Europeana Connect: Listen here!

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The EU-funded project Europeana Connect delivers core components essential to the realisation of Europeana (a.k.a. the European Digital Library) as a truly interoperable, multilingual and user-oriented service for all European citizens. The project adds a critical mass of audio content to Europeana, as well as adapting and enhancing existing audio-aggregation infrastructure to harvest audio from hundreds of audio archives. Europeana Connect provides technologies and resources for semantic enrichment of vast amounts of digital content in Europeana, supports advanced searching and browsing, allows for delivery of enhanced services and makes Europeana content more accessible, reusable and exploitable. Europeana Connect operates in close coordination with the Europeana v1.0 project in developing Europeana into an operational service. The goal is to make the Europeana into a common multilingual access point to Europe's distributed digital heritage, as envisage by the i2010 Digital Libraries initiative of the European Commission. Europeana Connect integrates key added-value services and delivers highly scalable, crucial infrastructure components enabling Europeana to integrate, manage, make interoperable and make available via innovative access channels a vast amount of digital content from libraries, museums, archives and audio-visual collections from across Europe. Key objectives for the project are: 1)Building the Semantic Layer for Europeana 2)Facilitating multilingual access to Europeana 3)Building key infrastructure components and value added services for Europeana 4)Providing tools and methodologies for user driven development and for testing and evaluation 5)Developing novel access channels to Europeana 6)Building the Europeana Licensing Framework 7)Providing a critical mass of audio content to Europeana and implementation of an audio-enabling infrastructure 8)Stronger and wider collaborative networking The audio perspective: Europeana Connect will add the music dimension to Europeana. The project integrates the successful DISMARC framework into Europeana and extends the technical, editorial and legal solutions of this platform. The EU-funded project DISMARC established a multilingual platform for the ingestion of metadata and audio which is now used by a music-interested audience all over the world. The DISMARC Audio Aggregation Platform Back Office Toolbox (components are: User Management, Dictionary, Portal Languages, Data Import, List Thesauri, List Browse, List Providers, Data Mapping), enables content owners to manage their content, and will be extended in Europeana Connect to include functionalities for community-building activities. Audio provision within Europeana Connect will focus on rights-free or wholly-owned audio, in line with the general i2010 perspective concerning IPR. In line with the thematic considerations of the eContentplus programme, content must be also classifiable under themes consistent with eContentplus guidelines by being of general interest. The increased exposure of music archive materials via Europeana will lead to a development of updated workflows and philosophy in archive practice, as the function of archives incorporates a developed additional public service role. The implications of exposure via Europeana increased public and institutional attention, networking, provision of multilingual search tools, extension of metadata and digitising standards, increased exploitation will have a impact upon the role of music archives as content providers. The project will therefore establish best practice routines for these activities.