Exhibiting Web Memories from Arquivo.pt: a call for community participation

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Abstract

Arquivo.pt has 28 million websites accessible and searchable by text, image and URL. However, the huge amount of information and the easy access does not guarantee the community's interest. How to show the community the potential and even the charm of historical web contents? How to arouse their interest and even their participation in the construction of the digital heritage for the memory of future societies and researchers? Arquivo.pt was created in 2007 and its mission is to collect contents from the Portuguese Web. Contents may be searched by text, image and URL and are fully accessible. It is necessary to capture the attention of target communities to use the service either for research or for the valorisation of the historical memory of institutions. To meet this challenge, Arquivo.pt has been creating online exhibitions by theme or by type of organisation, such as press, radio, municipalities, R&D units, schools, museums. Each exhibition is followed by a dissemination campaign and the attraction of collaborations. For example, the exhibition "Memory of Art Festivals and Events" (https://arteparasempre.wordpress.com) was made on Wordpress.com free version and presents a set of websites preserved by Arquivo.pt. It is the result of collaboration with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Art Library, a lead institution on Art in Portugal, and ROSSIO, a Digital Humanities infrastructure led by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the New University of Lisbon. This initiative generated interaction with the artists' community and contributed to the improvement of the preservation of art websites and art events. Another successful example was the expo "Memory of Museums on the Web" (https://memoriamuseus.wordpress.com), which had as its target audience the people in charge of museums and led to a cycle of webinars with the Portuguese Museum Network. This presentation shows how the Arquivo.pt online exhibitions (arquivo.pt/expos) were developed. It explains how low-cost tools, accessible to any person or organisation, were used to present preserved historical Web contents. It shows the impact of the exhibitions on the dissemination of Arquivo.pt, the involvement of communities and the improvement of the quality of preserved web sites. Finally, it shows Arquivo.pt's perspective when creating these online exhibitions: preservation is everyone's responsibility, the GLAMs, the researchers and the citizens. Everyone can contribute to a better preservation of Web contents. Arquivo.pt provides functionalities that allow it (e.g., the SavePageNow, integration of files recorded by people). All can contribute to a better preservation of Web contents in a changing world.

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