

Licensing, Metadata and the Use / Reuse of Digital Heritage

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Workshop duration: 2 hours 30 minutes

Workshop overview:

Creative Commons licenses are seeing increasing use in scholarly communication, including applications in the heritage sector. While Creative Commons offers a range of licensing choices, some of them may not be optimal for encouraging scholarly, instructional or artistic reuse of digital heritage content. Furthermore, these licenses are based on copyright and there are important policy questions around whether or not *any* form of copyright protection is appropriate for certain types of cultural heritage content. In some circumstances, the public domain may actually be a more appropriate place for heritage content. In this vein, the new Science Commons Open Data Protocol an intriguing direction that deserves consideration from a policy perspective, particularly where the primary aim is to maximize the exposure and reuse of content.

Along with these licensing questions, this workshop will also address important technical metadata and data standard issues. We will discuss licensing metadata as well as various data formats that enhance the portability of content, easing its use across multiple applications. The Open Context data publication system will be referenced to discuss implementation strategies around licensing, metadata and data portability.

This workshop will appeal to creators of digital cultural heritage content, policy makers, educators and members of the community interested in creative works based on world heritage. Participants will be encouraged to engage in lively exchanges around the above topics.

Part 1: The landscape of “openness”? (45 minutes)

As an introduction to this workshop, we will present an overview of the current “landscape of openness”, with specific reference to the worldwide spread and adoption of open access (OA) publishing models, open source software, Creative Commons licenses, and so-called “open data” efforts. We will explore and discuss some of the currently available technical (ontologies, data formats, web services) and licensing standards used in open publishing. Participants will discuss their experiences with and expectations of “openness”.

Part 2: Incentives and options for sharing cultural heritage (45 minutes)

This section will feature short presentations exploring the various challenges to sharing cultural heritage content, including rival public, professional, national, and indigenous intellectual property claims. Discussion will include an exploration of professional incentives, adoption barriers, and differences in worldviews associated with working with technology. Each presentation will be followed by a roundtable discussion inviting participants to share their perspectives on perceived barriers to sharing and efforts to overcome these challenges.

Part 3: Openness and its Discontents: Current and Future Directions for Cultural Heritage Online (60 minutes)

The third part of the workshop will close with a discussion about emerging trends and directions for sharing cultural heritage online, including Web 2.0 and beyond. We will explore the impact of shifting public and professional expectations and examine how so-called “peer-production” models (such as the Wikipedia) articulate with professional communities. Finally, while open content and open licenses can help widen participation in the processes of cultural heritage knowledge creation, the benefits of openness will not necessarily be enjoyed equally. Some organizations, especially Internet giants such as Google and Amazon, may be better able to capitalize on openness. How will the growing concentration of power toward these major players further shape public and professional understanding of the past?