



Preserving Culture: Italy's New Digital Library

Alex Catti (March 14, 2017)



A new library is coming to Italy, but it's not what you might expect. Cultural Minister Dario Franceschini gave the green light for the Italian Digital Library—an online resource dedicated to the preservation, display, and promotion of Italy's cultural heritage.

A new national archive is about to come to Italy. It's called the Italian Digital Library, and its goal is to preserve, share, and promote the vast history of the boot. According to [Dario Franceschini](#) [2], Minister of Cultural Heritage, Activities, and Tourism, the contents stored in Italy's 101 archives and 46 libraries will be uploaded to the digital library for viewers across the world to access.

As with any cultural preservation project, there is a cost. In this case, two million Euro were allocated to finance the initiative. Franceschini believes that the benefits are well worth the costs. During the culture and tourism conference at Rome's [Accademia dei Lincei](#) [3], the minister stated, "It's an incomparable asset of enormous cultural value, which in the age of the Internet, also means it has a



considerable economic value." The publication of Italy's cultural patrimony on the Internet will make the content global, not only local. Italian institutions will now be able to share the country's history with individuals abroad, without having to pay duties and taxes to ship material internationally. This comes as a big financial help for small cultural institutions.

The contents of the digital library will include both books and photographs. There are approximately 10 million photographs between [L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa \(Istituto Luce\)](#) [4] and [Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia](#) [5] alone. The [Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Activities, and Tourism \(MiBACT\)](#) [6] will coordinate the digitalization of Italy's cultural patrimony under its branch called the [Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione \(ICCD\)](#) [7]. Naturally, an initiative of this scale will take a bit of time to complete. Franceschini shared his thoughts: "It's going to be a job that will take several years, but in the end it's going to be a great outcome."

During the conference, Franceschini also emphasized some of the most salient points during his three years as cultural minister. The highlights include the growth of MiBACT's budget to 2.1 billion Euro; a concorso (competitive exam) for 500 cultural professionals; and the Art Bonus that saw 4,300 sponsors donate 158 million Euro to 1,150 different projects.

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