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The Progress and Development of the Digital Library of “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu Since 2007

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Abstract: In 2007, when the city of Sibiu (Romania) received the title of European Capital of Culture, the “Lucian Blaga” University Library was involved in its first digitization projects, the first one being SCRIBe - System for Processing and Visualization of the Old Book Fund. The main objective of the SCRIBe project was the development of an informational system offering the beneficiaries access to the old book fund, to which normal access was limited due to the scarcity of copies and due to the need of protecting documents with a high degree of wear. In the following years, we have concluded partnerships with local and county authorities developing our own digital library, which has since been growing continuously.

Keywords: Digital library; smart; repository; heritage; culture; Sibiu

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Introduction

In 2007, when Sibiu (Romania) received the title of European Capital of Culture, the “Lucian Blaga” University Library got involved in its first digitization project, *SCRIBe - System of Processing and Visualization of the Old Book Fund*.

The project aimed at exploiting and making old, rare books, of a high cultural importance available to readers, by scanning and indexing them in an electronic format.

The project’s main objective was to elaborate a computerised system giving beneficiaries (citizens, Romanian and foreign researchers, representatives of libraries and museums) the possibility to access the old book fund, which was normally limited due to the scarcity of copies and the need to protect documents with a high degree of wear. Interest for these books stemmed from their old age and scarcity.

The objectives of *SCRIBe* translated into:

- the creation of an experimental computerized system for purchasing, compressing, and managing the images in the respective documents,
- the creation of a website through which users can search the old book virtual library and express their interest in reading certain documents,
- the creation of an experimental system to recognize OCR characters, which can be adapted for various types of writings within these documents,
- the creation of a system through which users can visualize different parts of the images at various levels of detail,
- the design and creation of an experimental system through which users can apply methods to improve the quality of an image area and to express their satisfaction in this sense.

In 2013, the cultural project *Sibiu Smart 2013* followed. Sibiu remained very interesting and attractive for tourists due to its annual promotion under an ever-renewed logo: if 2012 was the Baroque year, 2013 was the Smart year. The city's cultural agenda became richer compared to the one in the year of grace 2007, Sibiu - European Capital of Culture: new events vivifying the lively cultural atmosphere of Sibiu were added to well-established events, such as Astra Film Festival, Artmania, the Christmas Concert, Sibiu Jazz Festival, Tiff, or the “Carl Filtsch” Festival.

The year 2013 was thus under the Smart sign of the college, young character of Sibiu’s university environment, a confirmation of the fact the city grew and became established as an important Romanian university centre, through its five universities and more than 20,000

students. Projects initiated by the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu were among the 78 approved projects: - *Romanian Writers versus German Translators* - *"Lucian Blaga" Students' Colloquium* - *Gaudeamus* - *Students' Fall* - *Sibiu Educational Festival*, and *the Digital Library of the LBUS - Sibiu Smart*.

The project aimed at creating a digital library dedicated to Sibiu in general and to cultural events, especially those that took place in 2013 under the auspices of Sibiu-Smart. It included the creation of a digital data base in which both old books about Sibiu, and images and videos of cultural events were archived.

The bibliographical descriptions made in a professional manner by university library experts were available online, thus promoting the past and present multicultural richness of the city of Sibiu on the internet.

By promoting this cultural resource of Sibiu in the network of Romanian university libraries, a very active Sibiu in these modern times was promoted in the Romanian and foreign academic environment.

The project activities included: the design and creation of the digital library system on the library's server, the implementation of the computerized system under its two components - a presentation and dissemination website and the DSpace digital base, archiving the scanned book pages, the bibliographical research of the collections of books or periodicals by or about the city's representative personalities, the scanning of these bibliographical materials at the optimal format and quality - collecting digital objects (pictures, images, films, old books, news articles, etc.) - their digital processing in the optimal format and quality for the internet.

The specific digital objects were processed from the viewpoint of library science in the two digital collections: *Trecutul istoric Smart (Smart Historical Past)* and *Prezentul Smart (Smart Present)*, verifying and adding copyright. Then, the digital library was disseminated through various actions performed the library: news articles, organizing *Nocturna Smart (Smart Night)* in November 2013, participating at the Gaudeamus Book Fair in Bucharest in November 2013, and through the dedicated website: <http://bcu.ulbsibiu.ro/smart>. The proposed stages were: creating the digital library system - April-August 2013, selecting and scanning the bibliographical material, collecting and processing the digital metadata and archiving the digital objects - April-November 2013, disseminating the projects, promotional actions: April-November 2013.

The aim was to create a digital library for Sibiu-Smart, in which to digitally archive and bibliographically describe (images, films, PDF files) old books about Sibiu and cultural events Sibiu-Smart.

Then, a Sibiu-Smart digital library was made available to the online general public, where people can search and visualize both old books about Sibiu, historical and cultural personalities, and descriptions of Sibiu-Smart cultural events. Besides, a higher number of visitors and tourists were informed about the city's cultural richness and attracted to Sibiu, as they got to know the diversity and richness of the cultural events due to their professional description and dissemination via the Sibiu-Smart Digital Library.

By publishing documents and images about the cultural events in a Digital Library, they became available at any given moment, anywhere, on any device, whether a laptop, a tablet, or a smart phone. Of high importance was the truthfulness of information, coming from reliable sources, and the professional manner in which the bibliographical descriptions were made.

Between 17-19 April 2013, the LBUS Library organized the 4th International Conference "Information Science and Information Literacy", during which the Digital Library Sibiu-Smart was launched, and which became the project's first promotional action.

From June to November, we were busy selecting the books and periodicals, scanning them in the library's digitization laboratory - using a powerful BookEye4 scanner and the related professional software, installed and put into operation in the library digitization laboratory.

Europeana insight - contributions in the largest European cultural database

As a digital data contributor in the projects Europeana Libraries 2011-2012 and Europeana Cloud 2013-2015, the library proposed that one of the future collections in the Europeana digital library should be about Sibiu-Smart 2013.

The *LBUS Library* became a digital collection contributor in *Europeana* in 2011, participating at the cultural projects below alongside the most important national and research libraries in Europe within *The European Library (TEL)*:

1. Europeana Libraries: Aggregating digital content from Europe's libraries, 2011-2012
 - 19 participants, 4.3 million digital objects (books, magazine articles, theses, letters), 850,000 images, 1,200 films and videos (click here for details about the project),
2. Europeana Cloud: New Spaces for Sharing Content, 2013-2016
 - facilitated sending digital collections to Europeana and made available new tools to researchers for using and improving the resources available,
 - worked on a new cloud infrastructure,
 - brought a new set of digital data (2.4 million new metadata and 5 million digital objects in the cloud),
3. Europeana 1914-1918
 - the project included the collection of stories, memoirs, and testimonies from the First World War (1914-1918),
 - contributors from all over Europe are called to bring their contribution in dedicated collections of digitized materials, available at: <http://europeana1914-1918.eu/en>.

The Campaign *Europeana 1914-1918* encouraged the people of Sibiu to go to the "Lucian Blaga" University Library to contribute to the European digital library with documents, memories, and stories, and to the recreation of public memory regarding the events, the people, and the institutions of World War I.

The Romanian Academy Library, supported by the *LBUS Library*, organized a campaign to collect data in the building of the Sibiu University Library, after similar events in Bucharest and Cluj.

The contributors' documents were digitized, then recorded in the Europeana 1914-1918 database and returned to their owners, as each of them also submitted the documents' stories.

Thus, the city of Sibiu has contributed more than 150 war images from historical publications, magazines, and books, 36 pictures, 28 postcards and other personal objects (identity cards, business cards, student cards, etc.), as well as decorations. People also contributed with photos of historical monuments dedicated to the fallen heroes of the First World War.

A very emotional moment was the meeting with the oldest war veteran in Sibiu, 101-year-old Mr.(r) Ioan Floca, member of the Sibiu branch of the National Association of War Veterans "Gl. Traian Moşoiu", who received a home visit from the Coordinator of Europeana Romania, Mrs. Cristina Roiu, members of the *LBUS Library* staff, and col. (r) Victor Neghină, who made this meeting possible.

The event was an opportunity to contact representatives of cultural institutions in Sibiu and find ways to collaborate in this and in future projects.

Projects on cultural local heritage

The next digitization projects in which the LBUS Library got involved were: *Traditional communication and transportation means - from the preservation of heritage to its promotion: digitization between necessity and challenge* and *Preservation and exploitation of heritage: a history of the means of transportation from Sibiu county reflected in a "Library on wheels" - dedicated digital platform and touring exhibition*, both took place in 2016.

The first project was initiated by the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, unfolded through the University Library from April to November 2016, and was financed by the Local Council and the Sibiu City Hall, through the 2016 Cultural Agenda; the dedicated website is http://bcu.ulbsibiu.ro/Calatorind_prin_Sibiu/, while the digital repository in the Digital Library is <http://digital-library.ulbsibiu.ro/dspace/>. The two main collections are entitled *Călătorind prin Sibiu - în imagini* (*Travelling through Sibiu - in pictures*) and *Istoria mijloacelor de transport reflectată în documente* (*The History of Transportation Means Reflected in Documents*).

The stories, memories, images, and exact data regarding the history of the city intertwined and outlined an ever more vivid picture of the Sibiu of the past, through the archived documents, the photographs in personal and institutional collections, into this project which aimed at highlighting the history of the city's means of transport.

Walking on the roads of Sibiu, whether you are a local, a passer-by or a traveler on the city's streets, you may have wondered how they looked like 10, 50, or 100 years ago, how one could travel from one place to another, be it in a classic car, in the city's public or recreational transport means, or about the flying machines on the city's sky.

The beauty and the hidden stories of each street corner are waiting to be revealed by documents or histories added by each generation. What was the route of the tram, or what were the coach fees, where did people walk, or where were the fairs to which peasants came with bags, baskets, carts full of goods - these are all details conferring more charm to your city.

The project "Traditional communication and transportation means - from the preservation of heritage to its promotion: digitization between necessity and challenge" developed a digital platform dedicated to the history of means of transport in the city of Sibiu.

The project team completed the documentation stage and collected data about the *Prehistory of the Modern Rocket*, *The Sibiu Manuscript (1400-1569)*, *The Sibiu of the Past in the collection Emil Fischer, Hermann Obertb. Titan of Space Travel*, *Preindustrial and Industrial Heritage in Romania*, *the Tram Line in Sibiu*, *the Flight of Aurel Vlaicu*.

Besides, we created a collection of images (photographs, postcards) submitted by private collectors or partner institutions, representing carts, carriages, cars, train stations, platforms, bridges, trams, zeppelins, boats, bicycles, stagecoaches, horsemen parades, sledges. After evaluating the authenticity of the sources, we started processing the metadata and uploading them into distinct collections in the digital library.

Starting from the idea that the library can be a cultural intersection, a meeting point, and a starting point for real or imaginary journeys, a data base containing the transport routes in Sibiu, scientific literature, as well as travel notes by those who walked the city's streets, is a resource which can be exploited by the inhabitants, but also by the big number of tourists choosing Sibiu as their destination.

On a website dedicated to the project, *Călătorind prin Sibiu* (*Travelling through Sibiu*), we highlighted the evolution, the history, and the diversity of means of transport, from the

beginnings of Conrad Haas' rocket in the 16th century, to the ancestor of the present trolley bus, the omnibus - equipped with an electric engine and wooden wheels - which started operating in 1904, to the electric tram, including the old locomotives in the Sibiu Depot.

The second project, *Preservation and exploitation of heritage: a history of the means of transportation from Sibiu county reflected in a "Library on wheels" - dedicated digital platform and touring exhibition*, aimed at both developing a website dedicated to dissemination, then a repository of scanned images and documents constituting the Digital Library per se, available on the internet, and the creation of a touring exhibition with the digital materials, photographs made during the project.

We also conducted a presentation study, printed in one of the project brochures, which followed the evolution, history, and diversity of the means of transport, from the prehistory of the Sibiu rocket in the 16th century, to the means of transport and of communication in Modern Europe, as reflected in publications.

The presentation and dissemination website can be accessed at http://bcu.ulbsibiu.ro/Biblioteca_pe_roti/, while the digital repository is available at <http://digital-library.ulbsibiu.ro/dspace/>.

The project structure included two sections or digital collections:

- I. "*Biblioteca pe roți" în imagini (Library on wheels - in pictures)*
 1. Human-powered means of transport
 2. Animal-powered means of transport
 3. Mechanical means of transport
 4. Craftsmen, crafts and workshops
 5. Hydraulic means of transport
- II. *Documentation resources on transport in the county of Sibiu*
 1. Monographies
 2. Periodicals
 3. Selective bibliography and online resources
 4. Project publications.

During this project, we collaborated with institutions in Sibiu (History Museum, Astra Museum, Sibiu County Division of the National Archives, Teutsch House, Tursib, Sibiu CFR Depot), but also with private collectors.

After ten years of transformations and evolution, 2017 brings a new challenge to the Digital Library, i.e. the project *O frescă a societății și un tezaur istoric în imaginile atelierelor fotografice de epocă din Sibiu (1854–1948). Valorificare și digitizare (Images of Sibiu's Classic Photo Studios (1854–1948): Society Fresco and Historical Treasure. Exploitation and digitization)*, an integral part of the project *Valori ale cunoașterii tradiționale în susținerea regiunii gastronomice europene Sibiu 2019 (Traditional Knowledge Values to Support Sibiu European Region of Gastronomy 2019)* run by the Sibiu University.

Through the digital platform which will include historical photographs from most studios of Sibiu during the mentioned period, the "Lucian Blaga" University Library aims at saving, exploiting and thus offering a valuable, less known treasure to the general public. The project started with a conference on the history of photography in Sibiu, one of the first Transylvanian cities where permanent photo studios ran, where people had the opportunity to appreciate the charm of classic photos.

The following collections were created:

1. **Photo studios in Sibiu**
 - Alois ZIEGLER (1838 Sibiu-?)
 - August Salomon MEINHARDT (1845 Töttleben, Germany-1900?)
 - Camilla (Kamilla) ASBOTH (1838 near Budapest–1908 Sibiu)

- Emil FISCHER (1873-1965)
- Fritz THEIL (1880 Sighișoara–1942 Agnita)
- Guggenberger Mairovits
- Gustav Albert SCHIVERT (Schievert, 1826 Sibiu–1881 Graz)
- Heinrich BÜCHNER (1821 Altenberg, Germany–1890 Sibiu)
- Johann NICKLAS (1832 Sibiu–1878 Mănărade)
- Julie HERTER (1838 Cârța/Harghita–1922 Sibiu)
- Theodor GLATZ (Vienna, 10 December 1818 – Sibiu, 13 April 1871)
- Victor MYSZ (Alba Iulia 1875–Sibiu 1940)
- Wilhelm AUERLICH (1853 Brașov–1917 Sibiu)
- Wilhelm MANN (1867 Alba Iulia –1927 Salzburg)

2. Classic gastronomy

- Gastronomy - Monographies
- Gastronomy - Periodicals

The images showing agro-food markets in the Small Square and the Big Square, restaurants, cafes, terraces, and confectioners' brought people in the atmosphere of the past. Of interest were both the photographs of 1854-1948, and the devices and images in the studio of Emil Moșoiu (1926–1996), which were donated to the University Library by Mrs. Silvia Coacă, the daughter of the photo artist.

The collections of the Digital Library also include: science books, LBUS Library publications, periodicals in Sibiu, PhD theses (summaries), *Telegraful Român* newspaper (full issues of 1868-1882; 1887-1888; 1918), *Telegraful Român* newspaper (transliteration of issues from January to August 1853), and national science publications.

Conclusions

All the documents included in the Digital Library of "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu are of great importance for the local heritage, culture, development and history of this part of our country. The selection of these documents was made after the necessity of the academic and local community interests was established.

The participation of Romania in the Europeana Digital Library was not significant until two years ago. Through the Europeana Libraries Project, the Library of the Romanian Academy and the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu had contributed with a rich and a high quality digitized content, thus enriching the image of the Romanian culture in Europeana.

For the "Lucian Blaga" University from Sibiu, it was a challenge and an honor to take part in the project together with the most important Research Libraries in Europe.

We had the opportunity to see how the big important European libraries are organized and function (Europeana, CENL, TEL, CERL), we gathered a rich professional experience, beginning with preparing the digital material and ending with its processing and cataloging.

There was also a great opportunity for us to promote our university as an institution providing knowledge; some of the local and national cultural richness (books or cultural events) are available now in digital format in Europeana.

The partnership between the University and the mayoralty of Sibiu made possible the promotion of the major cultural event of 2007: "Sibiu - European Capital of Culture." There was a year very rich in cultural events as you can see in the pictures and videos of our digital collection.

For the future, the University of Sibiu wants to continue working with the European partners, through the e-Cloud project and the future structure organization of the European Library. So, we would like to promote the cultural richness of our region, as well as its multicultural values.

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