PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Image Databases and Digitisation – platform for ALM-collaboration

TASK DESCRIPTION

Introduction

In applying their signatures to the document "Funding Application for the Project *Image Databases and Digitisation – platform for ALM-collaboration*" (2002-03-02), the directors of Sweden's National Library, the Nationalmuseum, the National Heritage Board, and the National Archives embarked upon a joint venture project that aimed to "build a common platform for collaboration between archives, libraries and museums where standards, norms, and regulations for digital imaging practices and registration may be developed". Finalised funding led to alterations in the initial timeline and scope for the project, however, the objectives have remained intact. The project aims towards the creation of a common working language and agenda for four cultural heritage institutions of differing traditions.

Background

In 1999, CultureNet Sweden charted the activity of more than two hundred digitisation projects in the ALM-sector. In recent years a growing number of archives, libraries, and museums (ALM-institutions) have begun to digitise parts of their collections and presented them in database environments, with or without linked digital image files. In many cases, cultural heritage institutions maintain collections with similar types of objects – maps, drawings, graphic works, photographs, and text documents. Full accessibility, as seen from the end user's perspective, would require that these materials are made accessible through automated searches from a number of entry points. For the user searching for information, it is of little relevance which type of cultural heritage institution it is that physically maintains the sought-after material. Despite a number of common points of interest due to the overlapping of the collections maintained, ALM-institutions work independently and often without much communication regarding digitisation efforts. As a result, the institutions work in isolation from one another with problems that are mutually significant.

Through better organisation, the tasks involved could be realised more efficiently and the numerous problems solved together. Co-operation regarding registration principles and the applied technology would lay a foundation for providing future users the opportunity to conduct searches in a number of cultural heritage institutions' databanks from a single platform. This opens up the possibility, in turn, for new learning opportunities. Among other things, complex searches might then be possible, resulting in relevant "hits" amongst different types of materials in the collections.

Task

The project's task is, over the period of 21 months (2001-03-05 – 2002-12-04), to investigate the prerequisites for co-ordination of strategies with regards to registration, image capture, and digitisation of those objects common to the collections of the participating institutions such as graphic prints, posters, drawings, maps, and photographs. More specifically, this foundational work requires that the project members:
- shall agree upon a common terminology for use within the project
- shall agree upon certain obligatory, common data element sets as well as authority file structure and regulations
- shall compile recommendations for common strategies in the selection of standards and quality specifications for the production and storage of digital image files.

The project contributes to increasing awareness and understanding amongst ALM-institutions, and in this respect, lays the foundation for continued co-operative efforts at both national and regional levels.

PROJECT DIRECTIVE

1. The Project Principals are the Royal, National Library of Sweden, Nationalmuseum, the National Heritage Board, and the National Archives of Sweden.

2. The project's title is "*Bilddatabaser och digitalisering – plattform för ABM-samverkan*" (translated as: "Image Databases and Digitisation – platform for ALM-collaboration").

3. The overall aim of the project is establish a common platform for collaboration between archives, libraries and museums where standards, norms, and regulations for digital imaging practices and registration can be developed. The project shall be conducive in
   - creating a common language and common action plans for digital imaging practices among participating institutions
   - increasing awareness and understanding for the various tasks of ALM-institutions
   - creating a foundation for continued collaborative efforts within the ALM-sector.

4. The project shall result in
   - recommendations for a common terminology for use within the cultural heritage sector with regards to digital imaging practices
   - obligatory and common data element sets, authority files, and guidelines which may be further recommended to institutions in the ALM-sector with regards to digital imaging practices
   - a common strategy in the establishment of standards and quality controls which may be further recommended to institutions in the ALM-sector with regards to digital imaging practices.

5. The project's objectives are limited to and circumscribe the digitisation and registration of those objects common to the collections of the participating institutions. Areas of responsibility and the assignment of tasks with regards to the Project Principals, represented by the Steering Committee, and project participants are delineated in the project plan under the subtitle "Organisation".

6. In addition to institutions in the ALM-sector, possible interested parties include researchers and the general public, as well as the Project Principals and financiers such as the Government, the Swedish Parliament, the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Fund, and other foundations.

7. An evaluation shall be conducted upon completion of the project.

8. The project shall be terminated on December 4, 2002.

The project has a budget of 2 760 000 Swedish kronor. Additional personnel resources are to be provided by the Project Principals.

ACTIVITY PLANS

Activity 1. Survey of Achieved Results and Praxis

Task
In order to provide a basis for the project administration and working groups, a report containing a survey of achieved results and praxis in the ALM-sector shall be conducted. The result is to provide the project committee with a background document against which future priorities and decisions concerning the project direction will be weighed.

The report shall include a descriptive account of the problems connected to registration issues and best practices in database environments in Sweden and abroad. Existing registration systems, data element catalogues, thesauri, and authority files used in the ALM-sector shall be charted. A summary of achieved results and praxis with regards to technical quality specifications and standards shall also be included.

Apart from the descriptive narrative, the report shall include a qualitative analysis of those results that are of particular interest to the project. In addition, the report shall draw attention to those problems in the ALM-sector which remain to be solved.

As a preliminary demarcation of the scope of the report, issues pertaining specifically towards objects such as musical sheet notes, computer graphics, sound, moving images, and paintings shall be excluded from coverage. This demarcation may however be overlooked in instances where the object categories in question affect issues surrounding those types of objects which are central to the project: maps, graphic works, and photographs.

The report shall include a catalogue of links to publications, articles and other websites of particular interest in the field of digitisation.

Time plan
Progress shall be documented continuously and the results delivered to the project committee no later than June 1, 2001.

Activity 2. Terminology

Task
In order to create conditions in which unambiguous and smooth dialogue is possible between the project's participants, the working group shall, together with TNC (Terminologicentrum) define a number of concepts and terms deemed central to the project. The definitions shall in turn be regarded as a reference point for continued work in the project.

Activities

1. Inventory
The working group shall make an inventory of the terms regarded essential to the project for definition.

2. Terminological Methodology
In collaboration with TNC, the working group shall establish working methods.

3. Definition of Concepts
As terms and concepts are often applied with varying meanings in different contexts, there is a great need for co-ordination the terminology in use at participating institutions. In addition, differences in usage at participating institutions shall be presented and discussed.

The following terms should be examined for definition:
archive creator
authority file, authority file register, thesaurus
image, image file, image capture, image database
data carrier
data dictionary
data element, data element dictionary
format, exchange format
indexing, classification
metadata
object
original, digital original, master, copy, representational image
provenance
term
originator/creator
subject heading, motif

4. Compilation of a List of Terms
The working group's results shall be collected in a list of terms with definitions. The list shall primarily be an internal working document within the project but may also be of some use to ALM-institutions and other cultural heritage organisations in implementing similar projects.

Time Plan
Progress shall be documented continuously and the results delivered to the project committee no later than January 19, 2002.

Activity 3. Registration Principles

Task
The working group shall investigate the feasibility of concrete co-operative efforts with regards to data element sets, authority files, and registration praxis for types of objects acquired for collections in common for participating institutions. The purpose of the activity is ensure an open, working dialogue between the ALM-institutions and lay the groundwork for future possible co-ordination of registration principles.

1. Object Categories
As a prefatory activity, the working group will identify and define the different categories of objects acquired for collections common to the participating institutions and relevant for digital registration. The working group will investigate possible existing thesauri or authority file registers that may be used for the comprehensive classification of those common categories of objects.

2. Names of Private Persons
The working group shall analyse the possibility of developing a joint co-operative effort with regards to name authority files between certain central ALM-institutions. The group shall especially study the efforts already established between the Royal, National Library and the National Archives.

The group shall even draw up a proposal as to obligatory data element sets required for registration of private persons, and summarise the special problems inherent when a great number of identities are gathered in a register. One example is the problems that arise when more than one individual shares the same name.

If the working group should find that a joint co-operative effort with regards to authority files is fruitful, then the working group shall leave recommendations as to how such future collaboration should be organised and which institutions ought to participate. Recommendations as to administrative and technical solutions shall also be prepared.

3. Obligatory Data Element
The working group shall compile a proposal delineating obligatory data element required for the description of the different categories of objects acquired for collections common to the participating institutions and which include figurative, ornamental, or representative depictions (in other words, drawings, sketches, graphic prints, maps, photographs, and similar objects).

4. Indexing of Images According to Motif
The working group shall determine the feasibility of using any of existing thesauri or controlled vocabulary registers mentioned in Activity 1. "Survey of achieved results and praxis" for the indexing of images (see types of objects above) according to motif. The possibility of using *Svenska ämnesord (SÄO)* ("Swedish Subject Headings", based on the Library of Congress Subject Headings) shall be particularly explored.

Should the working group find that *SÄO* or any other thesaurus or controlled vocabulary can be used for indexing of images according to motif, then the working group shall prepare recommendations as to how future collaborative efforts ought to be organised. Such a presentation should also include recommendations as to administrative and technical solutions.

Should the working group conclude that a suitable, existing thesaurus or controlled vocabulary does not exist, the working group shall prepare recommendations as to how plans for creating such a thesaurus or controlled vocabulary register should be administered.

Time Plan
Progress shall be documented continuously and the results delivered to the project committee according to the dates set below:

Object Categories: January 11, 2002
Names of Private Persons: March 22, 2002
Obligatory Data Element: June 28, 2002
Indexing of Images According to Motif: November 22, 2002

Activity 4. Technical Quality and Standards

Task
The task consists of investigating and compiling recommendations for technical quality specifications for digital images, that is, digitally stored photographic images of objects which belong in the ALM-institutions' collections. The working group shall in addition document and establish best practices for the creation, storage, and providing access to these images.

1. File Format
The working group shall investigate and analyse formats for long-term storage, presentation, and delivery of digital files in order to be able to provide advice and referrals to different formats for different purposes.

2. Metadata
The working group shall analyse and investigate what metadata should be registered during image capture in order to ensure high quality information in long-term preservation.

3. Quality
The working group shall recommend a common minimum standard for digital image quality according to the specified purpose of the image.

4. Colour Management
Differences in colour reproduction are inevitable, caused by discrepancies in the technical equipment used. The working group shall compile recommendations for establishing and managing correct colour values.

5. Authenticity
The working group shall investigate and compile best practices in ensuring authenticity, that is, rules for ensuring genuineness and accuracy of digital reproductions.

6. Storage of Digital Files on Data Carrier
The working group shall discuss and debate the main principles involved in the short and long term storage of digital files.

The working group shall discuss and debate with what technology and on what kind of data carrier (diskettes, CD-ROM, etc.) the participating institutions ought to store their digital materials. Principles for data migration shall also be explored. The working group shall discuss how the institutions ought to administrate the long-term storage and preservation of their digital materials.

7. Summary of Working Methods and Routines
As an aide to the participating institutions, the working group shall gather and compile recommendations for working methods and routines for digital and photographic imaging. The result should even be of use as a guide to other ALM and cultural heritage institutions.

Time Plan
Progress shall be documented continuously and the results delivered to the project committee no later than September 6, 2002.

PROJECT ORGANISATION

Organsiation
The project consists of a *steering committee*, a *project leader*, a *project committee*, a number of working groups with one *working group leader* and *working group members*, as well as a *reference group*. Each participating institution is represented by at least one delegate in each group.

Roles and Responsibilities

Steering Committee
- decides on date for project start
- stipulates the project budget
- stipulates the project plan
- anchors the project and it's work at each institution
- ensures that the promised resources are made available
- oversees that the project is implemented according to the project plan
- stipulates the closing of the project

Project Leader
- is president of the Project Committee, which implies the creation and distribution of meetings' summons, agenda (including documents which make up the basis for points on agenda and decision-making), leading meetings, as well as the approval of Project Committee meeting memoranda
- draws up, together with the Project Committee, the project plan
- executes decisions made within the Project Committee
- is responsible for following up the Working Groups' results and ensuring that intermediate goals and time plans as stipulated in the project plan are kept
- is responsible for the project budget and the continuous presentation of results
- is responsible for information internal to the project, which includes the position of contact person between the Steering Committee, the Reference Group and Project Committee, as well as between Project Committee and Working Groups
- is responsible for ensuring that project documentation is maintained and is continuously made available and updated on the project's website
- is responsible for reporting to the Steering Committee

Project Committee
- is responsible, together with the Project Leader, for the creation of a project plan
- makes decisions regarding issues which lie within the framework for the project plan, including external information
- is responsible, together with the Project Leader, for overseeing the Working Groups' activities are carried out according to the project plan
- follows continuously the project's economical situation
- is responsible for ensuring that the final report is written

Working Group Leader
- is responsible for ensuring the activity is carried out according to the project and activity plans
- leads and assigns tasks within the group
- is responsible for drawing up meetings' summons, agenda, providing background documents and memoranda for the Working Group meetings
- is responsible for the compilation of the activity's final report
- reports to the Project Leader

Working Group Members
- carry out, together with other Working Group Members, the task according to the project plan
- take part in the Working Group's meetings and shall prepare themselves in advance
- carry out those tasks, between Working Group meetings, which the Group has decided upon and according to the required time involved

Reference Group Members
- act as ambassadors for the project
- are resources for the Working Groups as experts in their fields of speciality

Project Participants

Project Principals
The Royal, National Library of Sweden (KB) www.kb.se
Nationalmuseum (NM) www.nationalmuseum.se
The National Archives of Sweden (RA) www.ra.se
The National Heritage Board of Sweden (RAÄ) www.raa.se

Steering Committee
Johan Mannerheim (KB), *president*
Jan af Burén (NM)
Börje Justrell (RA)
Monika Minnhagen-Alvsten (RAÄ)

Project Leader
Kate Parson (placed at KB)

Project Committee
Kate Parson, *president*
Pia Leth (KB)
Ann Hörsell (RAÄ)
Lillie Johansson (NM)
Göran Kristiansson (RA)
Tomas Rosenberg (NM)

Working Group Members
Ingrid Berg (KB)
Mats Berggren (RA)
Carina Bromark (KB)
Jan Dahlström (RA)
Karl-Magnus Drake (RA)
Magdalena Gram (KB)
Olle Halldin (KB)
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Magnus Matts (RAÄ)
Bengt Neiss (KB)
P. G. Ottosson (RA)
Tomas Rosenberg (NM)
Magdalena Svanberg (KB)
Hans Thorwid (NM)
Karin Åberg Waern (NM)

Reference Group Members
Sven Allerstrand – General Director, The National Archive of Recorded Sound and Moving Images
Janne Backlund – University Lectorat, Dept. of ALM, Aesthetics and Cultural Studies, Uppsala University
Kjell Blückert – Committee Secretary for Knowledge and Society Research, Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation
Ingrid Cantwell – Project Advisor, Stockholm University Library
Stina Degerstedt – Bibliographic Development and Co-ordination, Royal National Library of Sweden
Gunnar Broberg – Professor, Dept. of History of Ideas and Sciences, Lund University
Magdalena Gram – Head of Department, National Museum of Cultural History
Bode Janzon – Director, the Regional Archives in Uppsala
Lena Johannesson – Professor, Dept. of Art History and Visual Studies, Göteborg University
Christer Larsson – Librarian, National Museum of Cultural History
Hans Rengman – Consultant, META; Lecturer Dept. of ALM, Aesthetics and Cultural Studies, Uppsala University
Johan Scherman – Consultant, Medialandet
Anna Tellgren – Research Assistant, Department of the History of Art, Stockholm University
Erik Åström – Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs
Krister Östlund – Project Co-ordinator, "Wallerprojektet", Uppsala University Library