EuropaeanaLocal End-User Testing
Country Test Report for Poland

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1 Introduction

As required by EuropeanaLocal project, Poznan Supercomputing and Networking Center performed a series of end-user tests in Poland. The tests were conducted between 15th and 28th January 2011 by a group of thirteen moderators in accordance with EuropeanaLocal End-User Testing Specification prepared by Olga McHenry.

1.1 Organization

To achieve best possible feedback from the participants, special emphasis was put on the close cooperation with moderators. Small test groups were organized of one or two persons each. This method was chosen to minimise the possible group influence on the individual opinion, also known as the "bandwagon effect".

There was only one case when a group of seven people (professional users) was questioned at once, due to logistical issues in their workplace.

In order to be able to test many small groups, thirteen volunteers (already familiar with Europeana and the digital libraries domain) were trained to conduct the tests. They later led twenty eight test sessions with forty four end users. All of the sessions took place in the Greater Poland region: most in Poznań (twenty five), two in Swarzędz and one in Konin.

1.2 Questionnaires

As the questionnaires from the tests specification were written in English, for the purpose of conducting the tests in Poland they were translated into Polish. This allowed to include users independently of the knowledge of English. An obvious consequence of this decisions was presenting the Europeana portal always in the Polish version of the interface. Presumably it also helped to test the Polish interface.

Furthermore some exercises were adjusted to cover the actual available functionality in Europeana.eu. The following (sixth) task from the third annex of the test specification:

> "Choose settings of 'My Europeana' best fitting your needs. Save them."

was changed due to the lack of any settings options in 'My Europeana'. Task was transformed into a question connected with the settings in user space:

> "What settings do you miss in 'My Europeana'?"

This was done to minimise the confusion of tests participants.

Finally, as an optional seventh exercise, the following question about hometown was added:

> "Find objects connected with your hometown? Is there something missing?"

This was done in order to stimulate natural interest of the found objects among the end-users and also to test the visibility of local content in Europeana and expectations of users towards it.

2 Description of test events

During ten days of January twenty eight test sessions were run by thirteen moderators in three different cities.

Date	Place	# of end-users	# of events
2011-01-15	Poznań	1	1
2011-01-18	Poznań	1	1
2011-01-20	Poznań, Swarzędz	2	2
2011-01-21	Poznań	9	3
2011-01-22	Poznań, Konin	10	8
2011-01-23	Poznań, Swarzędz	12	8
2011-01-24	Poznań	2	2
2011-01-25	Poznań	1	1
2011-01-26	Poznań	5	1
2011-01-28	Poznań	1	1
		44	28

As required, users from all seven target groups were questioned. The least represented groups were government and professional users – both had only one participant. The most numerous was that of general users, with exactly twenty people. Other groups counted at least four participants.

Target group	# of participants
General user	20
Schoolchild	6
Academic user	5
Expert researcher	1
Professional user	7
Tourist authorities	4
Governments	1
	44

3 Statistics of the group

3.1 Demographic data

All participants were Poles. There were slightly more women (57%) than men (43%), but nothing can be said about the significant dominance of any

sex as you can see in the Figure 1.

People from all age groups were tested, most of them between 19 and 40 year of life (68%). A histogram of the age groups is shown in the Figure 2. The exact numbers are in the following table.

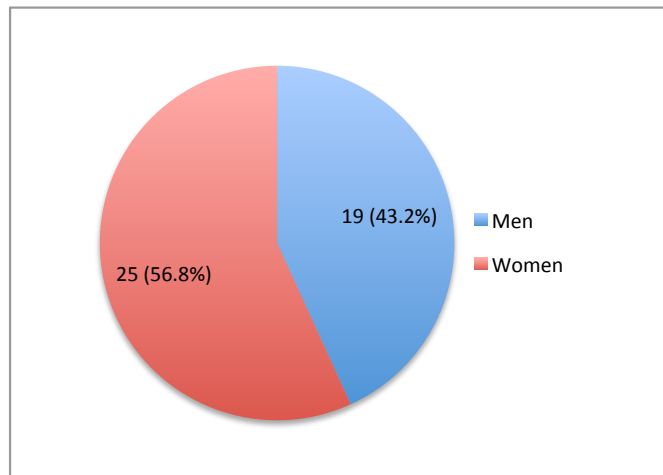| Age group	# of participants	%
< 15	3	6.82%
15-18	3	6.82%
19-24	6	13.64%
25-30	15	34.09%
31-40	9	20.45%
41-50	3	6.82%
51-60	4	9.09%
> 60	1	2.27%

Figure 1: Participants' sex

3.2 Familiarity with Europeana

Most of the participants had not seen the Europeana logo before (32 persons, 73%). Nine persons (20%) had already been familiar with the logo. The rest (3 persons, 7%) were unsure if they recognized it.

Similar situation was encountered when users were asked about using Europeana. Thirty nine (88%) people had never used it before. Three users (7%) had used it for their personal interests and two (5%) for their studies. What is interesting, all users who had used Europeana before, had visited the site because someone told them about it.
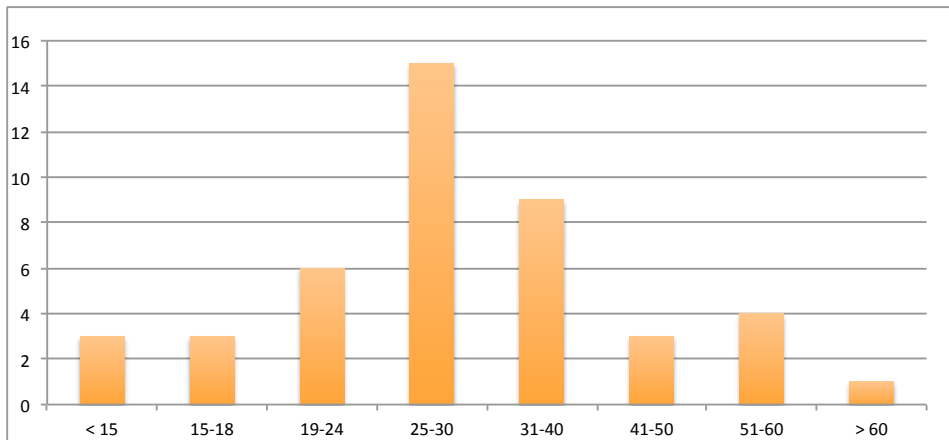
Figure 2: Histogram of participants age.

How many times have you visited Europeana?	# of users	%
This will be my first visit	37	84%
2-4	5	11%
5-9	0	0%
10-19	0	0%
20-29	2	5%
30-39	0	0%
40-49	0	0%
50-59	0	0%
100+	0	0%

Furthermore only thirty seven people where on the European site for the first time (as you can see in the table above). Comparing with thirty nine users who have never used Europeana before, we can see that two of them had visited the site, but had not used it.

3.3 Search habits

Almost all users (41 persons, 93%) search for information on-line often or very often. There was no single person who had never done it. And only five participants had never used an advanced search before.

Question – How often do you...	Never	Rarely	Often	Very Often
search for information on-line?	0	2	11	31
use advanced search features?	5	16	14	9

The advanced search feature which users are most confident in is searching by phrase (28 persons, 63%). The runner-up is searching by date (10 persons, 22%) and last (not far away) – searching using Boolean operators (8 persons, 18%).

4

Participants most often search for text (42 persons, 95%), then for images (16 persons, 36%); only ten persons (22%) for video and eight (18%) for audio. Almost all participants (41 persons, 93%) use Google for searching for images on-line. Only four persons (9%) use Flickr. No one reported using more specialized sites.

3.4 Interest in culture

Two thirds of participants are interested in links between cultures. Almost half of them have never studied any foreign culture in depth before. Similarly, half of them think that we are not losing our cultural identity, in contrast to one fourth thinking the other way around. Finally only one third have been involved in local culture projects.

Question	Yes	No	Not sure
Are you interested in links between cultures?	28	8	8
Have you studied about any foreign culture in depth?	20	15	9
Are people losing their cultural identity?	23	12	9
Have you been involved in local culture project?	14	22	8

3.5 Information sources

As it was expected, most participants get information via Google (36 persons, 81%). Far behind Google is Wikipedia with seven votes (15%) and then digital libraries and GoogleBooks, both with a one vote (2%).

When the sites used for homework are considered, numbers are different: Google – 11 persons (25%), Wikipedia – 9 persons (20%), digital libraries – 2 persons (4%) and PubMed – 1 person (2%).

Based on the above numbers it can be assumed that people are not bound to any specialized site (except from Wikipedia for homework). They prefer using a general-purpose search engine which redirects them to (or so they think) the most appropriate site, rather than any other specialized source of information.

4 First impressions of Europeana

4.1 Europeana ranking

Below are the calculated coefficients for different characteristics of Europeana.

Attribute	Avg.	Min.	Max.	Std. dev.	Median	Mode
Attractive	6.16	1	10	2.01	7	7
Fun	5.07	1	10	1.79	5	6
Well organised	6.55	2	10	2.23	7	5
Exciting	6.05	1	10	1.99	6	6
Easy to use	7.23	1	10	2.30	8	8
Interesting	7.45	1	10	2.23	8	8
Unique	6.70	1	10	2.27	7	8

As it can be noticed, minimal and maximal values range from the worst to the best possible rank. Standard deviation is usually near two, which is a medium value for a ten-point scale. Moreover, the histogram in the Figure 3 shows that among participants there was no strong common opinion on any of the given attributes.

What can be deducted from the histogram and coefficients is that the site is 'interesting' and 'easy to use' in most cases. The median and mode are at the level of eight which means that at least half of the users graded eight points for those attributes. The worst assessed characteristic is 'fun'. Average value, median and mode are five, which means that the site neither is boring nor fun.

The interesting case is 'attractiveness'. The most frequent value is seven (assessed by one fourth of users), also the median is seven. However the average value is a little more than six. It means that there are ranks substantially lower than seven and values larger than seven do not overweight those low numbers. It makes the average value lower than median and mode value. Similar case is with 'uniqueness' and 'easiness of use'.

4.2 Europeana is about...

From all users associations only those which were repeated at least two times (not always identically, but in a way which was similar enough) are included. For some original ideas exceptions were made. The number of users who entered that association is given in brackets.

- Place where you can find interesting things (12).

- Digital library, museum and archive with diverse resources (8).

- Search engine (7).

- Set of valuable information about European and world culture (6).

- Aid in learning (6).

- Site promoting culture of different countries (5).

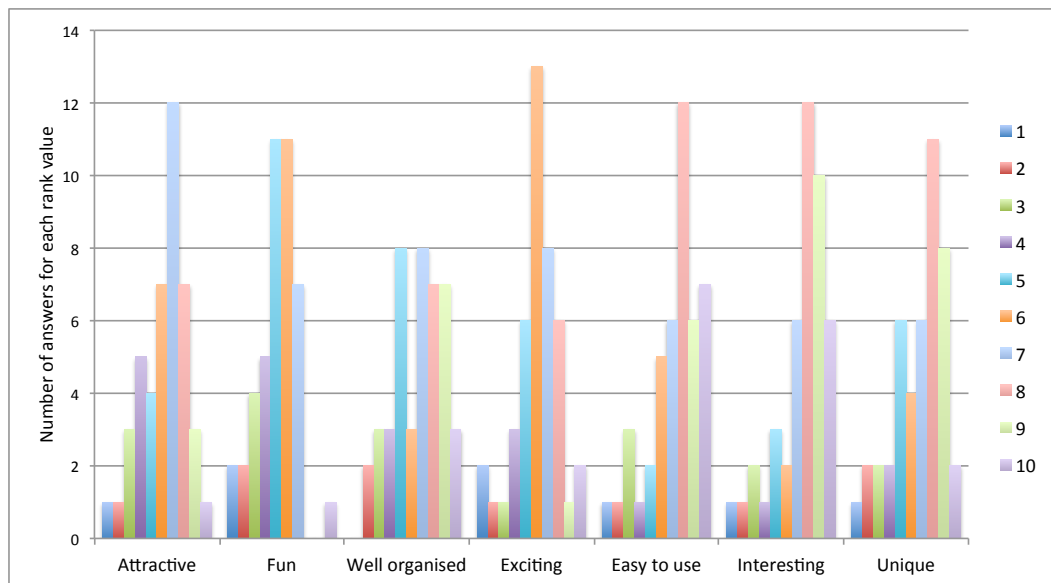- Cultural institutions and their resources in one place (4).

Figure 3: Histogram of ranks of Europeana website.

- Web page (4).

- New ways of accessing information (3).

- Web page for people interested in culture (3).

- Unknown page which is insufficiently promoted (3).

- Good, needed idea (2).

- Tool of work (2).

- Easy access (2).

- Integration agent of European culture (1).

- Cultures aggregator (1).

- Showcase of European diversity (1).

- Reliability (1).

5 Deeper impressions of Europeana

5.1 Language issue – exercise 1

All users observed that language influenced search results. Some voiced their concerns that it should be improved in order to get better search results.

Language was also an issue while reading objects descriptions. Descriptions are in different languages depending on the provider. It irritated some of participants, because they could not understand what kind of the search result they found.

5.2   Time period - exercise 2

Most participants found it extremely difficult to retrieve publications connected with a specific period of time. It was more intuitive for them to enter a phrase "1780-1880" in the simple or advanced search box (which returned no results), rather than use refinements. One of the reasons can be a problem with noticing refinements on the left side. Some blamed it on the grayish background and font colors used or on folded refinements details. If they noticed a data refinement box, it was an arduous task to mark all one hundred and one dates (also because of the unnatural order of the dates in the refinement component). Thus they would usually stopped checking dates after a minute with few dates chosen. Of course there were isolated cases when users chose the search results view called "browse through time" (but it was often unseen!). Then it was easier for them to distinguish objects from given time period.

It was also illogical for them that they cannot do the same thing with the advanced search that they can do with refinements (other example: choosing language or provider).

5.3   Relevance of objects – exercise 3

Most participants accomplished this task without any problems. There were some cases when refinement by the data provider was impossible to find. Sometimes they tried to enter the provider name in the advanced search box, but it did not return anything. Sometimes participants stated that term "provider" was unclear for them. Those who completed the task in majority stated that the displayed objects are relevant.

5.4   User space – exercise 4, 5 and 6

Almost one fourth (ca. 10 people) of test participants were unuable to register or had problems while registering. There were two main symptoms: after registration they could not log in or the email with registration information did not come. In several cases people could not understand what is the difference between logging and registering (especially older people). It should be clarified. But the main obstacle was finding the proper link to the logging/registration page. Many times it was easier to notice it on the search results page on the left side under the refinements box than in the header of each page of Europeana. The main reason is probably the incorrect translation of the link in the header, orginally "My Europeana", into Polish

"Zachowaj w Moja Europeana", which in fact means "Save in My Europeana". Other said that the standard term "My Europeana" is also unintuitive.

When a task required search refinement by language, the same problems were observed as with the refinement by date in the third exercise (unnoticed refinement functionality or using advanced search first). Moreover, using two-letter codes for languages (!), not their names, was a big problem to overcome for many.

Also, a link for saving searches was hard to find on the spot. Some users suggested that putting it closer to the search box is more intuitive.

What is interesting, more than thirty people did not answer the question about what settings they would like to have in their user space. One user explained that he never uses such functionality on any web site.

5.5   Local content

Although many users were able to find content connected with their hometown, there were voices that there are too few such resources. Especially with images, videos and objects from other cultural institutions than libraries (e.g.: from well-known museums in the city). In spite of that they were positively surprised that such content was already in Europeana.

6   Lasting impressions – intention to use Europeana

6.1   Intention to use

The substantial majority (70%) have declared that they will use Europeana (see the Figure 4) even though many voiced their concerns about different parts of the Europeana portal.
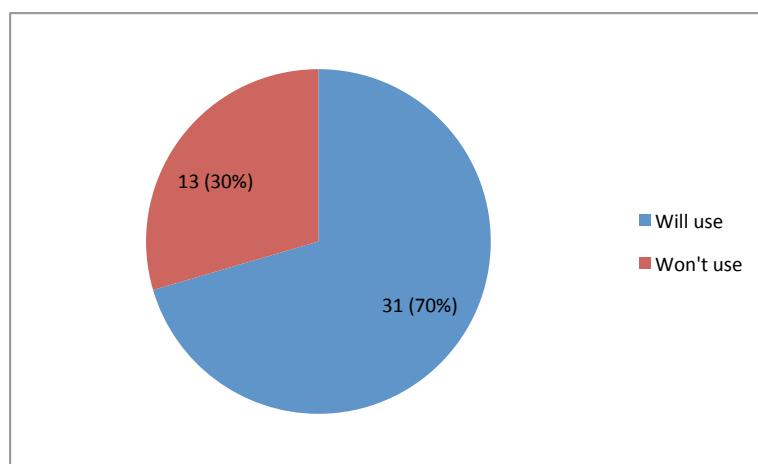

Figure 4: Intention to use Europeana in future

Furthermore participants declared that their standard search engine will be still Google, as they assume that Google will have all results from Europeana. Only if they do not find anything interesting via Google, they will use Europeana.

6.2   More in Europeana

Despite the fact that Europeana has currently more that fifteen million digital objects, people want more and more resources, especially contemporary works and objects from Poland (maybe the reason is the language issue). Some have specifically pinpointed video (6 people), image (6 people) and audio (4 people) objects.

Others wanted to see more museums, archives and audio-visual collections. A professional user regretted that not all digital libraries which he uses on daily basis are visible via Europeana. There was even a suggestion that giving the exact number and a list of content providers (in contrast to the list of aggregators) would be a big incentive.

6.3   Personal opinions

Below most frequent or most interesting personal opinions are cited. Similar sentences were merged into one. The numbers added in brackets indicate how many users has expressed the given opinion.

Europeana...

- is an interesting site (6).

- has great potential (5).

- is a good idea (5).

- needs more work (5).

- is useful (5).

- is hard to understand at the beginning (4).

- makes many cultural resources available (3).

- is more useful for pupils, students and researchers than for common people (3).

- is interesting for people connected in any way with culture (3).

- is helpful in finding something very specific (2).

- is not interesting (2).

- is an unknown search engine (lack of promotion) (2).

- has a big advantage – no advertisements (1).

- is only for computer literate people (1).

7 Comments and recommendations for improvements suggested by the test-group participants

7.1 Recommendations

- Sending the email with registration information faster.

- In the search results page, when refining by date, the dates should be sorted by date, not by the number of search results.

- Strongly advised full translation into Polish language. Some improvements also have to be made (e.g.: in the footer, the word 'Privacy' is translated into 'Serbia' in the Polish version of the interface, also 'Using Europeana' and 'Language Policy' from the footer are improperly translated).

- More frequent updates from content providers.

- Better user-interface (layout, design) with easy-to-find F.A.Q., tutorials and 'about' information.

- More search options, e.g. distinguished search functionality for time periods or geographical places (for example: disambiguation of different geographical locations with the same name).

- Multilingualism/cross-language features – the query language should not influence search results (it should be automatically translated into other languages).

- In the search results view, there should be an option to go to the first or the last page.

- In user space, add history of searches.

- In user space, add an option for saving default language of search results.

- In user space, add recommended resources based on previous users searches.

- In user space, add grouping of saved searches/tags/objects according to chosen label defined by a user.

- In user space, add sorting of saved searches/tags/objects.

- In user space, improve saved searches description. Sometimes it is impossible to distinguish two different searches according to its label.

- Add user forum.

- For logged-in users, add a possibility to personalize Europeana, e.g.: changing site colors, adding your own picture.

- Browsing functionality would be a nice feature for the first-time users.

7.2 Bugs

- In advanced search, when you enter a search query only in the second field, there is an error message after search execution.

- When users choose the Polish version of the Europeana interface, the email with the registration information comes in English.

- When user was logged-in, there were repeated problems with saving search results.

- Users were often logged out by surprise in different moments while using Europeana.

8 Comments of the moderator

8.1 First contact with Europeana

Some users expressed their initial attitude towards Europeana as expecting something like Wikipedia with objects described as in an encyclopedia. They could not explain what was the reason of this association.

While participants where getting to know Europeana, they usually chose between two approaches. The first was experimenting with the search functionality of Europeana, checking the results description and then results content on the providers sites. This one was more common with younger users (e.g. school children). The other approach was reading all possible descriptions of the portal (e.g.: 'about' information, FAQ) and then, optionally, searching for something.

It was also noticed by participants that the content type distinction into texts, images, sounds and videos is very well resolved.

8.2 Viewing content

Viewing content on the providers site often created confusion because of redirecting away from the original site. Additionally the sites are not even similar and differ for each data provider. Moreover there was a question about content availability and how often it is checked by Europeana.

Many times paid access was discouraging.

In some cases, the content was very small and similar to a thumbnail, so had no practical use to the participants. Sometimes it deviated from the description, e.g. it was described as a song, but there was only music with no singing.

8.3   Searching

While performing searching tasks, many users tried to use the Google query syntax for advanced search features. It seems that Google, by its popularity, has created a standard. As users are usually reluctant to learn new ways of doing the same thing, it could be a good pattern to follow.

Refinements were usually very hard to find at the beginning (as mentioned in the section 5.2).

Sorting sequence for search results is confusing.

In the object description, when the object had no thumbnail, users usually had no idea how to get to the content. The link at the bottom right is completely unnoticeable. On the other hand, with thumbnails it was natural to click on the image.

8.4   Catching users attention

It is a good idea to show users the interesting aspects of Europeana and why it is worth to use it. Unfortunately, the exhibition widget was usually unnoticed and rarely clicked. Those who chose exhibitions were satisfied with the one about art-nouveau. On the other hand, exhibitions based simply on searching were confusing and users browsed away fast.