

Notes from the Vision Group – Digital Library for the Maghreb Workshop Rabat, January 2007

Ideas Presented/Discussed by the Group

- DL leads to networks for science, education, culture
- Collaborated management, with distributed sites
 - Each country in the Maghreb will have different priorities
 - DL can help build ties among the countries
- Collection driven and content driven library – not technology driven
- Seeking to exchange knowledge
 - Importing knowledge – in particular science and engineering
 - Exporting knowledge – in particular culture
- Gathering and exchanging knowledge among the Maghreb countries
- “Institutions” will play an important role
- Goal is implementation, not a “framework”
- Starting point is the place where others countries are – we are not starting from scratch.
- Support institutions in their work – NGOs, Universities, Civil Society, Museums, local government, etc.
- Standardization and ease of access are issues
- Facilitate scholarship – culture, science, education
- Need training for librarians and the public – short exchanges & visits
- Technical materials are needed
- Need to incorporate materials held elsewhere – eg Harvard catalog
- Encourage membership in international organizations
- Recognize that the DL will lead to job creation
- Importance of identifying, archiving and preserving unique materials
- Identify barriers to implementation
 - Software may need to be specialized
 - Funds are needed – Euros or Dollars. Govt, Business, Private
- What single action that will lead to an unstoppable chain reaction?
- What is the Maghreb? - Use the UNESCO definition.
- What is a DL? Refer to UNESCO DL Manifesto, which will be issued in Nov. 2007. UNESCO also has a 50 page “guidelines for building DLs”

Participants in this working group:

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The vision group met twice. Once on Friday afternoon and once on Saturday afternoon. The Friday meeting was general discussion and exchange of ideas. For Saturday, the Rapporteurs circulated two pages of text from the report of the Alexandria DL meeting. The text below is based on that report and includes some of the input from the Rabat group.

Vision, Mission and Scope

The Digital Library of the Maghreb will exist within a global knowledge infrastructure supporting the free flow of information, capturing many forms of human expression, maximizing use of distributed resources, and serving research, education and information needs of all people.

Specifically, the MDL will promote the preservation and understanding of the cultural heritage of the Maghreb region through the collection, curation and dissemination of a sustainable digital record of worldwide resources from and about Maghreb cultures and societies. In addition to the cultural focus, the MDL would also disseminate information the scientific advances coming from the region and give local researchers information about developments elsewhere.

Achievement of this vision will require extensive cooperation, new technological resources and dedicated efforts by people and organizations located in the Maghreb as well as in other countries. The result will be new relationships between scientists and cultural heritage organizations, new scholarly collaborations and new resources for education and study at all levels. The MDL will also establish of long-term processes that promote the collection and preservation of the cultural heritage of the Maghreb while simultaneously encouraging a fuller, shared understanding of the historic human experience and its bearing on the present day.

Essential Features

The MDL should provide:

- worldwide resources from and about the cultures and societies of the Maghreb;
- a framework for incorporating resources of many types, including multilingual and multimedia materials, from many sources and subject areas;
- content that has public value, is easily navigable, unrestricted for use, and that can be adapted for different audiences;
- wide-scale access and exchange of information through multiple regional and international networks; and,
- preservation of resources in a trusted repository with redundancy to ensure long-term continuity;

- an architecture that is distributed, open & interoperable, and that is integrated into the global knowledge infrastructure;
- a working structure that is collaborative and receptive to new partners, contributors, and users; and,
- long-term sustainability as a dynamic, growing, and secure resource.

Anticipated Results

A successful Digital Library of the Maghreb will create:

- new relationships among cultural heritage organizations;
- new relationships among scientific organizations and universities;
- new scholarly collaborations;
- new resources for education and study; and,
- a fuller, shared understanding of the historic human experience and its bearing on the present.

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