

The European Film Gateway

The online portal European Film Gateway accessible at www.europeanfilmgateway.eu gives access to digitised collections from currently 39 film archives and cinémathèques from across Europe. Developed within the EU-funded project “EFG – The European Film Gateway” between 2008 and 2011 and enhanced in the framework of the follow-up project EFG1914 (2012-2014), the EFG is the official online portal of the Association of European Cinematheques (ACE) and is used by ACE member archives but also non-ACE members to promote their digital collections jointly online to a trans-national audience.


The EFG portal currently gives access to over 700,000 objects held by the participating institutions. Collections available on EFG contain such diverse archival materials as photos, posters, film set drawings, newsreels, feature and short films from the silent as well as the sound film era and text documents like film programmes and censorship documents, to name but a few. A specific thematic focus of EFG is on the First World War, offering the largest international collection of films from the First World War era online. However, EFG also features collections and individual objects from all other eras of film history.

The European Film Gateway and VICTOR-E

VICTOR-E unites scholars of non-fiction film from four European countries with film archives and combines archival research, media literacy, oral histories and public history to provide context for previously digitized as well as newly digitized content. One way to make the results of the project publicly available is the EFG: Researchers working on the VICTOR-E project collaborate with EFG to make a curated collection of films and contextual materials available online. These films have partly already been digitised, other will be digitised in the course of the project. The selected films will be made searchable through the EFG portal where they will be featured in a dedicated area towards the end of the project.

In addition, excerpts from relevant films will be included in a Virtual Exhibition, which presents the research results to scholars and the general public and helps further our understanding of how audiovisual media shape notions of public space as a site of commemoration and political and social action.

VICTOR-E currently has three officially associated archival partners. They are Narodni Filmovy Archiv (Prague), DFF - Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum (Frankfurt) and Archivio Nazionale del Cinema d'Impresa (Ivrea), two of which already contribute to EFG, while the Archivio Nazionale will be connected during the project.

VICTOR-E explicitly invites archives holding films that document public spaces, particularly after war damage and during reconstruction efforts, to become associated partners too and make selected films relevant to the project available to a wider public on the EFG portal or in the VICTOR-E Virtual Exhibition. 

Contributing to the European Film Gateway

Any film archive, cinémathèque or cultural heritage institution with film collections is invited to contribute to EFG. It is important to point out that EFG does not store the actual digital objects centrally, but just the metadata describing it. Archives connected to EFG host their materials themselves, while EFG only links to the objects. This way the contributing archives retain control over their digitized resources, while links to the objects provide seamless access to the resource for the users of EFG. The following main prerequisites need to be met by any archive wishing to making objects searchable via EFG:

- a) The collection or objects to be made available through EFG must be available online and accessible freely, i.e. not geo-blocked or behind a pay wall.
- b) The contributing archive must contribute descriptive and technical metadata related to each object either in XML or in a spreadsheet template provided by EFG.
- c) Each record provided to EFG must contain a link to the object so that it can be displayed on EFG.

In order to increase the number of digital objects accessible via the EFG portal, we welcome data contributions from all film institutions across Europe. EFG is connected to Europeana, the European digital library that allows its users to search through the online collections of over 5,000 European libraries, museums, archives and audiovisual archives. By contributing to EFG, film archives and cinémathèques can also deliver their data to the Europeana portal.

To find out more about your possibilities and the conditions to get involved with VICTOR-E and EFG, please get in touch with: Andrea Haller at haller@tfm.uni-frankfurt.de or Julia Welter at welter@dff.film

Find more information on the EFG portal at europeanfilmgateway.eu