

Publishing and Accessing Digital Archives using the EASAIER Framework*

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Abstract. Cultural archives have been massively digitalized in the past twenty years. Many multimedia databases are now available, many locally, more and more on-line. The emergence of the web, and its evolution towards the semantic web opens a new phase for the publication of digital archives. The data and assets they contain can be made available in a structured way, providing more precise, as well as wider querying possibilities. In this paper, we present a lightweight architecture for easily publishing and managing digital archives, based on semantic web technologies. This architecture is successfully being used within the EASAIER (Enabling Access to Sound Archives through Integration, Enrichment and Retrieval) European project. We also detail how the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama HOTBED archive was successfully published using such a system.

Access to cultural archives was significantly simplified thanks to the web. Online archives however remain mostly isolated on the network, such as islands in an ocean. Search in these archives is tedious since each archive has to be searched separately.

Recent advances on web research have seen a number of technologies emerging towards more structured information. Through the use of common vocabularies, unique identification of resources, and reasoning techniques, the semantic web is of great benefit for cultural archives. It allows one to query many archives at the same time, defocusing from the archive itself to concentrate on the information needed.

The EASAIER european project aims at providing next generation tools for access and processing of cultural archives information, with a focus on audio. We present in this demo the architecture we developed. It has two major goals: first, to provide simple publication of digital archives on the semantic web. Second, to give the possibility to enrich archive metadata by either linking resources from various archives or processing media with features extraction algorithms.

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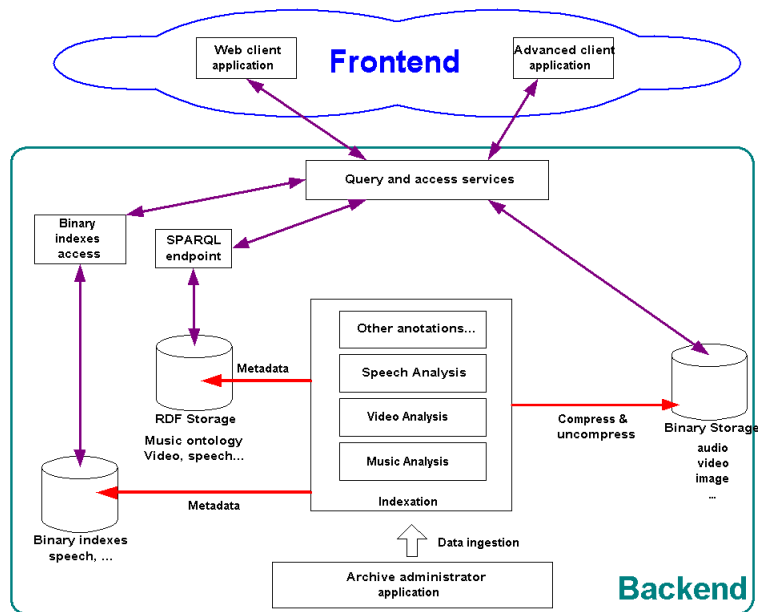


Fig. 1. EASAIER architecture overview

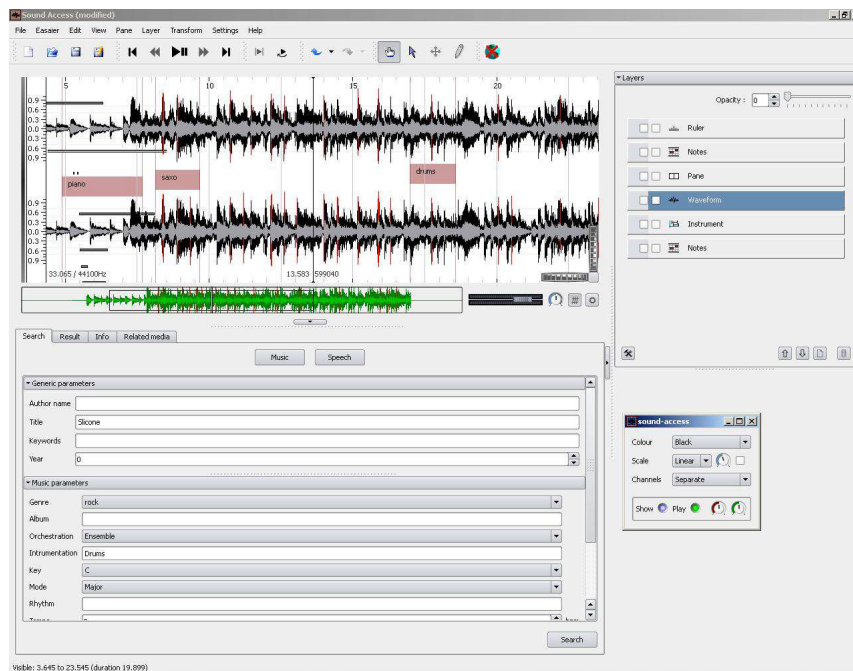


Fig. 2. EASAIER enhanced client