Who are the users of digital libraries, what do they expect and want? The Europeana experience

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Who are users?

General users: people that use a system seeking some kind of result, just for curiosity, for need or for entertainment.

Specialised users: people that get highly acquainted with a specific tool or website, without being a professional user

Professional users: people that use a tools or websites highly relying on the tool to get specific results

Representative users: people that "know something" and are used for defining user-requirements, testing and specifying needs

When conceiving a tool, software or website there are a certain number of usability considerations:

-Who are the users?

-What do they want or need?

-Which is the use context?

-What is there background?

What is usability?

General definition: ease with which people can employ a tool or object in order to achieve a particular goal

Human-computer interaction: Elegance and clarity with which the interaction with a program or website is designed, in other words:

Efficient - Easy - Satisfying

Usability **constraints on the Web:** Websites have to be grasped immediately, there is nothing like a manual for a website, there is no time for learning

Measurement concepts for *usability* **are**: Learnability, Efficiency, Memorability, Errors and… *Satisfaction*

Some examples, by Jean Fox and Janice Nall

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What are requirements?

The set of needs necessary for any project to be successful; they define what a system should do and how

Functional requirements: what you want a system to do
"I want a vehicle capable of transporting material from one place to the other"

Non-functional requirements: restrictions on the types of solutions that will meet the functional requirements
"It has to be capable of transporting 2 Tons of material, not larger than 1m80 or higher than 2m"

Design objectives: are the guides to use in selecting a solution
"Easy to use, red seats, plastic doors…"

Europeana project

Functional requirements: A Portal to access European contents from 4 domains: Libraries, Archives, Audiovisual Collections and Museums

Non-functional requirements: Should be capable of containing up to 10 million objects, permit multiple access, not contain the contents but their surrogates, respect publishing rights, etc.

Design objectives: Should be user friendly (of course!) and permit different categories of users to make the best out of it, plus different functionalities (my Europeana, send to a friend, communities, etc).

Who are the Europeana users?

General user: people that visit the Europeana portal just for curiosity or seeking sporadically for a specific information or content.

School child, Students: one of the great potentials for Europeana, makes access to cultural contents easy, permits to conceive online courses

Academic student, Teachers: looking for certified information, and possibility of exporting information for courses or research works

Expert researcher, explores all the possible sources, annotates and uses them thoroughly, wants access to the largest possible amount of contents

Professional user, experts in the domain, archivists, librarians, curators, searching and verifying information

Content holders: they know what they have and how to access it

How should Europeana look like?

Simple look?
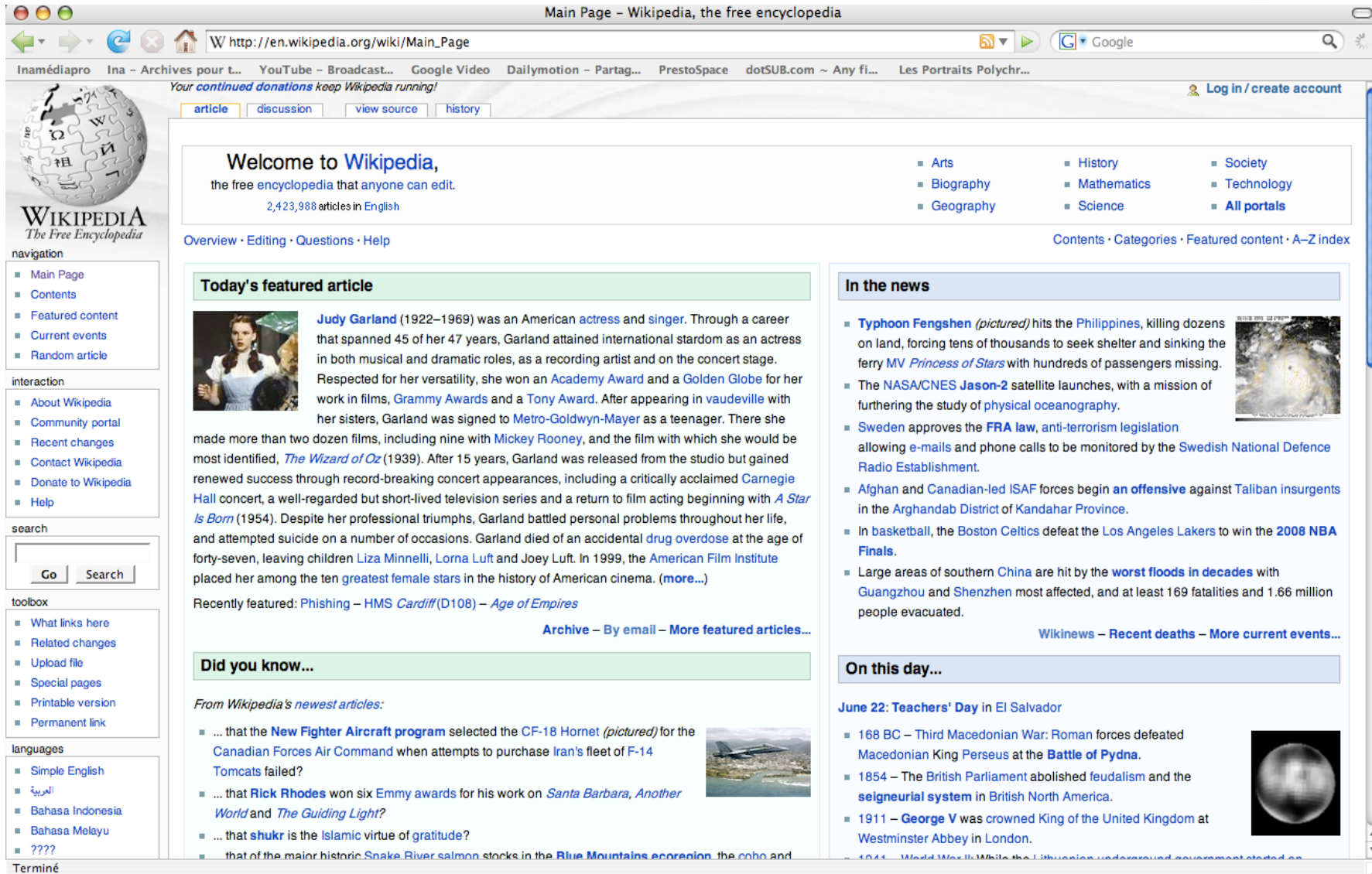
How should Europeana look like?

Lots of information?

First prototype of Europeana (jan 08)

The actual prototype of Europeana:

My Europeana   **Communities**   **Partners**   **Timeline (beta)**   **Thought lab**   Choose a language

This is Europeana - a place for inspiration and ideas. Search through the cultural collections of Europe, connect to other user pathways and share your discoveries. Find out more

[ ] **Search**

Advanced search

europeana

Kultur. Denken.
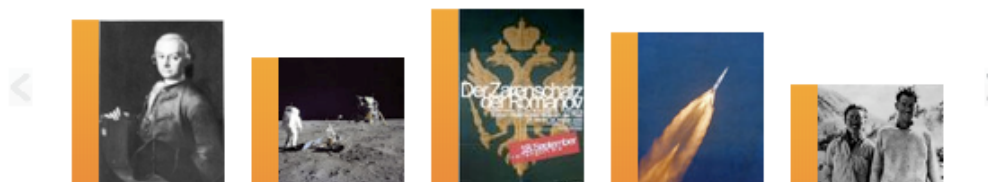
Share your ideas:

Send us feedback →

People are currently thinking about:

Manchester United →

Gaelic →

Cambridge →

Timeline navigator:

Browse through time. →

New content:

From our partner museums, archives, → libraries and audio-visual collections

Measuring user satisfaction

Different approaches to get user feedback:

On-line surveys

Feedback inbox

Log-in analysis

Focus groups surveys

Advisory board

Expert analysis

Measuring user satisfaction

On-line surveys

First survey done in May 2009, very good responses and reactions to the site the usability and the whole project.

Among the interesting comments:

1) Large amount of users did not see "My Europeana" or didn't understand what it was about

2) Users want to publish their own contents on the Portal

3) Users would want chat possibilities (young users)

Measuring user satisfaction

Feedback inbox

Interesting reactions from users who voluntarily express their opinion either to congratulate, to propose new technical facilities, or to request for new partners

Categories	Percentage (number of emails received)
Congratulatory	22% (203)
Technical (including: registration, languages, spelling, bugs, API's, search issues etc.)	18% (170)
Unknown Languages	11% (99)
Partner Requests	10% (92)
Content	9% (87)
Content Strategy Requests	5% (42)
Suggestions	5% (50)
Companies	4% (35)
Press List	4% (39)
Abusive	4% (39)
Student questions	1% (6)
Job requests	1% (9)

Measuring user satisfaction

Log-in analysis:
Being done, first results presented in September

Focus groups surveys:
First focus groups surveys to be done in September 2009, 4 or 5 different groups from different countries to be studied

Advisory board
Group of users interested in the portal and eager to discuss or participate to evaluations (currently under construction)

Expert analysis
Expert analysis to be undertaken in September 2009

Importance of user reactions

- Influences the development of the next Europeana version (called Rhine version)

- Gives a good indicator of what users like and think

- Saves development time if properly done

- Gives an active role to users making them interact with the Portal and react to its evolution

- Gives a view of the impact ot the Europeana project

Conclusions

It is important to carefully observe the habits of users and the possibilities of technology

In any case, never leave the users out, but consider them to their right knowledge

A queer ending !
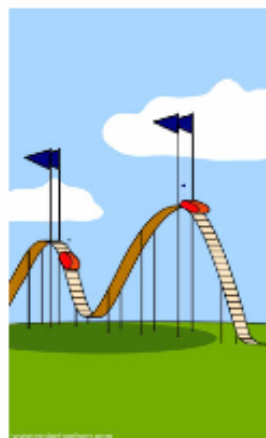
Thanks for your listening