

Emerging Job Roles in Museums: the eCult Skills Project

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Cultural Heritage is one of the main advantages of Europe, already recognized since 1974 by the European Parliament in an initial analysis of the Community action and subsequently by the Digital Agenda 2010 and the Innovation and Communication Union. It is essentially a field of infinite possibilities and in combination with the use of new technologies, culture has the potential to become an important area for increasing the economic and social objectives of Europe towards the strategy Europe 2020. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) so to access the cultural heritage, is a social demand supported by the European policy makers. The development of the cultural industry policies put its strategic objectives in a broader context, seeking to improve the quality of service, which recommends the strengthening of existing staff with digital knowledge and ICT skills but also attracting young professionals.

Towards all these challenges of new technology and addressing ICT solutions for cultural institutions such as museums, the eCult Skills project is the solution. The eCult project explores new jobs that are created by applying the new technologies in cultural heritage institutions. The project entitled "e Skills for Future Cultural Jobs" examines, synthesizes and develops the profile of five new professions associated with culture and new technologies (e-culture). By the term "e –culture" or "digital culture" we mean the digital technologies that help accessing and experiencing the cultural heritage (see Figure 1). This term focuses on digital skills and competences needed for the creation of digital cultural objects/ collections and digital museum, accessible to the public / users for the benefit of the museum and its visitors.

The eCult Skills project¹ (<http://ecultskills.eu/>), co-funded by the EU, a project of transport - innovation, explores new and emerging jobs in the field of e-culture in six

¹ This research was conducted within the project entitled eCult Skills for future Cultural Jobs (Offer Number 2013-1-GR1-LEO05-13884) under the Lifelong Learning Programme - Leonardo da Vinci Project with the acronym eCult Skills. Co-funded by the European Union and the State Scholarships

(6) EU countries. The consortium consisted of six countries: Hellenic Open University (Greece) Euproma GmbH & Co. KG (EPM) (Germany), KIBLA (Slovenia), The Forum of e-Excellence (EMF) (Belgium), Maison de la Promotion Sociale (MPS) (France), Mapas das Ideias, Edições de Publicações (Portugal). The aim is, through a comparison with other European examples, to create national profiles and implement them in the cultural sector. The expected impact allows the creation of a set of comparable skills for these jobs of the future, which will support the European labor market and therefore the employability of professionals while contributing to one of the largest challenges of 2020.

Based on the analysis of labor market needs and the data obtained from the cultural institutions (field research), the eCult Skills project created the following five (5) job role profiles in the cultural sector:

1. Cultural ICT consultant;
2. Cultural ICT Guide;
3. Digital Cultural Assets Manager;
4. Interactive Cultural Experience Developer, and
5. Online Cultural Community Manager.



Figure 1. The use of ICT in Culture

(Source: <http://daissy.eap.gr/files/eCultSkills/ecultskillsslideshare-el.pdf>)

The eCult Skills project was developed in three work packages by adopting the methodology, developed in the EQF - Code project (DE / 08 / LLP-LdV / TOI / 147177) and evolved into iServe project (2010-1-FR1-LEO05-14477). The European Frameworks EQF (European Qualifications Framework) and e-CF (e-Competencies Framework) were used as methodological tools in the research in order to map the ICT skills and the level of knowledge required so to set up profiles and related digital skills at European level. Through these three main directions there is carried out the research of knowledge - skills, competences - necessary for digital culture in the labor market. Additionally, we investigated the type and level training (e.g. training centers, training institutes and tertiary institutions, curricula) which is already provided by the various stakeholders for developing professionals in digital culture. For this purpose each project partner detected the field of education in his country and analyzed the current training levels and also the job profiles in this area. The summary of the data led to the creation, composition and detailed description of the five roles profile on professions of digital culture from each partner in the consortium. The investigation was completed with the design of the Training Schools (Training Guidelines) for providers of Vocational Education and Training for future professionals, from these five job role profiles. For the research: the collection of data for review and comparison was made through the online survey (desk research) with reports / articles / press / jobs / curriculum newsletters / notices and with interviews / questionnaires (field research) with organizations and individuals/ museum staff currently working in the cultural field.

In the eCult Skills project are detected the basic ICT skills necessary for the management/ promotion of digital - digitized cultural property. Research showed that in the case of Greek museums there is need for new job roles to be deployed in the institution, the simple ICT issues are rather often resolved by the existing museum personnel (which has a basic knowledge of ICT). Also, the research showed that the design/ development of the museum digital applications are rather assigned to external partners like IT companies who can undertake the construction of the museum website, the development of Museum Collections Database and of interactive cultural content applications for installations or onsite/ mobile applications (mobile apps) to digitize analog two-dimensional / three-dimensional cultural goods and therefore, create virtual sites.

The museum professionals need digital skills the so-called e-skills in order to meet the needs of the digital age. On the issue of education/ training we found it deficient in providing the relevant training in digital culture. For an effective and comprehensive training of professionals who will respond to the five roles profile we created the Training Guides, called Training Guidelines. In these Training Guidelines we created a template with all the learning objects that should be acquired by the five (5) job roles in order to fulfill the tasks outlined in the detailed profile and obtain the appropriate digital competences (knowledge - skills). Based on the analytical profile of professionals in digital culture, the consortium undertook the design, development and evaluation of innovative training for the five roles that are important to bridge the gap between digital technology and cultural heritage in the area of Museum.