Code Number: **020-E**
Meeting: **76 Art Libraries**

The new hybrid art library: printed materials and virtual information

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Abstract:
The development of new technology has an important impact in libraries and especially in art libraries because these institutions manage a great volume of visual information.
The new digital tools provide a lot of digital information that must be adquired and preserved in a library. One of the challenges facing librarians actually is how to manage and specially, how to preserve this kind of information. We think that traditional library tasks as cataloguing and indexing and are now more important than ever jointly with preservation. Most of our art libraries are now virtual libraries because we cannot ignore the digital resources that increase our collection and affect the printed collection, specially because this material have increase the concept of "ephemera" in our library. In fact, most of the digital information is ephemera, for example we dont know if we must print the information that is located in a web site or if this can be saved in a library server or merely linked to.
We want to discuss with our collegues the ways we can catalogue, indexing, preserve and present this information to users. We think that this discussion is very exciting because there are differents points of view and we can to work according to the kind of infomation just to build a hybrid library.

INTRODUCTION

The *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española* defines hybrid as "anything that is a result of combining elements of different nature".

Libraries, especially art libraries where image has a relevant role, have acquired and stored a very wide variety of materials during their development, that is why we can

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find books, magazines, maps, drawings, engravings, photos, slides, videos and nowadays even cd-roms and dvds in their collections.

All the materials mentioned above regardless of their materials, being other than paper, are acquired, stored, catalogued and made available to the patrons in a similar way and the differences are limited most of the times to the bibliographic description, where characteristic features have to be specified.

However, the development of the Internet and the explosion of virtual information stored on the Net have motivated a fast and significant change in the library and information science field.

If the 20th century was known as the information century due to its enormous development, in these first years of the new millennium we should call the "Information Society" the "Communication Society". The development and use of the Internet anywhere in the world has facilitated access to not only an enormous amount of information but also to new ways of simultaneous communication.

Libraries since their beginnings have had to adapt to the demand and expectations of their patrons. Nowadays, due to the changes that have taken place in the information field, libraries are obliged to take on modifications that affect all the tasks of the librarians. One of the most significant changes, but that has been carried out fast and efficiently, is the updating of the OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogues): at the beginning they were just a simple automated catalogue; afterwards they leaked out of the libraries and became available through a library system and finally they can be consulted through the Internet from anywhere in the world.

PAPER BOOKSTOCK

A library's bookstock still indicates the importance and the usefulness of the physical library and it contributes to documenting the history of the literature of a country and its bibliographic heritage.

On top of the fact that the literature that is held in our art libraries has as an inherent characteristic its validity, that is that the content is still valid no matter how long ago it was published. Most of the art writings are revised, completed and corrected, but many others are a valuable sample of historical heritage and cultural development of a country formed by its monuments, works of art, its exhibitions. We just need to remember the old, but always in use, painting and architecture treatises printed in the Renaissance, the catalogues and inventories on our own historical heritage, that tell us about works of art that unfortunately in some cases have disappeared due to various causes such as wars or losses due to speculation or lack of protection of some monuments, as well as the modifications caused by restoration and adapting to new times.

Because of all that, these collections of printed materials are extremely valuable and we must preserve them and catalogue them accurately so we can offer our patrons the most precise information as possible.

In past papers presented at the Art Section of the IFLA meetings we have always defended the validity and importance of many librarian tasks, such as cataloguing and classification. Regarding the first, the option has been to work in connection with other libraries whose main mission is the cataloguing of bibliographic materials. But for classification we have always defended an extensive classification through descriptors as well as accurate analytic cataloguing of all those who have taken part in the work, even if they are authors or the subject of the study, such as artists that take part in an exhibition or in any collective work.

HYBRID ART LIBRARIES

The incorporation of digital materials makes us talk of hybrid libraries: those where the traditional supports share their space with new materials that have special characteristics such as being virtually part of a collection and in most cases needing different cataloguing and classification processes.

Nowadays we can find different forms of digital information, such as:
- information stored in cd-roms and dvds,
- information created by the own library by digitalising it's collection,
- information obtained through the Internet.

Information available through electronic resources such as cd-roms and dvds

These materials have become more and more popular and have replaced other objects, like video. Amongst their characteristics you can find the possibility of storing more information, they are easy to get, cheap and sometimes they come with a printed book so you can interact with the book's content, making it more attractive. Their cataloguing does not differ from the rest of materials that can be found in a library and its storage is easier and they occupy less space, considering all the information that is contained within.

Virtual information created by the library through the digitalization of it's collection

These materials are generally the result of a conservation policy together with a promotional one. The works that are digitalised are considered essential for the cognisance of the art of a country but the latest publications of the institution to which the library belongs to can also be digitalised. It is very convenient to establish a policy for the digitalization of the collection as well as agreements with other institutions due to the high economic and time costs of the process that the library can't usually assume on its own.

Regarding its accessibility - if the information is stored on CDs it is catalogued like other CDs and if it's online, a link can be created from the library to access this information.

Information obtained through the internet

In this case we are talking about virtual information that has to be selected from the Internet, stored and processed if we consider it relevant for our library. This

information has grown spectacularly, in such a way that the volume of it has surpassed the printed one on some subjects. Of all the information that can be found on the Internet we are going to concentrate on the following bibliographic materials that we consider represent a dynamic aspect of the art bibliography:
- auction catalogues
- exhibition catalogues
- library and museum catalogues
- works on heritage conservation and restoration in the Mediterranean area and in Spanish speaking countries

Their bibliographic treatment varies between libraries and it is very interesting to be able to contrast them.

Our libraries are art libraries and both depend on public institutions. The library of the Instituto del Patrimonio Histórico Español depends on the Ministry of Culture and is specialised in conservation, restoration and knowledge of the historical and artistic Spanish heritage. The library of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya depends on a trust formed by Barcelona's town council, the province council and the Generalitat.

Auction catalogues

This material is very important in order to know the heritage that is privately owned and to know what's happening in the art market of a country. Nowadays at the library of the Instituto del Patrimonio Histórico Español we concentrate on the auctions that are held in our country.

Nearly all the auction houses issue a printed catalogue, and some even include a digital one. This last one can be consulted through the library's own catalogue, because it's collection has been catalogued in MARC format and a link can be established through the T856, that takes us directly to the selected website. This example is also valid for other types of publications that have a digital version as well as a printed one. In this case we can talk of hybrid publications because there are two ways of making the information available to the readers. This system also helps us complete the indexing of a bibliographic record because, for example, we can establish links to websites on a specific artist, monument or work of art.

Exhibition catalogues

This type of document is essential in our libraries, because they contribute to the development of the history of art and culture that are transmitted through the exhibitions organised by institutions and museums. There are two types of exhibition catalogues: those that are almost a monograph treatise on art when an exhibition shows the masterpieces of a specific artist or on a theme; and those that are merely a brochure or card. The latter have experienced an enormous growth lately, specially in a digital format since it's distribution is much cheaper than in printed form.

The library of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya has a section exclusively dedicated to gather the small brochures of the exhibitions held in Barcelona and the rest of the world. Since it's creation more than 200,000 records have been introduced into the database. It has become very popular amongst the library's patrons.

Traditionally, art galleries have sent us their catalogues by post, and the information processing method and its retrieval was solved by creating an Access database accessible to all our users. The fields of the database are: artist, title of the exhibition, gallery, city, opening and closing dates, language, format, illustrations, prologuist and observations, in this last field the shelf mark was also consigned.

When this information started arriving via email the scenario changed, mainly because the information was stored temporarily on the gallery's website and when the exhibition closed or the season ended it disappeared.

If, on top of that the gallery closed, it became nearly impossible to retrieve the information. At the beginning we thought of obtaining a printed version of the information but it soon became unviable because we were often redirected to other links and it was impossible to print all the information related to an exhibition. What was really important was to obtain all the information possible in just one search, and that is when we decided to add a field to our database under the tag "Digital version".
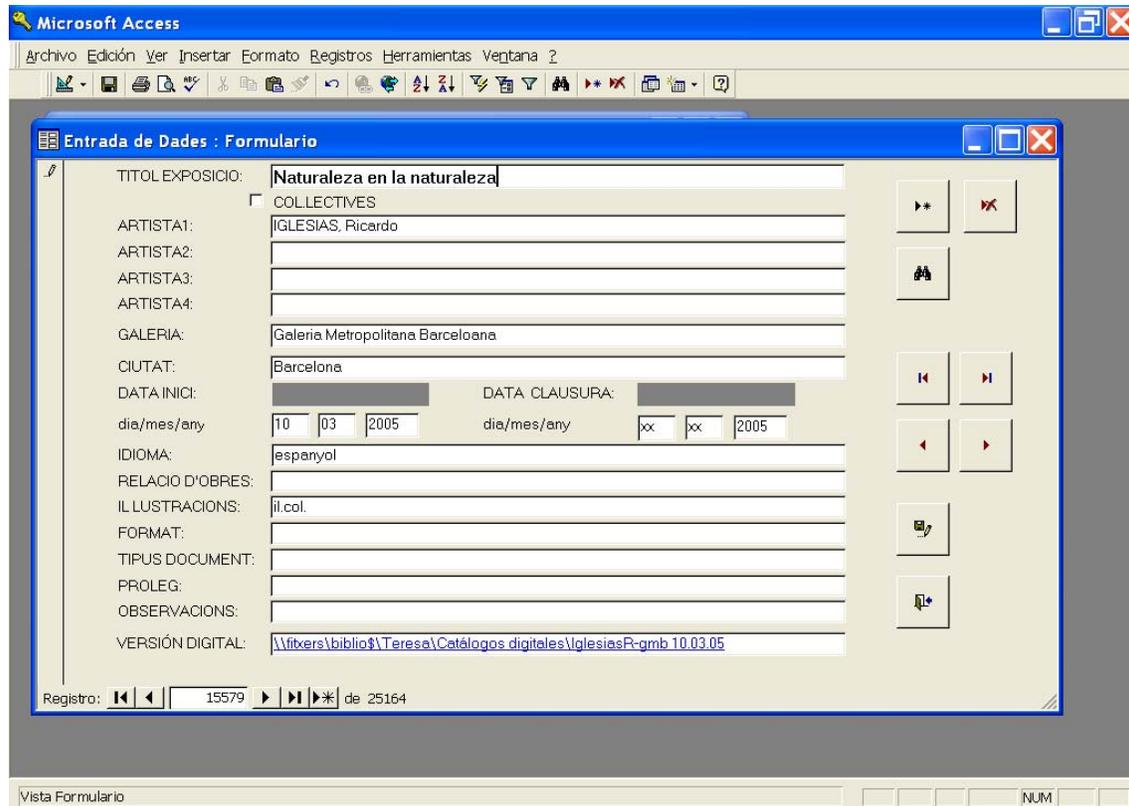
The guarantees offered by the system of creating a link to the digitalised document stored on our Server, and with constant security copies made, are not only its preservation but also the unification in a unique consultation tool of documents in different formats. For the time being the system is working well, but it is still on probation, and that is why I am still looking for alternatives.

On the other hand, at the library of the Instituto del Patrimonio Histórico Español, where the number of these catalogues is inferior, they have been catalogued as if they were any kind of brochure. Regarding the information on exhibitions that we receive in digital format, it is copied and stored on the library's computer and a link is

established through the above mentioned T856. In cases, where we have exhibition catalogues of an artist whom we know to have a website, we establish a link to it.

Library and museum catalogues

Nowadays it is quite easy to find library and museum catalogues on the Internet. When this happens at the library of the Instituto del Patrimonio Histórico Español we add the address to the "Interesting links" section of our own website. The site can offer only one catalogue or multiple links to other web pages.

Works on heritage conservation and restoration in the Mediterranean area and in Spanish speaking countries

With this type of publication we follow different procedures depending on the type of information they offer. In fact, if we consider that an article is of interest, we first obtain the author's permission, then we copy it, store it and make it available through what we call "Digital library". Right now we are thoroughly searching the Internet for studies on cultural products, their conservation and restoration. Although we can't be precise about the result of this search we can tell you in advance that the number of relevant documents on heritage from Spain or Latin America is small, mainly because most of them are copies of reports, and their quality and reliability are poor. None the less, we treat the information that we have found in different ways: if it is from an institution we store it on the library's website because we consider it more stable; but if it's an individual author's work we copy it, store it on our computer and catalogue it as a digital resource.

Conclusions

Present and future libraries are constituted by bibliographic materials and databases that tend to integrate into a whole.

The integration of these documents makes the library undergo significant changes. The collaboration of computer technicians is necessary to update the programs to keep up with the changes.

The demand of digital information has increased, so that in the future it will be very important for a library to have its collection accessible, as well as the variety of the links it offers. This is the reason why we have to digitalise our collections.

In this digital society, we think that libraries, in order not to disappear, should have a strategy to be able to compete with other agents that produce and provide information. At this point libraries can work as filters, but never censoring, that is, making accurate and verified information available to everybody, no matter what their resources are.

All of this implies a large investment and it is the institutions that we depend on who have to be aware of the importance of the economic and social value of information, in order to obtain the economic resources that are necessary without losing its independence, which also happens in the art and heritage fields.

We also have to think of the standardization and exchange of information that took place during the last century thanks to the rules and the data formats then introduced.

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