Digital Archiving in Children's Library

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Summary

Digital technology has given the libraries a way to preserve their materials and documentation in a secure way which doesn't demand as much storage space as paper does. Digital materials and documentation are easily accessible with numerous ways for later use. Children's Department of Public Library and Reading Room Sisak has recognized possibilities digital technology gives and started a project called "Digitization Project of Exhibition Activities". The goal of that project is creation of digital archive of educational and promotional materials and official documentation.

Key words: digital archiving, digitization, children's libraries

Introduction

Libraries are dedicated to archiving promotional and exhibition materials, photos, newspaper articles about library activities as well as annual reports in order to use them if the need ever arises. That leaves a big paper trail to archive and preserve which can be a problem since public libraries do not have enough storage space intended for keeping paper documents and, usually, those storage spaces are too small to keep everything librarians consider important.

Digital technology, digitization and digital carriers can solve that problem by reducing the amount of paper stored inappropriately in a secure way that doesn't need a lot of space at the same time archiving and preserving all the documents for later use.

Children's libraries are living spaces which grow and develop with their users. Important to the librarians and their users are sources of information that are accessible, simple to use, relevant and accurate. Digital archiving provides a way to store and preserve valuable information and educational contents, a mode for all relevant information on certain subject to be accessible in one place and a method to make promotional and archival materials important for every library.

This work will present all the stages in archiving materials in Children's Department of Public Library and Reading Room Sisak: from archiving paper documents and creating first digital documents to complete digital archiving

which provides the way for documents and information to be easily accessible and used as additional source of information for the users as well as promotional material and the material for annual reports, retrospectives etc. for the librarians. The use of this kind of digital archive is unlimited.

The beginning – archiving paper documents

For a very long time Children's Department of Public Library and Reading Room Sisak is dedicated to promotion of education and literacy. The exhibitions are the most important and most suitable way for Children's Department to achieve a connection and cooperation between itself and its users, children, teachers, students…

All the activities that are done for and during the exhibition involve creating materials that are valuable source of information for children as well as for librarians and they are worth preserving for possible later use.

Some years ago, before photocopy machines and computer technology all the work was done by hand. Texts for the exhibition posters were hand written, then cut out, glued to the cardboards or thicker papers and displayed in that way. After the exhibition was closed, handwritten texts were taken down from the cardboards and put away, in pieces, gathered in envelopes and archived in the storage space.

As technology developed, photocopy machines, printers and computers became available for creation of exhibition posters. Texts were printed and pictures photocopied, first in black-and-white and later in color, cut out and glued to cardboards but, after the exhibition, they were still archived in the same way as before, in envelopes, in paper pieces.

What is the end result of this kind of archiving? After a couple of years the oldest exhibition materials started to deteriorate, piles of paper become a problem for storage and, in the end, nothing could be used again since all exhibition materials were just small paper pieces which nobody could sort out.

First digital documents – promotional materials

Interest for the new technology among librarians of Children's Department grew as they realized that it could give them a new and modern way to improve and promote library work so the first step towards the digital archiving happened after two exceptionally successful exhibitions which were held during October and November 2003. By that time Children's Department was equipped with better computers, color printers, scanners, and digital photo cameras were owned by librarians personally, so they were also available for taking photos during exhibition.

During October 2003 an exhibition "Community Policing" in cooperation with Police Department of Sisak and Moslavina County took place in Children's Department. After the exhibition a PowerPoint presentation was made and presented at Interliber – Zagreb Book Fair and then in Osijek at The Conference

for Public Libraries in April 2004 where CD-ROMs containing presentation were given to other librarians as a promotional material.

Second CD-ROM with PowerPoint presentation was made in March of 2004. It was called "Blue World of Dolphins" and it was made to accompany the paper given at annual Spring School for the School Librarians. "Blue World of Dolphins" was an exhibition done in cooperation with the Blue World Institute for Research and Conservation of the Sea from Veli Lošinj and held in Children's Department during Month of Croatian Book in 2003. That CD-ROM was also given to interested librarians as a promotional material.

Both PowerPoint presentations contained a series of photographs taken during the exhibitions, schedule of events, all the reasons for making of the exhibitions, names of people involved, results, reactions of the visitors, newspaper articles, etc. They were made to present a very successful cooperation between different public and scientific institutions, library, schools and kindergartens.

After those two promotional CD-ROMs, librarians of Children's Department made more of them on different subjects presenting all aspects of activities including Preschool Playroom, Art Workshops, Storytelling Corner, Puppeteer Troupe "Together", etc. and most of them were translated to English language for promotional purposes. It, also, became a standard that every bigger exhibition was documented in that way.

Exhibition materials in a digital form – multimedia educative CD-ROM with digital and digitized content

Progress in making previously mentioned CD-ROMs was fast and soon it was not satisfying. In September of 2004 a very extensive ecological exhibition "Woods of Croatia" was prepared in Children's Department and for the first time Adobe Photoshop program was used for designing of complete exhibition posters in digital form which were later printed on A3 paper format and needed no cutting or gluing. That was the first step towards the creation of multimedia educative CD-ROMs with digitized content.

The whole process begins with the arrangements for an exhibition including decision about the topic of the exhibition after which experts are contacted for the purpose of arranging cooperation. Cooperation with various experts, scientists, authors of scientific articles, ambassadors etc. gives an opportunity to collect relevant materials, ephemerals, books, photographs, music, newspaper articles and scientific articles needed for the exhibition. That way it is made sure that materials gathered for the exhibition are accurate and relevant and that permission for the usage of those materials is given.

The next step is to write texts for the exhibition posters. Very important is a selection of pictures and photographs which will accompany and illustrate the texts. Chosen pictures and photographs are scanned usually in 300 dpi color format to ensure the quality of the reproduction and than edited. All scanned

pictures are saved in .jpg format in thematic folders after which additional editing of the pictures in Adobe Photoshop program follows.

The designing of exhibition posters is the process in two steps. First, written texts are copied from MS Word documents to Adobe Photoshop and scanned pictures are added. Next follows the final designing of the exhibition posters. Finished posters are saved in .jpg format but they are, also, saved in .psd format in case additional changes are needed.

Posters are then printed on A3 paper format with no cutting or gluing. Since they exist in digital form there is no real need to archive them in paper form so they can be lended or given to another library to use them.

After the exhibition is over, all digital documents, including exhibition posters used for the exhibition, are collected in one place. Photographs taken during the exhibition are added, as are digitized newspaper articles about exhibition. That is the beginning of making of a CD-ROM which has a multiple purpose: it is educative, fun, promotional, archival. The content of each CD-ROM is different depending on the activities done during exhibition duration time.

This kind of designing and storing of exhibition activities products is an archival record of library activities with a long period of durability, it is simple to use and is a multimedia educative product that has all the relevant information about a certain topic in one place and is accompanied by illustrative music, quizzes of knowledge which can be used for testing knowledge on the subject, etc. At the same time, this kind of product is a very good presentation and promotion of the work that is being done in Children's Department.

All-inclusive digital archiving – plans for the future

Previously described method for digital archiving is now called "Digitization Project of Exhibition Activities in Children's Department of Public Library And Reading Room Sisak". Plan is to develop it further in the way which will include indexing of all the documents concerning exhibitions which will be set in the future and attach it to the search software incorporated on the auto run DVD-ROM. That new approach will enable the librarians and users to quickly find what is needed without opening a number of folders and files but by simply entering key words.

It will include all the posters made for the exhibition which contain all the information about a certain subject (like, for example, history, literature, climate, geographical characteristics, etc. of Canada) in one place, digitized newspaper articles, photographs, data about authors of the exhibition, all the official documentation such as a correspondence between librarians and institutions, schools, experts, etc., interactive quizzes of knowledge made for the exhibition, statistical information about visitors, leaflets, promotional materials, etc.

Exhibitions which are and which will be digitally archived in this way will exclusively interpret topics for which it is known that are of real use, interest and benefit to the users, which promote knowledge, increase possibilities of educa-

tion and develop an interest in preservation of cultural, historical and natural heritage. That is, at the same time, the most important criteria for choosing topics which are and will be interpreted and archived in this way.

Conclusion

Digitization, a modern way of preserving rare and valuable materials that increases an access to visual records of the past and gives various new possibilities in education and promotion of knowledge and heritage is a complex process which includes different types of materials. It is done in several steps and each step considers specifics of a material that is being digitized which requires different expensive hardware and software solutions.

However, to be in a category of digital, documents can be made from scratch in a digital form without expensive equipment. Documents made in that way give a wide range of possibilities for management and use. Materials for exhibitions, research or various activities made in digital form are more suitable for different applications and they are valuable sources of information for librarians as well as users and, therefore, worth archiving and preserving.

Children's Department of Public Library and Reading Room Sisak do not posses valuable and rare materials. It is dedicated to education and promotion of reading and literacy so digitization is set on a different basis from which comes a different methodology and process of making the end product – digital archive of educational and promotional materials and official documentation.

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