

Dr. Igor A. Jenzen, Cidoc Dresden 10.9.2014

Daphne - Homepage – Onlinecollection

The digital Strategy of the Dresden State Art Collection

(1) The Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (Dresden State Art Collections) form an association of fourteen very different museums on the fields of art, history, and science. The State Art Collections are acting worldwide as a unity, and as far as special fields of research are concerned, as individual museums and scientists.

The digital documentation is organized as a common task for all museums. It is being driven by two factors: on the one hand, from an internal point of view, digitalization of objects is essential to simplify administration and to link knowledge. On the other hand and as a second step after completed digitalization, the publication of data on the internet is intended. This is meant as a service for the general public and is therefore handled by the press and communications department.

Internal tasks

(2) Some museums had been operating individual databases which in 2006 all were merged into the mutual database Daphne. Daphne is an in-house development of SKD and Robotron, essentially based on CIDOC conceptual reference model (CRM) but offering furthermore some innovative features. (3) Actually it has been the first museum database being accessible from every computer via world wide web (although this technology for safety reasons is used only within the Saxon administrative network).

(4) Daphne offers a sort of associative keyword search-option by using word families of the German keyword vocabulary SWD (today it's the GWD). And Daphne makes a difference between standardized datafields for searching and free formulated textstrings for publishing purposes. There are duty areas for all museums and specialized areas for individual museums in a balanced, well running relation.

(5) As a result of the great success of the Daphne-Database the Saxon state government encouraged the digitalization process since 2008 very generously by providing 15 million Euro spread over 10 years. A motivation underlying was the need for provenance research. (6) So there is a dedicated research area in Daphne for the exchange of knowledge between all museums. Thanks to this project, in recent years up to 80 documentarists, art historians and historians were employed. They not only compiled and indexed the artifacts but also researched the origin of 40.000 suspicious objects. Currently there are still 35 employees working.

(7) Meanwhile the database has been further developed. After technical problems in version 2 we now use since 2013 the third generation, Daphne 3, which manages about 970.000 object records (out of 1.400.000 estimated objects in the SKD and the Ethnografical Collections) in a fast and reliable way. The museum holdings of some of our smaller collections have been completely electronically recorded by now. That for example applies to Grünes Gewölbe (Green Vault), Porcelain Collection, Sculpture Collection and some others. The more extensive collections will still take some time, for instance the Prints Collection with 550.000 objects and the Coin Collection with 350.000 objects.

Recently the data of State Ethnographical Collections have been mapped into Daphne and now have to be re-worked. This is a new, extensive and challenging task.

Out of the nearly 1 million data sets in Daphne about 400.000 are of high quality. They are scientifically proven, indexed, and provided with at least two photographs. The remaining 600.000 object records are in different stages of processing but they all do work already.

We are now happy to say that Daphne is an effective working tool very well used by our colleagues. It is networking administrative processes, exhibition projects, restoration and research.

In this respect the well funded “Daphne Project” helps us to digitalize our daily work in nearly all aspects. But the scientific research of the content is definitely not powered by the Daphne Project. Research – except on provenance – has to be carried out by SKD curators and scientific staff. So it takes a while until all datasets will be proved or improved. This happens each time a data file is opened and used in order to prepare an exhibition, to restore an object, to write an article or to join a cooperated research-project. These research projects are very important, helpful and productive.

For instance the Sculpture Collection uses Daphne’s Lido interface to run a cooperation with the Capitoline Collection Rome concerning the mutual history of both collections.

The New Masters Gallery and the Kunstfonds (Art Fund) serve a database concerning “Bildatlas Kunst in der DDR” (a pictorial atlas of art in GDR).

The Collection of Prints, Drawings and Photographs is joined with other Print Collections running an online service on graphic arts.

And some weeks ago a cooperation was signed between the Ethnographical Collections and the Deutsche Fotothek der Sächsischen Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (SLUB) (German Photographic

Collection in the Saxon State and University Library Dresden) in order to make photo archives of famous explorers accessible.

#### External tasks

The Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden take the responsibility of classical museum duties very seriously: collection, preservation, research, exhibition, communication. In each field the database meanwhile plays an indispensable role. The first and principal task concerning Daphne was and still is the complete digital recording of all objects within the time-frame of public funding.

The publication of data on the internet is paid by SKD itself from its own resources.

This task is realized by our press and communication department, firstly because we are aware of the need for an attractive design on internet, and secondly because we consider the publication of data as a sort of home delivery service for our customers. So this is part of a number of initiatives to reach our clients digitally. (8)

#### The SKD serve

Second Life            May 2007 till August 2011

Twitter                since August 2009

Youtube                since April 2010

Facebook              since November 2010

Relaunch Homepage SKD April 2010

SKD Blog              since April 2010

Online Collection    since August 2011

Google Art Project since April 2012

(9) The Online Collection presents a small public part of Daphne data in an attractive and easy to understand manner. (10) There are several approaches to the content, walkways, preselected themes and of course (11) an extended possibility to search as you would expect it.

(12) Each image is combined with central metadata and – if possible – with an explanatory text.

Since its installation in 2011 the Online Collection has changed its character. Starting as a teaser with a selection of highlights, it now has expanded to an instrument for scientific research. Today the Online Collection includes 42.000 objects. The increase in scientific queries shows that it is used in a serious manner.

Right now we are preparing a revision of design, range of data fields and functions. For example the convenient search functions of Daphne should be open to the public, too (though this is also a technical and a financial problem.) And we are developing means of reasonable scientific communication, taking place within the Online Collection as far as objects are concerned, and on the homepage as far as subjects or persons are concerned. On our home page we are going started to establish an area where research projects and researchers of SKD can be found easily. It is called the Research Channel.

At the same time we consider it useful not only to serve special research data bases but also to participate in general public data projects like Europeana or Digital Library.

Recently we watched the discussion about the exploitation rights for pictures. As soon as these problems are solved or predictable we shall be glad to contribute our data. Hopefully this is going to work automatically and updated daily, just as it is working now in the communication between Daphne and Online Collection.

(13) For further strategic considerations the following scheme is helpful. It helps to make a difference between several tasks of our institution and several ways to encourage scientific research. Of course we are curious about the scope of big data in the future, but we are also convinced in the human methods of pursuing theories, working out articles and running scientific discussions.