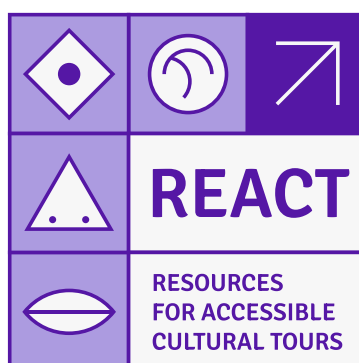




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Building inclusive cultural spaces with digital mediation – E-learning course training implementation guide

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INTRODUCTION

When it comes to accessibility within museums and heritage sites, elevators and ramps are probably the first things that spring to mind to help visitors with reduced mobility. However, there are also **many different special needs** which necessitate the use of different tools to ensure the best possible visitor experience, as well as social and cultural obstacles which can restrict access to cultural institutions. This may appear paradoxical in our digital era, when everything seems easier and faster to access. Consequently, cultural operators are now embracing a broader concept of accessibility, which can be developed on-site or off-site.

The e-learning platform developed by REACT (Resources for European Accessible Cultural Tours) **aims to identify the main challenges** currently faced by cultural institutions in terms of accessibility, particularly with regard to digital accessibility. It also aims to share best practices in this area and provide training for current and future professionals in the cultural field, regardless of their means, for developing accessibility projects. The platform should help users develop a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs of different audiences and encourage them to consider universal design when planning accessibility projects.

The purpose of the **Training Implementation Guide** is to present the structure of the training modules of the e-learning course. In the guide, we focus on **presenting the objectives of each of the three developed modules and how to use them in the learning / teaching process**.

The content of the guide was designed to be clear and transparent so you can easily navigate the course resources. One section has been dedicated to course certification.

The proposal for e-learning training comes from the project partnership's belief in the benefits of this form of knowledge acquisition: the ability to learn anytime and anywhere, provided there is the Internet access, the chance to choose the most interesting content, to interrupt the course at any time and return to the tasks when needed.

The e-learning course formula also coincides with one of the main goals of the REACT project, namely to **emphasize the importance of digital accessibility in museums and other cultural institutions**. At each stage of the project, we mark the changes that have taken place in cultural mediation over the past years. The Covid-19 pandemic, but also generational changes and the widespread adoption of digitisation, have also made the need for digital accessibility visible in the cultural sector under discussion, including for people with various disabilities. So, keeping up with technological developments is not only a sign of museums' modernity, but above all, meeting the diverse and changing needs of different users. Digital accessibility in museums levels the playing field for all who feel the need to immerse themselves in culture, and opens it up to those who may experience various forms of resistance or even fear using it.

We encourage to take the e-learning course, in which we have included a wealth of information on on-site and off-site digital accessibility and the challenges cultural institutions face. We have also focused on the benefits of the digital adaptation of museums to the needs of different audiences. We want this **guide to serve as a "helping hand"** in freely navigating the course and choosing what is most interesting and useful in the work and daily practice of all those to whom cultural accessibility is important and would like to spread the subject to others.

MOOCS AND VET

WHAT ARE MOOCS?

MOOCs, the acronym of **Massive Open Online Courses**, are web resources designed for learning and addressing a large number of participants, practically myriads. Open stands for free of charge availability, which enhances and largely contributes to the massive addressability of the educational program. Still, there might be some charges related to the service that allows users to access the course. Some universities might even recognise academic credits for MOOCs created by highly recognised experts and acknowledged contributions in specific fields. Generally speaking, though, **they are free and accessible to everyone with a strong will to learn** and, of course, a stable Internet connection.

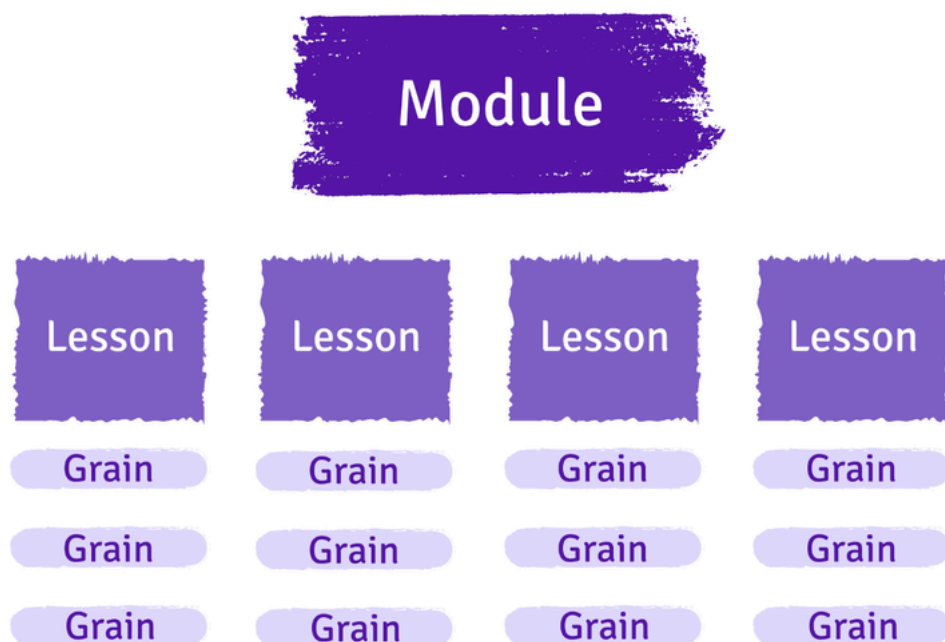
While the first online courses go back to 2000, year marking the launching of initiatives such as Fathom and AllLearn, it was in 2007 that professor David Wiley of the Utah State University officially launched a course opened to all those interested in the topic and which took place in hybrid format, with students both online and offline. **The term itself was coined one year later, in 2008**, by Dave Cormier from the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada. Cormier used the term to describe the course Connectivism and Connective Knowledge (CCK08) given by George Siemens and Stephen Downes and pointed out the main features of such pedagogical model. An educational specialist and innovator in the field of digital education, Cormier promotes rhizomatic learning using the resources available on the Internet, as an alternative to the expert-centred teaching that has been in use for so long. Other early and very famous MOOCs are Artificial Intelligence by Sebastian Thrun and Peter Norvig from Stanford University in the fall of 2011, or Circuits and Electronics at MIT in early 2012.

Sometimes distinction is made between two main types of MOOCs: cMOOCs, or connective MOOCs, which are rather content-oriented, with the content being selected from various course websites and even blogposts, while learners use their own online space, and xMOOCs, which involve learning managements systems based mostly on lectures given in video formats, automated assessments and discussion forums. Among the most famous platforms delivering MOOCs on a variety of courses to worldwide users, one may quote Udacity, Coursera, edX.

The growing importance of MOOCs in professional development, including in the VET context

For universities, MOOCs are mainly a useful way of disseminating knowledge for undergraduate education. They might represent an option to complement the official curricula and the resulting learning. For teachers and researchers, MOOCs might be a way of staying tuned with peers' approaches in transmitting the knowledge on a certain topic. **For the field of adult education, MOOCs are ways of continuing the lifelong information acquisition process**, irrespectively of one's background or professional experience. Finally, for VET, such online tools allow the users to maintain up-to-date their theoretical knowledge needed in providing high-quality practical work, in line with the latest developments. For centuries, in the field of professional education, one had, in the first phase, to attend a thorough theoretical and mostly practical training, followed by a career in which the prior learning was put into practice, with minimal or even no updating. The situation has now changed. More precisely, a radical change has taken place in the assessment paradigm of one's professional skills, requiring not only very thorough initial training, but also continuous on-the-job but also online training.

E-LEARNING COURSE



Our e-learning course consists of three modules. **Inside each module, you'll find lessons divided into smaller grains.** You can see this structure on the infographic presented below.

Each module has its main theme:

Module 1: Inclusive Museums: Creating Accessible Cultural Spaces






Module 2: Inclusive On-Site Digital Mediation in Museums

Module 3: Off-Site Digital Mediation for Inclusive Museums

Each lesson within the module focuses on a different aspect related to the module's main theme.

Grains are the smallest units of each lesson. Thanks to them, the information is well organised and goes directly to the point. In the grains, you'll find practical information and guidelines, exercises, case studies, and quizzes. You'll need approximately five minutes to complete one grain.

Target groups

-  Trainers in initial professional training, who train future professionals in the cultural and tourism sector.
-  Trainers in continuing professional education, who train professionals who are already working, looking for a job or changing careers.
-  Employees of cultural and culture-related institutions, including museums, providers of services for culture, cultural associations, and tour operators.
-  People engaged in disability and disorders fields: associations of people with disabilities or disorders.
-  Trainers in organisations offering training for cultural and tourism professionals / future professionals.


How the course itself is designed to be accessible to users

As we aim to reach a diverse range of individuals, **the course is available in four languages: English, French, Romanian, and Polish.** These are the national languages of partnership in which the e-learning course was developed. We use clear language and apply rules of user-friendly layout, including font size, line spacing, contrast, and the use of bullet points. And finally, **we combine theory with case studies** to make your learning even more inspiring.

E-LEARNING MODULES



MODULE 1: INCLUSIVE MUSEUMS: CREATING ACCESSIBLE CULTURAL SPACES

 Museums can be more than places of culture—they can become welcoming environments for everyone, regardless of background, ability, or circumstance.


 In this course, you'll explore:


 What inclusion and accessibility mean beyond physical ramps and lifts

 How to recognize diversity as a strength

 Small, impactful steps that don't require a big budget

 Tools and mindsets that foster participation and connection

 You'll also discover how museums across Europe are using technology, intercultural dialogue, and educational programs to engage diverse audiences.

 As a museum professional, you're not just adapting to change—you're leading it.

Let's build museums where all visitors feel seen, heard, and valued.

Start module 1 (2h30)



Main focus and aims

The first module of our MOOC has “museal” in the title, but its content might also be useful for other parties that organise exhibitions, such as galleries and historical buildings.

The cultural sector has always been a place of social change. It includes cultural institutions that, as one of the first, started offering professionally adapted inclusive events and services for their audiences. The accessible offer has evolved over time. About forty years ago, the word “accessibility” would have primarily referred to architectural accessibility: lifts, ramps, etc. Nowadays, **we understand accessibility in the cultural sector as a wide range of adaptations and facilities to meet the diverse, special needs of the public.** To provide an exceptional, tailored and autonomous experience.

One of the biggest challenges in that aspiration is digital accessibility. In the digital world, sky (and the budget) is the limit. You can develop any project you desire. But how to make it exciting for all, including visually impaired visitors, those who communicate in Sign Language or are on the autism spectrum?

How can it be used in teaching?

In this module, accessibility is presented from the perspective of the modern world, including digital accessibility. These concepts are presented in their usage in cultural institutions. You will learn about the most remote audiences, the most common obstacles visitors face, and what challenges cultural institutions have to overcome. **In the “Inclusive Museums: Creating Accessible Cultural Spaces”, you will find a section** focused on a very important concept of universal design, which may be applied to any creative / production process, including digital tools and services. We present a few interesting case studies as well as provide information about participatory design (target group as co-creator) and staff training. This module also gives a background for (digital) accessibility international standards and regulations. It introduces and explains the WCAG standards (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). Nowadays, in some countries, they’ve become a basis for national regulations regarding digital accessibility. We also provide information on the European Accessibility Act – “a directive that aims to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services, by removing barriers created by divergent rules in Member States”. Finally, by completing the first module, you’ll learn about the idea of digital sobriety in the museum sector. It raises awareness on issues like the environmental impact of digital technologies and strategies for implementing digital sobriety in the museum sector.

And if you need some inspiration, you'll find interesting case studies of inclusive museum experiences across Europe. As you can see, the first module covers a wide range of themes. It makes a solid, yet not overwhelming, introduction to the basics of designing accessible and inclusive museum experiences. This approach will provide an unforgettable museum experience to the widest possible group of visitors.

In the educational process, each lesson can be used either as a starting point or a wrapping-up of themes already discussed. For example, after completing lesson three, dedicated to international (digital) accessibility standards, trainees can explore national regulations on accessibility. As a continuation of the fifth lesson, they may do research on the inclusiveness of experiences offered by museums in their area. They may ask questions such as: Whose needs were taken into consideration? How could one improve the experience to make it more inclusive? To focus your students' attention on digital accessibility, ask them to find out how visually impaired people use the Internet and smartphones, what distracts people with autism while surfing the Internet, etc.

However, the content of the first module can also serve as a starting point for a more general discussion of **why it is only now that we are taking the needs of people with special needs seriously**. What must have changed in our society to see a person, not disability, in the first place? Another important theme you can raise with your trainees is how, nowadays, we define "a person with disabilities". Ask your trainees to draw a sign of a "disabled person" at the beginning and at the end of the discussion. Will there be any difference? As you can see, there are plenty of themes you can talk to your students or trainees about thanks to the module one of our e-learning course!



MODULE 2: INCLUSIVE ON-SITE DIGITAL MEDIATION IN MUSEUMS

🧠 Digital mediation tools—like interactive kiosks, VR, and multimedia rooms—can enhance museum experiences and make them more inclusive for all visitors. These technologies go beyond entertainment—they help remove traditional accessibility barriers and support diverse visitor needs.

💡 In this module, you'll learn:

👉 How on-site digital tools can foster inclusion

👉 Challenges in using these tools—and how to address them

👉 How to personalize visitor journeys for greater impact

👉 Real-world case studies from museums across Europe and beyond

🔧 Plus, practical activities are included to help you reflect and apply new ideas in your own museum.

Let's explore how digital mediation can turn museums into spaces that connect with every visitor.

Start module 2 (2h)



Main focus and aims

Module 2 of the e-learning course focuses on **how on-site digital mediation can improve the quality and impact** of the visiting experience by creating an emotional interaction between the audience and the cultural space.

It aims to show how various digital tools – be they interactive kiosks, virtual and augmented reality, multimedia cameras, sound trails, etc. – can transform museums into spaces that connect with each visitor, providing engaging and meaningful experiences.

At the same time, this module **highlights how digital tools can address the various needs** of the wide range of types of visitors, taking into account different disabilities or age-related requirements. It identifies ways in which on-site digital mediation can be used to create immersive, interactive experiences that are both engaging and inclusive, responding to the specific needs of various audiences, including persons with various disabilities, but also elderly, young people or children.

In order to encourage the employees of the cultural institutions to reflect on the needs and opportunities related to on-site digital mediation, the module also **includes practical information**, exercises and examples of best practices – a necessary source of inspiration for those who want to provide an interesting learning experience and an engaging and memorable museum visit.

How can it be used in teaching?

Module two of the e-learning course, related to on-site digital mediation, offers interesting and diverse information to be used in the teaching / learning process. Theory and practical aspects are combined in order to equip trainees with the necessary knowledge on how to use digital tools in real-world settings.

Module two provides an overview of digital mediation and its role in museums, it refers to how digital mediation tools can enhance accessibility and inclusion, presents key terms and concepts related to on-site digital mediation and explores the latest evolutions of digital mediation trends as well, **with the aim to help the trainees identify ways for adapting existing tools and practices to new developments**. Interactive kiosks, accessible touchscreens, immersive podcasts, interactive storytelling, augmented reality, virtual reality, avatars, sound trails, work recognition technologies and others are introduced in order to familiarise trainees with on-site digital mediation.

Each device or tool is presented in terms of both benefits and challenges that can be encountered during its implementation. Moreover, information on how the challenges can be prevented and overcome is offered, which is a very important aspect for the teaching / learning process.

The theoretical approach is complemented by examples of best and innovative practices applied by museums / cultural organisations in Europe and worldwide. The examples and case studies described within this module show how mobile applications, interactive screens, sound trails and other types of digital devices and tools encourage visitors' action in the form of discovering, searching, comparing, feeling, and engaging emotions.

In this way, the trainees can find inspiration and come up with ideas on how to use digital mediation and create attractive and engaging museum visits, and more accessible and inclusive environments in their institutions.


Moreover, the module comes with interactive exercises and activities that can help the attendees of the course to develop their ideas and implement an on-site digital mediation strategy. For example, the trainees are provided step-by-step guidance in the Moreover, the module comes with interactive exercises and activities that can help the attendees of the course to develop their ideas and implement an on-site digital mediation strategy.

For example, the trainees are provided step-by-step guidance in the process of designing an interactive and immersive experience plan or for customising the itinerary dependent on various audience profiles (families, national or foreign tourists, seniors, socially-assisted seniors, children at risk, visitors with specific needs – autistic spectrum disorder, mobility / hearing / visual impairment).

As regards the evaluation process, **the module includes two quizzes**: the first one refers to digital mediation essentials, aiming to recap foundational concepts of on-site digital mediation, and the final quiz aims to consolidate the overall information acquired about digital mediation.



MODULE 3: OFF-SITE DIGITAL MEDIATION FOR INCLUSIVE MUSEUMS


 From virtual exhibitions to podcasts and streaming platforms, off-site mediation helps museums reach remote, underserved, or international audiences—making cultural content accessible to all.


 In this module, you'll learn:

 What off-site digital mediation is and why it matters

 Tools like virtual tours, digital exhibitions, newsletters, and more

 How to overcome common challenges in remote engagement

 Case studies from museums that are innovating in this space

 Activities and examples will guide you in developing your own off-site mediation strategy—tailored to your institution's goals and audiences.

Let's imagine new ways to inspire, educate, and connect—wherever your visitors may be.

Start module 3 (2h40)



Main focus and aims

Module three is the last of the training course we have prepared. The basic premise of this module is to focus on **mediating off-site**, which is the direction of contemporary cultural institutions willing to reach potential audiences even before they cross the threshold of the building. The digital tools currently offered to users allow them to experience culture without being physically present in the cultural institutions. Therefore, module three aims to give you keys to discuss digital strategies that can help cultural institutions engage their audiences, facilitating mediation and making culture more accessible and inclusive.

Here we offer theoretical and practical content, leaving a wide range of choices for all those interested in developing their own forms of digital mediation off-site, adapting their practices to the changing needs of diverse audiences and expressively evolving technology. Within the module, you will find sections dedicated to the description and definitions of important concepts, enriched with links to useful resources to expand the knowledge gained. Some content has been developed in the form of a video with an introduction to the topic, examples and a summary with important conclusions. There was no shortage of interesting exercises that engage the user in practical activities and allow them to test and verify their ideas on digital mediation off-site. A particularly useful part may be the case studies, which allow you to assess the benefits and challenges associated with an initiative.

Thus, they provide an opportunity for a real assessment of a strategy that has already been implemented somewhere: how much the cultural institution in which the student of our training operates can afford organizationally, financially and substantively to implement a given solution. We selected these examples to present good practices implemented in various museums worldwide. We enriched the course with photos presenting some of the content, taking care to make the visuals accessible and adding variety to the written text. Thus, we met the needs of different users: those for whom concentration on content is sufficient and those for whom translation into images is crucial. Finally, we prepared a quiz collecting the issues covered in all parts of the module. Its purpose is to test one's mastery of digital, off-site mediation knowledge and to identify any gaps in this area.

How can it be used in teaching?

Taking into account the target groups of our course, which are both employees of cultural institutions who want to expand their knowledge on the indicated topic and trainers who plan to train future or current professionals in the culture and tourism sector, we encourage you to take advantage of the content we offer in module three. You can use it in many ways, starting with going through all or selected lessons on your own. It depends on the individual needs of the learners, their time and organisational capabilities. Everyone is aware of the field in which they feel more deficient in knowledge and skills, and the selection of these areas is facilitated by the clearly specified titles of each part. In the case of a coaching session organised for those willing to be trained in digital mediation off-site, it seems more effective to go through all the elements step by step, especially if they involve theoretical issues. As for exercises and case studies, we leave the choice to the trainer, who knows best which examples will reach his group with greater effectiveness. Of course, the way in which the posted content is presented is also up to the trainer, although in each case we have tried to maintain a cause-and-effect logic in the material presented. Ideally, the theoretical content would be interspersed with exercises or video presentations, which reinforce and capture the attention of those attending the training. The design of the content in the third module also allows the trainer to interact with the group by asking questions, suggesting solutions, and expanding possibilities beyond the examples already proposed.

In summary, the **content** used and developed by the REACT project partnership **provides a broad spectrum of knowledge about digital off-site mediation and offers a wide range of forms in which it has been presented**. Using these materials can help cultural institutions expand their inclusive digital offerings to different target groups, including those who are socially marginalised or have less access to culture.

CERTIFICATION AND EXPLOITATION OF COURSE MATERIALS

Our course meets European learning standards specific to VET

Our materials can be easily integrated into the VET (Vocational Education and Training) curriculum. Our training programme is based on the recommendations of the EQAVET (European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training) framework, which guarantees the quality of our learning environment on a European scale. The EQAVET framework is based on the Deming cycle:

- Plan (setting clear objectives)
- Do (implementing procedures and resources to achieve these objectives).
- Check (reviewing the work done, analysing feedback and discussing ways to improve)
- Act (evaluating the effectiveness of the process)

[You can learn more about EQAVET directly on their website](#), including how it works, how to evaluate the implementation of a VET project, but also a virtual library with various studies and report.

You can access and use our course materials freely!

The resources created for our online course are licensed under Creative Commons 4.0 (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 – Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International), meaning that **you can share and adapt the material as long as you give appropriate credit and do not use it for commercial purposes.**

[You can read more about the Creative Commons license](#) and get more information by consulting their official website.

You can obtain Europass Mobility document by attending our course

Europass is a **service provided by the European Commission** in 31 languages and covering 34 countries, including European Union members, candidate countries, and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members.

Europass Mobility is a document that **makes your newly acquired skills understandable to employers** or educational institutions internationally.

[You can learn more about how Europass](#) works, how to create your Europass profile and how to get Europass Mobility on their website.

To learn more about how to obtain Europass Mobility for our course, contact us directly at info@alto-on-site.com, or check out [REACT project's website](#).

FURTHER READING

[Brief \(very brief\) history of MOOCs - MOOC \(Massive Open Online Course\)](#)

This is a short presentation of how MOOC appeared and developed, as created by **Sergio Luján Mora** from the University of Alicante, in 2013.

[MOOCs: An Introduction - Modern Learners](#)

This is an overview of MOOCs and their role in our educational path, as provided by Will Richardson, co-founder of Modern Learners.

[MOOC.org | Massive Open Online Courses | An edX Site](#)

This is one of the largest online platforms providing accessing to a wide variety of MOOCs.

[Ingenium Accessibility Standard for Exhibitions](#)

It is a practical guide on how to plan and design accessible exhibitions. Among many useful pieces of information and drawings, you'll also find those considering the placement of digital mediation tools within the exhibition

[Crip Camp: A disability revolution](#)

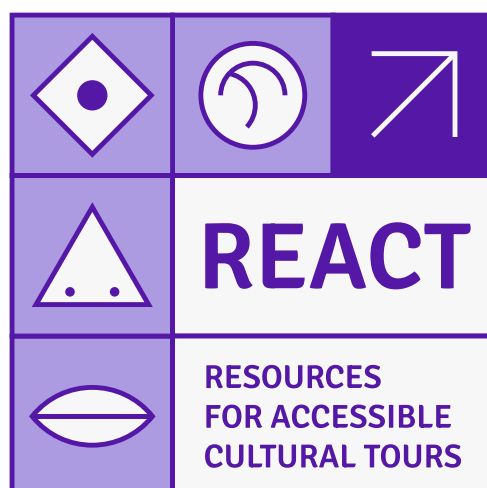
A very wise, touching and award-winning documentary movie on the revolt of people with disabilities in the USA.

[Une culture accessible à toutes et tous](#)

It is a French guide provided by the French Ministry of Culture and the French Interministerial delegation for the national strategy for neurodevelopmental disorders. It aims to help professionals in the cultural field identify and address the issues faced by people with cognitive disorders.

[Cultural accessibility guide “Kaunas for all”](#)

Kaunas, Lithuania, was the European Capital of Culture in 2022. This guide was developed to help cultural organisations and event organisers make their projects and events accessible to all, including people with specific needs.



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