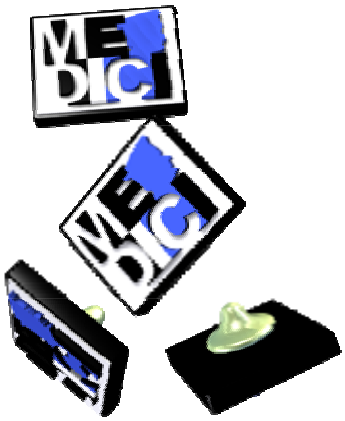
MEDICI FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Sommario

Introduction



The MEDICI Framework (Multimedia for EDucation and employment through Integrated Cultural Initiatives) is a framework of co-operation established in 1995 adopted and supported by the European Commission (1997).The goal of MEDICI is to promote the use of advanced technologies for access to, understanding, preservation and economic promotion of culture. Main action lines are: information sharing, research projects, education & training.

The use of advanced technologies allows the achievement of goals of important cultural value, which are impossible with traditional tools. This will lead us to a fuller understanding of our culture. And of course any form of economic exploitation must take fully into account the primordial need for preservation of the cultural heritage, for future generations.

Starting from 2003 the focus of MEDICI was extended to the use of different digital and other emerging technologies supporting social and economic development.

MEDICI Framework of cooperation is a not for profit, apolitical and non religion oriented organization. The mission of the organization is:

a. Promote knowledge sharing and dissemination in general supporting social and economic development and more specifically in the field of culture and arts;
b. Contribute to the preservation, study, promotion and exploitation of the natural, cultural, historical and artistic heritage. Including non moveable, moveable, tangible and intangible. The organization extends the same interests to recent and future heritage as well.
c. To favour and support creativity with specific reference to young generations;
d. To contribute to the development, diffusion and proper use of innovative technologies in order to let them have a positive social impact;

In order to achieve these goals the organization will:

1. Activate a knowledge and best practice sharing mechanism at international level:
2. Promote, and actively contribute to research, studies and projects related to the mission of the Association;
3. Design and activate projects aimed to: educate, train and disseminate knowledge and know how even through publishing activities.
4. Design and organise events, conferences, exhibits, workshops and seminars on the main activities and aims of the Association;
5. Organise evaluation processes and awards, grants and contribution addressing students, researches, professors, academy, university, cultural and artistic world' active members and operators;
6. Favour international cooperation in the field of culture, distance education and training, creation of digital content and services, support innovation process in SMEs.
7. In order to fulfil the mission the Association may take advantage from the help and cooperation coming from other Associations, Foundations, single persons and public or private bodies, both national and international having similar or similar missions or anyway sharing the scope of the Association. Such cooperation may, in addition, promote friendship, cooperation, twining and mutual acknowledgement and comprehension among individuals, people and cultures.

Main activities in 2009

As usual MEDICI Framework of Cooperation, in the general framework of social and economic development operated in three main sectors: culture, cultural heritage, eContent and services.

Meetings, Events and Initiatives

a) January 2 -5, Vienna (A), Vienna International Centre – meetings and information collection

b) February 4 -6, Monte Carlo (MC), IMAGINA 2009 – World Summit Award 2009 and eContentAward 2009 announcement and promotion.

c) March 6, Venice (I) – MEDICI headquarters in Venice, presentation of the draft project.

d) March 8, Hannover (D) – CeBIT 2009 – annual MEDICI Panel "eContent and Services for social and economic development" (cancelled due to the crisis)

e) April 1 – 9, New Delhi (India) – World Summit Award Grand Jury – product evaluation.

f) May 18 – 22, Geneva (CH) – World Summit on the Information Society Forum.

g) June 8 – 13, Monterrey (MX) – World Summit Award board of executive directors meeting and Awarding Ceremony.

h) June 8, 13, Monterrey (MX) – Global Alliance ICT for Development Global Forum.

i) September 20 – 27, Piran (SLO) - International Seminar on Cultural Heritage and Legal Aspects in Europe

j) October 15 -21, Bucarest (RO) – Global Forum 2009 - ICTS & THE FUTURE OF INTERNET Opportunities for Stimulating & Reshaping the Economy

k) October 23, Bologna (I) - Urban Center Bologna , presentation of the book "eCulture – Cultural Content in the Digital Age"

l) November 12, Milan (I) – TURISTARTH: "Sustainable tourism: the international scenario"

m) November 12 – 14, Graz (A) – Europrix Top Talent Award – Board of Directors meeting and Awarding Ceremony.

n) November 24, Roma (I) – eContentAward and "Young Talents" awarding ceremony.

o) December 8, Moscow (RF) - International Workshop „Russia – European Union: Signs on the Road Map of Cultural Cooperation"

Beijing Ancient Astronomical Observatory

The activity in the field of cultural heritage was mainly devoted to refinement of an Italy China cooperation project aiming to preserve, communicate and exploit the Ancient Astronomical Observatory located in Beijing (China).

The study address the goal to improve scientific communication, it introduces a "layered" approach to the preservation, communication and exploitation of the Beijing Ancient Observatory. This means that we foresee different levels of intervention, with different phases and consequently a set of goals. Single levels or phases may be implemented separately.

The main goal of the proposal is to improve scientific communication, as clearly stated in the title the three main action lines of the project are:

Preservation: how to protect the astronomical instruments in order to transfer them to future generation. Eventually restore them fixing minor and major damages getting closer to their original status. This only pertains to the rehabilitation of their own functionalities or the restoration of the physical aspect.

Communication: define a communication strategy by integrating real and virtual objects in order to reach a global improvement of the communication both related to the history of the observatory and to the astronomical instruments. One of the goals is to enable the direct experience of the main functionalities of such instruments in a virtual environment. Explain how they work, positive achievements and limits in the field of the astronomical observation.

Exploitation: exploit such relevant cultural and scientific assets without any risk to jeopardize their conservation. Define an exploitation strategy addressing both local and international markets. This strategy may include a close link to the new observatory and the planetarium. Expand and extend the experience of the visit from the pre-tour phase, direct fruition and post tour phase. Generate new opportunities to came back and visit again the exhibit.

The exploitation strategy will include the opportunity to develop specific merchandise both generic and educational (simulators, tools, dida box etc).

Cultural Heritage and Legal Aspects in Europe

This initiative focus on legal, policy and practice issues concerning the integration between built heritage protection and urban/spatial planning systems with specific reference to area-based protection mechanisms, conservation management plans, heritage led-regeneration, funding programmes and sustainable approaches. Practice will be examined in western Europe, where integrated systems and practice are more developed (e.g. Denmark, England, France, Germany), and in South East Europe referring to the progress of national policies on integrated management and sustainable development. Reference will be made to guiding principles through UNESCO and Council of Europe conventions, recommendations and other charters. A case study of Grainger Town, Newcastle upon Tyne (recognised as an exemplary regeneration scheme through the European Union funded INHERIT project "Heritage Led Regeneration – Delivering Good Practice") will be considered-

Long Term preservation of digital content

"Long Term Preservation" - Comprehensive and updated (first report Vienna '99 – second report New York '04) state of the art in the field of long term preservation of digital content, taxonomy of good practice and relevant methods. Publication of a set of recommendations as a follow up of the last international meeting.

eContent & Services for social and economic development

"To Google" is simply one of the neologisms providing the evidence of a running revolution, "go digital" is the keyword. A wide range of information and services are directly delivered on our desks or mobile phones: a tight interface with public administration, healthcare, education, entertainment and more. Quality content and services are a paramount issue in such a context, technological infrastructures without "content" looks like a highway without cars or a library without books. The World Summit Award initiative posed this question very clearly all around the world and ignited the quest for "quality content".

Through the centuries we faced a number of "revolutions" that shifted the human paradigm, this time we are crossing the "digital" river, the border line of the stating side was probably the merge of IT and Telecommunications how can we call the opposite side? Information Society? Knowledge Society? It will take some more years and technological developments to reach destination.

In the number of initiative derived from the global award the one we activated in Italy is based on three main actions running all over the year: scheduled road shows both along the country and abroad on the occasion of major events, educational projects, information days and more recently the creation of the WSA Institute for eContent located in Venice. The main aim of our project is to bridge the gap between the local lonely authors and the join international community stimulating at the same time creativity and innovation. The feedback is largely positive: an increasing number of quality products, more and more Institutions supporting the project, better results in the global contest.

Publications

"eContentAward 2008 year book" ISBN 978-88-95441-05-4, MEDICI Publisher 2009

"eContentAward 2009 year book", ISBN 978-88-95441-07-8, MEDICI Publisher 2009

"Global Forum 2009 - ICTS & THE FUTURE OF INTERNET: Opportunities for Stimulating & Reshaping the Economy", ISBN 978-88-95441-08-5, MEDICI Publisher 2009

Alfredo M. Ronchi, Alan Shark, Sylviane Toporkoff, et al., Beyond e-Health: A Global Vision, Public Technology Institute & Items International,. March 2010

Alfredo M. Ronchi, Alan Shark, Sylviane Toporkoff, et al., Beyond Beyond e –Government Measuring Performance: A Global Perspective, Public Technology Institute & Items International,. March 2010

Alfredo M. Ronchi, Сотрудничество в сфере обмена собраниями цифровых материалов и культурным контентом, keynote speech on the occasion of the International Seminar "RUSSIA-EU: SIGNS ON THE ROAD MAP OF CULTURAL COOPERATION", Moscow 8 December 2009

Alfredo M. Ronchi, From paperback to paperless (again?), proceedings Global Forum 2009, ISBN 978-88-95441-08-5, MEDICI Publisher 2009

Alfredo M. Ronchi, *eCulture: Cultural Content in the Digital Age*, Springer (D) 2009 , ISBN:978-3-540-75273-8

Annexes

Beijing Ancient Astronomical Observatory

The Beijing Planetarium and the Beijing Ancient Observatory are two relevant assets of the same institution starting from 1949. The Beijing Planetarium has been recently (2004) expanded thanks to the creation of new exhibition and training area including different facilities such as automated telescope, wide displays for solar crown observation and two high tech theatres.

The Beijing Ancient Observatory, is located on the third ring of Beijing not very close to the Planetarium, it was first built in 1442 in the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644) was named "Guanxiangtai". and was the national observatory in the Ming and Qing Dynasty.

Key element of the Observatory is the observation tower about 14 meters high. On top of this is located a set of seven astronomical instruments made in Qing Dynasty plus a New Armilla build in 1744. Similar Astronomical Instruments are no more available in other countries even because of the obsolescence of natural observation and the reuse of bronze. The whole complex is a key national relict's protection unit now.

At ground level there is a court with four single-floor buildings hosting offices and a small museum devoted to the history of the observatory, in addition some bronze replicas of observation instruments similar to the one on top of the tower.

The instruments survived through different periods of time and events such as the war in 1900. On that occasion the instruments were damaged (e.g. bullet hole) and transferred in the French Embassy (5 of them) and Berlin (the other three). Later on, in different times, they were repositioned on the tower.

Beijing, is one of the biggest and most populous metropolis of the planet. The city animates with its lights and tall buildings far more than the third ring and embraces the observatory with a number of grand hotels and corporate buildings all around. All these aspects make very difficult to think about the actual use of the observatory as an "historical window" on the sky. Of course scientist are very interested in reactivating the observation tower and enjoy a "live experience" of pre Galilean direct observation.

From the environmental point of view this metropolis in the last 10/15 years experienced and it is still experiencing deep changes and transformations. The big boost due to the "opening" to the rest

of the world and the explosion of private transportation and commercial traffic together with the escalation of tourism both domestic and international has generated both pollution and "antropic" risk for monuments and artefacts.

Tourism both in China and towards China is increasing exponentially. Domestic tourism is becoming more and more popular in China; day by day groups of American and European tourists are doubled by Chinese tourists more and more interested in discovering the beauty and treasures of their own county.

Following such thoughts if on one side it is no more convenient to observe the sky from the tower on the other side it seems reasonable to take into account some aspects related to the preservation of such an historical patrimony, preserving, communicating and exploiting the instruments event in a touristic framework.

Long Term preservation of digital content

In the last decades we faced two related processes, the increasing role of electronic devices in our every day life and the "rush to digital formats". Institutions, organisations and private companies launched a mid term programme converting their own archives in digital format. Even people at home started a "personal data" conversion toward digital format: documents, music, movies, drawings and photos left their original format and medium reshaped in "bitstreams" on digital media. It was a common understanding that digital format was the "ultimate format" in order to "freeze" information "forever". The idea to perpetuate texts, images, artefacts once converted in "digital" has been widely shared and supported / sponsored. As a result large part of our future heritage, our legacy to future generation relies on digital technology. Here comes the major concern: is digital technology suitable for long term preservation? Is electronic machinery, actually the implementation base of digital technology, enough durable in order to guarantee future access to information? If not how can we face this problem?

Rapid changes in technology make preservation of digital content a challenge. Taking into account the huge amount of data to be filed, the amount of time to accomplish with this task and more over the period of time we need to store such information, we have to value objectively a problem up to now widely underestimated and that is the conservation for long periods of time of digital information. This subject takes us to consider two aspects, the first is technological obsolescence and the second the 'temporary instinct' of the so-called 'permanent supports'. The biological clock of ICT beats smaller time slices compared to those considered worldwide in the field of cultural

heritage. Digital formats becomes suddenly obsolete and disappear. An extraordinarily long-lived solution, such as the PC/DOS in great favour for over twenty years, represents a short-lived apparition if compared to the time spent in state owned archives. Computer systems are aging, media on which information is stored are disintegrating; the magnetic technology diskette survives without problems for thousands of hours but not enough to be considered 'permanent' for those aims. Which are the long-term implications if we rely on current digital technology to preserve our cultural memory? Long term preservation of digital archives is an issue not only for cultural content but even for e-government and social services. Electronic devices are disappearing because some key components are no more available on the shelf so the only chance is update the devices if possible or have a look at vintage market, if any.

Thanks to MEDICI Framework of Cooperation on May 2004 a panel on long term preservation of digital content was held in New York on the occasion of the World Wide Web Conference . Later on, on September 2006 on the occasion of an event held in Asolo a set of recommendations was issued (may you need further information pls. refer to the publication).