Izlaganje sa znanstvenog skupa

Cooperative National Project of Digitisation of Archival, Library and Museum Holdings "Croatian Cultural Heritage"

Jozo Ivanović
Hrvatski državni arhiv
Marulićev trg 21, Zagreb, Croatia
jivanov@arhiv.hr

Goran Zlodi
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
Ivana Lučića 3, Zagreb, Croatia
gzlodi@ffzg.hr

Summary

The cooperative national project of digitisation of archival, library and museum holdings "Croatian cultural heritage" is geared at promoting and assisting the systematic and standardized approach to the digitisation of material in cultural institutions, forming and offering cultural content and services by way of digital copies and use of information technologies in the protection, processing and use of materials.

The development of comprehensive widely accessible content in digital form is one of the key assumptions for the protection and evaluation of cultural heritage, for networking and presentation of Croatian cultural heritage in European, regional and other cultural networks, for the preservation of cultural diversity and use of cultural contents in education, tourism and other service industries.

The project is aimed at formulating the long-term policy of digitisation and promotion of institutional, technological, professional and organisational capacities and infrastructure considered necessary for developing comprehensive, usable and sustainable cultural contents and services in a digital environment.

Key words: digitisation, cultural heritage, Croatia, portal, collection-level description service, cooperation

Introduction

Modern information and communication technologies generate numerous new challenges and possibilities for preserving and representing cultural heritage. They offer powerful tools for processing, protecting and making accessible cultural contents. More important and far reaching is that they open up new "virtual" communication spaces for spending time, acquiring and exchanging experiences, offering, seeking and encountering contents and services from all fields of human activities.

Activities connected with cultural heritage are markedly directed toward information and communication technologies: they depend on the quality and accessibility of information regarding stored and offered contents and on the possibility of having the largest possible number of users access its contents and services in an easy and simple manner. Today they are among the largest producers and suppliers of publicly accessible digital contents. The use of information and communication technologies and the digitisation of services and of the most valuable cultural heritage stored in archives, libraries and museums is the foundation for developing these activities and institutions engaged in them.

The issue of the digitisation of cultural heritage and introduction of services based on contents created in that manner should therefore not be considered a mere "added value" or only one possible form of activity. It is an activity on which the realisation of basic tasks of these activities essentially depends in the near future so that the lack of quality, long-term and sustainable programmes would in time lead to the ever decreasing presence and usability of cultural heritage and values which individuals and communities take over and create in communication with it.

Institutions that offer their contents in this way can expect an increased number of users and greater visibility of what they have to offer, attracting in that way new categories of users who would otherwise not know what kind of contents they are offering. Institutions which do not develop quality digital contents and services can expect to eventually lose their recognisability and presence among the public and (potential) users.

The development of comprehensive widely accessible content in digital form is one of the key assumptions for the protection and evaluation of cultural heritage, for networking and presentation of Croatian cultural heritage in European, regional and other cultural networks, for the preservation of cultural diversity and use of cultural contents in education, tourism and other service industries.

The development of an information society and information services, particularly in the economic and public services fields has recently been in the foci of numerous legislative, normative and strategic initiatives and activities. Undoubtedly they are gradually creating a new environment for cultural activities too, regardless of whether they are directly oriented and to what degree towards these activities.

The national programme of digitisation of archival, library and museums holdings takes into account the principles, policies and experiences gained in the field of digitisation of cultural heritage in the European Union such as *Lund Principles* [2], *Lund Action Plan* [3], *Charter of Parma* [1] and other relevant international standards and guidelines in digitisation. One of the goals of national programme is to develop the capacities of our institutions to participate in an appropriate way in the cultural heritage digitisation programmes in the European Union.

Digital contents are created relatively easily and in principle are readily accessible and usable in a variety of ways for developing various types of services. They are, however, also considerably more exposed to risk, including the risk of complete loss or loss of usability. With the growth of their volume and use (whether digitally born or digitised materials) the requirement of their long-term preservation and accessibility also becomes more expressed.

The long-term preservation of digital contents, namely, the ability to systematically store them and make them available in the near and more distant future is an indispensable precondition for any meaningful digitisation programme.

Objecitves of national programme of digitisation of archival, library and museum holdings

During the 2005 and 2006 working group of 13 representatives from archive, library and museum communities developed "The national programme of digitisation of archival, library and museum holdings" [5]. The national programme is geared at promoting and assisting the systematic and standardized approach to the digitisation of material in cultural institutions, forming and offering cultural content and services by way of digital copies and use of information technologies in the protection, processing and use of materials. The programme is aimed at formulating the long-term policy of digitisation and promotion of institutional, technological, professional and organisational capacities and infrastructure considered necessary for developing comprehensive, usable and sustainable cultural contents and services in a digital environment. The following are its basic objectives.

1. The complete digitisation of material in the long term leads to the creation of recognizable and relevant contents and "cultural space" in the electronic environment.
2. Services based on these contents are readily accessible to all interested parties while selected contents could be accessed in accordance with usability rules through networking.
3. Produced digital contents are adapted, adequately formed and processed according to adopted norms and good practices which enable their inclusion in European, regional and other cultural contents and services networks.

4. Digital collections are comprehensive and usable in the forming and supply of educational, tourist and other similar service contents.
5. Digital collections are part of the organised management system which offers sufficient guarantees for their permanent preservation and availability.
6. Institutions whose resources are not sufficiently developed shall not be deprived of the possibility to digitise their materials.

Activities

The national programme of digitisation of archival, library and museum holdings is not an all inclusive and closed digitisation project the primary goal of which is to produce specific digital contents. It has been envisaged as a framework for encouraging and developing a greater number of individual and adapted programmes and activities on the digitisation of these materials as part of national cultural heritage. Within this programme the following activities have been foreseen.

1. **Cooperative national project of digitisation of archival, library and museum holdings "Croatian cultural heritage".** The aim of this project is to create and make available series of digital collections of identifiable and nationally relevant contents and through work on the project strengthen institutional capacities of participating institutions. The project is open to all institutions that store valuable archival, library or museum materials and wish to make it available in digital form. The experience acquired through cooperation on the project will help institutions to promote their capacities and become equipped to offer other digital contents and services. The duration of the project is three years.

2. **Elaboration of standards and guidelines for the digitisation of material.** In order to ensure interoperability, exchangeability and long-term sustainability of the contents created through the digitisation of cultural heritage, it is necessary to adopt and apply uniform and harmonised standards and specifications in regard to the procedure and parameters of digitisation, properties of digital objects and collections and functional properties of the digitised contents management and accessibility systems. Given that there are no broadly and formally accepted and recommended standards and procedures in regard to the digitisation and management of digital collections in Croatia, the national digitisation project cannot rely on existing solutions. Therefore, it must contain activities that will generate the required standards, specifications and guidelines.

3. **Establishment of support and monitoring systems for the digitisation projects.** Many cultural institutions are relatively small and cannot count on developing their own resources for the systematic and appropriate digitisation of material. In many cases that would not even be rational. The existing and predictable professional resources in this field are such

that a certain degree of the unification and harmonisation will be required in order to develop an appropriate cultural heritage digitisation support system upon which the institution can really rely. The basic tasks of this system include: strengthening of institutional capacities for the digitisation of material and introducing appropriate services for users, decreasing the gap in the capacities of institutions to digitise their materials, supporting professional training and application of adopted standards as well as providing the continual evaluation and monitoring of the quality of digital collections to be created.

4. **Establishment of cooperative digital archives.** The digitisation of material creates collections of permanent value which need to be adequately stored, preserved and made continuously accessible. The producers of digital archives should have at their disposal quality digital archives either by creating and maintaining them individually or else by using the services of cooperative digital archives or some outside service provider. In addition, the task of permanent storage is one of the basic tasks of the institutions that collect and store material while the lack of capacities to adequately do so with digital materials too could have permanent long-term consequences in carrying out their basic activity. For these reasons it is necessary to develop and make such a system available, both for the storage of digital collections which will be compiled within the framework of the national digitisation project, as well as a model for the organisation of digital archives wherever they are needed given the quantity and significance of digital collections in various institutions. The establishment of cooperative digital archives shall be based on the existing standards and good practices with the maximum use of the existing infrastructure in institutions that will be included in the project.

5. **Portal "Croatian cultural heritage".** The portal "Croatian cultural heritage" will be the central networking point that will enable accessibility and browsing through digital collections which will be developed within the national project of digitisation of archival, library and museum holdings. It shall contain digitisation guidelines and instructions as well as other information and thereby offer support not only to this project but also to other projects, institutions and individuals who deal with or wish to deal with digitisation of their holdings. The portal will enable new and unique communication channel for delivery of cultural heritage content from institutions to users. To ensure quality of representation and accessibility of communicated content data model is developed as a core infrastructure segment. Data model enables description of digital collections and related information: institutions, projects, services or products and physical collections. Data model is based, with some exceptions and modifications, on MICHAEL Data Model and MICHAEL-EU Dublin

Core Application Profile [4] for use by data providers to the MICHAEL-EU presentation service. This model will support core functions of portal "Croatian cultural heritage" related to collection, processing, publishing and access to digital collections metadata what would result in better visibility and accessibility of digital as well as physical collections.

Implementation of the programme

The operational plan for implementation of the programme establishes a series of activities, measures and tasks which need to be implemented within specific basic fields and activities included in the programme, terms of reference and responsibilities for their implementation including a time limit.

The initiator and founder of the programme is the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia. The initiator of the programme considers and establishes the justifiability, adequacy and feasibility of the programme and programme activities as they are proposed, establishes the organisational structure of the programme approves the project plan and supervises the implementation of the project.

The holders of the programme are the Ministry of Culture, National and University Library, Croatian State Archives and Museum Documentation Centre as the key institutions in library, archival and museum activities.

Bearing in mind the activities linked to the implementation of the Programme e-Croatia 2007 which established the holders of specific activities of particular significance for this programme too (especially the development of a broadband multi-service network), the holders of the activities in the part of this programme which relates to the provision of the broadband access for key institutions, in addition to the Ministry of Culture include the Central State Office for e-Croatia and the Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development.

References

Charter of Parma, 2003. http://www.minervaeurope.org/structure/nrg/documents/charterparma03 1119final-hr.htm (2007-07-17)

Lund Principles, 2001 ftp://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/ist/docs/digicult/lund_principles-en.pdf/ (2007-07-01)

Lund Action Plan, 2001 ftp://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/ist/docs/digicult/lund_action_plan-en.pdf (2007-07-11)

MICHAEL-EU Dublin Core Application Profile. http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/metadata/michael/michael-eu/dcap/2006-04-28/ (2007-07-01)

Nacionalni program digitalizacije arhivske, knjižnične i muzejske građe. Zagreb : Ministarstvo kulture Republike Hrvatske, 2006. http://daz.hr/bastina/NacionalniProgramDigitalizacije.pdf (2007-07-02)