

Making Europe Virtual: The largest online European technology museum

A sneak preview

On May the 19th the Virtual Exhibit development team experienced its first baptism of fire. One of our sponsors, Next Generation Infrastructures, offered us the opportunity to present our work to an external but well-informed audience during its conference Infratrends in the Fokker Terminal in The Hague. For the first time, the team brought together content and technology, creating the first Sneak Preview of the Inventing Europe Virtual Exhibit.

Under the heading *Making Europe Virtual: The largest online European technology museum* Alec Badenoch explained how he and the development team, Slawomir Lotysz, Brian Fuchs, Alan Outten and Suzanne Lommers work to “embrace complexity,” one of the six central trends of the conference. He spoke about the questions, the challenges, and the opportunities the team has been encountering in the course of developing the exhibit. There is a large challenge in combining insights from the Tensions of Europe network with the collections of at least ten European science and technology museums, and other heritage organizations.



The audience could ‘sneak a peek’ at the *Brotherhood Pipeline*, one of the 36 stories being developed for the exhibit. The design mock-up showed how the story and its objects could be recombined with related objects from our heritage partners as well as from the European digital library, Europeana.

NGI had scheduled the sneak peek in the Gaming tent where the audience itself could experience the exhibit and build its own expert “theme path” based around their own interests in the story themes or objects. By selecting a number of interesting objects from the exhibit people could design their own story around a theme they knew well.

In general, we received positive reactions, including from officials in the Dutch government. Several people recognized the value of the exhibit for understanding their work. They experienced the clear link between past and present as a refreshing way of looking at matters currently at hand. The conference has also given us some critical feedback, which we can work to resolve in the coming months.



The day ended with a book presentation to the Dutch Minister of Environment and Infrastructure, Melanie Schultz-Verhagen. The book "InfraTrends" deals with the future trends in infrastructures, and has been coordinated by longtime ToE member (and former newsletter editor) Donna Mehos. You can approach her in case you are interested in having a copy.

It was a long and fruitful day. We could drive in an electric car, had some good food and ate as much purple chocolate as we wanted. What better setting would you wish for your first Sneak Peek?

Suzanne Lommers