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Europeana Food and Drink

Community Engagement Strategy

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Introduction

“The Public Engagement Strategy will build audience share for the Europeana Food and Drink suite of products and applications and help to demonstrate to the Creative Industry partners the social and economic potential of collaboration with the culture sector. The tasks under WP5 are designed to improve the quality of the end-product by facilitating public engagement events and interactions.”

Europeana Food and Drink Description of Work, page 28.

This Deliverable describes the Community Engagement Strategy defined by Shift, the leaders of Work Package 5 of the Europeana Food and Drink project. The primary aim of this work package is to plan and implement a strategy and tools for public engagement with the Europeana Food and Drink project in general, as well as build audience share for the Europeana Food and Drink products through community engagement pilot events.

Under Task 5.1: Development of a Public Engagement Strategy and associated plan and actions, this Deliverable describes community engagement and crowdsourcing as methods to engage the public with a specific product or service by identifying target segments of a market and then reaching out to these segments directly through local networks, selecting and reinforcing incentives that create strong reasons for lasting participation. This document discusses some of the reasoning behind the crowdsourcing strategy proposed by Shift, the various connections between crowdsourcing and a commercial product and the additional drivers needed to make the strategy successful. In addition, the document describes the first iteration and implementation of the strategy, focusing on community pubs. It also lays out the replicability of the strategy and next steps.

The document includes:

- a description of community engagement and crowdsourcing in the context of the Europeana Food and Drink project
- a description of a crowdsourcing strategy for a commercial product, including the main elements of a crowdsourcing model as well as the additional drivers needed
- a first iteration of this strategy, focusing on crowdsourcing in community pubs
- a description of the replicability of this strategy across the project and beyond
- a conclusion and plan of action

Community engagement and crowdsourcing

Community engagement

Community engagement is an important part of many cultural heritage projects, as it helps the project deliver a more sustainable social or cultural impact in local and national communities. When practised by community impact organisations, local groups or non-profits, community engagement can be grassroots, meaning that it is driven by local needs and involves local people in the direction and process of engagement.

“Community engagement works best where it is an ongoing cumulative process enabling relationships and trust to build and strengthen over time.”¹ In the context of developing engagement with cultural heritage, an approach that seems to have worked well in the past is to create a participatory relationship with audiences rather than a merely informational or educational relationship. This involves using the unique memories and informal collections of knowledge communities to contextualise or add to a body of institutional, professionally curated material. Enabling these participatory activities requires significant trust to be established within a community, and because of the informal expertise being sought, the relationships needed to reach these target people is a necessary precondition. Building relationships and gaining trust are, therefore, a time-consuming but vital part of developing a successful community engagement strategy.

Work Package 5 lead Shift has extensive experience in community engagement, based in part on the development and ongoing projects of Historypin, Shift’s community archiving platform. Historypin was designed to build stronger communities by bringing people together to collaborate around shared local history, inviting users to “pin” assets relating their personal histories. A set of digital tools on Historypin.org supports community archiving and storytelling and the Shift organisation works with a range of public institutions, commercial partners, community groups and local leaders to deliver these kinds of local community engagement programmes.

The engagement methodology proposed for the Europeana Food & Drink project has three phases. The first phase is dedicated to building relationships and tailoring the engagement methodology that will be used. This includes connecting to local partners to support the marketing of the project and the delivery of community engagement, building a core group of enthusiastic ambassadors to champion and help sustain and identifying archival collections to prompt participation.

The second phase will build on these relationships to involve people with a long and deep relationship with the project topic, which will generate knowledge about the topic, enrich the archival materials and additional contributions material, and creates sustained engagement. The third phase of the engagement methodology is reaching out to a broader audience to display knowledge gathered and invite more contributions. This also includes a launch or other event to showcase and celebrate the participating community members.

The engagement methodology we propose to employ on the project has the following steps.

Phase 1: Building relationships and refining engagement methodology

- Build a core group of enthusiastic ambassadors to champion the project
- Build relationships with local partners to support community engagement, contribution of archival content and media promotion
- Identification of existing public, private, and personal collections of material related to the project
Identification of digital platform to showcase collections and enrichments on
- Assessment of collections and drafting of steps needed to use them (eg. digitisation, data enrichment, copyright negotiations)
- Pilot activities to enrich archival collections (eg. identifying people in photos, adding dates and match detail to photos)
- Pilot activities to refine how best to generate connections and contributions, including testing:
- Different methods of inviting and gathering contributions of photos, video clips, memories and memorabilia eg. individually or in groups

- Different places
- Different methods and tools to use eg. oral recordings, using archive material as stimulus, videos

Phase 2: Deep community engagement to build the shared archive

- Outreach by ambassadors to engage and involve people with a long and deep relationship with the topic
- Activities by ambassadors to collect and enrich archive material
- Preparation and ingestion of relevant archive collections
- Design of a project area on digital platform to house materials gathered and specific features to showcase the archive and support online participation

Phase 3: Broad community engagement and launch of a collaborative history

- Ongoing activities by a growing network of ambassadors to engage people, gather materials and share stories
- Ongoing ingest of archive materials
- Launch of the history to local, national and international audiences
- Digital and physical products which bring the history to life
- Complementary and interconnected participation offline and online

Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing is “the practice of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people and especially from the online community rather than from traditional employees or suppliers.”²

Crowdsourcing can be an important part of community engagement around archival collections as it draws upon the knowledge of the community, which brings people together and makes them feel valued and invested in the project and the materials.

In a typical crowdsourcing project, community members contribute information, stories or archival material like photographs and objects. Crowdsourcing can happen online or offline, or in both spheres simultaneously. Many crowdsourcing events are focused around a central theme or question that the community can help explore or solve.

2 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/crowdsourcing>. Retrieved 18 December 2014

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For a crowdsourcing project to be successful, it is important to build a core group of active people that become ambassadors for the project. They can publicise the project within their networks and enthuse other people, thus bringing additional participants to the project. Encouraging ambassadors to remain engaged for the duration of the project is an important part of a successful crowdsourcing project and requires time and attention. Online and offline tools, such as the Historypin website or printed photographs, can enable crowdsourcing to happen individually as well as in a group.

Historypin has experience in using crowdsourcing as a method for community engagement, for example in the Year of the Bay project in San Francisco. This project, undertaken in partnership with Stanford's Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis in the Humanities, aimed to explore ways in which Historypin.org could be used for crowdsourcing in humanities research. One of the main aims of the project was to facilitate and measure community engagement amongst targeted groups, and providing a universal platform to share expert knowledge from these communities with a broader general audience.

Historypin's Community Officer reached out to a number of identified and targeted community groups for the Year of the Bay crowdsourcing project, utilising many different outreach strategies. These targeted audiences had local knowledge and experience that was very valuable for enriching the photographs and materials that were being uploaded to Historypin.org as part of this project.

One popular offline method to encourage audiences to contribute was organising 'pinning sessions' dedicated to particular community groups. These events were hosted in a local library or other space and focused on collecting and pinning photographs specific to that area from a specific community group. Because of the local knowledge present in the group, locations and dates of photographs could be easily identified and recorded.

An online method to encourage community engagement through crowdsourcing is 'mystery solving'. In the Year of the Bay project, photos that needed more metadata were released over social media and tagged as #historymystery. This offered a chance to reach out to specific local groups and individuals to collaborate on mystery-solving, which in turn spread the word to communities who otherwise might not have participated in the project. Audience members commented on social media posts, contributed to the discussion about the photographs and shared the photographs more widely to their own networks.

In short, Historypin's engagement model is about local people coming together around a shared history. As a part of that, Historypin's idea of crowdsourcing is about how the online and offline complement each other when collecting assets and information from a targeted local community group.

Crowdsourcing for a commercial product

Basic crowdsourcing model

Crowdsourcing is an excellent method for both engaging communities and drawing on their knowledge and experience to enrich the heritage that is at the centre of the Europeana Food and Drink project.

As the main aim of the Europeana Food and Drink project is to create connections between commercial and cultural organisations and promote the wider reuse of Europeana assets by the creative industries, it is important to define the crowdsourcing strategy for this project in such a way that it does not only link community and crowdsourcing platform together, but also incorporates the product into the cycle in a meaningful way. In addition, the specificity of both audience and collection is very important. This project is a great opportunity to research and discover what partnerships, connections and actions are needed to create a crowdsourced commercial product that promotes community engagement with heritage assets.

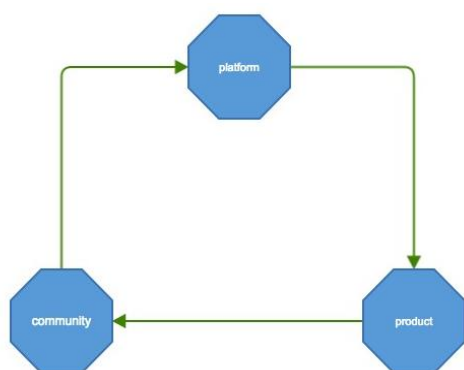


Figure 1: the three main aspects of crowdsourcing for a commercial product

Crowdsourcing begins and ends with the community. As shown in Figure 1, the community provides content in the form of stories, materials and metadata to the crowdsourcing platform, where it is uploaded, organised and presented. The crowdsourcing platform provides the product with content, which has to be curated according to theme or topic. The product is then marketed to the community. This cycle can potentially run multiple times as new content is mined from the community, uploaded to the crowdsourcing platform and curated into a new version of the product. This cycle provides a better chance at continuing community engagement.

Expanded crowdsourcing model

The above triad of platform, product and community is theoretically sound, but static. Content and stories will not flow from one stage to the next without a driving force. It needs added value and input from various partners at each turn to make it worthwhile for people to invest their time and resources in and for it to be a successful product development and community engagement process.

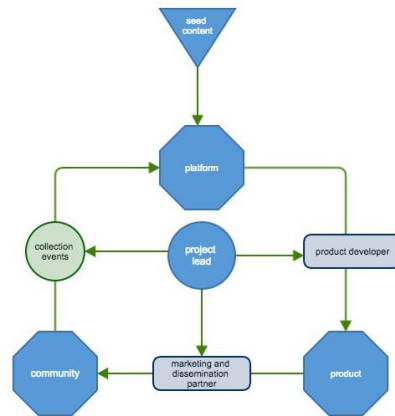


Figure 2: the three main aspects of crowdsourcing for a commercial product with necessary partnerships and roles

As shown in Figure 2, for the crowdsourcing cycle to be an effective community engagement, product development and marketing exercise, various partners need to be involved in at each stage of the process. These partners represent added value to each main aspect of the cycle, as explained below.

The centre of the cycle is occupied by the project lead, which is a generic term for whichever partner or cluster of partners is most motivated to produce the crowdsourced product. The product lead finds the partners and resources to engage the community, produce the product and utilise the crowdsourcing platform. They might also identify the seed content, but this could also come from the community. In general, the project lead drives the project and motivates others to help move it along.

As a starting point, a collection of seed content is uploaded to the crowdsourcing platform will add value to the platform as it will kickstart the crowdsourcing process, generate interest and define a theme, topic or locality around which the community can come together. In the next stage, the product developer will add value to the product by being able to mobilise networks and experience that will improve the product development process and create the best product possible. They will also be able to select and curate content from the crowdsourcing platform, or appoint someone to do so.

The marketing and dissemination partner(s) will add value to the entire process by finding ways of publicising the product as part of a crowdsourcing project which could encourage others (perhaps from the wider community) to participate. They will also boost product sales by targeting specific communities that might be interested in the product.

The collection events, which ideally are hosted and led by the community, are geared towards gathering additional material, stories and memories from the community to be used on the crowdsourcing platform to trigger online engagement, as well as being available for use in the product. In this way, the community will become visible and vocal both on the crowdsourcing platform and in the product.

It is important to keep in mind that even through this process is described in a linear way, it is in effect a circle which has no clear beginning or end. Even though the seed content kicks off the product production cycle, material from the community can and should find its way through the crowdsourcing platform into the product. If successful, this model guarantees continuing community engagement as additional material is sourced and uploaded to the crowdsourcing platform, which can then be developed into an updated version of the product.

The model described above is a version of a crowdsourced commercial product development cycle. It is an incentive structure that is somewhat different from more traditional product development cycles in the way that it relies on crowdsourcing to provide both the content for and the immediate audience of the product. The first iteration, which is a test of this model, is explained in the next section.

First iteration: Community Pubs in London

The first iteration of the model explained in the previous section is based around the 'Community Pubs in London' theme.

Community pubs

Pubs are community meeting places which are on par with churches and football clubs. As CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale that also speaks out for pubs and drinkers' rights in the UK says: "Pubs serve two distinct but intimately entwined functions – to sell drinks and to enable people to meet. The latter is especially important. Whereas, say, in a Belgian beer-cafe, drinkers will confine themselves to a particular table, where drinks are brought to them, in the British pub many customers are eager to chat with the other occupants, even complete strangers. Pubs are often the centre of community life – in towns and cities as well as villages – and play a huge role when it comes to social cohesion."³

These centres of community life are very important as they provide people with access to services and a support network that they might not have otherwise. Many pubs host music nights, life drawing classes or other creative and social sessions designed for people to meet and engage with others. However, pubs are under threat. In the last decades, CAMRA estimates that 31 pubs are lost from communities in the United Kingdom each week, either by demolition or conversion into shops or flats.⁴

The Europeana Food and Drink project can help safeguard this unique Food and Drink heritage, while simultaneously tapping into a strong and active community of interest that can be engaged with the Food and Drink suite of products.

Pub collection days for a book and ebook

This is a test of the crowdsourced commercial product model that will show whether the strategy has value in the real world and whether it can be replicated. Figure 3 (overleaf) shows the various roles and partnerships that are deemed necessary to successfully run this particular product development and community engagement process.

In this iteration of the model, the products being developed are a book and accompanying ebook. The product cluster responsible for this from the Europeana Food and Drink project consists of Keepthinking as WP3 lead, Alinari, Topfoto, FEP / FEE and Shift.

The section below will explain the relationships and connections in Figure 3.

The National Brewery Heritage Trust, the Charrington collection and Save Photo

The seed content for this first test of the model comes from the National Brewery Heritage Trust (NBHT) in Burton-upon-Trent, UK. The Charrington collection consists of around 6000 images showcasing the exterior of 3000 pubs in the Greater London area, some demolished or converted but many still open. These images were used by the surveying department of the Charrington Brewery and as such feature extensive metadata about amounts of drink sold, landlords and rent. The collection was rescued from a skip when the Charrington brewery changed hands and was donated to the NBHT.

3 CAMRA, About Pubs, <http://www.camra.org.uk/about-pubs1> Retrieved 19 December 2014

4 CAMRA, Pubs Matter campaign, <http://pubsmatter.org.uk/> Retrieved 19 December 2014

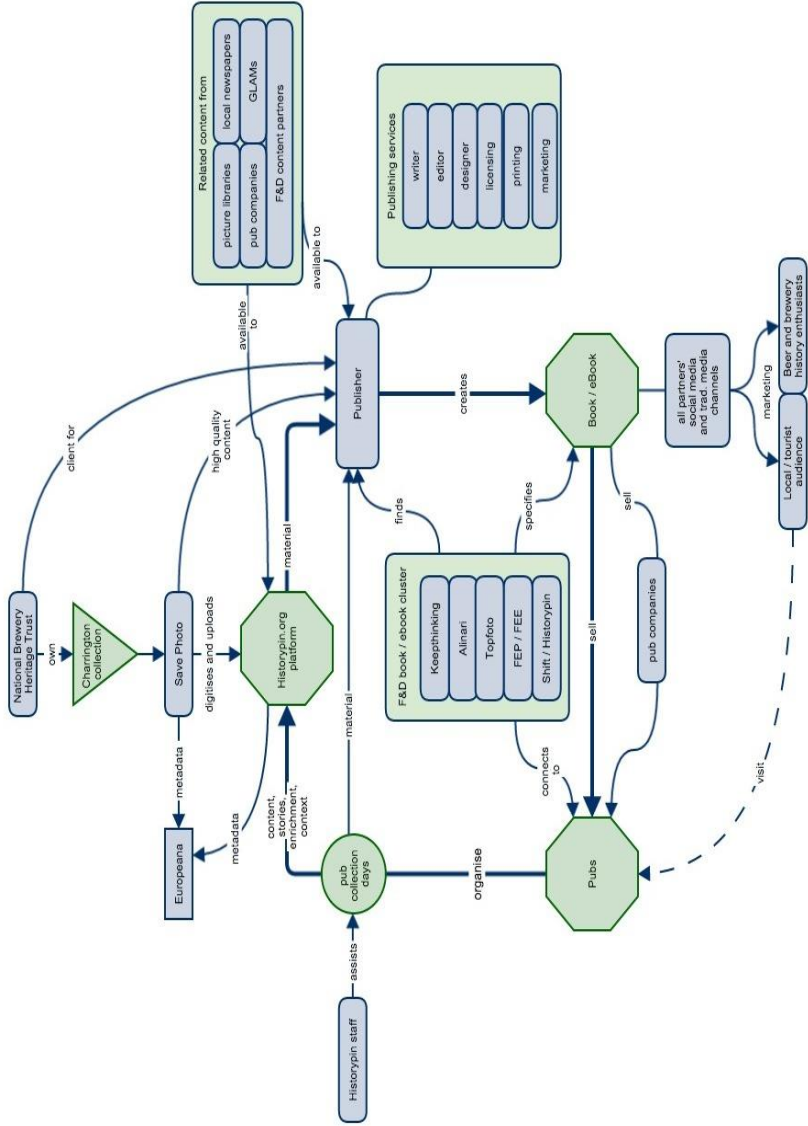


Figure 3: London Community Pubs community engagement and commercial crowdsourcing strategy

In a separate agreement with digitisation company Save Photo, the collection is being professionally digitised and can be commercially exploited by the NBHT once digitisation is complete. In addition, the NBHT is the intended client for the book and ebook about community pubs in London, as they are the owner of the seed collection that will feature heavily in the book and would be the ones instigating this product development cycle if there were no European funding available. The NBHT is a prospective Associate Partner in the Europeana Food and Drink project.

Historypin.org

The seed content will be uploaded to the crowdsourcing platform Historypin.org, which already has a rich collection of community sourced content and contributions and is available free of use to individuals, groups and organisations. In addition, many cultural and heritage institutions have a presence on Historypin.org. In this project, Historypin.org will function as the funnel into which content from various sources can be fed, so it can be discovered, enriched and shared. Not only community content, but also related content from Europeana Food and Drink project partners or other sources, such as brewery archives, pub company archives, local newspaper archives and museum collections, can be shared on Historypin.org. Historypin.org will also provide metadata to Europeana.

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Book / eBook product cluster

In this instance, the Book / eBook product cluster, which consists of Keepthinking, Alinari, Topfoto, FEP / FEE and Shift, will function as the project lead, cementing relationships, allocating resources and finding additional partnerships.

Pubs and collection days

As the seed content is being uploaded to the Historypin.org crowdsourcing platform, pubs, pub companies, pub heritage groups and other stakeholders are approached by the product cluster to raise awareness of the project and to help identify pubs that are willing and able to host collection days. Reaching out to those pubs will be done with the help of ambassadors from the pub sector, who can mobilise their networks and promote the project effectively. Shift has developed connections with a number of these ambassadors already, many of which are retired Charrington and Bass employees with strong connections to the pubs.

With help from Historypin staff using dedicated training and support materials (as part of D5.3) pubs will host collection days centred around the history of their pubs and the local area, marketing the events to regular visitors, locals, people with an interest in local and social history and tourists. The project ambassadors mentioned before remain important here to help publicise the event and make people enthusiastic. Many of them will have anecdotes and knowledge about these pubs themselves and can thus participate in the crowdsourcing events. At the beginning of the project, a Historypin staff member is on hand to help collect, collate and curate the information gathered, but as the project picks up speed this role can be taken on by the pub landlord or any other interested participant, using the training and support materials provided as part of D5.3.

For each pub, photographs, stories and memories crowdsourced on the collection days will be uploaded to a dedicated project page on Historypin.org, which will include the original seed photograph of the pub from the Charrington collection. Here, the material can be further enriched by the online community. The crowdsourcing events will be held at a minimum of 6 local pubs, as per Task 5.3 in the Food and Drink Description of Work.

Publisher

A publisher is identified and brought on board by the product cluster. The publisher represents the product developer and is important for the commercial success of the project, as they have connections in the publishing and book trade, as well as a degree of practical publishing experience that the product cluster might not possess. The publisher provides access to a variety of services, including a writer / editor, a designer, and licensing, printing and marketing services. The publisher will also be able to open up additional sales channels for the book, which will increase revenue.

If as an alternative the self-publishing route is chosen, these connections will need to be forged individually by the product cluster, which can be time-consuming.

The publisher will draw content for the book from both the Historypin.org platform or directly from project partners or other sources.

Audience and marketing channels

Once the book and accompanying ebook are produced, they will be marketed through all involved partners' channels to the intended audience of locals, tourists and beer / pub enthusiasts. In addition, building a cross-promoted social media push about the book as well as the crowdsourcing platform will create more engagement with both. Where possible, pub companies and individual pubs will be directly marketed to in order to generate book sales and strong engagement with the end product. The book can even be sold 'over the counter' at pubs that are willing to do so. A revenue sharing model that will provide financial incentives for the pubs to do so is in development as part of the work on the book and ebook in WP3.

Marketing and publicising the book through channels of project partners such as the NBHT, the British Guild of Beer Writers and other dedicated channels with a connection to the intended audience will encourage people to buy the book and perhaps (re)visit some of the pubs described in it. This will generate revenue and footfall for the pubs involved, as well as boosting the profile of local pubs as important community spaces. Actively targeting this 'niche' audience rather than the 'general public' will create a stronger engagement with the product as messages can be tailored to suit the interest group.

Building relationships

A general observation to keep in mind when attempting to use community crowdsourcing as an avenue to build content for and engagement with a commercial product, is that building relationships and trust - a practice which

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is central to good community engagement - takes time and resources. It requires much personal contact and genuine conversations with the community.

However, even though the initial process takes time and resource, the connections that are built are invaluable in the later stages of the project. In this particular case, Shift has developed relationships with the NBHT, the British Guild of Beer Writers, the Brewery History Society, the All Party Parliamentary Beer Group and a number of retired Charrington and Bass employees. These contacts form a way into a specific community of interest, which can serve as a client, content source, audience and marketing channel for the product.

Replicability

The crowdsourcing for a commercial product model described previously is replicable across communities and countries, depending on the strength and engagement of the local community and the commitment from the additional partners required to drive the product development and community engagement process.

Lessons learned from this first iteration of the model will be shared with the Europeana Food and Drink consortium through the Impact Evaluation Reports (D5.4 and D5.5) which will evaluate this community engagement strategy and extract learning points. In addition, a Summative Evaluation and Recommendation (D5.6) will provide insights into the entire project's engagement strategy and will develop recommendations which will benefit future planning and advocacy.

As part of Work Package 5, Shift can provide the other products in the Europeana Food and Drink product suite with dedicated project areas on the crowdsourcing platform Historypin.org. In addition, general training and support materials for crowdsourcing and community engagement will be shared with the consortium as part of D5.3.

However, it is important to note that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to community engagement and that each commercial product developed as part of Work Package 3 will need to have specific, tailored community engagement to suit their own unique audiences.

Conclusion and next steps

Conclusion

In conclusion, this document describes community engagement as a way of helping projects deliver more sustainable social impacts. Crowdsourcing is a method of community engagement that links communities with knowledge to heritage collections that can be enriched. This can be done offline or online, or both.

Crowdsourcing can also be a method for creating content for and engagement with commercial products. The model described in this deliverable focuses on the main aspects of crowdsourcing for a commercial product, which are community, crowdsourcing platform and product. In addition, it describes the partnerships and drivers needed to make the model work in the real world, which are a project lead, a product developer, a marketing and dissemination partner, collection events and seed content.

The first test of this crowdsourcing for commercial products model focuses on community pubs in London. The aim is to create a book and ebook together with the Europeana Food and Drink book and ebook cluster, based on seed content from the National Brewery Heritage Trust and enrichments crowdsourced from visitors to local community pubs in London.

The partnerships and drivers needed to engage the community and intended audience of locals, beer enthusiasts and tourists are vital to the success of this project. Building these relationships costs a lot of time and resource but is essential. This stage can take anywhere from two months to a year, depending on the size of the project, the various marketing channels and the manner in which the audience is expected to participate.

The product cluster will engage a publisher, marketing and dissemination partners and individual pubs as well as pub companies to create interest, engagement and drive for the creation, marketing and enjoyment of the book and ebook.

The replicability of this crowdsourcing for commercial products model will be examined in the various Evaluation deliverables of Work Package 5. The action plan for the implementation of this community engagement strategy is outlined below.

Next steps

Below are the next steps for the initial test of the model as dictated by the community engagement strategy.

December 2014 – February 2015	Deepening relationships with project ambassadors, gathering new ambassadors and raising awareness of London community pubs in particular and Europeana Food and Drink in general
December 2014 – February 2015	Exploring and deepening relationships with individual pubs and pub companies to find candidates for hosting collecting days
December 2014 – February 2015	With product cluster, engaging a publisher and starting book and ebook development process
February 2015	Uploading seed content and launching crowdsourcing platform for pub collecting days on Historypin.org
February 2015	Launching community engagement and crowdsourcing toolkit for participating pubs, as well as launching online engagement campaign using seed content
February – August 2015	Assisting pubs in organising at least 6 collection days around the history of the pub and local history, targeting locals, tourists and beer enthusiasts
June 2015	Interim Community Engagement Impact Report
August 2015	Launch of Book and eBook
November 2015	Summative Community Engagement Impact Report
April 2016	Summative Evaluation and Recommendation