A bridge across the Atlantic: the EBSI-INA collaboration

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Introduction

• Since 2007, a collaborative agreement between EBSI and Ina’Sup
• EBSI: library school at UdeM (Canada)
• Ina’Sup: Graduate school of the National Audiovisual Institute (France)
• Covers teaching and research
Realisations to date

• Since 2008, Bruno Bachimont (Ina’Sup) gives a summer course at EBSI
• James Turner (EBSI) gives a fall course at Ina’Sup
• Also, a doctoral student in co-direction, supervised by Bachimont and Turner
Two new courses

• To continue the collaboration, two new courses are planned: 1. preservation of digital audiovisual materials, 2. indexing digital collections

• This presentation discusses the first of these courses
Background

• Only a few graduate programmes in audiovisual archiving
  • MIAS (U California at Los Angeles)
  • MIAP (New York University)
  • MA (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
  • Graduate Certificate (Charles Sturt U)
  • MA (U of East Anglia)
  • Master Patrimoine (Ina’Sup)
International programmes

• A strong trend, but a number of issues:
  • institutional organisation and culture
  • faculty status
  • equivalencies in grading and diplomas
  • organisation of disciplines
  • language barriers
  • logistics
The transatlantic course

- Theoretical part given simultaneously in Canada and France
  - 6-hour time difference, so 8:30 in Canada, 14:30 in France
  - video link between the two schools
- Two instructors, to offer European and North American perspectives
- Lab exercises not synchronous
Lab exercises = workshops, projects

- Administered separately, largely because of logistical considerations
- Common discussion space online so students and instructors can interact
- In the final class, presentation of projects resulting from labs
Preparing the content

- A slippery slope, because digital preservation still largely experimental
- However, much groundwork already
- Some stability achieved, usable tools available
- The international nature of the work lends itself nicely to the course
INA a leader

• INA (the national audiovisual institute in France) a fertile ground
  • responsible for the legal deposit of radio and television in France
  • the largest a/v collection in the world
  • wholesale archiving of 50 networks
  • massive investment in digitisation
  • development of interesting methods
Practical solutions

- Lab content deliberately vague
- Emphasis on problem-solving
- Lots of discussion and experimentation
- Develop models for preservation in various contexts
- Encourage a variety of solutions
Logistical issues

- Perhaps the most complicated aspect of this kind of course
- A great deal of time and effort required to resolve issues
- A feeling that emphasis should be elsewhere, but logistics unavoidable
Some aspects

- Coordinate administrative procedures
- Semesters not simultaneous
- Different time zones
- Different statutory holidays
- Number of students in each programme (20 vs 250)
- Coordinating available technologies
Creating a new course

- At Ina’Sup, relatively easy because the school is new, small
- At EBSI, more complex because UdeM procedures must be respected
- However, for the first year, a special topics course available
- Students registered at INA or EBSI, later distance students also
Semesters don’t coincide

- At Ina’Sup, October through January
- At EBSI, September through December
- The 8 weeks in common used for the course, classes twice a week
- For students at EBSI, a commitment required because the course begins after cutoff date for course changes
Statutory holidays

• These and other events a big headache
• Solution: theory on available common dates, labs on other dates
• As a result, the labs take place at very different times
• However, since they are ongoing projects, hopefully this will work
Number of students

- 12-20 registered in the heritage option at Ina’Sup
- 250 master’s students eligible at EBSI
- The agreement aims for balance
- At EBSI, a maximum of 20 can register (first come first served, waiting list)
Coordinating technologies

- UdeM has videoconferencing equipment, but INA (surprisingly) does not
- Adobe Connect Now chosen as common software, with Skype as backup
- Plan for dropped connections, other technical difficulties
- Some video recording to offer lectures outside the designated time
Student help

- UdeM provided a startup budget, so student help can:
  - record video
  - tweak files
  - manage web site for the course
  - assist in the lab
Working with partners

• Plans for the course include working with industrial partners
• Everyone needs digital preservation
• Some companies have offices in Paris and Montréal
  • aeronautics, video games
• In the first year of the course, starting modestly without partners
Conclusion

- Structure in place, content being developed, undoubtedly adjustments
- A bit nervous, apprehensive
- Adjust for dynamics during the course
- Student exchanges?
References


EBSI, the school of library and information science at the Université de Montréal, available at <http://www.ebsi.umontreal.ca/> (accessed 31 May 2010).


Ina’Sup, the postgraduate school of the National Audiovisual Institute in France, available at <http://www.ina-sup.com/> (accessed 31 May 2010).


UdeM, the Université de Montréal, available at <http://www.umontreal.ca/> (accessed 31 May 2010).

The End

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