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RIPDASA: The Ibero-American Network for the Digital Preservation of Audiovisual Archives.

Abstract: RIPDASA is a research project whose objective is to develop networking between different research groups from several Ibero-American countries (among them Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú, Chile, Brasil, Uruguay). Its purpose is to identify, analyze, raise awareness and promote sustainable digital preservation alternatives for audio and audiovisual documents and to reduce the risk of losing them. The main goal is to create an observatory for geolocalization for this kind of archives.

Dr. Matteo Manfredi

Good evening. First, I would like to thank the Association of Canadian Archivists, University of British Columbia and Professor Luciana Duranti for her kind invitation to participate at ACA@UBC's 12th Anual Seminar and Simposium. I will introduce you to a new international investigation project, whose main goal is to preserve audiovisual and audio archives.

What is the situation of these archives in Latin America today? What paths must be taken in order to preserve audio and audiovisual archives? These are the questions that we are going to try to answer.

The situation of audiovisual and audio archives in Latin America can be described as a complex crossroads where there is a risk of loss. Which are the crossing paths? On one hand, from last century, we have a heritage of analogic documents that were recorded in a broad range of audio and audiovisual formats. It has been said that these documents can be not fully digitalized until 2025, in the best case scenario.

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On the other hand, it has been estimated that in less than a decade, due to obsolescence of the devices and progressive deterioration of the formats, a big part of our audio and

audiovisual heritage will not be transferred to digital formats. Therefore, there is a clear risk of losing much of the heritage recorded in this type of material.

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Probably, because of this, the race against time to digitalize the maximum possible quantity of materials is one of the main challenges of our time. It should be noted, however, that this race is uneven in many ways. While there are countries that have advanced a lot in this process, in others - and I refer to Latin America - the digitalization works are the first steps that have not even been taken yet.

The transfer from analogical content to digital formats is one of the paths that many Latin-American institutions will have to take in the next few years. Other aspects of this problem are determined by the growth of audio and audiovisual documents of digital origin. Each day, there is an increase in the amount of this kind of material being produced.

Nowadays, in fact, we cannot explain the contemporary "digital ecosystem" without referring to the enormous volume of digital audio and audiovisual information that is produced every moment. In many cases, we are amazed and preoccupied, because we still have not developed methods and strategies that warrants the permanence of this content. It is well-known that the risk of loss is also present when we refer to these kind of collections.

Frequently, we refer to the risk of loss to alert people about the demise of part of our documental heritage. From the end of the last century, this term has been noted in recommendations and international calls. In the Recommendation for the Safeguarding of the Audiovisual Heritage, UNESCO warned of the need to protect analogue media. In the early years of this century, documents of digital origin were incorporated into international recommendations. When we refer to the risk of loss, we are alluding to the fact that in the years to come we will lose some of the pioneering or old recordings that tell of contemporary history, unique records of historical, social and cultural value. Audios and moving images that have been fixed on analogue media can no longer be reproduced, much less be transferred to digital platforms. Given the immense volume of

information generated in traditional media, new digital media and social networks, we know today that it is very difficult to preserve everything.

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Digital preservation therefore lies at the crossroads between audio and audiovisual documents that have not yet been digitalized - and which must be transferred in the coming years. Is a problem of society that has no single solution. In recent years the international community has proposed a wide range of models, norms, standards, open source and proprietary technology solutions, among other tools that help us understand how to approach digital preservation. But the problem remains especially in countries where the recognition and appreciation of the audio and audiovisual documentary heritage has been delayed. It is known that research projects such as *Presto* and *Presto Space* were very useful in identifying and defining guidelines to identify the universe of media to be digitalized and preserved in Europe. However, in Latin America the risk of loss of analogue content is high, because it is not known where the collections are, in what conditions they are kept and what the copyright status of the recordings is. Furthermore, there is a lack of financial resources and technology for digital preservation, and of professionals trained to carry out the task of preserving the audio and audiovisual heritage on digital platforms. This is aggravated by the lack of communication, publications and professional networks to support the continued development of the area and encourage growth and education in these subjects.

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One alternative that we have proposed from the academic sector to address the complex and challenging paths described above, that converge in digital preservation, is the creation of the Red Ibero Americana de Preservación de archivos Audio Visuales y Sonoros (in English: Ibero-American Network of Digital Preservation of Audio and Audiovisual Archives). The creation of RIPDASA has the objective of encouraging a network – among research groups in Ibero-America – to identify, analyze, discuss, generate, make visible and disseminate sustainable digital preservation alternatives for the audio and audiovisual collections of the region's archives. This is in order to reduce the risk of loss of this cultural heritage and, with this, ensure its access to both current and

future generations. It will link researchers and professionals in audio and audiovisual archives.

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With the sponsorship of the Ibero-American Program of Science and Technology for Development (CYTED), RIPDASA started its activities in January 2019, with the aim of developing research works during the period 2019 to 2022. RIPDASA is coordinated by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) through the Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliotecológicas y de la Información (IIBI) and counts with the participation of the Universidad de la República de Uruguay, the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Sede Ecuador; the Universidad San Martín de Porres, Peru; the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, the Universidad de Chile, the Universidad de Bahía de Brasil, as well as Radio y Televisión Nacional de Colombia (RTVC). The Latin American Institute for Educational Communication (ILCE), an international organization with a presence in 21 Latin American countries, joins this initiative, as well as with the participation of the company AVPreserve (https://www.weareavp.com/)

Program activities. - During the first year the activities will focus on:

1. A diagnosis on the state of preservation of audio and audiovisual archives in Latin America.

2. Launch of an Observatory and a virtual map to facilitate the geolocalization of audio and audiovisual archives.

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The most important objective of RIPDASA is to create links between academics and professionals in audio and audiovisual archives in order to offer solutions to the problem of digital preservation of this type of material. This linkage serves to encourage the identification, analysis, discussion, generation of visibility and diffusion of sustainable digital preservation alternatives of the audio and audiovisual collections of the archives of Ibero-America. This is in order to reduce the risk of loss of this cultural heritage and, with it, to assure its access for current and future generations. This is an unprecedented

project in the region, probably because of all the existing documentation, the most forgotten are the audio and audiovisual ones. Small steps have been taken and isolated initiatives undertaken, but there is still a long way to go in order to guide the way through the crossroads represented by digital preservation. With few exceptions, research groups in Latin America are still in their infancy. Rather than being a weakness, this is a strength. Based on the situation in each country and the experience and knowledge accumulated, we will seek, adopt and design solutions that are appropriate to each social context. This is not an easy task if we think that we do not have the resources that were available at the time for research projects such as Presto. But there is interest and commitment to participate in this initiative.

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With this project we also aim to ensure that research in this field in Latin American universities has a direct impact on archival practices and the development of the digital environment. We will use and encourage the use of technologies for the digital preservation of this type of heritage. Our purpose is to empower research groups in the knowledge of this type of tool. Therefore, the Network will have an educational approach that facilitates the installation of these systems in institutions that do not have the necessary personnel or resources. In this first year, a diagnosis of audio and audiovisual archives in Latin America has been carried out. We want to know which libraries, archives, radio and television stations, and public institutions, among others, support this type of collection.

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Once identified, we want to give them visibility through the creation of an audio and audiovisual archive observatory. This will be a geolocation tool to locate where the archives are. This is the starting point for the diagnosis of the audio and audiovisual heritage of Ibero-America.

http://www.ripdasa.iibi.unam.mx/gits-geoportal-v3/home

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By means of 5 free webinars in Spanish, from May to October 2019, transmitted in network during 60 minutes. The topics are presented by professionals and experts from

different countries in the region with vast knowledge and experience in audiovisual and audio matters. The following is a description of the webinars scheduled:

☐ Conservation work prior to the digitalization of audio documents.
☐ Bases for the digitalization of audio archives.
☐ Key elements for the cataloguing of digital audiovisual collections
☐ Digital preservation of audio archives
☐ Digital preservation of audiovisual archives

The institutions that form part of RIPDASA, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México through the Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliotecológicas y de la Información (IIBI), the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM), the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar in Ecuador, the Universidad de Chile, the Universidad San Martín de Porres in Peru, the CRIDI of the Universidad de Bahía, Brazil and the Universidad de la República in Uruguay are calling for webinars.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoWU8W45oSNgmCSbgw5vE4Q/videos

https://weareavp.aviaryplatform.com/collections/122/collection_resources/10287

https://weareavp.aviaryplatform.com/catalog?utf8=%E2%9C%93&collection_id=122&collection_resource_id=10287&search_field=advanced&search_type=simple&title_text[]=&resource_description[]=&indexes[]=&transcript[]=&op[]=&type_of_search[]=simple&type_of_field_selector[]=simple&keywords[]=RIPDASA

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This network is not an isolated space. In fact, we have contacted IASA (Asociación Internacional de Archivos Sonoros y Audiovisuales https://www.iasa-web.org/about-iasa) because it is always important to rely on organizations that have worked in this issue for decades. We must take the best practices and adapt them to our context. The same happens with groups that for many years have thought about digital preservation, their knowledge and experience are very important to take decisive and secure steps that are also based in the sociocultural conditions of our Ibero-American countries.

Thanks!