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ARTS AND HUMANITIES: RESEARCH IN MEXICO

Mexico is a big country with an area of 1.972.550 square kilometers and 100.000.000 inhabitants being its capital one of the biggest of the world with 20.000.000 persons.

Mexico belongs to what have been called Latin America. Geographically it is one of the countries in the North American continent, but it cannot be considered into the so called unit of Latin America. It has different cultures, subcultures, history and characteristics from other countries in Central and South America.

A great majority of the researchers in the United States do not contextualize their studies, do not refer to original documentation and ignore the work of Latin American critics and historians for economic, political reasons or because of language. The latter are not well known or are not considered (1).

It is the purpose of this paper to indicate the research possibilities available, in the arts and the humanities produce in Mexico, in order to minimize the neglect detected.

The interest for Mexican prehispanic and contemporary art together with that of Peru and Argentina were emphasized in the College Art Association Congress in 1995.

Due to the success of the publication, *Las Humanidades en Web y en CD-ROM* in the year 1999, a second edition is in process.

Research possibilities available: (2)

- Location tools
 - Directories
 - Union lists
 - Indexes
- the Internet
 - World Wide Web
 - Web sites
 - Electronic services
 - Databases
 - Libraries and Archives

Location tools

Directories:

Directories of professional associations with detailed information on institutional and personnel members provide an annually updated guide which is useful for a particular topic or a specific expertise.

It is very largely the work of one individual or of a working party. The decision has to be made if the data will sit on a web site, for easy updating, or to publish it. The problem arises when to keep a service like the directory alive and up-dated, on-line or print.

Providing access to information is one of the most important goals of the librarians. Nowadays people think that the Internet has all the information available forgetting the import role of the libraries. On the other hand the libraries have take advantage of the Internet by placing information about their rich collections.

This is the case of "Mapa bibliotecario y de servicios de información de la ciudad de México" which lists 1.331 libraries in Mexico City giving full information about location, name of the person in charge, opening hours and subject specialization of 437 school libraries, 259 public libraries, 241 university libraries, 394 specialized libraries with a total of 16.974.811 volumes.

The art and humanities libraries may be checked by subject. The rich repositories of the National Library, the 143 libraries at UNAM, the Biblioteca de México, the Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, the library of the Museo Franz Mayer, the Biblioteca de las Artes are some examples. Often the links of Mexican libraries in the Internet mention a few.

Union lists:

The credit of the first union list of periodicals belongs to a Mexican government institution called CONACYT (Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología) back in the year 1976 with 32,358 periodical titles in 157 Mexican libraries. Later on the Dirección General de Bibliotecas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (DGB.UNAM) built up the database called SERIUNAM which is a Union List of periodical titles own by the 143 UNAM libraries and 237 other Mexican libraries.

SERIUNAM is a database since 1997 and has information about 52.400 periodical titles and 7.354.000 issues. The arts and humanities at UNAM are represented at the libraries of the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, the Facultad de Arquitectura, eight humanities research centers and nine research institutes which conform the Coordinación de Humanidades. It is a collaborated effort of those libraries which

are convinced of the importance of integrating their periodical collections in a single database. It can be searched by title, publisher, subject, Dewey classification and key word.

In close relationship with SERIUNAM is the database HELA which includes information about periodicals published in Latin America and the Caribe. It was elaborated at UNAM in 1975 and has 3,000 titles with 2,000 issues per year. The periodicals are indexed in the database CLASE.

A union list of 400 titles of visual and architecture Latin American periodicals was elaborated in the year 1990 by a group of art history students, but it is difficult to keep it going. Nevertheless it will be updated next year.

The struggles are: 1) locating titles – perhaps in broken runs in a number of different places; 2) identifying titles for which three or fewer locations are known; 3) advise libraries not to cut, after the identification takes place, subscriptions or discard material what may be the only subscription to a journal held in Mexico; 4) if discard occurs, for space reasons, to find the most appropriate destination for the materials withdrawn

Indexes:

Humanists' research is cumulative. They need more than the most current articles or research finding.

Forgotten volumes of periodicals little used, lack of indexes to their contents have intimidated scholars, yet a wealth of contents of Mexican culture is waiting to be discovered.

Indexes are standard tools for researchers to use. Nowadays they have been repackaged in electronic format.

A comparison of a sample of serials indexed in the international indexes reveals that a large percentage of Mexican titles are not included. Periodical indexing has largely been commercially based, but also has been done by individuals, such is the case of the database MEXICOARTE, about Mexican visual arts and architecture, and by individual libraries, the database CLASE, (citas latinoamericanas en ciencias sociales y humanidades) elaborated at DGB.UNAM.

CLASE (Citas latinoamericanas en ciencias sociales y humanidades) is a social sciences and humanities database which offers bibliographical items of articles, essays, book reviews and other documents published in 1,200 Latin American and Caribbean specialized periodicals. It was elaborated since 1975 at UNAM and presently it has 200,000 bibliographical references. It can be searched by author, periodical title, periodical articles, institution, language, year of publication, ISSN, volume, number and pages, subject and key word.

This database is available to subscribers of the OCLC First Search Base Package.

IRESIE (Índice de revistas de educación superior e investigación educativa) is a databank about Iberoamerican education through information. Among its objectives are: the analysis of 569 periodical titles, mainly from Mexico, Latin America and Spain, dissemination of a selective information, promotion of interinstitutional cooperation, at present with eight Mexican libraries. It initiates in 1979 within a Latin American education institution and since 1997 the UNAM is responsible for the up-date. It can be searched by author, periodical article, periodical title, country of origin, volume, number, pages, subjects and location.

Closely related to this databank are other indexes: IDOCED (Índice de documentos sobre educación) a bibliographical database of 3.000 documents about education available at the Centro de Estudios sobre la Universidad, UNAM. CATMEX (Cátalogo comentado de revistas mexicanas) a commented catalog of 205 Mexican periodicals. REDMEX (Red mexicana de información y documentación) an extensión of REDUC (Red latinoamericana de información y documentación) an interchange of knowledge about the real situation in education.

The Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas, UNAM is the responsible of the database FILOS. It registers philosophical bibliographical data published in México since 1975. It has 21.600 items. It can be searched by author, periodical title, publisher, subject and key word. All the documents, such as periodical articles, essays, theses, books or book reviews, are available at the institute library.

MEXICOARTE is in process of consolidation and will include periodical articles, monographs and individual chapters in collected works. At this time the database has 4.000 items and it is continuously updated. Altogether articles from 94 different Mexican periodicals have been indexed to date. Works of over 15 prominent authors in this area were indexed to date. Full bibliographical citations are retrievable from the database.

MEXICOARTE provides access to cultural information that has not been widely used because of the lack of access.

The database is available through the web page of the Dirección General de Bibliotecas, UNAM and through the web page MEX@RTE under the division catalogs to widen its access. Reference to local visual arts and architecture are limited on the international databases. MEXICOARTE is the obvious source for local information and has the added advantage of pointing to material that is readily available.

There is a need to improve knowledge of the existent indexes to work with the major indexing and abstracting services.

Internet

It is clear that access to resources rather than owning them is more important in

our information society. It is necessary to identify net resources produced in Mexico, evaluate, organize and make them available to the users. Technology push the traditional boundaries of research.

Mexican World Wide Web resources, based in the higher education sector, are given as a free service through DGB.UNAM.

Web sites:

There are also web sites of the arts and humanities periodicals and newspapers, produced in Mexico, some with index, others with full text, which are net resources free of charge.

Thanks to keywords and descriptor searching and Boolean operators, scholars can be creative researchers. The electronic world allows traditional resources to look fresh and stimulating.

Periodicals such as *Arqueología Mexicana*, *Estudios de Cultura Nahuatl* and *México Desconocido* as well as the Mexican newspapers *La Jornada*, *Reforma*, *El Financiero*, have their free of charge web sites.

Humanists, including architects, need expertise in accessing, identifying, evaluating and prioritizing, have a valuable tool in MEX@RTE. This is a web page which includes links to 35 art libraries and document collections about Mexican art and architecture in the following periods: prehispanic, colonial, modern and contemporary. Electronic journals published in Mexico are retrieved in full text as well as information about the table contents.

EUTERPE is a web site catalog of musical scores owned by the Escuela Nacional de Música, UNAM.

Electronic services:

The quality of the library of the future will be measured not only in terms of its collections but also in terms of the diversity and efficiency of its electronic services. They allow scholars to look more easily into documents and to discover new texts.

Almost all the libraries and archives have electronic services such as primary resources (images, full text), secondary resources (OPAC –online public access catalogs, bibliographies, CD-ROM and databases) and electronic mail.

The documentary service provided by DGB UNAM is another example of an electronic device. There are two types of service: the normal employs 72 hours if the document is in Mexico and 15 days if abroad; the urgent delivery is within 24 hours. The cost is cheaper than other services (\$50 pesos for UNAM people and

\$100 pesos for others plus delivery per document). Copyright law is observed. The documents are located in Mexico, the United States, the United Kingdom (the British Library) and Europe.

The digital reference services offered at the Universidad de las Américas, Puebla library is other good example of electronic services.

Databases:

It is not enough to provide with an overview of the resources of libraries through directories or to give more detailed knowledge of the contents of the collection through union lists. It is mandatory to have information products such as the databases.

There are individual as well as institutional efforts which have given databases in the arts and the humanities sectors. There are of a valuable direct benefit to the users of libraries and information services.

LIB E UNAM is the full-text database of books elaborated by DGB UNAM in 2002 with the collaboration of the Comité del Libro Electrónico of the national university. The books have been selected, therefore, it is a great opportunity to get acquainted with these titles because they represent a high-level research of Mexico.

Since 1990 there has been an enormous influx of electronic information. Unfortunately it is very difficult and time-consuming to locate appropriate materials about Mexican art and humanities in the Internet. The reasons could be lack of interest, the use of the Spanish language and few information products generated in the country.

Nevertheless, recently there has been an increase interest in the elaboration of Mexican databases.

For on-line database resources to be valuable to humanists they must provide unique research possibilities. Examples of this are the full-text databases of books, available on line at DGSCA UNAM web page such as "México un siglo en imágenes 1900-2000".

Libraries and Archives:

Libraries:

The printed and on line directories of libraries give enough information about the subject or the type of material each library has. It depends on the extent to which libraries have been able to convert their catalogs to machine readable form, on the existence of an infrastructure which will facilitate that access, and on the ability of the potential user to gain access to that infrastructure.

A great majority of the 1.331 libraries in Mexico City have their catalogs on line and offer electronic services to their users.

The National Library dates back to the year 1833, date of its creation. It is not until 1867 that Benito Juárez established it officially. It contains archives, manuscripts, incunabula, Mexican print from the XVI through XXc, an iconographic collection, print and recorded music, CD roms, Braille document material, maps and didactic plays. It is the legal depository library of Mexico.

The Mexican Digital Periodical Library is companion of the National Library. It is also a legal depository of Mexican periodicals. It contains 4.000.000 items divided in two groups: from the XVIIIc through 1916 and from 1917 on. This digital library is pioneer in the Hispanic world because it combines historical periodical information, technical and administrative experience and avant garde technology. At present 2.6 million images, which correspond to 800 titles of historical periodicals, have been digitalized.

LIBRUNAM incorporates the UNAM libraries catalogs. It includes the bibliographical items of the books available and it can be searched by keyword, title, author and subject. One of its characteristics is that it is possible to look for subject in the English language and recuperate the information in Spanish. This is a valuable tool for people whose native language is not Spanish but who want to look for information published in Mexico. There is also an alphabetical list by title, author, subject, classification and series. The classification list allows the search by the Library of Congress classification number.

TESIUNAM is an electronic catalog which describes the theses of UNAM students and incorporated schools and universities at the licenciatura, specialization, master and doctorate levels. The catalog was created in 1986. It includes more than

320.000 items of theses from the 115 licenciaturas, 235 masters, 108 Ph.D., and 203 specializations of UNAM, and 188 licenciaturas of 42 Mexican universities outside UNAM. 15.016 items belong to other school such as El Colegio de México, the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional and the Universidad de Sonora to mention only a few.

The theses collection dates back to 1990 and there are microfilm copies up to the year 1999, after that the paper copies are available at the Biblioteca Central, UNAM. There is a project to digitalize the collection.

Theses are more than an information resource. They are useful for: delineating subject research, for analysis of the fields which have not been considered and of course for inter and multidisciplinary research. The search can be made by keyword, title, author, name of the faculty or school, program, degree and year. There is an alphabetical list by title, author, director and classification.

Archives:

The repositories of visual arts, literature, history archives in Mexico are found in public institutions such as the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, at the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas: that of the art historian Manuel Toussaint, the archive of the collector Carrillo Gariel, and the engraver Erasto Cortés Juárez; at the Biblioteca Nacional, under the jurisdiction of UNAM the archives of Benito Juárez, Madero, Maximiliano; The Archivo de Escritores Mexicanos organized by a professor in Mexican literature, the diplomatic archive of Genaro Estrada at the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); the voice and image archive of the Centro Nacional de Información y Promoción Literaria of the Dirección de Literatura of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes; the archive Fondos documentales sobre creadores mexicanos (painters, musicians) of the Biblioteca de las Artes. Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (CONACULTA); a photographic archive of Manuel Álvarez Bravo at the private art gallery and school called Casa Lamm, among others.

The origin of the ARCHIVO FRANCISCANO goes back to the XVIc Franciscan Convent in Mexico City which was suppressed in 1861. The National Library bought the archive. Later on it was enriched with other XVIc archives from Provincia de San Diego, Colegio de San Buenaventura, San Francisco de Guadalajara, San Antonio de las Huertas and San José de los Naturales. The Archive contains not only documentation related to the Franciscan order, but missionary activities, art, culture, town foundations, geographical descriptions in the

North of Mexico and the South of the United States. The documentation covers New Spain as well as the Philippines.

The responsibility of the ARCHIVO GENERAL DE LA NACIÓN is to take care of, organize, describe and preserve the documents with the objectives of giving public access and promote diffusion.

It is the most important archive of the country. Its existence dates back to two centuries. During this period it has received documents from various public institutions covering the colonial and the XIX century periods. It also contains archives and collections of illustrious Mexican personages. In this manner its main contribution is to preserve the Mexican memory.

Examples of the documentary groups of this archive are: number 108 untitled Templos y conventos with 2.705 documents and number 126 untitled Propiedad artistica y literaria includes the national and international photographic collections of the Public Instruction and Fine Arts Ministry, covering the period 1898-1926 with 8.723 documents.

Notes:

- (1) College Art Association-CAA. 83rd annual conference. San Antonio, Texas, January 25-28, 1995.
- (2) Ben Houghton. "Bottom up: a UK approach to art library co-operation." *Art libraries journal* 23(4):9-17 (1998).

URL addresses:

Mapa bibliotecario y de servicios de información en la ciudad de México
<http://www.mexarte.info>

Biblioteca Nacional
<http://biblional.bibliog.unam.mx/bib/biblioteca.html>

Biblioteca Miguel Lerdo de Tejada
<http://www.shcp.gob.mx/servs/dgpcap/bmlt/index.html>

Biblioteca de las Artes
<http://www.cna.gob.mx/cnca/buen/acna/biblioteca.html>

SERIUNAM
<http://dgb.unam.mx/seriunam.html>

HELA
<http://dgb.unam.mx/hela.html>

CLASE

<http://dgb.unam.mx/clase.html>

IRESIE

<http://www.unam.mx/CESU/iresie/>

FILOS

<http://www.filosoficas.unam.mx/basefilos/index.html>

MEXICOARTE

<http://dgb.unam.mx/posgrado/posgrado.html>

Arqueología mexicana

<http://www.arqueomex.com/>

México desconocido

<http://www.mexicodesconocido.com.mx/>

Estudios de cultura nahuatl

http://www.ejournal.unam.mx/cultura_nahuatl/cultura_nahuatl_index.html

MEXARTE

<http://www.mexarte.info>

Universidad de las Américas. Puebla

<http://biblio.udlap.mx>

LIB E UNAM

<http://dgb.unam.mx/e-libros.html>

México un siglo en imágenes

<http://biblioweb.dgsca.unam.mx/libros/mexico/inicio.html>

LIBRUNAM

<http://dgb.unam.mx/librunam.html>

TESIUNAM

<http://dgb.unam.mx/tesiunam.html>

ARCHIVO FRANCISCANO

<http://www.coleccionesmexicanas.unam.mx/francis.htm!>

ARCHIVO GENERAL DE LA NACIÓN

<http://www.agn.gob.mx>