
Time to explore, time to learn from the archived web: Arquivo.pt training initiative

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Abstract

For a web archive it is not enough to exist. It is necessary to make it known and facilitate access to preserved information by all means. Training is essential to create proximity between users and the service, between the community and the development team. Can a web archive develop without training offered to the community? Definitely not. It was with this perspective that Arquivo.pt developed its training effort. The Café with Arquivo.pt (arquivo.pt/cafe) is a training initiative open to the community and held online, since the beginning of the general lockdown period due to the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. As suggested by the name "Café", these webinars adopt an informal style where participants can interact with the speakers and the Arquivo.pt team. The aim is to provide innovative training and strengthen ties with the community. Café with Arquivo.pt began as a response to the impossibility of face-to-face training. The initiative has been successful with 23 sessions held so far. The experience gained allows now to consider online training as a complement to reach specific audiences or geographically distant. Even after the pandemic, training through webinars is to continue. Arquivo.pt is a Portuguese public service accessible to anyone through the Web. The preserved information can be searched by text, by image, and by URL. For automatic processing it has an API (arquivo.pt/api) and provides open datasets on the preserved collections, some of which are multilingual. The training program (arquivo.pt/forma) aims to reach everyone, from the user with basic knowledge of the Web to the expert user. This presentation shows how the training open to the community through webinars operates, the topics covered and the number of participants and the degree of satisfaction (e.g., in 2021 they had 538 participants and 84% of satisfaction). Three cases are presented where training was done in collaboration with external organizations and guest speakers. The first was a cycle of webinars dedicated to art events, in collaboration with the Art Library of Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, a lead institution in the domain of Art, aimed at the artists community and researchers. The second was a training in collaboration with the City Council of Lisbon, aimed at citizens with basic skills in using the Web. Third, were sessions in which the winners of the Arquivo.pt Awards (arquivo.pt/awards) explained how they used Arquivo.pt in real cases such as studies, processing of archived data, and creation of computer applications. In conclusion, training is essential to promote and facilitate the use of web archives by researchers or simple citizens. As future work, Arquivo.pt will expand "Café" sessions to the international community. Like in previous years, the training initiative aims to share use cases, know-how and resources available, which make it an opportunity to learn, test and improve research methods in Digital Humanities and emerging fields like fact checking, activism, investigative journalism and Open Source Intelligence.

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