



Joint UNESCO and ITU  
Global Symposium on Promoting the Multilingual Internet



# **IDN and Cultural Institutions**

Cary Karp  
President and CEO,  
Museum Domain Management Association

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## IDN and Cultural Institutions



Archives, libraries, and museums frequently have complex mandates that extend well beyond popular notions of their institutional roles.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



Specific agendas vary in terms of their:

- Cultural origin
  - o local
  - o distant
- Documentary focus
  - o synchronic
  - o diachronic



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



Cultural institutions also:

- participate in national and international collaborative initiatives,
- are expert referees in the preparation of national policies and legislation, and may be maintenance agencies for component instruments.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



- o It can be difficult to map this multivariate activity into the Internet name space along its conventional administrative boundaries.
- o Cultural communities — particularly those based on language — often span geopolitical borders.
- o International action may have highly specific disciplinary focus.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



There is a strong interdependence between the representation of a cultural community in institutional action, and the status of that community in cultural planning.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



- o Language diversity is a pervasive component of this process.
- o Means for reflecting it in the content space are well understood by cultural institutions.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



The availability of a corresponding mechanism for highlighting (rather than obscuring) the linguistic identity of material placed in the resulting digital repositories significantly enhances their value.





## IDN and Cultural Institutions



IDN can therefore provide cultural institutions with powerful means for realizing one of the key components of their mission.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



It is not altogether clear how this potential can be realized if the internationalization of the content and identifier spaces on the Internet are treated solely as attributes of network operation and development, and not also as components of mainstream language planning.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



The resulting strain can be illustrated in both cultural and technical perspectives by recent directives about the formal status of the six official written languages of Sweden in digital contexts, and further national action in support of cultural diversity.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



In addition to Swedish itself (which has no legal standing as the national language!) the country's official languages are:

- Finnish
- Meänkieli
- Romani
- Sami
- Yiddish



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



The interests of the cultural communities in which these languages originate, as well as other immigrant communities using additional languages, are currently the focus of a national year dedicated to cultural diversity.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



“The purpose of the Year of Multiculture 2006 is to achieve a lasting increase in the opportunities for everyone living in Sweden to participate in cultural life and to create an interplay between various cultural traditions. The purpose is also to create incentives for publicly financed cultural activities to clearly reflect and incorporate the ethnic and cultural diversity that exists in Sweden today.”



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



- o Cultural institutions are obligated to plan and conduct special activity within this framework.
- o They are also bound by the terms of its administrative counterpart.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



“This document gives guidelines for a character set – with certain accompanying obligations – containing the letters and other characters that governmental agencies must be able to use for writing personal names, corporate names and geographic names for computerized processing.”

*Character set guidelines for writing names  
in Swedish electronic administration*

Date 2005-10-12 Dnr 2004/15-3





## IDN and Cultural Institutions



Although not required to participate in the cultural action, the Internet Infrastructure Foundation of Sweden, the organization responsible for the administration of the national top-level domain — .se — does need to address the consequences of the directive regarding character sets in electronic administration.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



This requires a massive increase in support for extensions to the Latin alphabet, from the three additional letters needed for the Swedish language itself:

Å Ä Ö

and the additional two letters traditionally included for names:

É Ü



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



The prescribed expanded repertoire includes every plain and decorated Latin character that can be represented as a single Unicode code point, explicitly providing full support for names in all languages that are written with them. (Vietnamese is the sole case where limited exception may be permitted.)



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



Meanwhile over on the other side of Stockholm, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, which hosts the administrative facilities for the international top-level domain — .museum — is dealing both with the terms of the character set directive and planning special action for the Year of Multiculture 2006.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



The thoroughly pan-national aspect of both endeavors suggest that distinctions between national and international TLDs, wherever else they might be relevant, do not have much significance here.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



افغانستان.icom.museum	الجزائر.icom.museum	österreich.icom.museum
বাংলাদেশ.icom.museum	беларусь.icom.museum	belgië.icom.museum
българия.icom.museum	تشاد.icom.museum	中国.icom.museum
القمر.icom.museum	кутпроç.icom.museum	مصر.icom.museum
ελλάδα.icom.museum	ísland.icom.museum	भारत.icom.museum
ایران.icom.museum	éire.icom.museum	אִיִקוֹ"ם.ישראל.icom.museum
日本.icom.museum	الأردن.icom.museum	қазақстан.icom.museum
한국.icom.museum	кыргызстан.icom.museum	ລາວ.icom.museum
لبنان.icom.museum	македонија.icom.museum	موريتانيا.icom.museum
méxico.icom.museum	монголулс.icom.museum	المغرب.icom.museum
नेपाल.icom.museum	عمان.icom.museum	قطر.icom.museum
românia.icom.museum	россия.иком.museum	இலங்கை.icom.museum
españa.icom.museum	ไทย.icom.museum	تونس.icom.museum
türkiye.icom.museum	украина.icom.museum	việtnam.icom.museum
českárepublika.icom.museum	magyarország.icom.museum	србијаицрнагора.иком.museum



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



The broader internationalization of the Swedish national name space can readily be seen as a valuable action in recognition of the country's multicultural population. The support of a cultural institution in that action can do little but enhance that value.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



Conversely, cultural institutions are likely to benefit from the relevance of their action being conveyed via this new channel into contexts where industrial aspects of the Internet are addressed.





## IDN and Cultural Institutions



Although the immediate objective of this collaboration is local, it is also being conducted with the anticipation of it furthering the recognition of the Internet as a cultural realm in its own right, requiring the same level of planning that is given to the educational, governmental, and social domains.



## IDN and Cultural Institutions



<http://about.museum/>

<http://iis.se/>

<http://mangkulturare.se>

[ck@nic.museum](mailto:ck@nic.museum)