

Tools for Culture:

The Resonance & Use of Online Tools in the Cultural Sector

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How do different cultural organizations collaborate online? Which tools do they use? The research mapping of online collaboration and tool use in the cultural sector found that online collaboration occurs most significantly in forums. Newsletter circulation is also a frequent activity. Viewed across sub-sectors, the types of tools used vary. National governments employ RSS feeds with far greater frequency than any other organizational type. Cultural databases use del.icio.us, the social bookmarking tool, far more often than other categories of organizations. The newsletter is popular amongst research institutes, observatories and educational training institutions.

There is growing body of literature on the topic of tools for collaboration. The research mapping is a contribution to the literature through the study of the types of tools used across a significant sample of organizations working in the cultural sector.

Research Mapping

Data Set:

LabforCulture.org has an online directory containing organizations working in the cultural sector in Europe. The English-language directory was scraped on 16 November 2007, and saved as a worksheet. It contains over 500 entries. The 500-plus organizations serve as the data set for the study on trends in collaborative tool use by the cultural sector.

Data set: **LabforCulture_scrape_16November2007.xls**

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Questions:

Are the tools, highlighted by LabforCulture,* used by the cultural sector? Which types of organizations make use of particular tools in the cultural sector? Are there organizational types that use more tools than others (also in terms of the variety of tools used)? Are there favorite tools, and favorite tools per sector?

Methods:

Map the tool use by organizations in LabforCulture's directory, as well as the tool use by type of organization in LabforCulture's directory.

- a) Identify tools.
- b) Rip inlinks and outlinks from each organization's Website. Count links to tools.

c) Sort and cloud by overall tool use and by tool use per organization type.

Tools
Blinklist
Citeulike
Del.icio.us
Digg
Flickr
Folkd
Forum
Furl
Google
Login
Mister-wong
Newsletter
Reddit
RSS
Yahoo

Organizational categories
Arts, Cultural & Media Organizations
Cultural Databases
Educational & Training
Foundations
Intergovernmental & Transnational
National Institutions & Agencies
National Governments
Networks & Associations
Professional Unions
Research Institutes & Observatories
Regional Local & Public Administrations

* The list of tools is gleaned from the 'LabforCulture online collaboration tools' blogpost as well as from the bookmarking tools used on labforculture.org.¹



FIGURE ONE: ICONS FROM SOCIAL BOOKMARKING TOOLS. (SOURCE: LABFORCULTURE.ORG)

Findings:

1. Are the tools, highlighted by LabforCulture.org, used by the cultural sector? Are there favorite tools?

Popular and unpopular tools overall. The most popular tool in the cultural sector is forum (144), followed by newsletter (102), rss (79), del.icio.us (43), login (43) [indicating membership/community], digg (42) and google (15). Underutilized tools include yahoo (6), flickr (3), reddit (2), and furl (2). Unutilized tools (with one or no references) are mister-wong (1), citeulike (1), folkd (0) and blinklist (0).

¹ LabforCulture Team, "New tools for collaboration," LabforCulture blog, 23 March 2007, <http://www.labforculture.org/en/community/blogitem/6694>.

Tools for Culture_ Overview of popular and unpopular tools

Research Question_ Are the tools, highlighted by LabforCulture.org, used by the cultural sector? Are there favorite tools?
Findings_ The most popular tool in the cultural sector is forum, followed by newsletter, rss, del.icio.us, login (indicating membership/community), digg and google.

forum (144)
newsletter (102) rss (79)
del.icio.us (43) login (43) digg (42) google (15) yahoo (6)

flickr (3) furl (2) reddit (2) citu/ke (1) master-wong (1) foxe (0) bkwist (0)

Source_ LabforCulture English-language directory (484 urls)
Query_ Use Inkripper and search for tools in urls
Method_ Count and cloud the results
Date_ 19 November 2007

Product_of the Digital Methods Initiative,
dml.medialstudies.nl, and Govcom.org
Analysis_by Sabine Niederer and Richard Rogers
Design_by Anne Helmond



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FIGURE TWO: THIS CLOUD GIVES AN OVERVIEW OF WHICH TOOLS, IDENTIFIED BY LABFORCULTURE.ORG, ARE POPULAR AND UNPOPULAR IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR. TOOLSFORCULTURE_OVERVIEW.PDF.

2. Which types of organizations are using the tools most significantly?

Types of organizations using tools overall. Cultural databases (262, or 54%) has the greatest tool use, followed by national governments (54, or 11%), networks & associations (42, or 9%), intergovernmental & transnational bodies (30, or 6%), arts, cultural & media organizations (23, or 5%), research organizations & observatories (22, or 5%), foundations (18, or 4%), national institutions & agencies (12, or 2%), professional unions (11, or 2%), educational & training institutions (8, or 2%), and regional & local public administrations (1, or 0%).

Types of organisations using tools overall

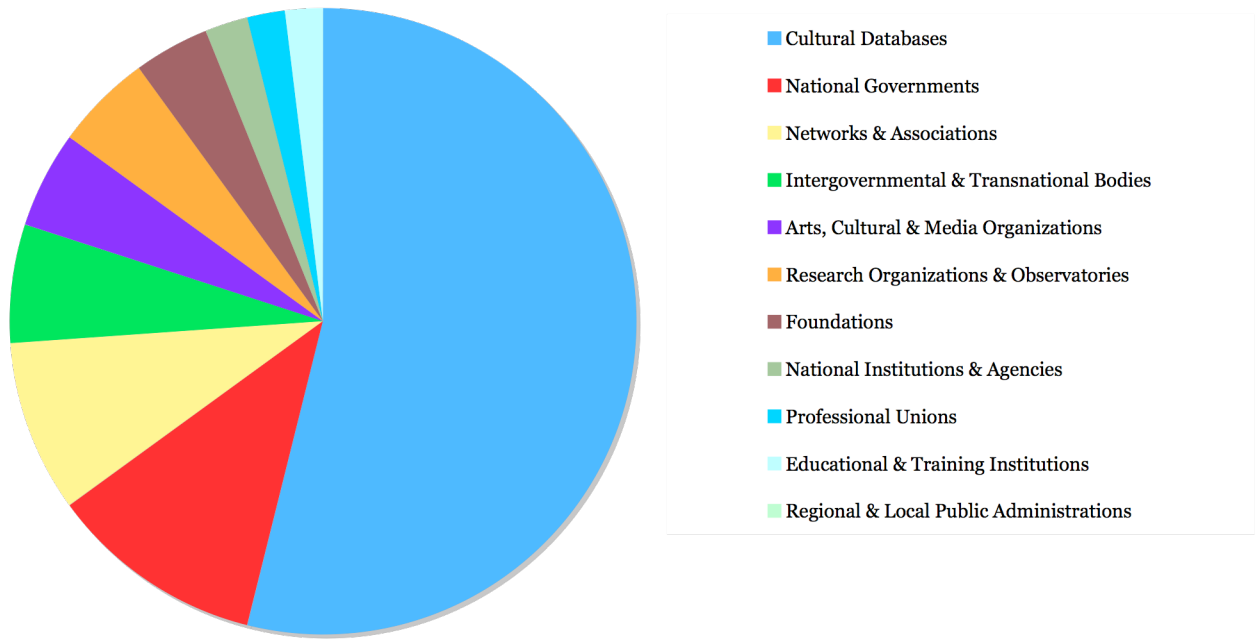


FIGURE THREE: THIS CHART SHOWS THE PERCENTAGES OF OVERALL TOOL USE PER TYPE OF ORGANIZATION IN THE LABFORCULTURE DATABASE.

Tools for Culture_Overview of tool use per type of organization

Research Question_ Which types of organizations are using the tools most significantly?
Findings_Cultural databases (54%) has the greatest tool use, followed by national governments (11%) and networks & associations (9%).

Cultural Databases (262)

National Governments (54) Networks & Associations (42) Intergovernmental & Transnational Bodies (30)

Arts, Cultural & Media Organizations (23) Research Organizations & Observatories (22) Foundations (18) National Institutions & Agencies (12)

Professional Unions (11) Educational & Training Institutions (8) Regional & Local Public Administrations (7)

Source_LabforCulture English-language directory (484 urls)
Query_Use linkripper and search for tools in urls
Method_Count, arrange by type of organization and cloud the results
Date_19 November 2007

Product_of the Digital Methods Initiative,
dml.medlastudies.nl, and Govcom.org
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Design_by Anne Helmond

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FIGURE FOUR: THIS CLOUD VISUALIZES WHICH TYPES OF ORGANIZATION, FROM THE LABFORCULTURE DATABASE, USE TOOLS MOST SIGNIFICANTLY. (TOOLSFORCULTURE_TOOLS_PER_ORGANIZATION.PDF)

3. What are the favorite tools by organization type? Do particular types of organizations use a greater variety of tools?

Favorite tools and variety of tool use by organization type. Cultural databases prefer forum, del.icio.us, digg and newsletter (and use 11 of the 15 tools). National governments prefer rss, newsletter and forum (and use 4 of the 15 tools). Networks & associations prefer forum, newsletter and login (and use 3 of the 15 tools). Foundations prefer forum and newsletter (and use 2 of the 15 tools). Regional & local public administrations do not use tools.

Top 3 most popular tools per type of organization:

	Cultural Databases	National Governments	Networks & Associations	Intergovernmental & Transnational	Arts, Culture & Media	Research Institutes & Observatories
1	Forum	RSS	Forum	Forum	Forum	Newsletter
2	Del.icio.us	Newsletter	Newsletter	Newsletter	Newsletter	Forum & Login
3	Digg & Newsletter	Forum	Login	Login & RSS	Login	RSS

	Foundations	National Institutions & Agencies	Professional Unions	Educational & Training Institutions	Regional & Local Public Administrations
1	Forum	Forum	Forum	Newsletter & Login	Newsletter
2	Newsletter	Newsletter	Google	N/A	N/A
3	N/A	Login	Newsletter & Login	N/A	N/A