

Who | Institutional Profile

Institution	<u>Alonissos Museum</u> of K. and A.MAVRIKIS
Location	Patitiri, Alonissos island, Greece
Short Description	The Alonissos Museum was founded in 2000 by Kostas Mavrikis and his wife Angeliki Agallou. It was the result of much personal work and an immense desire to preserve the island's cultural heritage spanning – literally - thousands of years. The museum functions only during the summer months (May-October) and attracts over 4,500 visitors. In the winter the island of Alonissos is inhabited only by locals and visiting is rather difficult as it is only connected to the port of Volos, which is only accessible through a 4.5-hour boat trip in often rough weather conditions. Among the museum's highlights are the Underwater Archaeology gallery and the Piracy Gallery, the latter being unique to Greece.
Ownership	The museum is privately owned and managed by the Association of Friends of the Museum.
Size	The Museum spreads over three floors, is run by the director and president of the Association of Friends. It has a staff of three people and is assisted by several volunteers. The annual number of visitors is about 4,500-5,000 people, all during the summer months.

Approach to Digital	<p>Input by Kostas Mavrikis</p> <p><i>"Digitising remote museums is the stepping stone to keeping them open: only through approaching their audience in winter months and through reaching out to expats or summer visitors who live abroad/in the cities can the small museums remain in touch with people, a first step to securing visibility and revenue"</i></p>
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What | Case

Project Title	DigiSmALL: Digital Curator for Small Museums
Timeframe	2022-2023

Concept & Approach	<p>DigiSmALL was born out of the need to support small museums of Greece, most of them in remote areas, to have a digital presence and make their material (or at least part of it) available online. Through the plans and efforts to digitise the assets preserved in the Alonissos Museum, we came upon the idea of creating something more than just a digital platform - a digital ecosystem where small museums can find not only display for their 'inner world' but also a friendly community of professionals and peers who will help them take the leap forward, providing the support they have been lacking for a long while. Unfortunately, without this leap their very existence can be jeopardised in an era in which digital presence is no longer a choice but a prerogative.</p> <p>Our story is thus focusing more on connections and mentoring rather than merely on the creation of a 'product'. IT experts, historians, archaeologists, museologists and conservators</p>
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are already gathering at one end of DigiSmALL. At the other end the small museums of Greece are gradually coming in, reluctantly at first, but in definite need of support and solutions. The Alonissos Museum believed that it could evolve into a modern, open museum. It now wants to convey this self-confidence to more museums across the region of Magnesia to begin with, but gradually all over Greece.

During the DOORS pilot implementation period, DigiSmALL built the digital platform which offers small museums (starting from an initial group of four museums led by the Alonissos Museum) the potential to digitise their exhibits, create collections, present themselves through an internet webpage and link it to their social media. Furthermore, the DigiSmALL team has contacted an initial group of experts who are willing to continue supporting the ecosystem and who have undertaken research (through questionnaires) on the digital needs of small museums.

It now aims at enlarging its range of activities through linking up to museologists and conservators who can offer further advice and support.

The ambition and aspiration of all the members of the DigiSmALL team is to see small museums open up and become more trustful, communicative and creative. We have reached a point in which cultural heritage is not just to be preserved for preservation sake. It needs to be an inspiration for future creation, for building new identities based on the older ones and making the past(s) our guide for the future(s). We see DigiSmALL as a valuable tool in this process.

DigiSmALL, Alonissos Museum

Benefits & Impact

The project-product DigiSmALL has created a reliable and affordable solution for the digitisation and digital enhancement of small museums, four to begin with. Based on the feedback of the museums themselves, we were able to create a priority hierarchy of the digital needs of museums and to address each one in perspective.

Thanks to DOORS we understood that we need to shift the small museums' attention to the development of audiences rather than only to funding (which is usually what the museums are looking for). Visibility is the future-proof asset that will help small museums survive in a competitive era.

Limits & Drawbacks

The main challenge for DigiSmALL is to persuade small museums to join this ecosystem and collaborate with the experts for an enhanced shared outcome and a more robust function of the network. Our aim is to reach at least 40 member museums (from Greece or other countries) within the first year after the official launch of DigiSmALL. This will enable us to continue building more functions and services of the DigiSmALL platform. Without any doubt a very active year lies ahead of our team but we are confident and sparkling.

Future Prospects

DigiSmALL is a platform based on community and collaboration. We plan to endow it with digital saleable items, digitally enhanced learning programmes, open online meetings and monthly mentoring offer, digital storytelling space and a collective e-shop. It will thus be a unique museum management system with a low cost threshold and ongoing escort of the museums' advance and progress. As the development and kick off was boosted with the support and mentoring of DOORS programme, we foresee the 'sequel' to be facilitated through Greek national or international projects. And even if no funding comes through, we are now in a position to enlarge the ecosystem of the museums that can benefit from DigiSmALL and work out more solutions activating our collective efforts.

Key Take-Aways

- If we could start DigiSmALL one more time from scratch, we would start with a tandem of museums from inception on. As of now, we have still managed to secure the collaboration of four more museums, alongside the Alonissos Museum, who can test the MVP, openly share experiences and feedback and contribute to the further development.
- We have conducted quantitative research through SurveyMonkey and it was relatively successful (20% responses); however, we would be more successful if we timed it better and with more context-sensitivity in mind, i.e. if we started it in wintertime, when museum staff (in Greece at least) has more time and therefore more available to try new approaches and tools.
- In terms of digital assets and formats, the videos taken in the Alonissos Museum (where Kostas Mavrikis explains his motivation, the origins and aspirations behind the collections) proved to be most efficient and emotionally engaging.
- The first B2B meetings with representatives from the other museums were very touching as they were really happy that they finally had a way to both digitise their exhibits and collections and activate them for the audiences.

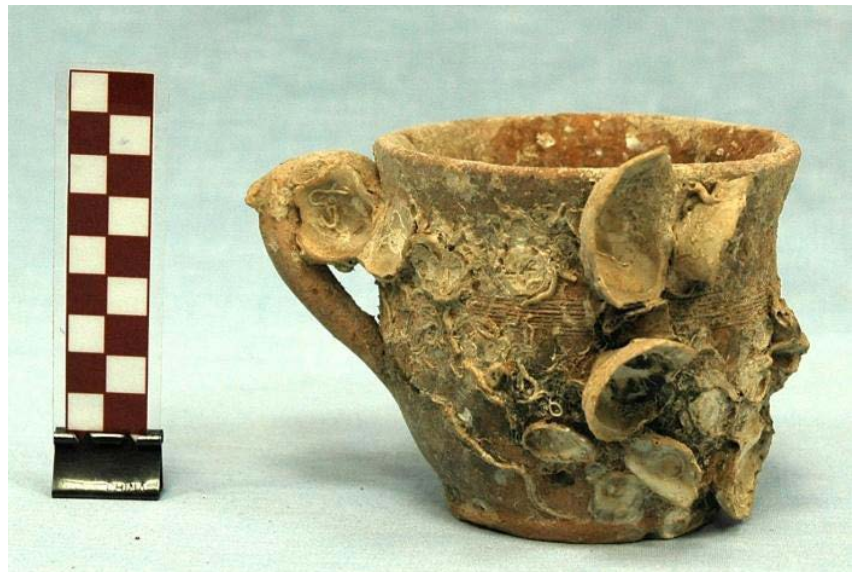
Benefits & Impact

- [Time Heritage](#) (the initial concept)
- [FAB LAB](#) (DSP provider)
- [Simple Lab](#) (sharing the idea and planning its sustainable development)

Examples of some typical exhibits from different museum 's sections
Underwater Archaeology section



Byzantine plate from the shipwrecks of Peristera, Alonissos museum, photograph by Hellenic Ministry of Culture



Byzantine jug (with shells' deposits), Alonissos Museum, photograph by Hellenic Ministry of Culture

Ethnography section



Agricultural tools, Alonissos Museum,
photograph by Afrodit Kamara



Shoes made of seal's leather, Alonissos Museum,
Photographs by Afrodit Kamara

National Memory section



Binoculars and picture of a deceased soldier, Alonissos Museum