A portal for film archives in Europe: The European Film Gateway

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To date, digitised collections of moving images and cinema-related material are dispersed, lacking the possibility of domain-specific search and access across various repositories, institutions and countries. Considerable challenges exist in several fields: The problem of lacking coherence in metadata standards across the film heritage community has to be tackled in order to meet basic interoperability requirements. Furthermore, the solving of IPR issues is crucial for providing access to moving images and cinema-related material. *EFG – The European Film Gateway* assembles 20 partner institutions from 14 European countries and aims at tackling these challenges around the actual task of building a single access point to digital collections of film institutions in Europe.

Many European film archives and film libraries have recently begun to digitise their stock. This concerns a great variety of materials – films, audio documents, photographs, posters, drawings, text documents. Digital materials have been collected in individual projects, but many of them are currently inaccessible for a broad, international audience because they are stored on local servers or on physical storage media, or because copyright issues prevent world-wide internet access to these resources.

This growing amount of resources of digital materials on the European film heritage is increasingly becoming confusing not only to private, scientific or commercial users, but also for the film archives themselves. The search ability of these digital materials is already difficult at present and will likely become even more complicated with the further growth of providers of digital content. However, investment in the digitisation of both films and film-related material can only be profitable if these digital materials can be accessed: On the one hand, to use these resources effectively and without geographical or temporal restraints; on the other hand, to avoid unnecessary efforts (double digitisation).

As an aggregator project towards the European Digital Library, *EFG* aims at enabling Europe's film archives and cinémathèques to contribute their rich and valuable collections to *Europeana*. Two major issues for access to digital content are being addressed in *EFG*: Technical interoperability and IPR Issues.

The *EFG* project has started in September 2008 and will run for three years. It will launch its public operational service in 2010. *EFG* is co-funded by the *e*Content*plus* programme of the European Commission and co-ordinated by *Deutsches Filminstitut – DIF*. (http://www.europeanfilmgateway.eu, http://www.filmstandards.org, http://www.driver-repository.eu, http://www.multimatch.org, http://www.europeana.eu