

# The i2010 digital libraries initiative

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# *The context*

- Part of i2010, the Commission strategy for the information society
- Letter of 6 Heads of state and government of 28 April 2005
  - Major digitisation initiatives in the US
- Ongoing activities at European level
  - Co-ordination and co-funding



# *The digital libraries initiative*

- Two main blocks: cultural content, scientific information
- Aim: make Europe's cultural and scientific heritage accessible to all
- Wealth of content in Europe's cultural institutions: books, newspapers, films, archival records
- At present only a small percentage digitised and available online
- Digitisation, online accessibility, digital preservation



# *Digitisation*

- Why digitise?
  - Wider access and use
  - Preservation
- Cultural and economic aspects
- Fragmented efforts throughout Europe
- Challenges
  - Economic, organisational, technical, legal



# *Online accessibility*

## *Intellectual property rights*

- Public domain material
- Towards a 20<sup>th</sup> century black hole?
- Constructive approach in HLG

## *Integrated access*

- Common access point: the European digital library
- Quality content description, interoperability



# *Digital preservation*

- What is the problem?
- Digitising without a preservation strategy may become a wasted investment
- Relevance beyond digital libraries
- No strategies in place



# *Work ongoing at different levels*

- Political: Commission Recommendation (August 2006), Council conclusions (Nov 2006), Parliament resolution (Sept 2007)
  - Member States expert group
- Work with stakeholders: High level group on digital libraries
- Technical: co-funding through FP7 and *eContentplus*
- Operational: establishing the European digital library



# *The European digital library*

- Common multilingual access point to Europe's digital cultural heritage
- Perspective of the user: direct search in different types of collections
  - How best to involve the user?
- Will be launched in 2008, name to be decided
- Critical mass of content, user-friendly interface, multilingual



# *Conclusion*

- European digital library well on track
- Work on basic conditions for digitisation, online accessibility and digital preservation
- Financing of digitisation is major issue
- Continue work at full speed

