

Intangible Cultural Heritage and Digital Communications

Cristina Caramelo Gomes^a and Maria Luísa Costa^b

^a Faculdade de Arquitectura e Artes
Universidade Lusíada de Lisboa
Lisboa, Portugal

^b Faculdade de Arquitectura
Universidade de Lisboa
Lisboa, Portugal

ABSTRACT

ICT aims to democratize the access to information for individuals despite their professional, social and/or personal objectives. Digital *artifacts* became an interactive way to promote the contact between individuals and entities while pursuing information about a particular issue. Intangible Cultural Heritage is an area of knowledge which by means of digital *artifacts* can expand its field of action. The impact of digital *artifacts* on ICH on creation, management and delivery of information was recognized by ICOMOS and European Union; however the knowledgeable entities do not invest on the conception of this kind of documents. The results are inefficient websites which communicate information as if they were traditional static documents. Recurrently, considerations of communication and interaction design are excluded from digital *artifacts*' conceptual process. The authors elected three Portuguese cases which illustrate the scarcity of information, an interface difficult to interact with, the failure of inclusive design principles, a questionable aesthetical and functional layout and navigation and particularly the nearly inexistence of interaction chances for the user. This paper proposes an analysis of the impact of digital *artifacts* on ICH, as well as the design concepts along the conceptual process of these digital *artifacts*, namely websites. The main objective is to propose a set of guide lines to help creative professionals conceive websites oriented to ICH in order to attract and support different kinds of users.

Keywords: Design, Cognitive Ergonomics, Human Computer Interaction, User Interfaces, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Digital Communication

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this communication is to contribute, with a set of guide lines sustained by a reflection on the role of communication design, plus the importance of the use of different digital media in the promotion and enhancement of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), identify the needs and practices of the usability of websites and their adaptation to small mobile platforms, such as smartphones and tablets.

Considering the need to develop and implement measures for the protection and preservation of ICH expressed in the Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH, adopted by the consensus of all member states of UNESCO in October 2003, and whose entry into force date April 2006, we argue that communication design has a crucial role in the development of processes that enable access to this heritage.

According to ICOMOS, the digital databases, websites, multimedia presentations and educational tools contribute positively to the sustainable development of society and communities, being decisive in all processes of cultural mediation and equity because they allow access to heritage information and interpretation.

Thus, we argue websites are appropriate for the promotion and enhancement of ICH, because the design provides methodological, theoretical and practical tools to act appropriately in the conception and development of intuitive and ergonomically appropriate platforms, which enhance the experience and allow more than simple access to information, achieving the access to interactive experiences that stimulate cognitive processes in individuals in different communities.

However, there is strong evidence that most institutions neglect the need of an intervention by the Designer in the construction and development platform for the web. Furthermore, the skills offered by the creators of these platforms are not the most appropriate. Currently, this work is developed by self-educated, which base their performance on phrases and images which are not so trustworthy, or informatics professionals that focus on functionality and efficiency of navigation, neglecting the communicative requirements behind contemporaneous culture and society, particularly with a concern to aesthetic and symbolic values. Facts that affirm a common result, such as multimedia documents, have no ability to appeal to our interest and/or senses, merely "play" static documents, which inert scanned sheets of paper, or making use of animations without any therefore lacking a fundamental insight of contribution to the accessibility and understanding of information, and only generate entropy in the process.

Observing and interacting with users permit to comprehend that the modern man is not interested in having or doing, but learn, experiment and experience. According to this theoretical thinking, the fundamental advantage of multimedia documents relies on the enabled interaction; they need to be dynamic and understandable, appealing to the user's curiosity and allowing the share of knowledge and experiences.

When facing reality, we consider decisive to identify a set of guide lines to be followed in the design of the communication process for developing websites, which ought to be applied also to targeted platforms for communication and promotion of the ICH. To achieve such goals the research will be conducted throughout literature review, from elected keywords and the analysis of two case studies related with official websites and identifying the communicational practices developed, which reveal the subject pertinence and the need of its review. The elected case studies confirm the information gathered along literature review and help to conceive the best practice guide lines that perform the section of conclusions. These guide lines are based on Communication Design, Web design and Interaction Design and aim to help the designer on the creation of every digital *artifact*, particularly websites, and the users on the search for information within Intangible Cultural Heritage.

DIGITAL ARTIFACTS

Websites – a case of communication grounded on interaction

“until 1900 human knowledge doubled approximately every century. By the end of World War II knowledge was doubling every 25 years. Today things are not as simple as different types of knowledge have different rates of growth. For example, nanotechnology knowledge is doubling every two years and clinical knowledge every 18 months. But on average human knowledge is doubling every 13 months. According to IBM, the build out of the “internet of things” will lead to the doubling of knowledge every 12 hours.” (Schilling and Russel, 2013)

The major value of knowledge it is its capacity to be applied and conveyed between individuals interested in a certain topic to further use. Every *artifact* that enhances a broader access to information is a step forward on the democratization of knowledge and a tool for development. If Gutenberg was a first step to encourage the contact with information for individuals outside particular social circles, allowing the conservation of the physical object and its passage between generations, ICT enforced this idea outside any imagined limits.

Contemporaneous society is characterised by information/digital age, which by definition aims to shift from the traditional industry based on mass production to an economy based on information computerisation. Digital age is the expression that identifies the present where we use technology to produce, edit, store, deliver and access information. If computers appear as a fundamental tool to manage digital information, digital network - internet and Ergonomics In Design, Usability & Special Populations II

intranet – emerges as a crucial tool to minimise time and increase the influence. Nowadays internet can be entitled as a global platform to increase the speed of information flow, pushing old forms of media communication to an obsolescent status.

Digital documents from dissimilar sources and technical provenances can be shared in real time by individuals in spite of their geographic and time locations. Faintly lagged this kind of documents can be delivered/accessed/shared via email or online transference/download depending on the properties of the file and the intentions of human act.

The muteness of these documents, once they do not encourage a bidirectional communication format, is balanced by their free and rapid access regardless the location (or even the technical gadget for receiving information) of the reader/editor. However the technological advancements have been driven by the need of communication between individuals. The forms of communication which are based (or at least encourage by) on interactivity emerge as the preferred ones in spite of the individual or professional purpose to access these sources of information. The reality illustrated by the success of the digital media age is grounded on the bidirectional communication opportunities, the dynamics featured by the continuous update of contents, public participation and interactions induced by any form of feedback, comments, questions, answers, chats, etc. Throughout systems everyone can deliver information, and interact with individuals, companies, etc., examples are Facebook, Tweeter, websites, blog, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Flickr, etc... This new approach embodies the new generation of World Wide Web where bi-directional communication is the major goal.

“Web 2.0 is the term given to describe a second generation of the World Wide Web that is focused on the ability for people to collaborate and share information online. Web 2.0 basically refers to the transition from static HTML Web pages to a more dynamic Web that is more organized and is based on serving Web applications to users. Other improved functionality of Web 2.0 includes open communication with an emphasis on Web-based communities of users, and more open sharing of information. Over time Web 2.0 has been used more as a marketing term than a computer-science-based term. Blogs, wikis, and Web services are all seen as components of Web 2.0.” (webopedia, 2014)

History shows that every time that a new theory, model, or just the challenging of status quo emerges, the human behaviour denotes a predisposition to reproduce the traditional process regardless the use of new tools or a new concept. This statement is substantiated by dissimilar websites which simulates the traditional yellow pages without adding any other kind of information and, consequently disregarding the possibilities granted by new ways of communicating.

Digital media can appeal to our visual and auditory senses while based in communication practices strengthened by design of communication. Communication is achieved whenever the message released by sender is comprehended by the receiver. Supported by ICT the message can be decoded and comprehended by a significant number of individuals. Even though the awareness of this reality there is a considerable number of private and public entities (nevertheless the product they want to promote and get credits) which do not invest in digital documents and social platforms.

Although the different types of digital documents and social platforms this piece of research will be focused on websites conceived and created to present, provide and marketer information and knowledge about cultural heritage.

“Conceptual design involves producing the conceptual model for the product, and a conceptual model describes what the product should do, what it should look like and how it should behave. Physical design considers the detail of the product including the colours, sounds and images to use, menu design and icon design” (Sharp, Rogers and Preece, 2007)

The creation of a website is always in a dependent relationship with the objectives of its owner. The appearance of a website, the visual interface design, is a central tool to endorse the communication process and to boost interactivity. To create and engage a user interface the designer will be helped by communication elements such as colour, typography, form and composition to communicate effectively and create a mood or intuitive response (Cooper, 2007). A visual design professional aims to create *artifacts* for others than themselves, thus the communication

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objective overcomes individual art expression. Visual design has the responsibility of data visualisation, content and navigation. Data visualisation refers to the composition obtained with the jigsaw created by images (photographs, tables, charts, maps, etc...), text and the hierarchy that they attribute to the content throughout shapes, colours, positions, scale.

Content, is an essential feature to maintain user on the web address and to return further on to the page. Content should be oriented to the final users' requirements and expectancies to achieve client objectives. Content must be meaningful, and create value. By meaningful is understandable that the content contributes to the topic and can influence users' behaviours. Whenever possible, the content must create an experience. By value is understandable that the information assembled must contribute for the wellbeing of the user. The content must be regularly updated.

Cultural issues must be attained along the layout composition once colours, shapes and symbols can have different interpretations in dissimilar cultures (red is not a warning colour in China and thumbs up is not a nice expression within Turkish culture). The profusion of possible compositions demands a detailed planned process which must be conceived regarding client and final users' requirements and expectations. (Cooper, 2007) Based on this statement we dare to say, that whenever the issue and/or the content permit is better to show than to just tell. Digital documents allow static and dynamic formats; from the written words, static pictures to YouTube' files there is a new language to communicate.

The properties of the content - quantity of text, format files, hierarchy of information - contribute for the navigation definition on the website. Navigation structure can be more or less complex depending on the information available, information properties, client and final user needs and anticipations. Navigation suggests interaction, which is the main feature that attracts or by opposite alienates users.

"We live in an artificial world. It is a world made up of environments, systems, processes and things that are imagined, formed and produced by humans. All these things have been designed, and all new things have to be designed. Someone has to decide their function, form and structure, as well as their ethical and aesthetical qualities. In this artificial world created by humans, information technology is increasingly becoming not only a common but also a vital and fundamental part. Our designed world is full of digital artifacts, that is designed things built around a core of information technology. We can find them in our workplaces, in our meeting and public places, and in our homes. Digital artifacts have a direct impact on our everyday lives. ...This mean that IT professionals and others involved in the design of this new environment take on a huge responsibility. To design digital artifacts is to design people's lives." (Löwgren and Stolterman, 2007: 1)

"Interaction design is about behaviour, and behaviour is much harder to observe and understand than appearance....An interaction, grossly speaking, is a transaction between two entities, typically an exchange of information, but it can also be an exchange of goods or services." (Saffer, 2010:4,5)

The dialogue of Interaction Design exists between a person and a product, system or service. This dialogue is both physical and emotional in nature, and is manifested in form, function and technology." (Kolko, 2011)

Interaction design emphasises the process that is prepared under a particular set of conditions to create, model and decide all use-oriented qualities (structural, functional, ethical and aesthetical) of a digital *artifact* for one or more clients and users (Saffer, 2010; Löwgren and Stolterman, 2007).

Interaction design is a strategy to achieve clients' objectives while refining digital *artifacts* orienting them to human purpose and enjoyment. Interaction design demands a deep understanding of clients' objectives and target audience behaviours promoting an inclusive perception about how smoothly and logically users relate with technology. Individuals present a tendency to choose simple websites, where information presentation demonstrates consistency – throughout layout, contents, navigation and interaction -; where unnecessary tasks, functions and options are avoided or hierarchically oriented; where the act of load and respond are perceptive and quick; where the act of thinking is minimised although encouraging the required concentration to accomplish users' intentions. The continuous dialogue between human being and technology warrants the engagement of the user and the flow of communication. This dialogue or interaction between user and machine is the major advantage from these

technologies and new ways of interact despite personal or professional objectives, which lead to the need – sometimes addiction – to be constantly online on computers, tablets and smartphones. This array of technical gadgets introduces a different requirement: the easily access and visualisation of digital information, namely websites, in dissimilar technical formats and properties.

“The digital heritage consists of unique resources of human knowledge and expression. It embraces cultural, educational, scientific and administrative resources, as well as technical, legal, medical and other kinds of information created digitally, or converted into digital form from existing analogue resources. Where resources are “born digital”, there is no other format but the digital object. Digital materials include texts, databases, still and moving images, audio, graphics, software and web pages, among a wide and growing range of formats. They are frequently ephemeral, and require purposeful production, maintenance and management to be retained. Many of these resources have lasting value and significance, and therefore constitute a heritage that should be protected and preserved for current and future generations. This ever-growing heritage may exist in any language, in any part of the world, and in any area of human knowledge or expression.” (UNESCO, 2003)

“Humanity’s legacy can be unlocked and shared between people through digital representations. Digital representations can communicate elements of our CH in a variety of ways. For clarity, we can define three types that distinguish different uses for these representations; art and entertainment, visualization, and digital surrogates of the world we experience” (Mudgea, Ashleyb and Schroer, nd)

Information, apart from its graphical or alphanumeric expression, communicates, preserve and convey our cultural heritage for the next generations. Digital *artifacts* aim to embody - in a rigorous and consistent way – real world contents in a digital format. Digital *artifacts* promote scientific knowledge; please individual curiosity and/or academic purposes or just acts as a developed technical source of entertainment, without the requirement of physical world experience (place and/or object). Digital *artifacts* archives promote the collect, store, management, deliver, access (and frequently feedback) of information recorded in different and often compatible formats (text, photographs, modelling 3D, virtual reality, augmented reality, etc...) while maximising public, academic and individual access and generally growth the knowledge established on our ancestors’ achievements.

“If the concept of “intangible heritage” is almost diffused amongst cultural heritage specialists, this aspect of heritage still presents difficulties in terms of identification and management, and how it should be valued and by whom. Intangible heritage is deeply embedded in a range of social, personal, political and economic relationships, which raise questions concerning the applicability of conventional “heritage management” practices and the risks...” (Euromed Heritage, 2010)

Digital platforms disseminate in an egalitarian approach the access of cultural heritage, particularly the intangible one, promoting and documenting the sense of social and cultural identity, embedding a new outlook to the thematic tourism, delivering information and knowledge to academics, professional and individuals. The importance of the intangible cultural heritage along with digital *artifacts* aims to store traditional knowledge expressed in different expressive languages (poetry, folklore, *fado*, handicraft techniques, etc...) and usually transferred throughout oral system. The importance of such question led European Union to promote a research program to preserve cultural heritage to Mediterranean countries with particular activities to promote intangible cultural heritage as well as the creation of digital resources of information. This European Union Program can be accessed in <http://www.euromedheritage.net/>

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Definitions and safeguarding processes

The concept of Heritage has suffered deep alterations throughout time, following human and society evolution, being recognized today that all material heritage congregates in itself endless memories and stories which integrate local traditions, constitute living matter to the citizens and are a structuring element of their identities.

These memories, stories, habits and experiences are considered Intangible Cultural Heritage, which is important to protect and promote, ensuring cultural diversity threatened by indifference due to the rapid globalization process, contributing simultaneously to the creation of a future memory.

In this sense, Unesco recognizes that “the processes of globalization and social transformation, alongside the conditions they create for renewed dialogue among communities, also give rise, as does the phenomenon of intolerance, to grave threats of deterioration, disappearance and destruction of the intangible cultural heritage, in particular owing to a lack of resources for safeguarding such heritage” (Unesco, 2003). Matsuura, K. (2002) refers the importance of ICH, not only as “the memory of past cultures, but is also a laboratory for inventing the future.”

From this topic arises the recognition of ICH protection, which led to the consensual approval by all UNESCO’s state members in the UNESCO’s 32nd General Conference, in October 2003, from “Convention to the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which defines and establishes the guiding lines to the pursuit of these goals. In the 2nd article, point 1, Intangible Cultural Heritage is defined as:

(...) the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development. »
(Unesco, 2003)

Manifesting this Heritage “in the following domains:(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;(b) performing arts;(c) social practices, rituals and festive events;(d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;(e) traditional craftsmanship.” (Unesco, 2003)

In what concerns to the Safeguard of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Unesco recognizes that this is of general interest to humanity, and to that end undertake to cooperate at the bilateral, sub regional, regional and international level” (Unesco, 2003), being understood as safeguarding: “(...) measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage.” (Unesco 2003)

Intangible Cultural Heritage is alive and the dialog with the belonging communities is only viable if the identification with this Heritage is a reality. The record by conventional means (inventory, cataloguing and preservation) will contribute to the preservation of a memory, but not of the Heritage in itself. (Costa,2013).

The protection of ICH goes through a promotion process, which must be structured around dynamic approaches, which facilitate playful experiences. In these communicational practices, Design has a determining role, connecting project and process methodology to technic and knowledge of social and cultural needs in daily life, answers emerging social and cultural needs and ensures the paths defended by UNESCO regarding active participation from communities and individuals, thus starting dynamic processes and Intangible Cultural Heritage re-creation (Unesco, 2003).

The authors are aware that the fast globalization process is playing a part, in a determining way, in the way we understand and perceive the world, shortening distances, altering our notion of time and space. This way, essential knowledge expansion about cultural particularities that characterizes and identify different communities, as well as the need to promote the dialogue between cultures.

For the contemporary thinking, it no longer makes sense the closing of a culture or way of being in a territorially limited dimension. Local culture needs to expand into an universal dimension as the fact that we are each time more familiarized with the diversity and incorporate it into our existence and in our daily life makes it more than a reality, a need.

Thus, we will reach a unit around local specificities opened to the world and the singularity of cultural meetings and sharing as “those who see the human unit tend to consider culture diversity as secondary. On the opposite, it is pertinent to conceive a unit that ensures and favours diversity, a diversity that can be inscribed in a unit” (Morin, 2002). This way, a careful look about Intangible Heritage will be a way of safeguarding human unity, manifested also in its cultural singularity, expanding on cultural diversity.

Intangible Cultural Heritage is anchored in territory and belongs to its communities but, facing the characteristics of contemporary society, it is also available for other communities, by way of transnational networks increment with generalized geographic access, ICH lives among these communities, its testimony passes from generation to generation, but this testimony can be promoted, presented to the world and different communities through websites that promote its characteristics and reveal the specificities of local culture, emphasizing the “spirit of the place” to which is intimately connected. ICOMOS mentions that information Technologies can constitute an efficient way to preserve, spread, and promote places, Heritage and its spirit. The “Québec declaration on the preservation of the spirit of place” (2008), recognizes that

“the spirit of place is made up of tangible (sites, buildings, landscapes, routes, objects) as well as intangible elements (memories, narratives, written documents, festivals, commemorations, rituals, traditional knowledge, values, textures, colors, odors, etc.), which all significantly contribute to making place and to giving it spirit... intangible cultural heritage gives a richer and more complete meaning to heritage as a whole and it must be taken into account in all legislation concerning cultural heritage, and in all conservation and restoration projects for monuments, sites, landscapes, routes and collections of objects.” (ICOMOS, 2008)

In the mentioned declaration, digital technologies are considered, namely websites, as a mean that can be used efficiently and for a low cost, to develop inventories that integrate Intangible Material Heritage, recommending its profuse promotion in the sense of better preserving, expanding, and raising places and heritage. We defend that inventorying Heritage must be complemented through playful approaches directed in the sense of offering a near-physical experience of the space.

Digital platforms, besides offering generalized access to Heritage, become promoting elements of cultural diversity and local cultures specificities. They allow citizens easy access to knowledge of their heritage, they make possible the access to those who, for physical or others reasons, cannot access geographic space to which heritage is anchored, allowing the sharing and easy and intuitive interaction among citizens.

However, in order to achieve these goals, digital platforms must be dynamic, motivate interaction, and encourage several levels of information in order to reach different publics, with different levels of interest in the theme. Training of teams gathered to build these platforms must be multidisciplinary and integrate a professional with expertise on design of communication, so that communication is possible, who with his/her methodological competences and specific knowledge, namely communication and ergonomics, will have a precious role in the whole communicative process.

***Fado* as ICH**

In the Portuguese context, we emphasize *Fado*, as a unique manifestation of the Portuguese identity, integrated in the “Representative of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity” list of UNESCO, in November 2011, with the designation of “*Fado* urban popular song of Portugal”, its candidature involved a large number of citizens and communities (singers, investigators, guitar players and builders, among others), as well as Lisbon City Council, The *Fado* Museum, and the Institute of Etnomusicology of Lisbon Social and Human Sciences University (Nery, 2012).

Fado has roots that go back to the history of Portugal and date back to the Brazil colonization period, where the first references to *Fado* appear as part of a set of danced songs, which brought together local and African musical influences, namely, the Lundum. These were joined by other palace “*modinhas*” (sentimental songs from the Portuguese text), which circulated in Lisbon at the end of the XVIII century and were taken to Brazil by the Portuguese aristocracy. Until the end of the 18th century, no written source is known in which *Fado* designates a musical genre, maybe due to the fact that the first manifestations of *Fado*, in Lisbon, were located in popular and marginal neighbourhoods, where middle class and aristocracy never participated, being the *Fado* circle confined to

taverns and brothels of working neighbourhoods. Surely, the taste for *Fado* starts contaminating other social groups, namely, the aristocratic and bohemian youth, social fringes which end up bringing erudite elements to *Fado*, thus contributing to its expansion to other social classes, as well as other locations in the country (Nery, 2012)

In 1974, *Fado* was linked with the expelled regimen and almost banned from cultural promotion, it went through a decadent period but quickly recovered its space in the national culture. (Nery, 2012). In the last decade of the 20th century, *Fado* witnesses a growing number of young *Fado* singers, which, together with the growing interest for local musical culture, expands *Fado* to an international dimension and recognition (www.museudofado.pt). Later, the ratification of its value through the integration in the “Representative Cultural Heritage of Humanity” list furthers the interest for *Fado* by growing community, aggregating individuals of different generations and social classes.

In Portugal, many other cultural manifestations, namely the ones spread orally, such as legends, stories and memories become an object of investigation, register and promotion. The Memoriamedia Project, of which the Instituto de Estudos de Literatura Tradicional (IELT) – Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas/Universidade Nova de Lisboa¹ is a partner, is supported by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT)², gathers various investigators who dedicate themselves to the compilation and promotion of the contents of oral traditions (songs, tales, legends, proverbs...), of the “know-how” of arts and crafts, of life histories and cultural practices (celebrations and rituals) (www.memoriamedia.net/index.php/o-projecto).

In Portugal, cultural manifestations which show themselves as ICH, knowledge and ways of doing things, deeply rooted in the daily life of the communities encompass a wide number of rituals, festivities, dances, tales and songs, which are responsibility of Instituto dos Museus e da Conservação³, namely through its Divisão do Património Imóvel, Móvel e Imaterial (DPIMI)⁴, promote the study, safeguard and promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the graphic, sound, audio-visual or other forms of record, of these realities without material support in order to obtain knowledge, preservation and valorisation, as well as records of mobile or immobile cultural assets associated to intangible heritage, whenever applicable (http://www.imc-ip.pt/pt-PT/patrimonio_imaterial/ContentDetail.aspx).

Case Studies

This article aims (also) to explore ICT impact within the promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage. From the copious digital *artifacts* available to disseminate information about this issue, websites were chosen since they represent institutions, organisations, professionals and individuals allowing the access to different types of files and encouraging feedback and interaction attitudes more than any other kind of material. Along with this argument, the authors were influenced in their intention, by the erratic assumption that a website is a simple and rapid *artifact* creation – mainly using online tools to do so, such as WIX and Joomla, etc... - neglecting all the conceptual requirements that ground the construction of a website. Noticeably, this argument is sustained by individuals in general but also by creative professionals such as designers.

Aside of the importance of storing, managing and accessing information about Intangible Cultural Heritage along with its transmission to the next generations, Portuguese institutions disregard the required investment on websites conception. Several examples illustrate a close replication of traditional sources of information in spite of all the available information related with websites conception as well as the dissimilar online platforms that freely analysis and score websites.

Several examples respond positively to usability requirements but negatively according to semantic, semiotic and communication parameters of the contents, navigation, transmission of the message and promotion of feedback and

¹ Free translation - Institute for the Study of Traditional Literature (IELT) - Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities / New University of Lisbon

² Free translation - Foundation for Science and Technology

³ Free translation - Institute of Museums and Conservation

⁴ Free translation - Division of Heritage Property, Mobile and Intangible

interaction. For a prompt and unbiased evaluation, is possible to use dissimilar web applications (free and paid-for⁵) which analyse the website according with dissimilar aspects in order to collect data for marketing research and helps to focus on the specific areas of the website. These tools are very helpful to understand the profile of each visitant, from traffic number, demographic preferences, selected keywords, etc...

There were selected three (3) examples as study cases to develop a critical analysis. The examples chosen are Portuguese ones and they deliver information related with ICH. The authors present the websites selected, responsible entity and objectives, and provide an analytical grid to compare the selected examples according with the identified parameters that must be present in a resourceful and aesthetical website.

The first one is a website dedicated to the *Fado* Museum, a Portuguese traditional tune that is typically of mournful or fatalistic character usually accompanied by Portuguese guitar (see Figure 1). The aim of the museum is “defined by the set of activities inherent to the accomplishment of the general goals of gathering, preserving, conserving, investigating, interpreting, promoting, divulge, exhibit, document and fruition of *Fado* and Portuguese Guitar’s universe museological body, spreading the knowledge on this music genre and promoting its learning”(Museu do Fado, 2014). This website is developed by the company seara.com, which constructs websites for several cultural entities, with a multidisciplinary team including design professionals. At a first look, this page has its own contents on Portuguese and English idioms, allowing written and oral forms of communication as the possibility of resizing the characters; there are links to social networks. Every now and then, the layout of the website is not clear about information hierarchy and the colour scheme to headings and subheadings can be difficult to be perceived by individuals with low vision and colour blind. Aside from contacts form there is no other possibility to users feedback.

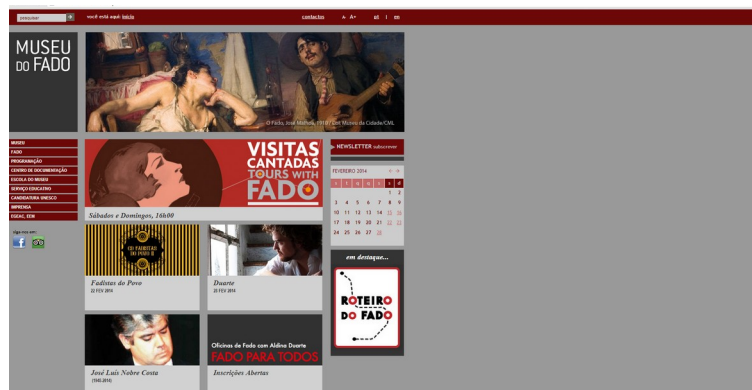


Figure 1 – Main page of “Fado Museum” website

The second example concerns *memoriamedia.com*, a project that aims to “collect and publicise traditional/oral/popular literature and any other manifestation of this culture (see Figure 2). It is grounded on the need to identify, register, preserve and publicise tales, legends, proverbs, and any other form of oral culture: the skills of ancient artisans; the uses and rites prevailing in day-to-day professional, social and family circles. Produced material is uploaded on the website *www.memoriamedia.net*.” (*memorianet*, 2014). This website is conceived by a multidisciplinary team which do not include a designer. The presented layout has just a Portuguese version; in spite of some of the contents have an English version is not understandable how to reach them. Some headings are not connected with a link, Facebook is the only social network available and it is hard to reach contacts page. There is no blog or other form of feedback from the visitants. It is not comprehensible the structure of the webpage as well as the hierarchy of the contents available. The big majority of the images do not have an attribute text which difficult

⁵ For websites evaluation search on platforms such as <http://piwik.org/>; <http://www.crazyegg.com/>; <http://www.woorank.com/>; <http://www.google.com/analytics/> among others.

their comprehensions from individuals with visual impairments. There are no labels to understand where the user is and how to go back. It is not understandable the update regularity of the website.

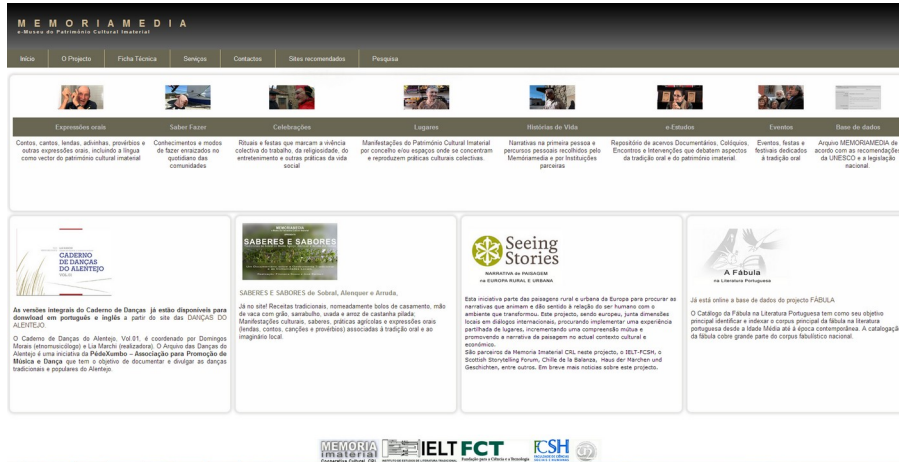


Figure 2 – Main page of “memoriamedia” website

The third example concerns *Património Imaterial*, a particular topic within <http://www.imc-ip.pt/>, *Instituto dos Museus e da Conservação* (see Figure 3), which aims to promote the study, preservation and dissemination of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the graphic recording, sound, audio-visual or other realities without support material for the purpose of the knowledge, preservation and enhancement, as well as the registration of movable cultural property or properties associated with intangible heritage, wherever applicable⁶. The website was developed by the company create.com. Though the page is inserted within a governmental website, the contents present a Portuguese version, without any other idiom. The content is fragile and there are no links to external sources of information. The contact form demands the identification of the sender.



Figure 3 – Intangible Cultural Heritage main page of the IMC website

Evaluation of websites

Based on the principle of the identified importance of digital platforms in the promotion of ICH, considering its characteristics, its growing importance, the need to conduct studies about topics related to this issue, as well as the need to its promotion with the different communities, that one desires alive and participated by a wide number of

⁶ Free translation from the website once there is no version beyond Portuguese one.

people, must encompass more specialized information and be oriented to researchers, the authors have analysed the aforementioned sites, pointing out that they all contain communication weaknesses.

One of the reasons why websites are an adequate mean to the promotion on ICH is due to the fact that communication is no longer throughout as unilateral and WEB 2.0, the reflex of this reality, allows the interaction among institution/community/promotion organization, and individuals. However, we have verified that analysed websites do not encourage visitors to participate by means of comments, suggestions, sharing of experiences (photos, videos, or narrative), stopping them from a desired proximity and interaction. This possibility could be viable through the availability of a space for comments associated to each of the pages, or a blog associated to the website. We have verified that this possibility was replaced by the direct access to social networks, which we consider positive, but raises a question that should be taken into account which is the replacement of in depth information for informative flashes which lead to participations/comments, also unavoidably superficial, such as a simple “like”. The *Fado* Museum, besides the connection to Facebook, has a connection to “Trip advisor” that allows the sharing of comments to the Museum. While the imc-ip website has, besides a Facebook page, a Twitter account and offers some publications of reference however there is no one dedicated to ICH.

Regarding the image taken as a whole, it constitutes an accurate way of expression. From the different parts that integrate it and proceeding to a detailed and in-depth exam of each intervening elements, we arrive to conclusive interpretations. We consider format, typography, images, grid, strength and tension lines, weights and the respective formal articulations and go from the different meanings in order to find the implicit messages.

Thus, we have the museum of *Fado* website with a formally coherent image, which take us through colours, images, and the frame where pages are set, into a well structured Project. The colours and the images aim to encompass a wide array of individuals, and simultaneously transmit an identity where longing, fatalism, and tradition, come along with modern times. This message is revealed to us also by the images that appear in sequence at the top of the website (see Figure 1).

In the *memoriamedia.com* website, we verify a lack of accuracy. This is conveyed by the non-existence of directing grids, by the different types and sizes of the used typography, as well as a conflict of alignments (centred, left aligned, justified). We emphasize the added difficulty that is reading a centred text, the problem of using justified texts, especially when the page size can be changed, such as in this case. Thus, if we diminish the page width, massive blank spaces appear between the words, which are ergonomically disastrous in what concerns the reading flow. Above all, we emphasize the problem of entropy created by the non-existence of a predictable organization, contributing to the easy reading (see Figure 2).

Redundancy also helps solve problems associated with the audience. If we wish to reach a larger, heterogeneous audience we will need to design a message with a high degree of redundancy. A small, specialist, homogeneous audience, on the other hand, can be reached with a more entropic message (Fiske 1990: 12)

The imc-ip website presents a repetitive image where colours are repeated throughout all pages, the text is justified, which in this case does not constitute the problem identified in the previous project, since it is not possible to change page size. However, in terms of image, this site has no dynamism in face of all chromatic repetitions and the presentation, always the same and in the text box, and also the shy appearance of images with little or no visibility (see Figure 3).

Generally speaking, we emphasize the lack of information, hierarchy and organization, which are fundamental aspects to the ease of reading of any text, particularly of texts published on the Web. In this context (communication of ICH and Web) it is important that the website visitor be encouraged to continue with the reading, be willing to obtain more information about a heritage that many times he/she does not know. We here mentioned previously that the patterns followed for publication in digital platforms are basically following the previous models of printed documents, but many times not even that takes place. We defend that the inverted pyramid, an information hierarchic methodology used in journalism, which presumes the organization and hierarchy of information by levels of importance in a downwards direction, would be adequate to the presentation of information in a digital platform context.

This methodology allows one to make the page accessible to different users, from the mere curious to the experts, through several well presented levels of information, allowing for a quick read and a basic understanding of

contents. This level must be constituted by a title, a sub-title and an introduction or small text before the main text. This communicational approach must encourage the page visitor to proceed with the reading. To these elements should be associated meaningful images that together with the respective captions will give to the reader a sequence reading, constituting a very efficient informative unity. To those interested in obtaining more information, namely scholars and researchers, a link should guide them to a database or to a set of documents, bibliography, etc. The information thus organized would make possible different types of reading and the access to information by different types of people, with different interests in the presented topics. This sort of communication is adequate to a journalistic context, to a museum and to digital platforms for allowing access to different levels of information: from a quick and superficial reading, getting only the essential, to a more comprehensive reading, or even the access to details.

Regarding the problem of databases to get in-depth information, we have verified that the “memoriamedia.org” website has associated a database but the relation between the space destined to the general public and a more restricted and specialized access is confused. Accesses are not intuitive and there are no levels of differentiated information for different types of users. On the “museudofado.pt” website there is a link to a “Documentation Centre” that could be established as a space oriented to obtain more detailed information, namely, having the possibility of making available some books and documents online, for a more comprehensive study of all topics related to *Fado*.

The imc-ip.pt website is a platform destined to experts and specifically to the availability of elements for inventory of ICH, being the research area complex and the key-words restricted. The non-existence of a space to promote the access to knowledge of ICH by the non-specialized public seems to be a serious flaw.

Based on literature review, the authors propose an evaluation grid to analyse the selected websites. The proposed grid illustrates the parameters to consider in any creative process of building websites (see Table 1).

Evaluation: ● poor ▲ medium ■ good

| Evaluation Parameters | | Websites to Evaluate | | |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------|-----|---------------|
| | | Memoriamedia | ICM | Museu do Fado |
| Purpose | The website organisation is oriented to target audience | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ |
| | The website content is oriented to target audience | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ |
| Source / Authority | The sponsor of the website is understandable | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| | The credentials of the page are understandable | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| | The information copyright is understandable | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ |
| | There is an email link to questions and comments | ● | ● | ● |
| | The contact information is easy to find | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Navigation | Easy navigation from one page to another | ▲ | ■ | ■ |
| | Easy to return to homepage or top of a page | ▲ | ■ | ■ |
| | Quick time for loading | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| | The website presents a site map or index | ● | ■ | ■ |
| Hyperlinks | All the links work | ■ | ■ | ▲ |
| | There are internal links | ▲ | ▲ | ● |
| | There are links to external sources | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| | The links are relevant / appropriate | ■ | ■ | ● |
| | The links are easy to find | ■ | ■ | ▲ |
| Interaction | The website presents links to social networks | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| | The website presents a blog | ● | ● | ● |
| | The website presents any other form of user feedback | ● | ● | ● |
| Page Layout | The website presents a logic organisation | ▲ | ▲ | ■ |
| | The website presents a well organised subsections | ● | ▲ | ■ |
| | The website presents a useful headings and subheadings | ● | ● | ● |
| | The website presents a clear label | ▲ | ▲ | ■ |
| | The website presents a consistent design throughout | ● | ▲ | ■ |
| | Pages are attractive in different browsers | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Graphics | Graphics are inviting and appealing | ● | ● | ▲ |
| | Graphics contribute to website /page purpose | ● | ● | ▲ |
| | Graphics contribute to website/page usability | ▲ | ▲ | ■ |
| Images | Images are significant and emphasize the content and the concept | ▲ | ● | ■ |
| | Images are in the right size | ▲ | ● | ■ |
| | Is it possible to enlarge images | ▲ | ● | ■ |
| Colour Schemes | Colour schemes are attractive and appealing to visitors | ▲ | ● | ▲ |
| | Colour schemes are readable by most visitors | ▲ | ▲ | ■ |
| | Colours schemes add significance to the website navigation | ▲ | ● | ■ |
| Contents | The content is valuable to the visitor | ▲ | ▲ | ■ |
| | The content presents accurate information, current and unbiased when checked against sources | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| | The topic content is comprehensively covered | ▲ | ▲ | ■ |
| | The content is written respecting rules of grammar, spelling and composition | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Reliability of Information | Links or references validate the statements made on the website/page | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ |
| | Date of Publication | ● | ■ | ● |
| | Update information | ● | ■ | ● |
| Readability | Pages are easy to read by most visitors | ▲ | ▲ | ■ |
| | Pages follow a logic arrangement | ● | ■ | ■ |
| | Type fonts are readable, attractive and properly sized | ■ | ▲ | ■ |
| | The information hierarchy is clear | ▲ | ● | ▲ |
| | The main text column has an appropriate width | ▲ | ■ | ■ |
| | The text alignment is correct | ● | ▲ | ■ |
| | The balance between empty space and occupied space is correct | ▲ | ■ | ■ |
| | The possibility of printing a page is correctly identified | ● | ■ | ■ |
| Usability | More than one idiom | ● | ● | ■ |
| | Easy choice of a different idiom | ● | ● | ■ |
| | There is a possibility to modify the type font dimensions | ▲ | ● | ■ |
| | Colour scheme is understandable for people with visual impairments | ▲ | ● | ■ |
| | Illustrations have alt text attribute | ● | ● | ■ |
| | Audio contents | ■ | ● | ■ |
| Display on dissimilar platforms | Computers | ● | ■ | ■ |
| | Tablets | ● | ▲ | ■ |
| | Smartphones | ● | ▲ | ▲ |
| Revealing the heritage | The website uses the appropriate means to promote ICH (audio files, video, history) | ▲ | ● | ■ |
| | The website allows the experience and the interaction | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ |

Conclusions

Cultural promotion requires relational processes, where the designer assumes a crucial position, on the conceptual process and as a facilitator amongst different groups of individuals encouraging collaborative experiences stimulated by digital technologies. Designers answer to the requirements of society throughout specific methodologies and practices that promote Intangible Cultural Heritage. According to ICOMOS and European Union, digital artifacts are adequate tools to promote ICH if conceived in a structured way, they include different levels of information, particularly a data base to allow the improvement of knowledge, throughout study and research. The proposed comparative analysis table showed, on the case studies section evidences, the guidelines to consider when

conceiving a website, particularly the ones related with ICH. In a more generalist approach, and to avoid extreme positions about the constraints and concerns in building a website, the authors elect the following intervention areas:

- The message should meet requirements of clarity, through a hierarchy of suitable content, and intuitive navigation of a formal and aesthetic consistency.
- The message should consider different levels of information in order to accommodate different audiences, with dissimilar levels of interest
- The message should include the appealing of visual and audio human senses.
- The message should consider a language (written, semantic, graphic and symbolic) to be understandable for the majority of individuals despite their sensorial and cognitive capabilities.
- The different pages of the website must be consistent, accurate, include references to other sources of information and regularly updated.
- The corporative image as well as the objectives of the owner must be present over the entire website.
- Communication design concepts ought to be present throughout page layout (composition, forms, typography, colours, contrast, harmony, scale, etc...)
- The website in general and some pages in particular must encourage navigation and feedback. Navigation for internal and external links and feedback throughout social networks, and predominantly email and blog forms.
- The website format must be optimised to be accessed and displayed in different search motors and technical devices (computer, tablets, smartphones)
- The website should be subject to prototyping testing and subsequent review by target users

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