IASIA 2026 CONFERENCE

12-16 October Athens, Greece

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ΕΚΔΔΑ NATIONAL CENTRE for PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Rethinking Governance for a Changing World

WORKING GROUP VI · PUBLIC SECTOR GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Innovation Ecosystems in Museums and Cultural Organizations

Lessons for Public Governance

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One public service, many contributors, no single line of command



- Most contributors do not report to the same manager.
- Each depends on the others.
- If one part fails, the service fails.

THE GAP

Lesson-drawing and policy transfer research mostly studies how ministries, agencies and other public bodies learn from one another. Public-purpose organizations in other fields face the same coordination problem.

Why museums and cultural organizations?

1

Public purpose

Public money and public accountability, like ministries and public agencies.

2

They coordinate diverse actors

Artists, researchers, technology partners, communities and funders around shared projects.

3

Their work is well documented

Strategies, experiments and even discontinuations are on the public record.

The aim is to identify transferable mechanisms. Museums are not presented as better than ministries or public agencies.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1 How do these organizations bring together actors, resources and infrastructure?

RQ2 Which governance capabilities appear again and again across the cases?

RQ3 Under what conditions can public administration adapt those capabilities, and with what risks?

An integrated theoretical framework

1

Innovation ecosystems

Adner (2006, 2017); Jacobides et al. (2018); Dhanaraj & Parkhe (2006)

Do actors depend on one another for a shared value proposition, and how is this orchestrated?

2

Collaborative governance and participation

Ansell & Gash (2008); Emerson et al. (2012); Arnstein (1969)

Who participates, at which stage, with what authority and through which accountability mechanism?

3

Public value

Moore (1995); Bryson et al. (2014)

What benefit is produced, for whom, under legitimate rules, and can it be sustained?

4

Lesson-drawing and policy transfer

Rose (1991); Dolowitz & Marsh (2000)

Which mechanism can be adapted elsewhere, under which conditions, and at what risk?

Identifies interdependence → **Explains coordination and participation** → **Evaluates purpose and legitimacy** → **Tests adaptability and risk**

Five deliberately different cases



NEW INC

New Museum, New York



Rijksmuseum

Amsterdam



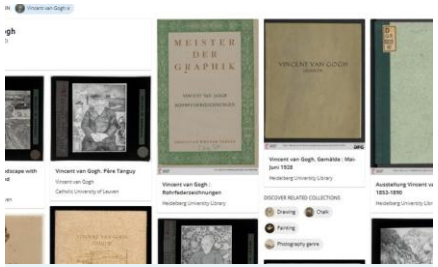
ZKM

Karlsruhe



Cooper Hewitt

Smithsonian, New York



Europeana

European network

SELECTION CRITERIA. EACH CASE HAD

1. **A public or cultural mission**
2. **Different kinds of actors**
3. **A sustained or clearly bounded arrangement**
4. **Enough documentation to examine its governance**

A qualitative comparative multiple-case study (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2018), with cases selected for maximum variation.

CASE 1 OF 5

NEW INC

New Museum, New York

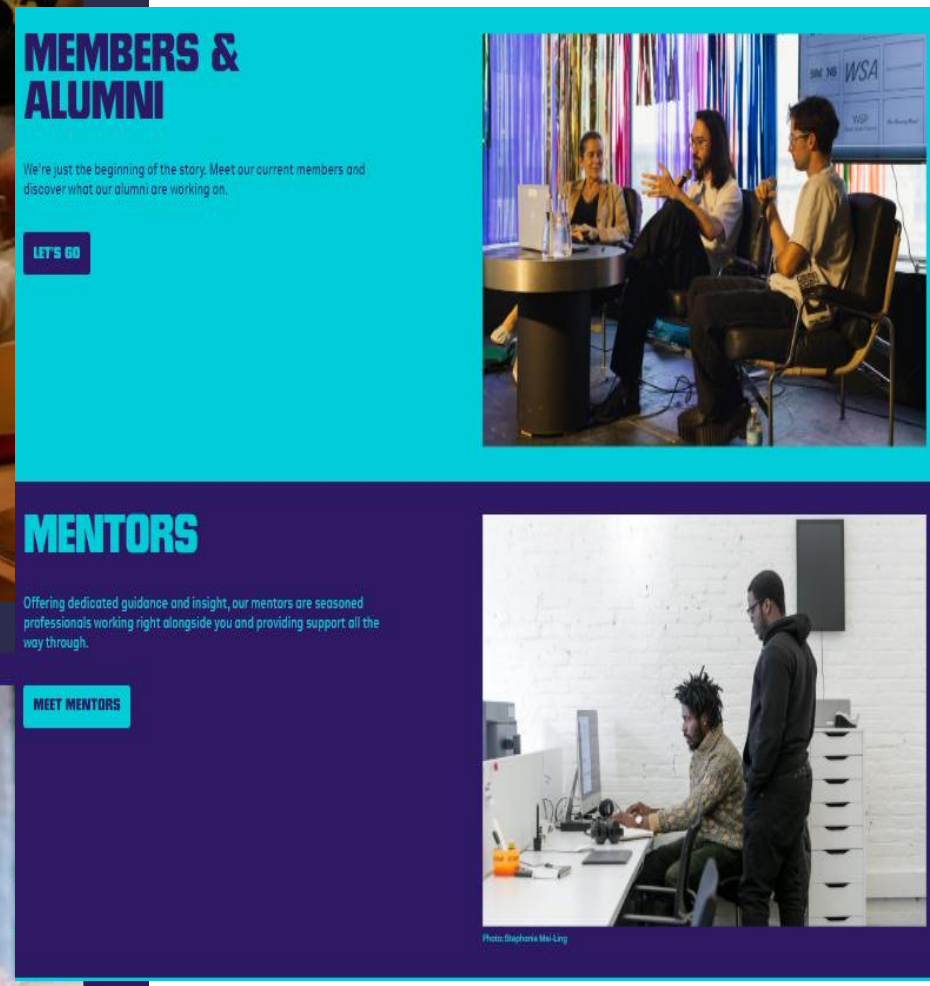
Museum-affiliated incubator, cohorts and mentor network

ROLE IN THE COMPARISON

Cohort-based orchestration and creative capacity building

Screenshots, www.newmuseum.org/new-inc, accessed October 2026.





CASE 2 OF 5

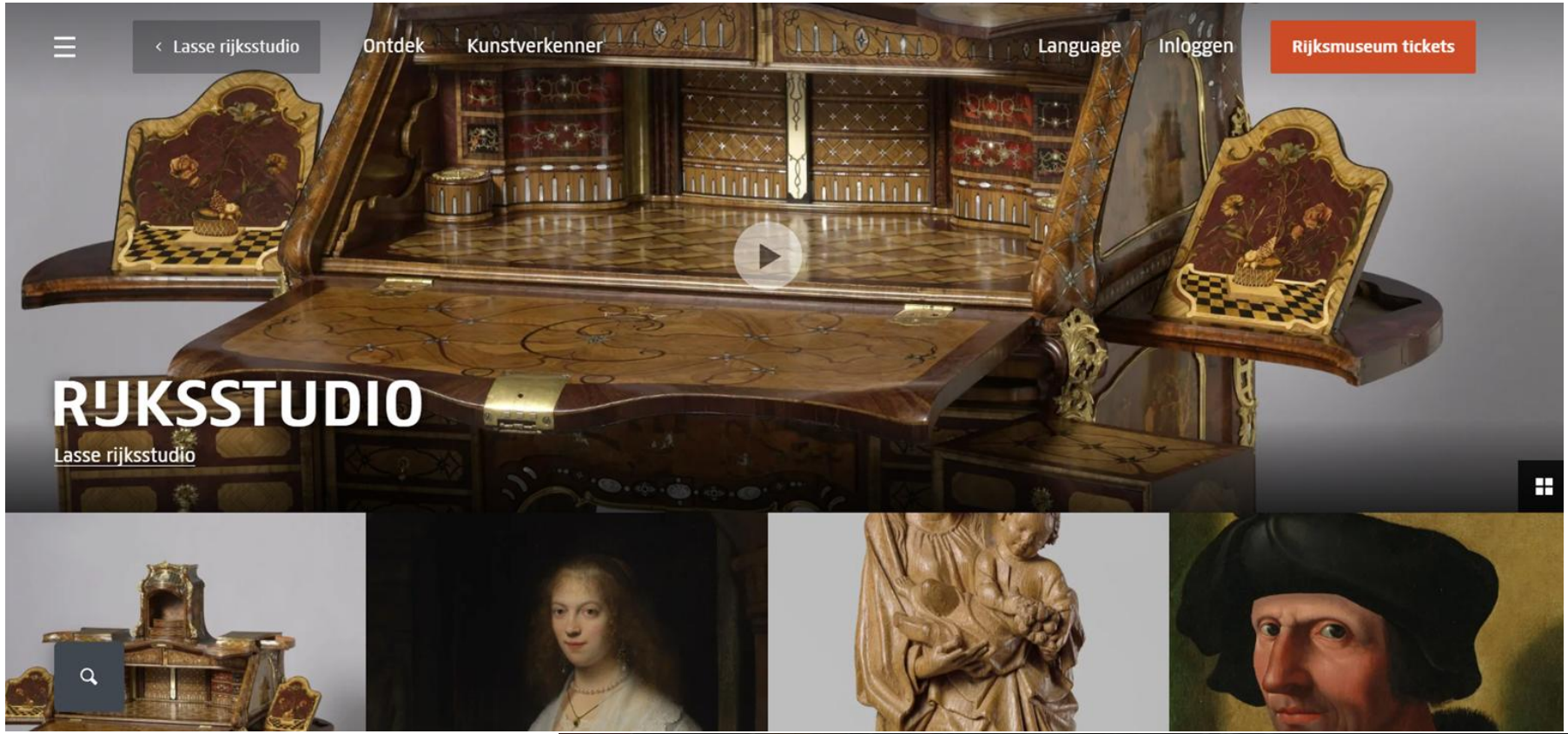
Rijksmuseum

Amsterdam

Rijksstudio and Collection Online open collection infrastructure

ROLE IN THE COMPARISON

Openness, reuse, data stewardship and institutional learning





Screenshots, www.rijksmuseum.nl/en, accessed October 2026.

CASE 3 OF 5

ZKM

Karlsruhe

Integration of research, production, preservation and public programming

ROLE IN THE COMPARISON

Boundary spanning and interdisciplinary knowledge production

ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe

/// Research /// Current Projects /// A Story that Never Ends – Restoration and Mediation of Selected Media Artworks at the ZKM

2025 - 2026

A Story that Never Ends – Restoration and Mediation of Selected Media Artworks at the ZKM

A joint project by ZKM and the Wüstenrot Foundation



Screenshot, zkm.de/en/projects, accessed October 2026.

CASE 4 OF 5

Cooper Hewitt

Smithsonian, New York

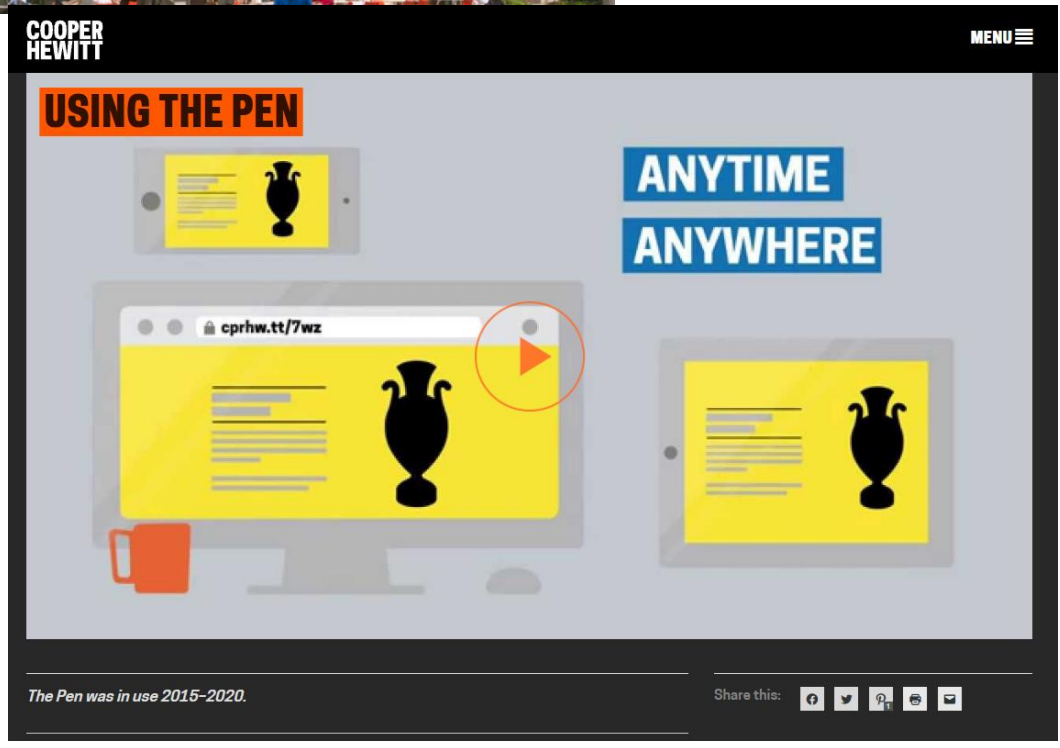
Pen-centered interactive visitor system and the Interaction Lab

ROLE IN THE COMPARISON

Participatory service design, lifecycle learning and discontinuation







Screenshots, www.cooperhewitt.org, accessed October 2026.

CASE 5 OF 5

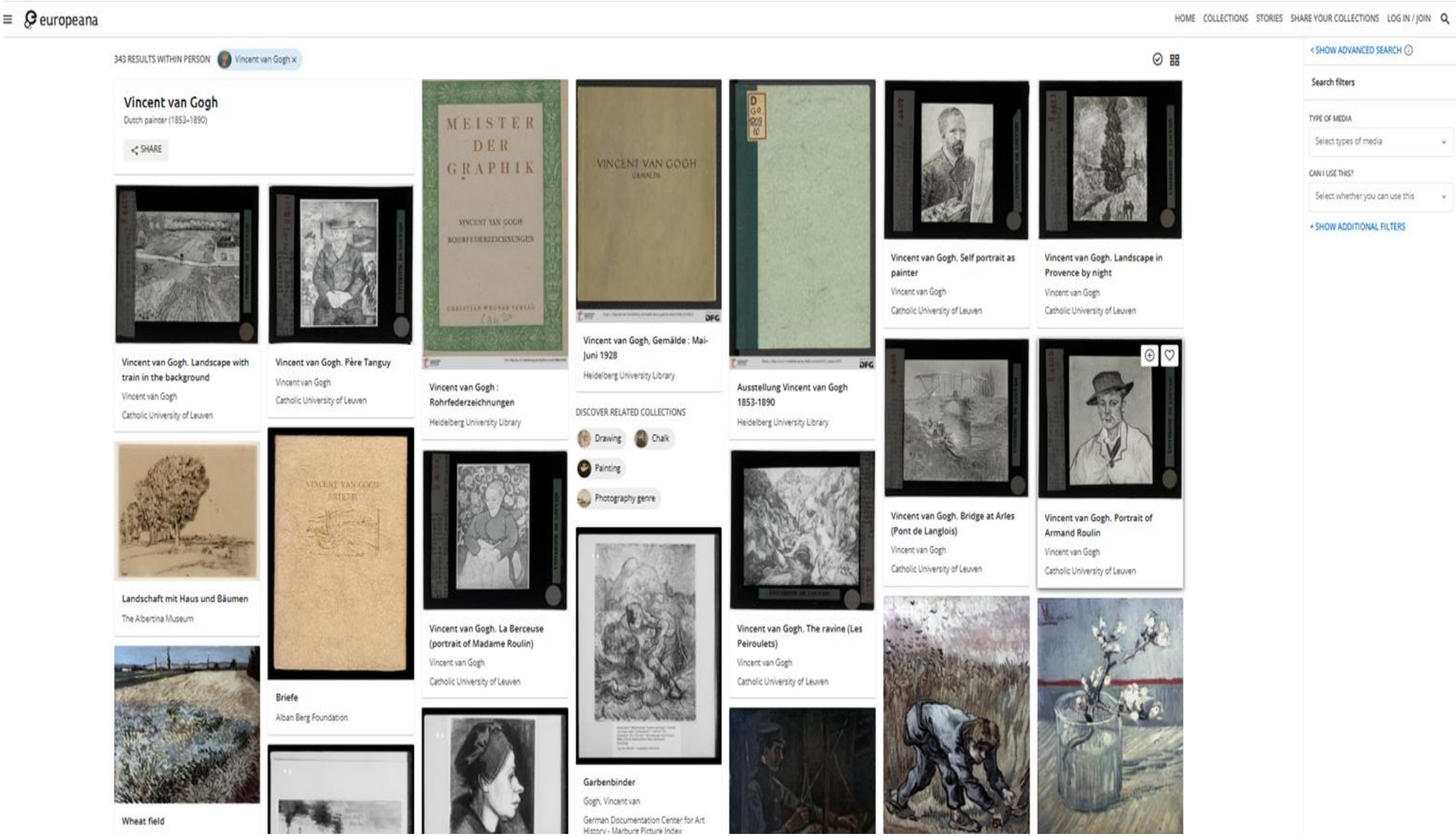
Europeana

European network

Distributed data infrastructure, association, aggregators and communities

ROLE IN THE COMPARISON

Standards-based and participatory network governance



Screenshot, www.europeana.eu, accessed October 2026.

How the cases were analyzed

SIX QUESTIONS ASKED OF EVERY CASE

1. What was the shared purpose?
2. Who contributed which resources?
3. How was their work coordinated?
4. How did experimentation and learning occur?
5. What could participants influence?
6. What benefits were claimed, and what constraints were documented?

Evidence from documentary sources. Each pattern was tested against evidence that could weaken it.

ANCHOR CASE PLUS FOUR



Each finding starts with the case where it is most visible. The other four confirm it, show how it varies, or show where it stops working.

TWO KEY TERMS

Governance capability. An organization's ability to perform a recurring task, such as coordinating partners or using evidence to revise an innovation.

Mechanism. The concrete arrangement through which that task happens, such as mentoring, shared data standards or a review process.

Deliberate coordination transforms a network into an innovation ecosystem

ANCHOR CASE · NEW INC

1 **Selection** a purposeful annual cohort

↓

2 **Mentoring** thematic tracks and mentors

↓

3 **Brokerage** links to curators, funders and investors

Members stay autonomous. The program shapes who meets whom.

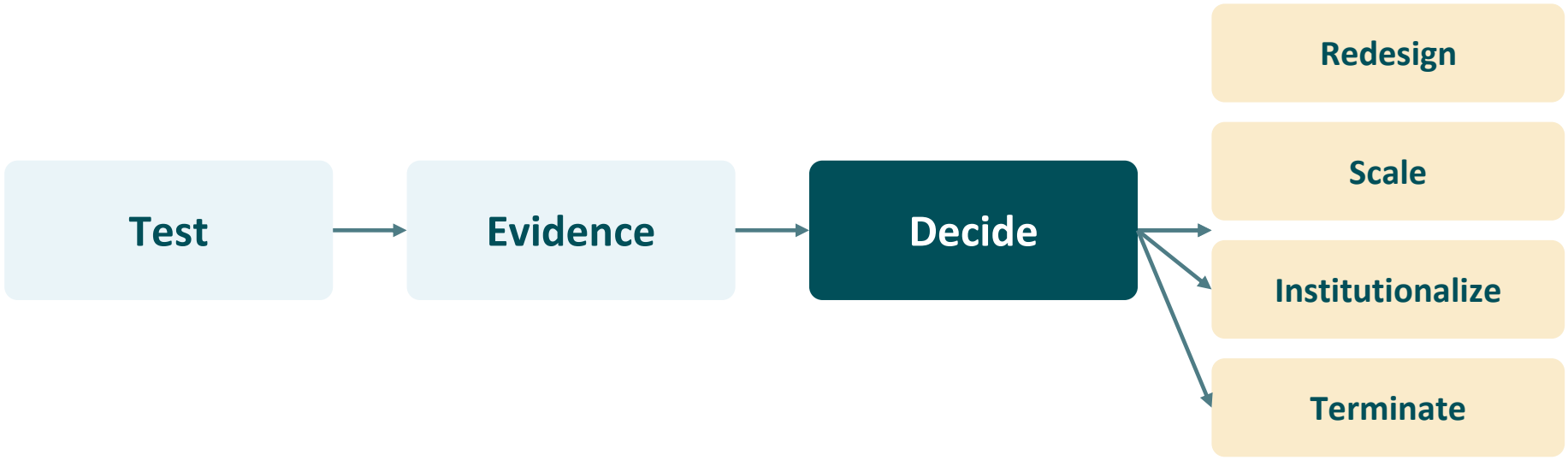
ACROSS THE CASES

Orchestration is not one model. Rights policy and stewardship at the Rijksmuseum. Standards and an elected association at Europeana. At Cooper Hewitt, tight coupling created rigidity.

FOR PUBLIC MANAGERS

Orchestration enables relations, but it is also power over who participates. That power should be transparent and accountable.

Experimentation requires lifecycle learning



ANCHOR CASE

Cooper Hewitt's Pen. Tight coupling made change hard. The Interaction Lab followed, and the Pen was discontinued.

A PILOT GENERATES GOVERNANCE LEARNING ONLY WHEN

1. Decision criteria are specified
2. Evidence can challenge prior investment
3. Responsible actors can alter or end it

Open knowledge is governed infrastructure

WHAT OPENNESS REQUIRES

Rights | Standards | Data quality | Interfaces | Skills | **Stewardship**

ANCHOR CASE · RIJKSMUSEUM

First
Hesitation and a hybrid paid and free model

Then
Unrestricted release of high-quality images

2024
Collection Online, built on linked open data

Europeana confirms the mechanism at European scale through its data model, rights frameworks and APIs.

FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Openness redistributes governance rather than removing it. Budget for documentation, interoperability, accessibility and long-term custodianship.

CAUTION

Digital availability alone does not guarantee equitable discovery, meaningful reuse or public value.

Participation varies in depth and remains asymmetrical

Less influence

More influence



Attend or be consulted

Create or co-produce

Be represented

Share governance

Cooper Hewitt

Experiential agency. Visitors collect and create within a designed service.

Europeana

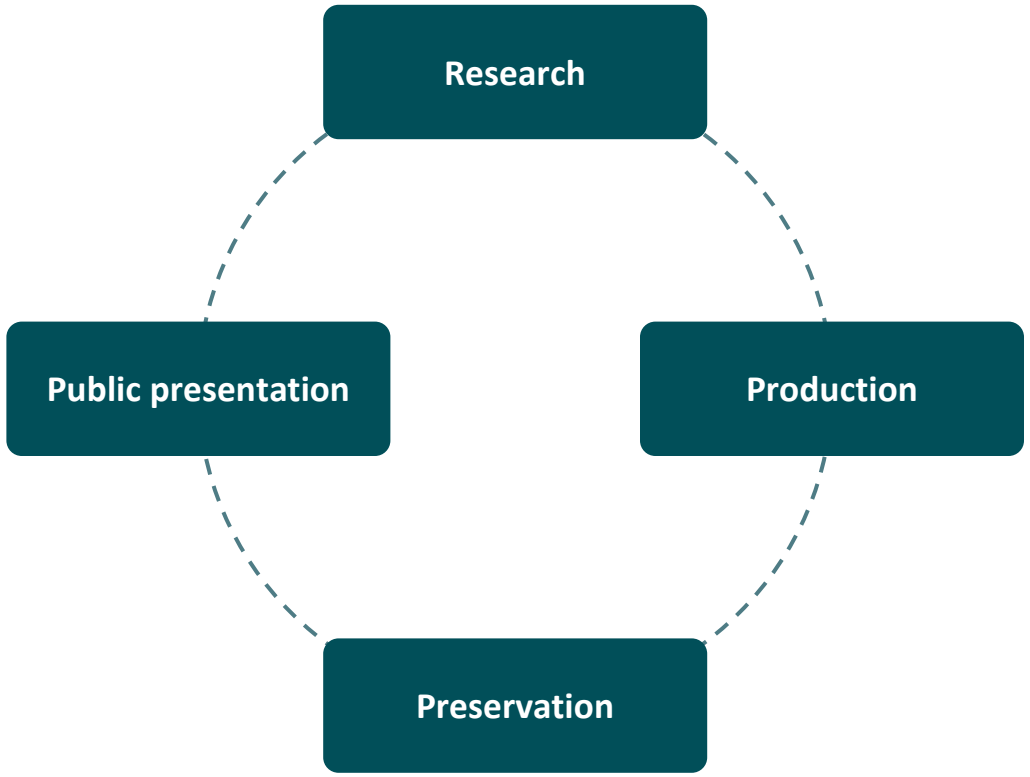
Professional representation. Communities, task forces and elections.

Across all cases, host organizations retain control over important rules and resources.

The better questions. Which decisions are open? Whose knowledge counts? How do contributions affect outcomes? Do participants receive an account of what changed?

Boundary-spanning must be institutionalized

ANCHOR CASE · ZKM KARLSRUHE



Example. The Digital Art Works project on conserving technologically fragile works.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION MEANS

1. **Recognized roles**
2. **Recurrent resources**
3. **Access to decision forums**
4. **Routines for translating knowledge**

CAUTION

Boundary spanners become ineffective when they remain peripheral to budgets, procurement or decision authority.

Public value and transferability are cross-case tests

WELL DOCUMENTED

Mechanisms and outputs. Access, learning, visitor agency, creative production, preservation, reuse and professional capacity.

WEAKER EVIDENCE

Independent, long-term and distribution-sensitive societal outcomes. Availability is not equitable use.

MECHANISMS TO ADAPT, WITH THEIR ENABLING CONDITIONS

- **Cohort-based peer learning**
- **Open standards**
- **Lifecycle governance**
- **Designed participation**
- **Boundary-spanning interfaces**

Mechanisms are more transferable than branded programs or whole organizational models.

An adaptive framework of six governance capabilities

1 Active orchestration

Aligns complementary actors

IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Cross-agency challenge networks and mission-oriented partnerships

2 Lifecycle experimentation

Connects tests to decisions

IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Policy labs, service pilots, sandboxes and prototype procurement

3 Open knowledge stewardship

Enables reuse

IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Open administrative data, shared registries and reusable public content

4 Designed participation

Specifies agency and influence

IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Citizen co-design, professional communities and participatory service development

5 Boundary-spanning interfaces

Connect specialized domains

IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Research-practice partnerships and multidisciplinary service teams

6 Reflexive public-value assessment

Tests benefit, legitimacy and sustainability

IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Innovation portfolio review and program evaluation

From framework to practice, in seven steps

Purpose and partners

1. Define the public-value proposition before assembling partners
2. Map interdependencies and what each actor contributes
3. Select an orchestration portfolio suited to the coordination problem

CAPABILITY

Active orchestration

Testing and opening

4. Bound experiments and specify how evidence informs redesign, scaling or termination
5. Treat open knowledge and participation as governance arrangements

CAPABILITY

Lifecycle experimentation
Open knowledge stewardship
Designed participation

Embedding and judging

6. Connect boundary-spanning roles to decisions, budgets, procurement and operations
7. Assess public value, including inclusion, sustainability and opportunity cost

CAPABILITY

Boundary-spanning interfaces
Reflexive public-value assessment

CHECK FIRST

Does the receiving organization have the

- **Mandate**
- **Capacity**
- **Legitimacy**
- **Accountability**

to sustain the capability?

Limits and future research

LIMITS

1. Five purposive cases do not represent museums generally
2. Documentary sources support claims about mechanisms more than about causal impact
3. Public administrations face legal duties, coercive powers, political oversight and equality obligations

FUTURE RESEARCH

1. Interviews with staff, partners and users
2. Internal governance and evaluation records
3. Prospective application in administrative innovation programs

The cases are sources of conditional governance lessons, not proven templates.

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THREE POINTS TO TAKE HOME

1

Learn from other fields

Museums are one rich source of tested coordination mechanisms.

2

Coordinating is not commanding

Ecosystems need deliberate orchestration, and its power must be accountable.

3

Borrow mechanisms, not models

Identify the mechanism, examine its public value, specify the enabling conditions, anticipate the risks.

Thank you

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