

## Introductory remarks

by

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I am very pleased to open this international conference on ER and I most cordially welcome to the United States colleagues in the name of the organizing committee and all the Italian librarians. Today I think it proper to quote a passage from the Unesco Manifest for the Public Libraries(1994) which reminds us that libraries are "a living force for education, culture and information", literally "an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women".

I extend a special welcome to the Canadian and European colleagues and to the Israeli colleague who honour this conference with their authoritative presence.

The idea of planning this meeting came out of the 66th IFLA Conference of Jerusalem. One and a half year later I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have helped in the preparations and promotion for this Conference by providing intellectual and financial contributions: the University of Rome "La Sapienza", the Ministro per i Beni e le attività culturali and the Italian Association for Libraries, and under the auspices of IFLA.

The Conference is held one year after the "Bicentennial Conference on Bibliographic Control for the New Millennium" promoted by the Library of Congress (November 15-17, 2000) to celebrate the bicentenary of its foundation.<sup>1</sup>

I am very proud this conference takes place in Italy. The presence of so many attenders testifies to the importance of this international forum and to the interest of Italian librarians in its thematic concerns. This interest has been increased by the growing demands of:

- a. integrating local digital resources into the library catalogues (i.e. locally networked CD-ROM, databases, multimedial archives), providing a *direct access to the documents themselves*;
- b. using existing metadata formats for cataloguing specific electronic materials as collections of images and sound recordings;
- c. settling an open and global platform for a remote access to networked resources provided by libraries, archives and museums;
- d. developing a digital library project to preserve the extraordinary amount of Italian documents;
- e. contributing to the adjustment and the revision of the ISBD(ER) and metadata formats.

The programm of the conference consists of five sessions exploring current issues and hot topics on Electronic Resources.

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<sup>1</sup> Proceedings of the Bicentennial Conference on Bibliographic Control for the New Millennium : confronting the challenges of networked resources and the Web : Washington, D.C., November 15-17, 2000 / sponsored by the Library of Congress Cataloging Directorate ; edited by Ann M. Sandberg-Fox. -- Washington, D.C. : Library of Congress. Cataloging Distribution Service, 2001. --xxxviii, 536 p. : ill., ritr. ; 28 cm. --ISBN 0-8444-1046-2.

1. The session *Challenges of electronic resources* is devoted to the analysis of the complex and mutable characteristics of digital documents, to the evolution of standards and rules, and to the problems of applying descriptive rules to remote electronic resources.
2. The session *Identification and selection of valuable electronic resources* is devoted to the organizational and technological issues *involved in* programmes of digital document selection, dealing with the different solutions achieved from the point of view of cooperation and development of national and international guidelines
3. The session *Bibliographic access and control of electronic resources* is focused on full bibliographic description, or the adoption of a metadata format in a simpler bibliographic control of electronic resources, with special regard to interoperability issues and the exchange of bibliographic descriptions.
4. The aim of the session *Portal and subject access to electronic resources* is exploring the state of art of access projects to Internet resources of various types (p.e., IRC, quality *subject gateways* , Resource Discovery Network, portals), with a comparative review of those projects and presentations on the systems of classification adopted in each portal.
5. The session *Further reflections on experience of national and university libraries* presents an overview on the main projects of some library systems aimed to favour an integrated access to Web resources or to guarantee their preservation.

A few words on the official logo of the conference which embodies the concepts of historical responsibility and Cultural Awareness and evokes new perspectives in the organization, preservation and transmission of knowledge.

Coliseum represents our rich cultural heritage based on classical and scientific knowledge, the fundamental of our civilization which is also a model of knowledge transmission. We have imagined the flow of the binary digits leaving the arcades and growing to carry out a new model of knowledge transmission.

We are especially grateful to John D. Byrum Jr, chair of the ISBD Review Group, for his ideas and useful suggestions.

My thanks to Flavia Cristiano e Massimo Pistacchi for their support in solving administrative problems. I would like to thank the scientific board: Patrizia Costabile, Gianfranco Crupi, Stefano Gambari, Pinella Monaco, Andrea Paoli, Tiziana Pesenti, Lucia Sardo for their hard work and dedication in designing and preparing this conference.

Thanks to Paolo Rembadi Damiani and Filippo Frassi for Web page designing, to Giovanni Michetti for its maintenance and to the Nexus company for the online version of the conference papers.

Thanks to the Ellediemme company and to Luca Burioni for trusting in the aim of this conference, to Swets Blackwell for sharing this experience, to Biblionova and Editrice Bibliografica for publishing the proceedings, to the Istituzione Biblioteche of Rome for its support and to Annarita Pazzaglini, of the FA.SI. Congress for her professional competence in logistic organization.

Finally, let me mention the Dipartimento di studi sul Medioevo e il Rinascimento of University of Florence, with which I am affiliated since last October.

Traduzione di Antonella Novelli

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