksmuseum...So when Heineken puts a Vermeer or Rembrandt on a beer bottle people know that Heineken collaborates with the Rijksmuseum. It helps us and it helps Heineken. The number of partners that use our images for their commercial activities has increased dramatically: from none in 2010 to a dozen now.

⁸⁰ http://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Publications/Democratising_the_Rijksmuseum.pdf



the
dieline
AWARDS 2015

THIRD PLACE

PRESENTED BY:
NEENAH
PACKAGING

The Rijksmuseum/Heineken licensing agreement has received design awards.⁸¹

⁸¹ <http://www.thedieline.com/blog/2015/4/27/3rd-place-beer-malt-beverages-tobacco-heineken-amsterdam-originals-the-rijksmuseum-bottles>