

A COST MODEL FOR ANALYSING AND CONTROLLING THE COST OF LONG-TERM DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY AS A STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING TOOL

Workshop by Eye Filmmuseum and BMC

H. Uffen

The Netherlands

herman.uffen@bmc.nl

W. Swagemakers

The Netherlands

walterswagemakers@eyefilm.nl

E. van Velzen

The Netherlands

ernstvanvelzen@eyefilm.nl

I. BACKGROUND: A COST MODEL FOR LONG-TERM DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

For some time now, heritage organisations and other institutions have been in agreement about the need for the long-term preservation and accessibility of valuable digital resources. What is much less clear, however, is how much this would cost. In many cases, not enough consideration is given to the long-term cost of curating digital collections, often because very little is actually known about this aspect. As a result, such management costs are frequently not included in the ordinary operating expenses of the institutions in question. Moreover, many heritage institutions tend to assume that the long-term costs are very high, partly due to the exponential rise in the volume of material, whether digitised or born-digital. In many cases, incidental revenue (i.e. project income) is used to pay for long-term management costs. But is this assumption correct? And how can we control the cost of curating digital collections in the long term?

II. EXPERIENCES WITH THE COST MODEL AS A STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING TOOL FOR DIGITAL PRESERVATION.

The second part of the workshop focuses on the practical use of the cost model and its potential as a tool for supporting strategic decisions on the design and management of a digital infrastructure. We will be looking specifically at two use cases involving Eye Filmmuseum in Amsterdam. In the first of these cases, Eye used the cost model as a tool for supporting strategic decisions of its own. The second case involved another Amsterdam-based

organisation in addition to Eye. This was LIMA, a platform for media art, new technologies and digital culture. In a joint project, Eye and LIMA sought to ascertain whether storing LIMA's digital collection in Eye's e-store would generate the benefits it was intended to generate.

Not only was Eye closely involved in the development of the cost model, it also took part in the trial and was one of the first institutions to adopt the model in practice.

During the period in which Eye made use of the model, it was confronted by rising costs of digitisation and of curating and providing access to its digital heritage collection. These rising costs – a trend spanning a number of years – came over and above the cost of curating the analogue collections. Having previously outsourced the management of its storage facilities and digital assets, it now had to take a strategic decision on whether to create a digital infrastructure itself, work in partnership with another heritage institution or subcontract the activities to an external supplier. In order for an institution to reach the right decision, it needs to have a clear picture of the costs throughout the entire ingest, storage and access chain.

Part 2A: Eye use case

Using Eye Filmmuseum as a case study, this part of the workshops looks at how the cost model works in practice, what sort of information it generates, and how this information can be used as the basis for strategic decisions on how to proceed in the future. We will also be demonstrating how the cost model

can help arts institutions to supply their funders (which tend to be government bodies) with information on the long-term funding they need in order to develop and manage a digital infrastructure, and on the reasons for the choices they make. Eye's experiences are particularly interesting given that the results of the cost model were audited and validated by an independent research agency. It was partly on the basis of these figures that the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science decided to allocate long-term funding to Eye's digital infrastructure.

Part 2B: Eye-LIMA use case

As part of a Digital Heritage Network project, LIMA and Eye partnered up in order to ascertain whether storing LIMA's digital collection in Eye's e-store would generate the benefits it was intended to generate. The assumption at the start of the trial was that LIMA would be able to make efficient use of the economies of scale offered by Eye's e-store and that the additional storage would not place an unacceptable burden on Eye's system nor require any disproportionate adjustments to be made to Eye's infrastructure. Thanks in part to the application of the cost model, Eye and LIMA were able to make a clear decision on which strategy to follow.

III. WORKSHOP FORMAT

The workshop on the cost model for long-term digital accessibility consists of three parts:

1. Introduction to the cost model:
 - a. How the idea came about
 - b. Structure and operation
 - c. Results
 - d. Link with other fields: preservation policy and shared services
2. Use cases: tutorial
 - a. Eye's experience with the cost model as a tool for supporting strategic decisions
 - b. Experience with the cost model as a tool for exploring the possibility of a partnership between Eye and LIMA

Discussion based on statements and questions, combined with an exercise based on the participants' own practical needs. The participants play an active role in this part of

the workshop: our aim is to encourage them to reflect on practical problems in their own specific fields of work.

IV. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

- Number of participants: maximum of 20-25. This is an interactive workshop. Participants will be expected to share their experiences and to think about using the cost model in their own work.
- Duration of the workshop: maximum of 2½ hours including break.
- Room layout: cabaret-style. The workshop is given partly in the form of tutorials and partly in the form of discussion and exercises. For the latter part of the workshop, the participants need to sit at tables in groups, so that they can work together on the questions and exercises.
- We need an LED projector and a screen.