INVENTING EUROPE NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2014

Dear friends,

I write you with an update on the education activities related to Inventing Europe. Consider this our first newsletter! Please read carefully. It contains important information!

First of all…

Although I haven't been in touch with many of you personally lately, I am pleased to see so many teaching with the website, and in so many different ways. So first of all, let me express to you a big thank you for all your work, participation in the experiment since 2012, and your valuable suggestions that you have made to Anne-Mirthe via Skype recently. Your input and participation enables the development of an education tool that matches with all the ongoing research activities of the Tensions of Europe network and beyond.

MyEurope: A playground for students

You can now take a new step teaching with the website. I'd like to draw your attention to the new interactive playground that we have developed for users. On MyEurope our visitors can "discover what's out there" on the website and start or join in discussions about tours, stories and objects. Also, up to six people can 'Create a tour' together online and share these with others. What does this mean for you?

You can think of **new** assignments for your students. In the 'Discuss' area next to the tours shown in the 'discover what's out there section', you can pose a question or start a discussion for your students that appears next to a specific tour. You will then have, with your students, a discussion online and accessible in one place. Also, your students can 'Create a tour', alone or in groups. Johan and I have experimented with this in a bachelor course which means that there are now some student tours online for other students to see.

Please note: Several development efforts should be undertaken by the development team in the future. These can only take place after teachers start having experiences, give us their feedback, and the MyEurope environment starts to be filled with more content by students and teachers.

If you are, or if you are planning on working with MyEurope in your teaching, then please let us know and we will help you.

To facilitate teaching with MyEurope:

1) We will create example assignments shared with you via the education page before the end of this semester;
2) We will answer all your questions when you can get in touch with us about the way in which the MyEurope environment works practically;
3) In the coming months we will experiment with creating a brief YouTube video that explains the working of the MyEurope environment, to be made available via the SHT YouTube channel.

A standardized course submission form

To continue facilitating all of you and create synergies across universities during semester 2, **please provide your course details as soon as you have them**. To ease your lives, we will use a **standard template** that you can fill out easily and which you can use to submit changes to us at any time. Anne-Mirthe will be in touch with you about this in the near future.

Please realize that you do not provide your details and feedback for nothing. We use this data to improve Inventing Europe, the education page, and to decide what functionalities to build for the website, and how.

The IE teaching project at SHOT

Your data and feedback also serve as basis for research on the possibilities of the digital age for cultural heritage and education. In November our education endeavor is part of a SHOT session in Dearborn Michigan. Johan will present our paper named "*Inventing an Online Education Environment: The Inventing Europe Digital Museum Education experiment*". The paper is a first attempt to analyze the results of our 2012-2013 education experiment. The paper is available upon request (contact us at inventingeurope@tue.nl). I hope you like it!

I greatly value your feedback on this. Please tell me your comments, suggestions, and let me know where you do or do not recognize your own experiences. I have tried to be as accurate as possible. Based on your feedback, I might be contacting you for a Skype call. The results of your feedback will in turn serve as basis for one or two articles to be published on our education activities, and for fundraising initiatives that we are working on in November. Therefore, please let me know your feedback no later than **November 2, 2014**.

Gaining international recognition

Over the past year I have regularly presented the Inventing Europe project at several cultural heritage institutions, the European Commission and the Europeana Foundation (which is in charge of creating a European digital cultural heritage infrastructure). It is apparent that they view the project as a pioneering initiative in creating a tool that combines cultural heritage with education in the digital age, and that we serve as an example of goals they want to achieve within and between their countries.

Kimberly Coulter, Director of the Environment and Society portal of the Rachel Carson Center in Munich, wrote a review on Inventing Europe. She, above all, stresses the website's potential for education, and the great possibilities for the cultural heritage world to reach this community. You will see why I am amazingly content with this review! The review is still forthcoming, an announcement about the publication will follow.

The European Commission Member State Expert Group on digital heritage and the Europeana Foundation are particularly impressed by the kind of and the high-quality European narrative the site opens up; both in text and in audiovisual materials. The level of collaboration we managed to realize, encompassing cutting-edge research, cultural heritage collections, teachers, and its relative efficiency they find stunning. The challenges we face in part result from the problems they have bringing ministries of culture, ministries of education, cultural heritage institutions and education institutions together and into the digital age within their own countries.

Good news…

The good news is that we most likely can continue our education trajectory in 2015. What would this entail? We would be creating an improved education environment that better speaks to your own specific needs, to the broader tensions of Europe research agenda, and we would be working on expanding the community of teachers working with the site. This means that we might be able to get together (!) and discuss teaching with IE somewhere in 2015. I will provide you with details as soon as I know more and things are certain.