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**MuSA**  
museum sector alliance

## **W4.1.2.B OPEN THINKING FOR MUSEUMS**

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Abstract:	This learning object presents to the learners the open thinking approach for creating innovations for museums. It details also the open innovation approach, as well as initiatives related to it.
Keywords:	Open thinking, open innovation, crowdsourcing, open data, linked open data.



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## Aim and objectives

This learning object introduces the learners into the open thinking approach for innovation in museums.

The main learning objectives of this object are to:

- Describe Open Thinking
- Describe Open Innovation and its types
- Describe initiatives supporting it, like the crowdsourcing, open data and linked open data

## Learning outcomes

After reading and understanding this text, the learner will be able to:

- Define Open Thinking for museum innovation
- Define Open Innovation for museums
- Identify how crowdsourcing can be used from museums
- Define Open Data
- Identify Linked Open Data

## Keywords

Open thinking, open innovation, crowdsourcing, open data, linked open data.



## Contents

1.	Introduction .....	6
2.	Open Thinking .....	6
3.	Open Innovation .....	7
a.	Types of open innovation .....	7
b.	Crowdsourcing supporting open innovation.....	8
c.	Open Data and Linked Open Data .....	9



## 1. Introduction

Open thinking considers a way of thinking “out of the box”, that facilitates innovating. It enables the person to adopt solutions not already used to solve existing problems.

## 2. Open Thinking

According to Dan Pontefract, “Open Thinking” is a cyclical process in which creativity is encouraged, criticism leads to better decisions, and thoughtful action delivers positive and sustainable results. It is a return to balance between the three components of productive thought: dreaming, deciding, and doing. The major block to Open Thinking is influenced by two factors: reflection and action. These factors must be balanced for someone to become an Open Thinker<sup>1</sup>.

An organisation may create the appropriate conditions to support open thinking if it<sup>2</sup>,

- encourages a collaborative culture,
- provides time to its employees to creatively think about new ideas and concepts,
- support employees to make decisions,
- respects the foreseen working hours and tries to improve results without overtime work,
- continuously asks the employees’ opinion on dreams and ideas,
- run think tanks.

Open thinking is similar – or even identical – to creative thinking, or “thinking outside of the box”. Creative thinking people are analytical, open-minded, problem-solvers, organised and are able to communicate their ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.marketingjournal.org/open-to-think-an-interview-with-dan-pontefract/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danpontefract/2017/04/23/6-tips-to-bring-back-open-thinking/#688f68c94758>



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The learner should watch the video of Giovanni Corazza at TEDxRoma on Creative Thinking – How to Get Out of the Box and Generate ideas, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEusrD8g-dM> (13,38 minutes)

### 3. Open Innovation

Open Innovation for organisations means to use external ideas, solutions, methodologies and technologies, instead of building upon only internal innovations. We saw earlier that Open Innovation is among the three key pillars of the Museum Innovation Model. In this section, we proceed further analyzing the term, as it is strongly related to Open Thinking. And this, in all different innovation areas for museums, i.e. the product innovation, the process innovation, the organisational innovation, and the marketing innovation.

Hjalmarsson (2017) identifies three different types of open innovation. Inside-out, outside-in, and coupled innovation. He also identifies a series of models for open innovation, among which crowdsourcing seems to be the most prevalent application of open innovation for museums.

#### a. Types of open innovation

Innovations can be found in products and processes of an organisation. If they emerge internally, building on existing products / processes, with the contribution of internal stakeholders, they are entitled “closed innovations”. The main problem here is that, the organisation and its people are “trapped inside the box”, losing the chance to innovate taking advantage of the various ideas built externally. In this regard, Chesbrough (2006) defined open innovation as “a paradigm that assumes that firms can and should use external ideas, as well as internal ideas and internal and external paths to market, as the firms look to advance their technology”.

Three types of open innovation are identified; inside-out, outside-in, and coupled innovation. In the first case, the organisation allows external stakeholders to access its ideas and resources. For example, making available the code of a software it developed, as an open source software. In the second case, the organization's doors open to allow external ideas, solutions, methodologies and technologies, to get in. This can be implemented through consultation events. Coupled innovation is a mix of the previous two approaches, implemented typically through joint projects.

### b. Crowdsourcing supporting open innovation

Crowdsourcing is defined as the “the practice of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people and especially from the online community rather than from traditional employees or suppliers” (Source: Merriam-Webster dictionary). It is the practice of engaging a ‘crowd’ or group for a common goal — often innovation, problem solving, or efficiency. It is empowered by new technologies, social media and web 2.0. Crowdsourcing can take place on many different levels and across various industries<sup>3</sup>. The keyword behind that is “co-creation”.

This model is also used by museums. For example, Corbeil et al (2017) presented a case initiated by the Canada Science and Technology Museums Corporation (CSTMC) – a group of three museums – that built a platform enabling Canadians to share stories of innovation through user-generated content. CSTMC is among the pioneers of “Openness” in museums, as it has released its collection data as open data, and it has launched the Open Heritage portal.

The [9/11 Memorial Museum](#) includes thousands of oral histories of people that were contributed through crowdsourcing.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://crowdsourcingweek.com/what-is-crowdsourcing/>



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[USEUM](#), is the first virtual crowd-sourced art museum. It currently exhibits 84.000 paintings, illustrations and drawings by 8.000 famous artists of the past and almost 2.000 participant contemporary artists from 106 countries around the world. Interestingly, USEUM uses particular gamification characteristics in order to empower the intrinsic motivation of contributors.

### c. Open Data and Linked Open Data

Open data are data that anyone can access, use and share. Governments, businesses and individuals can use open data to bring about social, economic and environmental benefits<sup>4</sup>.

You may learn more about open data watching the following video of Dr. David Tarrant

<https://www.europeandataportal.eu/elearning/en/module1/#/id/co-01> (2,56 minutes)

Museums, libraries and archives innovate nowadays using Linked Open Data, as they “allow them to publish and share their data in a way that seamlessly offers possibilities for data re-use, data enrichment and annotation, increasing the visibility of collections and data for much wider audiences”<sup>5</sup>. Linked Open Data are characterized by the properties of being connected through the web following particular standards, and using open licenses.

The objective of Linked Open Data is to enable data from different resources to be interconnected and retrieved, therefore making them more accessible.

Europeana, the EU digital platform for cultural heritage, currently shares all its metadata as Linked Open Data. You may understand better the significance of Linked Open Data watching the following

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.europeandataportal.eu/elearning/en/module1/#/id/co-01>

<sup>5</sup> <https://pro.europeana.eu/page/issue-7-lodlam>



video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uju4wT9uBIA> (3,42 minutes).

### **References and further readings**

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