BDB-MUS: a project for the preservation of Brazilian musical heritage

Beatriz Magalhães Castro

University of Brasilia
Music Department
Brasília, BRAZIL
beatriz@unb.br

Luiza Beth Nunes Alonso

Catholic University of Brasilia
Knowledge Management & IT
Brasília, BRAZIL
lualonso@pos.ucb.br

Edilson Ferneda

Catholic University of Brasilia
Knowledge Management & IT
Brasília, BRAZIL
eferneda@pos.ucb.br

Murilo Bastos da Cunha

University of Brasilia
Information Science Department
Brasília, BRAZIL
murilobc@unb.br

Fernando William Cruz

University of Brasilia
Information Science Department
Brasília, BRAZIL
fwcruz@ucb.br

Márcio da Costa P. Brandão

University of Brasilia
Computer Science Department
Brasília, BRAZIL
brandao@unb.br

Abstract

This poster proposes a discussion on concepts evolving from the role of digital libraries on the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural inheritance, including concepts developed in 2003 by UNESCO and the World Summit on the Information Society. It further describes the construction and design process leading to the development of BDB-MUS – Brazilian Digital Music Library, which aims to establish national recommendations on metadata attributions, and to develop means for appropriation and retrieval of musical sources. The poster further explores the concept of digital music or culture within the aims and objectives of the project.

Keywords: Digital Libraries; Cultural Preservation; Indigenous Music; Popular Music; Erudite Music; globalization; Brazil.

1. Introduction

The term globalization has been commonly perceived as an economic movement that accelerated production processes, market exchanges, decision making and interventions into the real world. These were enabled through global transformations, especially those related to information and communication technologies (ICT). Yet, such technological innovations also brought the prospect of identifying and distinguishing new cultures and differentiated social structures throughout the possibilities offered by interconnected virtual spaces. This enabled the contact with other world interpretations, rooting the phenomenon of regionalism or localization [1].

Today we dwell with technology-based industries that

can act upon information transforming data into new logical processes coherent to the complex interactions between human thought and economic development. Nevertheless, in spite of a seemingly final overthrown, local cultural expressions, and especially those from economically fragile groups, are able to find through ICT its subsistence and developmental continuity. Unlike past economically globalized movements such as European mercantilist and colonialist action in Latin America and Asia, today there is the possibility of rejection and disposal of acculturation processes. This may be referred to as *transculturation* or *transculturality*, a concept that it wins prominence with Augustí Coll's works [2].

In Coll's *transculturality* it is necessary to avoid three types of reductionism: culture solely as folklore, and sometimes associated to groups or communities marginalized from hegemonic production processes; culture as a scholarly expression in which only abstraction is valued; and culture as sacred soil of values and faiths that cannot be questioned or, when done so, be considered as politically incorrect. Thus, the intent is to understand cultural contexts inserted into different realities - individual, collective, tangible, intangible, in interaction with other social groups and cultural forms.

The speed and easiness of access of information retrieval, favored by ICT may foster the creation of new cultural codes within the so-called *culture of virtual reality* [3]. Anchored on socially organized webs disentailed from economic status and political empowerment, and based on the use of the human mind as a creative and productive force and not just as an element utilized by a given production system, information technologies within the context of digital music and culture emerge as a resisting factor against the process of cultural homogenization inherent to the globalized order.

Based on the concept of *culture of virtual reality* and branching from the informational paradigm, is envisioned

a framework in which cultural expressions interweave from and within a global electronic hypertext, the Internet, configured as a common reference for the processing of cultural expressions and of human creativity, independently from excluding and limitative parameters such as geographical location and linear time. What matters are the capacity and the actual experience as communicational beings. The symbolic is not just a group of metaphors that guarantee a group's identity, but rather translates itself in actual experience, in which virtual space, past and future, dialogue in an extemporal frame within computer webs and electronic media.

2. The project

The BDB-MUs group aims to develop and act on three applied areas of ITCs: *(i)* the unearthing of what is still ignored, including tangible and "intangible heritage" [4], musical and cultural expressions of several Brazilian indigenous groups; *(ii)* in the dissemination and preservation of known but not treated musical archives, such as Brazilian composer Claudio Santoro's complete archives (ca. 20.000 items); *(iii)* the construction of a digital library on the popular instrumental music gender *Choro* [5]; *(iv)* the development of metadata pattern attributions to systematized information, as found in archival sources in libraries throughout the country. One should point to other projects developed in Brazil such as the Biblioteca Nacional [6] and the CDMC at Unicamp University [7]. These topics are also being discussed within the Brazilian scientific community in Music [8] and in Computer Science [9].

However, these initiatives are not aimed to the study of musical object patterns, metadata retrieval, preservation strategies, among others important aspects that may guarantee longevity and interoperability of existent or developing databases. The IBICT Institute (*Instituto Brasileiro de Informação em Ciência e Tecnologia*) [10], a federal agency with several atributions in Information Science, seeks to develop and recommend normative directives for the development of digital archives in the expanded spectrum of Brazilian music heritage.

The BDB-MUS project, supported by IBICT, integrates researchers from several areas including music, ICT, Knowledge Management and Information Science and its objectives are: *(i)* identification of ICT resources that can be applied to composition of musical archives within the concept of *culture of virtual reality*, *(ii)* accomplishment and promotion of national debates with the intent of adjudication and endorsement of the results of technological research, *(iii)* discussion of normative procedures to be applied on a broader national scope, and *(iv)* elaboration of accompaniment routines and certification of the implemented actions. The certification will be based on two pillars: the application of Information Technologies and the theoretical conceptualization supported by Knowledge Management tools.

From the point of view of ICT, the following tasks are foreseen: *(i)* definition of the elements that compose a musical digital object and its format, *(ii)* definition of relevant metadata (content and bibliographical entries), *(iii)* identification of alternatives for content retrieval, *(iv)* identification of possible user interface and interaction, *(v)* definition of strategies for the preservation of musical objects, and *(vi)* integration with RISM and others international music databases. The project seeks the conceptualization of a framework for the applied use of approved and endorsed normatives.

In the perspective of Knowledge Management, the interactivity between ICT and the creation of a "Culture of virtual reality" will be chiefly approached. Aspects such as *transculturality* and *group identity* will be differentiated and particularly explored in the qualitative analysis of the collected material.

Finally, from the musicological point of view, one aims to the construction of interactive digital musical archives containing Brazilian musical forms and genres, regardless of style and source.

3. Perspectives

Due to its interdisciplinary nature, this project, will work closely with Brazilian and international communities within the areas of Musicology, ICT, Knowledge Management, and Information Science. A partnership with the community of Music Information Retrieval will be at this point opportune and profitable.

References

[1] Castells, M. "Globalization, Technology, Work, Employment, and Enterprise", *La factoria*, n. 7, October 1998. Available: http://lafactoriaweb.com/articulos/castells7.htm. (In Spanish)

[2] Coll, A. N. "The Cultures Are Not Disciplines: Does The Transcultural Exist?" In: *Educação e Transdiciplinaridade II*. São Paulo : Editora Triom, 2000. (In Portuguese)

[3] Castells, M. *The Information Age,* Vol. 1: *The Rise of the Network Society*. Cambridge MA, Oxford (UK): Blackwell Publishers, 2nd Edition, 2000.

[4] UNESCO. "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage". MISC/2003/CLT/CH/14. Paris, October 2003. Available: unescdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf.

[5] Cruz, F. W. et al. "A Brazilian Popular Music Oriented Digital Library For Musical Harmony E-Learning", *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Music Information Retrieval* (ISMIR'04), pp. 429-432, Barcelona (Spain), 2004. Available: ismir2004.ismir.net/proceedings/p078-page-429-paper198.pdf.

[6] Brazilian Nacional Library [Web Site] Available: http://www.bn.br/fbn/musica/

[7] Centro de Documentação de Música Contemporânea. Unicamp [Web Site] Available: http://www.unicamp.br/cdmc/

[8] ANPPOM. Associação Nacional de Pesquisa e Pós-Graduação em Música. [Web site] Available: http://www.anppom2006.unb.br/

[9] SBCM. Brazilian Symposium on Computer Music [Web site] Available: http://www.cefala.org/sbcm2005/

[10] IBICT. [Web site] Available: http://www.ibict.br