How to support participation and quality contribution on websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage

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The Questions

What are the aspects of design that influence participation and contribution quality on websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage?

Which aspects of design are more influential than others?

How could websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage better support participation and quality contribution?
Potential benefits of crowdsourcing

• Promote and stimulate interest in collections
• Signal the institution's openness and approachability
• Achieve goals that are otherwise too costly and labour-intensive
• Better reflect the diversity of visitors
• Tap into expertise outside the institution
• Engage visitors in new ways
• Raise the profile of research
• Demonstrate relevance
• Enable new research questions to be explored
Common challenges

• Crowdsourcing is still in an experimental phase and projects aren’t always cost-effective

• Common project constraints include limited time, resources and expertise

• Guidance for designing and evaluating websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage is limited and fragmented
A (Proposed) Solution

A set of 21 design principles that draws on existing guidance for:

- Highly interactive websites (Petrie & Power, 2012)
- Online communities (Kraut & Resnick, 2012; Preece & Shneiderman, 2009)
- Crowdsourcing (Howe, 2009)

Available from http://nonprofitcrowd.org/crowdsourcing-heuristics/
How influential are these design principles on participation and contribution quality?

Online questionnaire completed by 251 respondents, which included:

• Former, current, and prospective users of websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage
• People from NZ, Australia, UK, USA and elsewhere
• People affiliated with the cultural heritage sector, tertiary institutions, and other professions
How could websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage better support participation and quality contribution?

A sample of 20 websites was evaluated using the new design principles. The sample encompassed:

- **Multiple host types:** galleries, libraries, archives, museums, research institutions, and collaborations
- **10 common process types:** transcribing, recording/creating content, tagging, correcting/modifying content, contextualisation, cataloguing, commenting, critical responses and stating preferences, georeferencing, linking, and mapping
- **6 common asset types:** text, image, ephemera/intangible cultural heritage, geospatial, numerical or statistical information
How to support participation and contribution quality on websites for crowdsourcing cultural heritage

1. Inform users
2. Support users
3. Engage users
4. Nurture and sustain the user community
How to inform users

• Provide clear, concise, and sufficient task instruction
• Show how project output is freely accessible
• Keep the website current
• Prioritize key information
• Present reasons to contribute
• Display project progress
• Convey the credibility of the project
Opportunities to inform users more effectively

Percentage of sample that fully complied with design principles for informing users
Ancient Lives:
An example of clear, concise, and sufficient task instruction
How to support users

- Minimize the effort to contribute
- Minimize user error
- Enable users to review contributions
- Clearly identify tasks
- Provide task options
- Simplify the task
Opportunities to support users more effectively

Percentage of sample that fully complied with design principles for supporting users
Europeana: An example of minimizing the effort to contribute
How to engage users

• Attractive design
• Acknowledge participation
• Encourage users to engage with the collection
• Convey a sense of fun
Opportunities to engage users more effectively

Percentage of sample that fully complied with design principles for engaging users
Your Paintings Tagger: An example of acknowledging participation
How to nurture and sustain the user community

• Convey a sense of community
• Support community interaction
• Publicly recognize contributions
• Support content sharing
Opportunities to nurture and sustain the user community more effectively

Percentage of sample that fully complied with design principles for nurturing and sustaining the user community
Old Weather: An example of conveying a sense of community
Opportunities to better support volunteer participation and quality contribution

Percentage of sample that fully complied with design principles in each category
Thanks!

For the full set of design principles and other crowdsourcing resources visit nonprofitcrowd.org

For research updates and all things crowdsourcing cultural heritage follow @nonprofitcrowd
References


