Safeguarding of the Portuguese Language Documentary Heritage

The Lusophone Digital Library

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Abstract

The communication outlines the importance of the safeguarding of the Portuguese Language documental heritage. During some conventions, information professionals and researchers jointed to discuss about difficulties and requirements and planned together information strategies, as the Letters of Aveiro and Sao Paulo, the IFLA- Portuguese Caucus, the Lusophone Forum of Archivists and professional training. In 1996, the creation of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), joints eight countries to deepen mutual friendship and cooperation to achieve common objectives. The Informational Policies of the organization structured initiatives for safeguarding of the common cultural heritage, in which documentation as a remarkable position. Till now, most of the digitization and preservation projects are Portuguese and Brazilian. A number of the them are briefly described and they mainly consists in digital programs in different areas of knowledge such as the Health Information Network in Portuguese, ePORTUGUESe, formalized in 2004, and supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), to promote information networks and the creation of the Global Health Library; the Lusophonia Portal, a forum, about the Industrial Property in the Lusophone countries, where you can find, since 2007, a virtual library, the LUSOPAT database and another data of cooperation; the Information Center on Social Protection (CIPS), responds the information needs and experiences of social protection of the CPLP countries, created in 2007, by the Executive Secretary of CPLP, the International Labor Organization (ILO)-Lisbon and STEP Project/ Portugal; the Legis PALOP, born in 2008, containing a platform to provide and share legal information and knowledge among African Countries of Portuguese Official Language (PALOP), developed by the Regional Indicative Program PALOP II, funded by the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) and the Portuguese Institute for Development Support (IPAD). The presentation ends up with a recent initiative, result of a doctoral thesis, containing a methodological guide for the implementation of the Lusophone Digital Library (BDL), a free access portal to digital content of the collections of Lusophone National Libraries. The objective of this contribution is to safeguard the documental heritage, democratize the access to it, increase awareness of its significance and distribute, on large scale, products derivate of it, develop the integration of the Lusophone countries in the knowledge society and promote the Portuguese language in the cyberspace.

Authors

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1. Safeguarding in the Digital Age: digitization and preservation planning

All areas of life produce digital documents and the digital documentary heritage, born digital or digitalized traditional documents, are an important heritage for humanity. In order to allow universal access, the safeguarding of digital documents and digital technology should concern everybody: international organizations, governments, experts, professionals and all peoples.

The Memory of the World, launched by UNESCO, seeks to preserve documentary heritage, which reflects the diversity of languages, peoples and cultures and is the mirror of the world and its memory. But this memory is fragile and every day disappears. In order to avoid this situation, the Programme proposes some principles for the preservation of archives, libraries and museums collections all over the world and ensures their wide dissemination.

At the same time, other initiatives improve this policy, like the Information for All Programme (IFAP) in 2006, which looks toward a world where everyone has access to information that is relevant to them and where everyone has the opportunity and skills to use this information in creating better societies. The Programme provides a platform for discussions and action on information policies and the safeguarding of recorded knowledge, but many challenges yet remain, such as strengthening the program in all regions, increasing international and intra-regional cooperation to use ICTs for development and the materializing its goals.

But resources of information and creative expression are increasingly produced, distributed, accessed and maintained in digital form, creating a new legacy, the digital heritage, that is at risk of being lost and its preservation, for the benefit of present and future generations, is an urgent issue of worldwide concern. Consequently, in 2003 UNESCO published the *Guidelines for the Preservation of Digital Heritage,*[1] based on the experience of groups working in preservation and research programs around the world; it supports a variety of preservation strategies and requirements and tools across institutions and settings who are making decisions to implement preservation planning.

The *Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage* provides strategies and policies to develop preservation of digital heritage, taking into account the level of urgency, local circumstances, available means and future projections. The cooperation of holders of copyright and related rights, and other stakeholders, in setting common standards and compatibilities, and resource sharing, will facilitate this.

A number of initiatives to preserve digital materials have been ongoing in scientific and scholarly research, so that they are maintained and can be re-used. National libraries generally approach the digital environment from the angle of deposit legislation and several libraries have developed strategies for actively selecting and preserving websites, and some national archives have extended policies for electronic record management to include websites of government agencies, public sites and intranet sites, and developed guidelines describing best practices. Other institutions are focusing on collecting materials in a specific subject.

However, few countries have adopted a national policy regarding digital information and most decision-makers have no sensibility for the problem or are not informed about the risk of disappearance of commonly used means of transmitting and storing digital information.

2. Portuguese Language: Past, Present and Future

Portuguese navigations began by the mid-1500s, and the Portuguese controlled, during centuries, some colonies all over the world.[2] The Portuguese Empire was motivated by economic, mercantile, political and strategic interests, allied to a certain cultural and scientific curiosity and an attempt at evangelization. The process of colonization encouraged miscegenation and the colonial education system improved the use of the Portuguese language.[3]

Following the Second War World, and after the long process of European colonization, most of the European territories gained their independence. But, despite armed struggles, only after the Democratic Portuguese Revolution of 1974, Portuguese colonies finally won independence and the Portuguese language was the major cultural heritage shared between the old metropolis and new nations.[4]

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[1]Guidelines for the preservation of digital heritage (on line). UNESCO, Information Society Division, 2003. http://www.unesco.org/webworld/mdm.

[2]Boxer, Charles. O Império Marítimo Português (1415-1825). Lisboa: Edições 70, 1992.

[3] Vasconcelos, J. Leite de. História da Língua Portuguesa: origem e vida externa (em linha). Revista Lusitana, 25, 5-28.

[4] Reis, Carlos. La internacionalización de la lengua portuguesa. Contextos, confrontaciones y prioridades (on line), 2010. Ciclo de Conferencias 2010.El espacio ibérico de las lenguas. Instituto Cervantes, Madrid, 2010. http://scholar.google.es/scholar?cluster=630868506494526101&hl=es&as_sdt=0

Like Brazil, two centuries before,[5] the new governments, which came to power in new Lusophone countries, in order to achieve national unification among of numerous ethnic groups, decided that Portuguese was their official or co-official language, and established cooperation in different areas.[6]

Portuguese is the official language of the following eight countries: Portugal in Europe, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tomé and Principe in Africa, and East Timor in Asia, and is spoken by immigrants that live in different regions.[7]

It has been estimated there are about 240 million people speaking Portuguese in the world.[8] The Portuguese language is the fifth most spoken language on the planet, and the third most spoken language of the western hemisphere, after English and Spanish, and the most spoken language in the southern hemisphere. In the future, Portuguese Language speakers will grow up.[9]

3. The Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP): creation and development

The Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) is inspired in others similar organizations joined together around common languages, as English, French, Arab and Spanish, and with similar objectives, and its development is marked by sequential phases.[10]

The first one is a large period of the Portuguese colonization that, in the last decades, was fragmented by a new political consciousness recognizing that Portugal must finish with the dictator regime and be a free country, and the African colonies did not belong to Portugal, and the peoples of the colonies had the right to freedom and independence.

Those new ideas prepared the Portuguese Democratic Revolution in 1974, the beginning of the second phase, and brought independence to the Portuguese colonies, that choired new ways of organization and development. Unfortunately, military conflicts between rival political groups devastated Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau, and East Timor was invaded by Indonesia till 2002, however, the new century brought peace to them, and conditions for the growth of the peoples. In spite of general problems and difficulties, a proposition of Brazil was accepted, and the Lusophone countries founded in 1989 the International Portuguese Language Institute (IILP).[11]

The third phase of the CPLP corresponds to a period around the concept of the Lusophonie,[12] a cultural identity shared by eight countries and various communities in the world, united by a common past and language, enriched in its diversity. The concept gained official partnership in 1996, with the creation of the Community in Lisbon, and despite a series of delays and various opinions, this moment

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[5]República Federativa do Brasil. Portal do Governo Brasileiro Brasil. Português, a língua oficial do Brasil (on line). http://www.brasil.gov.br/pais/lingua_portuguesa/portugues.

[6]Kakunda, Vatomene. As Línguas Africanas dos Países de Expressão Portuguesa. Passado e presente. In: Forum Internacional de Cultura e Literatura Africanas, Lisboa: Universidade Católica, 1996.

[7] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision Press Release*. Disponble at http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Documentation/publications.htm

[8]Observatório da Língua portuguesa. *Falantes de Português.* http://observatorio-lp.sapo.pt/pt/dados-estatisticos/as-linguas-mais-faladas/falantes-de-portugues.

[9] Internet World Stats. *Top Ten Languages Used in the Web (Number of Internet Users by Language).* http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm.

[10]Comunidade dos Países de Língua portuguesa (CPLP). http://www.cplp.org/

[11] Instituto Internacional da Língua Portuguesa (IILP). http://www.iilp.org.cv/

[12] Eduardo Lourenço. Cultura e Lusofonia ou os Três Anéis. In: *A Nau de Ícaro seguido de Imagem e Miragem da Lusofonia*. Lisboa, Gradiva, 1999.

had great impact and visibility.[13] The organization is a multilateral forum, privileged to deepen the mutual friendship and cooperation among its members, and has the following objectives:[14]

- The conservation of political diplomacy among its Member States, reinforcing its presence in the international scenario.
- The cooperation in all matters, including education, health, science and technology, defense, agriculture, public administration, communication, justice, public security, culture and sports.
- The implementation of projects that promote and disseminate the Portuguese language.

The foundation *Declaration*[15] emphasized the development of an identity based on a common language, Portuguese, on dialogue with other national languages and on solidarity and cooperation, respecting the sovereign equality of states.

The CPLP aims to collaborate in promoting peace, democracy and sustainable development, recognizing multilateral cooperation as the most effective means to achieve these objectives, established above a strong structure in different areas.

4. Safeguarding of the Portuguese Language documentary heritage: approaches to digital preservation and the Lusophone Digital Library

The safeguarding of the of the Portuguese Language documentary heritage, specially, digital documents, had been a preoccupation of the information professionals and researchers. During some conventions, they joined to discuss their difficulties and requirements and planned information strategies, as the Letters of Aveiro and S. Paulo, the IFLA- Portuguese Caucus, the Lusophone Forum of Archivists and professional training.[16]

In 1996, the creation of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), joins eight countries to deepen mutual friendship and cooperation to achieve common objectives in different areas. The Information Policies of the organization structured initiatives for safeguarding the common cultural heritage, in which documentation holds a remarkable position. Till now, most governmental and private initiatives of digitization and preservation projects were organized by Portuguese and Brazilian institutions, which have participated in international projects. We present some of them in the next paragraphs.

The assignment of the ePORTUGUÊSe[17] was formalized in 2004, during the Ministerial Conference on Health Research in Mexico, and is a model developed by the Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences information (BIREME) and supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), an organization that promotes information networks and the creation of the Global Health Library.

The project, born in 2004, was created with the following objectives:

[13]Viggiano, Alan. Missão em Portugal. José Aparecido e a Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa. Brasília: André Quice Editor, 1996.

[14] Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa. *Estatutos* (on line) http://www.cplp.org/

[15] Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP). *Comunicado Final da Cimeira Constitutiva da Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP)* (on line). http://www.cplp.org/Arquivo.asp?id=5.

[16]Associação Portuguesa de Bibliotecários, Arquivistas e Documentalistas (BAD). http://www.apbad.pt/Cooperacao.htm

[17] ePORTUGUESe. http://www.bvs.eportuguese.org/php/index.php,

- To support the development of human resources for health in the CPLP countries, strengthening collaboration in health information and training.
- To promote the development of the Virtual Health Library.
- To help the dissemination of the Blue Trunk Library in Portuguese, facilitating interaction between health institutions and contributing to training in health.

Another example is the Lusophonia Portal,[18] a virtual forum where, since 2007, you can find relevant information on the system of Industrial Property of the various Portuguese speaking countries and of the international organizations. To fulfill its mission, this forum aims:

- To contribute to the creation of the necessary conditions for the affirmation of Portuguese as a technology language in the context of the knowledge society.
- To provide a documentation centre in Portuguese, which includes the LUSOPAT database, the largest database in the world of patents in Portuguese, a cooperative database to support cooperation initiatives, restructuring and maximizing their results.
- To promote effective partnership about Industrial Property.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) launched the Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All in 2003, the conclusions of which were applied worldwide. In this context, the Project STEP/Portugal, the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity of Portugal and the Executive Secretary of CPLP created the Information Center on Social Protection (CIPS)[19] in 2007. The objectives of the CIPS are:

- To provide information in Portuguese to managers with responsibilities related to the social protection, improving knowledge and information in this area.
- To guide policy decisions, supporting decision makers through research and experience and provide a framework of different approaches and strategies used in the Portuguese-speaking world.
- To create opportunities for institutions and civil society, enhancing the exchange of information and knowledge about the extent of social protection for the benefit of the people.

In 2010, in Fortaleza, the Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs of the CPLP recognized the importance of the CIPS and adopted the resolution to ensure the continued development of the centre.

In the legal context, it is worth referencing another case, the Legis-PALOP,[20] inserted under the Project Support Development to Judicial Systems of the PALOP (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique S. Tomé and Principe), inserted in the PALOP Regional Indicative Programme II, financed by the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) and the Portuguese Institute for Development Support (IPAD).

The project, initiated in 2008, is an ambitious project of providing a platform of knowledge and of legal information among the African Countries of Portuguese Official Language (PALOP) and for those

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[18] Portal da Lusofonia. http://www.portal-lusofonia.org/
[19] Centro de Informação em Proteção Social (CIPS).
http://www.cipsocial.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=57&Itemid=105
[20] Legis-PALOP. http://www.legis-palop.org/bd

who want to know these subjects, providing access to legislation, jurisprudence (higher courts) doctrine and documents, published after the independence and a common thesaurus.

In partnership with the Overseas Historical Archive of Institute of Tropical Research (IICT), all legislation published since 1926 on the African independences were collected.

The Legis-PALOP became a recognized instrument of Lusophone citizenship and civic and economic development, actively contributing to the consolidation of a fairer society and a more solid international position of the PALOP.

In this context, the presentation ends up with another recent initiative, consequence of a doctoral thesis,[21] defended in 2007. The research emphasizes the privileged place of the national library, as an encyclopedic institution, for the conservation of the heritage literature produced in a country, the responsibility to elaborate the national bibliography and the obligation to provide the national heritage to the largest possible number of users.[22]

The economic growth provided increased literacy of the population and the demand of information. National libraries were obliged to enrich their collections, introduce new areas of knowledge, practice new functions and question their new mission and priorities in a context of the new digital world.[23] Besides, the National Library is one of the key elements of the national information policy, as well as the national archives and the archaeological museum, serving the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage of each country.[24]

In this perspective, the study of the Lusophone National Libraries allowed for the design of a theoretical, conceptual and methodological proposal, called *Methodological Guide for the Implementation of Lusophone Digital Library*, of which the potential users exceed 240 million Lusophone people. The mission of this initiative is the establishment of a cooperation project, oriented to the collection, access, preservation and distribution of a network of digital objects belonging to cultural and documental heritage of the Lusophone National Libraries, as well as the creation of their infrastructure and services.

The proposal includes the creation of a free access portal to digital content, contributing to the integration of the Lusophone countries in the knowledge society, the safeguarding of the documentary heritage, the democratization of the access to it and promoting the Portuguese language in the cyberspace.

The International Association of the Lusophone Digital Library, in Portugal, the Lusophone National Libraries and the Information Science Department of the Carlos III University of Madrid, in Spain, recently developed a project for the safeguarding of the Portuguese Language documentary heritage, named the Lusophone Digital Library, which is waiting for financial support from UNESCO.

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[21]Melo Alves, Fernanda Maria. Articulación y complementariedad de las políticas de la lengua portuguesa, de cooperación y de información en los países lusófonos: guía metodológica para la implantación de la Biblioteca Digital Lusófona (BDI) (on line). http://e-archivo.uc3m.es/handle/10016/2/browse?type=author&order=ASC&rpp=20&value=Alves%2C+Fernanda+Maria+Melo.

[22] Carrión Gútiez, Manuel. Manual de Bibliotecas, 2ª. Madrid: Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez, 1993: 13.

[23] Line, Maurice. The role of national library: a reassement. Libri, 30, 1, 1980: 1-16.

[24] Guinchat, Claire, Menou, Michel. La gestion et les politiques d'information au niveau national et international. En: Guinchat, C., Menou, M. Introduction Général aux Ciences et Técniques de la Information et de la Documentation. Paris: UNESCO, 1981: 369-370.