Cost Issues in Digitalization and Preservation:
A Case Study of a Small-Scale Music Library

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ABSTRACT

For many projects, resources are always limited. Hence, there is often a need to allocate resources in a most cost-effective manner. There are some cost models developed as guidelines on how to estimate the costs of digitalization and preservation of information in a comparatively more accurate way. By knowing the factors which affecting those costs, it will be easier to find a cost-effective strategy for digital preservation. Among different migration strategies proposed by researchers, in this article the migration in the framework of Open Archival Information System (OAIS) will be studied. This is applied to the case of this small-scale music library, Melos Music Library in El Parnaso Centre in Uruguay.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

Information preservation is an important issue discussed in the past decade. It always refers to the digital preservation of information. As digitalization is one of the ways to store and to preserve the massive data we have, there is a need to study digital preservation which especially focuses on the long-term preservation of the information. According to Rosenthal, Robertson, Lipkis, Reich, and Morabito (2005), "The goal of a digital preservation system is that the information it contains remains accessible to users over a long period of time." Migration is one of the means for digital preservation and to make the information sustainable throughout time. It is significant to find out the costs behind all those procedures involved in digital migration.

There are a number of research studies on the cost issues in digitalization and they are mostly in the academic libraries context (Alhaji, 2007; Byrd, Courson, Roderick, & Taylor, 2001; Piorun & Palmer, 2008) or in the medical libraries context (Becker & Arenson, 1994; Shepard, 2005). This study emphasizes on a digitalization project in a small-scale music library in order to fill the gaps. The concepts applied here can be upscale to a large-scale digitalization project in the future.

This article aims 1) to study various existing cost models for digital preservation proposed by researchers at the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) Reference Model, the Cost Model for Digital Preservation (CMDP) by Kejser, Nielsen, and Thirifays (2011) will be discussed in more details;

2) to identify the tasks in digital migration and the costs for those tasks; 3) to find out all the possible costs in digitalization and digital migration; 4) to understand the difficulties in reducing costs and to suggest alternatives for reducing costs; and finally 5) apply to the case of the Melos Music Library.

Background

Background of the El Parnaso Centre and the Melos Music Library

The Melos Music Library is in the El Parnaso[1] Centre which is located in Uruguay. It opened in late 1999 associated with the library network of UNESCO. "Melos" is an ancient Greek word meaning 'melody'. This small-scale library provides a place, especially for the children to explore the world through books, music and other extra-curriculum activities for free. The facilities in this centre including a large multipurpose room with a capacity of sixty people which can serve as a classroom, theatre, computer room and also craft room. The centre is also equipped with broadband internet connected computers, televisions and all kinds of audio-visual (AV) equipment so that the community can enjoy the collection in the centre.

The El Parnaso Centre is planning to expand its services. A new extension of a music library, Melos, located next to the main building is currently opened to the public. A collection of more than 6000 CDs and DVDs with NAXOS label plus some other music CDs will be displayed in this library. In view of this, they need to catalogue their purchased items so as to optimize the library usage.

Background of the Project

In order to facilitate the library users to find what they want in the music library, it is important to organize the physical AV materials in an orderly way. With the help of a simple catalogue, they can locate the items easily and efficiently. The major assignment is to build a simple catalogue for their purchased NAXOS label items.

To serve the music library users, it is necessary to make catalogue searching simple and practical. It is recommended to shelf the total of 6020 pieces of NAXOS AV materials according to their own unique catalogue number. This catalogue number can be found printed on each individual CD/DVDs easily. It will be a more feasible way to use this catalogue number assigned by NAXOS rather than assigning another call number according to Library of Congress (LC) convention to each CD/DVDs, as the NAXOS products form the majority of their collection. By that NAXOS catalogue number, users can also search from the NAXOS official website[2] directly for more online information. Even if there will be new additions to the collection in the future, the Melos volunteer worker can add them to the catalogue without difficulties.

A full list of detail information of Melos purchased items is collected mostly from the NAXOS official website by means of a data scraping software called OutWit Hub[3]. All the collected information is stored in Microsoft Excel spreadsheet according to their NAXOS catalogue number in ascending order. Items are then categorized according to their catalogue number to assist minimal browsing of the catalogue. (e.g. Those catalogue numbers start with '76' and '86' are World Music and Jazz correspondingly)

Due to the lack of technical support for software setup and installation in this remote music library, Microsoft Excel has been chosen for the purpose of data storage for this cataloguing project. Microsoft Access can be considered a better choice for further enhancement of the automated cataloguing system. If required, data can be transfer from Excel to Access in the future.

Besides the above cataloguing project, a study of the cost issues in digitalization of the CDs booklets is carried out to respond to the needs of digitalization of materials at a later time. The Director of Melos, Dr. Anabella Levin Freris, once mentioned that they would like to display the booklets of each CD or DVD separately because some of the users or researchers may only want to look for the printed information rather than listening to the music recordings. It may be helpful if the booklets are digitalized and the physical ones are still kept with the original CDs in the cases. With this approach,

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