

# National Digitisation Strategy 2022–2026

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Strategic Work Group for the National Digitisation Strategy

Library Cooperation Council

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## Work Group for the National Digitisation Strategy

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Technical Process

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## I. Introduction

The National Digitisation Strategy was conceived as an instrument to define the basic guidelines for digitisation between different administrations and governing bodies of bibliographic heritage and to serve as a framework to draft Operative Plans that develop these lines by means of specific actions.

The Strategy will facilitate coordination on different aspects of digitisation (collections, technical and organisational procedures...) and will promote joint actions and cooperative projects in the field of bibliographic heritage digitisation.

Since the 1990s, despite different administrations and entities going to great lengths to digitise library heritage, the results have been uneven. Although there is a broad set of accessible digital collections available on the internet, several other efforts have been lost owing to a lack of knowledge on the standards involved in the process or to problems of accessibility and quality. A lack of coordination between initiatives has often hindered existing resources and knowledge from being utilised, while certain collections have been digitised intensively but types of documents and subject areas remain under-represented. Therefore, in its Second Strategic Plan 2016–2018, the Library Cooperation Council (CCB) agreed to create a Work Group to form a draft [National Plan for Bibliographic Heritage Digitisation](#) which outlines a strategy, agreed on a national level, with all elements involved in digitising bibliographic heritage. In 2021, inside the framework of the Third Strategic Plan 2019–2023 (General Objective 4.1, “Preserving and Disseminating Bibliographic Heritage), the work carried out was resumed by creating a Strategic Group to draft the National Digitisation Strategy, the aim of which was to write the final document of the National Strategy to Digitise Bibliographic Heritage.

The Strategy is carried out in accordance with the European guidelines in this area, more specifically the *Commission Recommendation of 2011 on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation (2011/711/UE)*. This recommendation starts from a series of considerations concerning the situation of cultural heritage digitisation and its future expectations, presenting a set of recommendations related to organising and funding digitisation, the online accessibility of material, both in the public domain and that which is subject to copyright, digital preservation and Europeana.

Among every aspect highlighted by the Commission, of note is the importance of coordination and cooperation on national and international levels, in addition to actions and instruments enabling them to be carried out. As far as Spain is concerned, considerable steps have been taken in this line of cooperation via Hispana, a portal to access Spanish digital heritage and a national aggregator of Europeana.

This National Digitisation Strategy of Bibliographic Heritage will be part of a broader objective of cultural heritage digitisation, in accordance with the Commission

Recommendation and the practice established inside the international sector of digital cultural heritage.

## II. Scope

This Strategy is applied to bibliographic heritage in all its manifestations and is valid for all institutions holding such heritage, whether public or private.

The National Digitisation Strategy will be developed from 2022 to 2026. To ensure the Strategy is correctly monitored and implemented, the proposal will revolve around the creation of a stable and ongoing coordination structure.

## III. Vision and Mission

### A. Vision

To create a national digitisation framework of bibliographic heritage which serves to gain maximum accessibility and the possible reuse of these materials. In the future, this Strategy must be integrated into a broader digitisation strategy of cultural heritage.

### B. Mission

To trace strategic lines which, via their development in operative plans:

- Improve the gathering of data on digitisation in Spain, contributing to greater knowledge of the country's digitisation which serves as a platform for developing future strategic plans.
- Rationalise the efforts of memory institutions in the field of digitisation, online accessibility and the preservation of bibliographic materials.
- Expand the quantity and quality of digital collections.
- Advocate cooperation in different fields in relation to the digitisation and accessibility and reuse of content.

## IV. Strategic Lines

### Strategic Line 1. Expanding Digital Collections and Increasing Quality

This strategic line seeks to address everything related to the quantitative and qualitative development of digitised bibliographic collections.

#### *1.1 Extending the deployment of digitisation standards and best practices*

Promoting standards and best practices in all aspects of developing digital collections.

Standard procedures must encompass all stages of digitisation projects, from the initial planning to the dissemination and preservation of digital objects. Particular emphasis must be placed on some of the key milestones which are not yet sufficiently standardised and/or circulated: generating metadata, applying intellectual property rights and other similar rights and designing and applying long-term conservation plans.

Therefore, developing documents on best practices related to this issue is particularly important.

A study must also be undertaken on the standardisation of the use of controlled vocabulary facilitating the link between collections and statistical data mining.

#### *1.2 Increasing the range of digitised collections and diversifying content*

Developing, qualitatively and quantitatively, digitised library collections, stressing diversification in relation to content, language and document types.

To consider quantitative digitisation objectives and recommendations for selecting materials, there is the need for an awareness of the current state of digitisation in Spain to detect gaps in content, languages and document types. Consequently, a structure or work group will be created to compile data and draft a report on the situation regarding digitisation in Spain.

Based on this report, quantitative digitisation objectives and recommendations of materials to be digitised will be developed as a guide for all agents involved in digitisation projects and to orient digitisation campaigns from different institutions.

Digitisation will be promoted in institutions with documents of special importance and those which conserve major historical collections and which, to date, have not developed specific digitisation lines, for instance church libraries or secondary education libraries.

### *1.3 Promoting the improvement of local heritage on the internet*

Developing technology, applications and services allowing cultural institutions to create their own accessible online digital collections, facilitating and simplifying the process and circumventing technological and training barriers, etc. that hamper the visibility of heritage collections in small local institutions of culture.

## Strategic Line 2. Driving Visibility and the Reuse of Collections

The digitisation of cultural heritage, promoted from the European Union and Spain's Ministry of Culture and Sport, is an undertaking of huge cultural and economic interest. Digitisation guarantees greater access to and the reuse of cultural content for education, work and leisure purposes, in addition to offering significant economic opportunities in facilitating the use of cultural material to develop new services and products.

There is a need to systematically address projects around an analysis of the use of collections, SEO and the design of advanced search and retrieval interfaces that turn digital libraries into a powerful research tool.

There is a further need to strengthen the role of the Collective Catalogue of Spain's Bibliographic Heritage as an access point to digitised heritage materials.

Despite the aim of this strategy being to attain greater dissemination and the reuse of digitised cultural content, all projects and initiatives to circulate these materials must strictly adhere to intellectual property rights. To a large degree, heritage content is in the public domain and, once digitised, this status, or similar, must be transmitted to the digital object by public institutions. However, there are materials in which the allocation of rights is more complex (for instance with twentieth-century content) and, as a result, information work will be conducted with recommendations and best practices, for professionals and users alike, in relation to original material and digital copies.

The most advanced initiatives, such as Europeana, take this problem into consideration and establish different levels of presence and visibility.

### *2.1 Disseminating digital collections among users*

Technological changes have altered user expectations, with users now asking to interact with content, and not only in relation to search interfaces from digital libraries. We must open up these digital materials to teaching, research, digital humanities, artistic creation, etc.

Therefore, we need to systematically compile user data from digital collections and from there seek to offer contextualised content and present it via attractive designs that adapt to users' needs and preferences.

To promote knowledge and the use of collections, it is important for content to be found through generic internet search engines and for the results to be well positioned.

### *2.2 The confluence of digital heritage with creative industries*

Another group towards which we must focus our efforts is the creative industry, a sector made up of entrepreneurs and developers who employ digitised cultural heritage to develop new products and services, finding new pathways to interpret our heritage.

There is a need to advocate the reuse of digitised materials in these environments, encouraging the access and usage of associated information such as open data.

### *2.3 Driving initiatives regarding intellectual property rights in digital projects*

There is a need to develop proposals for the following aspects:

- Managing copyright to make digital projects viable, particularly those involving modern cultural content.
- Transferring the public domain declarations of analogue objects to digital objects, in accordance with the European Commission Recommendation.
- Combining the legitimate rights of intellectual property holders with the broadest possible dissemination of cultural content.
- Establishing consortium agreements with rights management entities.

On the one hand, professionals involved in digital projects require clear guides on reusing content and a framework of comprehensible and easily applicable licences; and on the other, digital library users demand simple and user-friendly information on what they can do with specific digital objects, which is why there is a need to clarify, simplify and divulge, in a straightforward way, specific cases of applying and using intellectual property rights.

### Strategic Line 3. Promoting National and International Cooperation

This strategic line encompasses the initiatives and projects requiring development in order to promote national and international cooperation.

On a national level, important cooperation steps have been taken via several projects, including:

- Hispana: a portal to access digital heritage and a national content aggregator of Europeana.
- Virtual Library of Bibliographic Heritage (BVPB): a digital library offering citizens a collection of digital facsimile reproductions of manuscripts, printed books, historical photographs, cartographic materials, sheet music and other materials conserved in memory institutions (archives, libraries, museums) and part of Spain's Bibliographic Heritage.
- The Virtual Library of Historical Newspapers (BVPH): a digital newspaper library offering citizens a catalogue of historical newspapers and cultural magazines in Spanish languages.

There is also active participation in international cooperation structures and measures, particularly those contained within the *Recommendation of 27 October 2011 on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation (2011/711/UE)*, most notably including Spanish participation in Europeana (a European Digital Library set up by the European Commission).

Inside the sphere of international cooperation is the need to promote the involvement of the Spanish culture industry in providing data for the biannual survey carried out by the European Union to monitor the progress of cultural digitisation in different countries. Extending participation to cultural institutions in European projects — framework programmes, Europeana, etc. — is also important.

#### *3.1 Strengthening Hispana*

The development of Hispana must be twofold:

- As a technology tool enabling Spain's cultural institutions' metadata to be effectively managed, as well as providing Europeana with this data.
- As a support mechanism for professionals from data providing institutions: the translation of technical documentation, the development of a website with information for professionals, the dissemination of suppliers' content, etc.

To achieve this effectively, Hispana staff will reinforce communication with institutions participating in the project and search for greater coordination with Spain's Autonomous Communities.

### *3.2 Developing frameworks of encounter between professionals and between professionals and users*

We must drive forward frameworks of encounter between professionals from cultural institutions to facilitate the adoption of standards and best practices in the sphere of digitisation. In parallel, promoting training activities (courses, workshops, tutorials, etc.) to improve knowledge and skills for professionals is advisable in order to foster an increased number of institutions carrying out digitisation projects.

Furthermore, there is a need to create frameworks of encounter and other mechanisms that give a voice to private users and the creative industry of reuse. Thus, digitisation projects will be able to adapt better to real demands.

### *3.3 Contributing to attaining a National Digitisation Strategy for Cultural Heritage*

The Work Group understands that a national digitisation strategy of library heritage must adhere to European guidelines in the subject areas compiled chiefly in the European Commission's 2006 and 2011 Recommendations on the online digitisation and accessibility of cultural material and digital conservation. In such guidelines, it advises Member States to draw up national strategies for long-term preservation and access to digital material, encompassing all cultural materials regardless of the type of institution housing them: libraries, archives or museums. The so-called LAM (Libraries, Archives, Museums) is made up of institutions which manage cultural heritage materials and, therefore, must participate in coordinated strategies regarding digitisation, preservation and online accessibility.

This integrating vision between cultural heritage domains is at the root of projects like Europeana and has also oriented national strategies in countries within Spain's environment. For instance: Germany has regulated a coordination structure led by *Deutsche Digital Bibliothek*, which coordinates different sectors: libraries, archives and museums, while Sweden set up a governmental office, *Digisam*, in 2011 with the primary goal of meeting the objectives of its national digitisation strategy.

As a result, we consider that Spain's objectives regarding digitisation includes the goal of advancing in the collaboration between other LAM sectors to contribute to attaining a National Digitisation Strategy of Cultural Heritage.