

10 PRINCIPLES FOR LINKED DATA IN THE CULTURE SECTOR

In his speech on *Building Britain's Future*, Prime Minister Gordon Brown has set out a vision of a next generation of Government services which makes use of semantic technologies such as Linked Data to improve the quality and depth of engagement with Public-sector Information.

The Linked Data* agenda presents an important challenge to UK museums, archives and libraries to open up cultural data in such a way that it can be used, shared and built upon by a global audience. The following 10 Principles have been developed by leading Culture-sector organisations and we believe that they should inform future Digital policy for the sector. They build on the recommendations established by the *Semantic WebThinktank* funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council and led by the School of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester.

1. **Data is rich, and includes Data created by Users**

Data includes all forms of digital asset, including those generated in collaboration with our users. We must guard against information silos in our organisations, and promote openness as widely as possible.

2. **Linked Data serves both the sector and its audiences**

Linked data has the power both to improve our service to the public and the management of our Collections. Connecting the data we hold and curate is the best way to achieve Public Value.

3. **Linked Data connects the culture sector to a collaborative effort across the Public Sector**

Linked Data connects the culture sector to the broader context of Public Sector delivery. It also enables the sector to benefit from investment and innovation in other industry sectors.

4. **Linked Data can help us achieve more efficient practice**

Providing and consuming Linked Data can reduce inefficiency, and add value to existing content creation. It helps us improve workflows, reduce duplication of effort and foster a culture of cooperation within organisations.

5. **Linked Data can help us deliver on our commitment to Public Access**

Services based on Linked Data provide a channel through which Culture-sector content can be enjoyed and used by a wider, more diverse public. Linked data carries an implicit right of reuse for our audiences.

6. **Linked Data is the next phase in our adaptation to the Web**

Linking Data is the next logical step in the evolution of cultural services from curation to digitisation to the delivery of rich, integrated and personal online services.

7. **Linked Data should become an embedded function of the software we use**

Linked Data will only achieve critical mass in the Culture sector when it becomes an out-of-the-box function of the systems and software we use.

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8. We must communicate the benefits of Linked Data throughout the sector

Embracing Linked Data across the sector will not happen by itself. The benefits of Linked Data must be championed proactively throughout the sector by strategic and political agencies, funders, managers and policymakers.

9. We must commit to commissioning Open Data, not Open Source

Open Source systems do not guarantee that the data they contain will be openly available. As a sector, we must ensure that all funding programmes, commissioning and procurement include a requirement to make publicly-funded data openly-available using open and established industry standards.

10. We must support a commercial market of providers and suppliers to support Linked Data

There must be a viable business case to support a long-term transition towards providing Linked Data as an established function of the sector. We must ensure that the broader marketplace is aware of the range of data that museums, archives and libraries can provide.

* There is no single standard definition of 'Linked Data', for the purposes of our discussions, we have taken the four principles set out by Tim Berners-Lee: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linked_Data.

These Principles are published for consultation and discussion by the sector. The following organisations participated in the Linked Data summit at which they were developed:

- Wikimedia UK
- School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester
- Flow Associates Ltd.
- Knowledge Integration Ltd.
- Natural History Museum
- University of Liverpool
- Media Equation Pty.
- Gallery Systems
- National Gallery
- Museum of London
- UKOLN
- Collections Trust
- Adlib Information Systems
- Richard Light, Consultant
- Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)

Please note that the Principles represent the discussion at the meeting, and are not necessarily the views or opinions of the individual organisations represented.

This paper is published by the Collections Trust, Mar 2010.