

Workshop Part 1.1: Defining Virtual Museums

Introduction:

However, during the drafting of the "Plea for Virtual Museums," it became increasingly clear that virtual museums cannot be universally defined. Numerous terminologies are used interchangeably with virtual museums, further complicating the attempt at defining them. "The core concept of the virtual museum has not yet been clearly identified, and the delineation of the perhaps subtle difference between digital collections, online archives, and virtual museums has to be clarified." (Schweibenz 2019)

In a workshop format, building upon theoretical and conceptual knowledge, the different (practical) perspectives can be collected, organized, and an attempt at defining virtual museums can be made. Possible guiding questions could include:

1. What constitutes virtual museums e.g. concerning structures, objects, accessibility? What types of VM are there?
2. Which content and themes are suitable for virtual museums?
3. What is the relationship between actual/analog and virtual/digital in museums?
4. In what situations and for what educational tasks is the virtual in museums suitable?

Schweibenz, W. (2019). The virtual museum: an overview of its origins, concepts, and terminology. The Museum Review, 4(1), 1-29.

Definition of museums according to ICOM:

"A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing". (ICOM 2022)

In the following you are provided with excerpts from the manuscript

"Around the clock. Around the world. Plea for virtual museums: An encouragement for the establishment as well as the characteristics, requirements and opportunities of virtual museums" by the working group Forum Virtuelles Museum (2023), to be published soon.

Our definition "Virtual Museum"

(by Theresa Stärk and Isabelle Becker)

"[...] according to the understanding of the authors of this treatise, virtual museums are equivalent, digital alternatives to the physical museums in the metaverse without connecting points to analogue houses. Virtual museums should also be open to the public (possibly for an entrance fee) and use interactive elements to educate, research, exhibit and create an experience for visitors (cf. Hermon/Hazan, 2013). This publication defines the virtual museum as a virtual representation of a collection in its final form, which can have a material or virtual origin. Hybrid forms of the virtual museum such as online collections or digital

exhibitions, which can be assigned to a classic-analogue museum and are traded as an extension of such a museum into digital space, are here distinguished from the purely virtual museum, which has no physical-present equivalent. Objects of such an autonomous virtual museum can be born-digital objects (such as net art, video art and video game art) as well as originally material objects that are reproduced online as digital copies.”

Reports on "new" digitally oriented museums

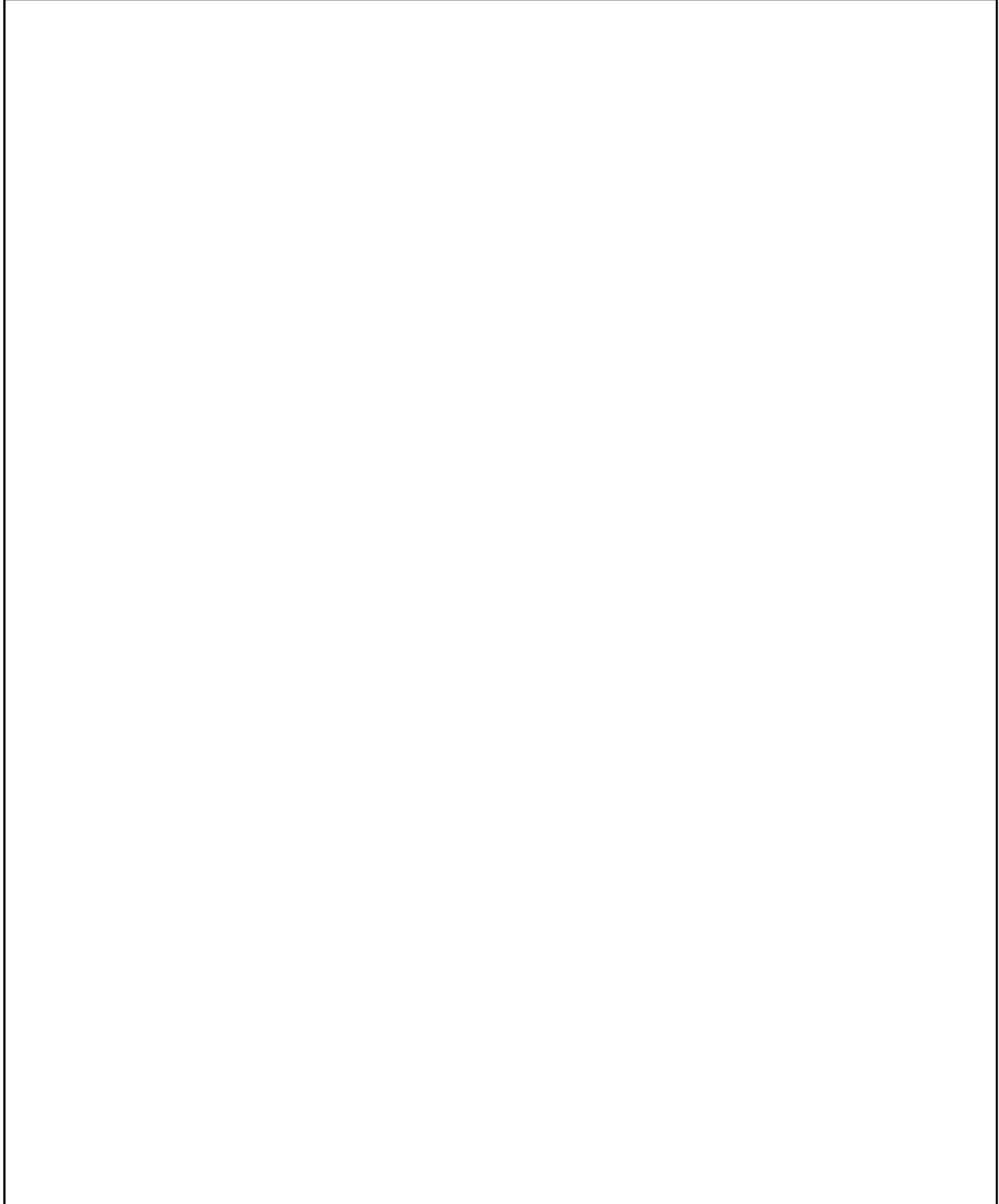
(by Anja Kircher-Kannemann)

<p>1. digital offerings that draw on existing digital collections of other museums, archives or other cultural institutions and process them under special aspects and topics. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Arts and Culture • Europeana • German Digital Library • Cultural Heritage Lower Saxony • Museum digital • Digital State Museum Thuringia • Digital Art Gallery ZDF 	<p>2. digital offerings based on an analogue or partly also digital collection made visible in the digital space in the absence of an analogue space. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Migration Museum • Barnum's American Museum • CIA Museum • Virtual Museum Digital Humanities • Virtual Grimm Museum • Chemnitz Virtual Tram Museum • Virtual Carnival Museum • Nikon Virtual Museum • "The Jeckes" - A Virtual Museum • Winnenden Virtual Town Museum • Virtual Museum of Science • Virtual Museum Culture Makes Potsdam • Virtual Fruit Tree Museum Rhineland • Thomasberg Virtual Museum of Local History • Virtual Museum of Caribbean Migration and Memory
<p>3. digital offerings that are an extension of analogue museums and/or archives. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Museum of Antiquities Göttingen • Saar-Lor-Lux-Alsace Literary Archive • Zeiss Archive • Niederzissen Synagogue • Virtual museum for children and young people • Virtual Museum Tramway • Virtual Museum for Nature Conservation • Virtual Bridge Yard Museum • Museum of the World (British Museum) • Dreams of Dali • Anne Frank - The Back House • eMuseum: Heavenly Ways • West Highland Museum 	<p>4. digital offerings that have no analogue reference and have exclusively digital representation (metaverse).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFC Francisco Carolinum the "first museum for NFT art in the metaverse". • Area for virtual Art • Musée Decentral

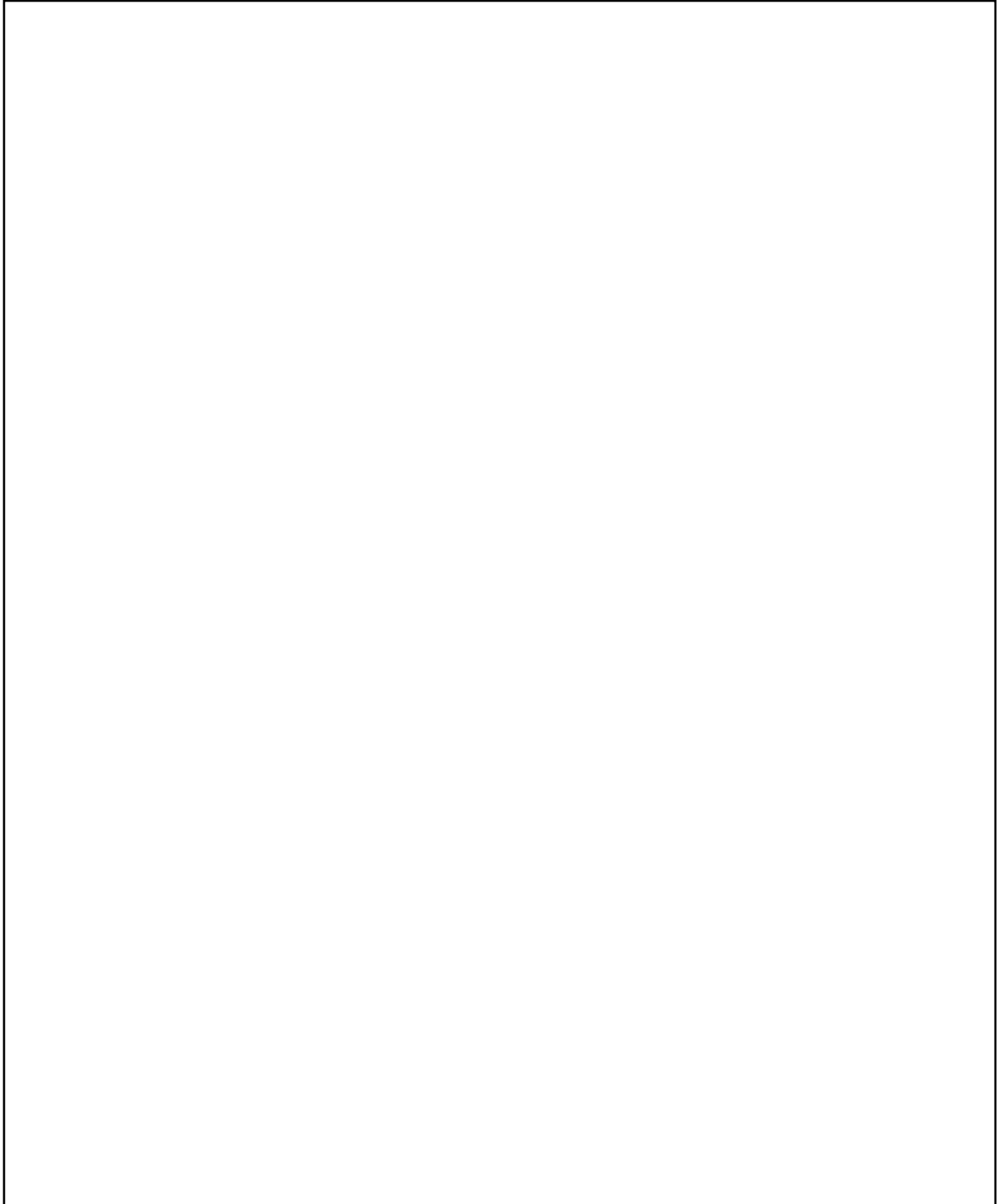
5. v-must: a first EU project

From 2011 to 2014, an EU-funded project *Virtual Museum Transnational Network* ("[v-must](#)") dealt with the topic of virtual museums. However, it was about identifying framework conditions for (future) virtual museums, the term and implications of the concept of virtuality. A glossary and key criteria for virtual museums were developed.

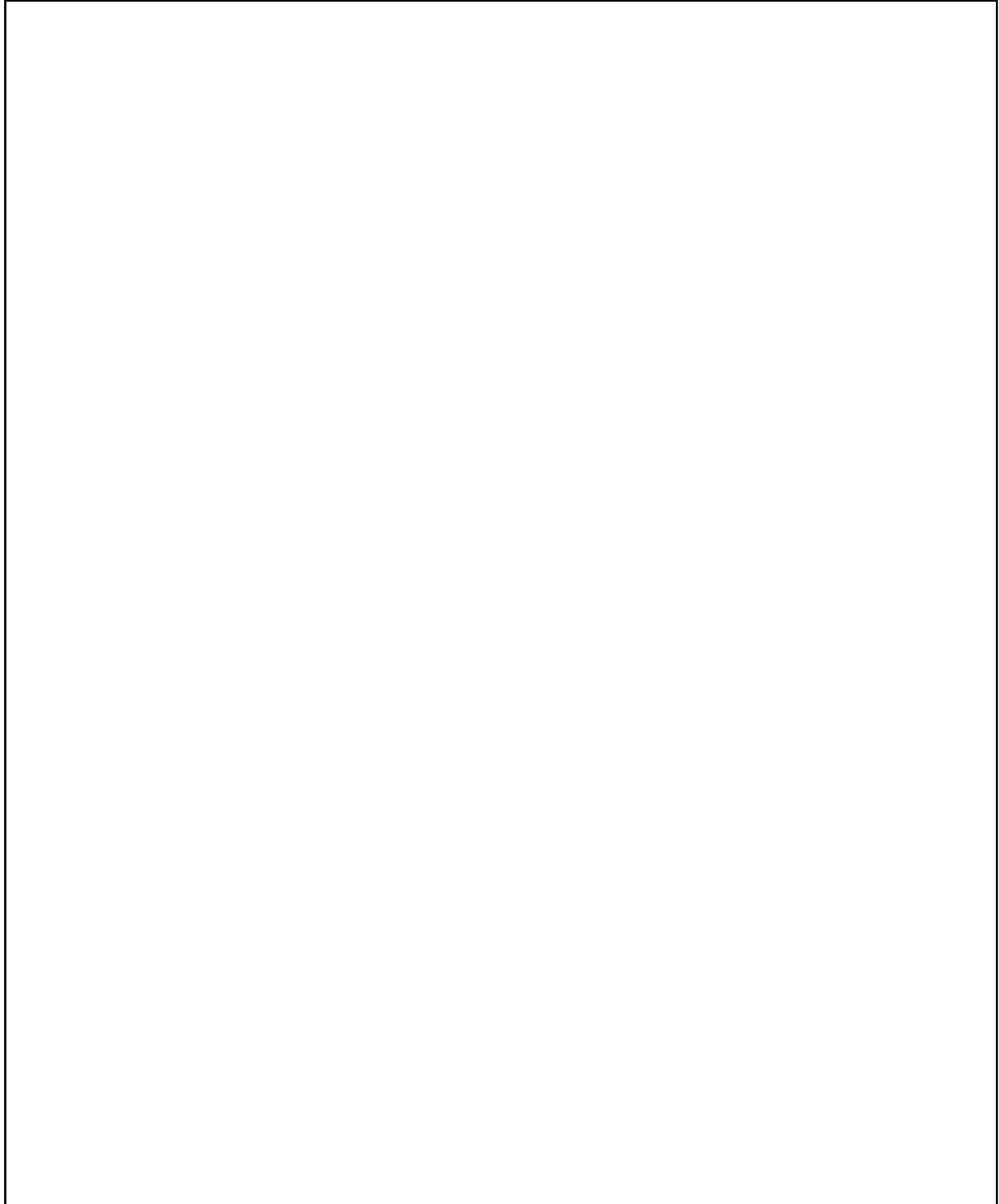
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