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A bridge across the Atlantic: the EBSI-INA collaboration

James M Turner

Université 
de Montréal

Faculté des arts et des sciences

École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de l'information

Outline

- Introduction
- Background
- The transatlantic course
- Preparing the content
- Logistical issues
- Working with partners
- Conclusion

Introduction • Background • Course • Content • Logistics • Partners • Conclusion

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?

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The End

`james.turner@umontreal.ca`
