Latvia

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Latvian National Library
Poster, Latvian IV dance and music festival in Jelgava, 1895
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Policy scenario

In the Republic of Latvia many important normative acts and documents, which influence digitization in the area of culture (e.g. the national programme "Informatics", the social-economical programme "e-Latvia 2000") have been adopted.

The National programme "e-Latvia 2005-2008" is in the process of approval. The programme covers modern information society needs, the availability and promotion of cultural content and services for users. It is based on previous national programmes, the Lisbon strategy, the EU programmes "eEurope 2002", "eEurope 2005", including the priorities and initiatives of "eEurope+ 2003". The national legislation includes the law *On Libraries*, *On the National Library of Latvia*, *On the Realisation of the Latvian National Library Project*, *On Archives*, *On Protection of Cultural Heritage* and *On Museums*. In order to promote the digitisation process the EU directives and WIPO contracts have been implemented in the *Law of Copyrights*. *The Electronic Document Law*, which determines the juridical status of the electronic documents and electronic signatures, is also adopted. Technical Committee for Standardisation of Museum Work, Archives and Records Management and Librarianship can be considered a step forwards to co-ordinate the work of culture institutions. It gives a possibility to exchange information, to introduce uniform terminology and adapt interdisciplinary standards. Up to now each of the areas uses different standards and terminology when recording traditional information. The digitalised media require concordant principles of data processing. The following standards are approbated as international standards in the branch of museums, archives and libraries: ICOM, ISAD, ISBD, ISAAR etc. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia is the key player that supervises the development, coordination and implementation of digitisation policy. In the realm of preservation we have long-term traditions:
- restoration centres in all largest institutions
- restorers' society, as a sample of an inter-branch cooperation
- copying, including digitisation of endangered objects (films, sound records, newspapers etc.).

In order to ensure the access we have started:
- description of objects - creation of registers, catalogues, union catalogues, and data bases
- digitisation of objects (optical recognition, if necessary) and delivery in CD-R or on-line delivery.

The three most important projects are financed by EU Structural funds (according to the action plan and national programme "Improvement and Development of e-Administration infrastructure") and the budget:
- National Museum Holdings Joint Catalogue
- Unified Archival Information System
- State Integrated Library Information System.

In 2003 the Culture Capital Foundation of Latvia formed a special purpose programme 'Co-operation of Archives, Museums and Libraries in a Digital Environment', a financial support that can be received by representatives of at least two sectors. This programme is administered by state agency 'Culture Information Systems' (former Consortium of Library Information Network). *Good Practice Handbook* (edited by MINERVA Working group 6) has become an important guideline to ensure quality and preservation of digitised content.

Latvian Academic Library
Johann Christoph Brotze, *Coastline, Riga*, c. 1650
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Co-operation

State agency "Culture Information Systems" works under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture. The main task of the agency is to provide for public availability of the information sources and culture values stored in the libraries, museums and archives. It is to be reached by creating a joint integrated automated information network poetically named ''Network of Light''. The main functions of the agency are:

• to develop the information systems of libraries, archives, museums and other cultural institutions;
• to provide for processing, storing and distributing information from libraries.

In 2002, the Latvian Cultural Capital Foundation established a special target program "Co-operation of Archives, Museums and Libraries in Digital Environment", where projects with at least two branch specialists participating can be supported. Co-operation in the digitisation process with other information preservers (libraries, museums), with authors (Riga City Council), with users (Association of History teachers, University of Daugavpils etc.), and with companies is taking place. This co-operation will broaden during the establishment of e-government in Latvia. Information and object search in the accumulated founds of Latvian museums, archives and libraries can be provided by establishing national data base for names and denominations of concrete persons, generations, institutions and organisations. Several private IT companies in co-operation with archives, museums, and libraries have started to develop products which support digitisation of objects and their access to Internet:

• SWH-T (software for retro-conversion of printed National bibliography)
• Lursoft (access to digital Cabinet of Folk songs, also via WAP service)
• Tilde (multimedia CD-ROM "History of Latvia", e-encyclopaedia "Letonica")
• IT Alise (single solution for Archives, Museums and Libraries in terms of software) etc.

State agency "Culture Information Systems" is a participant of International Consortium of ALEPH Users (ICAU) that promotes the implementation of ALEPH library information systems. Latvian National Library takes part in international projects such as CALIMERA, LibEcon, PULMAN and NAPLE.

Good Practice Handbook
(edited by MINERVA Working group 6) has become an important guideline to ensure quality and preservation of digitised content. The translation of Cultural website creation guidelines is on its way.

Main digitisation initiatives

Each branch has undoubted achievements. For example, the museum sector has:

• Joint Catalogue of the National Holdings
• History Museum of Latvia
• Ventspils Museum
• The Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation creates all-State historical and digital museum of photographs.

Since 2000, the online union catalogue of eight

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Map, *Ducatus Curlandiae*, 1747
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Latvian National Library
Newspaper "Kurzemes Vards" 1918-1944, 1918
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research libraries operating the Aleph500 system
is available for users.
www.linc.lv
Latvian Academic Library has its own catalogue operating
in the LiberMedia system.

AILab, the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at the
Institute of Mathematics and Computer Science
of the University of Latvia; has become one of the
leading institutions for digitising Latvian folklore
resources. In 2001 digitisation of the second biggest
collection of legends and fairy tales was started.
www.liis.lv/folklora/folkloristika/teksti).

In 2003 AILab started a project 'Electronic Library
of Folkloristics' The aim of this database is to make
articles and books of different time periods covering
the first scientific publications in Latvian from the
19th century up to the present day available for users.
http://www.ailab.lv/FEB.

Virtual Online "Case of Latvian Folk-Songs (Dainas)":
the digitisation of the 'Dainas Case' comprising the
manuscripts of 350,000 folk songs was implemented
within the framework of the UNESCO project 'Memory
of the World'. In the database you can search Latvian
folk songs by any word in their content.
http://www.dainuskapis.lv

At present the collection of Radio Record Library
comprises some 140,000 records in different
formats - tapes, discs and compact discs. It is the largest
library of audio records in Latvia. Since January 2003,
the broadcasts have been available online.
The National Library of Latvia is to be the centre of
universal information services and the chief developer of

library resources in Latvia. Administering these functions
and joining the European project TEL (The European
Library), it will become the centre of the national digital
library. The creation of a digital library was initiated in 1990s.
The seven projects must be mentioned:

- digitising of local newspapers
- digitising of topographic maps
- digitising of historic maps
- digitising of art posters
- digitising of the images and postcards of the end
  of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century
- digitising of sound records is started
- digitising of printed matter of national bibliography
  and creation of the database.

New projects that are related to Latvia e-portrait gallery
and the ancient prints of the 16th -17th centuries could
be mentioned here:

- Latvia State Historical Archive in co-operation
  with Daugavpils University work on project
  "Moscovitica-Ruthenica" (Document store in the
  State of Republic of Latvia). The making and digitisation
  of the microfilm in the year 2004 is planed.
- The Latvia State Archive of Film, Photography and Audio
  Documents work on digitisation of photo foundation.
- The Artificial Intelligence Laboratory creates a textual
  base of modern Latvian literature, for example, the texts
  of the most prominent Latvian poet Rainis.
- Data bases based on visual materials about Latvian
  designs and Monuments of Culture are formed.
- In the context of State Integrated Library Information
  System there is a development towards information
  availability, providing new services for users, such as
  ordering and supplying literature online.

Latvian National Library
Postcard, Richard Wagner's Wohnhaus
Photo: Hebenspergen & Co, 1838/39
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