

**CULTURAL
HERITAGE**
A CHALLENGE
FOR EUROPE



EnDOW

Enhancing access to 20th Century cultural heritage
through Distributed Orphan Works clearance



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Project Summary

Digitization of 20th Century cultural heritage is severely restricted due to the real or potential subsistence of copyright and related rights. Under the new European laws on orphan works, a large amount of cultural heritage whose copyright status is uncertain could possibly be lawfully digitized by cultural institutions on condition that a “diligent search” of the right holders has been performed. While these diligent searches trigger prohibitively high costs for institutional users, the project designs a cost effective de-centralized system that enables cultural institutions across Europe to source information from end-users and determine the copyright status of works contained in their collections. Ultimately, the project will allow for an enhanced access to 20th Century cultural heritage and will contribute to enable use and re-use of items that would otherwise remain unexploited.

Key objectives of EnDOW are:

- To analyse the legal requirement of “diligent search” across the orphan works legislation of the 15 countries members of Heritage Plus
- To investigate best practices of orphan works clearance across cultural heritage sectors (libraries, archives and museums);
- (Based on this knowledge:) to design, implement and optimize an online platform for crowd-sourced diligent searching on works contained in the collections of European cultural institutions;
- To study the potential applications and challenges of the crowd-based search method for texts, images, films, works of visual art and born-digital cultural heritage works.

Through analytical and empirical approaches to mass digitization, the project will foster knowledge exchange between cultural heritage stakeholders, including small and medium

size institutions. It will produce a high-value tool to maximize sustainable management of recent cultural heritage and use and re-use of related cultural artefacts.

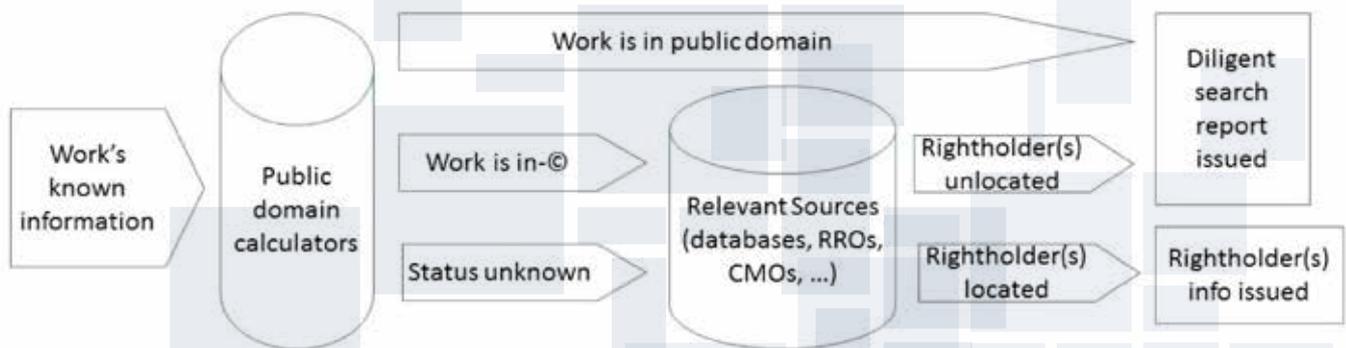
Application and impact

European cultural institutions host a large amount of items that are potentially eligible as orphan works under the relevant legislation. Libraries, museums and archives own old books, magazines, maps, photographs, footages, whose author or right holders are unknown or, even if known, they are not locatable. Most of these items can be included in digitization projects and become widely accessible, usable and re-usable by the public at large. However, not only the costs of digitization are large, but the costs of right clearance, by requiring a diligent search to be carried out in order to identify the rightholder of each artefact, are prohibitive.

In short, while mass digitization of archives is essential for the preservation of our cultural heritage, mass right clearance is not sustainable. This project addresses this problem by providing “sustainable strategies for protecting and managing cultural heritage” and thereby allowing for “use and re-use of all kind of cultural heritage”. These goals are inscribed in the Research Agenda of the Joint Programme Initiative in Cultural Heritage and Global Change as outlined by the Heritage Plus joint call.

Sustainable strategies for protecting and managing cultural heritage will be provided by the innovative platform EnDOW. The project focuses on the preservation of a substantial part of the cultural heritage, including literature, visual arts, and music (and excluding landscapes and buildings). The preservation of the artefacts object of this project is generally entrusted to digitization. The enormous volume of artefacts subject to this digitization makes the preservation costly, not only because of the technology involved but also because of the duty of right

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How the EnDOW platform will work

clearance that falls upon the cultural institutions. These institutions cannot sustain such costs, especially in the long run. This project aims at identifying solutions to substantially reduce these costs, and therefore making the preservation of the cited cultural artefact sustainable in the medium and long run. In turn, this will allow use and re-use of all kinds of cul-

tural heritage. Therefore, after clarifying the European legal landscape for diligent search requirements, the project will explore possible solutions to engineer an unprecedented user-friendly platform for crowd-sourced copyright clearance, with the ultimate aim of lowering to the minimum the costs of mass digitization of cultural heritage contained in the collections of European institutions. This project therefore presents all aspects required by the Heritage Plus joint call as it is collaborative, transnational, interdisciplinary, and innovative. Moreover, the strategic research agenda for the JPI-HP displays a preference for research on tangible cultural heritage while not excluding some interest for the intangible aspects of them. EnDOW is mainly focussed on the preservation of tangible cultural assets through digitization, and therefore covers both tangible and intangible intellectual products in its study and experiments. Crucially, the outcome of the research, as required by the Joint call, will be available to non-academic stakeholders, in particular cultural institutions of every size (including NGOs and SMEs) and to the public at large.

Coordinator

Bournemouth University (UK).

Participants

- CREATE, University of Glasgow (UK).
- IViR, University of Amsterdam (NETHERLANDS).
- ASK, Bocconi University, Milan (ITALY).

Dates

01/07/2015 - 30/06/2018

Budget

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Subject area(s)

Digitization, orphan works, diligent search, copyright clearance, crowdsourcing

Project website

www.diligentsearch.eu