Cultural material in the digital age: Some issues around preservation and access

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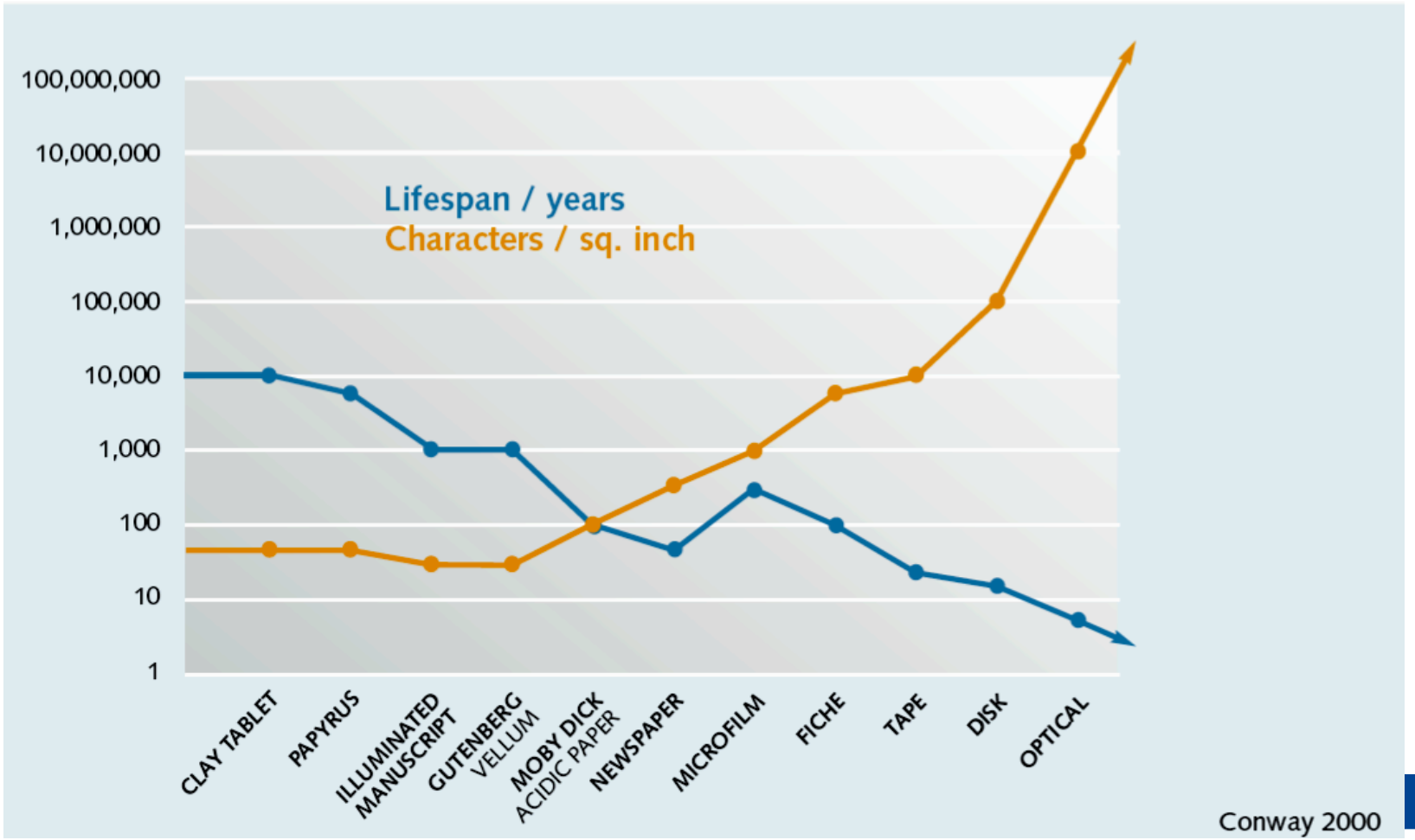
European Commission

C4C event

Dublin, 17 January 2012

The digital dilemma



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Preservation of digital content: the challenge

- Files may be unreadable when hardware and software becomes obsolete
- Material will be lost when storage devices deteriorate over time
- Storage systems could be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of new and changing content
- How to guarantee authenticity?

Digital material has to be maintained, which involves **migration** = copying

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IPR-issues around digital preservation

- Multiple copying and migration for preservation purposes
- Legal deposit of cultural material:
  - Technical protection measures should not impede preservation
  - Transfer of legal deposit works from one legal deposit library to another one
- Web-harvesting by deposit institutions
- What can be done with the content? The risk of dark archives

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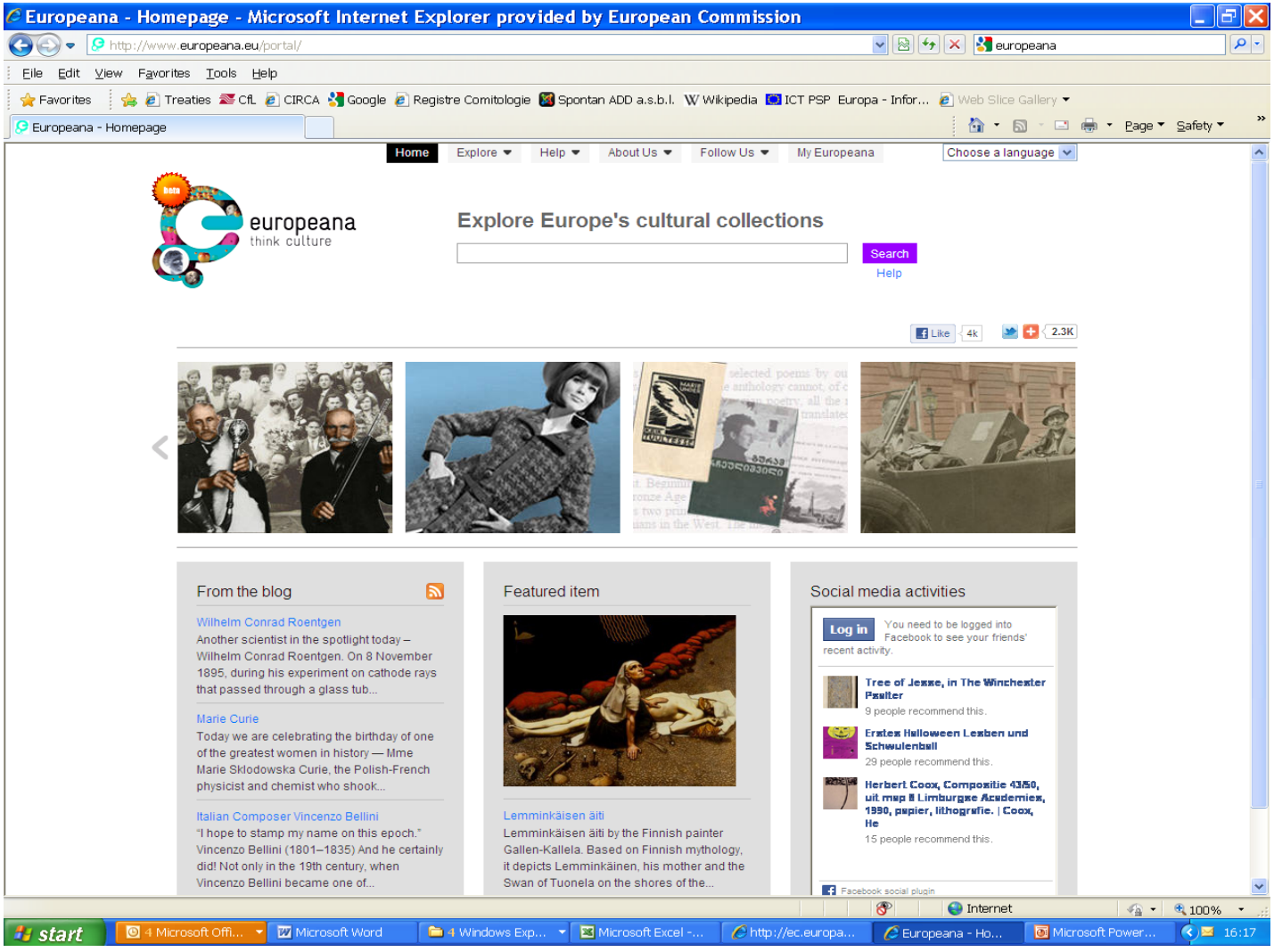
Access to material preserved throughout history



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Contributor: National Library of Scotland Mary, Queen of Scots writer Henri III recipient

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Subject: ff. 1r., 2v., National Library of Scotland shelfmark Adv.MS.54.1.1 |

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Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots
Letter from Mary, Queen of Scots to Henri III of France on the eve of her execution.

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Accessibility of public domain material

- Legal question about new rights created by digitisation
  - Level of originality needed
- Issue of principle about locking up public domain material: role of cultural institutions in the digital age

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