



Swiss Open Cultural Data Hackathon 2024

Final Report

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1. Introduction

From 6 to 7 September 2024, the 10th anniversary edition of the Swiss Open Cultural Data Hackathon (short: “GLAMhack”) took place at the Zentral- und Hochschulbibliothek (ZHB) in Lucerne. The event was organized by the OpenGLAM Working Group of the Opendata.ch association in collaboration with the ZHB (among other partners).

The GLAMhack was accompanied by a rich side program. An afternoon workshop on 5 September 2024 gave the opportunity to deep dive into the intersection of cultural heritage and digital tools, fostering discussions and collaborations aimed at leveraging open data for creative and scholarly endeavors. The pre-hackathon program then continued with an “OpenGLAM Night”. This celebratory evening provided a stage to the “CultureFLOW” project in collaboration with the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) in Mexico. The event highlighted the richness of cultural exchange and the interconnectedness of global artistic communities.

During the two days of the hackathon, the participants then focused on challenges around this year’s topic “on the move”. Following this theme, the objective of the GLAMhack 24 was to trace the movements of individuals to and from Switzerland and further away, capturing the imprints they have left within cultural heritage collections, such as images or letters. The aim was to reintroduce these historical footprints to present-day users. Thanks to the collaboration with the ZHB as this year’s host, valuable new data sets were made available to build projects around this theme.

This report offers a recap of the outcomes of the event and includes learnings that will be taken up in future hackathons. It is based on an internal project evaluation as well as a feedback survey that was shared with participants of the event. To complete the picture, a summary of the financial result as well as an outlook to the next edition of the GLAMhack is presented.



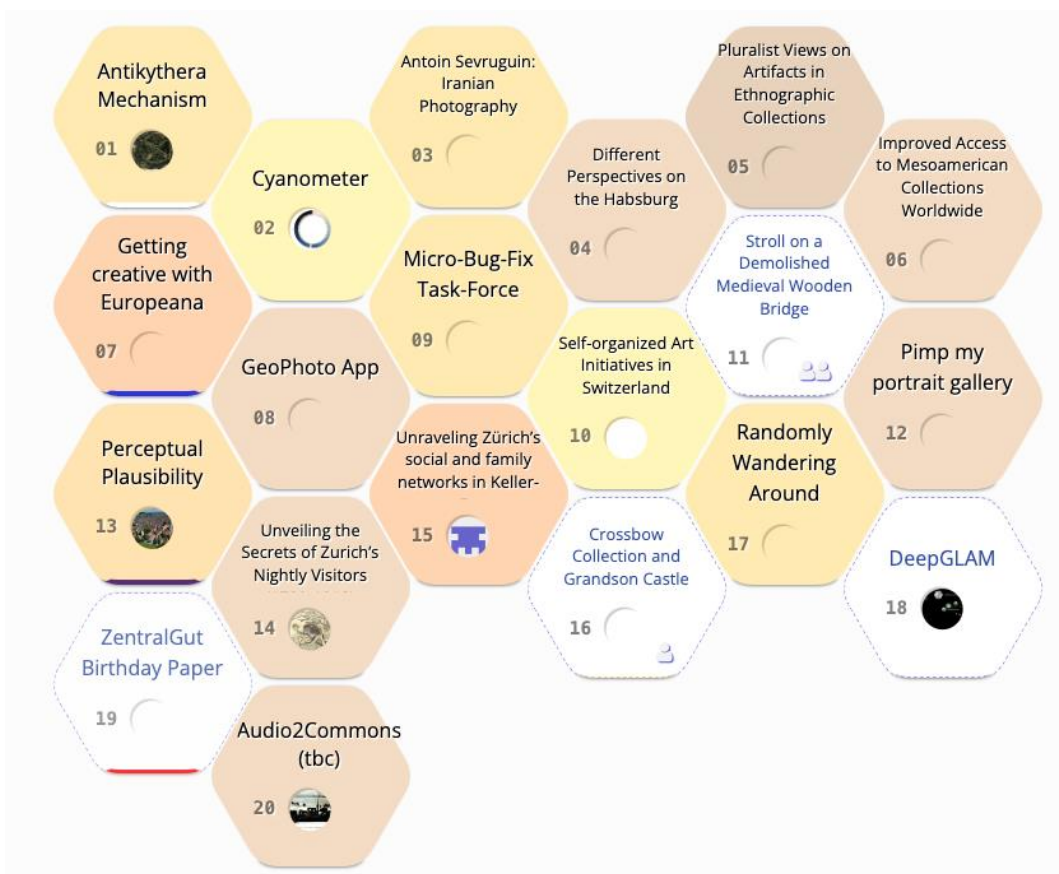
GLAMhack 24 participants at the end of the hackathon. Photo by Jan Baumann. CC BY-SA 4.0.

2. Main Objectives of the GLAMhack 2024

As for previous editions of the GLAMhack, the primary goals of the hackathon remained unchanged: They 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 softwares prototypes.

At the end of the event, the project teams were given the opportunity to present their outputs during the final presentations. Beyond simply providing a platform for showcasing hackathon projects, the GLAMhack also facilitates connections by allowing participants to meet other individuals from various backgrounds with an interest in cultural heritage and collaborating with them during the two days of the hackathon.

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 was to encourage these stakeholders to share data and content and to promote awareness of OpenGLAM principles¹.



¹ <http://openglam.org/principles/>

² <https://hack.glam.opendata.ch/event/12>

3. Accomplishments

Individual hackathon projects have been documented on the hackathon platform³. Below, we will briefly assess the extent to which our objectives have been achieved within the context of the hackathon and the pre- and side-events.

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

The organizing committee invested considerable effort in engaging potential data providers, achieving notable success in securing collaborations with new institutions. With these new partners gained during the GLAMhack 24 project, we were able to add 12 datasets to our database. As some old datasets have been removed, however, the total count of datasets went down to 213 in 2024 compared to 218 in 2023. New data sets were provided by the following organizations: Bibliothek Zug, Municipal Archives of the City of Lucerne, Tourist Board of Luzern Tourismus AG, Museum Rietberg, Swiss National Library, Zentral- und Hochschulbibliothek Luzern and Zentralbibliothek Zürich.



GLAMhack 24 participants during hacking at the ZHB Luzern. Photo by Anna Sigrist. CC BY-SA 4.0.

³ <https://hack.glam.opendata.ch/event/12>

3.2 Improve the visibility of Swiss heritage data and content

This year's edition of the GLAMhack again promoted the visibility of Swiss heritage data and content among a wide audience. Significant in this regard is that 38 (or 56%) of the 68 hackathon participants were first-time participants, which means that the GLAMhack works as a tool not just for bringing together the existing community but also for enlarging it and attracting new interested people.

3.3 Promoting the reuse of cultural data/content

The projects presented at the final presentations displayed broad diversity in their content, but also in the approaches chosen to tackle the respective challenges, paying tribute to the creativity, imagination and innovative thinking of the teams. One team for instance developed a prototype of a web app challenging visitors to find specific points of interest and allowing them to compare today's scenery with historical pictures of the very same monument. Another project under the name "Pimp my portrait gallery" worked with portraits of the gallery of remarkable people of Lucerne and animated them to talk and tell their own stories. Particularly entertaining was the presentation of the Bug fixing task force project, which supported the different teams with bugs encountered throughout the two days of project work.

3.4 Fostering the exchange and cooperation among stakeholders from various backgrounds

A key objective both for the main hackathon event and the various pre- and side-events is to connect people from different institutions and professional backgrounds and fostering exchange and cooperation between them. The following two paragraphs describe to what extent and how this goal has been achieved both for the pre-event and side program and for the main hackathon event.

3.4.1 Pre-event and side program

The GLAMhack 24 was accompanied by a rich side program. The event in Lucerne started on Thursday afternoon at Neubad with a workshop on the collaboration between the digital humanities and GLAM, organized in collaboration between DARIAH-CH and the OpenGLAM Working Group. Around 20 participants from various backgrounds worked out the challenges, opportunities and key success factors for the GLAM - Digital Humanities collaboration and identified activities that should be taken up in the short and long term. The outputs of this session will be crucial to officially launch the DARIAH-CH GLAM Working Group early in 2025 and reinforce the existing collaboration in these fields.

The evening continued in a celebratory spirit with the OpenGLAM Night, which started off with a presentation of the CultureFLOW project in collaboration with BUAP in Mexico. Students in visual arts from BUAP presented their artistic creations on objects from Mexico-related heritage collections in Switzerland in a livestream between BUAP and the event in Lucerne. The artists shared their experiences during their creative process, which in one case involved getting in touch with the Lipan people (the south-easternmost Apache tribe living across the border between Texas and Mexico). A projection by Oleg Lavrovsky rounded up the evening's program.



Presentation of the CultureFLOW project during the OpenGLAM Night at Neubad in Lucerne. Photo by Anna Sigrist. CC BY-SA 4.0.

3.4.2 Hackathon (main event)

On Friday morning, around 70 participants arrived at the Moderne in Lucerne for the opening of this year's hackathon. After a welcome and introduction of the theme and the different challenges, participants split up into teams and worked on their projects at the ZHB Lucerne. The ambiance in the library's different rooms provided a perfect environment for focused collaboration and creative problem-solving.

Both the participants' feedback in the post-event survey and the analysis of the participant list confirm that the GLAMhack 24 was successful in bringing together people from various backgrounds and fostering exchange and cooperation between them. The list of participants reveals that people from more than 37 institutions took part in the hackathon, with their roles ranging from data providers and experts to Wikipedians to software programmers and researchers. Diversity in terms of participants' gender was similar to previous years (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: GLAMhack participants by gender and year⁴

Gender	2017 (N = 94 of 98)	2018 (N = 66 of 69)	2019 (N = 33 of 33)	2020 (N = 68 of 68)	2021 (N = 95 of 98)	2022 (N = 53 of 53)	2024 (N = 68 of 68)
Female	37%	39%	12% ↓ **	44% ↑ **	43%	37%	32%
Male	63%	61%	88% ↑ **	56% ↓ **	57%	62%	65%
Non-binary ⁵	n/A	n/A	n/A	n/A	n/A	n/A	3%

Changes marked * are significant at the 0.10 level; those marked ** are significant at the 0.05 level. The 2019 edition had a different, 3-day make-a-thon format.

The qualitative answers given by participants in the post-event survey also indicate that the mix of participants and the opportunity to exchange and collaborate with people from different backgrounds and institutions was one of the key positive highlights of the event.



GLAMhack 24 participants during final presentations. Photo by Anna Sigrist. CC BY-SA 4.0.

3.5 Propagating the OpenGLAM principles within the Swiss heritage sector

The GLAMhack as well as the related pre- and side-events presented above have again proven to be valuable tools for the outreach within the heritage sector in Switzerland and even attracted some

⁴ No official list of participants has been recorded for the GLAMhack23, hence that year is missing in this table.

⁵ The category “non-binary” has only been introduced with the GLAMhack24, hence no data for previous editions are available.

participants from abroad. The publication of new datasets as referenced under paragraph 3.1 as well as the projects implemented during the hackathon are effective ways to propagate the OpenGLAM principles and enable participants and partners to not just learn about them on a theoretical level but also apply them directly to their work done in the context of the hackathon.

3.6 Involving artists in the GLAMhack – the CultureFLOW method

In September 2023, the Bern Academy of the Arts and the Opendata.ch association invited the BUAP to join a project application to Pro Helvetia under the lead of OpenGLAM.AT, entitled “CultureFLOW: Recollecting Peregrinations”. Both Opendata.ch and OpenGLAM.AT have numerous years of experience in carrying out hackathons in the field of cultural heritage. In both cases, artists represent a rather marginal group among hackathon participants. The goal of the project therefore was to implement and disseminate a novel method (termed “CultureFLOW”) for the facilitation of artistic creative processes that engage with collective memories, both in the form of heritage artifacts and in the form of living memories, thereby reenacting and reinterpreting them in a co-creative approach involving interested publics.

Following an initial exchange around the project application, BUAP signaled their interest in widening the cooperation around the theme of Open GLAM / digital transformation of the heritage sector. For this purpose, they invited Beat Estermann as a visiting scholar to Puebla in spring 2024. While the initial project application to Pro Helvetia was not granted (the decision was communicated in February 2024), the parties agreed to move forward with a pilot implementation of the CultureFLOW method in view of the 10th edition of the Swiss cultural hackathon (GLAMhack) in Lucerne in September 2024, involving around 35 students at BUAP and several heritage institutions in Switzerland.

In addition to the pilot implementation of the CultureFLOW methodology at BUAP, the common activities in Puebla, led by Beat Estermann and Sandra Palacios, included a seminar at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales de la BUAP (ARPA) on the Digital Transformation of the Heritage Sector (6 lessons), a Public Lecture at the BUAP Central Library, as well as talks with several BUAP representatives in view of the bootstrapping of an Open GLAM programme in the State of Puebla. The activities that were implemented in spring 2024 are shown in green in figure 1 below. The GLAMhack 24 was instrumental in discussing perspectives of propagating the approach to further countries and in securing funding for the planned GLAM hackathon in Puebla in 2025.

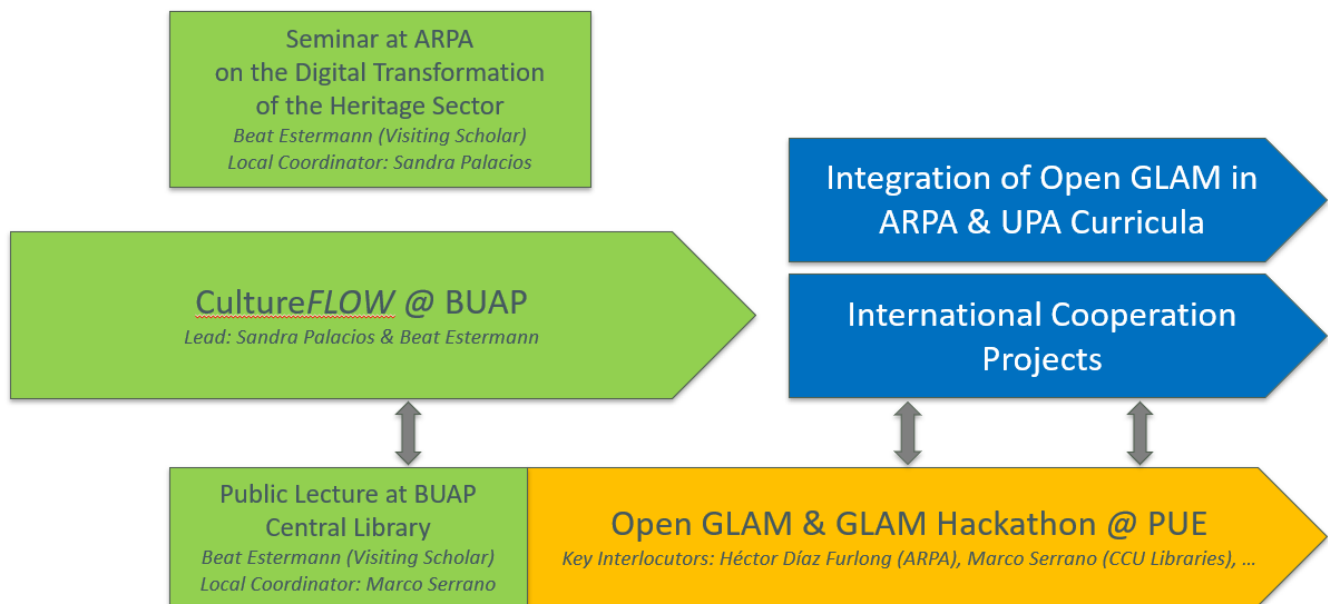


Figure 1: Bootstrapping an Open GLAM Programme for the State of Puebla

While this cooperation will continue, the pilot implementation of the CultureFLOW method in Puebla, alongside rather unsuccessful attempts to involve more artists in Switzerland, has demonstrated that it is possible to involve artists in the GLAMhack on a larger scale, but only if a dedicated, longer-term program, specifically targeted at artists, is implemented. Moreover, in the case of BUAP, the students actively involved in the artistic projects are able to get their involvement recognized as a social engagement activity, which forms an integral part of their curriculum. This in turn raises the question how artists involved in a Swiss context could(/should) be retributed for their conceptual work. For larger artistic projects, separate efforts need to be made to secure the necessary funding for their implementation.

4. Potential for Improvement

Several areas for improvement have been identified based on the internal project evaluation meeting and the feedback from the post-event survey. The key points that will be crucial for the organization of future hackathon events are:

- The threshold for participation should be lowered by communicating the invitation in a more open and inclusive way and providing opportunities for onboarding to first time participants of the hackathon. This could be either in the form of events prior to or side events during the hackathon.
- The sharing of skills and knowledge during the hackathon should be further encouraged, e.g. by more actively supporting the group building phase to ensure diversity of background, level of experience and skills in the different teams, or by providing small introductory sessions to commonly used tools.
- Project management could be improved by more clearly assigning roles and responsibilities to the different people and institutions involved and ensuring a handover between previous and future host institutions.

5. Outlook

The 11th edition of the GLAMhack will be hosted by the Stiftung für Kunst, Kultur und Gesellschaft (SKKG) in Winterthur. It will take place from 13 to 15 November 2025 at the SKKG campo. The hackathon will focus on creating connections between the digital and the analog worlds thanks to physical cultural spaces, such as the one that is planned at the new campo.



The hackathon theme and method will be further refined following this year's GLAMhack and the above-mentioned potential for improvement will be reflected in the way the GLAMhack is organized and structured.

6. Project Resources

6.1 Financial resources

The table below gives an overview of the financial resources of the project.

Table 2: Overview of resources and expenses

Item	Budget	Effective Costs / Revenue
Total Expenses	- CHF 60.000,00	- CHF 42.258,20
Food & Beverages	CHF 11.500,00	CHF 10.000,00
Accommodation Youth Hostel/Hostel	CHF 10.000,00	CHF 5.580,10
Project Coordination + Communication	CHF 15.000,00	CHF 15.275,00
opendata.ch Contribution to the administrative costs of the opendata.ch association (10% of the overall budget)	CHF 6.000,00	CHF 4.100,00
Hack Tech Infrastructure	CHF 2.800,00	CHF 2.800,00
Side Events	CHF 4.000,00	CHF 1.686,35
Public Relations & Communication Materials	CHF 2.500,00	CHF 620,50
Onsite Tech Support	CHF 2.700,00	CHF 0,00
Gifts	CHF 500,00	CHF 499,50
Varia / Incidentals	CHF 5.000,00	CHF 1.696,75
Total Revenues	CHF 50.000,00	CHF 29.500,00
Internal Sponsors	CHF 2.000,00	CHF 2.000,00
External Sponsors	CHF 58.000,00	CHF 27.500,00
Balance		-CHF 12.758,29

The ZHB, as the event's host, supported the event with CHF 10'000 for the rental of the locations as well as the catering during the hackathon. Furthermore, the project was kindly supported by the following organizations:

- Wikimedia CH (CHF 8'000)
- Stadt Luzern (CHF 3'000)
- Corymbo Stiftung (CHF 3'000)
- Swiss National Data and Service Center for the Humanities (DaSCH) (CHF 2'000)
- Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana (SUPSI) (CHF 1'000)
- Luzern Tourismus (CHF 500)

GLAMhack 24 ended up costing approximately CHF 17'000 less than initially budgeted, mainly because of a reduced participant count, resulting in lower expenses for accommodation and catering.

6.2 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:

- Beat Estermann (Opendata.ch)
- Beat Mattmann (ZHB Luzern)
- Benjamin Flämig (ZHB Luzern)
- Birk Weiberg (HSLU)
- Christian Erlinger (ZHB Luzern)
- Enrico Natale (infoclio.ch)
- Gaston Wey (Opendata.ch)
- Jonas Baumann (infoclio.ch)
- Jonas Lendenmann (OpenGLAM)
- Juliette Wyler (ZHB Luzern)
- Lionel Walter (OpenGLAM)
- Nicole Casty (ZHB Luzern)
- Oleg Lavrovsky (Opendata.ch)
- Pierre-Louis Blanchard (Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum)
- Sandra Becker (Wikimedia CH)
- Sandra Palacios (BUAP)
- Simone Rosenkranz (ZHB Luzern)

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

- Zentral- und Hochschulbibliothek Luzern
- Opendata.ch (online and hardware infrastructure, financial administration)

or by supporting the documentation of the event:

- infoclio.ch

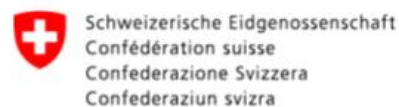
7. Final Remarks

As the project evaluation and the feedback from participants shows, the GLAMhack 24 has been a very successful event. With the ZHB Luzern as a high-quality partner for this anniversary edition, we managed to offer participants a highly professional and stimulating environment in which they could get creative and work on their projects. Once again, we would like to thank everyone who has contributed to making this event possible. We are looking forward to taking the great spirit from our anniversary GLAMhack into next year's edition and continuing the successful series of our yearly hackathon events.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all our sponsors and partners for their invaluable support before and during the event. We cherish the prospect of continuing these collaborations and building on our mutual success in the future.



Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana



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PTT-Archiv



BUAP