Cultural Heritage Preservation and Access: Digital Library North

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Project Overview

Digital Library North (DLN) is an ongoing project with the overarching goal of creating a digital library infrastructure for the north. In Canada’s North access to information has been limited by the geographic dispersion of the population, lack of high-speed communications infrastructure, and low availability of digital information resources. DLN aims to address the information needs of northern residents by increasing access and providing a model of organization to make information available across time and space. Specifically, the project is focused on the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) in the northernmost parts of the Yukon and Northwest Territories and is being conducted in collaboration with the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre (ICRC). The project aims to create a digital library infrastructure specific to the ISR that will then be able to serve as a model for other regions in the Canadian North. Collaboration and the perspectives of potential communities and users are an integral aspect of the project and are important in understanding the cultural context for the digital library infrastructure. An environmental scanning model has been created and is being used as a guide to understand the context of the digital library. Several methods and forms of data collection are being used for the project. This poster summarizes the emerging methodology and analysis plan as we plan for the 2016 field season.

Emerging Analysis

All textual forms of data collected (e.g., interview transcripts and field notes) are being coded using both inductive and deductive coding with a flexible coding framework. The ongoing analysis is framed by the six areas of the project outlined in diagram 1 and the seven areas of the environmental scan model: the macro-environment in the outer circle and the micro-environment in the inner circle (in diagram 2). Each of these areas will be inductively sub-coded with emergent themes.

Key Research Objectives

- Investigate and identify the information needs and information seeking behaviour of community members
- Identify and select cultural heritage information
- Create a culturally appropriate metadata framework for resource description
- Develop requirements for multilingual user interfaces that support the dominant languages
- Conduct a user-centered evaluation of the digital library
- Develop a sustainability strategy for the digital library to ensure long-term access to information
- Provide training in information management to local project participants

Research and Data Collection Methods

Method | Technique | Output
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Environmental Scan | Information collections | - Directory of organizations and websites with relevant content

Ethnography | Observation | - Field notes
- Summary notes
- Observation notes
- Transcriptions and audio

Information Tables at Community Centres and Events | - Informal and casual interactions with members of community - Story telling (e.g. Inuvialuit Day) | - Observation notes - Stories

Participation in Community Workshops | - Pattern making - Bansnas making | - Observation notes

Survey | - In-person questionnaire - Online questionnaire | - Quantitative data about the information needs and seeking of various communities

Review of Documents and Descriptions | - Cultural heritage collections - Language learning - Historical documents - Archival records | - Field notes - Typology of digital and physical collections

Information Audit to Support the Development of Metadata Framework | - Close examination of information collections | - Inventory of collections - Type of material - Format - Subject area - Location

Community Leader Engagement (project collaborators) | - Identifying and connecting with Community organizations - Key people - Identification of various user communities and stakeholders | - Directory of community organizations - Typology of potential and actual users - Engaging connection with relevant organizations and media outlets

Visual Approach and Photography | - Photography by researchers & research assistants | - Images of Organizations - Community centres - Libraries - Geographic entities (streets, lakes, rivers, etc.) - Cultural objects

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