

Joining the forces: challenges and approaches towards braiter future?

The Eighth SEEDI Conference
on Digitisation of Cultural and Scientific
Heritage

Zagreb, 16. 05. 2013.

main goal of the talk

- is to discuss the
 - theoretical and methodological approaches
- towards new strategy of digital cultural heritage in the light of European and national cultural heritage strategy till 2020.

content

- Introduction
- Theory as an inspiring framework for considerations relevant to the digitization of cultural heritage
- Work in progress in Croatia
- Conclusion

Introduction

- digitization of cultural heritage
 - “refers to the **dynamic** and **evolving** interdisciplinary domain that encompasses **philosophical, social, cultural, economic and managerial aspects** and consequences of management of cultural heritage in the technological environment”
 - Mandzuch, Huvila, Aparac-Jelusic, 2005

introduction – cont...

- different models for collecting and presenting, as well as for preserving and using digital assets have been designed upon a **multilayered concept of communication of cultural memory** as a **complex phenomenon** that foresees the synergies between archival, library and museum (ALM) studies and ITC
- main ideas and content of these projects usually relay on technology based conceptual framework(s) which is **lacking a general conceptual elaboration** starting from the nature and social goals of ‘traditional’ disciplines such as these that are considered basic of the ALM sector.
- Therefore ...

theory as an inspiring framework ...

- considerations relevant to the digitization of cultural heritage
 - general theory of culture
 - theory of heritage
 - theory of digital society
 - ...

- the participatory nature of heritage has been emphasized in an array of approaches and theories of
 - significance and
 - social memory

- the realization of significance is through **cultural motion** (Urban 2005, 181)
- theories of **relevance** (Saracevic since, 1970-ies and 2006) accommodate
 - the idea that relevance has to be linked to what is considered **public knowledge** and to
 - what is **socially perceived as normatively relevant**
- these ideas are not new in information science(s) – (P. Wilson, Rayward, Buckland...)

theorizing digital cultural heritage

- **public conversation** is at the core of heritage practices involving artifacts and their digital representations
- **research questions** have been concentrated on investigation of the
 - relationship between material and digital objects in different collections;
 - implications of digital technology for knowledge creation, documentation, and the concept of authority
and
 - the possibilities for "virtual cultural heritage,,
 - the preservation and interpretation of cultural and natural heritage through real-time, immersive, and interactive techniques

two periods

- the first wave of digital library development, and
- a most recent trend characterized by engagement of online audiences through social networking platforms

the burst!

- the major burst of digital library development from the mid-1990s resulted in
 - large amounts of digitized material,
 - together with the accompanying constructions of digital cultural heritage
 - the purposes, politics, and audiences for tradition re-mediated in digital form

the other wave

- in which digital collections have become a vehicle for inscription of new meanings to heritage objects, and
- ways in which digital production has engendered consumption to escape the hegemonic constructions of heritage (Dalbello, 2009)
 - this transformative period exposed institutions to **critical, self-reflexive perspectives on collections, engagement of new audiences, and the creation of new publics**

In 2009 Dalbello researched in these periods and explained:

- Cultural production
- Constructionism
- Cultural variability

Cultural production

- paper *The Institutional Shaping of Cultural Memory* presented results of the survey of earliest digital collections in North American libraries
 - the focus was on the **emerging content** and **institutional context**
 - 378 projects identified using web-registries of ARL (Association of Research Libraries) and Digital Library Federation (DLF);
 - methodology: narrative and content analysis;
 - theories from which the researcher started
 - theory of organizational isomorphism

Constructionism

- two-part study titled
 - *A Phenomenological Study of an Emergent Digital Library*
- focused on
 - an emerging area of **institutional operation** that integrates electronic resources into routine library activities using the digital library development of the National Digital Library Project (NDLP)) in the Library of Congress (1995-2000)

Cultural variability

- two-part study
 - *Cultural Dimensions of Digital Library Development*
- the national characteristics and models of development in five national libraries in Europe and the LofC were studied
 - transformative period of the initial burst, from the late 1980s to mid-1990s when the DL initiatives were developed to 2002
- a rich description of
 - the period, and
 - the emergent models of DL development, at the tail-end of the initial burst,
- is given from a perspective that connects **organizational** and **national cultures**

EU foundation based research

- European Commission launched a new integrated approach of long-term preservation and access of digital cultural heritage and scientific knowledge
- new strategic frameworks
 - *i2010: Digital Libraries (2005)*,
 - *Scientific information in the digital age: access, dissemination and preservation (2007)* and
 - *Directive on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities ("Audiovisual media services without frontiers")*

outline the EC vision

- digitization, accessibility and digital preservation of cultural heritage and scientific knowledge,
- highlighting the initiative and role of digital libraries
- those initiatives aim at:
 - making European Information resources easier to be accessed and more user-friendly in an online environment
 - building the DCH on Europe's rich heritage by combining multicultural and multilingual environment with technological advances and new business models

work in progress in Croatia

- two phases:
 - initial phase of national digitization plan (2005-2008)
 - design and decision making

initial phase of national digitization plan (2005-2008)

- in the attempt to conceptualize the new strategic approach Croatian experts joined the forces, knowledge and experience from previous smaller, mostly uncoordinated and underfinanced digitization projects that brought, among other outcomes, experience in the processes of digitization of different kind of materials

second phase

- design and decision making
 - towards the Strategy of digitization of Croatian cultural heritage till 2020

We intend to follow three main directions to enable/strengthen

- online accessibility, a precondition for the general public, researchers and companies to get maximum benefit from information;
- digitisation of analogue collections in order to promote their usage among the information society;
- preservation and storage aiming to ensure access to digital material for future generations and to prevent precious content from loss

Strategy of Digital Cultural Heritage in Croatia till 2020

- Initial steps
- Working groups
- Council on Digitization
- Final product till July 1, 2013

approach

- at the various stages of digitisation initiatives archives, libraries and museums engage into diverse partnership relations which include agreements with funders, co-operation with institutions that have similar goals or collections, outsourcing digitisation services from other organisations.

AKM partnerships

- 14 proceedings!!!! – partnership
 - has been acknowledged as success factors of digitisation projects
 - the nature and characteristics of partnership networks developed by memory institutions in digitisation initiatives have not been discussed as a whole and have not been researched empirically

the next step?

- since implementation of digitisation projects requires strategic decisions to sustain such initiatives a stronger kind of liason is needed (Joint Council?)
- although digitisation is mostly defined as a technical process, its impact to the whole cycle of information resource management and even broadly – to strategic management of services in archives, libraries and museums – is widely acknowledged (Smith, 2001)
- in order to deliver quality services, make use of digitisation advantages (such as wide access, integration of diverse types of content) and sustain the initiative in a long-term perspective archives, libraries and museums **have to become more engaged** into diverse collaboration relations

Conclusion

- conceptualization refers to
 - unifying principles of ALM disciplines and fields of practices in digital society, and to
 - new approaches to semantic web features and possibilities that enable all partners to accept unique model(s), rules and procedures in building trusted sources, sharing of data and making them available to public.