Creating digital stories: experience of Vilnius University Library

Brussels, 2023 11 07
Main points

1. About Vilnius University Library (VUL)
2. First digital exhibitions
3. Collaboration with GA&C
4. What’s next?
Jesuit college library
Founded in 1570
Library of state importance

1+1=1 philosophy
Situated in the city Center (Central Library) and
In the student campus (SCI Center)

• Manuscripts – more than 347,000 documents and still growing
• Rare books – more than 165,000 items
• Graphics – over 95,000 artwork

The 19th century collection (circa 150,000 items)
1900-1945 books (over 450,000 items)
Digital collections (20,000 digital objects, ~1.2 million pages)
Some treasures

The first Lithuanian book (M. Mažvydas. *Catechismusa prasty szadei*... Königsberg, 1547)


344 incunabula (Valturio, Roberto. De re militari. [Verona], 1472)

The oldest manuscript from the beginning of the 13th century

600 court books

Collection of cartography and atlases

Portraits of Radvila family, Vilnius Album

19 positions in UNESCO Memory of the world programme national and regional registers
Historical halls

P. Smuglevičius Hall

White Hall
Virtual exhibitions

Since 1998

Collaboration with UNESCO, the first CD in Lithuania

8 exhibitions

https://biblioteka.vu.lt/en/resources/virtual-exhibitions
Historical hall + virtual space

Catechisms of Martynas Mažvydas and Mikalojus Daukša in the virtual hall of J. Lelevelis (2021 04 01)

This virtual tour is created on other platforms - Matterport and Google Street View - but in its form and essence of the idea belongs to the field of digital exhibition.

10000 views in 2 years
VUL in GA&C

Map of Threads. Pages of Athanasius Kircher's books (December, 2019)

Books and Non-Books. 450 years in the treasury of Vilnius University Library (October, 2020)

Stories of fancy paper. A series of five stories (September – October, 2021)

Academic Vilnius: the thesis culture of the old University (parts I and II) (April, 2023)

One story from History of Vilnius (Winter, 2024)

9 stories, 246 items

https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/vilnius-university-library
Viewers (unique visits) by year

- 2019 (1 month): 528
- 2020: 4577
- 2021: 11827
- 2022: 9549
- 2023 (7 months): 3788
Key points

Idea – concept – finding the best way to express
Research
Non-academic – popular science / art
Principle of brevity
Selection of objects (links to Digital Collections of VUL)
Connections between objects (telling a story)
Google editorial review (2 stages)

N.B. main language English
Academic Vilnius (Part I)

Culture of Theses of the Old University

By Vilnius University Library
Research on the dissertations of the old Vilnius University (1579-1773) and creating a database (VUDis)

- The aim of the project - to research and present to the public the published theses of old Vilnius University (1579-1773) and form their digital collection.
- more than 60 items were selected, metadata and descriptions were created
- The first theses in 1583, the oldest surviving theses 1585
- Results: 3 scientific articles, digital collection, virtual exhibition, conference
Theses of the Old Vilnius University

Theses and other scientific papers that were written at the Jesuit Vilnius University (1579–1773) and intended for a public dispute or for gaining scientific degree.

VIEW COLLECTION

Uniate Collection

The Church of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania’s Uniates or Catholics of the Greek Rite was established in 1596 and abolished in 1839.

VIEW COLLECTION
Thesis on Universal Logic written by a student of philosophy Petrus Romulevicius (20 general statements of scholastic logic) to obtain a Bachelor’s degree in liberal arts and philosophy.
Challenges

Physical exhibition / digital collection vs digital story
Time frame of the project
Project team
Ideas
Too much / too little digital content
Final remarks

Ideas – Always have something prepared
Practise – you only gain experience by doing
Discussions produce the best results

Future plans of VUL
• Searching for new ways / places to promote cultural heritage
• Editor’s choice in Digital Collections
• Waiting for digital story dedicated to Vilnius700 to be published
• Generating ideas for 2025
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