Personalized Access to Cultural Heritage Spaces (PATHS)

Paul Clough[1], Paula Goodale[1], Mark Stevenson[2] and Mark Hall[2]

[1]Information School, University of Sheffield (UK)

[2]Department of Computer Science, University of Sheffield (UK)

p.d.clough@sheffield.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

The EU-funded PATHS (Personalized Access to Cultural Heritage) project is investigating ways of assisting users with exploring a large collection of cultural heritage material taken from Europeana, the European aggregator for museums, archives, libraries, and galleries. A prototype system has been developed that includes novel functionality for exploring the collection based on Google map-style interfaces, data-driven taxonomies and supporting the manual creation of guided tours or paths and the use of personalized (and non-personalized) recommendations to promote information discovery.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

H.3.5 [**Information Storage and Retrieval**]: Online Information Services - Web-based services

General Terms

Experimentation, Human Factors

Keywords

Digital Libraries, Cultural Heritage, Information Access

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years significant amounts of cultural heritage materials has been made available through online digital library portals, such as Europeana (http://www.europeana.eu), the European aggregator for museums, archives, libraries, and galleries. However, these collections can often be difficult to navigate, especially for those without advanced levels of subject and domain knowledge [1].

The PATHS project [2], which is funded under the FP7 programme of the European Commission, is exploring alternative modes of information access to large cultural heritage collections, such as Europeana. A range of expert and non-expert users from various cultural heritage domains have been involved a user-centred approach to the development of a prototype system [3]. One of the key features of the project has been investigating the design of functionality to support the manual creation of paths or trails through the collection. This has included a workspace feature to store items during exploration of the collection, a path editing feature for arranging the gathered items and forming narratives, and functions for sharing the paths. The resulting paths

can be used as a means of navigating items in the collection based on a theme or topic, along with forming tangible learning objects for education purposes. Figure 1 shows an example screenshot from the PATHS system as the user explores the collection using a Google Map-style visualisation.
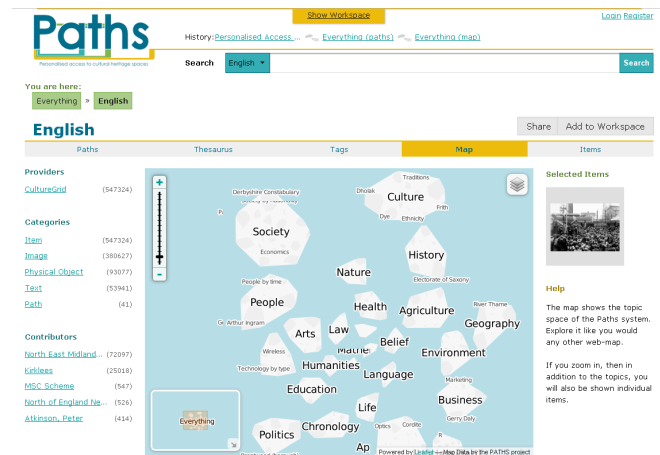

Figure 1 – PATHS system showing Google Map-style visualisation for exploring themes in the collection

The PATHS system makes use of state-of-the-art text processing and information retrieval techniques to link similar items within the collection, link to related Wikipedia articles, generate mappings to thesauri and controlled vocabularies to aid navigation, and provide recommendations.

2. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

3. REFERENCES

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