



Project: “Digital Preservation in Argentine libraries: exploratory survey and pilot experience”

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Approval date: October 2006

Project Life Cycle: March 2007 to May 2008

General aims

- To explore problems and issues concerning preservation of knowledge in digital format
- To promote registry, access and preservation of scientific, technical and cultural production in digital format in Argentine institutions.

Specific aims

- To assess the state of digitisation and organization of digital collections in libraries of scientific, technical and cultural institutions, with emphasis laid on strategies and procedures for the preservation of digital objects.
- To raise awareness and to develop and share knowledge in order to help outline strategies and procedures for the long term preservation of digital objects in scientific, technical and cultural institutions.
- To carry out a pilot experience to develop digitisation standards School of Exact and Natural Sciences historical collection, devising strategies and procedures for the long term preservation.

Stages

Stage 1

Bibliographic research on concepts, previous knowledge and expertise, strategies, procedures and better practices on digital preservation issues.

Stage 2

Workshop on digital preservation and digital collections building, to enable members of participant libraries to gain knowledge on digital preservation tools, strategies and procedures, as well as to become acquainted with experiences in other countries.

Design of a questionnaire for participant institutions to undertake a self-evaluation process in terms of digital preservation, applying criteria and parameters acquired in the workshop. Self-diagnosis on digital preservation by participant institutions.

Stage 3

Information- and discussion-based workshop on problems and critical points at each institution for members to gain an insight on common problems and better practices in terms of digital preservation

Etapa 4

Workshop on institutional digital preservation strategies

Report of the workshop on Digital Preservation Strategies

Training workshop on applied archival sciences

Pilot experience of organisation, storage and digitisation of the historical archival collection in the School of Exact and Natural Sciences

Project execution summary

The aim of exploring situations, problems and strategies for the preservation of knowledge and culture in digital format was fulfilled. Purposely, a number of people working in libraries, archives and museums on issues of long term preservation of digital collections were trained; a bibliography on issues and experiences in digital preservation was compiled and analysed, and tools for an institutional diagnosis were developed.

Consequently, participant institutions could apply these tools to their digital collections, releasing individual diagnosis and interchanging expertise in a workshop. These diagnoses were then compiled into a document systematising common and specific issues.

The knowledge gained during the training and interchange of experiences enabled all institutions to build up their own strategies and practices, which, in turn, resulted in the reorganisation of their processes for the developing and maintenance of digital collections.

At the same time, a pilot experience was carried out at the School of Exact and Natural Sciences Central Library to build the historical archive, as much as its digital component. A team of staff from several libraries took part in this training to take the acquired expertise back to their institutions.

Finally, the initial steps in the building of the Historical Archive were completed. Within this stage a collection of photographs were digitised, according to the conversion and digital preservation guidelines previously established. Description and access to a range of 700 pictures were set up by means of an image management software.

Impacts and results

Following goals stated in the projects were achieved:

- Librarians and other staff from 50 libraries trained on digital preservation issues and standards, with a view to middle and long term preservation best practices
- Tool (questionnaire) to assess digital collection state and digital preservation resources in participant libraries
- Diagnosis on digital preservation situation in the 18 participants libraries

- Guidelines, procedures and best practices for digitisation and digital preservation in participant libraries
- Staff from participant libraries trained in the basics of historical archives
- Pilot of the Facultad de Ciencias Exactas y Naturales de la Universidad de Buenos Aires Historical Archive Digital Collection digital collection applying digital preservation procedures.

The workshops and interchange of expertise, as well as the development of preservation-oriented guidelines raised awareness among participant institutions on the importance of digital preservation.

Consequently, participant institutions reorganised their procedures in order to apply them to digitisation processes, as much as in the treatment of digital born items, facing their need to build digital collections. This also included the adoption of descriptive metadata schemes.

These achievements are deemed a substantial contribution to the strengthening of a range of procedures associated with the registry, preservation and access to the production and cultural heritage of institutions.

In addition, an open network of different organizations and people was spontaneously built among these institutions, which now share common issues and expertise in matters of digitisation and digital preservation concerns.

A representative example is the Discussion Group on Digital Preservation on the Web, with an increasing number of participants from Argentina as well as from other Spanish-speaking countries. Half their 160 active participants belong to the main libraries, archives and museum in Argentina and Latin America, whereas the rest is to count amount students in related areas and professionals of smaller institutions and the private sector. The group has risen to a valuable information channel on its topic. A renowned museum asking for directions on how to digitise ancient photograph collections, or an important university library requiring information on the necessary equipment to treat manuscripts from the 18th century are not exceptional situations. Moreover, events, courses, meetings and new publications are there publicised, as well as news about the latest technological developments. Furthermore, an extensive bibliography of print and online relevant resources are available on the group website.

It may be accessed at:

<http://espanol.groups.yahoo.com/group/PRESERVACION-DIGITAL-BIBLIOTECA-LELOIR-FCEYN-UBA>

Likewise, institutions were linked into a collaborative environment which strengthened feedback among them and enabled them to gain and share further expertise, which in turn resulted in progress of the project.

On the other hand, the dissemination of the project's progress and related topics on digital preservation in fora and other professional events have widened the knowledge on the risks associated to digital collections and the importance of tackling these matters right from the very beginning. As an example, the Diagnosis Tool created under the project's frame was included on the website of the Foro de Informáticos, Oficina Nacional de Tecnologías de la Información de la Subsecretaría de la Gestión Pública (Computers Forum, Information Technologies National Office, Public Administration Subsecretary).

As part of the project, Anne Kenney's [et al.] "E-journal archiving metes and bounds: a survey of the landscape", 2006, published by CLIR (Council on Library and Information Resources), Washington, USA, was translated into Spanish by Olga Arias, Chief of Technical Services at the library and a member of the project's team. Permission was granted in advance by CLIR editorial staff to translate the book.

List of participant institutions

Biblioteca Central de la Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina
 Biblioteca Central Dr. L. F. Leloir, Facultad de Cs. Exactas y Naturales, Universidad de Buenos Aires
 Biblioteca de la Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca

Biblioteca Fac. de Ciencias Naturales y Museo Universidad Nacional de La Plata
Biblioteca Fac. Humanidades y Cs. de la Educación - Universidad Nacional de La Plata
Biblioteca Leo Falicov, CNEA - Centro Atómico Bariloche
Biblioteca Nacional
Biblioteca Pública - Universidad Nacional de La Plata
Biblioteca, Fac. de Agronomía, Universidad de Buenos Aires
Biblioteca, Fac. de Arquitectura y Urbanismo, Universidad de Buenos Aires
Biblioteca, Fac. de Derecho, Universidad de Buenos Aires
Biblioteca, Fac. de Psicología, Universidad de Buenos Aires
Biblioteca, Fac. de Veterinaria, Universidad de Buenos Aires
CAICYT
Clacso (Biblioteca)
Facultad de Informática, Universidad Nacional de La Plata
Sistema Integrado de Bibliotecas y Centros de Información (SISBI), Universidad de Buenos Aires
Sistema Integrado de Documentación Universidad Nacional de Cuyo

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