Erasmus+

MUSEOMIX
PEOPLE MAKE MUSEUMS

SYNTHESIS

The method of creative and critical thinking used in Museomix and comparable events or projects ("Remix")

Museomix was created in 2011 to implement
- - in volunteer museums
- - a 3-day event
- - whose scenario is inspired by the methods of *design thinking*
- - with a view to overturning the approach to the mediation of cultural objects and concepts hosted or staged in the museum
- - and thus/also to disrupting the very organisation of this cultural institution.

Museomix belongs to the family of events known as "Remix", all of which seek to renew the relationship with the public and, beyond that, the organisation or conception of a place, an institution (library, school) or an intellectual object/issue.

This synthesis aims to present the intellectual and operational principles of a "Remix" method including the one implemented in Museomix, in order to apply them to the creation of Open Educational Resources (OER) prototypes, whose creation and dissemination are the objectives of PITCHER.

We will first list the fundamental values of the approach, then the characteristics of the discourse implicitly conveyed by the prototypes created with this method; we will then present a set of good practices to be implemented for the creation of the prototypes; we will finally focus on how to safeguard and disseminate the tangible trace of the created prototypes and of the intellectual and material process of their creation, with a view to their appropriation by the public and/or by other actors.

Main resources:
- Creative Museum project (Erasmus+, 2017) :
  "Connecting Communities", "Spaces for Yes", "Strategies for success"
- Museomix CH (2018) : "Collaborative adventures in the museum of tomorrow"
- Métropole de Lyon (report, 2015) : "Fabriquer la ville – 'Gare Remix' Lyon-Saint Paul"
- Vertigo (electronic review, 2021) : "Living Lab* de recherche et médiation scientifique"

Other resources:
- Museomix (2011-2021) : internal on line archives of the French community

*Living Labs = hybrid organization model (research-industry-unprofessionals), with active participation of users, for the co-construction of concrete products or services

Core values

Context of the Remix/Living Lab: participants are free from the control of any authority (such as hierarchy or holders of "official" cultural knowledge) and closer to real life

Objective of the method: to develop capacities ("empowerment") in order to enable personal or collective reflection/action

"An experimental project is not necessarily about something that has never been done before anywhere; the important thing is that it is new for its institution/audience"
= Benevolence and cooperation rather than searching for an original idea at all costs

Provide seeds to spread rather than recipes to follow

Walking a fine line between pragmatism ("will we be able to do it?") and creativity
What we think to be impossible... is actually possible

Be part of (or initiate a process of) creating a public (creative, non-professional) community
- Involve the whole "public"; for Pitcher: beyond students (parents, friends, etc.)
- Find a way to involve political staff (at different levels)
- Make the project an opportunity for new partnerships

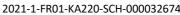Identify allies in local communities (heritage or digital or creative)
- To invent new ideas
- To produce the ideas of its students (Pitcher)

Nurture the link with its/a particular place/territory

"Do It Yourself" is a key point ("Be a think and do tank", "Don't talk, just act!"), especially thanks to the emotions that are provoked by combining human, art/design and technology

A prototype is a physical, tangible, functional object (a kind of "masterpiece"!?)
It must be designed, adjusted and manufactured in a very limited time: (less than) 3 days

Importance of the link with the local universe of "makers" and other FabLabs (know-how)

Be careful to take into account the interest of the participants, considering the three faces of participation: "Taking part, contributing, benefiting" (Zask 2011)
- Taking part means becoming part of an active community
- To contribute is to offer one's own skills to this community
- To benefit is to share in return the new knowledge or the notoriety gained or simply the pleasure of having participated in the creation of an "object" that enriches the community as a whole

The prototype is a user-driven mediation
Stake/challenge: to produce a "new knowledge" from the knowledge of the experts... but without their direct involvement
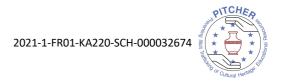
Representation/conference, meeting with experts → state of the art of knowledge, problematisation, "mapping of controversies"

Beware! Participation is deviated into "outreach" (= instrumentalised in the service of institutional communication) if it does not allow to influence the "rules of the game",
i.e., in the case of mediation, to influence the discourse carried by the holders of knowledge

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The ultimate "secret" of Museomix is the efficiency and fluidity of the methodology
= scene/scenario/development (place, tempo, dramaturgy)
+ empathy in the human process/interactions
+ alliance of opposites (culture/making/digital/amateurs)

The discourse: arguing and/or playing on emotions

A prototype can seek to convince (arguments) or persuade (speaking to emotions)

"You go to a science museum to learn something; the objects displayed serve to illustrate the learning or the concept. Whereas in an art gallery or museum it's about reinforcing your emotional relationship to the work, to the object. And so the status of mediation, digital or otherwise, is completely different." (Museomix CH)

Think "data" as much as "message"
However, "Only once emotion has been elicited or reinforced should metadata - facts and figures around the piece - come into play. Research (or academic work) around a piece should be dissociated from the emotional relationship." (Museomix CH)

In digital mediation, the challenge is to succeed in recreating an emotional approach in a dematerialised, non-tangible context.

Every cultural remix raises a classical question: "What is the place of digital reproduction versus the original, material, tangible work?"

Making the project an event to communicate about oneself and around oneself

It is an opportunity to redefine the expertise of the knowledge holders in the public mind
Performance/conference, meeting → put on stage the controversies that are at the heart of knowledge (a claim must be theoretically refutable to be a scientific one)

Wikipedia-Wikidata: publishing allows to reach a very large audience and to establish emotional links between the public and the heritage

"Give a more modern visibility to a heritage sometimes overlooked by the younger public." (Museomix CH)

Methods and "good practice"

A good device/mechanism should be efficient in all languages and cultures

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Cooperating to go beyond one's own skills
The role of experts, "resource persons" or coaches is crucial:
- They are part of the mobilised community
- The OERs developed rely on their knowledge and technical skills
Technical skills are specifically central

Make the project a learning opportunity
Experiment (all the better/never mind if you don't know how to do it well...)

You cannot rest on your knowledge, you have to take the risk of imperfect ideas and then "get your hands dirty" to produce, through trial and error, a functional object

To find inspiration:
- Talking to your audience
- Immerse yourself, (physically) putting yourself in the visitor's shoes

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Empowering your students!
For the youngest (8-12 years old), organise a one-week programme (holidays)

Create and innovate as a team
Identify, federate and enhance the value of people who are already familiar with or practicing "creative methods" within a wider community of supporters-practitioners

Take into account the "user experience", before and during the creative process
Involve end users in the process: "Reverse form of creation from the audience's point of view: the customer's feedback comes from critical friends." (Museomix CH)

Involve makers/FabLab in the creation process from the beginning (in order to integrate, from the design stage, their vision of what is technically possible)

The driving force behind these "Remix" schemes is the dynamics of teamwork (collaborative, but distributed among the different skills brought together)
To be avoided: leadership by only one or two team members (=> a team should be composed of at least 6 people + 1 "facilitator"– see below)

The collection of all the teams involved forms a community: it is therefore necessary to plan for critical sharing times between teams (presentations, questions and answers, evaluations)

The "facilitators" are the people in charge of keeping the pace and ensuring that the ideas developed are in line with the initial project, but they do not take part in the team's work (they can nevertheless be asked to give an opinion)

Organising an "out of the box" day:
- An environment free of stress and disturbance
- An environment where social hierarchies are greatly reduced
Organise breakfasts, lunches or mini-days (like "PEWs") of shared creativity, in your institution or outside ("neutral field")

Set clear objectives, which can be modest

Use an open creative space ("a space for Yes") within the institution:
- Multi-purpose space
- Project incubator

Workshop → "ideation" and design (← scenarios), then prototyping (→ usability testing)
Brainstorming:
- accumulate as many ideas as possible
- do not sort out these ideas when expressing them
- accept eccentric or unworkable ideas (they are a source of inspiration)
- do not hesitate to express yourself visually (drawing, diagram, etc.)
- adopt a "staircase spirit" (one idea leads to another...)
Prototyping :
- a volume model (cardboard is ideal)
- an interface model (visual on paper, pasted on a screen)
- a role-playing game
- a live prototype in a rearranged space (setting reflecting real life)
Beware: risk of manipulation by one or more experts (at the scenario/design stage) to push for the acceptability of a pre-existing solution (=> the role of the"facilitator"is critical)

Confrontation with the public for improvement ("iteration") through user tests is an essential step, to be repeated several times (after each creation-improvement phase)
Exhibition of prototypes → Numerous user tests and feedback loop ← Workshop

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Such a device must be renewed regularly: hence the need for rapid prototyping and light manufacturing, supported by back-and-forth user testing (qualitative and quantitative)

Saving and disseminating prototype development

"Open source" or "open educational resources" includes a commitment to disseminate freely (e.g. Creative Commons licence) and as widely as possible its results

Communication of results (OER prototypes) is the ultimate objective
=> A great deal of attention must be paid to the means of this communication towards the target (which is primarily local in the case of Pitcher)
One high school student = one family, which is our target as much as he is

Differentiate messages for different audiences

Use existing digital platforms
Any remix experience is closely associated with the use of social networks

By documenting the device, you "open it up" and make it duplicable
Documenting = disseminating the whole process of its trial and error

A device/mechanism should inspire other actors and lead to the creation of other devices/mechanisms

The successive stages in the creation of OERs are, by themselves, events that are vectors of communication, as much for the overall message (what we want to make people do or understand) as for the prototype being created

Museomix Experience – inspiring exemples (Museomix CH)

MAH Machine – GE.RA.L.D. (GEneric RAndom Logical Device)
Automatic generation of combinations of ideas (based on visuals and keywords)
https://vimeo.com/112491394

MEMOBOX
Collection of personal stories/memories/affects about an object/its representation
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1IUwmgA-c4

Examples of the steps in documenting a device/mechanism (CCSTI Le Dôme, 2021)
See the project timeline and examples of materials, step by step (see pictures in attachment)