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EPOCH

**Excellence in Processing Open
Cultural Heritage**

Network of Excellence

Information Society Technologies

D.1.2.3 1st Annual Report of the Board (DRAFT)

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University of Brighton

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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

Introduction

The 1st Annual Report of the Board will be a public report on the work of the Network in the first year. As such, it will be appropriate for this to be written following a considered review of this work. The Report will then be developed from the following Executive Summary.

Publishable Executive Summary

The overall objective of EPOCH is to improve interdisciplinary interaction at the interface between technology and the cultural heritage of human experience. EPOCH combines expertise and resources of technologists, heritage administrators, heritage professionals and communication experts concerned with the effective and sustainable application of digital technology to archaeological research and cultural heritage presentation at museums, monuments, and historic sites. The work is targeted at increasing the effective use of technology at every stage of processing or potential processing of digital data concerned with cultural heritage. The network promotes the integration of research efforts in five vital subfields:

- Field Recording and Data Capture
- Data Organisation, Provenance and Standards
- Reconstruction and Visualisation
- Heritage Education and Communication
- Planning for sustainability of heritage projects

EPOCH's objectives are best served by making effective technology available as cheaply as possible (preferably freely available) and then using the technology in conjunction with cultural assets to produce sustainable and economically viable digital assets. Thus the consortium (which in technological terms is concerned primarily with the design of tools rather than the provision of digital content) does not seek to create a commercial market for the tools. This philosophy is encapsulated in the consortium agreement and is reflected in the Network's plans - the exploitation will happen because the knowledge is disseminated, not because of patent activity.

The Consortium comprises 83 partners listed below and the work is organised in four major work packages, including Management; Integrating Activities; Jointly Executed Research and: Spreading Excellence.

During the first year of its operation EPOCH has established much of the underpinning on which to build future development. It has surveyed the current state of the application of technologies to cultural heritage and of the needs that cultural heritage professionals have for technology and for novel solutions. From this exercise and with feedback from many diverse groups the Network has produced the first iteration of an agreed research agenda for future research topics to move the Network's objectives forward.

One of the mechanisms used to glean feedback from user communities which traditionally have a somewhat restricted view of the potential of technology in the area, has been to build some showcases which integrate different technologies to produce embryonic applications as a vehicle to discussing future potential with different potential user groups. In this way it has been possible to get somewhat traditional professionals to "think outside the box" and share ideas of potential future uses of technology.

The Network has produced 8 of these showcases addressing different elements of the processes involved in discovery, documentation, use and dissemination of cultural heritage information and digital artefacts.

EPOCH has also initiated actions to understand and enhance the relationships between SMEs and the world of cultural heritage and to assist policy makers in their understanding of the socio-economic impact and potential impact of investments in cultural heritage. These activities have uncovered a considerable expansion of related research activities each covering different aspect of a complex mosaic of techniques and tools for assessing impact in different circumstances. Given the current fragmentation of research activity in the area EPOCH has decided to bring experts in different aspects together for a Symposium designed to synthesise a broader understanding of the issues and of the potential ways forward. The Symposium will be held in Brighton in July of this year.

The other area of business development being undertaken is the encouragement of appropriate SMEs to be successful in becoming involved in the Cultural Heritage sector. To this end EPOCH is implementing plans for a network of centres of expertise which will be able to provide support to SMEs that are unable to cover the full range of specialisations required, so that the companies will be able to be mutually supportive and to draw on the expertise of the centres.

In the jointly executed research activity EPOCH has surveyed current technological research across the range of topics and has defined a set of priorities for a supporting common infrastructure for applications in this field. In addition a set of priorities has been defined for filling gaps in the available technologies and for integrating different technologies into a common framework. A call for proposals to meet these needs has been conducted and the next phase of the NoE operation will implement tools to address these needs.

The Project website has been implemented (www.epoch-net.org) and provides information both for the public and for the consortium members. An extensive range of services is now available to consortium members and the volume of data in the various digital asset libraries is expanding rapidly. This includes repositories of documents and software, pointers to other resources, calendar, work areas for different activities, voting mechanisms for consortium consultations and other facilities.

Project partners continue to contribute to standards work, most notably in the adoption of CIDOC CRM for documentation of collections. In addition the Ename Charter for communicating cultural heritage has been adopted extensively world wide – including by the global organisation, ICOMOS.

The consortium has also been successful in initiating a number of programs designed to promote human resource development in support of cultural heritage development, implementing courses, bursary schemes, staff mobility opportunities and events, as well as a range of in-house and other publication activities.

In conclusion the first year of EPOCH has been very successful in establishing the basis of activities for future years and in forming the new partnership and cooperations that will take EPOCH forward and build the European Research Area for the intelligent use of technology in support of cultural heritage applications.

Consortium Membership

The Consortium Coordinator is the University of Brighton, UK, backed by a group of three other core partners – PIN srl – Servizi didattici e scientifici per l'Università di Firenze, Italy; Ename Center for Public Archaeology and Heritage Presentation, Belgium; and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium;

The other partners in the consortium are: Technische Universitaet Graz, Austria; Technische Universitaet Wien, Austria; Leopold Franzens Universitaet Innsbruck, Austria; Instituut voor het Archeologisch Patrimonium, Belgium; Virtual and Augmented Reality Technologies NV, Belgium; Axell Communication srl, Belgium; New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria; Gastiburu SL, Spain; MAP - CNRS, France; Université de Toulon et de Var , France; Albert-Ludwigs-Universitaet Freiburg, Germany; Technische Universitaet Braunschweig-Institut fur Computergraphik, Germany; Fraunhofer Gesellschaft zur Forderung der Angewandten Forschung E.V., Germany; Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität Bonn, Germany; University of Tübingen, Germany; Foundation of the Hellenic World, Greece; INTRACOM SA Hellenic Telecommunications and Electronics Industry, Greece; GeoAnalysis sa, Greece; Technical University of Crete , Greece; Synthesis & Research Ltd, Greece; Advanced Computer Systems A.C.S. – S.P.A., Italy; Politecnico di Milano, Italy; Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna, Italy; Università degli Studi di Genova, Italy; Ducati Sistemi S.P.A., Italy; Consiglio Nazionale Delle Ricerche, Italy; 4site srl, Italy; HeritageSolutions, Netherlands; Hogeschool van Utrecht, Netherlands; Universitetet i Oslo, Norway; Insitituto Polytecnico de Tomar, Portugal; Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona, Spain; Universitat de València. Estudi General, Spain; Universidad de Jaén, Spain; Diputación Provincial de Jaén, Spain; Universidad Politecnica de Madrid, Spain; The Interactive Institute II AB, Sweden; Karlstad University, Sweden; Eidgenossische Technische Hochschule Zurich, Switzerland; Université de Geneve, Switzerland; Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland; University of Kent, UK; University of York, UK; University of Bristol, UK; Brunel University, UK; University of East Anglia, UK; The University of Surrey, UK; The University of Warwick, UK; The University of Sussex, UK; Paveprime Ltd, UK; Planetek Italia S.R.L., Italy; Instituto Superior Tecnico, Portugal; Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan , Sweden; Oxford ArchDigital Ltd, UK; Istituto per i Beni Artistica, Culturali e Naturali della Regione Emilia Romagna, Italy; Archaeolingua Alapítvány, Hungary; The European Academy of Sciences and Arts, Austria; Institutul de Memorie Culturala, Romania; Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Belgium; UniRel srl, Italy; Tekniska museet (National Museum of Science and Technology), Sweden; Stichting Bedrijfsregio Kop van Noord-Holland, Netherlands; Ciência Viva – Agência Nacional para a Cultura Científica e Tecnológica , Portugal; Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany; Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia; Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Netherlands; Département des Recherches Archéologiques Subaquatiques et Sous-Marines, France; The University of Hull, UK; University of Patras, Greece; Imagination Computer Services GesmbH, Austria; Instituto Tecnológico de Informático, Spain; National Museums of Scotland, UK; University of Cape Town, South Africa; Culture, Heritage & Development - International, Belgium; Conseil Général de la Côte d'Or (Parc Archéologique d'Alésia), France; Università della Svizzera Italiana (USI), Switzerland; Visual Acuity Limited, UK; Università degli Studi di Napoli - L'Orientale, Italy; European Association for Historic Towns and Regions , UK;