Case Study

Open Culture

Background

Open Culture manages and promotes the Uncover Liverpool website. The site is aiming to become the go-to hub for discovering an endless variety of incredible Liverpool City Region cultural events from the Culture Network LCR membership venues and organisations—all in one easy-to-use place. Open Culture's vision is simple: to create the ultimate destination for anyone looking to find out what's happening in the Liverpool City Region, today and beyond. Open Culture are also well known for leading and developing events including LightNight, the Winter and Summer Art Markets and Tickle the Ivories

Challenge

Open Culture heavily rely on arts organisations to submit and update their own events and listings through the Uncover Liverpool website, as well as manually entering and approving event details, such as locations, times and ticket links, which can be labour-intensive and strain everyone's limited resources.

Solution

Open Culture approached The Horizons team at VEC to initiate a scoping exercise to explore how cultural organisations across the Liverpool City Region currently upload and display their events on their websites.

Delivery Partner

VEC

The findings revealed three commonalities:

1. The majority of organisations utilised their own CRM or ticketing system, with a variety of solution providers in play;
2. A common use of external sites such as Skiddle or Eventbrite
3. Built-in event listings were shown on the venue's own websites, built using platforms including WordPress, Craft and Squarespace

The VEC researched how to best collate data from these different outputs while also exploring the use of API feeds or RSS feeds for automated listings. Initial research explored methods for effortlessly collecting and organising data from WordPress sites, which provided insights for development of a system that could allow different sites to communicate with each other, removing a level of manual work from the Open Culture / Uncover teams.

Also a recommendation for Application Programming Interface (API) endpoints provided by a CRM vendor can enable users to access and synchronise data related to opportunities and contacts, streamlining searches and matches of relevant events.

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

METRO MAYOR LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

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Finally, the VEC conducted a knowledge transfer session to demonstrate how Open Culture could use the insights gained from their research and consultations. This knowledge then helped Open Culture consider their immediate options for developments, such as development funding and marketing this to the Culture Network LCR membership.

Impact

A report was presented to Open Culture with the research findings and recommendations. The document provides insights for the Open Culture platform which will enable contributions and events to be quickly and automatically listed.

The insights provided by VEC provided a starting development point with the aim to allow organisations to leverage the upgraded Uncover Liverpool website, recognised as a trustworthy resource, that will help the membership to gain increased visibility for their events and work and decrease the reliance on manual entries.

Open Culture received a Horizons grant to enhance their investment efforts. This allowed Open Culture to appoint project manager Sarah Jane Evans and then collaborate with Ambos Digital, a Brunswick-based digital agency, to enhance these initiatives and implement the initial insights achieved from the Horizons project.