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Memory	Memória	Mandu`a	Memwa	Nasundaa`wa

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LACCHA – Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Heritages Archives Roundtable

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Welcome all to the first issue of Memoria/Memory/Mémoire/Memória, the official newsletter of LACCHA (Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Heritage Archives) Roundtable. I hope you enjoy our first issue and that you also consider submitting articles, news and anything else you want to share about managing, preserving, and providing access to archival collections from Latin America, the Caribbean and their Diaspora communities in the United States of America.

From Idea to Action: The LACCHA Story

When I sent my first post to the Archives & Archivists list in July 23, 2007, I was barely into my first month working at the University of Connecticut Library (Homer Babbidge) as a subject librarian and as curator for the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center. As the Latin American and Caribbean subject specialist at UCONN, I found myself in need of help. I am in charge of a huge Latin American and Caribbean archival collection that ranges from 19th century newspapers to Mexican pamphlets during the Independence Wars, to modern materials from the 1960s-1980s, including refugee records from a non-profit organization in the US. Although SAA already has two

Part 2: Feature articles

TEAM México within the InterPARES Project: Seeking for knowledge useful for the preservation of digital records

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Introduction

The instability and volatility of digital environments can create serious obstacles for records and archives preservation. This concern has been historically articulated by national archives and/or record offices of different countries, as well as by international initiatives such as the Council of International Archives, UNESCO. Also involved in this discussion of digital environments are researchers who have conducted different investigations, such as the International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems Project (InterPARES). This last project produced knowledge and methodologies for the long term preservation of digital records and archives. The purpose of this paper is to offer backgrounds on TEAM Mexico's participation in the InterPARES Project.¹

Through the proposal of Professor Luciana Duranti, Director of InterPARES, UNESCO, in the context of the “Memory of the World” program, granted funds to support the dissemination and adaptation of the Project findings to the Caribbean and Latin America countries.

As a result, five scholars of said region visited the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia (UBC) to learn about the InterPARES research methodology, products and findings of phases 1 and 2, to bring back to our countries the knowledge generated in the context of the Project. Each country committed matching funds to support various forms of dissemination of the InterPARES research. The scholars were Anna Schleger from Argentina, Rosely Rondinelli from Brazil, Arien Gonzalez from Cuba, Alicia Barnard from Mexico and Aida Luz Mendoza from Peru. The group was named CLAID (Caribbean and Latin America InterPARES Dissemination) Team. Claudia Lacombe from Brazil participated also with funds from the National Archives of Brazil.

Training was received by two visits to UBC, each one for two weeks, first in November, 2005 and again in February 6, 2006. During the second visit the CLAID TEAM also took part as observers of the InterPARES plenary research workshop. The CLAID Team had a last meeting in March 2006 in Mexico City with the participation of Isidro Fernandez Aballi representing the “Memory of the World Programme” of UNESCO. During that meeting the Team shared and assessed their achievements. There was also a roundtable organized by the General Archive of the Nation (AGN), where every member of the CLAID Team presented a paper relating to electronic records preservation issues. Those presentations were published by AGN after the meeting.²

Dissemination of the InterPARES Project in Mexico

Since October 2005 through March 2006, there many presentations about InterPARES were given to different audiences.³ Also an interview that the Columbian Society of Archivists made to Professor Duranti in March 2006⁴ was translated into Spanish. Finally during a course on Records, Archives and Accountability organized by the Metropolitan Autonomous University in the context of the module “digital archives and its preservation” the InterPARES Project findings were included.

1 For more information about the InterPARES Project go through <http://www.interpares.org>. Offices of InterPARES are at the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of British Columbia (UBC).

2 Archivos en Formato Electrónico. Equipo CLAID, proyecto InterPARES. Ed. Archivo General de la Nación. México, 2006

3 Translation into Spanish from Professor Duranti's Presentation to the CLAID Team on November 2005, is available at <http://www.agn.gob.mx/proyectos/interpares/interpares.html>

4 Interview in Spanish is available at http://www.sociedadcolombianadearchivistas.org/foro/ENTREVISTA_LUCIANA_DURANTI.pdf

A visit of Professor Duranti to Mexico City took place on March 2007. There were different events to disseminate the findings of InterPARES 1 and 2 as well as to promote a possible third phase. She gave two lectures. The first one, organized by the AGN, had as its the audience (around 500 persons) mainly records managers, archivists and students of the School of Library and Archivonomy. The second one was organized by the Ministry of Public Function, and the audience profile (around 400) was communications and information technologies officers belonging to different agencies of the Federal Government. The conferences were also translated into Spanish.⁵ There were other events such as a meeting with officers of Bank of Mexico (Central Bank of our Country), an interview at the Access to Public Information Federal Institute and a videoconference for officers and record managers of health services across the Country.

As Professor Duranti points out there were important lessons learned from the CLAUD Team:

- Inadequacy of simple translations into local languages
- Need for interpretation of findings based on local culture
- Inability of workshop audiences to apply what they have learned in their own organization
- Concern about the products' downward-scalability and their relevance to small and medium sized archival organizations and to organizations with limited resources
- Need for direct discovery and testing of concepts and methods
- Action research and implementation
- Need for products providing criteria and parameters rather than direct answers⁶

Among other issues, the above ones were significant for the InterPARES third phase that began on September 2007 with the following main goal:

to enable small and medium-sized public and private archival organizations and programs, which are responsible for the digital records resulting from government, business, research, art and entertainment, social and/or community activities, to preserve over the long term authentic records that satisfy the requirements of their stakeholders and society's needs for an adequate record of its past.⁷

As a result, Mexico joins the IP3 project by establishing a TEAM the name of which derives from the specific title given to this third phase of the Project, Theoretical Elaborations into Archival Management (TEAM): Implementing the theory of preservation of authentic records in digital systems in small and medium-sized archival organizations.

TEAM Mexico is comprised of a director Dr. Juan Voutsás, Researcher of University Librarian Research Centre of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, academic researchers as well as practice researchers from the National Autonomous University (UNAM), AGN and Bank de Mexico. The TEAM has meetings on a regular basis to review literature on InterPARES methodology and findings as well as to look for the progress of the case studies, translations and mobilization activities.

To this date, the team has directed our efforts to translate documents into Spanish, mobilization activities, and to carry out case studies, in accordance with the three main components of IP3: research, training and mobilization.

Translation into Spanish of IP3 documents was a first concern so as to be able to carry out case studies and work with test bed partners. As of now the following document has been translated into Spanish:

- Glossary first batch. The translation of IP Glossary into Spanish is one of the General Studies of IP3 so

5 Professor's Duranti Conference in English and Spanish is available at <http://www.agn.gob.mx/proyectos/interpares/interpares.html>

6 Duranti, Luciana: June 15, 2007 – "The Future of Our Digital Memory: The Contribution of the InterPARES Project to the Preservation of the Memory of the World," presented at the Meeting of the UNESCO Memory of the World International Advisory Committee. Pretoria, South Africa

7 To learn about InterPARES 3 visit http://www.interpares.org/ip3/ip3_index.cfm

that every TEAM, in the context of its own environment, may have the most appropriate translation of the concepts in its own language, thus enabling the exchange of knowledge among the different TEAM's. The first batch is being reviewed and will be further published in the TEAM website page.

The following working papers have also been translated into Spanish, they are not only useful for case studies but also dissemination and training activities:

- Template for Diplomatic Analysis
- Template for Case Study Contextual Analysis
- Questions that the researchers should be able to answer with respect to Policy Case Studies
- Questions that the researchers should be able to answer with respect to Recordkeeping Systems Case Studies
- Questions that the researchers should be able to answer with respect to Records Case Studies
- Case Study Report Template

As for dissemination activities there have been four conferences and one lecture.⁸ In addition we are carrying out two case studies, one involving the long term preservation of records of UNAM students and another designed to assist in the development of policies for the long term preservation of Records of the Bank of Mexico (Central Bank in Mexico).

One may say that, since the activities carried out within the CLAID Team began, preservation of digital records and archives in Mexico became a more important issue among groups of interest such as records managers, archivists, archival institutions, communication and information technologists, public servants and access of information officers. Notwithstanding it has been a slow walk mainly due to the lack of articles, papers or books in Spanish, which results in the lack of programs for training and professional curricula. Also there still prevails the idea that information and communications technology is going to solve the troubles of preservation. It has been hard to convince others that the solutions must come from records and archival procedures rather than technology. On the other hand, there is not a government policy or guideline for digital records preservation. Even though the guidelines for organizing and preserving records and archives² state that they must be applied also to digital records, said guidelines do not state how to do it. Meanwhile a lot of e-government actions have been launched possibly lacking in preservation procedures or methodologies for those documents being created by the interactions of agencies with citizenship, thus risking the evidence of government actions and therefore accountability.

By participating in IP3, TEAM Mexico, expects to go ahead in the preservation of digital records by using the resources and products that the InterPARES Project has developed for nearly 10 years.

Upcoming event: FORO, the Transborder Library Forum

FORO is a conference that focuses on librarians and library services in the border regions between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. This event will be jointly hosted by CETYS Universidad and San Diego State University.

What: 15th Transborder Library Forum/FORO Transfronterizo de Bibliotecas

When: March 4-6, 2009

Where: Camino Real Hotel Conference Center in Tijuana, Baja California Conference

Theme: Exploring Common Interests: Expanding Opportunities

The organizing committee invites all interested presenters, exhibitors and participants to visit the FORO web page at: <http://foro.cetys.net>

⁸ <http://www.agn.gob.mx/archivistica/lineamientos/lineamientos.html>

⁹ The papers and conference reference may be found in the presentations section at http://www.interpares.org/ip3/ip3_dissemination.cfm?proj=ip3