METHODOLOGIES AND TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS OF MUSEUM WEB APPLICATION FEATURES

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AREA: Content quality for cultural Web Site

Past research: a database of Web sites of northern Italy Museums

In year 2001 an extended investigation was carried out on Web sites of over 400 Museums in northern Italy (Corradini e Benassi, 2002), in association with ICOM Italian Committee and Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Modena. The classification of the Museums focused on: 1) geographical distribution and category 2) navigation tools and visual aspects 3) user interactivity and site behaviour 4) Museum contents and organisation 5) Museum activities 6) on-line services 7) users contacts and community.

Capturing Museum site behaviour

An inspection of the general features (not only usability) of a Museum Web Application implies to deal with various site behaviour models, according also to the Museum mission as defined by ICOM:

- **Institutional communication**, including the suitability with minimum required standard indicated by European, national an regional laws
- **Museum collections and data presentation**, using databases access technologies
- "**Edutainment**" dimension, through e-learning methodologies and multimedia techniques
- **"Community" animation** for both common and professional users, in reference to Internet virtual communities experience
- **Marketing** and e-shop services
- **Technological features** to sustain maintainability, reusability, integration of information flows, interoperability (Minerva, 2003)

Methodologies and technologies for a practical tool

In order to perform site benchmarking and inspection we are defining:

- **objective vs. subjective** inspection criteria
- **qualitative vs. quantitative** inspection criteria and scales
- **sample-page(s) vs. whole-site** inspection criteria
- relevant **technological benchmarks**

✍ identification and integration of (eventually automated) **software inspection tools**

We want to develop an *open adaptable system* with a definition of inspection phases, procedures, scales, measure units. This system will be tested on various Museum sites. We are going to start from the ones in Emilia Romagna.

The graphs shown report the results of a preliminary examination of 35 home pages of Bologna and Milano Museum sites, as listed in the ICOM site. The graphs show estimated download time (only 4 sites fit the "8-seconds-rule"), HTML4 compliance (no one is HTML4 valid), presence of external CSS (only 20% has them).

REFERENCES

Corradini E., Benassi A. (2002), , *Didattica e multimedialità: il progetto 'Museologia on line' del Comitato Italiano dell'ICOM,* "Scuola, Museo, Territorio", p.33-43, Pavia.