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Europeana Food and Drink

Virtual Exhibition

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1 Introduction

As part of the Europeana Food and Drink project, Europeana coordinated the production of a [Virtual Exhibition](#), available on Google Cultural Institute platform. The purpose of the exhibition is to generate public interest and debate and provide a promotion opportunity for the Europeana Food and Drink projects. This document includes a summary of the process of creating the final version of the Virtual Exhibition.



The opening screen of the Food and Drink virtual exhibition

1.1 Approach

A series of consultation sessions with consortium partners about their content, partnerships and audiences made it apparent that products developed by the Europeana Food and Drink project will require separate content approach. This was one of the main reasons for dividing them into *cluster* and *classic* products, with each group following a slightly different method for successful delivery. The virtual exhibition falls into the *cluster* products category (together with physical Exhibition, Book and eBook, Social Game and Mobile App), which means using content tailored to its specific needs.

The major partners were Centre for Agrarian History (CAG) and Royal Museums of Art and History (KMKH). CAG, as an expert centre for history/heritage of agriculture and food, with expertise and experience in developing exhibitions, acted as the

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content provider and cluster lead. KMKG was the content and creative partner assisting with the specification and processes. The client was Bakkerijmuseum Veurne (Bakery Museum), a member of CAG network.

1.2 Idea Definition and Aims

The concept of the exhibition is built around the theme of 'cake', its history and meaning across the world. The main aim is to show the significance of cake in each season, its role in festivities and its wider social function. By displaying diversity in the appearances of a common artefact (a cake) from region to region and from time to time, the exhibition will help understanding the variety and uniqueness of traditions.

1.3 Scope and Set-up

The framework for the exhibition, a first selection of content and the narrative, was created by CAG and KMKG in collaboration with the Bakery Museum in Veurne. In addition, project partners submitted text and images describing various national cakes, which are connected with different celebrations along the year. Some of the submissions did not meet the criteria for being included in the exhibition, but they will be improved and added at a later stage. Moreover the Virtual Exhibition will be expanded with user-generated content. A selection of crowdsourced content (cake related photographs, recipes and stories) will eventually become part of the GCI curated exhibition. During the remainder of the project, the UGC material will be delivered by the project partners and subsequently Europeana will update the exhibition.

1.4 Value Proposition

The value represented by publishing the virtual exhibition:

- Generating broad public interest in shared cultural heritage (educational aspect);
- Raising awareness of the contributing organisations, as they are credited in the exhibition;
- Raising awareness of the physical exhibition (advertising aspect).

The exhibition is part of a series of actions involving the general public, bakers and creative industries around the pan-European theme of cake.

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1.5 Revenue-sharing model

The exhibition will be accessible for free and will not create revenue, except for the promotional value for the involved partners. However, because the exhibition is using an external platform (Google Cultural Institute) with implemented design, there were no costs involving design and hosting of the exhibition.

1.6 Target Audience

The Virtual Exhibition aims to widen the audience of the physical exhibition. This audience, which is listed as: (home) bakers, regular visitors of museums that will become a venue for the exhibition, tourists, schools and (heritage) public, can be increased with the use of digital tools. One of the method is drawing the attention of Europeana users who gathered around different social media channels.

2 Specifications

Based on the analysis of available software, Europeana made a recommendation of using the Google Cultural Institute (GCI) platform to host the virtual exhibition. GCI provides a linear structure for storytelling with particular focus on visual content, which makes it advantageous when trying to translate the physical exhibition into its virtual equivalent. Additionally, it makes the exhibition available for exploration from mobile devices and gives the possibility to embed it on relevant websites, like the Europeana Food and Drink website. Europeana has published already a couple of virtual exhibitions on Google's platform, such as 'To my peoples!' and 'Photography on a silver plate'.

2.1 Content

The material for the virtual exhibition is based on the physical exhibition, which contains a mix of both new content, coming in via the Food and Drink project (i.e. material from the Bakery Museum), and existing content (i.e. from the Rijksmuseum). The materials were prepared by CAG and KMKG, and consisted of 15 themes describing a particular aspect, like the act of pieing, or the celebrations involving cake, like examples of New Year's customs. The themes are illustrated by 25 images: 19 were sourced by CAG and 6 were contributed by the partners. At the moment only 5 of those items are in the Europeana portal; the majority of the remaining content should be fed to Europeana in the future.

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2.2 Technical Specifications

Europeana provided partners with the precise conditions on quality and submission of the materials. The conditions were as follows.

“Content needs to be:

- Openly licensed and/or cleared according its rights statement;
- High resolution, 300 DPI;
- Delivered in .JPG, .MP3, .MP4 or YouTube link;
- At least 60% Europeana content, or content that will be available in the near future;
- Complete with metadata.

Text needs to be:

- In English;
- Written for the web;
- Short, introductions 50 words/stories 150 words;
- Checked for spelling and typos;
- Featured with short titles;

Metadata ideally need to have:

- A good title;
- A good description;
- A date of creation and creator;
- Licences and rights statements;
- Original source link;
- Europeana link;
- The same order as the images.

Delivery:

- For the first phase, four weeks prior to launch;
- For the second phase, two weeks prior to launch;

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- All objects will be send via Dropbox or WeTransfer;
- Texts and credits will be send in one Word document;
- Metadata will be sent in one Excel file.”¹

2.3 Functional Specifications

Google Cultural Institute (GCI) exhibits content on their exhibition platform in a very visual way. Pictorial content plays the most important role. However, as text provides a meaningful context, the exhibition includes longer passages. The platform supports different media types: images, audio and video files and maps, but in this case only image files have been used.

Users can scroll from left to right and click on individual items to see them full screen, as well as read detailed information (metadata) about them. There is also a zoom function that makes it possible to zoom into the smallest details. It is not possible to download the images. GCI exhibitions are responsive and are optimised for display on mobile devices. The credits display the Europeana logo, together with the names of contributing partners. The logo and listed institutions are clickable links.

2.4 Designs

The design of the exhibition follows the framework of exhibitions hosted on GCI platform. It consists of a cover image that serves also as a background image for the whole exhibition. This solution provides a feeling of consistency and smoothness, which adds to the user experience.

¹D3.11_Specification for Food and Drinks Virtual Exhibition

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Screenshot of the "Cake?Cake!" virtual exhibition hosted on Google Cultural Institute's platform.

The exhibition has a clear linear structure: the only way to explore the content is by browsing left or right. After the opening slide with appropriate credits, the user can move through 15 themes; each story has been illustrated with at least one image.

Because of the nature of the images, which are mostly vintage (black and white or sepia), the exhibition operates in the dark shades, with text displayed in white font on the black background. A few contemporary photographs refresh the overall appearance.



Screenshot of the "Cake?Cake!" virtual exhibition hosted on Google Cultural Institute's platform.

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3 Success metrics

3.1 Metrics

The most important metric for the virtual exhibition itself will be the number of views, as well as unique visitors exploring the exhibition. In the span of the project, these numbers should be over 20,000 and 200 accordingly.

Secondly, as the exhibition aims to raise awareness of the physical exhibition, a valuable indication is the outreach a number of people that see the relevant posts on social media. Our social media campaign aspires to reach out to over 10,000 people.

3.2 Value for Europeana

Each virtual exhibition that is added to the Europeana family allows us to extend the outreach of our partner's collections. Exhibitions are important because they allow Europeana to connect to niche audiences that might be interested in learning more about a very specific topic. The context added to the content (metadata, descriptions) is also valuable in terms of online discoverability of content. What is also significant, the material used in the exhibition will be, at least partially, ingested into Europeana with metadata relating to the exhibition events.

Both the theme and the content of the exhibition have been chosen to be pan-European and easy to localise. The exhibition covers a number of aspects of cake, like history, occasions and local variations. These themes can be translated and used in any localised version of the exhibition.

3.3 Commercial value and exploitation

The exhibition itself has limited to no commercial value. Its main goal is to widen the audience of the touring exhibition which acts as a catalyst to bring together cake heritage and customs to general public.

Bakers will bake cakes inspired by recipes contributed through the crowdsourcing events and virtual exhibition. They will sell the cakes in the specially designed cake boxes. The revenues of the cake sales will go directly to the bakers.

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4 Marketing

4.1 Activities

The Bakkerijmuseum is celebrating its 30th birthday in 2015. Related promotional activities will be taking place around the same time as the launch of the exhibition.

By collaborating with GCI, the exhibition will receive an extra exposure - it will be featured on their landing page and their Google Plus account.

Upon the launch, Europeana will include the exhibition in its [exhibition foyer](#), as well as highlight it on all available social media channels (Facebook: 78,000+ fans, Twitter: 22,000+ followers, Google+: 2,000+ followers). In addition, Europeana will feature the virtual exhibition in the end-user newsletter (50,000+ subscribers).

4.2 Exploitation

The Virtual Exhibition includes institutional content, as well as some openly licensed content that was necessary to illustrate prepared materials. The project aims to add user generated content to the exhibition at a later stage. Europeana is committed to updating the exhibition once new content (images together with metadata) is delivered by the project partners.

The Bakkerijmuseum is celebrating its 30th birthday in 2015. Related promotional activities will be taking place around the same time as the launch of the exhibition.

5 Repeatability model

5.1 How can this product be replicated

There are two ways to replicate this project. The texts can be translated and included in the exhibition - the multilinguality will help in reaching the wider audience. Secondly, Europeana is open to repeat the experience with other providers that are interested in displaying their content online in a curated fashion. In case of this ongoing project, the new exhibition could be centred around another type of food or drink.

5.2 Next steps

As part of a second phase, the virtual exhibition will be expanded with user generated content. Public events will be held to gather cake related photographs, recipes and stories, and all content will be uploaded to HistoryPin. A selection of this crowdsourced content will enrich the GCI curated exhibition.

6 Conclusion

The Virtual Exhibition “Cake?Cake!” is available publicly starting from August 28 2015 at <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/exhibit/cake-cake/QRtG6eMd>.

Afterwards, it will be sustained, in order to be enhanced with the last batch of content. This part should be the most engaging for interested users and we are looking forward to include that content.

Aware that sourcing content might be problematic, for future initiatives Europeana recommends encouraging project partners to create their own content and openly licensing it.

Europeana firmly believes that this exhibition will, according to its goals, generate a public interest, possibly spark a debate and provide a promotion opportunity for the Europeana Food and Drink projects.