



Developing a Historical Library's Identity through Heritage Interpretation.

A Thesis submitted on

26th June 2022

By

Christopher Cilia

Supervised by

Mr Mark Camilleri

B.A. Hons. (Melit.), D.L.I.S. (Melit.), M.Sc. ILS (Aber.)

A Thesis Submitted to the

Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta

In Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements for the

Master of Arts in Heritage Interpretation

Acknowledgements

Dedicated to my children Jake and Kate, you are my everything!

Countless people supported my effort in this thesis. First and foremost, to my tutor Mr Mark Camilleri for providing invaluable feedback, at times responding to my emails late at night and early in the morning. A heartfelt thanks for all the times we met and talked repeatedly to finalise this research. Several other people supported me throughout this journey and gave me all the moral support needed to make sure I can make it to the very end.

Lastly, my family deserves endless gratitude: Thanks to my loving and supportive wife Alison for her constant support, and for taking on a bigger role to reach out to our children and family obligations.

To my parents, Jude', and Maria for the extra hassle they went into for me to follow the online lessons needed to arrive to write this now. I wouldn't have made it without you.

I dedicate this to all my extended family who were always willing to help me in everything that was needed to ensure that I keep my focus on track on this master's course. To my family, I give everything, including this.

Thanks to my closest friends that for the past three years heard me constantly rant and talk things out, to the course co-ordinator Dr, Thornhill, who ensured smooth operations on what was needed from us step by step and once again to my wife Alison, for all the sacrifices you have made and all the extra work in between. I love you more than ever!

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Table of Contents	ii
Table of Figures	iv
Abstract	v
Abbreviations	vi
DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY FOR MASTERS STUDENTS	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Definitions	2
1.2 Digital media and cultural heritage.....	5
1.3 Alignments of the past, present, and future	6
Chapter 2: Literature Review	11
2.1 What is 'Heritage Interpretation?	11
2.2 The Library as an Institution	12
2.3 Public Libraries.....	12
2.4 Data Transference: The Case of the National Library of Sweden	14
2.5 Obtaining access to cultural heritage and defining one's cultural identity.....	17
2.6 What function might libraries play in the construction of cultural identity?	18
2.7 Access to cultural identity sources	19
2.8 Digital Cultural Heritage	21
2.9 The role of libraries	23
2.10 Libraries to Evolve	25
2.11 Possible solutions for the National Library of Malta's visibility.....	26
Chapter 3: Methodology	37
3.1 Objectives and scopes	37
3.2 Ethical Issues.....	39
Chapter 4: Data Analysis	43
4.1 Sampling and validity of data	43
4.2 Limitations	44
4.3 Insightful information	45
4.4 Questionnaire for Library Professionals.....	51

Chapter 5: Conclusion	58
Bibliography	70
Appendices.....	78
Appendix A – Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form.....	85
Questionnaire addressed to Tour Guides.	87
Recruitment Letter / Consent: Library Professionals.....	90
Questionnaire for Library Professionals.....	91
Appendix B – Interview Responses.....	93
Questionnaire for Library Professionals.....	107

Table of Figures

Figures A - 1-11: Innovative techniques to enhance the library experience whilst utilising some lifelong learning skills	79
Figures B: 12-13: Meet the artists, get to know the process, be inspired in this creativity hub	79
Figures C: 14-27: Different library layouts and innovative technologies make the library experience truly memorable. Other libraries which incorporated such ideas saw a significant shift in people attending, and the demands grew.	84

Abstract

National libraries serve locals and visitors from all around the world. These organisations are solely responsible for preserving and safeguarding national book treasures and unpublished documents and manuscripts. Heritage interpretation's primary function is to assist tourists in developing a sense of place and identity. Cultural heritage interpretation refers to the strategies used to increase visitor understanding and perception of cultural assets through development, management, and, sometimes, planning. The primary purpose of this dissertation is to provide a study on how the National Library of Malta can function as a cultural centre that safeguards the identity of all that makes us who we are. The author researched ways from similar libraries abroad through the literature review to answer this question. Through the lens of social identity theory, the proposed study is empirical research on the usefulness of local historical libraries in supporting tourists in creating a sense of place and learning about Malta's past. The literature review will focus on the last decade (2012-2022) to demonstrate the underlying nature of the issue, current advancements, and any recommendations that should be adopted. Two semi-structured questionnaires were disseminated to obtain a more focused picture: one for Malta's tourist guides and one for Malta Libraries' management, who are also professional librarians, allowing for a more in-depth examination of the data. The comparisons offered an assessment of where the National Library of Malta stands and what tourist guides expect against what is done as expressed by library professionals. A comprehensive picture of what must be done to restore this important historical library to its former splendour is also discussed. While tour guides frequently emphasise the difficulty of intersectoral collaboration, library management officials frequently emphasise their inability to communicate effectively, as they appear to be waiting for authorities to establish new ways to maximise and restructure the National Library of Malta. All the professionals questioned care about their clients' demands, which is a good sign for this business.

Keywords: National Library of Malta; Identity; Library; Heritage

Abbreviations

C.E.O. – Chief Executive Officer

I.F.L.A. - International Federation of Library Associations

K.B. - Koninklijke Bibliotheek

M.T.A. - Malta Tourism Authority

N.L. - National Library

N.L.A. - National Library of Australia

N.L.M. - National Library of Malta

N.L.S. - National Library of Sweden

U.N.E.S.C.O. - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY FOR MASTERS STUDENTS

Student's I.D. /Code: **146283(M)**

Student's Name & Surname: **Christopher Cilia**

Course: **Master of Arts in Heritage Interpretation**

Title of dissertation:

Developing a Historical Library's Identity through Heritage Interpretation.

I hereby declare that I am the legitimate author of this dissertation and that it is my original work.

No portion of this work has been submitted in support of an application for another qualification of this or any other higher education institution.

I hold the Institute of Tourism Studies (Malta) harmless against any third-party claims with regard to copyright violation, breach of confidentiality, defamation and any other third-party right infringement.



06-07-2022

Signature of Student

Date

Chapter 1: Introduction

When heritage interpretation is made correctly, it can significantly “enhance the visitor experience”. It may deepen the interaction amongst the site and those who visit it (Howard, 2011).

The interpretation might cause economic benefits for the surrounding area by upgrading a site's appeal. When done incorrectly, it may miscommunicate the site's meanings and alienate visitors. If historic materials are not specified and placed correctly, it can potentially cause physical damage to them (Russell, 2014).

A group or society sector considers a heritage site of historical or cultural interest. Heritage interpretation conveys a place's significance or meaning in various mediums. The international charter, which provides guidelines for the interpretation, provides that “prints and electronic publications, public lectures, on-site and directly related on-site facilities, training programmes, community activities, and ongoing research, training and process analysis can be included” (ICOMOS 2008, 7).

Today's library world is awash with debates over technology, alternative service models, and managerial concepts, many of which lack historical precedent. Inability to see the past is a crucial source of contention in social and political debates in all western liberal democracies, not least in the European Union. Debates about libraries and their place in society and librarianship as a profession are often launched and sustained by players outside the library sector (Hansson, 2010). However, if we examine this area, we can see that it can meet many of the demands for change by looking at the fundamental values and professional ethos formed over nearly six thousand years. We must emphasise this and introduce such a view into contemporary arguments about librarianship (Hanson, 2010).

How a historical library is interpreted is highly contextual. Specific settings may be amenable to extensive on-site interpretation. Others may cause an interpretation strategy primarily off-site or reliant on mobile technologies or publications because of their scarcity, use, or fragility (Ashworth, 2021).

The proposed interpretation program and the site's influence will determine the plan's intricacy. A genuine dialogue should occur between heritage specialists and stakeholders, with all participants' viewpoints and ideas recognized. The discussion could take the form of forming a steering committee and organizing a series of seminars. It is crucial to emphasize that the level of communication between heritage specialists, libraries, and the community will vary depending on the intended interpretation program and the site's significance (Burra Charter, 2013).

Why is it necessary to interpret heritage sites in order for them to survive? When a "heritage site" is large or prominent enough, it may not require as much interpretative effort to attract visitors as people would still want to visit it for other reasons. Therefore, interpretation is a "value-added" service that enhances the overall site visitor experience (Weiler and Walker, 2014).

However, delivering exceptional programmes and services for most moderate to small heritage sites and maintaining an effective interpretative plan will be necessary for long-term tourism success.

1.1 Definitions

As we examine why heritage sites require interpretation, it is necessary to establish certain baseline concepts.

Heritage Tourism: Visitors or travellers who visit, experience, and learn about natural or cultural landscapes, sites, features, products, people, events, and stories (edutainment). It is important to note that the educational component of this type of tourism is vital. Visitors are ready to learn, see, and do! They explore historical sites and take part in a variety of educational activities.

Interpretation: Through direct encounters with products, artefacts, landscapes, and sites, interpretation is a communication approach that enlightens visitors about the meanings and connections inherent in our cultural and natural heritage.

Without interpretative services—whether having qualified interpretive workers tell the unique story of each heritage site to tourists or developing and offering

great self-guiding interpretive possibilities for tourists—a historic or heritage site becomes an OLD site. The "legacy" of the place is revealed by interpreting the site's tale to visitors. Interpretation brings the site to life for visitors, endowing it with relevance and significance. It shows tourists the distinctions between "ancient" and "historical" in exciting and unforgettable ways.

Most heritage literature deals with the intricacies of collected and preserved things. There is, of course, no shortage of literature on the history of the building or the pricing guides of ancient collectors or spotters to local wildflowers. Like the patrimony scholar, a geographer, or a historian must comprehend the entire classification system in any library. From folklore to architecture and wildlife, materials on conservation practises are likewise abundant and widely scattered around the library. However, material that examines the notion of patrimony as a unit that focuses on questions of property ownership and its purposes is much smaller and is drawn from very diverse authors, including geographers, cultural scholars, municipal planners and art historians, and museum studies departments (Howard, 2011).

Many libraries worldwide have been closed down due to the pandemic. For example, several libraries, like the one in the Institute of Health Care in Malta, have been converted into emergency care facilities for patients afflicted with COVID-19. Even the Library of Congress, governments have instructed whom to close all its facilities until further notice (Chisita, 2020).

With each societal disruption caused by the coronavirus, closing libraries can have a ripple effect on the towns in which they are located, as library closures profoundly influence the entire community (Chisita, 2020). Libraries are one of the few places anyone may visit without the expectation of purchasing something and are accessible to everyone, rich or poor. Until libraries are closed, the public will either be unaware or forget how crucial libraries are (Ashworth, 2020).

Libraries have historically operated as informal day shelters for homeless people or facing housing difficulties. Libraries provide a lifeline for low-income families. They lend far more than books—baking supplies, power equipment, and other

items the wealthy may take for granted. Libraries provide social resources for poor children and elders and internet access for individuals who live in rural areas or cannot afford them (Ashworth, 2020).

Libraries have become much more lenient regarding item return deadlines and library card expiration dates. Specific libraries have expanded their online offerings, increasing their allocation of streaming media rentals to organise online reading sessions (Ashworth, 2020).

COVID-19 allows libraries to reaffirm their roles as essential institutes combating information disorder. The emphasis is worldwide to prevent and convert the event of COVID into a mobilisation of knowledge, skills, collective will and any embryonic means for the goodwill of humankind regardless of race, colour, gender, religious or political preference. In times of uncertainty, access to quality information is vital since it is a resource that can make or break communities. Every action, programme, service, and product intended to raise humanity characterises the field of influence of the library, together with international library associations such as I.F.L.A. Unlike in the past, the spread of digital technology, restricted to print-based resources, strengthens the librarians' ability to organise, retrieve, analyse, and distribute. Professional librarians must mobilise their know-how, abilities, and material resources to tackle COVID-19. Using the literature panoply, for example, literacy, librarians may illustrate their value to society during a crisis. A citizen of health information is not gullible but analyses all authoritative information to avoid unnecessary deadly anxieties and terror (Chisita, 2020).

Culture has a lot to do with how people perceive their experiences. Various historical and cultural experiences will yield varied interpretations and diverse cultural orientations. Diversity is the result. However, culture takes form at many levels, from the unification of traditions and values. National and broader transnational traditions have a particular strength, such as universal concepts—peace, freedom, democracy, justice—and notions that cognitively frame the symbolic narratives and imageries shaping identities and cultural traditions. The European heritage is a source of these concepts, which should not be considered

uniting master narratives but as references often interpreted differently. The idea of Europe is a cultural model that has influenced social identities and the many cultures of Europe in its formation. It is not a common culture but an interpretative framework from which a shared culture is workable. It does not oppose this idea of Europe to national culture but the foundation of national culture (Delanty, 2018).

1.2 Digital media and cultural heritage

The most eloquent expression of digital media's heritage significance is the transference of value systems and methods from legacy. This expression is articulated clearly in the National Library of Australia's *Guidelines for the Preservation of Digital Heritage* (2003: 69). What to maintain is determined using the same criteria as non-digital materials, with selection based on collection policies, understanding of materials and their context, and, most crucially, determining the material elements that give the objects their value.

To be verified, digital legacy must be placed with other forms of legacy that have been designated as "valuable." Additionally, established selection criteria for nation-building and unfolding a "national" tale are in place. For example, the U.N.E.S.C.O. charter's Article 7 (2003) - Selecting what should be preserved expressed a nation's cultural memory through selected historical landmarks and instances of innovation.

As with any documentary legacy, selection criteria vary by country, but the primary criterion for determining which digital assets to retain would be their relevance and long-term cultural, scientific, evidentiary, or other worth (U.N.E.S.C.O., 2003).

Collecting and authenticating significance is less about constructing a clear identity than preserving an insecure one on the verge of dissolving. The historian François Hartog states that this is "an identity in quest of itself, to be excavated, assembled, and even constructed through this process." (2005, 10) In this

manner, it becomes less about defining what one owns and has and more about defining what one is without knowing or capable of knowing".

When it comes to Australian digital heritage, the National Library of Australia's *Guidelines for the Preservation of Digital Heritage* (2003, 44) indicates that "preservation programs function as agents for the 'country' or the 'public community.'" Digital legacy is crucial to establishing a nation's identity in this context, and those who pick what is deemed significant and the methods accompanying it are portrayed as an unchanging entity - as natural and objective. In essence, digital legacy is similar to traditional heritage in that it is forced on everyone, safeguarded, and presented as a birth right. Additionally, it portrays the past as uniform and stable through reified systems of worth and value, a history that can be known using selected material artefacts. Preserving the digital fabric's integrity assures its continued existence as a historical treasure. According to historian Graeme Davison (2000), heritage can only provide a gloss of the past. Indeed, the same may be said of "new" heritage.

1.3 Alignments of the past, present, and future

As with established ideas of legacy, digital heritage reflects the monetisation of the past. It is retrograde and seeks to resurrect a future from the rubble of the past. Rather than the monetary value of these items, digital heritage is concerned with loss and preservation for posterity. According to the U.N.E.S.C.O. Charter, "digital heritage is at risk of extinction, and its preservation is critical for the sake of current and future generations." (2003, 1). The foundation for digital legacy is as much about the future as the past - the generations yet unborn who will inherit.

Similarly, the National Library of Australia's *Guidelines for the Preservation of Digital Legacy* (2003: 29) allude to this function as a present–future–past interlocutor, adding that "everything deemed significant enough to be handed on to future generations is considered heritage, even digital." Loss discourses Digital heritage, like traditional forms of heritage, is haunted by the potential of loss. The

U.N.E.S.C.O. charter's (2003, 2) references to born heritage pieces allude to this possibility of disappearance.

Preventing the Loss of Cultural Property, the world's digital legacy is in danger of being lost to future generations. Several issues contribute to this, including the quick obsolescence of the technology and software that power it, uncertainty regarding resources, accountability, and techniques for maintenance and preservation, and a lack of supportive laws (U.N.E.S.C.O., 2003).

Digital legacy is valuable if it is threatened or has been lost. It is born with the possibility of extinction. Protecting digital history is a safeguard against loss and reflects the belief that nothing we can create or expect to create is more precious than the past. As codified in the National Library of Australia's rules and the U.N.E.S.C.O. charter, loss discourses are inextricably linked to authentic preservation. Loss and authenticity have a psychological resonance that serves as a spiritual anchor. They imply a distinct afterlife for an object, a noble commitment to one's predecessors and descendants, and establish a principle of resistance to growth. Friedrich Nietzsche (1995) describes this overriding desire as the "preservation of the decaying or outmoded for posterity." This desire results from a sense of devotion to the past. Heritage value may also be interpreted as a state of mind, visceral fear of the past and future. Without concern about loss and recovery, digital things would have no heritage value if seen in the present.

Assembling the future archives: there is a conflict between accepting loss, desiring retrieval, and choosing what to maintain. When creating tomorrow's archives, heritage experts are trapped between defining what to save and what is relevant in the national narrative. This narrative involves both collective forgetfulness and collective memory and the desire to forget nothing. The National Library of Australia's *Guidelines for the Preservation of Digital Heritage* articulates this by stating, "For cultural institutions traditionally charged with collecting and preserving cultural heritage, the question of which of these objects should be preserved for future generations and how to go about selecting and preserving

them has become extremely pressing." (2003, 8). The digital surrogate serves a different purpose than the born-digital object, which is considered to be analogous to the non-digital original. According to the *Guidelines for the Preservation of Digital Heritage*, surrogates play a critical role in preventing loss due to digital preservation (ibid). David Lowenthal states that we "cling to traces of the past in the face of insecurity and compensate for what has passed away by an interest in its history." (1985, 399). Thus, the surrogate is viewed as a tangible link to a bygone era, serving as an affirmation of a continuing identity in a perilous present. It is used to lament and support discussions about a lost past by demonstrating an interest in the original's history and validating the concept of material authenticity. The replicant is theoretically locked off as part of this grieving and historical rehabilitation process. It does not include any explicit messages but rather relays the originals. In this sense, the replicant brings the heritage object and the evidence of its making into the viewer's presence while obliterating the craft that enabled that presence; that is, by conveying information about the "original" object's details, form, fabric, shape, aesthetics, and history through interpretation rather than through reference to its characteristics. By establishing a surrogate, their life histories' movements, memories, customs, intents, and wounds are precisely duplicated in virtual space, assuming the actual's firmness, surfaces, edges, and texture. It is intended to give testimony to the past through these representations, acting as a visual autopsy, to enable a more definite recovery of history, time, or aesthetic experience (Sontag 1983: 63; Leyton 1992). For instance, Lieutenant Henry Anderson's scarlet jacket, or "coatee," from the Battle of Waterloo, currently in the collection of the National Army Museum in London, contains a bloodstain, the trace of a wound inflicted by a musket shot (Pearce 1996, 19).

Similarly, the stain etched into the coding of the digital form becomes one of its message-bearing characteristics, the observer's language, or memory. The historical conditions of time, location, and action that the "coatee" and stain as an authenticated natural trace and its digital replica provide an opening for imagination, which may be reshaped through memory's creative capacities. Due

to the jacket's physical survival retains its metonymic association with the war (Pearce 1996, 25).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review will concentrate on the recent decade (2012-2022) to illustrate the fundamental nature of the issue, the current developments, and any recommendations that should be implemented.

"Libraries and librarians should be seen as important tools in national security. National security is possible through the utilisation and collaboration of library, human, and material resources" (*Aussie-Ugbah 2013, 103*).

2.1 What is 'Heritage Interpretation'?

Heritage Interpretation is a term that refers to a professional practice that has become increasingly prevalent in environmental and cultural heritage sites. Its primary objective is to "establish a connection between visitors and what they can discover at a nature reserve, historic site, or museum" – given its nature as a "structured approach to non-formal education that is specialised in communicating significant ideas about a place to leisure-time visitors," as recently defined by the European Union. Originating in the "nature guiding" activities for visitors that began to establish themselves within the ambit of North American parks and reserves in the second half of the nineteenth century (Yellowstone, the world's first national park, was founded in 1872), the professional practise of interpretation – and, with it, the professional role of the interpreter – has been further developed as a result of the actions taken. This work seeks to illuminate some critical connections between educational reform claims that were emerging in American society and culture at the time by retracing the cultural background, particularly of late-nineteenth-century America, as well as re-examining the actions and writings of the figures mentioned above in light of the thought and work of some contemporary influential educationalists and educators (Brunelli, 2013).

2.2 The Library as an Institution

"If most knowledge is accessible in digital formats, on devices that can be carried anywhere, what is the purpose of a traditional library collection of books, journals, magazines, movies, and music? If the Internet is the primary access point for this information, what is the purpose of preserving physical spaces where people can come to find it? If libraries are nothing more than community centres in cities and towns and on college campuses, then what do we need librarians for? Are libraries and librarians anachronistic in a digital age? Who, after all, are they serving, and how?" (Palfrey, 2015, 8-9)

In attempting to define cultural legacy in a way appropriate to museums, archives, and libraries, it was discovered that the meaning is fluid, complex, and constantly evolving. In attempting to trace the origins of the phrase "culture heritage" related to libraries, it was discovered that "cultural heritage" became prominently used just after they began digitising their historical collections that had lost their copyright protection. Within the library setting, the phrase "cultural heritage" was inextricably related to "digital preservation" or "preservation and access," but no definition of cultural heritage was discovered. The phrase appears to be used in the library sector based on a shared understanding. Books, journals, newspapers, and maps are examples of cultural heritage documented on "paper". Some may house unpublished manuscripts (which would fall under the traditional purview of archives) and audio-visual materials. Thus, the aspect of "document" provides a route for additional research (Nilson & Thorell, 2018).

2.3 Public Libraries

Public libraries have traditionally provided services other than book lending, and a recent trend in the United Kingdom has been an increased emphasis on a broader "cultural offer," often focused on arts programmes and events. Fletcher (2019) argues in his article *Public Libraries, Arts and Cultural Policy in the U.K. that* The most frequently mentioned causes are increased public funding demands and changing public needs and attitudes toward libraries. Collaborations with other organisations in the cultural sector appear to have increased.

The extent to which a broader mission is a net positive is debatable. Diminished public library users cannot be handled adequately through simplistic arguments about reduced financing. Coates (2018), in his article *On the Closure of English Public Libraries*, makes a compelling case for the long-term degradation of their primary mission and attractiveness that has disproportionately harmed those libraries. Perhaps the most significant expansion has been the transfer of facilities to charitable trusts, community-based organisations, or volunteer-led organisations, frequently with the suggested or actual threat of closure. Though this is not a complete examination of the subject, as Smith (2018) suggests in his article *An evaluation of Community-Managed Libraries in Liverpool* a stronger emphasis on arts programmes and events may be one area in which community-run libraries can differentiate themselves: whether intentionally or unintentionally. Other research has examined council-run and volunteer-run libraries' geography and "attractiveness" (services offered and closeness to other venues). The study cited above indicates that, while some of the smallest and least frequented libraries in this area were maintained by volunteers, other factors (opening hours, user groups, and transportation connections) influenced overall usage across libraries of all sizes (Delrieu & Gibson, 2017). Ownership of libraries and arts in libraries are two distinct topics, yet both hint at substantial shifts in community perceptions and interactions. Parallels can be drawn with other lengthy (even historic) arguments about the "convergence" of museums, libraries, galleries, and archives. There is certainly an increased interest in collaborations throughout the cultural sector. However, Warren and Matthews point out in their 2018 article *Public Libraries, museums, and Physical Convergence*, that actual study on how these operate in practice and whether the risk and investment are beneficial is lacking. The arts' position in current library services is a developing issue, while at least one book exists on Smallwood's 2014 book, *Bringing the Arts into the Library*. In the United Kingdom's arts and cultural policy, the role of performing arts is significantly more specialised. Several policy guidelines and toolkits have been published in the United Kingdom (Williams, 2017; Loud in Libraries C.I.C. 2019; Society of Chief Librarians, 2017). However, these are mainly broad, "how-to" instructions. There is still room for more in-depth analysis and

critical perspectives. The Marvellous article, *Marketing for Story Selling: the Spark Arts for Children* (Matthews, 2017), seeks to fill this lacuna in the literature by demonstrating the convergence of policy sectors such as libraries and the arts.

2.4 Data Transference: The Case of the National Library of Sweden

Conway (2015), in his article, *Digital transformations and the Archival Nature of Surrogates*, points out that it is common knowledge among scholars studying digitised cultural material that so-called "digital surrogates" do not and cannot replicate or replace authentic paper documents. Digitisation is a means of providing access – not a plan for preservation in the classic sense (preserving the integrity of the physical object). However, one could argue that the concept of "surrogates" is becoming challenged within a heritage culture infiltrated by digital operations that are now considered standard. Indeed, online digital newspapers can skew historical research (Milligan, 2013). Nonetheless, they are progressively becoming the norm for research (instead of scrutinising original prints), making it more critical for cultural organisations to monitor actual output.

Even when digitisation operations have been directed toward increasing access, particularly for fragile newspapers, the internal incentive for digitalisation (at cultural organisations) has typically been to conserve what would otherwise degrade into paper flakes and dust. For example, in a policy paper detailing the National Library of Sweden's digitisation strategy, it is noted that "a critical component of the library's mandate is to preserve cultural material for future generations." Thus, preservation is a critical selection criterion. We prioritise digitising material on low-quality paper, namely newspapers, periodicals, printed advertisements, and audio-visual material with failing recording media" (Kungliga Biblioteket, 2016). When digitalisation is proposed as a preservation method, it is frequently viewed as a particular type of "information capture" — the preservation of material "on" paper – not the paper itself. From the standpoint of a heritage institution, digital preservation is typically defined as the transfer of

information — texts, photos, sound, or video — from one medium to another in practice.

According to Jarlbrink and Snickars (2017), in their article *Cultural heritage as digital noise: nineteenth-century newspapers in the digital archive*, it is stated that regulation makes it difficult for heritage institutions (particularly in Europe) to manage copyright. Preservation has typically been the guiding concept for digitisation initiatives. As the National Library of Sweden's policy document affirms, preservation is almost in the D.N.A. of heritage institutions (as well as professional archivists and librarians) — which is arguably one of the reasons the National Library of Sweden has paid so little attention to the actual output of its noisy newspaper heritage.

Nonetheless, there are compelling grounds to cast doubt on the distinction between digitisation for access and preservation. For instance, Paul Conway (2015) has claimed that the division between digitisation and digitalisation is "artificial and deceptive." According to his logic, access is always the default in the digital world and is the "natural conclusion of digital transformation, even if access is fully achieved only through functional electronic networks and legal frameworks that control permits." Access is a "given in the process of digitisation". We propose that, somewhat strangely, preservation has become the yardstick for evaluating the value of digitalisation efforts (in the case of newspaper digitisation activities at the National Library of Sweden). Access has consistently been overlooked and even neglected — since it is a given — due to institutional legacy processes known as "archivalization" (Kettunen et al., 2014).

Björk (2015), in the article *How Reproductive is a Reproduction?* Observes that a linear view of digitalisation processes may be misleading, as numerous steps occur concurrently. At each stage, new information is generated, resulting in distinct levels of representation: metadata, transcription, and visual. Despite this, Swedish Media Conversion Centre (Mediakonverteringscentrum (M.K.C.)) employees frequently refer to their facilities as a "factory," complete with an

assembly line and various workstations. The digitalisation process begins with librarians selecting the volumes to be scanned from library holdings. Since the National Library of Sweden acquired the Uppsala university library's newspaper collection a few years ago, they have had two copies of practically all newspapers. The duplicate best suited for scanning has been selected and converted into a "disposable copy." M.K.C. cuts these newspaper copies into loose sheets to expedite the scanning process. After capturing the "content," the disposable copy is discarded. Thus, digitising newspapers means preserving and protecting the material from the perishable paper medium, i.e., printed texts and photographs. In summary, newspapers are not digitised; instead, the portion of (and within) them classified as content is digitised (Conway, 2015).

"Behind the scenes, in server rooms and on systems administrators' desktops, 'artificial' digital collections are organic entities that grow and change shape as new materials are added, new contextual relationships among objects are established, and new procedures are brought to bear on the organisation and management of these large collections." (Conway, 2015).

Because vast collections of "digital surrogates" inevitably possess archival qualities, legacy institutions must reconceptualise what a digital archive is. In terms of noisy heritage, this causes fresh perplexities for academics. On the one hand, as Jarlbrink & Snickars's (2017) paper has proven, the digital copy is not the same as the original paper copy; letters never published in old newspapers are now part of history. However, if the same digital material is processed again, the resulting digital copy will differ from the original. Historically, the press was characterised by nearly identical printed copies. Inevitably, digitising historical newspapers separates us from originals and digital copies. There will undoubtedly be more than one difference between the original and copy in the future digital newspaper archives generated by the National Library of Sweden. Variation between the original scanned newspaper page (Jarlbrink & Snickars, 2017).

2.5 Obtaining access to cultural heritage and defining one's cultural identity

To create a complex identity, it appears that not only a large quantity of high-quality data is required but also a specific type of information. This type of creation is referred to as "culturally valuable information." However, what is culture? According to Dancs (2018), culture is "the circumstances in which individuals are brought up." If this statement is true, it leads to one's growth in a healthy identity. It also gives a context to a society's literature and oral tradition. Documented literature of any genre of every society that claims to have an identifying culture is given more weight. There is also a more detailed, scientific definition of culture, "...shared patterns of behaviours and interactions, cognitive constructs, and sufficient understanding learnt through socialisation. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group." (Dancs, 2018). The *U.N.E.S.C.O. Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* defines culture as the collection of a society's or a social group's "distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional characteristics, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, communal ways of life, value systems, traditions, and beliefs." (U.N.E.S.C.O., 2001). Documents of cultural heritage act as carriers and transmitters (medium) of cultural values.

It is vital to make available digital cultural heritage. Promoting the creative industry, or creativity in general, on a national or international level is regarded as a noble goal, for example, by permitting the reuse of cultural products. The European Parliament and Council Directive 2013/37/E.U. States (author added italicised emphasis):

"Libraries, museums, and archives hold a significant amount of valuable public sector information resources, in particular since digitisation projects have multiplied the amount of digital public domain content material. These cultural heritage collections and related metadata are a potential base for digital content products and services and have a huge potential for innovative reuse in sectors such as learning and tourism. Wider possibilities for reusing public cultural material should, inter alia, allow Union companies to exploit its potential and contribute to economic growth and job creation." (Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council 2013, 2)

The directive addresses digitised culture's economic and educational implications, mentioning the possibility of utilising these resources. However, a more profound aspect and an influence of sharing cultural legacy among society's inhabitants cannot be measured solely in monetary terms (Esterházy, 2016). U.N.E.S.C.O.'s (2015) proposal on the protection and accessibility of documentary material, including digital versions: "For each State, its documentary heritage reflects its memory and identity, thus determining its place in the global community." It is essential to mention that since there is no unifying regulatory process to stabilise the use of the cultural market, each country, especially in the European Union, has developed different practices in exploiting its cultural heritage (European Parliament, 2013).

2.6 What function might libraries play in the construction of cultural identity?

According to an essay in the *Scandinavian Library Quarterly* (Rydell, 2016) relegating libraries to the role of lending stations is, first and foremost, ahistorical. Lending is a relatively recent development in the lengthy history of libraries. The library's position as a meeting place was far more significant in the past and is frequently forgotten today. Libraries played a critical part in the process of integration and identity development. Meeting literature, but most importantly, meeting other people, allows for forming a new identity. Libraries provide a necessary key to this language (Rydell, 2016).

Historical libraries must be critical to any long-term cultural, information, literacy, and education plan. Contemporary trends and evolution should be represented in libraries' collections and services. Additionally, library services should not only reflect trends, playing a passive role in the process, but they should also respond to specific social challenges. An excellent illustration of this is a programme designed by the I.F.L.A. Public Libraries Standing Committee and the I.F.L.A. Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations. The programme's objective was to demonstrate the critical role that public libraries play in the

refugee crisis. In 2015, a document named *Responding!* was published. Libraries in public spaces and refugees, "As Europe's immigration crisis unfolded, we were inundated with outstanding examples of libraries responding in practical and meaningful ways." One can say that libraries are contributing not only to their previous cultural heritage but moving on to the multicultural heritage of a given country region. The following year, I.F.L.A. hosted a session in August 2016 at the Columbus Main Library to "inspire and demonstrate the ability of libraries to make a difference in people's lives." The European Bureau of Library, Information, and Documentation Associations established a website to gather connections to relevant news and stories.

Libraries' tasks and aims may be influenced and shaped by contemporary events and demands. Additionally, libraries must maintain their stability and standard functions as a primary institution and source of knowledge and identity as an essential component of any long-term strategy for culture.

The Warsaw Declaration by U.N.E.S.C.O. (2011) projected various points on multicultural heritage:

1. To build mutual respect and understanding amongst different civilisations, societies, and social groups, documentary history provides the necessary framework for dialogue. This framework contributes much to our understanding of and appreciation for cultural diversity.
2. Documentation preserves the memory of the past. Identity affirmation and communication among distinct social groups tied to their local communities rely on the transmission of tradition and historical consciousness, vital legacy components.

2.7 Access to cultural identity sources

Reading preferences have shifted. People are reaching more information than ever due to the increased use of tablets and smartphones. However, people are now reading sources outside of their radical cultural perimeter. These are primarily brief texts sent in via social media in the form of articles on news portals,

comments, and instant messages, among others. While our brains appear to be well supplied with information, do our souls receive the spiritual sustenance necessary for critical thinking and creativity? This "spiritual nutrition" is embodied in cultural artefacts, particularly belles-lettres, arguably the primary source of cultural identity (Dancs, 2018). Information acquired from information communication technology enables one to understand the literature set that was otherwise previously scarce or unknown.

When it comes to literary works, whether they are published in digital formats or digitised by memory institutions, the primary issue confronting European libraries today is that internet access to them is severely restricted by copyright. Alternative methods such as Open Access and Creative Commons have been demonstrated to be appropriate for publishing research results, studies, and survey analyses, but not for publishing poetry, dramas, or fiction with high artistic characteristics. Despite trials such as *Bookhyla* in Norway and *ReLire* in France, there is still a great deal of work to develop a model acceptable to all stakeholders and transferable across the continent. Hopefully, a solution that can be broadly applied will be presented as part of the European copyright reform (Dancs, 2018). Therefore, one can deduce that we are far from accessing documentation of cultural heritage importance through literature unless it is out of copyright, and therefore the representation of cultural heritage in such literature might also be obsolete.

While culture is a significant incentive for daily activities, it can also promise to make communities more resilient and accepting when having a solid and cohesive worldview is more critical than ever. Cultural identity construction, that is, embracing the consciousness of shared cultural references and values, is a "lifetime endeavour" that the library can assist in various ways (Beckers, 2017). Library services should be enhanced to meet new expectations generated by the increasing importance of connecting communities of many cultural origins (Dancs, 2018).

While pertinent I.F.L.A. and U.N.E.S.C.O. articles emphasise the role of libraries in forming cultural identity, they are left unadvised when it comes to suggestions for

precise implementation. In response to this demand, the article "The Multicultural Library - a gateway to a culturally diverse society in dialogue" discusses several ways libraries might assist in bridging cultures and overcoming preconceptions and stereotypes (U.N.E.S.C.O. & I.F.L.A., 2012). Expanding the scope of bibliotherapy may be a realistic choice. The international library community may consider developing a thorough proposal or approach for establishing shared narratives in a library setting. This dissertation attempts to provide a broad overview of the difficulties associated with building cultural identity in libraries (or with the assistance of libraries) and some ideas and inspiration for those who share the author's concern for humanity's cultural survival.

2.8 Digital Cultural Heritage

The term "heritage" relates to our forebears' legacies, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations (U.N.E.S.C.O., 2021). The ideals of traditional cultural legacy are shared and expanded by digital cultural heritage. These shared goals are initiatives to conserve the past, increase public awareness, and enhance interpretive competence. Digital cultural heritage encompasses all types of presentations that use digital computer technologies to enhance, complement, or preserve the experience of a heritage place or object of historical and cultural significance. Digital resources such as text, still and moving images, audio, graphics, software, and web pages are incorporated into these presentations (U.N.E.S.C.O., 2021). Unique site visits, historical evolution and social context can illustrate the relationship between heritage and tourism. As a result, heritage tourism focuses on connecting heritage sites and tourists. Staiff, Watson, and Bushell (2013), in their book introduction for *Place, Encounter, Engagement: Context and Themes*, classify their ideas and approaches available in the literature for examining these encounters and interactions into two categories. The *contingent approach* asserts that representative narratives shape

heritage and tourism, but the *negotiated approach* asserts that heritage and tourism are dynamic and cannot be contained by representative narratives.

Since tourism is a process, we may anticipate these encounters being fluid, dynamic, and amenable to modification. Cultural heritage digitisation meets the negotiated method's central logic from this vantage point. Cultural heritage has been digitised due to the digital revolution and many other spheres of life. Despite digital cultural heritage being a young discipline, it is expanding rapidly. The link between cultural heritage and digital technology is frequently discussed in the literature through case studies. Without a doubt, these studies have made substantial contributions to the tourist sector's continued development. Nonetheless, there are few critical studies on the impact of digitisation on cultural assets and the resulting alterations. This dearth of research has created a considerable knowledge gap (Cameron & Kenderdine 2017: 3; Hemsley, Cappellini & Stanke, 2017).

Accessibility and democratic engagement in cultural heritage transfer are two contentious issues in digitisation (Kidd 2018; Nyhlén & Gidlund, 2018). In his article, *Makers and shapers or users and choosers participatory practices in digitalisation of public sector*, the following questions are essential: if everyone can benefit equally from the digitally transferred cultural heritage, and if not, whether this [digital transfer] is a suitable mechanism for cultural heritage transfer (Gindlund, 2015). Caffo, in his article *Digital cultural heritage projects: Opportunities and future challenges*, emphasises that the success of the authorities' digitalisation of cultural heritage in establishing a shared cultural identity is controversial. The substantial research grants made available by European countries and the European Commission attest to the growing importance of cultural heritage (Caffo 2014, 16-17). However, Winter (2013), in his article *Clarifying the critical in critical heritage studies*, whether undeveloped or growing eastern nations that do not engage in these programmes may contribute portions of their cultural history interactively is one of the unanswered problems.

Thwaites, in his book chapter called, *Digital heritage: What happens when we digitise everything?* published in, *Visual heritage in the digital age* (2013), evaluated the positive and negative effects of digitisation on transmitting cultural heritage and developing cultural consciousness. He argues that despite its importance as a jumping-off point, the digital experience lacks the representational power to convey information about the entirety of cultural value. Researchers take this conception for granted in the following studies and find it valuable when conducting empirical research. These are not the only concerns about digital cultural assets that are open to criticism and should be considered. In the book *With new eyes, I see: Embodiment, empathy, and silence in digital heritage interpretation*, Kidd (2019) explain that culture and technology are inextricably linked, necessitating continual inquiry. While recent research on digital cultural heritage has focused on augmented reality (A.R.) and virtual reality (V.R.) technology, additional studies are needed. Long-term research on digital cultural heritage consumers' needs and satisfaction levels should be done (Nyhlén & Gidlund, 2018).

2.9 The role of libraries

Compared to other city and university libraries in the same country, N. L's are typically famous for their physical size and contents. In their article *Servant leadership theory in practice: North America's leading public libraries*, Lo et al. (2018) writes that unlike public libraries, university libraries, school libraries, and most special libraries, "national libraries do not serve a specific community or principal user group." National libraries serve both residents and visitors from around the world. "Despite the critical and influential role those top-level directors of major libraries play in shaping organisational culture," Lo et al. (2018, 2-3) write, "studies devoted to examining top-level library managers and the philosophy and ideology that underpin their management and leadership styles are scarce worldwide." During the previous decade, thousands of C.E.O.s were trained in participative leadership characteristics.

In their article *The open library: Research library in change*, Anderson et al. (2017) state that there are two libraries: research and public libraries. Libraries, like archives, are part of both the research and higher education and arts and culture organisational domains, with research libraries falling under the former and public libraries falling under the latter (except for national libraries, being part of both). Whereas research libraries, such as those found at universities and colleges, serve specialised research communities, public libraries serve their surrounding communities and various people. While many libraries attempt to become more open, splitting the core of the community they serve along these lines for the activities within the libraries and their contact with the public makes more sense. In his article *Archives, libraries, and museums in the Nordic model of the public sphere* Larsen (2017) delves deeper. As with archives, digitisation reshapes how research libraries gain and make items available to users. As a result, they can transform the collections into resources that may be accessed via online public spaces unattached to physical libraries. The case with national libraries is similar. These are charged with the civic responsibility of making the content freely accessible to all citizens under their care.

In his article *Openness in the digital library: On political guidelines and frictions between commercial book industry and library in a digital age*, Colbjørnsen (2017) argues that due to copyright issues and constraints imposed by sizeable international publishing corporations, most digital collections in university and college libraries are restricted to those connected to the university server. Besides open access publications, digital content is thus restricted to students, employees, and visitors to a particular university or college. These libraries' digital offerings are available to a smaller audience than their hard copy books and periodicals in certain situations. Unlike physical books, electronic books cannot be borrowed from other universities and colleges throughout the country. In the Norway Strategy, *National Strategy for Libraries 2015-2018*, Rambll acknowledges that, as a result, digitisation of knowledge does not always imply an increase in public accessibility. While the number of e-books available to users in public libraries

continues to grow, they now account for only about 1-2 per cent of all material borrowed by users in Norwegian public libraries (Colbjørnsen 2017; Rambll, 2015).

Additionally, as Audunson (2012) documented in the article "*The public library as a meeting-place in a multicultural and digital context*", the public library is considered a meeting-place in a multicultural and digital context. Public libraries contribute to the public sphere by serving as gathering spaces and physical arenas for their communities, and librarians play a critical role as cultural intermediaries between private citizens and public culture (Rambll, 2015). As digitisation continues to free up space in libraries, this function of meeting place becomes more critical. Additionally, in recent years, government policies on public libraries in Norway have emphasised the meeting place function of libraries (Kulturdepartementet, 2015), pushing public libraries to increase this component of their operations. Because public libraries are viewed as low-intensity, inclusive venues, they are critical for teaching citizenship and fostering social cohesion, particularly in multicultural urban areas (Fagerlid, 2016).

2.10 Libraries to Evolve

Educational and governmental institutions, including libraries, continue to evolve their leadership and management approaches, gradually moving away from rigid hierarchical authority and a much flatter management style based on a smaller, more flexible team-based "organic" structure. For many modern organisations seeking to become innovative and growth-oriented, the traditional chain of command approaches to operational management and leadership is ineffective. In their book *Library and Information Center Management*, Moran and Morner (2018) argue that organisational logic (i.e., how things are ordered, defined, and operated) must evolve away from principles based on the traditional hierarchical model, as those principles are no longer effective in today's organisations. The hierarchical command-and-control approach works best when the work is stable and straightforward. Work can become more complex and knowledge intensive as it grows. In recent decades, many novel theories, models, approaches, and

methods have been applied to managing not-for-profit organisations, most notably academic and public libraries. Allowing employees to provide input while encouraging them to participate in managerial decisions is called participative management, employee empowerment, dispersed leadership, shared leadership, and open-book management (Moran and Morner 2018, 415). Warren & Matthews, in their article *Public libraries, museums and physical convergence: context, issues, opportunities: a literature review Part 2*, stress the importance of "empowering employees" under the umbrella of participative leadership in both for-profit and not-for-profit organisations. Indeed, the term "empowerment" has recently become a buzzword in several contemporary organisations, as it encourages employees to think, behave, and, most importantly, act autonomously in the workplace, allowing them to make work-related decisions and accept responsibility for the results (Warren & Matthews, 2018).

2.11 Possible solutions for the National Library of Malta's visibility

"Participatory modes such as crowdsourcing, social tagging, public commenting, and user-generated content promotion have become necessary for the cultural heritage sector. For many galleries, libraries, and museums, crowdsourcing activities are seen as a relatively inexpensive means to engage with the public and solicit valuable content for their documentary heritage collections" (Johnson & Li Liew, 2020).

The National Library Board (NLB) of Singapore embarked on a bold mission to achieve the highest standards in its services. This objective is accurately described by the board's motto: "Readers for life, Learning Communities, and a Knowledgeable Nation." According to Menkhoff and Wirtz's (2018) paper *National Library Board Singapore: World-Class Service via Innovation and People Centricity*, innovation is the key to market leadership. In addition to radio frequency identification (RFID), a self-automated system enabling users to check out books, and robots that ease the shelf-reading process, the library boasts various features that were formerly a pipe dream for many.

The key to accomplishing all this was harnessing different synergies to collaborate on a national project of this scope. In this master plan, it was wise to establish collaborative executive library management, have government entities work with what visitors and businesses desire, and use crowdsourcing to reach out to a wider variety of groups (Menkhoff & Wirtz, 2018).

The National Library of Singapore's (N.L.S.) digital strategy features creative immersive reading experiences inside the library via e-reading stations, new interfaces for mobile apps that can make interactivity work to borrow books and reserve them in real-time, reinforces the institution's reputation for excellence (Menkhoff & Wirtz, 2018). To achieve their ambitious goal, the N.L.S. had to implement several learning programmes to meet the changing needs of the community, including programmes for young children to make them fall in love with their library and books and programmes for low-income children to provide them with the same opportunities as any other child (Menkhoff & Wirtz, 2018).

In 2005, Sawhney, Verona, and Prandelli wrote in their article *Collaborating to create: The Internet as a platform for customer engagement in product innovation* that collaboration and innovation are essential factors for achieving customer satisfaction. However, they were hesitant about the creative approach unless the Internet remained open and accessible to everyone. In 2016, Yea and Walter emphasised in their article *Determinants of Service Innovation in Academic Libraries through the Lens of Disruptive Innovation* that, even though technology can facilitate library services, there is no denying that libraries have long influenced society and that the Internet cannot replace qualified librarians, but that the two can work together for the greater good.

In his dissertation titled *Incremental and Radical Innovations in Research Libraries: An Exploratory Examination Regarding the Effects of Ambidexterity, Organizational Structure, Leadership, and Contextual Factors* (2013), Jantz builds on the innovation history of the library and provides a fantastic look at how decisions to adapt to new technology and changes in the library environment have been made over the past century. The maturity of the library sector, the evolving

organisational structure, and the need for change have all inhibited the library's capacity for innovation.

In his article *A Treasure Lost: The Portocarrero collection of science instruments and interest in the sciences of Hospitaller Malta*, Zammit (2005) emphasises the historical significance of our library in Europe when discussing our local N.L.M. in Valletta (Zammit, 2005). The Knights of Malta constructed this awe-inspiring architectural structure to keep the Order's records secure and easily accessible. The edifice was completed in 1798, and the island is now home to some of the world's most important collections. These works date from the 14th century until the 19th century. This antique library is exceptional and one-of-a-kind because certain manuscripts from the 12th century are much older.

Mizzi's (2015) dissertation, titled *Digitisation at the National Library of Malta: Improving Access in Support of Potential Users, Their Needs and Expectations*, provided insight into how the N.L.M. operates locally. Our N.L.M. collaborates with the public library, sharing and running the online catalogue and resources similarly. Their specialised collections identify them, and as a result, they serve dual purposes. Mizzi explains that when both libraries are handled according to the same principles, they lose their essential value and potential since they are not marketed appropriately. In close coordination with the National Archives, the N.L. lists its website so users can "use each other's resources" (Mizzi, 2015). The fact that libraries and museums in Malta are constantly connected to the existing structure may seem odd because, unlike those designed to be independent and based on their own space and dynamics, their full potential cannot be realised. Libraries must evolve through their interfaces and institutional cultures (Mizzi, 2015). In his article *Facebook, Twitter, etc. - A Practical Guide to Getting Involved for Heritage Collections*, the author explains how social media platforms can promote heritage collections. The article *Library+Information Update* by Williams (2010) provides insight into libraries and their usage of social media accounts and innovative methods for raising interest in such historical organisations. To be truly outstanding, the M.N.L. requires a significant resource boost. Tourism tours may display digital information about the knights of Malta while also serving as a

community hub for local and international artists who wish to display their work. Eventually, this can function as an excursion, especially when combined with a café where clients can utilise another editing service (Mizzi, 2015).

Locally, one can lobby for the National Library to construct another open location to display specialised topics throughout the year and engage the community within the institution. The message must emanate from a well-defined plan with constructive objectives (I.F.L.A. — Cultural Heritage, 2020).

A national hub can be used as a step in the direction of programmes, films, and documentaries on Maltese heritage. According to the dissertation "Preservation and Conservation Programmes for Printed Material in Maltese Libraries" (Zammit Mangion, 2000), the National Library can serve as a heritage destination and, if promoted appropriately, can be matched with other locations such as temples and museums. In addition, the N.L.M. possesses some of the most valuable items in the country. The 'Dedicate of Donation' by Charles V, the 'Saint Anthony the Abbot of Life,' and 'Nostradamus - the 1566 Prophecy,' all of which are in good condition, are regarded as national treasures due to their rarity. One should ask if these are promoted enough as national treasures. In his article titled "*10 most exceptional mobile libraries*" (Kowalczyk, 2020), the author offers promotional methods to reach the general public through a hub and other means of access, such as mobile wheel libraries, to ensure that these standards are applied and easily accessible.

In his online publication, *Tomorrow's Architects: Designing the Future of Libraries*, Morville (2021) emphasises the significance of organisational structures that foster innovation. In the end, library staff and other stakeholders are permitted to adopt new visions and develop a strategic plan to realise them. We must have learnt how to expand, maximise, and utilise the library beyond its bounds, especially in light of the COVID-19 epidemic and its effects on society and libraries. Consolidating a new technology that enhances the user experience is necessary. The library must make its patrons more appealing, build digital media laboratories to preserve its heritage, and collect accurate data. Give the community authority, encourage the exchange of ideas and participation in

review exhibitions, and organise conferences and excursions for everyone (Freeman, 1957).

How is it possible to invent? Wilansky addressed an unusual experiment during the Library Conference in Aarhus, Denmark, in his paper titled "*Five lessons for libraries seeking innovation in the 21st century.*" Several librarians from around the United States participated, and the collective synergies were beneficial. This opportunity allows IT professionals, managers, and librarians from across the globe to interact at an annual innovation conference. Through this conference, these libraries may disseminate innovative libraries' best practices and anticipated potential in this ever-changing digital environment. This chance is significant since librarians are dedicated to new concepts, motivated, and willing to experiment with anything novel. Some librarians may feel isolated and distorted when surrounded by technology professionals and wealthy businesses.

Consequently, such opportunities revive the passion for a profession everyone can rediscover and investigate. It is also beneficial to meet, share ideas, discuss challenges, and discuss critical future efforts; these can all assist in reorganising, updating, or executing new strategies. When one begins to exchange ideas and think outside the box, specific questions, such as how a library might begin to sprout more excitingly, can be enhanced, upgraded, modified, and redefined instead of necessarily being transformed into a new concept. First impressions must start. Is the library aesthetically pleasing? Does it need additional development to attain the service model? Does the space design imply or have the capacity to further enhance it? (Wilansky, 2017). The vision should motivate the development of a dynamic and innovative future marketplace in which all citizens connect and learn through cross-cultural and cross-educational co-creation (Shakalis, 2016). Libraries have always been accessible to ever-changing environments. Locally, these frameworks must be utilised for libraries to flourish and fulfil their social responsibilities (I.F.L.A. - Manifesto I.F.L.A./U.N.E.S.C.O., 2009).

In their article titled *"Advantages and problems associated with augmented reality for education: a comprehensive review of the literature,"* Akcayr M. and Akcayr G. (2017) discuss the usage of virtual reality in educational contexts and its benefits. Special theme nights centred on historical events in Malta should be considered for the local community. Imagine how wonderful it would be if the library's exterior were adorned with graphics and photographs depicting the Great Siege, and the piazza was filled with animators re-enacting events. In contrast, the library's interior hosted specialised debates and unique exhibitions. We have never seen anything of this scale constructed before, especially in the Maltese context. People who have never been able to visit this historical library will now be able to do so. All of this can generate revenue that can be used for things like innovation, maintenance, and other necessities to ensure the library's relevance over time.

Can the National Library serve as a cutting-edge national heritage centre? Capacity-building projects enable us, among other things, to make the roof more accessible to its users. To ensure that the National Library can share knowledge, it can utilise available space and the existing building in innovative ways. As stewards of heritage interpretation, it is crucial to remember that the National Library is accountable for preserving its historically significant materials, as they affect every citizen. The library must pay great attention to the public's needs and make every effort to meet them (I.F.L.A. — Cultural Heritage, 2021).

The library could exhibit themes and digitised content with the assistance of authors, artists, and musicians passionate about heritage and motivate their participation with tangible objects, special prices, and competitions (I.F.L.A., 2021).

The N.L. should utilise digital high-resolution documentation printing, digital scanning, and traditional techniques such as mould and casting, engraving, and gilding (I.F.L.A., 2021). Artists must contribute to a national heritage hub by creating museum reproductions, recovering artefacts, duplicating, and digitising records, and providing fine art prints. They can then sell these to tourists as souvenirs, generating revenue for both the artists and the library.

Finally, as Jantz emphasises, the government must secure digital access to otherwise inaccessible websites, especially in the event of a global epidemic. Discover novel ways to preserve rare artefacts and value cultural heritage for use in the creative industries and other areas of sustainable development, among other goals (Jantz, 2013).

Rahaman (2018) discusses the importance of encouraging innovation and how new trends such as digital maker labs, coding clubs, and digital storytelling can open the door to new learning and employment opportunities in his article titled "Digital heritage interpretation: a conceptual framework." One alternative is to create and produce new interactive stories of historical value, such as the Great Siege of Malta, in which readers get entirely immersed in the actual event. Another idea might involve using virtual reality for specific courses, allowing library users to study while having fun with technology (Rahaman, 2018).

At the national level, the government and the N.L., as well as other NGOs, EU funds, and persons interested in sponsoring, must form committees and devise new ways of cooperating to solve creative but risky endeavours. The European Commission (www.europa.eu) has granted 18 million euros in 2018 for "resilience and sustainable repair of the historical region in response to climate change and hazardous events" (n.d.). 2018 CORDIS | European Commission) The European Commission launched the CORDIS initiative in 2018 to assist libraries in developing innovative, cost-effective technology for preventing or restoring damaged historic locations following a disaster. Unfortunately, Malta received no financial help from this programme, which is a shame because it would have provided an opportunity to foster creativity in the country. In an ever-changing society, several structures are subjected to post-earthquake stability assessments to maintain their historical significance. Assuming this is the case, the National Library's roof might generate the electricity required for the National Heritage Hub (ProQuest, LLC).

This enormous endeavour will remind us of who we are as a nation and promote the Maltese islands because of their unique and illustrious heritage. Most individuals are aware of the age and rarity of our temples and museums but are

unaware of the abundance of information available in the National Library. Some of the earliest publications date back to the 12th century, and many popular libraries in other regions do not even include this period (Mizzi, 2015).

Malta can benefit from its status as a small island. One can easily include born-again resources into any collection by focusing on digitisation. There are already compelling examples of digital libraries, such as Gallica, a highly successful digital library:

"Gallica is one of the most important digital libraries available for free on the internet," says the website. Any form of the document is accessible, including printed publications (books, newspapers and magazines) in image and text mode, manuscripts, audio-visual and iconographic materials, maps and blueprints" (Gallica – The BnF digital library n.d.)

However, digitised heritage and digital embellishments of reformatted artefacts require a place in cultural narratives of memory and tradition, civilisation or national legacy focused on the reinterpretation of the past, which are also headed by librarians (I.F.L.A., 2021).

"The goal for all of us in the profession should be to create institutions that are well-respected in our society for the long run" (Farrugia 2014, 34).

There have been numerous suggestions that we are on our way to a paperless reading lounge equipped with touch screens that are linked to mobile phones, according to Shakalis' journal *Rethinking Library Technical Services: Redefining our Profession for the Future* (2016), but the ultimate breakthrough has yet to be realised. Foreign historical libraries must include creative concepts and a sense of awe to attract more tourists while making them feel at home. Kinect bikes, for example, allow riders to exercise while charging their phones and downloading an e-book, a function that has grown in popularity in recent years. Many historical libraries now have robots as permanent fixtures, and their presence has become an intrinsic part of the everyday routine. Furthermore, as new methods of printing

and logging in, cloud printing and single sign-on (SSO) authentication have been incorporated.

In conclusion, libraries provide chances for lifelong learning, and while these changes have been engrained in the larger library ecosystem, they still necessitate consolidation and creative ways (I.F.L.A. 2021).

The question at hand is how to transmit the message correctly. Verheul (2006) addresses trends in maintaining and showcasing the riches housed by these libraries in his study titled *Networking for digital preservation: current practice in 15 national libraries*. Establishing a national historic centre could aid in efficiently disseminating the message across the country. In order to protect and develop the ecology upon which it is founded, the library must be an authority in establishing new channels of communication with policymakers and decision-makers. The library ecology becomes resilient when a solid, secure foundation is formed.

The National Library should be able to attract more patrons while growing its capacity by highlighting its relationship to history through its publications. Using the rooftop in conjunction with the National Heritage Hub – which should be positioned in a prominent area of Valletta to attract more users and boost the National Library's capacity – would generate additional buzz and make it more meaningful and ubiquitous if authorised.

Such ideas can be expanded by allowing them to alter as society changes and new demands and requirements emerge (Mallia & Farrugia, 2014). Mallia and Farrugia emphasise the importance of a fully functional library in their journal *"Libraries and Archives: Surviving, Striving, and Thriving."* As a result, with sufficient resources and a specialised team to execute a schedule of events and anniversaries, the library may see an increase in visitors. Special Commemorative Events could feature technical breakthroughs like virtual reality in conjunction with animators, conventional speeches, and meet-the-artist possibilities, making the event entertaining for families and tourists (Mallia & Farrugia, 2014).

If connected synergies such as libraries, archives, and other channels join together to fulfil the National Library's goal, one can produce something truly spectacular (Yeh and Walter, 2016).

Heritage is not just the past, but the present interacting with the past in the ongoing growth of cultural tradition (Pearson & Sullivan 1995, 195)

The capacity of libraries to foster this type of tourism is grossly underrated and under-explored. In addition to museums, libraries that are adequately presented to tourists can attract visitors' interest. The potential advantages of the visit include becoming acquainted with the local community and the library's collections, including the works of young or obscure authors. In addition, the library will benefit from the formation of contacts with tourists and, in particular, international visitors, allowing for a more in-depth, thorough, and credible assessment of culture than a usual trip, which includes several attractions, cafes, stores, museums, and more. There is the possibility of including the N.L. as a tourist destination in a collection of specialised cultural and tourism routes linked to national and European cultural pathways networks. In the future, these trails can be incorporated into a cultural tourist package.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Objectives and scopes

The study's primary objective is to answer the research question, "How can a historical library's identity be further developed through heritage interpretation?" The author shall identify examples of excellent practices and disseminate lessons learnt from various libraries and methodologies to answer this question. The author attempted to limit the scope of the literature review to the most recent decade (2012-2022) to demonstrate the fundamental nature of the issue, current developments, and any recommendations that should be implemented in historical libraries, specifically The National Library of Malta (N.L.M.), in a heritage interpretation scenario.

This study is mainly qualitative but with a mixed approach. It employs triangulation to bolster its findings and compare existing research in Europe. Triangulation is a research method using two different sources to understand one common outcome and find a potential conclusion (Patton, 1999). The historicity of historical libraries and the search for their identity are examined. An argument is made for both a strategy and a conclusive action. In this way, innovative and unique strategies are explored to ensure that such libraries restore their proper place in society in the future. The main objective is to instil and communicate the critical nature of our N.L.M. on a national scale. The approach will be comprehensive, and comparisons to other foreign local collections will be made. Additionally, this dissertation includes a literature analysis. This literature analysis shall attempt to put the reader in perspective globally.

Semi-structured questionnaires with open-ended questions were sent to relevant individuals who could contribute to this research. Although personal experiences from abroad were considered for this research, they were restricted to the Maltese setting. One questionnaire was intended for tourist guides operating in Malta, while another semi-structured questionnaire targets the Malta Libraries'

management, who are also professional librarians, allowing for a more precise assessment of the data.

Two recruitment letters were sent to library professionals and another to a representative selection of tourist guides via their official email addresses.

Since the number of tourist guides operating on the Islands is large, a representation of gender and range was needed, and it was decided that ten persons varying from 20 to 60 years would be a respectable sample. These parameters were established to understand how tourist guides view their role in aiding the National Library in promoting our literacy culture. The Malta Union of Tourist Guides and individual tourist guides already known by the author were involved in this sampling exercise.

The other recruitment letter was addressed to the Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O.) of the Malta Libraries. The author requested permission from the C.E.O to suggest key personnel from the National Library management team. The Deputy Librarian in Charge of the National Library and the Chief Executive Officer herself, who is also the National Librarian, were invited to participate in a questionnaire aimed at promoting our historical libraries, notably the N.L.M. in Valletta. They were invited to explain how they, as a management team in charge of the National Library's strategy, can assist in reaching out to visitors in a heritage interpretation scenario. The questionnaire was aimed at the N.L.M.'s management team to ascertain their perspectives about the N.L.M. as a significant cultural and heritage interpretive objective. The C.E.O replied, stating that she was delighted to agree to join since it would be fascinating to see what can be done to promote our literary heritage and receive an insider's perspective on the issue. Samples of the questionnaires and the data collected from the primary sources shall be included in the appendices.

This dissertation delves deeply into the process through which historical libraries might reclaim their identity through heritage interpretation. It was investigated via micro qualitative techniques (Spickard, 2007). This technique was chosen as

the most effective means of acquiring information about local trends since direct observation and participation in historical libraries may reveal an individual's actual convictions, which may or may not be expressed openly. Since beliefs, values, and views are not readily observable (though they may result in observable behaviours), one of the most effective methods of gathering data about trends is to ask the community directly. The primary source of data for this study will be questionnaires. As Dimitriadis notes:

Interviews allow the researcher to understand more explicitly how participants understand their experiences, [...] allow researchers to how individuals to understand how individuals make sense of their experiences – give them shape and nuance. They are a particularly good way to understand people's beliefs- or at least their articulated beliefs. [...] Unlike field notes, interview data come largely pre-processed. Once transcribed, data can be readily worked with using a range of coding and interpretive methods. (Dimitriadis 2008, 140-142)

3.2 Ethical Issues

The mixed design used in this study is more targeted and inventive in eliciting and revealing people's thoughts, sentiments, beliefs, or emotions about particular concerns. As a result, ethical considerations should be made during the research's design. 'Informed consent is an ethical method the author must follow before initiating this research. As Homan (2001, 330) explains, consent must be granted by the responder who agrees to contribute, fully aware that s/he has the right to withhold any information or terminate the exercise entirely if s/he likes, and at any moment, while fully understanding the research work's purpose.

The mixed design used in this study is more targeted in eliciting and disclosing people's thoughts, attitudes, views, or emotions about specific subjects. As a result, ethical issues should be incorporated into the research design. Before the author can undertake this research, they must seek 'informed consent,' an ethical procedure. According to Homan (2001), an agreement must be gained from the respondent who agrees to participate, is fully aware that they have the right to

withhold any information or discontinue the exercise at any moment, and fully understand the study's objective.

None of the study's participants risked being subjected to unpleasant incidents. The participants were given a guarantee in the recruitment email sent to the respondents. None of the respondents was pressured or compelled to participate, but they volunteered their time and information. A consent form was required, and a sample was included in the appendix. The right to be anonymous and confidential is also protected. Individuals engaged in this survey voluntarily and without fear of being coerced or deceived. Each recruitment letter includes an overview of the research's goals and objectives and assures that all information will be kept secure and anonymous during the study.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The data gathering for this thesis was done through two sets of questionnaires in the form of structured, open-ended questions. One was explicitly intended for the management of the Malta Libraries, under which remit is also the National Library. For this questionnaire, the author contacted Malta Libraries' management.

The questionnaire with the Malta Libraries management was intended to be answered by each respondent separately. However, it was then agreed that all three respondents should send one questionnaire with the answer of all three respondents. The questionnaire, comprising ten open-ended questions, was designed to add clarity, detail, and direction to the proposed visions and declarations.

The other questionnaire was intended for ten tourist guides selected intentionally by age difference and gender. The tour guides were between the ages of 20 and 60 years old. All respondents answered the ten questions provided. The questionnaires were sent via email to each respondent as they were expected to fill them in and return them via email.

4.1 Sampling and validity of data

Since most of the data was gathered through first-hand accounts from professionals in their field, one can also determine that the data gathered is valid. Other data from published works were gathered from authoritative publications published by serious authors in their fields and mostly from peer-reviewed journals.

4.2 Limitations

Due to the method used to disseminate the questionnaires, the author verified that all critical questions asked to collect the required information from the participants were given the option to write whatever felt appropriate and accurate to answer these questions. As a result, the questions were designed to elicit information from participants regarding what appeared to be proper and what they envisaged seeing if the National Library were administered through their work speciality and perspective.

Both population samples considered were constrained. While tourist guides may have had an inherent prejudice toward the subject, this bias was mitigated by interrogating tourist guides as a secondary source of information about the tourists' sentiments toward the subject rather than their own. On the other hand, librarians may have viewed specific questions as intrusive and required additional information about the author's intention concerning the questionnaire before attempting to answer. The pandemic of Covid 19 was a reoccurring restriction throughout the experiment. This study was meant to elicit brief responses and document the emotional state of visitors to Malta's National Library. The objective was to ascertain whether visiting guests found the National Library of Malta of interest during their stay in Valletta. The sample size for the surveys was chosen beforehand. The term *sample* refers to a subset or subsets of a population, in this case, tourist guides and Malta Libraries staff, or more specifically the management of Malta Libraries, that reflect the overall opinion and tendencies of the profession's population, in this case, tourist guides and the National Library's management (Denscombe, 2010).

Numerous tour guides had lost their jobs as the tourist flood decreased, as it had elsewhere in the world. As a result of the difficulty in obtaining the essential information, the recommended methodology was adjusted.

4.3 Insightful information

The tourist guides unanimously agreed that Malta must take aggressive measures to embrace our tangible and intangible cultural heritage to attract tourists worldwide. Indeed, as previously said, they all concur that a strategic plan has been long overdue. Authorities and relevant ministries must devise strategies to showcase Malta's cultural diversity rather than its sea and sun while also ensuring that we continue to offer innovative, exciting possibilities to visit new historical sites and a comprehensive approach to address the needs of tourists.

When questioned, the tour guides agreed that cultural tourism comprises the most well-known cultural sites; nevertheless, many stated that lesser-known cultural sites received little attention. Each tourist guide drew on their experience to uncover our hidden gems, such as wayside chapels and traditional characteristics that some of them have retained. Indeed, these churches are brimming with stories and art, offering a fantastic opportunity to meet with locals and obtain an authentic experience from a unique vantage point. A thorough analysis and eventual strategy of how Malta should portray itself to tourists, tour guides, and tourism marketing specialists must be done. Tourism must be prioritised to demonstrate the uniqueness of our archival treasures, which we thankfully still possess but have done little to maintain and digitise.

According to Modeva (2018), the function of museums, immovable cultural assets, and intangible cultural heritage is frequently stressed in connection to cultural tourism. The potential of libraries to generate this form of tourism is vastly underappreciated and underexplored. Libraries, like museums, may draw much attention if they are correctly presented to tourists. The possibility of having a closer look at the local community and the library holdings, including works of creative production by young or unpopular writers, is one of the possible benefits of the visit. At the same time, the library will benefit from encounters with tourists, particularly international visitors, providing a deeper, more thorough, and credible appraisal of culture in contrast to the typical trip, which includes diverse attractions, stores, museums, and more. One approach is to integrate

chosen public libraries of tourist importance in a network of local cultural and tourist routes linked to national and European cultural pathways networks. These paths might be included in a culturally themed tourism offering in the future.

Even though it is primarily designed for tourists, cultural heritage interpretation may be enjoyed by residents as well. In such a case, it may be related to public educational initiatives. For example, according to Beck and Cable (2002), "desired learning goals can include sparking inquiry and discovery, shifting attitudes and inspiring sentiments, and developing a sense of personal, cultural, and community identity as well as forming moral and ethical judgements." The interpretation of cultural heritage contributes to sentiments of national identity and pride.

When asked how the National Library of Malta contributes to cultural tourism, two out of ten respondents, the tour guides, stated, "Are tourists encouraged to visit this historic library as part of their vacation, and how many do?" Is there a plan in place to entice these foreign nationals? The potential exists, but it is being underutilised. Indeed, many residents are ignorant of such historical treasures concealed from the outside by displaying restaurant umbrellas. Tourist experts say that the National Library has excellent potential to become a heritage site since it has some rare collections not found anywhere else in the world. No digital signage directs visitors to the building's magnificent architectural highlights. The National Library should be a focal point as a reference library since it provides an excellent resource for historians, scholars, archivists, and authors to share their discoveries with the public via their publications. This latter notion finally sparked a chain reaction in which their shared knowledge in the form of a book served as a tool for tourist guides to introduce Malta to guests and provided new avenues for insightful interpretations to supplement their tours with historical vocabulary. These examples illustrate that the National Library has much to contribute to cultural tourism, but it must continue expanding its reach and opening its doors.

In Malta, history is viewed as a tourism resource. Tourism officials and industry professionals recognise that anything related to history (museums, festivals, audio-visual events, walking tours through historic districts) adds interest to tourism and can even attract high-quality tourists. No significant distinction is

being made between mass tourism, and quality tourism is an issue that must be addressed immediately. Malta's uniqueness must be rekindled through history, gastronomic tastes, passions, music, the arts, and religion, as these all identify us. Numerous treasures housed in the National Library's (Bibliotheca) holdings can easily be incorporated into any cultural endeavour. A segment of the vast hall may be dedicated to welcoming visitors and highlighting some of these treasures, thereby putting Malta's illustrious archive history on the cultural map. The National Library's inability to reach a more significant audience result from the lack of exposure.

When asked what tourist guides would recommend further incorporating and displaying to promote the National Library's richness, all participants agreed that selected items related to Malta's calendar should be evaluated and incorporated; for example, if Good Friday is approaching, one could choose something related. Current media events, such as those involving women in construction and elections, can also serve as sources of inspiration. The critical point is that the papers, books, or other items picked for such events have been well vetted and that, in addition to presenting them, workshops, seminars, thematic tours, specialised night tours, and other activities are conceivable. Social media should be promoted, as should the proper use of technological advancements such as a revamped website and audio-visual screens outside the reading room to display the most historic documents hidden on a shelf, bringing them to life with facts about their uniqueness and presenting innovative ways to do them justice. In contrast, the outside area will highlight regular thematic topics on the calendar or events of the Knights of Malta or 'Sette Giugno.' Additionally, library staff can organise noon talks about one or two pieces in the collection, which can easily be held in the same hall for 25 minutes, allowing people to attend and enjoy. Additionally, authorities should try to publish an annual publication highlighting their collection and discussing restoration and other significant news items.

One critical aspect of the National Library's mission should be to attract locals because many people assume that as locals, we do not value our rich legacy and what our forebears sacrificed to maintain their identity and beliefs. Indeed,

officials seek to benefit economically from tourism but fail to recognise the immediate benefits it may bring to other industries. Numerous individuals and volunteers attempt to curb building destruction and protect village cores. Unfortunately, many people do not appreciate the architectural heritage. Therefore, raising awareness about such issues becomes difficult due to a lack of awareness and appreciation, contributing to the demise of what makes us Maltese as we are stripped of our identity. There is a noticeable lack of awareness and understanding of our immense archival treasures, whether they are kept by civil, religious, or private groups. However, these archives help shape our understanding of past events, tales, and histories, and as such, they must be better understood, cherished, and made more available to a broader audience.

Tourist guides were also asked whether they would be interested in training to become specialised guides at the National Library, highlighting varied cultural interpretations and representations. They unanimously agreed that it was an excellent notion and that such initiatives had been long overdue. With the impending adoption of new regulations governing tourist guides, further avenues for guides to market their services will become available. Library tours would surely interest guides who value and are drawn to documentary legacy, and another niche tourism market may be developed for a specific audience seeking additional information. As a result, the guides will learn about the historical treasures and the proper way to handle and discuss them, both in terms of documented evidence and the historical journey the location has had in becoming a historical library.

When asked if the National Library should build a visitor's area to attract more tourists to such ancient libraries, all guides were enthusiastic and optimistic, as they all agreed that it requires a proper facelift while retaining its charm and unique architecture. Visitors should access informational panels, rotating exhibitions, children's activities, and a restaurant, among other amenities, to re-establish this historic library as Valletta's cultural hub. It finally gives travellers fresh perspectives on Valletta and sentiments about how critical it was for the Knights of Malta to have a library back then, which remains a reference point.

Open jobs must be created to ensure that tourists enjoy their visit and feel engaged, rather than employing academic language. The tour guide should be instructed to make his remarks and engage with the passengers through appropriate body language and eye contact.

The tourist guides emphasised the need to develop and implement a strategic plan, updating and revising it as necessary to disseminate knowledge and attract visitors to the National Library. While numerous seminars are held consistently, they fail to reach a broader audience. In truth, many people believe that they are uncomfortable doing tours there, particularly after COVID-19 began, and that one must call them and schedule an appointment before their visit, all of which contributes to a sense of seclusion and isolation. If this is the case, a visitors' centre would have to accommodate such requests while preserving perfect silence in other areas to allow academics/researchers to work in peace, necessitating an assessment of synergies and dynamics. Extending the hours of operation, generating night concepts, and developing distinctive themes are all important to capture people's interest.

Libraries have a considerable potential to play an essential part in developing cultural tourism and serve as a hub of activities for both local and international tourists (Whitman, 2016). It is critical to include recommendations and strategies in regional development policies to strengthen the engagement of public libraries in the development of cultural tourism at both the central and local levels. The role of the local population can be critical in adapting cultural routes to the requirements of creating a unique tourist product that carries the atmosphere of authentic national culture on the ground, the memory stored in libraries, and the revival of intangible heritage values. Strategies and development plans should involve libraries in the interpretation and appealing demonstrations of activities promoting cultural values' identity. In this way, conditions will be created for the popularisation of libraries, the development of a specific type of activity related to the engagement of employees to present the library to tourists, the formation of new jobs, and the creation of an appealing year-round calendar of cultural

tourism, as well as the resolution of today's problem with the offering of attractions of dubious artistic value (Soojung et al., 2019).

There is a need to develop a unique municipal policy for cultural tourism and market libraries as tourist destinations. This approach would entail organising various events celebrating the intangible heritage and living culture, building on existing municipal initiatives – celebrations of regional cuisine, wines, traditions, and rituals, for example – and promoting modern arts, including innovative manifestations. There is a need to connect year-round cultural tourism to the library's cultural calendar, which must be synced in terms of permanent exhibitions, the presentation of rare and important collections, and visitors' gifts of national literature. In other words, they are receptive to fresh material about the indigenous culture that may be given to them correctly in libraries (Whitman 2016). The cultural experience and cultural tourism attract primarily more educated and solvent tourists, which benefits the local economy (Modeva, 2018).

Not only does the content of the library's financing as part of the region's cultural heritage have the potential to provide exciting experiences and enrich the overall culture of visitors, but so does the library's history, its contribution to the spiritual development of the community, its remarkable building and interior, and the significant events that are held on-site. Visitors can benefit from all of these aspects of the library. This role should coincide with fulfilling local, national, and world cultural heritage responsibilities. The library may contribute to protecting and preserving cultural assets by preventing their loss. Because cultural knowledge loss is not a process that occurred in the past, it continues today as newer generations' access to traditional forms and ways of life is reduced and constrained. Historical and cultural knowledge is information gathered through many generations via contributions and historical events. It is self-evident that comprehending historical traditions in their proper context, depth, complexity, and variety is necessary to reaffirm present culture and identity. (Cokorda et al. 2018, 561).

4.4 Questionnaire for Library Professionals

The definition phrased by the U.N.E.S.C.O. Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity states that,

"...culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (U.N.E.S.C.O. Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001).

Cultural heritage documents are carriers and transmitters (media) of cultural values. Making digital cultural heritage available is of high importance. It is known to be an honourable aim to support creative industry, or creativity at all, at a national or international level, for instance, by enabling the re-use of cultural products whilst preserving and leaving the originals as authentic as possible.

According to the Malta Libraries' managers, the National Library is primarily a reference and research library and thus an academic institution; nonetheless, non-researchers of all ages are invited to visit. Unfortunately, the building itself is experiencing space constraints. As a result, certain restrictions on the number of visitors permitted at any given time must be imposed to avoid disrupting researchers, as all must share the Main Reading Hall, whether they are researchers, visitors, students, film crews or photographers working on assignments in the same space. Before the pandemic, visits had reached an all-time high, with tourists and organised group trips accounting for most visitors.

Professional members of staff guide organised trips to the library from within the Reading Room. Visitors are given an overview of the building's history and shown some of the most significant pieces in our collection. The Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) awarded the National Library of Malta a COVID-19 Relief Fund in 2021 to create physical and digital displays explaining the various holdings and collections housed at the National Library, allowing casual visitors and students alike to get a more in-depth and illustrated look at the National Library and its treasures without jeopardising the collections themselves (CENL, 2021).

Typically, the shows are based on a strictly historical background or collection (for example, The Archives of the Order of St John, Three Centuries of Russo-Maltese Relations, Bibles from the National Library collection, The Great Siege of 1565, The Building of Valletta). However, in partnership with the Department of Maltese and following the school curriculum, a yearly educational exhibition about Malta is produced in which we present original works by Maltese artists. Additionally, an intriguing exhibition on Maltese *sunetti* is presently going on (initially slated for 2020 but postponed due to the pandemic), closely related to social practice and culture that has already changed significantly and is already extinct in some parts of Malta.

Indeed, given its twin function, the N.L.M. should position itself more as a historical museum. To begin with, museum staff will get knowledge and assistance with research through the collection and dissemination of evidentiary data. Second, to give in-depth contextual information to museum visitors, external academics, and other members of the general public on the item collections and exhibits displayed by their museums (Van der Wateren, 1999; Watson 2001; Lo et al. 2014; Vogel 2014). That which has been stated for museums also counts for historical libraries serving as a cultural destination for tourists. These functions are listed in this order on purpose because many museum librarians have a tacit understanding that supporting museum staff, particularly curators and others involved in exhibition planning and delivery, is the primary focus of their libraries and have developed a strategy for approaching such exhibitions yearly in conjunction with commemorative occasions or significant dates (Williams 2018).

As with the National Library of Wales' Screen and Sound Archive, it would be ideal if the National Library could pursue more ambitious and innovative methods of promoting its cultural heritage on a national scale, similar to what the Welsh Film and Television Archive recently accomplished with the launch of a new App honouring Welsh cinematic history.

Dave Berry, the app's author, has built a tool for documenting the most significant events in Welsh cinema history. It has been instrumental in preserving Welsh films and sound recordings, and it has now sponsored a bilingual product that

transcends the constraints of a book and is a one-of-a-kind synthesis of text and moving pictures (Library.wales, 2022).

In response to the question of establishing a connection between the National Library and the development of Maltese society, the Malta Libraries respondents stated that an interesting item in our collection is an album of watercolours by Vincenzo Fenech depicting Maltese costumes depicting the entire spectrum of Maltese society at the end of the 18th century, from the Grand Master to the beggars. Naturally, there is a complete collection of Maltese newspapers dating back to 1798, which documents the growth of Maltese society. Also, group visits (except for student visits) are available only by appointment and in limited numbers.

The Malta Libraries respondents provided contradictory responses to those given by the tourist guides. She stated that the National Library receives frequent requests from tourist guides and collaborates closely with the *ExclusivelyMalta* organisation, catering to culturally minded visitors. She claimed that this organisation scheduled 20 visits prior to the pandemic per year. Unfortunately, they only received one visit last year, which was understandable considering the Covid situation. On the other hand, the tourist guides stated that they strive to avoid entering the N.L.M since they believe it does not cater to the interests of the tourist who wants to learn more about the building.

The Malta Libraries respondents responded to the possibility of a visitors' centre by stating that space constraints make such a centre hard to include. She stated that they plan to expand the facility to include a temporary display space and an audio-visual show about the N.L.M. A project to transfer parts of the library is ongoing to acquire nearby buildings to house the collections and free up space in the current location. However, such programmes necessitate the participation of other government agencies and private individuals and a substantial sum of money to cover restructuring costs. If we had more space, we could combine these synergies to deliver a more personalised experience for customers with diverse preferences. Current research on the history of the N.L.M examines it

from various perspectives, and as a result, its collections cannot be studied separately from the context in which they evolved.

Plans are underway to enhance the N.L.M.'s interactive and accessible features. Construction has begun on a step-free entrance, a local library, a souvenir store, and planned professional guided tours to attract more walk-in tourists. The answer to how to conceptualise and advertise the National Library to foreign visitors was to continue working closely with long-standing colleagues such as Malta Tourism Authority (M.T.A.) and contacts in the film industry, who have connected us with fantastic foreign and domestic promotional opportunities in the past. Our social media platforms have a sizable international following, and we receive queries from a vast clientele (looking to travel or organise events, for example) via those promotional platforms.

The Koninklijke Bibliotheek (K.B.), the national library of the Netherlands, is much more than just a collection of books and periodicals. Beyond serving as headquarters for the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (I.F.L.A.) and a partner of other international organisations, it strives to be a pioneer in library innovation. The written word can enhance intellectual growth, talent, and creativity, so the K.B. exists. The organisation also seeks to engage with partners in public libraries, cultural heritage organisations, and academic institutions. These goals are achieved by creating, innovating, and sharing knowledge over a robust network and exposing the most up-to-date technology to the broadest possible audience. K.B. deploys innovations locally and nationally by employing two different strategies. *From Idea to Initiative: A Program for Local Public Libraries*, sponsored by the K.B. library, supports innovation in local public libraries on the one hand, and on the other, it promotes innovation in the K.B. library. Alternatively, it strives to incorporate cutting-edge computer science techniques into its user-facing services (Boekesteijn & Wilms, 2017).

Innovative campaigns can promote libraries nationally, establishing "this partnership that will highlight the unique benefits only libraries and librarians can offer." It can also attract significant stakeholders to come together and create something bigger than collectively serves the true purpose of any National Library, which is to safeguard its identity (Gale and EveryLibrary, 2015).

For museums and libraries to be fully acknowledged for their distinctive contribution to cultural preservation, the notion of cultural sustainability must be presented and shaped in cultural policy contexts more comprehensively. It must be prioritised over all other sustainability problems. Before the importance of libraries in maintaining culture can be articulated in greater detail than the criteria already supplied by larger sustainable development goals and in a broader framework than preservation and conservation methods, additional research is required. Such research could enable a more accurate depiction of historical libraries' contributions to cultural preservation within sustainability policies, hence facilitating a greater recognition of the worth of these organisations by the general public. It is essential in the library sector, where the role of organisations in preserving culture is frequently less evident than in museums and, as a result, has been largely ignored. To better comprehend the function of libraries in cultural tourism, a study of sustainability models is necessary. It is necessary to conduct research into sustainability models and other worldwide practices. In addition to ensuring that the National Library is treated as a national repository, emphasis must be placed on revitalising it as a tourist, social, and economic attraction. Since these organisations' primary capabilities lie in cultural preservation, it may be more beneficial to analyse their involvement in sustainability than their cultural preservation function. This analysis would ensure that their total contribution to cultural sustainability is acknowledged and utilised. It would also make sustainability appear more relevant to library employees, who typically fail to comprehend how notions of sustainable development apply to their institutions.

Lastly, environmental concerns would centre on the physical conditions and processes necessary for the protection of collections, archives, and buildings, as well as the provision of the environment required for the physical survival of cultural heritage assets within organisations.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The responsibility of N. L's is to document and preserve the common memory of nations. Consequently, national libraries will continue to play a vital role in future generations. One of their key roles is to safeguard the preservation of a nation's history and culture. They are responsible for educating others. They contribute to the nation's development and maintain its cultural heritage. National libraries serve as the official repository for a country's literary works. They strive to maintain information and experiences in both analogue and digital formats. Numerous museums also serve as national libraries. They serve a crucial public service not just for the inhabitants of their own country but also for foreign researchers, tourists, and inquisitive individuals. They must maintain the past's traditions while simultaneously being forward-thinking and creative. Because innovation is what propels us forward, this is the case. National libraries must be at the forefront of change in addition to their roles in the preservation of history, culture, and education. They must have the talent of clairvoyance in order to know what will happen to them and where they will be in the future. They recognise that the only constant changes, even if that change is intended to preserve the past. In the end, their thoughts and actions are not confined by geographical boundaries. They are examples of innovation and change in their respective industries. Innovation is not a random occurrence; every organisation member emits it. There must be no limits whatsoever. While creativity cannot be compelled, it can be supported and fostered through various approaches. Innovation is not limited to the invention of a new product or process; instead, it may and should also address the existing methods and strategies within an organisation to increase productivity, reduce waste, promote services in the digital era, and much more. These processes transport us from inertia to originality. To suit the needs of the National Library and its patrons' needs, inventive abilities are pooled.

In the era of digital change and post-COVID-19 lifestyle, libraries, archives, and our entire attitude toward our cultural legacy are at a pivotal juncture. On the one

hand, the more digitalised our lives grow, the more we need collaborative spaces such as libraries to talk, communicate, and discover new inventive solutions. On the other hand, the librarian profession is frequently viewed as diminishing compared to a species on the verge of extinction. The opposite is the case. Without librarians, we would lose control over our cultural history and, by extension, our cultural identity. What to collect in the future and how to maintain and protect the digital history can only be addressed through the participatory exchange and collaboration of librarians, the general public, and significant entities willing to fund new exciting projects. In this environment, librarians want continual input and the formation of synergies with other extensive National libraries from across the globe to comprehend the directions and aspirations these historical libraries can pursue. As information curators, these libraries must protect physical and digital data copies. However, information technology also requires information professionals, like librarians, to recognise that fundamental methods for managing cultural material exist and can be adapted to the digital environment in many instances. The most important thing is to recognise that all upcoming obstacles can only be overcome through multidisciplinary communication and mutual understanding.

Librarians can play a role in working outside of libraries as organisations while maintaining the professional principles and significance of cultural programs. Cultural institutions such as historical societies, archives, libraries and museums serve as intermediaries between people and information, cultural groups and records, and communities and relics of cultural heritage. Librarians, archivists, and curators also serve as intermediaries. The preservation and accessibility of not only books and other textual materials but also stories, oral histories, musical and dance performances, and numerous other forms of expression validate the living and collective memories of varied communities. In this case, the author believes that not enough synergies are coming together to protect the interests of a more diverse community, which is growing in size. This cultural diversity needs to be addressed and harnessed in a way that one structure could accommodate all and preserve everything that makes us Maltese, from everything that made us unique

throughout history to what our community has evolved into and how to preserve the current scenarios and protect them for future generations and tourists alike.

If the collective memory that is produced by groups or communities over time also forges a cultural identity that is passed down from one generation to the next, then what better place in the community than libraries and other cultural institutions to collect, preserve, and make accessible the cultural heritage that reflects the various cultures and communities than points of intersection? In addition, libraries and other cultural institutions need to keep in mind that authenticity is a socio-cultural concept rather than a technical one. Authenticity can reflect the works and lives of individuals and the circumstances that have played a role in moulding their existences.

As was mentioned earlier, the European Commission initiated the CORDIS initiative to assist libraries in developing new innovative techniques that are friendly to both costs and the environment and assist in the prevention of or restoration of damaged historic places following a disaster. Regrettably, Malta Libraries did not or could not submit any applications for any of the offered financial aid, which is unfortunate since it would have helped alleviate some of the financial concerns that our National Library of Malta has to face as soon as possible. Malta Libraries' reasons why they did not benefit from such funds would not have lent this research much more or less value to its content. However, it would have been possible to begin treating this historical library with more respect and getting it ready to take on new duties in an ever-expanding community if this goal had been achieved.

According to what has been presented in this dissertation, one can use the fact that Malta is a small country. If a collective synergy comes together, one could have a state-of-the-art historical library representing the Maltese community in its diversity. The ordinary people, the artists, and the historical tourist who want to immerse themselves in a revamped library while ensuring that all of the roots that made it iconic are still in place and ready to keep writing history and storing it accordingly. Regarding the contribution and function of history, historical architecture is regarded as a repository of monumental heritage, regarded as one

of the essential criteria for preserving architectural heritage. Consequently, the transformation of the philosophical concept of cultural heritage into contemporary architecture preserves its originality through the application of historical precedent.

Closing in on the local scene from the data gathered and analysed in the *Data Analysis* chapter, the following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn:

First, we see that the overall participants anticipate a slow but positive shift in attitudes toward both organisations and the tourism industry and libraries themselves in understanding the perception as cultural tourism objects. What struck the author about the present evaluation's findings is how enthusiastic respondents responded positively to specific questions regarding the possibility of libraries attracting additional visitors. Second, most people have a predisposition to place themselves, think, or be prepared to operate in this way. Given that the Malta Libraries' respondents are top management staff, a favourable trend toward supporting the National Library's capacity to participate in cultural tourism is emerging at the highest management level. It is well established that no such initiative can be conducted adequately without the management's agreement. In this regard, the findings are positive and support the initial premise that libraries have a considerable potential to serve as destinations for cultural tourism and a hub for creative tourism activities and that this potential should be maximised. As a proposal, we may emphasise the need to establish the essential circumstances, including modifications to the legal framework, to enable Maltese National Libraries to emulate best practices from Europe and the rest of the world. These modifications give a chance to garner broader public support for programmes, including their involvement in cultural tourism.

It is important to emphasise that library directors support the opportunity for these cultural institutions to participate in cultural tourism and that they are willing to collaborate with the tourism industry and all stakeholders to create the conditions necessary for the training of competent officials to reorganise the library's activities so that they are accessible to tourists with cognitive and cultural

needs. As a result, sustainable heritage promotes regional development by creating jobs, particularly in areas with limited economic options and a high emigration rate. Simultaneously, the expansion of cultural tourism aims to generate funds to support site upkeep and cultural attractions. This segment of travellers likes off-the-beaten-path destinations, which stimulates year-round visiting and travel to even more tourist places, including fewer familiar parts of the country. Cultural tourism eventually encourages local citizens to cherish and protect their culture and become aware of and proud of their historical past. In this way, libraries have tremendous cultural relevance and can profit from this type of tourism. Those who will not only represent their resources but will also help to attract tourists to the settlement, expand their contacts with local communities, assist in the preparation and implementation of projects, and demonstrate their potential for fully participating in today's globalised society while preserving local cultural identity.

Several important conclusions have been reached: the recognition of libraries as active participants in cultural tourism opens up new avenues for their development; it stimulates their activity in seeking partnerships with state institutions, local governments, non-governmental organisations, tourism, businesses, and citizens. Libraries are typically seen as passive guardians of valuable and uncommon artefacts. They must now take action, organise programmes, launch events, be aware of tourist wants, and provide innovative and intriguing possibilities to attract people to their location. Another critical component of cultural tourism in libraries is that it is always linked to a traditional library with displays at a site that travellers must physically visit. Unlike other information and cultural needs that may be met in a virtual environment, this engagement occurs in real-time and in a physical location, specifically the library's campus. The existence of libraries in cultural tourism is perfectly congruent with their educational objective, as this type of tourist caters primarily to cognitive needs. Participating in cultural tourism necessitates the development of a complete programme, the use of innovative techniques and forms of engagement

with tourists, and specialised training for library workers in this type of activity, suited to the ages and interests of the visitors.

No respondent mentioned EU-funded projects; in fact, international libraries actively seek financing for projects through different regional, national, and EU-funded project grant programmes, in which libraries collaborate with other cultural or educational service providers. Many other European members benefited from Advancing Resilience of Historic Areas against Climate-related and other Hazards concerning climate change (CORDIS, 2021) and resilience and sustainable reconstruction of historic areas to cope with climate change and hazard events (CORDIS, 2021).

Climate change and natural disasters wreak havoc on Europe's historic cities and towns and their urban and rural environs. Increasing their Resilience through 'contingency planning' interventions and assuring their long-term reconstruction in the event of damage or destruction is crucial for preserving their historical significance while retaining their identity. However, due to specific characteristics of heritage sites, solutions might be challenging and expensive (such as artistic values, denser urban fabric, material compatibility requirements, a higher vulnerability of materials and structures, difficulty in accessing the damaged areas, high symbolic values for communities involved, traditional lifestyles, and other factors). Cost-effective resilience enhancement and reconstruction require knowledge- and evidence-based approaches (CORDIS, 2021).

The Ministry of Culture of Latvia is responsible for creating policy documents and rules controlling the library industry. The Library Council in Latvia, a public advisory body comprised of representatives from all types of libraries, library associations, and other library support organisations, actively create national library policy and ensures the development and collaboration of the sector (IFLA, n.d.). The actual National Library Collection Development Policy does not prioritise direct efforts to protect and disseminate cultural assets, equal and high-quality access to library services, or genuine contributions to a knowledge society and economic growth. Locally, it is possible to implement what other nations,

such as Latvia, are doing and develop recommendations for implementing changes that need to be addressed very quickly.

Numerous EU frameworks, programmes, projects, policies, and strategies highlight the importance of digitization, accessibility, administration, and protection of cultural material in historical institutions, such as National Libraries, and address related concerns. Methods and strategies were outlined in this thesis to ensure that our written history is maintained in the most effective manner possible while also exploring new ways to present them in various digital formats for future generations. Although Malta is a member of the European Union, little has been done to address this challenge on a global scale and fulfil its obligations to preserve and present new innovative and cutting-edge technologies to ensure that our nation's history is preserved and that we continue to document everything that makes us Maltese.

Unhappily, the author does not wish to imply that nothing has been done, but collectively we have yet to see a body of synergies coming together in full force, especially among libraries, archives, and museums, and independently learning from each other how to display their valuable treasures so that visitors are enticed to visit for the first time and continue to return to such historically rich locations.

Our roots date back to before the invention of the pyramids, and our small island has been conquered numerous times, all of which have left their mark on our history; one cannot overlook the reign of the Knights of Malta, and one can still visit their rich heritage in places such as Mdina and Valletta, where they constructed one of the oldest library buildings in Europe. However, it cannot be maintained that the policies and efforts to safeguard, promote, and transmit this heritage to future generations are enough. The conventional understanding of cultural heritage is centred on physical preservation. We will instead embrace digitization and other new methods. Increasing the visibility and accessibility of cultural assets demands creative and innovative policies and services.

It is not enough for institutions to just promote their services on their website. They should be accessible via search engines such as Google or visible and accessible on social media sites, and they should participate in heritage-related projects while showcasing different themes throughout the year and presenting them online through virtual reality technology and collaborating with other established libraries that have the same objective of presenting their treasures to the visitors who wish to learn more prior to physically visiting such historical libraries. Innovative service growth requires a heightened awareness on the part of memory institutes' staff.

The establishment of digitization, digital preservation, and sustainability standards should be encouraged by the policy. Institutions should employ innovative methods, such as the development of computer and communication technologies and digital humanities. It is also necessary to standardise the use of metadata systems for interoperability. There should be no uncertainty in the law regulating cultural heritage, especially in regard to copyright. To strengthen their services, administration of collections, and public access, libraries should interact with other libraries and memory institutions, such as museums and archives, as well as with ministries and U.N.E.S.C.O.

It is necessary to note that cultural tourism is a new concept in the current debate about librarianship, and it is frequently seen as complex and distant by even experienced librarians. While crucial informants that were questioned generally thought that cultural tourism may help libraries enhance their services, information professionals have shown a lack of enthusiasm about cultural tourism as no direct, foreseeable solutions were addressed.

Both parties questioned (tour guides and library professionals) recognised the potential for convergence between libraries, archives, and museums. While this convergence is not entirely evident theoretically, librarians are confident that it may benefit end-users. All experts interviewed are concerned with the needs of their clients, which is an optimistic assumption for this industry.

While tour guides often emphasise the difficulty of intersectoral collaboration, library management officials frequently emphasise their inability to effectively communicate as they appear to be waiting for authorities to find new ways to maximise and revamp the National Library of Malta. If numerous synergies come together and public consultations and a theme for how the National Library should be addressed, the author is hopeful that the perfect library will be developed, as it will genuinely cater to everyone who expressed interest in imagining it in this time and age. The same professionals emphasised the need for collaboration and a cross-domain approach. This optimistic outlook might also be used for cultural tourist ventures. The issue appears to be a lack of information and training, which requires more reinforcement since these experts demonstrate the best aptitudes for group work, learning, and professional development. Indeed, they seek to enhance communication skills, marketing and planning tools, project, human resource, and financial management.

Convergence fostered by collaboration between diverse cultural organisations may also be extended to diverse individuals working in the cultural or tourism sectors, whether public or private. Indeed, the theoretical framework is complicated by the interconnection of several professions.

Due to this complexity, information experts recommend novel learning approaches and meet specific learning requirements related to cultural tourism programmes for libraries. An interviewee, in particular, suggests obtaining professional training through temporary transfers to strengthen one's practical knowledge of the profession through hands-on experience. Another proposal is to establish a specialist documentation and education centre for cultural tourism, where professors and professionals may collaborate and learn.

The fact that a key informant stated that cultural tourism requires curiosity and risk and that the National Library is too prestigious and valuable not to take on all of these risks and give this historical library all the exposure needed to make it culturally significant once more. Information professionals interviewed admitted they lack the necessary skills to manage cultural tourism projects while demonstrating a solid commitment to professional development.

In regional development strategies, it is essential to set guidelines and means to encourage the engagement of other libraries in the promotion of cultural tourism at both the central and municipal levels. The local populace can play a vital role in adapting cultural routes to the needs of producing a distinctive tourism product that embodies the ambience of true cultural identity on the ground, the memory recorded in libraries, and the restoration of the value of intangible heritage. Libraries should be involved in the interpretation and appealing demonstrations of efforts to promote the uniqueness of Maltese cultural values, mixed with contemporary approaches to presenting the European dimension of our national culture, as part of strategies and development plans. In this way, conditions will be created for the popularisation of libraries, the formation of a precise type of activity linked to the engagement among employees to present the library to tourists, the creation of new jobs and an enticing year-round calendar of cultural tourism, and the resolution of the current problem of offering attractions of questionable artistic quality.

To foster comprehension of the role of N.L. and an appreciation of the one-of-a-kind value that these institutions bring to society, developing sustainability policies for libraries that include adaptive strategy as a paramount consideration along with their responsibilities to social, economic, and impact on the environment appears to be beneficial. This would help to ensure the institutions' long-term viability.

People can be enticed to visit the building on their next trip to Valletta by employing the appropriate marketing strategies. Why are people waiting in line to enter the library during "Notte Bianca" when it is available to the public throughout the year?

One should begin by promoting the library's historic property designation. If a company needs to be recognised, it must place advertisements in local newspapers and on the Internet. The parties involved will receive flyers. Recommendation: organise a public event with a variety of activities and reenactments. As part of the national curriculum, all public schools and local governments must promote library use in their respective communities.

Therefore, it is essential to increase the building's accessibility for spectators. From the opposite side of the square, the word "Bibliotheca" is boldly displayed on the building's facade. The arches obscure the building's entrance despite the plethora of coffee shop umbrellas.

One needs to remember that when it comes to tourist visits to the National Library, the emphasis is on individualised tours and private excursions catered to the specific interests of individuals and groups. Many past visitors to Valletta wish to explore the city's other attractions.

The interpretation of the collection and its organisation must be as creative and appealing as possible. Both on-site and online digital media must incorporate the latest information and technologies. Digital information panels should flank the reading room displays. The information panels at the entrance to the reading area should be updated to reflect new technology advancements. Children, adolescents, families, and the elderly must have a place to explain themselves. In a library, ancient literature can serve as a resource for storytellers. Staiff (2016) argues that when we hear stories, we are emotionally and intellectually connected to our past, enabling us to understand who we are. In order to manage such situations, interpreters of the past must obtain training.

Public speaking engagements and exhibitions are effective. Libraries that preserve the nation's historical achievements contribute to cultural tourism. As a result, libraries should serve locals and visitors as a focal point for relevant events (Terziev, 2020).

A shop selling souvenirs and a coffee shop where visitors and academics can meet would be desirable. This idea can be achieved by outsourcing with the coffee shops in front of the building or by utilising the roof. Transportation from the principal bus station must be arranged for the elderly and others with limited mobility. Additionally, a visit to the National Library and the Grandmasters Palace might be combined, as the National Library contains numerous historical records of the Order of St. John.

Finally, once the library has been recognised as a property of cultural significance, it is crucial to ensure that visitors depart satisfied and prepared to spread the news. Crucial for determining the ever-changing needs of visitors is feedback. Attracting trust, aid, sponsors, and volunteers would all contribute to the success of this endeavour.

Bibliography

- Akçayır M., Akçayır G. 2017. "Advantages and challenges associated with augmented reality for education: a systematic review of the literature." 1-11.
- Anderson, A., Fagerlid, C., Larsen, H. and Straume, I (Eds). 2017. *The open library: Research library in change*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk.
- Ashworth, B., 2020. *The Coronavirus' Impact on Libraries Goes Beyond Books*. 25 March. Accessed 4 2021, 2021. <https://www.wired.com/story/covid-19-libraries-impact-goes-beyond-books/>.
- Ashworth, Boone. 2020. *Covid-19's Impact on Libraries Goes Beyond Books*. 25 March. Accessed June 4, 2021. <https://www.wired.com/story/covid-19-libraries-impact-goes-beyond-books/>.
- Audunson, R. 2012. "The public library as a meeting-place in a multicultural and digital context." *Journal of Documentation* Vol.61 No.3, pp. 429-441.
- Australia ICOMOS. 2013. "The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013." *Australia ICOMOS: International Council on Monuments and Sites*. Accessed June 5, 2021. <https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>.
- Beckers, B. 2017. "*Building bridges between 'typically Limburgian' and 'Limburg does not exist'*". Accessed July 15, 2021. www.oclc/content/dam/oclc/events/2017/EMEARC2017/EMEARC-2017-Session-I-Libraries-Culture-and-Identity-Barbara-Beckers.pdf.
- Björk, L. 2015. *BjHow Reproductive is a Reproduction? Digital Transmission of Textbased Documents*,. Borås.: Swedish School of Library and Information Science, .
- Brunelli, M. 2013, pp 399-42 (ISSN 1971-1131). "From nature guiding to nature interpretation in the United States (1872-1920). The origins of the professional practice of heritage interpretation: Between protection and education. History of Education & Children's Literature, [online] VIII, 1 ." *ResearchGate*. January. Accessed January 2, 2021. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290550989_From_nature_guiding_to_nature_interpretation_in_the_United_States_1872-1920_The_origins_of_the_professional_practice_of_heritage_interpretation_Between_protection_and_education.
- C.I.C., Loud in Libraries. 2019. "*Get it loud in libraries*". Accessed December 3, 2021. <http://getitloudinlibraries.com/toolkit/> .
- Caffo, R. 2014. "Digital cultural heritage projects: Opportunities and future challenges." *Procedia Computer Science*, 38 12-17.
- Cameron, F., & Kenderline, S. 2007. *Theorising digital cultural heritage: A critical discourse*. London: The MIT Press.

- Chisita, C. 2020. "Libraries in the Midst of the Coronavirus (COVID-19): Researchers' Experiences in Dealing With the Vexatious Infodemic." *Library Hi Tech News* 37 (6): 11-14.
- Coates, T. 2018. "'On the closure of English public libraries'." *Public Library Quarterly*, Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 3-18.
- Cokorda Pramatha, Joseph G. Davis, and Kevin K. Y. Kuan. 2018. "'A Semantically-Enriched Digital Portal for the Digital Preservation'. Digital Heritage. Progress in Cultural Heritage: Documentation, Preservation, and Protection", Proceedings, Part I." *Springer Nature* 560-571.
- Colbjørnsen, T. (2017), "Openness in the digital library: On political guidelines and frictions between commercial book industry and library in a digital age", in Anderson, A., Fagerlid, C., Larsen, H. and Straume, I. (Eds),. 2017. "'Openness in the digital library: On political guidelines and frictions between commercial book industry and library in a digital age'." *The Open Library: Research Library in Change*, Cappelen Damm Akademisk, Oslo 23-39.
- Conway, P. 2015. "'Digital transformations and the archival nature of surrogates'." *Archival Science*, Vol. 15 No. 1, 51-69.
- CORDIS. 2021. *Advancing Resilience of Historic Areas against Climate-related and other Hazards*. 11 May. Accessed January 24, 2022. <http://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/820999/reporting>.
- DANCS, S.,. 2018. "Information seeking and/or identity seeking: libraries as sources of cultural identity. Library Management,." *Library Management*, 39(1) 12-20.
- Davison, G. 2000. *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Delanty, G. 2008. *The European Heritage: A Critical Re-interpretation*. New York: Routledge.
- Delrieu, V. and Gibson, L. Vol. 26 No. 1,. "'Libraries and the geography of use: how does geography and asset 'attractiveness' influence the local dimensions of cultural participation?'" *Cultural Trends*, 18-33.
2013. "Directive 2013/37/E.U. of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26th June 2013 amending Directive 2003/98/E.C. on the reuse of public sector information," . 26 June. Accessed November 27, 2021. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:175:0001:0008:EN:PDF>.
2013. "Directive 2013/37/E.U. of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26th June 2013 amending Directive 2003/98/E.C. on the reuse of public sector information," available at:<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:175:0001:0008:E>." 26 June. Accessed November 27, 2021. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:175:0001:0008:EN:PDF>.
- ESTERHÁZY P. 2016. "A vereség [online]. [cit. 2018-08-06]." 27 July . Accessed February 25, 2021. http://hvg.hu/itthon/201451_esterhazy_peter_urizalasrol_hagyomanyokrol.

- Fagerlid, C. 2016. "Shielded together - coexistence in the public library." *Norwegian Anthropological Tidsskrift*, Vol. 26 No 2, 108-120.
- FLETCHER, R. 2019. "Public libraries, arts and cultural policy in the U.K. ." *Library Management*, 40(8), 570-582.
- Gidlund, K. L. 2015. "Makers and shapers or users and choosers participatory practices in digitalisation of public sector." *International Conference on Electronic Government* 222-232.
- Hanson, J. 2010. *Libraries and Identity: The Role of Institutional Self-Image and Libraries and Identity*. Oxford: Chandos Publishing.
- Hemsley, J., Cappellini, V., & Stanke, G. (Eds.). 2015. *Digital applications for cultural and heritage institutions*. London: Routledge.
- Howard, P. 2011. *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity*. London: Continuum.
- ICOMOS. 2008. "The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites." *ICIP*. 4 October. Accessed June 8, 2021.
http://icip.icomos.org/downloads/ICOMOS_Interpretation_Charter_ENG_04_10_08.pdf.
- IFLA. n.d. *Library Map of the World: Latvia*. Accessed January 2022, 2022.
<https://librarymap.ifla.org/countries/Latvia>.
- Ifila.org. 2021. "Cultural Heritage. ." Accessed May 19, 2021.
<https://www.ifla.org/cultural-heritage>.
- . 2020. "IFLA - Cultural Heritage." *Cultural Heritage*. [online]. Accessed May 19, 2021.
<https://www.ifla.org/cultural-heritage>.
- . 2009. "IFLA - IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto. [online]." Accessed May 22, 2021. <https://www.ifla.org/node/8976> [Accessed 21 May 2021].
- Institutional, BnF -. n.d. *Gallica - The BnF digital library*. Accessed February 12, 2021.
bnf.fr/en/gallica-bnf-digital-library.
- Jantz, Ronald C. 2013. "Incremental and Radical Innovations in Research Libraries: An Exploratory Examination Regarding the Effects of Ambidexterity, Organizational Structure, Leadership, and Contextual Factors." *Doctoral dissertation, Rutgers University*.
- JARLBRINK, J. and SNICKARS, P. JARLBRINK, J. and SNICKARS, P., 2017. Cultural heritage as digital noise: nineteenth-century newspapers in the digital archive. *Journal of Documentation*, 73(6), pp. 1228-1243. "Cultural heritage as digital noise: nineteenth-century newspapers in the digital archive." *Journal of Documentation*, 73(6), 1228-1243.
- Johnson, E. and Li Liew, C. 2020. "Engagement-oriented design: a study of New Zealand public cultural heritage institutions crowdsourcing platforms." *Online information Review* [online]. Accessed May 17, 2021.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341551682_Engagement-

oriented_design_a_study_of_New_Zealand_public_cultural_heritage_institutions_crowdsourcing_platforms.

- Kettunen, K., Honkela, T., Lindén, K., Kauppinen, P., Pääkkönen, T. and Kervinen, J. 2014. ""Analysing and improving the quality of a historical news collection using language technology and statistical machine learning methods", paper presented at IFLA, Lyon." Accessed November 26, 2021. <https://helda.Helsinki.fi/handle/10138/136269>.
- Kidd, J. 2019. "With new eyes I see: Embodiment, empathy and silence in digital heritage interpretation. ." *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 25(1), 54-66.
- Kowalczyk, P. 2020. *10 most extraordinary mobile libraries*. Accessed May 25, 2021. <https://ebookfriendly.com/extraordinary-mobile-libraries/>.
- LARSEN, H. 2018. "Archives, libraries and museums in the Nordic model of the public sphere." *Journal of Documentation*, 74(1), 187-194.
- Leyton, M. 1992. *Symmetry, Causality, Mind*. Massachusettes: MIT Press.
- Lo, P., Allard, B., Wang, N. and Chiu, D. 2018. ""Servant leadership theory in practice: North America's leading public libraries"." *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*. Accessed January 11, 2021. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0961000618792387>.
- Lowenthal, D. 1985. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mallia, David, and C Farrugia. 2014. *Libraries and Archives: Surviving, Thriving and Striving*. Hal-Tarxien: Book Distributors Limited.
- Manifesto, IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library. 2017. ""The Multicultural Library - a gateway to a cultural diverse society in dialogue"." 6 January. Accessed March 13, 2021. www.ifla.org/files/assets/library-services-to-multicultural-populations/publications/multicultural_library_manifesto-en.pdf.
- Menkhoff, T. and Wirtz, J. 2018. "National Library Board Singapore: World-Class Service through Innovation and People Centricity." *ResearchGate [online]*. Accessed June 10, 2022. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326587122_National_Library_Board_Singapore_World-Class_Service_through_Innovation_and_People_Centricity.
- Milligan, I. 2013. ""Illusionary order: online databases, optical character recognition, and Canadian history, 1997-2012"." *The Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 94 No. 4, 540-569.
- Mizzi, R. 2015. "Digitisation at the National Library of Malta: improving access in support of potential users, their needs and expectations." *Faculty of Media & Knowledge Sciences [THESIS, BACHELOR]*. University of Malta. Mizzi, R., 2015. Digitisation at the National Library of Malta: improving access in support of potential users, their needs and expectations. THESIS, BACHELOR. University of

Malta; Faculty of Media & Knowledge Sciences. Department of Library Information an.

Moran, B.B. and Morner, C.J. 2018. *Library and Information Center Management, 9th ed.,*. Santa Barbara, CA.: Libraries Unlimited, .

Morville, P., 2021. *Tomorrow's Architects: Designing the Future of Libraries*. 6 April. Accessed May 16, 2021.

National Library of Australia. 2003. "Guidelines for the Preservation of Digital Heritage." *UNESCO Digital Library*. March. Accessed July 1, 2021. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000130071>.

National Library of Sweden. 2016. *Digitization*. Accessed November 26, 2021. <https://www.kb.se/om-oss/det-har-gor-vi/digitalisering.html>.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1995. *The Use and Abuse of History*. New York: Macmillan.

Nilson, T. and Thorell, K., 2018. "Cultural Heritage Preservation: The Past, the Present and the Future. [online] ." Accessed May 9, 2022. Diva-portal.org. Available at: <<https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1224014/FULLTEXT01.pdf>>.

Norwegian Ministry of Culture. 2015. "'National Library Strategy 2015-2018. The state's tasks and responsibilities for development of public libraries'." Accessed March 19, 2021. file:///C:/Users/ChristopherCilia/OneDrive%20-%20Institute%20of%20Tourism%20Studies/Downloads/norway%20strategy%202015%C3%A2%E2%82%AC%E2%80%9C2018%20english%20(1).pdf.

Nyhlén, S., & Gidlund, K. L. 2018. "'Everything' disappears... reflexive design and norm-critical intervention in the digitalisation of cultural heritage. ." *Information, Communication & Society* 1-15.

Ossai-Ugbah, N. 2013. "'The role of the library and librarians in promoting national security in Nigeria'." *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 2, 99-104.

Pearson, M., and S. Sullivan. 1995. 1995. *Looking after heritage places: The basics of heritage planning for managers, landowners and administrators.*. Melbourne: University Press.

ProQuest, LLC. 2020. "National library of Israel goes live with e libris alma platform to power the library's far-reaching initiatives today and into the future ." 27 February. Accessed April 15, 2021. <http://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/proquest-llc-national-library-israel-goes-live/docview/2364700995/se-2?accountid=190493>.

Rambøll. 2015. "Assessment on e-books and lending in public libraries,."

2015. "Responding! Public libraries and refugees." Accessed November 27, 2021. www.I.F.L.A..org/node/10580?org=49.

Russell, S. 2014. *Re-imagining Heritage Interpretation: Enchanting the Past-Future*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- Rydell, A.,. 2017. ""Libraries are vital meeting places".*" Scandinavian Library Quarterly, Vol. 49 Nos no. 1-2, pp. 8-10,*. 6 January. Accessed May 22, 2021.
<http://slq.nu/?article=volume-49-no-1-2-2016-3>.
- Sawhney, M., Verona, G. and Prandelli, E. 2005. "Collaborating to create: The Internet as a platform for customer engagement in product innovation." *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 19(40)* 4-17.
- Shakalis, W. 2016. "Rethinking Library Technical Services: Redefining our Profession for the Future." *Library Resources & Technical Services* 60-61.
- Smallwood, C. 2014. *Bringing the Arts into the Library, American Library Association,*. Chicago: ALA Editions.
- Smith, C. 2018. ""An evaluation of community-managed libraries in Liverpool", .*" Library Management, Vol. 40 No. 5,* 327-337.
- Society of Chief Librarians. 2017. "Public Libraries Universal Culture Offer." 28 March. Accessed November 13, 2021.
<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/sites/default/files/Public%20Libraries%20Universal%20Culture%20Offer%20report.pdf>.
- Sontag, S. 1982. *Barthes: Selected Writings*. Oxford: The University Press & Fontana/Collins.
- Staiff, R., Watson, S., & Bushell, R. 2016. "Introduction: place, encounter, engagement: context and themes." *Heritage and Tourism: Place, Encounter, Engagement* 1-23.
- Terziev, V. & Vasileva, S. 2020. "Libraries And Tourism - Possibilities For Integration And New Directions For Sustainable Social Development, .*" Varazdin Development and Entrepreneurship Agency (VADEA), Varazdin.*
2004. *The Glasgow Story*. Accessed January 20, 2022.
<https://www.theglasgowstory.com/>.
- Thwaites, H. 2013. *Digital heritage: What happens when we digitise everything? In Visual heritage in the digital age*. London: Springer.
- Tilden, F. 1957. *Interpreting our heritage, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1957. The edition consulted is the Fourth edition expanded and updated, ed. by B. Craig, with foreword by R.E. Dickenson .* North Carolina: Chapel Hill.
- UNESCO. 2021. ""Concept of Digital Heritage".*" Accessed December 12, 2021.
<https://en.unesco.org/themes/information-preservation/digital-heritage/concept-digital-heritage>.*
- . 2003. "Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage." *UNESCODOC Digital Library*. 17 October. Accessed June 1, 2021.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000179529>.
- UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. 2001. ""Adopted by the 31st session of the general conference of UNESCO, Paris, 2nd November 2001".*" 6 January. Accessed December 11, 2021. UNESCO Universal Declaration on*

- Cultural Diversity, (2001), "Adopted by the 31st session of the general conference of UNESCO, Paris, 2nd November 2001", available at;
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.
- Verheul, I. and International Federation Of Library Associations And Institutions (. 2006. "Networking for digital preservation : current practice in 15 national libraries." *München: K.G. Saur*.
- Warren, E. and Matthews, G. 2018. ""Public libraries, museums and physical convergence: context, issues, opportunities: a literature review Part 2", ." *Concept of Digital Heritage*. Accessed July 22, 2021.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000>.
- Weiler, Betty, and Kaye Walker. 2014. "Enhancing the visitor experience: Reconceptualising the tour guide's communicative role." *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 21:90–99. 21 December. Accessed July 22, 2021.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266561893_Enhancing_the_visitor_experience_Reconceptualising_the_tour_guide's_communicative_role.
- Wilansky, L. 2017. "Five lessons for libraries looking for innovative in the 21st century ." *Knight Foundation*. Accessed April 15, 2021.
https://knightfoundation.org/articles/five-lessons-for-libraries-looking-to-innovate-in-the-21st-century/?fbclid=IwAR3aNP_wtX4X6TyukwVdveSe_rfkgtYB7_Zvj_5sjF6csdDT671RC13MZqM.
- Williams, J. 2017. *Marvellous Marketing for Story Selling, The Spark Arts for Children*. Leicester: Springer.
- Williams, Tracey. 2010. "Williams, Tracey. (2010). Facebook, Twitter et al – Practical Guide to Getting Involved, for Heritage Collections. Library + Information Update." (vol 6 issue number) 34.
- Winter, T. 2013. "Clarifying the critical in critical heritage studies." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19(6), 532-545.
- Yeh, S. and Walter, Z. 2016. "Yeh, S. and Walter, Z., 2016. Determinants of Service Innovation in Academic Libraries through the Lens of Disruptive Innovation." *College & Research Libraries*, 77(6) 795-804.
- Zammit Mangion, Patricia. 2000. "Preservation and Conservation Programmes for Printed Material in Maltese Libraries." *Unpublished Long Assignment; Dip. LIS UOM pp.19-22*. University of Malta.
- Zammit, W. 2005. "A Treasure Lost: The Portocarrero collection of science instruments and interest in the sciences of Hospitaller Malta." *Symposia Melitensia* 2: 1-20.

Appendices

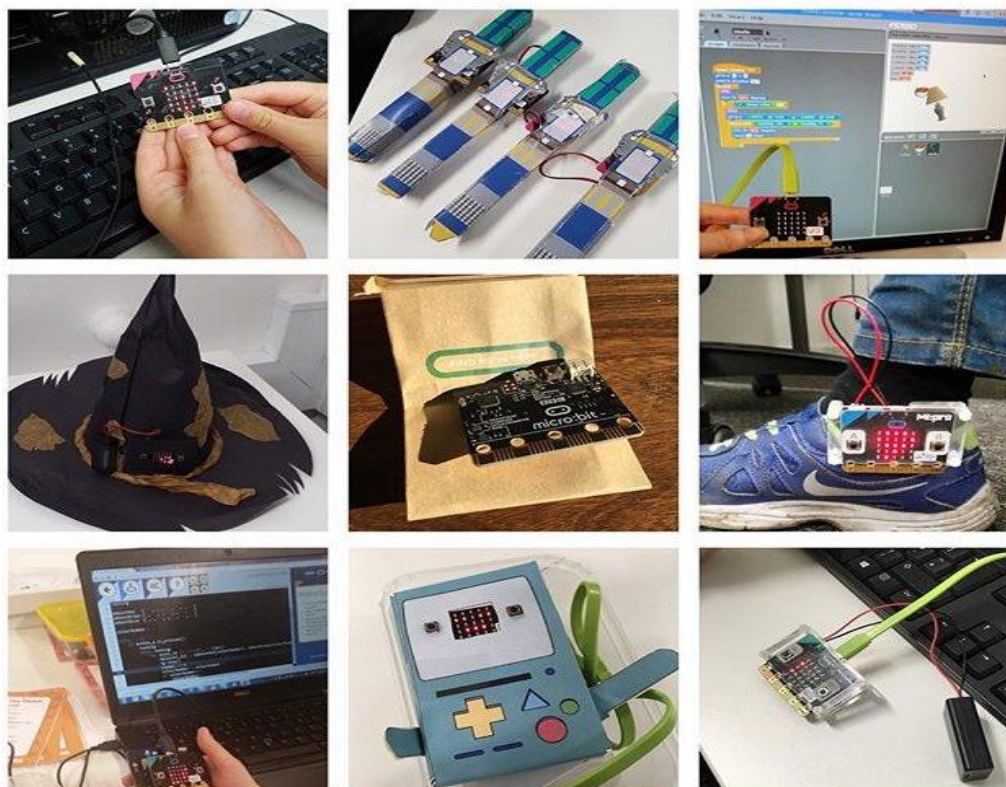
Photos of various library layouts in the National Library of Singapore (taken from Google Photos).

In these pictures, one can see how a National Library could look like when incorporating the latest innovative technologies: Digital maker labs, coding clubs, digital storytelling, virtual reality, mobile apps, RFID technologies, cloud printing, copying, scanning, kinetic bikes in the library, and single sign-on resources are just a few of the technologies available.

Also, various layouts of how the library should look to attract potential new patrons are illustrated here. One can also see original concepts mentioned in this essay, such as meet-the-artist, heritage hub, mobile library, digital storytelling, etc.

Pictures (All Photo credits: Google Photos)



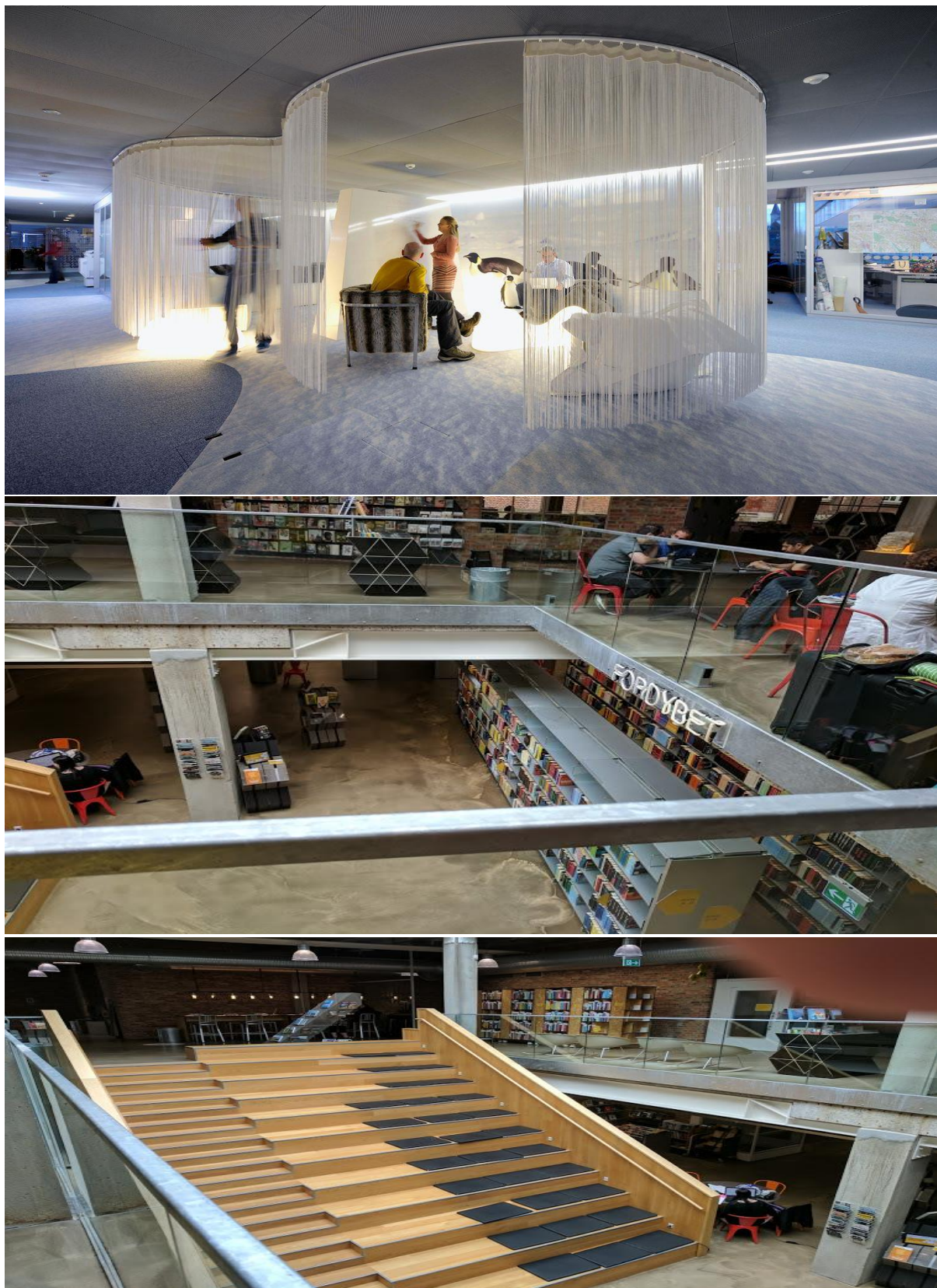


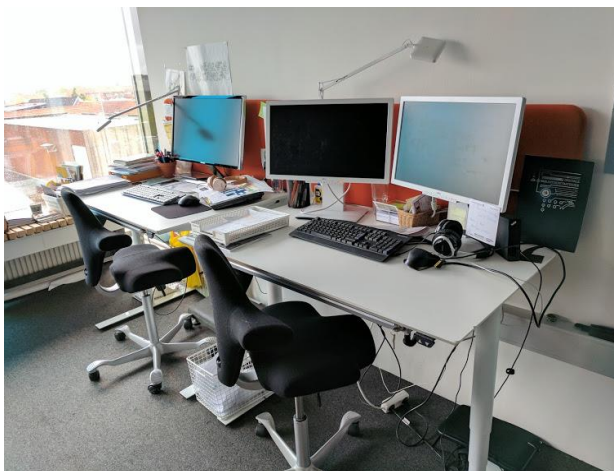
Figures A - 1-11: Innovative techniques to enhance the library experience whilst utilising some lifelong learning skills



Figures B: 12-13: Meet the artists, get to know the process, be inspired in this creativity hub











Figures C: 14-27: Different library layouts and innovative technologies make the library experience truly memorable. Other libraries which incorporated such ideas saw a significant shift in people attending, and the demands grew.

Appendix A – Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form



15/10/2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Christopher Cilia, and I follow a two (2) year Master's course in Heritage Interpretation, at the Institute of Tourism Studies (I.T.S). I am focusing on promoting our historical libraries, particularly on the National Library in Valletta and how it can assist tourists in developing a sense of place and learning more about Malta's history from the perspective of social identity theory. I shall interview the subjects *with open-ended questions about the National Library as a valid cultural and heritage interpretation target*.

I would like you to suggest ten Maltese (10) members who are willing to participate in my questionnaire/interviews.

Preferably the members need to be age bracket from 20 to 60 years and mixed-gender (men and female), for example, five (5) men and five (5) women.

I hope you consent to the participation from your end as it will be interesting to see what can be done to promote our literacy in heritage.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. With your valuable input, I will understand how (one can make a historical library genuinely remarkable.

I am proposing invitation for an interview by email or by phone call. Tourist guides are going to be invited for the interview using the suggested method by the Malta Union of Tourist Guides. There is no compensation for participating, nor is there any known risk. Your privacy will be protected. I will ensure your anonymity in the data analysis and pseudonyms will be used to ensure confidentiality. Records will be held in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (Cap 586).

If you consent to participation, I will be in contact to arrange special time frames to do so.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. With your valuable input, I will be able to understand how the National Library can truly fulfill its obligations in relation to heritage interpretation.

If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at (christopher.cilia@its.edu.mt) or on my mobile, _____.

Sincerely,

Christopher

Christopher Cilia

M.A.H.I Student



Questionnaire addressed to Tour Guides.

Libraries are where a nation's tradition, uniqueness, and legitimacy are gathered. They collect, process, and safeguard cultural heritage assets. Their events and activities are open to people of all ages. In their contributions to the community, historical libraries (National Libraries) are proactive and interdisciplinary. Local history collections are critical stewards of cultural heritage, assisting communities in retaining their identity and sense of belonging.

Cultural tourism is "a phenomenon that, by definition, enables destinations with no year-round visitor traffic and no primary income based on tourism to build a tourism offering based on their cultural and creative endowments. The major objective of cultural tourism is to attract visitors and teach them about indigenous cultural values in order for them to better understand and respect them" (Dojinovi, Uki, 2005, p.10).

1. Is Malta's vast tangible and intangible cultural heritage effectively integrated into cultural tourism that attracts tourists from all over the world?

2. Does Malta's National Library contribute to cultural tourism by altering its local history collections?

3. Do you believe there is a lack of understanding of Malta's past and that it is not viewed as a tourism resource?

4. What would you propose the National Library incorporate and display in order to promote its local historical collections' materials?

5. Is heritage awareness still lacking in Malta, and if so, why?

6. Would you be interested in receiving training to become a specialist tour guide concentrating in the library's historical context, which dates all the way back to the Knights of Malta, and highlighting specific topics throughout the year to highlight cultural interpretations and representations?

7. Should the National Library establish a visitor's section to attract more tourists to such ancient libraries? (The Visits Department's role would be to educate tourists about the history of the location, not about the extensive book collection found.)

8. Do you believe that a strategic plan should be developed to elevate and exhibit art and architecture through heritage interpretation?

9. Does the National Library work to increase public knowledge of the bibliographic history it houses?

10. Do you intend to visit the National Library as part of your tour? if no state your reasons why.



Recruitment Letter / Consent: Library Professionals

15/10/2021

Dear _____,

My name is Christopher Cilia, and I follow a two (2) year Master's course in Heritage Interpretation, at the Institute of Tourism Studies (I.T.S). I am focusing on promoting our historical libraries, particularly on the National Library in Valletta and how it can assist tourists in developing a sense of place and learning more about Malta's history from the perspective of social identity theory. I shall interview the subjects *with open-ended questions about the National Library as a valid cultural and heritage interpretation target*.

I would like you to suggest subjects from the National Library management team, that is, Deputy Librarian in charge of the National Library, and Chief Executive Officer, and National Librarian.

I hope you consent to the participation from your end as it will be interesting to see what can be done to promote our literacy in heritage and to take an inside view of the situation.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. With your valuable input, I will understand how one can make a historical library genuinely remarkable.

I am proposing invitation for an interview by email or by phone call. Tourist guides are going to be invited for the interview using the suggested method by the Malta Union of Tourist Guides. There is no compensation for participating, nor is there any known risk. Your privacy will be protected. I will ensure your anonymity in the data analysis and pseudonyms will be used to ensure confidentiality. Records will be held in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (Cap 586).

If you consent to participation, I will be in contact to arrange special time frames to do so.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. With your valuable input, I will be able to understand how the National Library can truly fulfill its obligations in relation to heritage interpretation.

If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at (christopher.cilia@its.edu.mt) or on my mobile, _____.

Sincerely,
Christopher

Christopher Cilia
M.A.H.I Student



Questionnaire for Library Professionals

“Would the National Library, as a historical library, convey the historical development of the Maltese population through heritage interpretation?”

The national library is set in a historical building and its collection is part of Malta’s heritage. Is it frequently visited by visitors who are non-scholars but are interested solely in its historic background?

The national library itself is impressive set in a baroque setting. Does the site itself offer more information about the history of the building and its connections with the Maltese society?

We know that the National Library in normal circumstances organises themed exhibitions composed mostly of some of the national library holdings. Do you find that these exhibitions are really reflecting the development of the Maltese society?

If I were to ask you to find a link between the National Library and the development of Maltese society, what would you show me or what story would you tell me?

Does the site allow group visits?

How often do you have requests form tourist guides, or independent tourist groups to visit the national library itself?

Does the site have a visiting centre, or would you recommend an audio-visual show that includes a detailed story of the National Library's history and development?

Do you have a strategy in place or perhaps a strategy in the pipeline to market the National library as a historical library but also as a continuous representation of the Maltese society?

How would you intend to market the National Library to foreign visitors?

Appendix B – Interview Responses

Questionnaire addressed to Tour Guides.

Yellow Tourist Guide No.1

Green Tourist Guide No.2

Light Blue Tourist Guide No.3

Purple Tourist Guide No.4

Red Tourist Guide No.5

Blue Tourist Guide No.6

Colour Tourist Guide No.7

Grey Tourist Guide No.8

Colour Tourist Guide No.9

White Tourist Guide No.10

Libraries are where a nation's tradition, uniqueness, and legitimacy are gathered. They collect, process, and safeguard cultural heritage assets. Their events and activities are open to people of all ages. In their contributions to the community, historical libraries (National Libraries) are proactive and interdisciplinary. Local history collections are critical stewards of cultural heritage, assisting communities in retaining their identity and sense of belonging.

Cultural tourism is "a phenomenon that, by definition, enables destinations with no year-round visitor traffic and no primary income based on tourism to build a tourism offering based on their cultural and creative endowments. The major objective of cultural tourism is to attract visitors and teach them about indigenous cultural values in order for them to better understand and respect them" (Dojinovi, Uki, 2005, p.10).

1. Is Malta's vast tangible and intangible cultural heritage effectively integrated into cultural tourism that attracts tourists from all over the world?



We've made great steps forward with tangible heritage, but I think as a country we still lag behind when it comes to a strategic approach towards integrating intangible heritage in cultural tourism.



I Strongly believe a lot of work needs to be done to portray Malta more as a cultural destination than an island for sea and sun. In addition to that I do not believe that tangible, especially the intangible cultural heritage is being effectively integrated the tourism sector.



While Heritage Malta is doing a lot of work to re-open such forgotten sites such the Villa Guardamangia etc we have other cultural and historical sites in the countryside, that is being lost and forgotten. I believe more investment needs to be done.

Regarding the intangible aspects, Malta has so much to offer such festivals and knowledge or events about. The Maltese “ftira” tasting (U.N.E.S.C.O.’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Lis) yet few tourists are aware of it etc. “ghana” festivals, opera in Malta etc.



I think that the most popular cultural sites are integrated into cultural tourism. However, other less popular sites that are not but which are still very important and interesting. The wayside churches are rarely ever featured as a must visit site for example. These churches are full of stories, art and a place where one can interact with locals and get an authentic experience since these are not tourist oriented.



Tangible heritage is seen everywhere around the island and is easily made easily accessible in many heritage sites. Most of the excursions are based on heritage that is seen in museums, monuments, archaeological sites, churches, architecture, and cities. However, with regard to intangible heritage, Malta has still a long way to go.



When a cultural tourist feels the need to analyse something about Malta’s heritage/culture/society etc, one would obviously requires some secondary research to refer to. I don’t believe that this area is developed yet, but nowadays we have the internet and is a great source of information. An ‘Maltese Academia’ site would definitely help in this respect.



I believe that tourism is not taken seriously, that it is not organised appropriately, and that if it weren't for our rich history and pleasant climate, we would have nothing to offer potential tourists. Having said that, the government and other organisations do nothing to promote our tangible and intangible heritage, which is why permits to construct near U.N.E.S.C.O. world heritage sites have been in the headlines more than once.



I believe that although there is a significant potential for cultural tourism in Malta other types of tourism are still predominant in Malta therefore, I feel that we should work more on this sector by offering a true cultural experience.



I believe that this particular heritage is not utilised enough to increase the uniqueness of our archival treasures that we have in our possession.



I would say this is overall the case, yes, however tourists usually come with foreknowledge of only a couple of aspects of Maltese culture; namely they will have heard of the knights and sometimes of the unique Neolithic temples. Anything other than that is normally obscure to them so naturally they cannot have been attractors when they decided to book their trip. Intangible heritage like customs, folklore, tradition, legends etc. and some periods of our history (e.g. Roman) are not used as a pull factor for

potential visitors, however once tourists are here, these same things are often part of tour itineraries (e.g. catacombs, local food tours, feasts) or are commented on by tour guides.



A lot more can be done in this aspect. From my experience I have encountered a lot of tourists who were not aware of what Malta has to offer. Malta is still marketed as the sunny island and a lot of our cultural gems are not promoted enough.

2. Does Malta's National Library contribute to cultural tourism by altering its local history collections?



I answer with another question... how many tourists are encouraged to visit the National Library as part of their holiday? How many actually visit? What is the National Library doing to appeal to foreigners? The potential is there but I do not feel it is being exploited.



Yes, but could do more. It has a sense of only specific people who are studying can go there, looks boring.



I do not think that there is a big number of tourists who visit Malta in order to go to the National Library. However, this library hosts incredible collections which tell the story of Malta and which should be able to attract tourists. Unfortunately, I think that the national library is more targeted at scholars.



Malta's National Library has great potential to be altered into a heritage site and contribute to cultural tourism on the island. Its historical collections need not be altered but there is great need to alter their accessibility, at least digitally on a screen, and help visitors admire the displays and the architecture of the building.



I think all the information available at the Public Library should be accessible on line with all documents scanned and readable.



I had never heard of any specific events, not even on a national scale like Notte Bianca. I'm aware of it and its wealth, but it's buried beneath all the other delights Valletta has to offer.



It would surely attract a certain group of people who are interested in Malta's history and it would be a new concept.



Ideally there should be an ever-changing temporary exhibition, in order to keep the place alive, to advertise one's treasures and entice the local people to visit. Through a better understanding and appreciation of these treasures, it would be easier to increase awareness amongst a wider audience. Through these activities it will help to increase cultural tourism.



As a reference library, the National Library is immensely important to our continuous discovery of all that is Maltese and that has been Maltese throughout the ages. It provides an invaluable resource for historians, researchers, archivists, and authors to share with the public their discoveries, theories and perspectives. The publications that result from this are either the tools used by tour guides to unlock Malta for visitors or become ways for tourists to read up further on what has been touched upon during tours. So yes, the National Library contributes a lot to cultural tourism in this way.



A lot more can be done... we need to bring history back to life. We need to install pride in the new generation for everything Maltese. Schools are lacking in this.

3. Do you believe there is a lack of understanding of Malta's past and that it is not viewed as a tourism resource?



History in Malta is viewed as a tourism resource... both the authorities as well as people working in the tourism sector know that anything associated with history (museums, festivals, audio-visual shows, walking tours in historic areas) are an asset to tourism and can attract high-quality tourists. But what I think is lacking is an effective approach to present it and interpret it, especially to incorporate different facets and aspects. Focus tends to be only on the prehistoric 'temples and the Knights of St John... they are used as images to represent Malta's history even in touristic brochures. They are of course very important components but there is so much more to explore.



Yes, and lack of appreciation/ interest in investing, most probably investors does not see it as a profitable or financially sustainable business.



I think that many people lack knowledge about the history of the islands. I wish that more people are interested in the subject and try to learn more about it. However, I believe that many tourists come to Malta because of the country's past and its many colonisers. I do not know if the past is viewed as a tourism resource, but it should!



Malta's past is surely considered as a tourism resource, but we need to spread this industry to various other resources, out of the comfort zone and traditional attractions, and experiment on innovative ways how to attract the 21st century tourist.



Our history is so vast that it is impossible to remember it by heart. There is always new information that is developing, and communication is always import. Sometimes, people are aware late in life and particular interest of our history rings a bell. There should be academic reference point where one can satisfy this thirst.



Malta, I believe, works hard to advertise itself as a tourist destination, and the authorities are aware of this. We need to work together to provide Malta on additional exciting tourism opportunities. True, Valletta and Mdina are highlights, but there is so much more to learn about Malta and its people, to reconcile the past and present, and to present a vital island that has it all in terms of history, culinary tastes, passion, music, and religion. All of these characteristics define us as Maltese, and they are the things that tourists wish to see throughout their stay.



There is enough understanding of Malta's past and it is well advertised but it all depends on the tourist if he/she is visiting as a cultural visit or just to spend a short period of leisure.



I believe that this is so. Within the collections of the national Library (Bibliotheca) there are innumerable treasures which can easily form part of any cultural initiative. A section of the long hall can easily be made to welcome visitors, to browse through showcases some of these treasures, thus putting Malta's rich archival heritage on the cultural map. The lack of presentation by the authorities, helps in not reaching a wider audience.



No, on the contrary Malta's past is leveraged a lot for tourism. As mentioned in my first answer, the most unique and still visible aspects are widely advertised as attractors to visit the islands. By this I mean the fortified settlements and the temple ruins, both of which are gateways to explore Malta's golden age under the Hospitallers and mysterious prehistory. Tour guides also make vast and good use of local history to tell stories and elicit questions from visitors who are enchanted by the density of historical events that befell Malta. What is sometimes overlooked, and not by intent, is history for which there is nothing tangible to show. Unless tourists are standing in one of the few Roman ruins open to the public, or passing by a wayside chapel, or reading the one plaque that mentions Napoleon in Malta, trying to engage them with stories of Roman, medieval or French Malta is often futile. People need to see first before they can imagine. So it is only parts of our history that are not as explored as others, and that is often down to lack of visible remains.



Definitely! We need to steer away from mass tourism and target a more selected audience!

4. What would you propose the National Library incorporate and display in order to promote its local historical collections' materials?



Selected items that are related to Malta's calendar (ex: if Good Friday is approaching one can select something which relates to it, or if The Fashion Week is being organized, one might opt for something related to clothing). Current topics in the media can also provide inspiration such as the construction industry, women in society, elections, etc... The important thing is to select documents, books, items, etc which are relevant to the community now. And perhaps one can go beyond simply displaying and also organize workshops, seminars, thematic tours, etc...



It already in the library however for the tour I would be interested in showing the Incunabula to tourist especially the books bear Fra Sabba's signature as well as an autograph note by the historiographer Fra Giacomo Bosio



I think it would be interesting to display important collections along with explanations of the written information (especially if it is difficult) and also some objects related to that episode of Malta's history. For example, display original documents of when grandmaster Pinto prohibited anyone from wearing any attire with embellishments and display along with it an example of a costume from that time which used to be embroidered with gold and embellished with lace and other decorations. I believe that this would attract the people's attention.



An up-to-date website, more accessibility through social media and a large screen outside the reading room to display the most historic documents that lie hidden on the shelves.



They should have all their books on line for the benefit of humanity. This will instigate more interest in local history and will ultimately result in up level tourism. It happened to me when I studied Aristotle and had to visit the Acropolis to walk on the same footsteps of the Peripatetics.



First and foremost, they must publicise what distinguishes them from other national libraries around the world. It would be fantastic to have specialised themes throughout the year and to display the themes on a bigger platform to combine other points of interest while making the library an essential stop to experience these literary legacy up close and personal. To the best of my knowledge, it has never occurred to Valletta to collaborate with all of the museums, libraries, and historical sites to join together and display many things from various points of view true their specialised collections.



First of all it needs to implement a good promotional campaign and try to define a target audience which would make it easier to display a set up of categories in the library.



I dream of seeing the long hall separated by a divisionary transparent wall, so that beyond the wall there would be the place and quite for the researchers to continue with their work. The outer area of this section would be for displays. The displays need to be changed frequently – every two months. This would make the Bibliotheca a mecca for visitors (locals and tourists alike) adding more to the appreciation of this heritage.

The Library authorities can also organise midday talks about one or two items in the collections. These talks can easily be held in the same long hall and will be of not more than 25 minutes duration. This would also give the chance for locals to attend and enjoy.

The authorities should also try and publish an annual, in which they will highlight their collection, bring up news items about restoration and other relevant material.



I don't have many specific suggestions in mind for this. I think the deed of transfer of the islands from Charles V to the Hospitallers is already on display, which is one of the most important documents for the country. I am not sure whether the declaration of independence from the British is shown, or other documents related to Maltese

statehood. If it survives, the Napoleonic constitution written specifically for Malta would also be of great interest. Finally, a series of plans for the building of Valletta, even unrealised ones, would be very good.



I would say share more snippets from historical collections material on social media.

5. Is heritage awareness still lacking in Malta, and if so, why?



No, I don't think it is lacking. I just think it is diverted to one channel, namely that of tourism. We want to take care of a museum because it attracts tourist and so pumps money into the touristic economy. Often, I feel that locals do not value heritage for heritage's sake, for the opportunity of memory-making, representation and co-creation of meaning. We want to use it for the economy and for others but fail to appreciate the direct benefit it can provide us in other sectors.



Yes. Malta is ruining its skyline with all these building. I do not believe Valletta is treated as a U.N.E.S.C.O. site should be treated, important facades are covered with umbrellas and canopies, case in point the National library looks buried ...



I think that as a nation we should be prouder of what we have. I think that it is still lacking. Not everyone appreciates how rich our heritage is. Many prefer the contemporary culture to be more up-to-date.



Unfortunately, many Maltese still consider heritage education to be something targeted at children on their school benches and at tourists. Heritage sites are not yet considered as places for family educational and enjoyable outings, except during open days. Awareness regarding the protection of heritage has still a long way to go. More education on this subject is needed, especially in the field of intangible heritage.



A strategic plan includes a vision, mission, portfolio and plans. Some of these are lacking as advertisements for cultural tourism is not in its hay day in Malta.



Yes, given that teaching on this topic begins in elementary school, I believe that as a country, we fail to fall in love with our past, both tangible and intangible legacy. One of the most important problems is that we do not recognise tour guides or librarians as professionals. There is no one better than a tour guide to channel the narration of history through time, and no one better to guide students to use library facilities such as books and electronic formats than librarians. Unfortunately, these last two are not recognised in Malta.



Although nowadays there is more awareness when compared to the 80's I can't draw a line and give a definite yes or no because certain people just don't care about local heritage, and this is one of the reasons. It is not easy to try to persuade someone to appreciating our heritage when that someone just don't care!



It depends on which part of heritage one is talking about. There are always people and volunteer groups that try to control the destruction of buildings and to safeguard the village cores. At the same time, it is also difficult to try and point to something in particular why such lack of awareness and appreciation is still common amongst the local population. Awareness has increased, but it is still not enough.



There is a great lack of understanding and awareness towards archival treasures that we have. Malta is rich in its archives, being it held by the various civil and religious and private authorities. Yet, these archives are what buildings up the picture of past events, past stories and histories. These archives need to be better understood, appreciated, and made well-known to a wider audience.



On the level of the general population, I wouldn't say hopelessly unaware. If anything awareness around certain heritage is quite high in some circles, but this does not always extend to everybody as then demographics and socioeconomic factors come into play. When Open Days are organised by heritage institutions, people usually turn up in great numbers, often with children, which is encouraging. Public lectures tend to attract those who already have certain connections to heritage, for example via being active in the tourism industry or in heritage management or the arts sector. Melitensia publications seem to follow the same route, as in they are bought and read largely by that same bubble of people, like academics and history buffs. Some aspects of heritage remain unappreciated perhaps for the same reason I gave above in relation to local stories told to tourists, i.e. they aren't there to see and touch. Physical remains help immensely in stoking curiosity. As for intangible heritage, awareness around that seems to move according to trends, alternately being forgotten and then rediscovered. Examples of this would be old recipes or dances or music styles such as għana, or even children's stories, etc.



We have improved in the last couple of years, but still a long way to go. Why are children not taken on cultural/heritage school outings not being accompanied by tourist guides??

6. Would you be interested in receiving training to become a specialist tour guide concentrating in the library's historical context, which dates all the way back to the Knights of Malta, and highlighting specific topics throughout the year to highlight cultural interpretations and representations?



Yes, it would be a fantastic idea. At the moment with a young child I cannot really take up such training but I would surely be interested in the future.



Yes, I would be willing to do so as I feel like these initiatives are past overdue. Like any other tourist some wants to know the history of historical libraries.



Yes, I would be interested.



Surely yes. With the new legislation soon to be implemented about tourist guiding, there will be the opportunity for guides to advertise their own services directly. New fields and innovative niches in tourism are being created. Specializing in library tours would surely be of interest to guides who appreciate and are aware of the importance of documentary heritage.



Lifelong learning has always been on my schedule, so yes.



Yes, I'd love to have adequate training and lecture on such a fantastic topic that can be applicable to any other visit to Valletta. I also have the impression that there is a tourism niece who comes to learn about the National Library and is disappointed when they are met with a one-liner and told that they may take a café in the plaza. COVID-19 made everything more difficult, and the National Library now feels like an impenetrable fortress. Tourism generates cash for countries all around the world.



Brilliant idea! I will definitely go for it!



Personally, I do not have the time now. But I fully agree and support such an initiative because the guides would hear from the experts about the treasures and learn about the proper way of handling and talking about such treasures.



I don't think the National Library in its current form is suitable to be included in guided tours, mostly since visits to the interior would disrupt the required silence. Guiding is by nature a noisy business unfortunately. Of course the façade is a highlight and Republic Square is a popular stop where guides spend some minutes describing the history of the library and its continued importance to discovering Malta's past. If the obvious challenges to guiding inside could be overcome, I think it would be a popular addition to itineraries.



Definitely! I would be the first to enrol in such training!

7. Should the National Library establish a visitor's section to attract more tourists to such ancient libraries? (The Visits Department's role would be to educate tourists about the history of the location, not about the extensive book collection found.)



Yes, definitely. Both location and collections have potential.



Yes, and even specific opening hours for the tours, so it will not disturb the local user. Low fees can also be implemented, which can assist the upkeep of the library and its books. I can see this work even at night-time, on selected weekends with specific themes implemented. Obviously, it needs to be promoted accordingly.



Yes, I think this is a great idea. When one learns about a site, appreciation for the site increases. Therefore, this would help people appreciate ancient libraries more.



The National Library of Malta is in desperate need of a good facelift, protecting its character and its original architecture but in the meantime, sustainably preserving the building and the collections, both physically and digitally. In some countries, historic libraries have had a visitors' area added, including interpretative panels, screens, and interactive displays. The interpretation, apart from educating visitors about the history of the building, should also include bringing the visitors closer to the vast historical collection of books in the building. Other areas can include children's activities and other participatory activities for all ages and abilities. A cafeteria would be ideal where visitors can interact, and scholars can meet to discuss topics of common interest.



An idea that helps.



This is an excellent concept; I believe there are many tourists who want to experience Valletta through many pathways, and this will ensure that we exhibit more of our richness as a nation while keeping the national library front and centre. We must remember that the Knights who built it did so to demonstrate their extensive knowledge, and what are we doing about it now, so many years later? This is the appropriate time to create the National Library and locate devoted, qualified individuals with a vision to put what has to be done in place as quickly as feasible.



Sure, it is part of our history where a national treasure is being held and taken care of as it should be. Visitors should be allowed to visit this section to get a real feeling not just getting info while outside the building.



Yes, there should be dedicated staff to be able to communicate well with the visitors. Communicating well does not mean speaking in jargon, or in academic words, but rather make the visitor enjoy the visit and learn a bit more about this rich heritage. I have had experience at the Bibliotheca, where the person that was assigned to talk with the highly educated visitors, did not manage to look at the guests, but kept on talking to the times that he had on the table in front of him. Therefore, the people chosen to be talking with the guests, need to be trained to communicate well.



Yes, I think a visitor's section could benefit the Library and general awareness about what such libraries can still offer us, which is a lot. As for guided tours of the interior carried out by on-site staff, I also think that could work provided it is within the limits of the law

as regards who is allowed to guide. On this last point I am not sure if there is an exemption for site staff to guide without a tour guide licence from the MTA.



By all means! We are so lucky to have so much information and it is a pity that we are making full use of it and its potential.

8. Do you believe that a strategic plan should be developed to elevate and exhibit art and architecture through heritage interpretation?



Yes, for sure. A strategic plan that needs to be not only put together but also actually implemented, updated, and adjusted as times change and as community needs change.



Yes, definitely. It is very important to have it set up and running, and it needs to work in synergy with local artists and specific people who are targeting how to promote this through heritage interpretation.



Yes, I think this would be interesting.



Yes, heritage interpretation is desperately needed in this field. The National Library is a precious hidden treasure of the Maltese islands which needs to be exposed and protected.



It will certainly help.



Without a doubt, a strategic strategy is long overdue. There will be no foreseeable implementations if it is not present.



Yes a lot of work needs to go into it.



If there are plans of present day buildings, or other such like drawings, one can easily create modern computer generated images in order to enhance the experience.



No, I don't think these calls for a formal strategy since it seems to me that art and architecture (in particular) are already very appreciated in Malta. On the latter point, of course the problem of tearing down buildings to replace them with modern apartments is very relevant here, especially outside the confines of the fortified cities. I think the problem there, though, lies a lot less with lack of appreciation than with the influence of money on local politics. This is beyond the scope of this questionnaire so I will not elaborate. However, such projects do cause consistent outcry among the public, which is very dissatisfied with how things are progressing, despite sometimes not being able to halt the destruction. This indicates to me that there is in fact a high awareness of what is

being lost, and therefore (oddly and ironically enough) a high appreciation of historic architecture.



Yes! We seem to always go round in the same circles! Let's expand out knowledge!

9. Does the National Library work to increase public knowledge of the bibliographic history it houses?



Yes, I think so. I know that regular seminars are organized and during the pandemic even documentary videos were done.



I am not aware of the work it does, therefore it is difficult to answer.



To be honest, I do not really follow the Nation Library. However, I would like to hear more about its efforts and activities.



The National Library is carrying out important work in preserving and digitizing its documents. However, it lacks in public awareness. Many Maltese do not have any idea what it houses and what is being done to preserve its collections. Financial aid should be sought for more promotion and awareness raising in this regard.



This has to be done through various sources of advertising, Public Relations, Direct Marketing, Sales promotion and selling process, plus the extensive use of the Internet.



For those of us who are Facebook friends with their page, I would say yes because I am aware of various seminars that are organised, but I never see anything else advertised on social media, tv news segments, or anything else, so on a general note, many people are unaware of what is being done and see it as a "place for old books."



Although the national library works to reach the public there is always room for improvement.



Although I have visited the place with foreign guests, I do believe that the National Library should try and increase public knowledge with a wider audience.



I am not aware of any such work myself, however there may have been efforts on channels I don't follow, such as social media pages, etc. Irrespective of that, nothing has reached me so far.



I do not think so. I would love to see more passion, more engagement, more of what there is in there being shared with the public

10. Do you intend to visit the National Library as part of your tour? if no state your reasons why.



I have never taken groups to visit the National Library because I always thought the staff there would not be in a position to cater for them, (ie: due to the need for silence as well as because they would have other duties to see to – I have the impression they are understaffed). But should I have a group that specifically requests to visit I would not hesitate to contact the persons in charge. I think if the National Library staff will start welcoming tourists popping in, they should advertise it and do some sort of outreach with guides and agencies. It doesn't have to be all the time... perhaps a set time and date for tours (say a library tour every Monday @ 3pm, Wednesday @ 9am and every Friday @ 11am) would work better, channelling efforts and making distribution of work easier.



Yes, stops are always done Infront of the national library to explain its history, façade and the square, if time permits or a small private tour and tourist are interested, I would go inside.



Irarely work in Malta (as I am Gozo based), but when I did, I never took them to the library since this was never on their programme and the programme is always very tight. It also depends on the type of persons you have and if they are interested. Any activities/ exhibitions going on that are interesting would also be an attracting factor.



Until before COVID-19, I used to recommend a visit to the National Library to my guests during their free time in Valletta, only if they wished. I used to tell them that the entrance is free, and it would be worthwhile. Many of them used to be impressed by the building per se and by the collection. However, with the state that the library is in at present, I would not recommend it as part of the tour. Guests enter only if they have interest in the subject. If, in the future, it would be restored and made accessible as a heritage site, a visit to the National Library would surely add value to a visit to the capital city of Malta. It would also be ideal for tourists who have repeatedly visited Malta and Valletta, to have another choice added to their itinerary.



I paid a few visits to the National Library in my life. But the point is that first it has to be to my requirements and needs and also it has to be beneficial to my research. If both criteria are met, I will visit.



If a group of visitors approaches me, I will undoubtedly accept, but I will be hesitant because I fear the experience will fall short of their expectations. The National Library is only utilised for research by individuals, not as a cultural centre where people may

interact and have coffee. It's not even near to a museum experience, which worries me because willing tourists will have a negative experience on this visit.



Yes. Won't plan a tour without a visit to the national library.



Yes, I would not mind visiting the Bibliotheca when with like-minded visitors. I would never think of taking a large group, as that would not be conducive to a properly visit. But visiting with a small group, and highly interested people, is a must.



Not at the moment. As stated in previous answers, there are logistical considerations which to me seem unsurmountable at the moment. However, there may be solutions to these that I am not aware of, such as after-hours visits where noise would not be an issue. Apart from that, I am not currently in charge of my own itineraries but follow what agencies set out for me, and the Library interior has never been part of the route. That said, when I have the opportunity and can see that tourists might be interested, I do recommend they visit on their own.



Normally tours are time limited. Unless it is a specialized tour, I do not really envision this happening.

Questionnaire for Library Professionals

“Would the National Library, as a historical library, convey the historical development of the Maltese population through heritage interpretation?”

The national library is set in a historical building and its collection is part of Malta's heritage. Is it frequently visited by visitors who are non-scholars but are interested solely in its historic background?

The National Library is primarily a reference and research library, thus an academic institution first and foremost, however visits by non-researchers of all ages are encouraged. Alas, the building itself is now facing problems of space shortage and therefore certain limits have to be applied on the number of visitors which can visit at anyone go without causing disruption to researchers present as the main Reading Hall needs to be shared by all; be they researchers, visitors, students and/or film crews or photographers who may be working on assignments in the same space. Prior to the pandemic visits had hit a record high and visitors were mainly composed of tourists and organised group visits.

The national library itself is impressive set in a baroque setting. Does the site itself offer more information about the history of the building and its connections with the Maltese society?

Organized visits to the library are guided by trained members of staff inside the Reading Room. Visitors are given a brief history of the building and shown some important items from our collections. In 2021, the National Library of Malta was allocated a COVID-19 Relief Fund by CENL to create physical and digital screens explaining the different holdings and collections housed at the National Library so that casual visitors and students alike can get a more in depth and illustrated look at the Bibliotheca and its riches without endangering the collections themselves.

We know that the National Library in normal circumstances organises themed exhibitions composed mostly of some of the national library holdings. Do you find that these exhibitions are really reflecting the development of the Maltese society?

It very much depends on the subject of the exhibition. Our exhibitions are usually related to a strictly historical context or collection (e.g. The Archives of the Order of St John, Three centuries of Russo-Maltese relations, Bibles from the National Library collection, The Great Siege of 1565, The Building of Valletta) That said, we do hold a yearly educational exhibition relating to Malta in collaboration with the Department of Maltese and which reflects the school curriculum, in which we exhibit original works by Maltese authors for the students to experience first-hand. Moreover, an interesting exhibition about Maltese sunetti (planned for 2020 but postponed due to the pandemic) is underway and that relates directly to a social practice and tradition which has now changed considerably and in some parts of Malta is also extinct.

If I were to ask you to find a link between the National Library and the development of Maltese society, what would you show me or what story would you tell me?

There is an interesting item in our collection consisting of an album of watercolours by Vincenzo Fenech depicting Maltese costumes showing the whole spectrum of Maltese society at the end of the 18th century, from the Grand Master to the beggars. Of course, there is also the entire collection of newspapers printed in Malta as of 1798 which reflect the development of Maltese society.

Does the site allow group visits?

Group visits (excluding students' visits) are currently allowed strictly by appointment and for limited numbers as explained above.

How often do you have requests from tourist guides, or independent tourist groups to visit the national library itself?

We get a lot of these requests. We work closely with Exclusively Malta group which caters for culturally inclined tourists. Before the pandemic, we used to have an average of 20 visits per year organized by this group. Last year, given the Covid situation, we understandably only had one visit.

Does the site have a visiting centre, or would you recommend an audio-visual show that includes a detailed story of the National Library's history and development?

No, there is no visitors centre for reasons of space explained above. That said we are working to extend the building so as to hopefully one day be in a position to build one so as to house temporary exhibits as well as an audio-visual show about the National Library.

Do you have a strategy in place or perhaps a strategy in the pipeline to market the National library as a historical library but also as a continuous representation of the Maltese society?

There is a project on paper regarding the relocation of spaces in the library with a view also to acquiring adjoining buildings so that the collections may be housed in these areas, thus freeing up space on the current premises. However, such projects require the collaboration of other government entities and private persons, apart from enormous funds to cover the costs of restructuring. With such space freed up we would be able to create a more fitting experience for visitors of all inclinations. The research being conducted at the moment vis a vis the history of the National Library tackles it from different angles and therefore its collections cannot be studied outside of the context in which they came to be. Same goes for the study of the building itself.

Having said that, there is a plan for a more interactive and accessible National Library. Construction works were initiated to create a step free entrance, local library, souvenir shop, scheduled professional guided visits and more facilities to eventually attract more walk-in visitors.

How would you intend to market the National Library to foreign visitors?

We intend to keep working closely with long standing collaborators such as MTA and contacts in the Film Industry which so far have brought us in touch with great foreign and local promotional opportunities. Our social media platforms are also followed by a wide foreign follower-base and queries by a varied clientele (looking to visit, organise events etc) also come through to us via those promotional platforms.