

Submission for full length paper

Designing a multipurpose infrastructure for cultural heritage collections

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With several ongoing initiatives for preserving information, both for archival purposes, for making the information easily available and usable for researchers, meeting the needs of curators, and making the information available to the public, we have found the need to take a fresh look at the roles of databases in the digitization of our cultural heritage.

We are exploring ways to take this beyond individual databases, and design workflows, data flows, custom views and mappings between different systems, in order to make the same data usable to different roles and for different purposes. We aim to implement tools to enrich the data, and make it searchable and viewable without jeopardizing the integrity of the information.

This will, by necessity, include multilevel metadata mark-up, loose and strong mappings to common metadata standards, audit logging and approval workflows, advanced search indexing and multiple views, depending on the user's role.

We are basing this work, initially, on Alvin and Pragmata, two databases that are both intended as long-term repositories for collections, but with very different design philosophies regarding data modelling. Alvin was developed by Uppsala University library, for library collections; Pragmata was designed to accommodate and make searchable different types of archaeological data (Swedish institute at Athens and Uppsala University). Beyond those two, we are investigating other use cases from the world of research into our cultural heritage. We envision an integration between different

systems to facilitate the association between object/context data and its documentation to enable tracing of object history.