

## MULTICULTURAL ASPECTS OF DIGITIZATION

Urban culture appears as an agent in the development of multiculturalism which encourages uniqueness and singularity of culture as something that is interesting, attractive and rich. Any cultural connection between different cultures and subcultures represents a form of acculturation. The fastest acculturation happens in technical achievements, to some extent science, and much slower in some forms of spirituality. The concept of trans-disciplinarity is a broader term of the "demands" and a new "design" of institutions that would mediate between social and cognitive factors and which aim was to encourage integration strategies in science and culture in general.

### **Nature of "inter, multi and trans-disciplinarity"**

- complexity
- diversity
- cohesion
- nonlinearity
- integrated approaches
- agreement
- connectivity
- universalism
- local-regional-global dialogue

Multiculturalism today, within the liberal discourse, is approached to from different aspects, and perhaps solutions should be sought in that fact. Namely, it seems that in multicultural societies as Serbian is, where many differences exist, it is necessary not only to respect diversity but also different approaches to it.

Multiculturalism is the co-existence of many cultures in one area. However, multiculturalism in its broadest sense means peaceful coexistence of different ethnic, cultural and religious communities in the same state / area. That is why recognition of the rights of cultural groups and the positive evaluation of their differences is in the center of multicultural claims. These relationships primarily involve communication, exchanges and participation in the creation of cultural values, taking place in a globalized world and further more a whole range of interactions.

Policy of multiculturalism is one of the key levers of the organization of the European social sphere and in that sense; it is expected of the countries that seek to join the EU fit their own cultural patterns in the broader cultural habitus.

Among the key theoretical and social issues in contemporary European science and politics there is also a question: How, within the European integration processes, to create a social space for compliance of numerous cultures, languages and ethnic groups that exists within the European Union? The expansion of European Union towards the east and south actualizes this issue and sets to the new members the requirements for establishing a stable inter-ethnic relation in culture and protection of national cultural heritage.

Multiculturalism - the model assumes that individuals and different cultural groups can fully incorporate into society without losing their particularity or opportunities for full participation in the society.

### **Digitization process**

*Digitization is a relatively new field, which will for many years be extremely modern issue in all libraries of the world.*

Digitization is the process of transferring documents from analog to digital form. With additional processing, today, various documents and information become available to users. The benefit is preserving and protecting original documents also.

The scanning process is often identified with the notion of digitizing, which is only one part of the process of digitization. Digitization include several processes, few more steps of the different nature of variable duration and logical place in the "production process" which will lead to the realization of the common digital document as final, but not always formed product. Development of hardware is so fast that it is almost impossible to predict the performance of computer components in next 10 or 20 years. When it comes to the software, it is already frustrating trying to read text or view images created in earlier versions of the software. In addition, the unknown lifetime of the medium containing data must be taken into consideration when deciding of an option of digitization since it is necessary to obtain constant availability and interoperability to a formed digital document. The fact that the process of digitization acquires several different steps, roughly classified into preparation, scanning, quality control, indexing, backup creation, continuous availability of digital document, indicates the complex nature of digitization, which is further complicated by the rapid development of hardware and software.

### **Why digital document archiving?**

- provides the fastest access to information
- increases document security
- reduces business costs
- increases control over the information
- protects the document
- solves the problem of space in libraries

**Determination of priorities and evaluation of the types** of materials to be digitized means choosing the materials by various criteria.

**Selection criteria** that the institutions are usually led by in designing digitization projects are the following: historical and cultural value 100%, improved access 100%, the scientific significance 92%, reducing the damage of documents 69%, protection 69%, exchange and loan of documents 46%, space saving 15%, research of digital technologies 15% and commercial reasons 7%.

**Types of documents** that are usually digitized: 49% of rare books, photographs 44%, manuscripts 39%, books 35%, music 30%, artwork 15%, magazines 9%, newspapers 5%, maps 1%. In terms of format, the ratio is as follows: printed material 58%, engravings 42%, posters, 42%, movies and video 25%.

**Digitization standards** vary in relation to the type of documents to be digitized. Despite all, we must admit that the standards are the key elements of each project of digitizing and every library that runs a similar project must necessarily take them into account. Many countries that have not started with any digitizing project yet, have shown interest in this matter because they intend to begin work in the near future.

There are three basic problems in the digitization of documents:

- problem of access to documents,
- legal problems and
- problems in archiving the documents.

Advantages of electronic items are immense, but it is necessary to face the problem, very difficult to solve, of intellectual property. Therefore, it is truly necessary to bring up European standards in the domain of intellectual property laws. Also, it will be necessary to ask the authors themselves to note how they want their publications be issued - printed or electronic.

Building digital libraries is carried out along with the various discussions, while on the other hand information and digital databases have already grown to an immense height. There is almost no major national library in the developed world that has not at least drafted a project to build its digital library and most of them have already established an enviable collection of digital documents. Some has come to the end of the converting old card catalogue into an automated database. Unfortunately, we can say that there is no complete list of the existing digital collections in libraries or other cultural institution in the world.

The beginning of the librarianship is connected to the Library in Alexandria, Egypt. It was the first attempt of humanity to gather, allocate and made available the whole human knowledge. The library was destroyed, but not its ideal, its true concept and it was rebuild. *Alexandrina* today is presented by 10 billion pages of text, film and an audio archive. Most of the national libraries also make their digital collections available to the world via the Internet, mostly free of charge.

Another well known but the smallest project of the kind is so called "Gutenberg", Illinois, USA. It started in 1971, to reach 25,000 electronic titles in September 2008.

Far more ambitious in the number of titles offered is the U.S. Library of Congress, the biggest institution of its kind in the world. It digitized and offered Internet users 134 million of its books until April 2008.

### **World Digital Library WDL**

The portal was officially launched on 21st April 2009 in Paris headquarters of UNESCO. World Digital Library has been developed by the Library of Congress (USA) team and the technical support was provided by the Alexandrina Library in Alexandria, Egypt. WDL works in seven languages-Arabic, French, English, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish but some other contents of the portal are available in numerous other languages.

**Main objectives are:**

- Encouragement of international understanding, development of cultural cooperation among nations and raising awareness about the importance of it,
- Development of world education services,
- Increasing the amount of digital contents that are not in English and which do not come from Western countries only,
- Raising awareness of the importance of foreign languages that can encourage and facilitate language learning,
- Contribution to scientific research.

Any digital document in the WDL is presented in the best possible way with all the advantages offered by new technologies. Each collection and each document is presented in its historical and cultural context, containing the interpretation of experts and the general introduction.

*“World Digital Library is envisioned as a digital treasury of the world cultural heritage, but in its exclusive sense according to the criteria of the universal value of importance for humanity. The site of the World Digital Library will enable you to find cultural treasures from all epochs of human history and from all meridians“.*<sup>1</sup>

Serbia is presented with two documents:

*"They are separated by a total of 800 years of Serbian culture, and both are similar in the way that they connect the eastern and western European dimension of culture that has been in such a fruitful manner achieved in Serbia, some 800 years ago as well as in the 20th century. Also, in Paris, I will propose some new cultural monuments from Serbian tradition, the legacy of Nikola Tesla, which is included in the UNESCO 'Memory of the World', and some new archival and other treasures the Serbian culture is abounded with."*<sup>2</sup>

These are *Miroslav Gospel* and avant-garde magazine *Zenit*.

---

<sup>1</sup> Branka Mihajlovic: Serbia in digital treasury of world`s heritage. An interview with Sreten Ugričić, director of National Library of Serbia, member of editorial board of World Digital Library. [www.slobodnaevropa.org](http://www.slobodnaevropa.org)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

## GOOGLE

Inspired by this and similar projects, leading group of people in the internet giant *Google* during 2002 officially started up the project named *Books* as a new service of *Google Print*, presented in 2004 on the book fair in Frankfurt. Later the concept has changed its name to *Google Book Search* (<http://books.google.com>) under which it still exists. But on the way to the digitization of all books of the world, Google first had to solve technical problems and then legal, which proved to be tougher. For "all the books of the world" belong to someone, so Google faced the problem in two ways. First, they made contracts with numerous libraries in order to acquire those books which copyright has expired. The problem of new items, for which they were exposed to claims, was resolved by including more than 10,000 international publishers and authors as partners in book search program. Program improves selling books in the way that only a selection of pages is available online, and the user is then referred to local bookstores, suppliers or publishers themselves.

*Google* announced the beginning of digitalization of all archived newspaper items. This program began two years ago in cooperation with the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*.

In fact, judging by the statements of many European intellectuals, the motives of Google attempt are not understood as benevolently as in the U.S., but rather as a risk of American companies chase for the profit that could threaten European tradition of multiculturalism, including the establishment of "Empire of English language". However, the European Commission has decided to „speed up” the digitization of works of culture and make them accessible to public on the Internet through the European Digital Library.

### The first European digital library EDL

The first European Digital Library with two million titles was put into three-month probation for the first time on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008 under the supervision of Dutch Royal Library. Only a day later Europeana had to be removed from the network. It was not ready for a large number of users. It was supposed that the prototype can accept five million users per hour. But there were twice as much. A month later, the online library was opened for the second time with four times larger capacity of the server.

Digitized works are available free of charge over the Internet in 21 languages. In 2010 this library has ten million titles. Library visitors, except for literature, are allowed to access a large number of manuscripts, pictures, maps, photographs and audiovisual documents online. The library is named **Europeana**. According to the published data of the European Commission (EC) (available at [www.europeana.eu](http://www.europeana.eu)) *Europeana* could be proud now of approximately 4.6 million titles. Primarily, those are the books but also the newspapers, photographs, film clips, historical maps etc. **Europeana** is the first multilingual on-line collection of millions of digitized documents from European museums, libraries, archives and multimedia collections.

**European Digital Library** is focused on the presentation of rare and unique collections that are physically stored in different geographic locations, which, combined with other international, *multicultural* and multilingual collections can also be searched and reviewed, in order to

contribute to general knowledge. In the case of this project the importance is its influence. "This is the front door to the treasury of European culture in all its glorious ambiguity. **Europeana** is more than the library", explains José Manuel Barroso (José Manuel Barroso), European Commission President, on the opening of the portal.

How quickly will Europeana.eu develop, depends primarily on the so-called aggregators, the portals that collect digitized material from a range of different institutions. Following the example, European film archives now work on designing their professional portal the *European Film Gateway*, which will be connected to the *Europeana*.

In the meantime, another version of the European (European Version 1.0) is carried out which will replace the current prototype in the summer 2010. By the mid-2011 four more versions with the increasing number of functions and better results are planned.

Moreover, many EU countries created national portals. Ten digital collections from Serbia are on the European Library portal. Five of them can be searched directly from the portal, the content of another five is linked.

Almost half of the digital items come from only one country. It is France, 47% of the entire Europeana fund comes from it, Germany, takes the second place and take part in with 15 %, the Netherlands with 3%, but when it comes to other countries, generally less than 1%. It seems that in most countries it is not realized that participation in this project, is primarily their interest to present and affirm their culture.

Despite all, it is possible to find many unique works of arts in **Europeana**. For example, there is a collection of early printed publications from the Catalan library, archive film material on Berlin 1913, Dante's Divine Comedy, a collection of 100 paintings by Pablo Picasso, manuscripts of music genius etc.

## **NBS-National Library of Serbia**

### **From Miroslav Gospel to the latest electronic items**

The National Library of Serbia (NBS) seeks to answer the demands of the time, we see the efforts of digitizing their collections and in this way to supports the project of European library. The best proof that such an effort enables different attitude of the world toward Serbia and Serbian is the motto seen on others sites: "*It's in Serbian, but look at it*".

The International Children`s Library planned to digitize 10,000 books for children in 100 different languages to help developing children`s information literacy all over the world. Our country is presented with 130 most beautiful books written by eminent Serbian authors. From February 2005 these books are available on the NBS website in full text allowing zooming, and are grouped by theme considering age from 3 to 13.

An essential attempt of NBS is a definite and permanent conservation of invaluable collections of the NBS. Medieval manuscripts and incunabula have the special value. **Miroslav Gospel** 1180 is the oldest preserved and the most important Serbian manuscript, decorated with the unique miniatures. NBS by placing full digital reproduction to its web site unveiled this monument of literacy to the public and also kept it from oblivion and destruction. The daily newspaper "Politika" digitized items are from the period of the 1904 until 1941. The items can be searched by date, which makes it easier to swim in the sea of information.

### **Central Public Library "Stevan Sremac" Niš in the process of digitization**

Central Public Library "Stevan Sremac" in Niš has a small number of titles of the serial publications in its funds published from 1884, when the first newspaper "Journal of Nis" was printed, until the 1945, when one period of social development in Serbia ends. The reasons are the turbulent historical events and the devastating consequences of the great flood in 1948. Since these primary sources directly reflect all segments of life, it is necessary to obtain these title and to make them a source of data and information for all those interested in history of our city, especially researchers in southern Serbia.

National Library of Serbia in their funds has 49 titles (1930 volumes) of the serials that were edited in Niš. Our project implies scanning of this material by the National Library of Serbia for the purposes of the Central Public in Nis. We own 24 titles in 1086 volumes of the serials from this period and would scan them by own facilities. The deadline is the end of 2010.

The local history department or homeland department in our Library so far, scanned and published printed catalogues of the oldest and most valuable collections of photographs and periodicals. The intention is to scan a collection of postcards too, which would complete the photo collection. Sound records and audio-visual materials, the particularity of this region, will also enter the digitalization process as soon as technical support would be available. In this way we make non-book materials popular in the sense of their originality, representativeness and content. Its uniqueness is in abundance of material that will help the future researchers with the study of similarities and differences among nations in the Balkans in the terms of tradition, customs, fashion, music and speech.

### **SUMMARY**

Multiculturalism means the co-existence of many cultures in one area. The access to multicultural treasure is obtained by digitized collection of the world. The beginning of the librarianship is connected to the Library in Alexandria, Egypt. It was the first attempt of humanity to gather, allocate and made available the whole human knowledge. Digital libraries encourage international understanding, development of cultural cooperation among nations. *Google* started the project *Books* in 2002, National Library of Serbia in 2005, the first European Digital Library ie. *Eurepana* in 2008, *World Digital Library* in 2009. Urban culture appears as an agent for the development of multiculturalism that encourages uniqueness and particularity of culture.

## Literature:

1. Olivera Porubović-Vidović: Digitalizacija-izazov danjašnjice, potreba današnjice. Arhiv, sv. 2/2001, str. 51
2. Walt Crawford and Michael Gorman, Future libraries: dreams, madness and reality, Chicago, American Library Association, 1995, pp. 127
3. Vesna Injac: Digitalne biblioteke u svetu – Narodna biblioteka Srbije  
[www.bb.rs](http://www.bb.rs)
4. Branka Mihajlović: Srbija u digitalnoim trezoru svetske baštine  
[www.slobodnaevropa.com](http://www.slobodnaevropa.com)
5. Dagmar Ginsberg: Copyright. Goethe Institut e.V., Online-Redaktion, April 2009.
6. Milan Lazarević: Balkan magazin, 30. Septembar 2009.
7. Goran Bašić: Evropske integracije i politika multikulturalnosti u Srbiji. Filozofija i društvo (Beograd), br. 29/2006, str. 113.
8. Goran Bašić: Lokalna demokratija i međunacionalni odnosi. Teme, br. 1/2006, str.70
9. Milan Mesić: Multikulturalizam, društveni i teorijski izazovi. Društvena istraživanja, vol. 16, no. 1-2, (87-88, travanj 2007.