Participation of small cultural heritage institutions in the digital world

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**Abstract:** Considering the complexity of the concept of digitization, an approach of a ‘stand-alone’ project is bound to fail in the long run, since projects as such are not designed to provide long-term solutions. Since long-term accessibility is one of the prime goals of digital presentation, a couple of components are needed. These components are selection of content, creation of catalog-datasets, creation of digital representations of the original content, compilation of said parts for a presentation platform and the preservation of the digital information and objects with all its challenges.

In the German state of Brandenburg, there is a workgroup which focus lies on the digital presentation of the cultural heritage of all areas, such as archives, museums and libraries. A 2009 study by this group showed all the challenges, especially for the many smaller institutions. In 2012 the University of Applied Sciences Potsdam provided a concept study on how to enable institutions to make a contribution to the German Digital Library. Many smaller institutions lack the financial and organizational capacity to provide all the means necessary. Without a cooperative approach, those many small institutions would fall behind.

The only feasible approach is that of a network of regional partner institutions who offer their knowledge and infrastructure to the ones in need. We also learned that a coordination office is needed to handle the organizational functions for this network.

In late 2012, such an office was established at the University of Applied Sciences in Potsdam.

**Keywords:** cultural heritage, cooperation, digital presentation
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