

Case Study

BabelMed

The screenshot shows the BabelMed website interface. At the top, there's a header with the logo and language options (FRA, ENG, العربية, ITA). Below that is a large banner image of a beach. A search bar and navigation menu are visible. The main content area features several article teasers with images and titles, including 'Trans-culturelle', 'L'histoire de Nora et de l'équipe nationale de football', and 'Après match'. There are also sections for 'PAGE D'ACCUEIL', 'AGENDA', and 'NEWS'.

Profile

Website's name / Domain	http://www.babelmed.net
Country of origin	Italy
Geographical scope	Regional, National, European
Language/s / tackling of language issues	The website is available in English, French, Italian and Arabic

Website owner

Contact	Babelmed.net Via Bolzano, 14 00198 Rome Italy Tel: +39 06 85355928 Fax: +39 06 85382960 e-mail : info@babelmed.net
Type of organisation	Non-profit organisation
Description of the owner organisation	Babelmed is a non-profit organisation established in 2001 in Rome and supports especially intercultural dialogue and mobility. This multilingual network has been established by Mediterranean journalists and aims at promoting Mediterranean intercultural dialogue and understanding by presenting the contemporary and dynamic cultural scene in the Mediterranean and Europe.

Importance of the website within the organisation structure

The website functions as the main communication and presentation facility for BabelMed's aims and goals to foster dialogue, debate and mobility in Mediterranean and European culture.

Description of the website's mission and objectives including the main activities of the website and which domains and disciplines are addressed, as well as how the accomplishment of the mission is facilitated

The site aims to be a link between actors, events and cultural production in the Mediterranean and to provide independent information on a wide range of issues. Babelmed's main goal is to provide information on cultural issues in the Mediterranean in a free and politically independent fashion. To this day, it has no equivalent on the Internet. Babelmed is a totally independent electronic medium.

A part of the website is dedicated to the EU project "Meeting the Other" as part of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, which aims at giving "greater visibility to the cultural expressions and artistic productions from immigrant communities" by posting articles on established multicultural websites like BabelMed. Babelmed has decided to include the website Babelmedfestival.org, created in the context of the project "Meeting the Other", in another project of cultural journalism and investigations, called "Tahqiq Sahafi", funded by the Anna Lindh Foundation, the René Seydoux Foundation and Babelmed. New features will be published from February until September 2010 on Babelmedfestival.org, where also blog space for artists and the public is available.

The site offers more than 300 links with the main cultural actors in the Mediterranean.

Website facilities

Kind of facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog (Links to two blogs) • Comment function on the blog • Newsletter • Picture galleries 	
Member / non-member facilities	Partly member facilities	
Importance within the website content	The website's main focus lies on distributing information about the arts, cultural development and policy. Furthermore, the two implemented blogs facilitate users to comment on different issues. The variety of links concerning museums, newspapers and festivals in the Mediterranean is an important part of the website.	
Frequency of usage	Number of visitors (monthly):	30,000 (during the 'Meeting the Other' project)
	Frequency and number of uploads of contributors:	No information
	Frequency of website updating by the website owner:	No information
Does the website show any results for working communication and debate on a European / cross-border level?	The website has a section concerning the European Year of Intercultural dialogue, which is not regularly updated but shows the effort to enhance European communication and shows results achieved during 2008.	

Evaluation of the website

Mission and objectives, accomplishment of mission	Attitude towards the European idea, incorporation of the European idea	The website's main focus is the Mediterranean dialogue and exchange of cultural ideas and productions. Nevertheless, the website shows the intention to increase intercultural dialogue further incorporating the countries of the European Union.
	Cultural values	The website represents mainly intercultural dialogue by reporting about cultural activities across the Mediterranean. Furthermore, the website's values include inclusion and accessibility; many articles focus on marginalised groups like immigration communities and arts. Besides cultural topics and the arts, BabelMed publishes articles about politics in the Mediterranean.
Presentation, navigation, structure	The website's structure and navigation could in some parts be simplified but the presentation is appealing. The website offers a large amount of content which makes it sometimes less easy to find all information directly.	
Trustfulness	The website has been established by journalists to foster independent dialogue about culture in Europe and beyond and the website has been supported within the project 2008 The Year of Intercultural Dialogue.	
Main strength	Main strengths are the variety of information about cultural activity in different countries as well as the large number of links.	
Main drawback	Main drawback is the lack of direct communication facilities like a forum or a commenting possibility for all articles on the website.	
Usage of communication facilities	The communication facilities are frequently used but the variety of user contribution could be enhanced.	

Vision and recommendation of website owners

Recommendations for the European Commission	<p>European Commission should find ways of more sustainable funding and financing of 'virtual culture' projects after the initiation phase which have managed to already obtain some financing and which can demonstrate a real networking capacity and a demonstrable success.</p> <p>The European virtual landscape needs to involve young</p>
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Vision of further development of the website

people, artists, musicians, cultural operators, journalists, writers, bloggers. To make this possible, the European Commission needs to involve young citizens of different countries in cultural projects which are close to the interest of the civil society, of small cultural associations, of students, of young people who want to find a job in the cultural sphere. Therefore, the European funds should be more "attainable" for smaller initiatives and actors not familiar with the jargon language of the European funding programmes.

A virtual community needs funds to maintain their software, to pay collaborators and technical support, to continue its operation and to pursue its aim.

The website Babelmedfestival.org needs funds to finance the production, translation and publication of articles and multimedia contents realized by young artists and journalists of the network.

The idea is to also create an Arabic version of the website, to give more visibility to the artists speaking Arabic who live in European countries or in the Mediterranean. In the Arabic world, there are not many spaces to show artworks and to have a virtual space of visibility. Babelmed would like to give this possibility to young artists who are looking to increase their artistic competences in comparison with other creators of the Euro-Mediterranean region.