Deployment and Maintenance of Europeana DSI core services - SMART 2016/1019

CONTRACT NUMBER - 30 - CE - 0885387/00-80

DELIVERABLE

C.5 Report on suggestions for improvements received

Revision	1.0
Date of submission	31 January 2018 (M5)
Author(s)	Dasha Moskalenko, Europeana Foundation, Ash Marriott, Europeana Foundation
Dissemination Level	Public

Co-financed by the European Union
Connecting Europe Facility

REVISION HISTORY AND STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

Revision History

Revision No.	Date	Author	Organisation	Description
0.5	25-01-2018	Dasha Moskalenko, Ash Marriott	Europeana Foundation	First version
0.9	29-01-2018	Victor-Jan Vos, Jill Cousins, Julia Schellenberg	Europeana Foundation	Review
1.0	01-02-2018	Dasha Moskalenko, Victor-Jan Vos, Julia Schellenberg	Europeana Foundation	Final version

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Executive summary

After reviewing various sources of feedback received Europeana can identify common themes of suggestions for design and functionality improvements. The main themes for suggestions for improvements are:

1. The findability of data on Europeana Collections incl. the Thematic Collections; and
2. Finding information on an item page.

Main feedback themes that emerged relate to the search, discovery and retrieval of data. Users reported difficulties finding content they are looking for when searching on Europeana Collections. In addition, users mentioned difficulties finding information either about a specific item on the item page.

To improve the relevance of content shown to users when searching on Europeana Collections Europeana is looking at introducing dynamic facets and more help/information cues to help our users funnel the information down to the granularity they need. To improve the accuracy of the information displayed for or related to each item Europeana will introduce a new item page, which will present the information in a more comprehensible structure.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to report on suggestions for improvements received for Europeana Collections incl. the Thematic Collections. Europeana Collections is Europeana's main service for end-users to access Europeana data.

The questions addressed in this report are:
What are the suggestions for improvements received for Europeana Collections? Are there any common themes that we can identify from the user feedback that we receive?

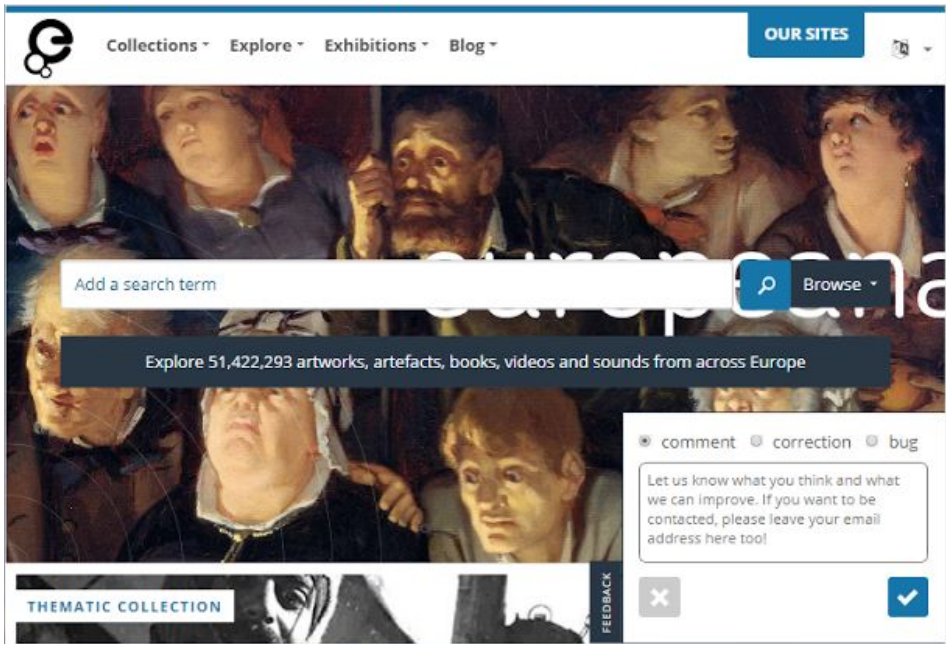
Based on the received suggestions from users, this document clusters common themes for improvements of Europeana Collections. Each theme is exemplified by users' comments and states actions that Europeana undertook to follow-up on the comments received. At the end of the document comments as well as a priority order of comments to be taken into account for Europeana Collections are presented.

Methodology

The document reports on feedback received from three sources[1]:

A. **User feedback via the feedback button:**
   The main source of user feedback is the feedback button presented on every Europeana Collections page (including search results pages and record pages) (see screenshot below). For this report, we looked at user feedback received in the period between 1 September and 31 December 2017. During September-December 2017 we received 50 user comments through the feedback button.
B. **Feedback received from partners:**
   The report also highlights some suggestions for improvements received from our partners (i.e. Europeana DSI-3 partners).
C. **Feedback from user research:**
   Besides the feedback mentioned above we also added feedback from user research we undertook such as online surveys, the heuristic review conducted by external User Experience (UX) Designers in 2016, and task based interviews.

After reviewing the sources of feedback we identified common themes for suggestions on how to improve Europeana Collections. The analysis section of this report follows up on the identified themes and states user comments, analysis of the issue as well as short/medium and possible long term actions towards design and functionality improvements over time.



Quick feedback button. View at https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en

[1] For the moment, Europeana has not received any comments from Commission Services.

Analysis

Based on the feedback there are two common themes for improvement:

1. The findability of data: search, discovery;
2. Finding information on the item page

Topic 1: Findability of data

Users reported difficulties to find content they are looking for when searching on Europeana Collections. Judging from feedback it seems that users who struggle with finding information are looking for specific types of data, or data from a specific period. Typical examples of user feedback on this topic are:

User feedback 1

"When searching anything I get 90% hits on architectural photos and drawings from norway (kulturkvartalet). As this type of documentation is interesting only for a specific crowd can you create a separate tab on architecture in order to differentiate these works from paintings, drawings and other visual arts?"

Analysis
This is a known issue. When a user executes a query on Europeana Collections, items in the search results are displayed by dataset. Each dataset follows after the other displaying results of that dataset. If a provider has a lot of records relevant to the query the user can experience a lack of diversity in the search results.

Short and medium term action
We replied to the user and demonstrated ways of how to use search filters and additional search terms to differentiate search results. We also gave the user a link to the search tips page. This page was created to help users get the best from Europeana's search engine.

Longer term action
In the long term we are looking at introducing dynamic facets. This functionality enables users to filter down search results with facets that are specifically relevant for the type of data being browsed. In the future, we are also looking at ways to improve relevance ranking.

User feedback 2

"I'm a doctoral student in French literature whose research involves reading many 19th century newspapers, and I'm sorry to tell you that your site as designed is, quite frankly, unusable. It is completely unsuitable for any kind of serious research. You boast about a collection of historical newspapers, but how can that collection be searched? Not in any real way. An utterly useless resource as is."

Analysis

This is a known issue. The Newspapers Collection was first developed under an EU project and integrated in the The European Library (TEL). With the integration of TEL in Europeana Collections the development of the interface was discontinued. A large amount of newspapers ingested into Europeana Collections cannot be browsed properly as we are missing the ability to browse by title or search the full-text, which hampers discoverability. However, the ability to search by title or search the full-text it is still available on the previous TEL website[2].

Short and medium term action

Improving the search functionality of newspapers is a priority area of development. A new thematic collection for newspapers will be launched in 2018. We will improve the findability of newspaper data by adding the ability to view and search IIIF content within Europeana Collections. This means that when searching for keywords that are mentioned in newspaper pages in IIIF format, you will find these pages as results.

An example of an annotated IIIF document in the existing TEL portal, to the left is the scanned text and the right is the associated original scan. Future features include a full-text search, OCR interaction with Newspapers where a full-text is available and improved browsing.

[2] The European Library (TEL). View at http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/tel4/newspapers

User feedback 3

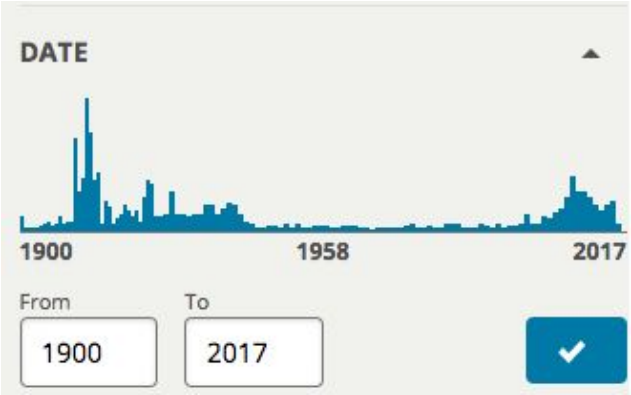
"I would like to be able to search by year. Is that possible?" and "It would be great (though perhaps difficult?) to have a chronological filter--even if only using very broad categories (e.g. 500 years intervals)."

Analysis

Records provided by our data partners have different levels of metadata completeness. A vast amount of records do not have information related to dates. Even if date information is available, the information can have different levels of quality. The biggest quality issue is that dates are not normalised and therefore cannot be clustered into categories. Because of the varying quality of the incoming data from institutions, we are selective about where and when we make this facet available to ensure that we do not inadvertently provide people with a negative searching experience. When applied, the filter can only show items that have information on dates available while all other records would be excluded. This may lead the user to the assumption that there are not more records for this time available on Europeana Collections.

Short and medium term action

Currently, only the Europeana Fashion Thematic Collection offers the date-facet to users as the data available for this Thematic Collection qualified to offer the facet. Since introducing the date facet in the Fashion Collection, we have made further improvements to enhance robustness against the data available. We are currently investigating to introduce the date facet also in other Thematic Collections, such as Migration.



Date facet on the - proposed - Migration collection

Longer term action

Ideally, all provided data should have a time period. This will facilitate a more accurate search experience for the users. Europeana is aware of this issue and the improvement of metadata quality, is one of Europeana's key areas of attention.

User feedback 4

"I'm wondering if it's possible to browse through the collection further than page 10. I set the results per page at 96 but it finished at page 10, even though of the total results of 457,908. I would really appreciate, if you could help me so I could explore the entire collection."

Analysis
Due to the resource limitations of the search servers, we unfortunately have to limit our results to 1,000. This is a practice followed by many popular search engines.

Short and medium term action
As a result of this feedback, and others with the same message, we are planning to improve our information cues on the pagination to explain to the user why they cannot access further results.

Conclusion on the feedback received

Looking at the feedback received it can be concluded that using Europeana Collections to find specific information can be challenging. We intend to make this easier for our users by:

A. **Improving data quality.** All data should be titled and have a complete description such as the type of object, creator, location and time period. This will facilitate a more accurate search and users can find the content they are looking for. Europeana is aware of this issue and the improvement of data quality is one of Europeana's key area for attention (see Europeana 2020 Strategy[3]). We introduced the Europeana Content Strategy[4] and the Europeana Publishing Framework[5] to make data partners aware on the importance of full rounded, good quality metadata and the Europeana Publishing Guidelines[6] on how to provide high quality data to Europeana.
B. **Introducing dynamic filters so only the filters relevant to a specific collection are displayed.** This will reduce the amount of filters available making it easier for the user to choose and allow a user to drill down and finegrain the data to show only the requested selection.
C. **Make the help/information cues available on the site more prominent and increase their amount of features they cover.** These will help the user exploit more features on the site that facilitate an easier interaction and better experience. This can include information on how to use filters to see different content we hold or how to add additional keywords to get more precise search results.

[3] Europeana 2020 Strategy. View at http://strategy2020.europeana.eu/update/
[4] Europeana Content Strategy. View at https://pro.europeana.eu/post/europeana-content-strategy
[5] Europeana Publishing Framework. View at https://pro.europeana.eu/post/publishing-framework
[6] Europeana Publishing Guidelines. View at https://pro.europeana.eu/post/publication-policy

Topic 2: Finding information on an item page

User feedback gathered with the feedback button revealed that users when landing on an item page are not always satisfied with the way the information is presented. The need for a redesign of the item page was also discovered in other user research we undertook such as online surveys, the heuristic review conducted by external User Experience (UX) Designers in 2016, and task based interviews. Some examples of feedback received on this topic including our response are described below.

User feedback 1

"Don't like the fact you have taken up too much of the page and I can only see half. Prefer the o;d omw that just had the url!space at the top" [sic]."

Analysis
We deduce that the current layout of the item page is inefficient, and fails to allow quick consumption of the media and important metadata.

Short and medium term actions
We are currently in development of a new item page to be launched in quarter one of 2018. It will offer a more comprehensible layout of information for both type of users of Europeana Collections; the casual user and the advanced/professional user.

Partner feedback 1

"...it is not correct to use "and" between the names of artists because sometimes the second artist is a former attribution..."

Analysis
Previously, several names in the creator field were listed adding the word "and" between several persons.

Short and medium term actions
Based on this feedback we replaced the "and" with a semicolon (;) for all languages, except Greek with a vertical bar (|).

Partner feedback 2

Provider names are being capitalised on the item page. This covers poor quality data (fictitious example: 'the national library' to 'The National Library') but it interferes with good quality data (fictitious example: 'The National Library of France' to 'The National Library Of France') where separating words such as 'of' should not be uppercased.

Short and medium term actions
To correct this the CSS (style specification) was removed and the incoming data represents the institution name correctly now.

Online survey feedback 1

"Only 13% of our users indicated that they feel encouraged to explore." (partner feedback).

Analysis
We know that 65% of our users land directly on an item page. The bounce rate for the item page is 60%. This was a signal that the item page was not well equipped to invite users to navigate further. We hypothesised that this could be due to that the related items bar at the bottom of the item page was too hidden below the extensive (heavy to absorb for a casual user) metadata.

Short and medium term actions
On the new item page which will be launched in quarter one of 2018 we moved the related items suggestion up and placed it next to the media card in the top right of the page. Making it clearly visible and motivating our users to flow through the website at an early stage of the user journey. We also introduced a second suggestions bar at the bottom of the page with more contextual groupings of suggestions. For example: other works of the same artist, other items of the providing institute, etc.

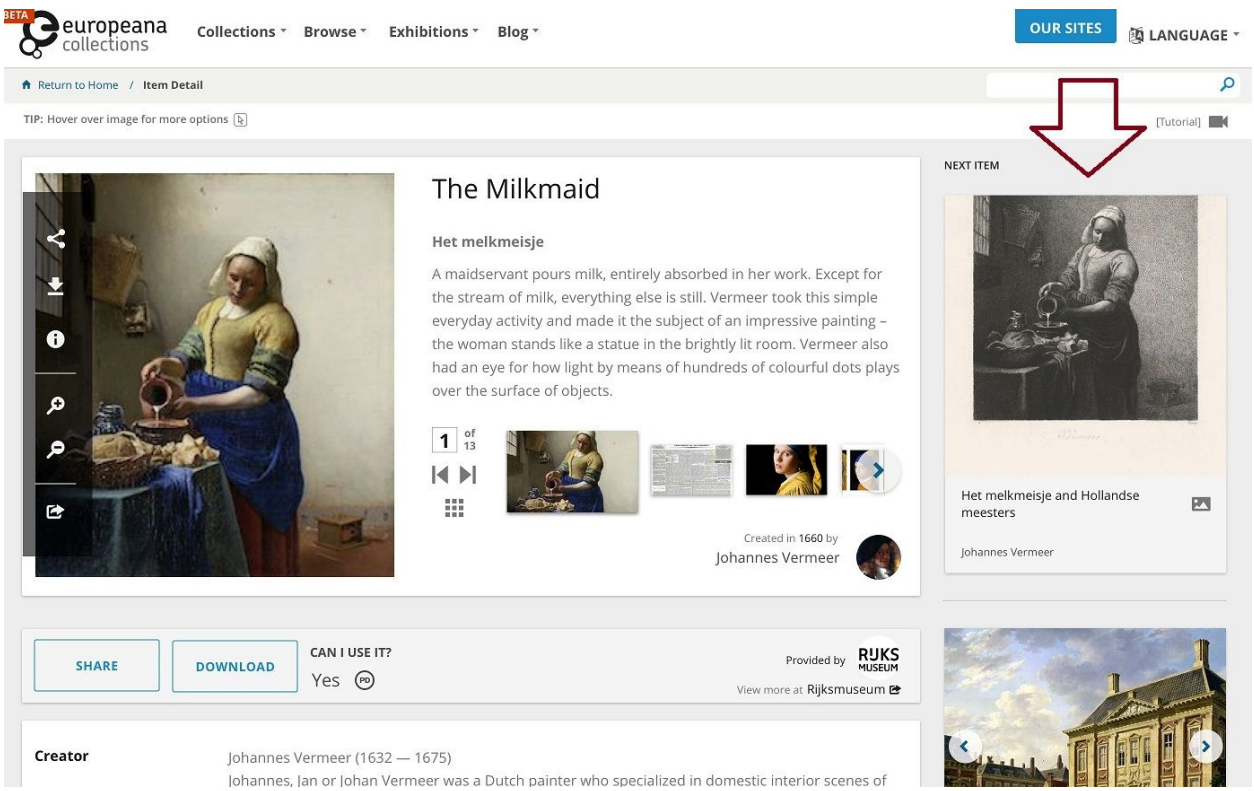
Heuristic review feedback 1

"From an item page onwards, one is only limited supported to explore further, e.g. links towards related collections, exhibitions or blogs or links to the next item in the search results." - observation of UX designers during the heuristic review

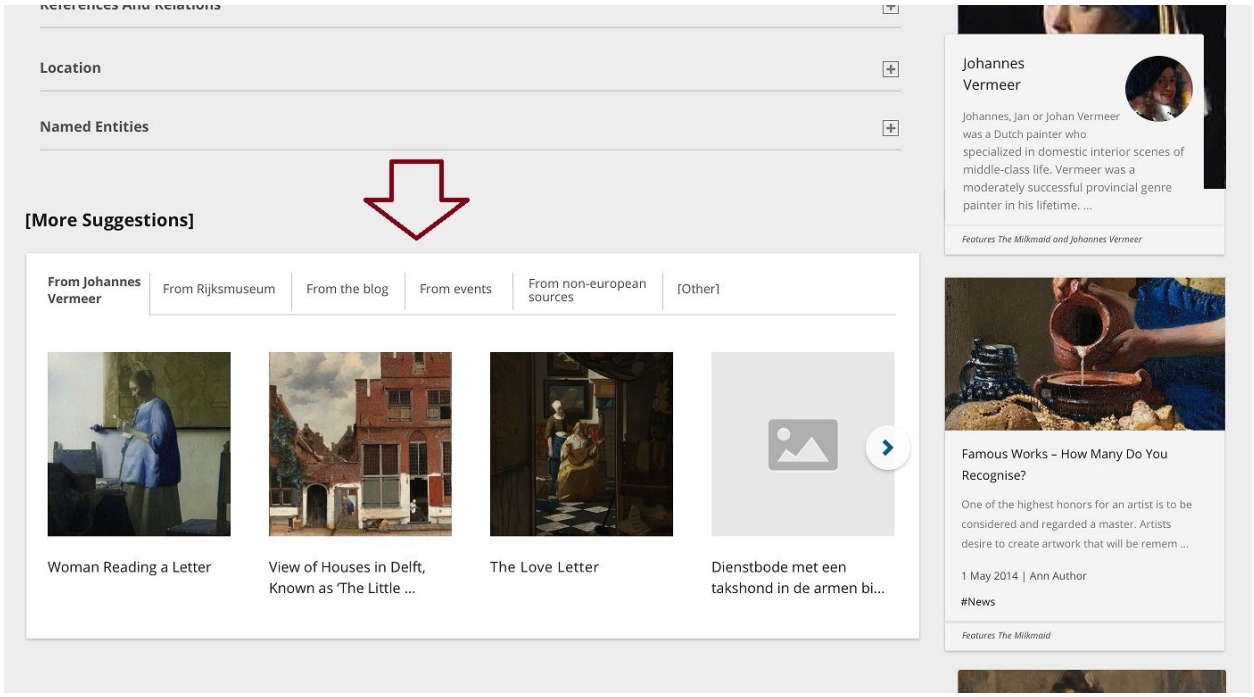
Analysis
As mentioned above, we know that 65% of our users directly land on an item page and 60% of them bounce from it. This means that users do not continue to browse but hit the back button on their screen and leave the Europeana Collection website. Since our curated content is well received we took the leap to assume that when a user is interested in an item they would also be interested to see it in a curatorial context e.g. narrated in a virtual exhibition, described in a blog post or as part of a thematic collection.

Based on this we hypothesised that enriching the individual item pages with browse entry points to curatorial content where this item was used would motivate our users to browse further than the item page. Thus, decreasing our bounce rate and improving our second click ration.

Short and medium term actions
Europeana invests a lot of resources in creating curated content (around two galleries and virtual exhibitions a week, one to three blog posts a week and 4 new Thematic Collections a year). Unfortunately 60% of users that bounce directly from an item page do not encounter them. For this reason, we introduced cross promotion related content suggestions, new content suggestions featured in the right hand column and grouped by curatory type at the bottom of the page.



Red arrow points to related items next to the media card in the top right of the page.



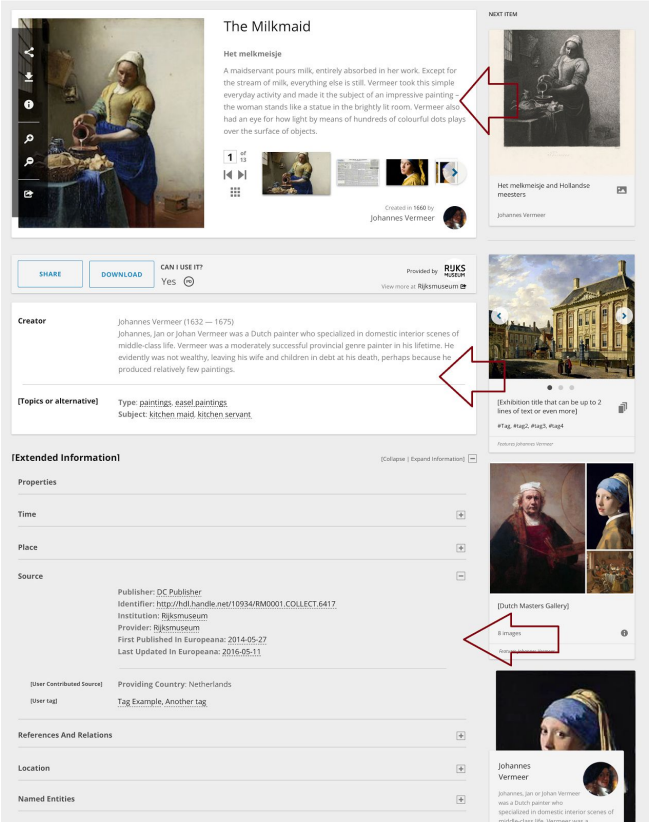
Red arrow pointing to related items at the bottom of the page with more contextual groupings of suggestions.

Task based interview feedback 1

These interviews highlighted that there is a difference between how our two main target groups interact with the metadata we offer for each item. Casual users find most of the metadata unnecessary while advanced users, these are researchers, educators, and cultural creatives; people who interact with data for professional purposes find it useful.

Short and medium term actions

To have the item page cater to both audiences we chose to separate the high-level metadata e.g. title, description, creator from the more extended metadata e.g. time, place source, location. On the new item page the title, description, creator and the providing organization are always visible and appear besides the media. The rest of the metadata is introduced in a foldable/expandable format towards the bottom of the item page. We also used visual cues to separate the two types of metadata. The high level metadata is displayed on a white background signalling that this is the key metadata for this item and the extended metadata is displayed on a grey background signalling that this information is secondary. This design change benefits our casual users because it makes it easier for them to consume the key information about an item while still offering our advanced users the full overview of metadata.



Top two red arrows pointing at the high-level metadata display and the bottom arrow pointing at the advanced metadata display.

Conclusion on the feedback received

Based on this feedback we concluded that the design of the item page needs to be updated so the information is presented in a more comprehensible structure. This feedback and the low second click ratio (amount of users that continue to browse the site when landing on any page) on our site led to the redesign of the item display page. The new item page will be launched in the first quarter of 2018. A new full page design for the new item page can be found in Annex 1.

Priority listing

In the table below see a priority listing of improvements on Europeana Collections, based on the above analysis and our resource availability.

Theme	**Actions**	**Priority level**	**Status of implementation**
Findability of data	Improving the quality of our data	High	In progress, ongoing activity
Finding information on an item page	Design of new item page	High	In progress, expected implementation Q1 2018
Findability of data	Improving the search functionality of newspapers	High	In progress, implementation planned for 2018
Findability of data	Dynamic filters/facets	Medium	Not planned
Findability of data	Make the help/information cues available on the site more prominent and increase their amount to cover more features	Medium	Not planned

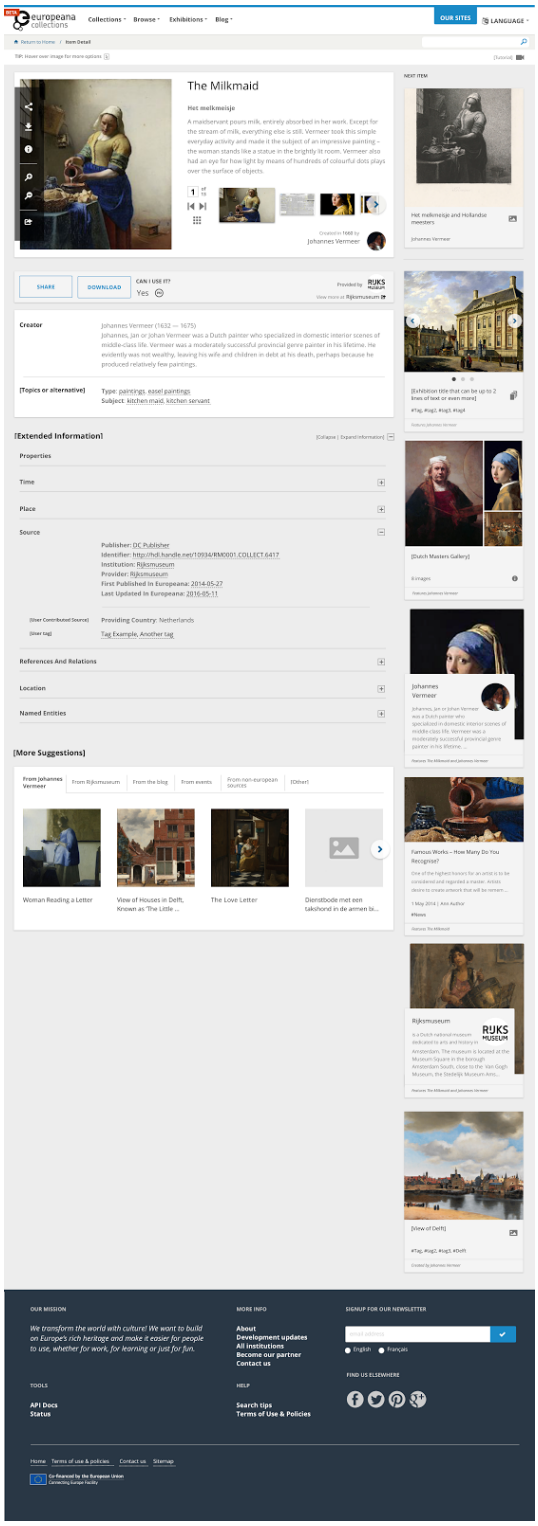
The feedback collection process

When feedback comes into Europeana (i.e. via the feedback button), it is assessed to whether it is actionable feedback. If this is the case, we create tickets in our product management tool, Jira.

When analysing the feedback from our users we encountered a number of problems such as a manual transfer of information from one tool to another, and the lack of solid reporting on existing comments as they are stored in a tool which does not allow to automatically count, sort or filter the issues by topic or type.

To automate this process we will integrate Jira directly into the feedback form on the site. When a user creates a piece of feedback, it will be passed directly into Jira where a support ticket is be created. We can then choose to:

- Take action by creating a linked development ticket, following up with the user if necessary.
- Archive the ticket but categorise it for future reporting purposes.
- Communicate further with the user through use of the ticketing system.

This benefits us from a reporting perspective as we will be able to accurately describe how much feedback was received, according to the category of feedback, as well as report on what development was completed as a result.

Annex 1: New item page design