

Music information: a converging view of digital, physical and temporal resources

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Ten years ago, I wrote in the French-speaking librarians' forum that the distinction between libraries and archives will become fuzzier because of digital and Web technologies and their effect on the preservation and access to documents held by both kinds of institutions. This then-controversial opinion was vindicated with the 2004 merging of the Canadian national archives and library. The subsequent development of structured metadata (such as FRBR and EAD) together with better authentication mechanisms has helped with this convergence, which now also affects museums (as manifested with the "rapprochement" between FRBR and CIDOC-CRM and the emergence of FRBROO). As a result, a wider class of cultural artefacts is being dematerialized and their representations made available online, including once-impossible or difficult contextualization. An additional benefit from these trends is the gradual move from so-called digital libraries towards more general information systems, which aims at uniformly handling not only representations of objects and their interrelations but also of time (events, evolutions of objects and of their interrelations, etc.), yet without disregarding non-digital (or non-digitizable) objects. This talk will concentrate on two related ongoing and operational projects exemplifying, on a medium scale, these evolutions in the music and audio domains: the first one, a workflow to handle the preservation and distribution of archives of the traces of music events at Ircam (sound recordings and related documentation, such as program notes), is based on a careful modelization of simple and complex musical events (musical season, concerts, conferences, etc.) as the "glue" contextualizing and relating digital documents. The second one, which partially feeds on metadata and contents provided by the first one, is a specialized search engine for contemporary music resources (i.e., documents, but also events, people, organizations...) held by French small and large institutions: music ensembles, conservatories, libraries, museums, which provides access to digital documents, allows the localization of physical ones and provides information on related events and resources, all described via a single, simple, schema.