GLAM/Case studies/WikiAfrica/Share Your Knowledge

The spirit of the project is best summarized into two animated shorts; Share Your Knowledge: Why? (subtitled in English, French, German and Greek), and Share Your Knowledge: How? (subtitled in English and Greek).

Share Your Knowledge (2011-2012, sometimes shortened as SYK) is a program that enhances the contents and work of cultural organisations through Creative Commons and the Wikimedia Foundation websites, strengthens their use and visibility and makes them available on Wikipedia. It is prompted by the good results of a previous experience with the Italian GLAM Associazione Amici del Museo delle Grigne Onlus.

Share Your Knowledge is a step-by-step procedure and it was initiated in 2011 a as subproject of "WikiAfrica", which is focused since 2006 on enhancing the production of African contents on Wikimedia Foundation's sites (especially articles on Wikipedia) with the involvement of research and documentation centres, institutions for international cooperation and archives. Share Your Knowledge helps WikiAfrica reaching the 30,000 African content milestone by the end of this year, regarding the number just as a chance to collaborate and engage as many people and institutions as possible. They are both initiated and promoted by the Italian nonprofit Foundation lettera27.

Among related activities there were:

- edit-a-thons (1, 2);
- workshops;
- a course to train "Wikipedians in residence".

A little bit of history

Share Your Knowledge was launched in 2011.

In 2011 a pilot phase involved institutions with different missions and content (texts, videos, films, books, papers and research articles, magazine articles, art collections). Working with an heterogeneous range of documentation was meant to allow the project to test a step-by-step procedure capable of supporting future partnerships. The first institutions involved in 2011 were Nigrizia (Ticket:2010092010007287), Festival del cinema africano, d'Asia e America Latina di Milano, Careof (Ticket:2012092510004197), Connecting Cultures, COSV (Ticket:2011090210011385), Fondazione Cariplo, Fondazione Ismu (Ticket:2012040510004902), Kunstverein (Milano), Officina GRIOT and the Africa Centre.

In 2012 the project was ready to involve more institutions and to test the efficiency of the step-by-step procedure. The objective of Share Your Knowledge was to work with 15 institutions in 2012: at the end of 2012 there are near 100 institutions involved thanks to the partnership with the w:en:Africa Centre and the support of Wikimedia España, Wikimedia Serbia and Wikimedia CH. In 2012 to respond the request of some of the institutions involved, a course was held to train "Wikipedians-in-residence".
How it works

Share Your Knowledge is structured in a step-by-step procedure to allow institutions to enhance the use and visibility of their content through Creative Commons and the Wikimedia Foundation websites. Please refer to the list of institutions involved in Share Your Knowledge to see where they are up to in the step-by-step procedure.

Before starting. Agreement

Institutions are invited to share their knowledge and to write an official letter in which they state it. The letter can be addressed to a Wikimedia chapter or to lettera27 and it needs to be signed by the institution's director; we encourage institutions to involve all their stakeholders in this decision (board, general assembly, staff, public...). We provide a model in which we suggest the institution to explain why and how they will share their knowledge and they provide the name of the person who will follow up on the project.

- **Why an official letter.** A letter is the simplest way to express a willingness; it allows institutions to freely decide what they can provide and it doesn't imply something back in return. It makes institutions in the position of "supporters" (with content not money) and it doesn't require a double signature. In specific cases we had to double sign partnerships agreements; in particular public administrations or institutions managed by public administrations require more formal agreements.

- **Who can sign the official letter.** In general letters are signed by the institutions' director. The person who signs the agreement takes the responsibility of what it states. We noticed that the best collaborations happened when the institutions involved as many stakeholders as possible in the decision process (board, general assembly, staff, public...).

- **Why share your knowledge.** We invite institutions to share their knowledge rather than inviting them to adopt a Creative Commons license or to contribute to Wikimedia projects for two main reasons

  1. Institutions can debate, argue and choose to share their knowledge with confidence and a deep understanding of what it means. We had a very significant discussion with the Tropenmuseum and the Ethnographical Museum of Neuchâtel which allowed us to understand how articulated is the position of institution related to sharing knowledge (i.e. the problematic issue of providing content without an accurate information about the context; the question whether it is appropriate to release documentation strongly connected to ideologies).

  2. Tools change over time and it is difficult to foresee all the specific authorizations you will need. Deciding to share their knowledge gives a general working direction and it allows people who will implement the initiative to take specific limited decisions (adopt the license on the content, publishing the license on their website, writing a letter to the OTRS service, giving a further authorization for the rights on the scans or photos...).

- **How we convince institutions to share their knowledge.** In general institutions – and more specifically GLAMs and non profit institutions – want to share their knowledge; they are aware that sharing their knowledge is part of their mission and it is essential to reach their beneficiaries; institutions are also already sharing their knowledge through exhibitions, events, publications, websites, online catalogues. The project offered them a new way to share their knowledge. In general we didn't focus on explaining "why they should do it"; we started from the question "why not doing it?". If an institution is selling rights on its art collection then it is maybe not a good idea to release the collection in Creative Commons attribution share alike; but if they only sell high resolution images, why not providing a lower resolution? If the institution is not selling its website texts and it is interested in providing them to as many people as possible, why not using an open license? We also encourage institutions to start from a selection of their content, to see how it works and to evaluate the experience. We noticed that, after the initial test, institutions work more and more to make available their content online.

- **How we select institutions.** In 2011 we were looking for different typology of institutions (foundations, festivals, NGOs, publishers, associations...) with different focus (literature, art, contemporary art, cinema, history, intercultural studies, cooperation) and with different content (texts, books, art works, digital catalogues, old documents, parchments, videos, films...); we initially worked mainly with institutions in Italy, specifically in the
Lombardy Region, because it is where lettera27 is based (this allowed us to organize at least 4 meetings with each institution), and also because the work of lawyers is strongly connected to the territory. In 2011 the Africa Centre participated in the project to test the step-by-step procedure and to decide if they wanted to implement a similar system in partnership with lettera27. Share Your Knowledge is born within WikiAfrica project, so we were also interested in involving institutions with African contents or strong links with Africa.

- **All institutions signed the agreement.** In general all institutions have signed the agreement. There are some exemptions.
  1. Institutions which have already contributed to WikiAfrica and/or have a Creative Commons attribution share alike license on their website didn't sign the agreement.
  2. GLAMs already contributing to Wikimedia projects didn't sign the agreement; nevertheless we asked them to express their support to WikiAfrica to allow us to consider their African content as a contribution to WikiAfrica project.

**Step 1. Authorize the content use**

Once the institution has signed the agreement we invite them to get started on Share Your Knowledge. The first step is to authorize the content use.

- **Why the Creative Commons attribution share alike license (cc by-sa).** We decided to invite institution to release their content with the Creative Commons attribution-share alike license (cc by-sa)\(^1\) because:
  1. it allows contents to be used on the Wikimedia projects; since the end of 2009 Wikimedia projects have the same license\(^2\)
  2. it requires attribution which is something institutions care about\(^3\).
  3. it requires share alike which ideologically is a relevant viral marketing strategy\(^4\).
  4. it is a simple and do-it-yourself license, easy to understand, to apply, and to publish it nicely visible on the institutions' website\(^5\).
  5. according to the cc by-sa license, "where the work or any of its elements is in the public domain under applicable law, that status is in no way affected by the license"\(^6\). This is a very important characteristic of the license which defines a sort of minimum openness, which does not restrict access to public domain content; The cc by-sa becomes very useful in case of other rights involved (i.e. rights of the institution over photos or scans).
  6. we preferred to focus on one license rather than a wide range of options (including public domain and fair use), because it was easier to explain properly one license rather than asking institutions to choose among many options.

- **Convincing institutions to allow commercial use of their content.** In general everybody is scared of allowing someone to use their content for commercial use. When you talk about commercial use people tend to imagine that one day someone will take their essay on the historiography of the Grigna mountains and make huge amounts of money with it. It is important to
  
  - Explain commercial use with concrete examples and to start by focusing on content the institutions is not already making money of or it is not planning to make money of.
  - Focus on what the Wikimedia projects can benefit from. There is a huge amount of documentation which can be relevant for Wikimedia projects, but which it is not relevant for the institutions; often the most interesting content is background documentation: biographies, resume of books and films, description of artworks, descriptive photos, reports.
  - Let the institution know that thanks to the commercial use of the cc by-sa license, the content they provide can be published or re-published on books and magazine (with attribution and the same license), without any cost for the institution.
  - Explain also that the license on digital images applies only to that specific image, at the resolution they decide to release it with. This means that they can release images with a lower resolution and keep high resolution
images under copyright. We asked for a minimum of 800 pixel side and we invited them to release works of contemporary artists only at this resolution (simply because we don't really know much about what happens next, so we preferred to test and evaluate first).

• Provide examples of other institutions using the license is very effective.

• **How about copyrights.** Clearance on copyright is the most delicate issue of the project; in general there is a great confusion on who holds copyrights and what belongs to whom. In general we noticed that larger institutions have a better and clearer copyright management: they sign agreements with freelance collaborators, they have content produced by employees (which automatically belongs to the institution) and they often take full rights on what they commission or buy. Small institutions present the most difficult situation in particular because they often don't have contracts with their collaborators or the contract don't specify copyright management.

• We focussed only on the less problematic content or on content produced by people involved in the project who could give their authorization.

• We encouraged institutions to explain why they are "sharing their knowledge" on their website and through their mailing list. The institutions received a very positive feedback and we highly recommend to do it, it gives also a better sense of the project to all the institutions' network and public.

• When needed we asked for authorizations to specific people and partners with positive feedback.

• **How about non digital content.** We focused on digital content because we preferred to concentrate our attention on what is already available and can be made more available, rather than on digitalizations, libraries and archives management. It is also still not very developed the use of Creative Commons licenses on printed material; nevertheless we created some

• **Looking at the future and procedures.** Sometimes it is not possible to release existing content with open licenses because managing all the copyrights would be too complex, but it is possible to improve procedures for the future. We created together with the institutions involved templates for contracts, partnerships and the production of artworks, where open licenses are included. From one side this is not the best way of working because paradoxically it reinforces the copyright laws[^7], on the other side we noticed that it allows institutions to work in a more structured and transparent way.

• **There is the law and there is the law of the community.** Regarding copyrights management, in general the law is less restrictive than the law of the Wikimedia community.

• Wikimedians need to be convinced that an institutions is actually really providing its content with an open license. The impression is that in general the community does not believe that an institution can be willing to do it.

• OTRS service is preferred rather than the Creative Commons attribution share alike license published on websites. The impression is that the OTRS service is perceived as a guarantee of the licenses. The license published on a website doesn't seem sufficiently "legal", as it was a mistake or a misunderstanding.

• The presence of two licenses on a website is considered a sign that the cc by-sa is invalid.

• Even if there is the cc by-sa license on the website, there are no other licenses, the license is in the footnote of all pages and the license is embedded with the appropriate HTML code, the community suggests to use the OTRS service.

• **OTRS vs. Creative Commons attributions share alike.** Share Your Knowledge has made the choice of supporting Creative Commons rather than to use the OTRS service[^8].

• OTRS service is very simple, rapid and efficient[^9]; at the same time it does not allow a wide visibility of the license adopted by the institutions. On the long run this service managed very well by the community will have difficulties to respond to a wider number of requests; already the OTRS service guidelines suggest to use the CC licenses.

• Embedding the cc by-sa licenses on the institutions' website is a very clear statement of the institutions for all the online community supporting and believing in open knowledge.
- In several cases we also used the OTRS service because it was easier to make the license clear for the community and it allowed us to have a ticket number which can be included in a template in the discussion page of Wikipedia articles.

- An argument in favor of the OTRS service is that it is a statement archived by Wikimedia projects which does not allow the institutions to withdraw from their authorization[10].

**Attribution.** Attribution on Wikipedia presents some critical issues.

- It seems that the procedures are rather thought for citations and public domain images than for content in cc by-sa.
- Articles produced by using texts in cc by-sa license have the OTRS ticket in the discussion page; not all of them have a reference in the bibliography.
- Images on Wikipedia have captions related to the subject and not to the image's author or to the courtesy. A common caption on magazines for images would include, Subject. Photographer, place, year. For artworks: Artist, *title*, year. Technique, dimensions. Name of the photographer, courtesy of [the institution/person providing the image]. Those kind of captions provide a complete attribution to the image.

**Step 2. Share contents on Wikipedia**

The second step Share Your Knowledge is to share contents on Wikipedia.

- **Why Wikipedia.** We use the word Wikipedia to simplify the Wikimedia universe. When we talk about Wikimedia Commons we explain that it is the multimedia archive of Wikipedia, and so on. We are aware that the choice does not properly portraits Wikimedia projects but we considered that our aim is to communicate the general sense of free and collaborative knowledge rather to explain the movement.

- **Who shares the contents on Wikipedia.** The project encourages institutions to announce that their content is now openly available. Contributors can be Wikipedia and Wikimedia editors, their public and their staff. Within Share Your Knowledge project we also took care of several uploads, because the overall project was meant to enrich Wikipedia and the Wikimedia projects with African contents (please refer to WikiAfrica); the uploads also helped us to evaluate the project and produce case studies.

- **Conflict of interests.** Staff of the institutions are invited to follow the guidelines for culture-sector professionals. The role of Share Your Knowledge staff is to facilitate the process; there are no agreements with the institutions that the staff will take care of uploads or of the production of articles.

**Step 3. Check out the path**

The third step of Share Your Knowledge is to evaluate the experience.

- **Self-evaluation.** We invite institutions to ask themselves questions about how the experience worked and to ask themselves if they can or they want to do more. We made a list of questions to facilitate this process and we consider the evaluation part of the time the institution need to invest in sharing their knowledge.

- **Evaluation of the project.** To evaluate Share Your Knowledge in 2011-2012 we involved a group of external evaluators, people or institutions who can look at what we are doing and provide us feedback. In particular thanks to this involvement, the DensityDesign Research Group of Politecnico di Milano joint the project as a partner and created visual analysis of the content uploaded.

- **Uploads.** To accelerate the use of content, Share Your Knowledge staff made uploads. This also allowed us to use those content as a contribution to WikiAfrica 2012 milestone. In reality in 2011-2012 we provided under cc by-sa license much more of what we can upload; we had to renounce in uploading texts and large collections of images because the time needed to do it would exceed the project deadline.

- **Tracking content.** To be able to monitor the content and what happened to it, we tracked it with a template in the discussion page. This template also provide information about the license, OTRS ticket and attribution. The templates are used also to produce information design.
• **Case studies.** We started producing case studies of the institutions participating in Share Your Knowledge. We firstly focussed on the institutions which have made the most significant contributions and for which there are already uploads. Please refer to the list of institutions involved in Share Your Knowledge to access the specific case studies.

**Structure of the project**

**Institutions**

Share Your Knowledge is promoted in 2011 by the Italian Foundation lettera27 with the support of Fondazione Cariplo and in collaboration with Wikimedia Italia and NEXA Center for Internet and Society at Politecnico di Torino, (Creative Commons Italia, SeLili). In the first months of the project we contacted experts who could contribute to the work as volunteer external evaluators; two external evaluators involved their institutions and agreed to join the project as partners. DensityDesign Research Lab - Design Department INDACO at Politecnico di Milano and Fondazione Università IULM both based in Milan become Share Your Knowledge partners in Spring 2011. In July 2011 we started contacting European Wikimedia chapters with the aim of involving them as associated partners in a project focussed on African contents of European institutions. We established agreements with Wikimedia España, Викимедија Србије (Wikimedia Serbia) and Wikimedia CH. We also started to discuss possible synergies with Wikimedia UK, Wikimedia France, Wikimedia Germany and Wikimedia Poland; but those discussions didn’t lead to a formal agreement.

**Collaborations with Wikimedia Chapters**

Wikimedia Italia has been partner of WikiAfrica since 2006. Wikimedia Italy contributed to Share Your Knowledge in 2011-2012 by informing its members about the initiative and the open calls and by involving its members in presentations and trainings. There have been also important and rich discussions between lettera27 staff and Wikimedia Italy to define the project, to overcome gaps and difficulties and to evaluate its approach from the perspective of the Wikimedia movement and its coherence with the Wikimedia vision and policies. Wikimedia España contributed to the project by informing its members and volunteers of Wikipedia in Spanish about the initiative, by facilitating contacts with Spanish cultural institutions and providing answers to their questions and by actively contributing to Spanish events linked to WikiAfrica/Share Your Knowledge. The collaboration with Викимедија Србије (Wikimedia Serbia) led to a presentation of the project Share Your Knowledge. There have been discussions about the possible collaboration between Wikimedia Serbia and Serbian institutions with African contents; during its trip to Belgrado, Cristina Perillo has presented the project to some institutions but in 2012 the meetings didn’t lead to formal collaborations.

**Budget**

Share Your Knowledge in 2011-2012 is a project supported by lettera27 Foundation and Fondazione Cariplo. The structure of the project, its activities and budget are clearly defined within its project. The overall project budget for 2011-2012 is 172,000 euro. Fondazione Cariplo provides a total financial support of 90,000 euro; lettera27 provides a total financial support and in-kind support of 82,000 euro; lettera27 supports Share Your Knowledge within the frame of WikiAfrica. In December 2011, the Africa Centre has defined its in-kind contribution to WikiAfrica; this support both contributes to WikiAfrica and Share Your Knowledge. The budget has been used mainly for collaborations (scientific director, project manager, administration, communication, tutors, legal consultants, documentation, community outreach) and communication (printed materials and the Share Your Knowledge videos). The tutors and the person working on documenting the project have been selected through an open call. The job descriptions are defined in the project, in the open calls and in the letters of appointment signed by either lettera27 or the Africa Centre, and by each person collaborating with the project.
References

[1] In general we suggested the use of Creative Commons attribution-share alike license (cc by-sa) version 3.0 License Deed http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/ and Legal Code http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode. At the moment the 4.0 version is under development.


[3] Please refer to the Creative Commons FAQ for further information about attribution http://wiki.creativecommons.org/FAQ#How_do_I_properly_attribute_a_work_offered_under_a_Creative_Commons_license.3F.

[4] Please refer to the Creative Commons FAQ for further information about how to reuse cc by-sa content for derivative works http://wiki.creativecommons.org/FAQ#I_derive_or_adapt_a_work_offered_under_a_Creative_Commons_license.2C_which_CC_license.28s.29_can_I_apply_to_the_resulting_work.3F.

[5] Please refer to the presentation of Creative Commons licenses on the Creative Commons website http://creativecommons.org/licenses/?lang=en.


[7] The lawyer Maria Lillà Montagnani, legal consultant for Share Your Knowledge, underlined this side effect of the project by explaining that stating the copyright reduces the potentiality of “fair use”.

[8] To understand how the OTRS service (or Volunteer Response Team) works please refer to its help page on Wikimedia Commons which is more focussed on explaining the system which allows rights holders to send a permission to use an image freely; this permission is then validated by a user with OTRS access http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/OTRS. The help page on Wikipedia is rather focussed on explaining how the e-mail system works and what it is for http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Volunteer_Response_Team.

[9] By the way, thanks.

[10] Erica Litrenta – a Wikipedia and Wikimedia volunteer member of the Volunteer Response Team and collaborator of the Share Your Knowledge project – has pointed out this important capacity of the OTRS service to record authorizations (June 2012).


[13] Presentation by Cristina Perillo at the GLAM Conference in Belgrade 2012 (https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:L5_e44KZ_pgJ:upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/fei/Open_Wiki_GLAM_of_Serbia_-_presentation_WikiAfrica-Share_Your_African_Knowledge.pdf+Wikimedia+Serbia+share+your+knowledge&hl=it&gl=it&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESjltR4TM7sWEXE9PyHht7SHoyEPohtMs_Hzd5HLMdtkT6j8RKGZwmp8q_2dEunkJ0k1Uj654zdL0hS9CZovVTX6_7nf62cTT2pGqHfH8MamuQ_sigg=AHIeHs5Gy6CYAKAAAsM-H7hKa1ISiSbOwQ4) during the GLAM Conference in Belgrade.


Specific case studies on the GLAMs involved

Please refer to the list of institutions involved in Share Your Knowledge to access the specific case studies.

Other contents

- Commons:WikiAfrica
- commons:Category:WikiAfrica report
- commons:Category:SYK report

Results

The Italian association it:COSV will soon share details about a project based on free licensed music in Pacific Islands and Southern Africa and involving lettera27, the first “spin-off” of the Share Your Knowledge experience.
Learn more

- Full list of involved institutions
- Main concepts
- Path for institutions willing to join
- Some links to evaluate the reached goals

External links

- Share Your Knowledge on Commons (http://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:Search&limit=20&offset=20&redirs=1&ns0=1&ns6=1&ns9=1&ns12=1&ns14=1&ns100=1&ns106=1&search="share+your+knowledge")
- Share Your Knowledge on Outreach wiki (http://outreach.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search="share+your+knowledge"&title=Special:Search)
- Share Your Knowledge on SlideShare (http://www.slideshare.net/iopensa/tag/share-your-knowledge)
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