



Funded by the
European Union



GLAMMONS

**BLUEPRINT
DIGITAL
STRATEGIES
FOR GLAMS
UNDER
COMMONS**



FRAUNHOFER
UNIVERSITÄT
DUISBURG-ESSEN

CREARE
SOCIAL

in
polis
urbanism



TECHNISCHE
UNIVERSITÄT
BERLIN

BSB
BURGUNDY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



EUROPEAN
CREATIVE
HUBS
NETWORK

MAZOMOS
LANDSCAPE | HERITAGE | CONSULTANT



Nova Iskra

Disclaimer

This document contains information, which is the copyright of GLAMMONS Steering Committee, and may not be copied, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, in whole or in part, without written permission. The commercial use of any information contained in this document may require a license from the proprietor of that information. The document must be referenced if used in a publication.

The European Commission is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.



Funded by
the European Union

This project has received funding from the Horizon Europe Research and innovation on cultural heritage and CCIs Programme of the European Commission grant agreement No 101060774.

A 'BLUEPRINT' FOR DIGITAL STRATEGY

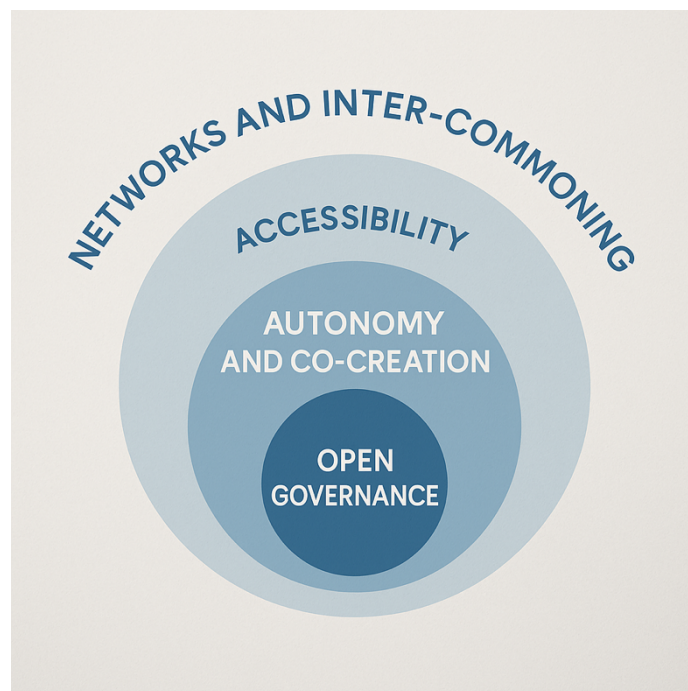
In architecture and engineering, a blueprint is a precise design plan—a detailed technical drawing that guides the construction of a building or a bridge. It captures every important measurement and decision, **ensuring that everyone involved shares a common vision** of the final structure.

By analogy, **this guide is your blueprint**—a practical, step-by-step plan for **crafting a successful digital strategy for your organization**. It lays out the key stages, tools, and practices you will need to navigate the digital landscape with confidence.

Designed for Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums (GLAM) practitioners, expert teams and 'non-expert' communities, small cultural institutions and independent culture and heritage projects, this blueprint will help you translate your goals into action, so you can build a strong, sustainable digital presence **that truly supports your mission!**

DEVELOPING A DIGITAL STRATEGY – KEY PRINCIPLES

Creating a **successful digital strategy for participatory, resilient, and commons-oriented GLAM** starts with clarity of purpose; your principles and values will guide your choice of practices and tools that are mostly right for you. Commons-based approaches invite us to shift focus from control to collaboration, from passive consumption to active participation and mutual care, and from outreach to engagement and reciprocal exchange. Above all, **commoning is a process**; a novel lens to reimagine cultural institutions as dynamic spaces for knowledge production, heritage-making, and co-stewardship.



Key principles for commons-oriented GLAMs¹

¹ This and all subsequent images featured in this document have been generated with OpenAI ChatGPT-4.

Although there is no one-size-fits-all solution, the following principles² can serve as avenues to navigate you while devising the digital strategy of your organisation or project, starting from scratch:

1. Prioritize **Accessibility**
2. Empower **Autonomy and Co-creation**
3. Foster Transparent and **Open Governance**
4. Strengthen **Networks and Intercommoning**

In this blueprint, we move step-by-step through these four key principles — accessibility, autonomy, open governance, and intercommoning — to help you craft a strong digital strategy, with grounded actions, that not only reflect your values but also amplify your impact in the cultural commons.

Don't forget that what matters most is intentionality: **that your digital strategy reflects a genuine commitment to sharing power, enabling participation, and nurturing the cultural ecosystems you are part of!**

² These principles have been adapted from the [conceptual framework](#) proposed by Avdikos et al., 2024.

1. Prioritize Accessibility

Your **digital presence** is determined by how you connect with your audiences online, what image you project to the world, and what message you communicate through your digital activities and overall policy. A commons-oriented organisational philosophy will pursue the development and application of practices on **ethical open access to cultural heritage**³, facilitating public access to knowledge and encouraging users to discover, navigate, share, and engage with your content and work.



Across these lines, you can start by choosing the tools and materials that will secure that your digital presence and collections are as **open and accessible** as possible. Openness and accessibility will be determined largely by the ways you will decide to **curate your digital collections online**, including both the physical/analogue materials that you have digitized (e.g., scanned photographs, manuscripts, maps) and your born-digital objects (e.g., oral history sound recordings, electronic journals).

Bear in mind that, in the digital realm, 'openness' usually concerns:

- (a) **easy and free access to related data, such as digital works of art, artefacts, audio-visual archives, their information and stories**, allowing users to learn about and enjoy your materials online,
- (b) **metadata processing**, enabling users to easily search, locate, and retrieve content on demand, and
- (c) **permissible uses**, determining your rules and wishes regarding their reproduction, modification, and distribution for different purposes (e.g. educational or commercial).

³ See for instance the principles supported by the OpenGLAM movement, at <https://openglam.org>

To ensure accessibility:

- ✓ Check available copyright and open-access options for your collections and assets and adopt **open-access policies** for your digital content, where possible.
 - Public Domain materials are not protected by intellectual property laws such as copyright. Normally in the EU all works enter the public domain typically 70 years after the death of the creator⁴.
 - A standardized way to grant the public permission to use your data is by using [Creative Commons](#) or [GNU General Public Licenses](#). For a detailed analysis of available options, you may also consult the Copyleft Guide⁵.
- ✓ Share data and digitized materials through platforms that support free access and serve as **cultural data aggregators and public repositories**, operating at European (e.g., [Europeana](#), [Archives Portal Europe](#)) or national level (e.g., [Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek](#), [Art UK](#)).
- ✓ Publish raw files and photos to a public repository such as [Zenodo](#) or [GitHub](#), under an open license (e.g., [Creative Commons BY-SA 4.0](#)) to allow sharing and remixing, reusing in educational apps and wiki-based platforms, such as Wikipedia, while receiving proper credit.
- ✓ Devise an ethical and sustainable data management plan that ensures responsible data use, long-term access, and interoperability.

Don't forget that by putting accessibility first, you lay the groundwork for a truly inclusive, commons-oriented online space!

⁴ For more information, you may consult our GLAMMONS working paper, available [here](#).

⁵ See [Copyleft and the GNU General Public Licenses: A Comprehensive Tutorial and Guide](#)

2. Empower Autonomy and Co-creation

Apart from sharing data, your digital presence can serve as a channel for reaching out to and engaging with your audiences in multiple ways. In commons-oriented GLAMs, the idea of ‘openness’ moves beyond access to digital and digitised resources and takes a broader meaning – as **an open and welcoming attitude towards users’ involvement and contribution**⁶.

Therefore, a second key step when building your digital strategy is to **design digital experiences that invite your community to engage with your work in novel and creative ways**, contribute actively and allowing for two-way exchange of knowledge, resources and inspiration. To do so, you can draw on a plethora of free, ‘hands-on’ tools, materials and software for digital development, which you will help you mobilise new modes of open participation.

PARTICIPATORY
CO-CREATION
FOR DEEPENING
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



Bear in mind that, in the digital realm, there are different modes and levels of participation, including:

- Contributions, whereby participants can **provide data** to your digital projects;
- Collaborations, whereby participants can **analyse data** under your supervision;
- Co-creations, whereby participants **co-develop content** with you.

⁶ For more information, see the open-access anthology ‘[Sharing is Caring: Openness and Sharing in the Cultural Sector](#)’, edited by M. Sanderhoff.

Each of these requires different skills and resources for working with your users and community members, as they involve not only collaboration but also processes of interpreting together, sharing authority in the meaning-making process. Before designing your strategy and deciding upon your course of action, it is purposeful to consult some open-access **practical guides, written by GLAM professionals**, such as [The Participatory Museum](#) by Nina Simon, to see what suits best with your capacities and aspirations.

To empower autonomy and co-creation:

- ✓ Explore participatory tools like **crowdsourcing**, inviting your community to make meaningful contributions while building their skills (e.g., transcribing, annotating, georeferencing, capturing photos of public art and monuments with their mobiles).
 - [FromThePage](#) is a crowdsourcing platform for archives and libraries where volunteers transcribe, index and describe historic documents.
 - [CrowdHeritage](#) hosts crowdsourcing campaigns for enriching the metadata of digitised cultural heritage.
 - [AliceVision](#) and [Meshroom](#) software provide free, open-source reconstruction tools to transform visitor photos into 3D models.
 - [RESCAPER](#) is a mobile app for georeferenced ethnographic data collection and participatory landscape mapping (soon to be released in App store / Google Play).
- ✓ Run online **hackathons** or **co-creation workshops** to generate new ideas and solutions with your audiences.
 - [PeerTube](#) is a free video platform for creating your own channels, integrating them into your website, and administering them independently.
 - Creative projects can use open digital heritage collections (e.g., [Europeana](#), [Wikimedia Commons](#)) and open-source VR and AR libraries, such as [WebXR](#) and [AR.js](#).

- ✓ Support your communities to curate and document their heritage through **citizen science** projects, promoting the use of web-based tools for managing content, curating collections, and online libraries.
 - [WEAVEx](#) is a mixed-media tool for organising various types of content, such as images, documents, and videos, supporting digital community spaces and community heritage documentation.
 - [Mukurtu](#) is a free, mobile, and open-source platform aiming to empower communities to manage, share, and exchange their digital heritage archives.

- ✓ Consider **crowdfunding** initiatives to support participatory projects that matter to your stakeholders and users.
 - [Cobudget](#) is an open-source infrastructure for collaborative funding, supporting activities such as webinars, workshops, educational programmes, and public events.

A participatory co-creation approach holds great potential for deepening public engagement and ensuring that your organisation or project is nested in your community and maintains high social relevance!

3. Foster Open and Transparent Governance

Effective digital strategies also enhance **internal processes of managing your resources (money, time, equipment etc.) and democratic decision-making**. Commons-oriented GLAMs cherish horizontal and open modes of governance that are based upon collective decision-making, with transparency and accountability.



So, a third key step when designing your digital strategy is considering the adoption of the right tools **for working together** with your staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders to make sure decisions and manage your resources fairly.

Bear in mind that **P2P and blockchain network technologies** can be particularly ‘handy’ for introducing and maintaining collaboration and open governance within your organisation. In particular:

- P2P tools can help you **connect and work directly with each other as peers**; for example, sharing schedules, assigning tasks, voting while everyone can view and update information as they go.
- Blockchain ledgers can help you and your team **keep track of progress**, monitor resources coming in and going out, and record who agreed to what, with full transparency and information symmetry.

To foster open and transparent governance:

- ✓ Implement tools that enable **horizontal communication and knowledge sharing** across your team.
 - Open-source cloud collaboration platforms, such as [Nextcloud](#), can support file sharing, collaborative editing, commenting, while helping organise your work, through audio/video calls and task management features.
- ✓ Adopt digital platforms for **transparent project management** so all stakeholders can track progress and contribute to decisions.
 - [AppFlowy](#) and [Anytype](#) are easy-to-use collaboration apps to help you coordinate action for your projects.
 - Simple tools, such as [DAOhaus](#), can help you build consensus by enabling your members to make proposals and vote on the best course of action.
 - Participatory budgeting tools, such as [adhocracy+](#), can assist you in managing funds allocation.
- ✓ Build a culture of **open governance**, where team members at every level can contribute to your digital vision and strategy implementation and monitoring.
 - Free software web platforms, such as [Loomio](#), can help you run General Assembly processes remotely, focus discussion on specific threads, deliberate, and e-vote.
 - Similarly, [Decidim](#), is a free open-source platform to support democratic strategic planning and decision-making, meetings organisation, e-voting, and collaborative writing of regulations and texts.

An engaged and collaborative culture with internal transparency reinforces a commons-based ethic of shared responsibility, trust, and co-leadership!

4. Strengthen Networks and Inter-commoning

Finally, extend your digital strategy **beyond your ‘walls’ and institutional boundaries** to connect with the wider commons. Digital space can serve as a fertile ground for networking; for creating and sustaining **channels of information and knowledge exchange** between virtual communities of practice within. Moreover, it can help for connecting and collaborating with communities and groups outside the sector (e.g., cultural commons, digital commons, urban commons), by participating actively in **commons-oriented ecology for learning, sharing, and inter-commoning**.

- ✓ Seek opportunities to **exchange knowledge and best practices** with other GLAMs and commons-oriented organisations.
 - Some communities to liaise with could be the [Europeana Network Association](#), the [OpenGLAM initiative](#) and [Wikimedia Commons](#) and [GLAM-Wiki](#).
- ✓ Develop collaborative projects that leverage **shared resources**, like co-created digitization campaigns or joint exhibitions under a shared theme, where each partner can supply their digital content to a unified online platform.
 - [Museum with no frontiers](#), operating as an international non-profit organisation, develops virtual exhibitions by bringing together digitised materials contributed by museums, archives, and heritage institutions.
- ✓ Join digital **communities of practice** to promote inter-commoning and the circulation of knowledge and tools across institutions and networks.
 - This may include reaching out to ‘Do it with Others’ (DIWO) communities, such as [DisCo](#) and [IPFS](#).

This outward-looking dimension will enable your institution or project to grow with its peers and to contribute to a more connected and sustainable commons ecosystem!