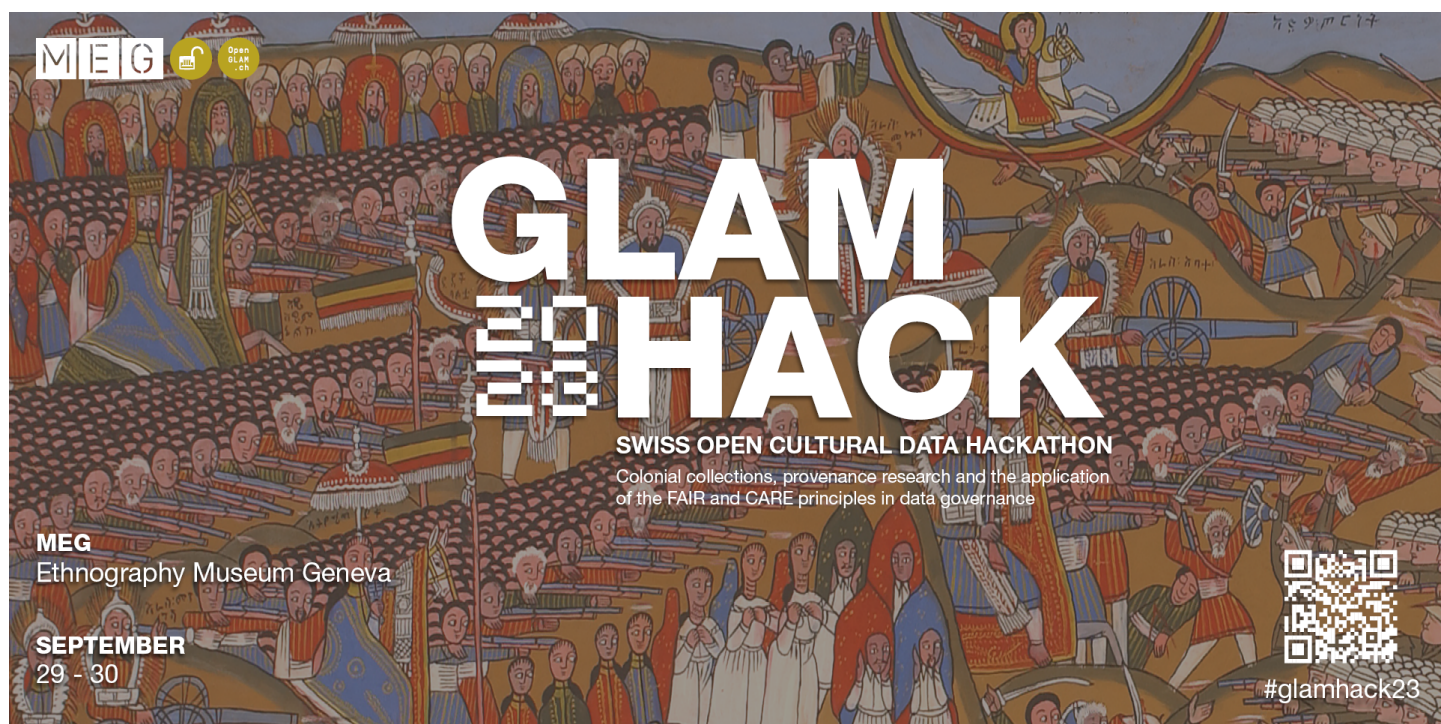




Swiss Open Cultural Data Hackathon 2023

Final Report

Gaston Wey, February 2024 (updated version, September 2024)

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1. Introduction

From September 29 to September 30, 2023, the 9th edition of the Swiss Open Cultural Data Hackathon took place at the Musée d'ethnographie (MEG) in Geneva. The event was organized by the OpenGLAM Working Group of the Opendata.ch association, in collaboration with the MEG, among other partners.

The Swiss Open Cultural Data Hackathon (GLAMhack) was accompanied by a rich side program. In the run-up to the hackathon, four pre-events addressed ethical issues related to the opening up of heritage data/content, challenges and opportunities related to the re-use of colonial collections, as well as indigenous perspectives on data governance.

Thanks to the collaboration with the MEG, OpenGLAM Switzerland was able to deepen its new thematic focus on colonial collections, provenance research, and the application of the FAIR and CARE principles in data governance. The GLAMhack in Geneva was also used as an occasion to strengthen the ties with the French-speaking GLAM community in Switzerland.

This report offers a recap of the outcomes of the event and includes insights for upcoming hackathons. It is based on an evaluation of project objectives and the results of an internal project evaluation. To complement the picture, a summary of the financial result and an outlook is included in the report.



GLAMhack 23 participants at the end of the hackathon, CC BY-SA 4.0.

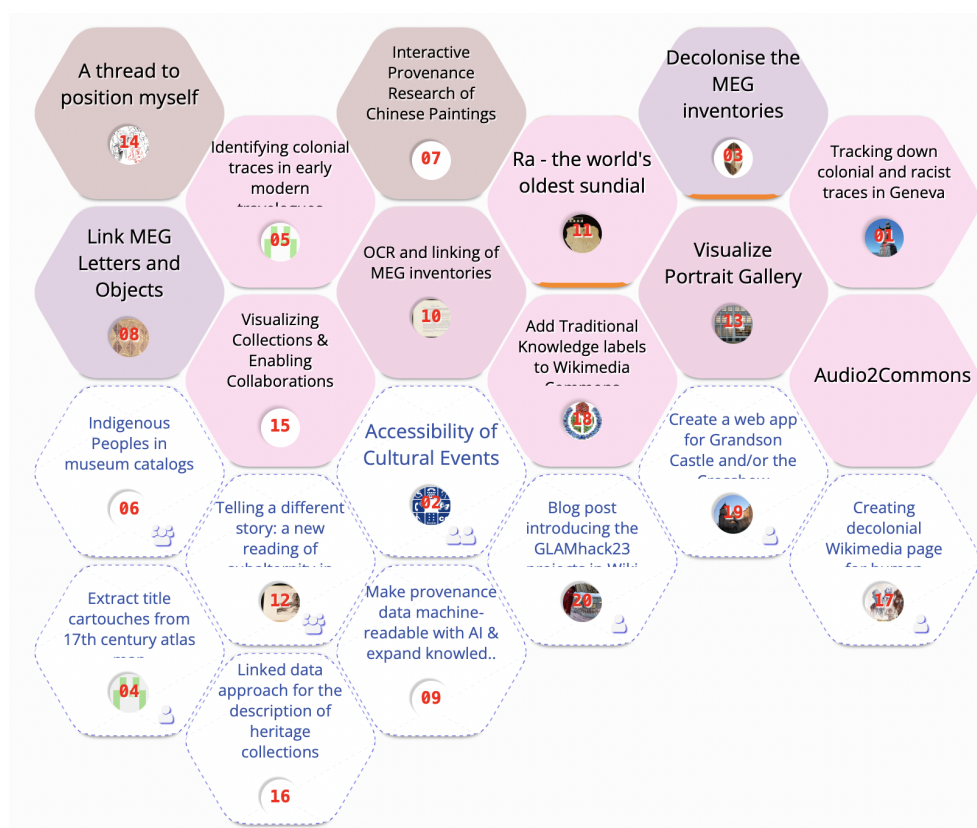
Main Objectives of the GLAMhack 2023

Similar to previous GLAMhack events, the primary goals of the hackathon remained unchanged: The core objectives included bringing diverse stakeholder groups together, providing them with novel and captivating datasets from various data providers, and subsequently encouraging the use of these datasets for the creation of concepts and software prototypes.

At the end of the event, the project teams had the chance to present their outcomes during the concluding presentations. Beyond simply providing a platform for showcasing hackathon projects, the GLAMhack also facilitates connections by allowing teams to meet other individuals from various backgrounds with an interest in cultural heritage.

As is customary, the organizational committee assigned a task force with the responsibility of engaging Swiss heritage institutions and researchers in the Digital Humanities. The goal has been to encourage them to share data and content and to promote awareness about OpenGLAM¹.

The GLAMhack 23 furthermore specifically focused on colonial collections, provenance research, as well as the application of the FAIR and CARE principles in data governance.



Summary of challenges and ideas released both prior to and during the hackathon. The colored hexagons depict the projects actively pursued during the GLAMhack 23, while the white ones are in the "challenge-state," indicating concepts or challenges that were not taken up and worked on by project teams during the event.

¹ <http://openglam.org/principles/>

2. Accomplishments

Individual hackathon projects have been documented on the hackathon platform².

Below, we will briefly assess the extent to which our objectives were achieved within the context of the hackathon.

2.1 Opening up cultural data and content for reuse and making them available at a central location

With new partners and supporters in the *colonial collections and provenance research* field, we were able to add 14 datasets to our database (new total of 218 compared to 204 in 2022). New data sets were provided by the following organizations: Archives de la Ville de Genève, Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire Lausanne BCUL, Bibliothèque de Genève, Ethnographic Museum of Geneva (MEG), Museum Rietberg, PARC - Portal for African Research Collections, Stiftung für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte SKKG in Winterthur, and Zentralbibliothek Zürich.



GLAMhack 23 participants during hacking, CC BY-SA 4.0.

² <https://hack.glam.opendata.ch/event/10>

2.2. Improve the visibility of Swiss heritage data and content

With this year's edition in Geneva, the visibility of OpenGLAM interests could be better promoted in French-speaking Switzerland. Connections across the "Röstigraben" (between German-speaking and French-speaking communities in Switzerland) were reinforced.

2.3 Promoting the use of colonial collections

After the 2022 edition, which was the first in person GLAMhack after COVID-19, we wanted to keep up the drive and hoped for a higher number of participants. At first, the registrations looked very promising. We had a total of 100 registrations before the hackathon. However, of 100 registrants, only 65 turned up and joined one of 12 teams. It appears that no-show rates have significantly increased since COVID-19.

The diverse challenges at GLAMhack aim at exploring the cultural heritage of different regions and communities. As mentioned, this edition focused on colonial collections, provenance research, as well as the application of the FAIR and CARE principles in data governance, which was echoed in the challenges that were presented and addressed during this year's hackathon. An overview can be found on the challenges page³. For example, participants [tracked down colonial and racist traces in Geneva](#) or worked on [interactive provenance research of Chinese paintings](#). They used open cultural data and digital tools to create new ways of exploring and sharing cultural heritage. They learned about new datasets provided by various institutions, experimented with new tools and methodologies, and familiarized themselves with new perspectives, thus enriching their knowledge and skills.

2.4.2 Pre-event and side program

The GLAMhack 23 was accompanied by a rich side program:

The first gathering was held online on June 26, 2023, and featured a presentation by Brigitte Vézina, a legal expert on cultural heritage and intellectual property. She discussed the **challenges and opportunities of opening cultural data, especially in relation to indigenous and traditional knowledge**, and the role of licenses and labels in ensuring ethical and respectful use of such data. The event also included a training session on how to use open data for research and creative purposes.

Following that event, a workshop was held on the 31st of August as part of the LivreABC conference. It introduced the participants to the concept and format of a hackathon, and the main themes of the GLAMhack 23: **colonial collections and digital accessibility**. The participants also had the opportunity to brainstorm and sketch some ideas for projects that could be developed during the GLAMhack 23, and to present them to the organizers and other attendees. The event was led by Marina Berazategui, Gaston Wey and Lionel Walter, who were directly involved in the organization of the GLAMhack 23.

On September 13th, participants had the opportunity to join a presentation on **Local Contexts and Indigenous Data Sovereignty**. This was an online event hosted by Jane Anderson and Corrie Roe, both part of the Local Contexts initiative. They explained how Local Contexts offers a digital labeling system, the Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Biocultural (BC) Labels and Notices, that supports

³ <https://hack.glam.opendata.ch/event/10>

indigenous data governance and cultural authority in collections and data. They also showed how these labels and notices implement the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance and are being used in various settings around the world to enhance and legitimize locally based decision-making and indigenous governance frameworks.

Lastly, on September 28, a workshop entitled "From manuscript register to database: What is a museum inventory?" was held at the MEG library. The workshop, led by MEG's Floriane Morin and Emilie Thévenoz, delved into the MEG's historical and digital inventories. It discussed the composition of the MEG's metadata and the **challenges related to the publication of heritage data, with a focus on balancing accessibility and the respect for intellectual property rights of indigenous communities**. Participants were introduced to the history of Geneva's ethnographic collections and had the opportunity to look at the original handwritten registers, the precursors of the contemporary database.

Side events were off- and online and all were open to anybody who signed up to the event via Hitobito. The different formats of the side-events (input-presentations, tutorials, workshops) enabled the sharing of knowledge, the exchange of experiences, the identification of common goals and challenges as well as the initiation of future collaborations. Some ideas were pursued as projects during the hackathon.

2.4.3 Hackathon (main event)

On Friday morning, around 60 participants arrived at the museum in Geneva. During the two days of the hackathon, intensive work was carried out on all floors of the MEG. Unsurprisingly, most people worked in the library. It is a beautifully furnished library with a lot of light. During the two days, guided tours of the temporary MEG exhibition were offered. This was the perfect way to be inspired by the fantastic collection during the hackathon, and participants thoroughly enjoyed their visit to the MEG Museum. The museum is perfectly suited for a hackathon. It has more than enough space and all the technical infrastructure needed for such an event.

GLAMhack 23 was not only a hackathon, it was a learning experience and introduction to a global movement of activism for cultural data. It contributed to the digital transformation of the GLAM sector and helped to shape the future of open cultural heritage in Switzerland.



Picture of the GLAMhack23 participants during lunch, CC BY-SA 4.0.



GLAMhack 23 participants during hacking, CC BY-SA 4.0.

2.5 Propagating the OpenGLAM principles within the Swiss heritage sector

Regarding the provision of new datasets for GLAMhack 23, the objectives have been met. The organizing committee invested considerable effort in engaging potential data providers, achieving notable success in securing collaborations with new institutions, such as Rietberg Museum. In terms of outreach within the heritage sector, the hackathon's pre-event and side program have demonstrated effectiveness in promoting the OpenGLAM principles. This was accomplished by sharing experiences and showcasing successful projects undertaken by Swiss heritage and research institutions.

3. Potential for Improvement

Several areas for improvement have been identified. The key points highlighted during the internal evaluation meeting and the participants survey are:

- The role of the pre-events in attracting and preparing people for the hackathon should be reconsidered and clarified.
- We need to find an effective way to deal with the relatively high no-show rate.
- We should encourage participation by people from communities concerned by the (colonial) collections. This requires better advertising in the relevant circles.
- Unfortunately, there was no media coverage for GLAMhack 23. We should try to change this in the anniversary year. The media partners should be contacted earlier for this.

4. Outlook

The next GLAMhack 24 in Luzern aims to explore the theme of people being “on the move” throughout history and the reflections of their peregrinations in cultural heritage collections. The anniversary edition of the GLAM hack will thus put a particular focus on making existing collections accessible in a digital environment and fostering multidisciplinary collaboration to create artistic and participatory projects inspired by these materials. This will provide participants with ample opportunities to continue working on collections with a colonial past, such as the ones provided for this year’s edition.



(c) Leo Finotti, Zentralbibliothek Luzern

5. Project Resources

5.1 Financial resources

Table 2 below gives an overview of the financial resources of the project.

Table 2: Overview of financial resources

Item	Budget	Effective Costs/Revenue
Total Expenses	- CHF 60.000,00	- CHF 39.935,00
Food & Beverages	CHF 11.500,00	CHF 8.720,00
Accommodation Youth Hostel/Hostel	CHF 10.000,00	CHF 4.471,50
Project Coordination + Communication	CHF 15.000,00	CHF 20.250,00
Security & Extra Opening of the MEG	CHF 1.000,0	CHF 1.000,00
opendata.ch Contribution to the administrative costs of the opendata.ch association (10% of the overall budget)	CHF 6.000,00	CHF 3.993,500
Hack Tech Infrastructure	CHF 3.000,00	CHF 1.000,00
Side Events	CHF 4.000,00	CHF 0,00
Public Relations & Communication Materials	CHF 2.500,00	CHF 0,00
Onsite Tech Support	CHF 1.500,00	CHF 0,00
Gifts	CHF 500,00	CHF 500,00
Varia / Incidentals	CHF 5.000,00	CHF 0,00
Total Revenues	CHF 60.000,000	CHF 39.935,00
Internal Sponsors	CHF 2.000,00	CHF 935,00
External Sponsors	CHF 58.000,00	CHF 39.000,00
Balance		-CHF0,00

The MEG, as the event's host, supported the event with CHF 1'000 for the communication, social networks and newsletters - in addition to providing the venue for free. The project was kindly supported by the following organizations:

- Hasler Stiftung (CHF 10'000), *deficit guarantee*
- Wikimedia CH (CHF 50'000)
- Ville de Genève, Culture et Transition Numérique (CHF 10'000)
- Ernst Göhner Stiftung (CHF 8'000)
- Corymbo Stiftung (CHF 5'000)

GLAMhack 23 ended up costing approximately CHF 20'000 less than initially budgeted, mainly because of a reduced participant count, resulting in lower expenses for accommodation and catering.

5.1 In-kind contributions

The organization of the event would not have been possible without the substantial in-kind contributions made by several individuals and organizations, most notably by contributing their volunteer and/or staff time:

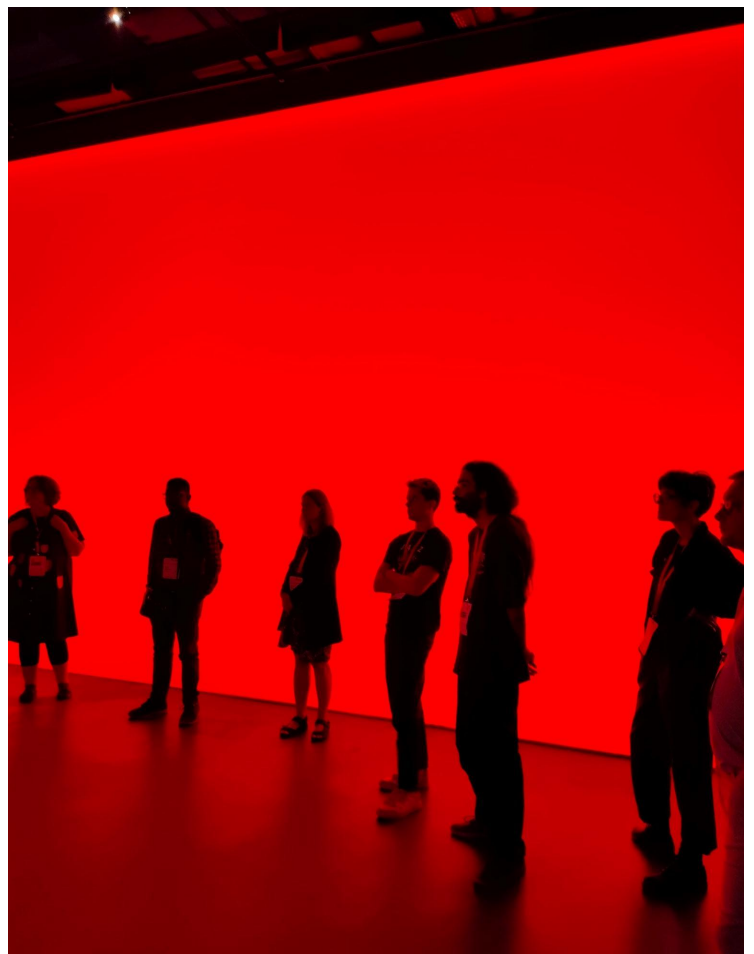
- Marina Berazategui (MEG)
- Grégoire de Ceuninck (MEG)
- Floriane Morin (Conservatrice Afrique, MEG Genève)
- Beat Estermann (Opendata.ch)
- Oleg Lavrovsky (Opendata.ch)
- Dominik Sievi (OpenGLAM)
- Lionel Walter (OpenGLAM)
- Jonas Lendenmann (OpenGLAM)
- Iolanda Pensa (SUPSI, Organisation)

but also by allowing us to use their infrastructure and/or equipment:

- Musée d'ethnographie de Genève, Geneva
- Opendata.ch (online and hardware infrastructure, financial administration)

or by supporting the documentation of the event:

- Infoclio.ch



GLAMhack 23 participants during guided tour, CC BY-SA 4.0.

6. Final Remarks

The GLAMhack 23 was a major success. We managed to find a high-quality partner in the MEG. This enabled us to offer our participants a highly professional environment in which they could work on their projects. Once again, we would like to thank everyone who makes such events possible. Thanks to GLAMhack 23, we will be inspired to tackle the 10th anniversary edition in Lucerne. We hope that we will be able to put on another successful event.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all our sponsors and partners for their invaluable support during the event. We anticipate the prospect of ongoing collaboration and mutual success in the future.

Our Sponsors



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