



I S A A C

Integrated e-Services
for **A**dvanced **A**ccess to Heritage
in **C**ultural Tourist Destinations

CITY OF GENOA

CASE STUDY DESCRIPTION



Project co-funded by the European Union through the IST programme under FP6

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CITY'S BASELINE DESCRIPTION

Genoa is a city that has changed a lot in the last few years: from a city based on an industrial port industrial to a major touristic attraction in Italy offering a unique mix of cultural heritage and a young, lively, eventful atmosphere.

This change is calling for a new organizational and technological city and for cultural and touristic promotion media that take advantage of advances in state of the art technologies.

Genoa is a city with a lot to offer to those who have the desire and time to discover its secrets and to experience its fascinating history and traditions, its lively and ever-changing present, and its vision for the future.

In the last few decades Genoa has become a young and vibrant city, with a very modern soul inside a "body" containing countless places of historical and cultural interest. From the old town rising up behind the port area to the wonderful forts looking over it with watchful eyes from the hill tops, Genoa is a complex intertwining of ancient places and surprising and absolutely contemporary events; it is a city absolutely capable of giving a young and exciting meaning to the word "culture".

Genoa is a town rich in contrasts. You only need to take a few steps to find yourself immersed in its glorious ancient past or walking on a path made of new daring symbols of a town explicitly turned towards facing the future.

If you come to Genoa from the sea, the impact is spectacular. The town shows its visitors all its grandeur. Lying on the coast, it stretches out, climbing the hills and offers a dramatic view.

The **Old Port** holds both the old and new town in a harmony of amazing shapes and colours. It preserves the old symbols, like the Lighthouse and the marvellous perspective of the ancient Palaces of Ripa Maris, as well as the bold and modern ones like the Bigo and the Bolla (Glass Ball) by Renzo Piano, the Aquarium, I Magazzini del Cotone and (the) Galata Museo del Mare (sea museum), to mention only a few.

The **Historic Centre** has returned to the splendour of its past, after being neglected for so long. What was, years ago, run down, today shines radiantly, magnificently renovated and brought back to life. The Palazzo Ducale, the Palaces of **Rolli** via Garibaldi "Strada Nuova" are now a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Today visitors really can see a town that has regained its nickname and title: "Superba" ("The Superb").

The city promotion on the web is presently mainly accomplished through the Tourism portal <http://www.turismo.genova.it> while the offer from the city's museums is described and promoted on the Museums portal <http://www.museigenova.it/>.

The new services developed through Genoa's engagement with the ISAAC project will be integrated into the latter, after the restyling process that it is currently undergoing has been completed.

CITY'S EXPECTATION

Genoa wants to attract more national and international tourists by presenting itself as a real "digital city" able to exploit 'state of the art' IT, and by georeferencing its cultural heritage, both material and immaterial, and the city's events.

Genoa's primary expectation is to be able to promote its services to citizens and its heritage to national and international tourists through a social web IT environment.

The city's main objective is to attract more national and international tourists and to offer advanced IT cultural promotion to tourists and citizens.

This is accomplished through the availability of a complete set of e-services developed in conjunction with the ISAAC project and by their integration in the city's tourism and culture portals.

From Genoa's perspective, the most important aspects of these IT services are the georeferencing of all points of interest, the possibility of being able to focus on both the material and immaterial aspects of the city's cultural heritage and the possibility to be able to provide users with functions for managing their own contents on the web and for generating their own cultural paths and themes for visiting the city.

Genoa expects to greatly enhance its cultural heritage web promotion through these ISAAC e-services.

CITY'S GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Genoa has focused primarily in-house on engaging in the project of the internal departments of the city's administration necessary for effective deployment. This has meant backgrounding involvement of external public and private partners until the services exploitation phase.

The City of Genoa has so far involved in the project its internal departments and offices including:

- ❖ Culture
- ❖ Tourism
- ❖ City promotion
- ❖ "Digital city"
- ❖ Information technology.

along with the external City Culture promotion organization (Fondazione per la Cultura).

As soon as the final ISAAC prototype is finished, other major local stakeholders (public and private) will be involved in the exploitation of the e-services for both content creation and promotion.

CRITICAL ISSUES AND HIGHLIGHTS

The project had encountered no “local” big problems in Genoa once the initial difficulty of involving the internal and political stakeholders was solved.

CITY’S RESULTS GAINED FROM PARTICIPATING IN ISAAC

Beside developing a set of new e-services, the ISAAC project has helped bring about very useful changes in the organizational approach used by the city for the deployment of technology-based initiative for cultural and touristic promotion.

The result of participating ISAAC is a **new set of e-services** for Genoa tourists and residents with:

- ❖ basic and detailed information
- ❖ content (images, audio, video, links)
- ❖ interactive maps
- ❖ material and immaterial “stories” running along cultural and touristic itineraries throughout the city
- ❖ simple interactive games
- ❖ user-generated content management
- ❖ user personalization

Beside developing these new e-services, the ISAAC project has caused significant changes in the city’s in-house reorganisation around digital modernisation, particularly in how it exploits, promotes and manages its cultural heritage.

City narrative: a short story describing how citizens and tourists experienced ISAAC prototype

Alan’s experience of the ISAAC prototype in Genoa

Potential visitors – whether tourists or residents – gets access through the ISAAC prototype. This provides a complete set of tourism information about the city, including the UNESCO heritage “Palazzi dei Rolli” and in particular the “Strada Nuova”, By accessing this web site, Alan experiences the following narrative constructed for the development of Genoa ISAAC prototype.

“Yes, Genoa must be experienced by the sea!”

The ISAAC city portal was right to be full of enthusiasm about this. The real thing looks really gorgeous!” Alan thought while checking his visit plan on his mobile phone as the ferry made its entrance into Genoa’s ancient port.

Thinking about the little time he had available meant that Alan had to plan his visit carefully.

And, given his limited time he was about to spend in the city, he really appreciated the opportunity he had before he arrived to check the best points of interest of the city beforehand, comfortably sitting on his sofa at home, sipping a cup of tea.



His main interest was to see the largest European historical center.

ISAAC, he thought.... the site was full of information about Genoa's tangible and intangible wonder.... About its little alleys close to the magnificent Rolli palaces. About its multiethnic people, local ancient shops, local folklore, and the young Porto Antico zone....

All so close to each other, just as if time, and people and places were melting into one ...

Alan had planned his visit very well, defining his personal tourist experience, choosing between the thousands of points of interest on the website. The ones provided by the city administration were good, but the user generated content was the real interesting part! There some alternative itineraries had been defined, and all the related content was at his fingertips now on Alan's mobile phone....

"I must remember to go up to the Strada Nuova street.. the museums district.. but not before tasting the local "focaccia"..."



Hours passed in a second, as if time stood still. Alan had lost himself playing the "loose yourself in Genoa" game as the city's site suggested he should, experiencing its people and places, and discovered new wonderful spots... Everything was there. Exactly there, as described...

Alan really made the best of his short time in Genoa's ancient center. Its tastes, smell, art, people, events, the sea.... And all this had been made possible by digital technology.... what a it was he thought while getting back onboard the ferry to go the airport...

And in just a few minutes he was starting to share his experience with the world, adding new points of interest and itineraries to the Genoa ISAAC site, describing his time there, and commenting and uploading his freshly taken pictures using his mobile phone....

Although he didn't give a second thought to it, he had experienced exactly how the ISAAC project has allowed the city to develop new, integrated, more efficient and effective approaches to promoting its cultural heritage and enhancing its residents' and tourists' visits.



CITY'S READINESS TO DEPLOY ISAAC

Beside developing internal ISAAC project prototypes, focused on the "Strada Nuova" and the Rolli palaces, Genoa has started the process of deploying the ISAAC e-services in a real online environment. The ISAAC e-services will be the main technology used in the new civic Museums information and promotion website, whose development is under progress.

Technical requirements:

- CMS DRUPAL
- MySQL
- Apache Web Server

Type of Installation:

- Full installation
- Integration in City Legacy Systems

Spatial Data provision:

- "by hand", exploiting the ISAAC Content Management Systems
- XML conformant to ISAAC XSD

INFORMATION

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