

The Kultur Project: Academic Audience

Partners:

- **The University of Southampton**
- **The University of the Arts London (UAL)**
- **University College for the Creative Arts at Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester (UCCA)**
- **Visual Arts Data Service (VADS)**

Funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)

Background

The aim of the Kultur project is to create a model of an institutional repository tailored to the specific needs of the creative arts research community. Digital repositories have started to play an increasingly significant role within Higher Education Institutions as a means of managing and promoting research and educational assets. However, the recent development of repositories has largely focused on text-based research. Consequently, they have had less of an impact in the creative and applied arts than in other disciplines. The Kultur project seeks to address this imbalance by creating a multimedia repository with the flexibility to represent both theory and practice-led research. So alongside traditionally text-based outputs, such as journal articles, book chapters, papers and catalogue essays, this new model will also be able to store and retrieve a range of digital objects, reflecting the breadth of practice-based research carried out in the creative and applied arts. This range of outputs could include digital versions of painting, photography, printmaking, performance, film, installations, and graphic and textile design amongst other forms.

Benefits

The development of a multifunctional, multimedia digital repository will bring a number of benefits to academics working in the arts. It will increase the visibility of institutional and individual research profiles by acting as a showcase for research outputs. It will help to promote work within the scholarly community as well as to audiences outside of HE, with the potential to strengthen cross-domain partnerships with art galleries and museums. An arts-based repository will dramatically increase access to research outputs by making them visible globally through search engines such as Google.

Capturing an institution's intellectual assets in digital form will also enhance research-led teaching: once stored in the repository, items can easily be re-used for educational purposes, for example through links to a Virtual Learning Environment.

Approach

This is a user-led project, which will work closely with the academic community at every stage. In particular, the creation of appropriate copyright policies, the choice of file formats and cataloguing standards, will be informed by feedback from researchers and arts practitioners. The partnership represented by the project brings together expertise in the creative and applied arts sector (UCCA and UAL), specialist knowledge of the digital environment (VADS), and experience of successful institutional repository development (Southampton). An important part of the project will be to investigate the software, copyright, metadata and preservation issues specific to the management of creative arts assets. This will help to shape the structure of two new pilot repositories, which the EPrints team at Southampton will develop for each of the partner arts institutions. Southampton will also develop the cultural content of its existing repository with input from the Winchester School of Art, a constituent part of the University. The main output of the Kultur project, then, will be a technical and policy model of a creative arts repository which can be adopted by other colleges and universities in the future. More broadly, it is also anticipated that the project will improve the recognition of practice-based research and lead to a greater understanding of the ways in which research outputs are used and re-used within this sector.