Developing services for local history research through a digitization project: a public library case study

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Abstract

The Public Library "Vladislav Petković Dis" (www.cacak-dis.rs) is the oldest cultural institution in Čačak and one of the oldest public libraries in Serbia. Founded in 1848, nowadays it is the main library for the district of Morava, situated in the western part of Serbia, and it is in charge of public libraries in Gornji Milanovac, Guča, Ivanjica and 48 school and special libraries.

The Public Library in Čačak (PLC) began, in 2006, the digitization of resources from its Local History Collections (created in the beginning of the 1970's). During 2007 and 2008 extensive work was continued on Digital Library, an organized collection of digitized materials important for preserving and presenting local history, culture and heritage. Collections (books, newspapers, journals, postcards, posters, photos, audio-visual documents) are accessible to the general public through a user-friendly web interface (www.cacak-dis.rs/dig_bibl/). The digitization initiative in the library existed alongside a great effort by librarians and information specialists to create a new and modern online image of the institution. In 2006 a thorough redesign of the web site was implemented, the online service "Ask a Librarian" was introduced, as well as an Oral History program. Later the blog "Digitization and Digital Libraries" (digital.cacak-dis.rs), a Facebook page and the YouTube channel of the library were started.

All of these services are used for the promotion of digitized resources online and they point to a new dimension of local history and genealogy research in the library, previously confined to the publication of articles in journals or bio-bibliographies. Our users interested in genealogy were limited in using resources inside the library, while for many of the rare or valuable resources they did not have the right to make photocopies. Digital Library changed this, because there is no longer a threat of damaging the printed publications. All of the publicly accessible materials are published as open resources for everybody (not just for registered users). On the other side, the greater number of resources online created not just more extensive usage (web site traffic went up seven times in 2008), but also new means of doing the work of the librarian and some new ways of interaction between users and librarians. The "Ask a Librarian" service, until 2007 mostly dealing with questions about books, programs or working hours, became filled up with questions about the origins of population or resources for further genealogical research. Our blog "Digitization and Digital Libraries" received comments about digitized Local History Collections and their accuracy or relevancy for local history, because some of the resources

were published for the first time. That meant that these issues could not be left to a web administrator - users' demands are rapidly changing the role of the librarian working on local history or genealogy.

This paper is trying to demonstrate the changed perspective of genealogy and local history inside public libraries in Serbia concerning the greater online involvement of librarians, almost solely caused by the digitization of resources which have previously been hardly accessible. Although genealogy-related work in Serbia is still at its very beginning and without clear institutional organization, growing needs and demands from users are forcing libraries and other cultural institutions to show more flexibility and a readiness to change old practices. Digitization is already proving to have a high potential for many new services waiting to be implemented by librarians working with local history collections, but there are a lot of challenges along that path.

Prologue

In a survey of more than 3,000 adult citizens in the USA in 2000, 41% responded that they were using libraries to find information about local history and genealogy, which was the fifth reason of using the public libraries by frequency from 21 collected reasons. At the same time, 23.7% responded that they were seeking information about ethnic heritage. The Internet did not affect why people were using libraries and their services, so 39% of the users of the Internet and the library were looking for information about local history and genealogy. The percentage was higher, 44.1%, among those using only the library.[1]

To collect more information about the coexistence of digital collections and local history, the Public Library in Čačak created an online survey of nine questions, to reflect domestic theory and practice on this topic. The main purpose of the survey was to collect data on how local history practitioners utilize digital collections to develop their research. A total of 72 participants took part in the survey in March and April 2009. 52 of these finished the survey answering all the questions. Although a relatively small number of individuals participated, it must not be forgotten that the survey was in Serbian, with an emphasis on quite narrow fields of research and practice, away from any dominant academic disciplines. That is why we could conclude that this survey is relevant for the topics it deals with.

Due to limited space, we will just summarize the results of this survey[2]. The following could be regarded as general conclusions:
- libraries lead activities in digitization among cultural institutions in Serbia,
- promoting local history collections and research in a digital way is still an underdeveloped field of work, although local history is the most frequent historiography research activity among cultural institutions,
- a dominant majority of participants firmly believe that digitization of collections will improve research and collaboration among scientists,
- digitization of local history collections mostly involved paper materials (photos, postcards, maps, newspapers, journals), regarded as priorities, while some characteristic local history sources, like oral history or personal biographies, are treated as of lesser importance,
- users expect to see digital collections included inside larger online databases, with full search options at their disposal,
- digitization services do not have to be cost-free by default, considering the introduction of some advanced features and the users' willingness to pay for high quality service.

Digitization in the Public Library in Čačak: short introduction

The Public Library "Vladislav Petković Dis" Čačak (PLC) started its digitization program in 2006, when the first project, the digitization of postcards from the Local History Collections, was introduced. That year our website was thoroughly redesigned and one part of it, named *Digital Library*, was dedicated to the Internet presentation of digital collections. Before this project, staff at the PLC did not have any experience or knowledge about digital preservation, so we looked for help to the National Library of

Serbia (NBS) and their Department for Digital NBS. Colleagues at NBS gave us guidelines about technical details and their advice to think small[3], but collection building and the purpose of digitization initiative was framed in PLC. Alongside the main aims of digitization, which we defined as preservation and presentation to a greater number of users, PLC paid a lot of attention to creating a framework for improving local history research through digitization projects.

Digital Library has received significant attention and an increase in Internet traffic, so it proved to be a highly potential field of work for the future. The decision was made to continue improving that section with new collections and materials, in addition to electronic texts which our library provides. Some of these are very important for researchers of local history and culture (biographies, bibliographies, various articles, manuscripts, etc). *Digital Library* was projected as an organized collection of digitized materials from the Local History Collections, which by "*content and form create part of the cultural heritage of Čačak and its surroundings*".[4] The aim was to constantly improve collections by adding new materials, organized through static HTML pages of web galleries and PDF documents. When collections grew in size and number, the administration of *Digital Library* became highly difficult and, more importantly, its usefulness dropped at the same time. Users were not able to search collections, and browsing options were quite narrow. All of this suggested, at the time, that a different approach should be reconsidered.

Digital Library and the usage of Local History Collections materials

Although local history with genealogy is not yet given enough staff time in public libraries in Serbia, several projects in recent years have proved that librarians are taking their part in preserving the community's history and living memory. Genealogy helps in the wake of local history (while academic circles mostly avoid it), as was the case in Western Europe or the United States from the 1970s, later spurred on by the advent of the Internet.[5] The Western Balkans and Serbia experienced a somehow different and growing interest in genealogy and local history after the tragic events in the 1990s. These caused people to look for their roots and family histories, when they were forced to leave their homes and families got separated. Plenty of books dealing with local history were published in recent years by non-historians and authors tracing their family roots. Most of them rely on older publications and sources held in public libraries. PLC holds in its collections various valuable materials which cannot be found anywhere else. One example is the most important local newspaper for the period before WWII, "*The Voice of Čačak*". While we are witnessing the modern digital divide in society and a weakening of local community identity, which have resulted in less participation and involvement in community issues, public libraries have a mission and an obligation to work on preserving local history. "*The public library's objectives are to ensure that the population has equal opportunity to access material recorded in all ways...*".[6] Many institutions embarked on digitization projects mainly in order to reach out to the communities they serve.[7] Emphasis is both on availability and quality and PLC is following these premises.

By digitizing the most valuable and threatened parts of its Local History Collections, PLC is seeking to accomplish several aims:

1. the preservation of paper materials threatened by extensive usage and paper deterioration;[8]
2. some digitized collections will be much more accessible;
3. the digital format implies easy keeping, copying, distribution, which could bring more users to our services;
4. Internet presentation of some parts of our digital collections is an excellent way of promoting the richness of local cultural heritage.[9]

The scale of the new obligations involved with digital preservation and the organization of digital materials overwhelmed librarians, proving that digitization could not be treated as a side-job. Most public libraries (but also museums and archives) do not have departments or centers for digitization. In most cases technically more skilful employees allocate part of their duties to scanning and digitizing materials. PLC started with this concept, digitizing in 2006 one album of old postcards (printed from 1900 until 1941). Soon the digital collections were enriched by other postcards of Čačak, old drawings and photos from the Local History Collections or private collections. PLC sent a message through the local media and over the

Internet, announcing that it was starting a long range digitization project, concentrating on local history and the digital preservation of the cultural heritage of this part of Serbia. The response from patrons and new users was quite unexpected. Hundreds of new documents were presented to us as gifts or were lent to be digitized. These included old photos of people, buildings, important historical scenes, and everyday life in Čačak, which doesn't exist anymore; old manuscripts, letters, medals; some older individuals were invited to share their memories of a past life, which is a starting point of our Oral History collection; some institutions, threatened by changing economic processes and the period of transition in Serbia, were ready to share or sell valuable documents from their archives - for instance, Radio Čačak, the most important local radio station in Serbia, sold its digital archive of old programs and broadcasts to PLC, before the station was privatized. Radio Čačak had seen the library as a trusted partner for long-term digital preservation and as an institution with the interest, knowledge and resources to carry out this task.

The experience of the massive public response in 2006 and 2007 in helping to build the digital library of local history proved the extent of the community conscience about protecting our collective memory from oblivion. Putting historical documents on the Web immediately increases their accessibility. Expanding online collections and renewing community interest leads to more public support. People, who usually are reluctant to give away their family treasures, are more willing to loan artifacts and documents to an institution for digitization.[10] Citizens needed just a spark triggered by one cultural institution to recognise the importance of dealing with our past in a modern way. It must not be forgotten that this action attracts a lot of media attention, which bolstered an interest in local history for strengthening existing collections or the creation of the new one.[11] That is why *Digital Library*, as the Internet gateway to digital collections, was from the very beginning oriented towards an end-user, who did not need to be historically literate. Specific historical matter, which is significant part of *Digital Library*, is presented in a clear and sensible way, sometimes relating to the present (for example, in the case of old public buildings, where different names had existed for these in the past, but unknown to most people today). Therefore, any librarian working on digital collections of local history must be at the same time proficient in historical matters or be willing to create strong ties with local historians.

So far, digital preservation in PLC has included more than 40.000 digital pages and documents. The bulk of these are scanned books and newspapers from the Local History Collections, but users can access more than 2,000 digital photos of places, people and events depicting the history of the 20th century in Čačak. Several collections are especially valuable from the local history perspective: books dealing with the history of particular villages or places, titles from the PLC edition "*Local History Bibliography*" or books about the history of librarianship and the printing industry in Čačak. Probably the most important collection for historians and genealogists is in the historical newspaper section, where users can access seven newspaper titles in print between 1889 and 1937. This collection will be enriched over time by the post-WWII titles.

Before the advent of digitization in the Public Library of Čačak users were obliged to use our materials only inside library. Some limitations were imposed upon them when using valuable or fragile items (such as old and rare books, the only pre-war paper copy of the newspaper "*The Voice of Čačak*", manuscripts, etc). Digital documents existed before 2006 on the computers of library staff, but these were just for internal or one-time use. No organizational structure existed to collect and organize digital collections, nor to provide our patrons with the ability to access them. *Digital Library* and, in particular, the creation of the *Digitization Center*[12] fulfilled those requirements, so the question of access and terms of use by patrons needed to be solved. The general principle was that all information should be free (as we are a public institution) and that PLC will provide equal access to all information for all users over the Internet.[13] Right now, more than 20% of all digitized materials are already accessible over the Internet. The rest of the digital collections are accessible in PLC (except for some sensitive materials with authorship and copyright issues), but gradually most will be provided online.

Development of new services for local history research

In 2006, as a thorough redesign of the web site was implemented, the online service "*Ask a Librarian*" was introduced. Until the end of 2007, this service dealt mostly with questions about books, programs or

working hours. When the digital preservation program received greater public attention, particularly after *Digital Library* was officially launched, "*Ask a Librarian*" was filled with questions about population origins or resources for further genealogy research. This switch meant that answers to these queries could not be left to PLC's User Service. Particular knowledge and expertise was needed to provide satisfactory responses to users. This inevitably put together librarians from the Local History Collections with their colleagues from the Digitization Center, because users' queries concerning local history and genealogy issues can be put in two general groups:

- where particular information can be found (questions related to the content of resources),
- how to use *Digital Library* (how to search or limit search results, why some publications are included and others not, how to obtain PDF copy, and other technical subjects).

The realization of what *Digital Library* meant for local history and genealogy research came through one example, where a user was using the "*Ask a Librarian*" service to ask about one oral tradition for his surname. Usually librarians would look for titles treating geographic micro-regions where that surname is or was frequent, published biographies, genealogies, etc, and suggest to the user those books he or she should consult. In this case the librarians were not able to find where that oral tradition was mentioned in printed books, although the user was claiming that such a book existed. Finally, it was decided that we should respond negatively to the user, and say that we were not able to find this information in our collections. Before sending the email, the librarian responsible for our digital collections made a search in *Digital Library*. One of the results was a page in one book published in 1940, where that oral tradition was explicitly mentioned. This example, which happened *just as Digital Library* was introduced, showed our librarians the importance of relying on new technologies to enhance their work. Or, more appropriately, it showed the need for changing our everyday practice in accordance with our users' demands and expectations.[14]

A second major group of questions, on using *Digital Library*, could be described as administrative and technical.[15] When it was realized that a lot of users are not so skilful in using the features which *Digital Library* provides and that instructing them by email correspondence would take too much time, we selected a different approach. We want to maintain the service with an advertised 48-hour response-time, so for all questions regarding technical or administrative aspects we created a Help Section on the *Digital Library* website. This saves precious time and staff capacity. The Help Section provides the necessary information on the basics of *Digital Library* and digitization, the terms of usage, technical details, links to documentation, with an emphasis on searching collections (explanation of key words, how to use them, which key words are the best for describing particular historical materials, full text search options, etc).

Although a lot of users' questions were time-consuming and diverted librarians from their work, "*Ask a Librarian*" provides valuable information on users' habits, needs and demands. It serves as an online survey for PLC's digital preservation program, extracting information on what material users expect to see in *Digital Library*, how they use it and how often, what are the main problems (feedback on quality of our services).[16] "*Exploring user needs and research patterns can benefit anyone who builds digital collections.*"[17] Not only could we use this feedback for gathering information on development, but it gave some directives for future projects. For instance, users were confused with a lot of the professional terms and rules for the description of documents. These were distracting their attention from the historical material and content (we were following the Qualified Dublin Core metadata element set). Also, some technological implications proved that "*technology is not always the best solution, especially for a collection of historical materials*".[18] Subsequently, the decision was made to provide the simplified look and feel of *Digital Library* (version 2, from October 2008), which uses logical vocabulary and insists on pure information (although that approach slightly diverted our flagship project from library standards).

Some untypical materials have been digitized, such as audio and video. Our audio collection consists of hundreds of recordings of important Radio Čačak's programs and broadcasts, and also many more recordings of programs organized by PLC. Thanks to its knowledge of storing and preserving audio materials, paired with its growing expertise in capturing living memory, PLC introduced the Oral History Program, as a joint project of the Local History Collections and the Digitization Center. The aim of this program is to collect interviews from public figures and ordinary people, in an effort to create an oral

history audio archive. We believe that this project is the first organized oral history program in public libraries in Serbia. PLC is using the services of a contracted journalist, who is also a professional radio technician, to conduct, record and process the interviews. Librarians then create metadata for the documents and the original archive file, while our IT staff create another copy of that file optimized for exchange and usage over the Internet. Users now have access to interviews with the mayors of Čačak after 1945 and some other public figures, while in the near future more recorded oral history about everyday life in Čačak in the 20th century will be available. The Library will also apply for funds to make transcripts of all interviews now in its possession.

The digitization initiative of PLC exists alongside the great effort made by the librarians and information specialists to create a new and modern online image of the institution. Our blog "*Digitization and Digital Libraries*" (digital.cacak-dis.rs) was set up in 2008, and a couple of months later the Facebook page and the YouTube channel of the library were also started. These projects do not have a direct relation to local history and genealogy, but they are very important for spreading the word about those new services that the library could offer to our patrons. A not so irrelevant fact is that a growing institutional presence on the World Wide Web attracts new users, those previously ignorant of library services, believing that libraries are stacks of books and nothing more. The present condition of genealogy and local history related research in Serbia somehow proves this delusion[19] and that is why libraries and other cultural institutions should work on changing that perception. For instance, after the initial start of our blog we received comments about the digitized resources from our Local History Collections, concerning their accuracy or relevance for local history, because some of these resources were published for the first time. Older local history titles are significant even if they don't have a historiography value, because the most of them became historical sources soon after publication (for methodology and sources later inaccessible to historians, like oral history, family photos or personal experiences).[20] We are using our blog extensively to promote and discuss the new features of *Digital Library* and the new collections being digitized and opened to public access. Users follow news and web links to collections, where, for the first time, they are able to read old newspapers or texts from Local History Collections online, so it was natural that this material will raise questions among researchers. Librarians involved with the Local History Collections now have to pay attention to how our users are accepting online material and what they are asking for. They must now find accurate answers, without seeing any user personally. Similarly, the Facebook page and the YouTube channel promote our collections. Facebook applications allow us to connect news, published on the website or blog with our Facebook page (through Really Simple Syndication, RSS). In this way we reach a very different group of online users. YouTube allows video streaming and this feature is used to promote our work through several published videos from our historical collections: interviews and recordings of well-known writers and artists participating in library programs, short promotional films about PLC (created by staff or outsourced contractors) and video recordings of important segments of the life of the library.[21] Old audio tapes and VHS recordings of programs (from the 1980's and 1990's) have also been converted in-house to digital format in order to preserve these and produce further audio-video productions.[22]

All these activities promote local history (family history, oral history and genealogy, as elements of national history [23]), our collections, digital preservation and the library itself. When public attention was attracted to our digital preservation programs (that this is something "*high tech with local touch*"[24]) the decision was made that the situation was ready for a large scale promotional campaign (in July 2008). The public and the local media showed great interest in the new technologies and services. Later the same year Radio Television of Serbia and Radio Belgrade broadcast a programme about the digitization activities of PLC. It is very unusual for librarianship in Serbia to receive any media attention on vocational activities (the media mostly concentrate on public programs).

The Library itself had made a breakthrough in one Internet niche - genealogy and family history web sites in Serbia. It was noticed that these web sites regard only archives as trustworthy institutions for those researchers looking for data and information. One of the biggest web sites, *Rodoslovlje* (www.rodoslovlje.com), actually holds a list of archives in Serbia, with contact information for their users. Administrators of *Rodoslovlje* regularly point their users to archives in search for data. Practice suggests that it is much easier for regular users to use library services than those of archives, where the referencing policy is much narrower (users mostly have to compile data they are looking for by

themselves from a number of records; legal regulations additionally make access to archival materials much harder than is the case with libraries). Librarians for decades were pushing boundaries in organizing their data in the simplest possible way for the users. Library materials are a natural choice for specialized research such as local and family history, or genealogy, so there is more than one reason why these should be more accessible through digitization:

- these materials are not widely held, but mostly at local public libraries;
- making local history available is a library mission;
- access to non-digital documents may be limited due to their condition or scarcity;
- national projects usually do not pay attention to the local perspective.[25]

PLC made an effort of presenting itself (and other libraries) as equally important reference points for researchers in local history and genealogy as archives. Some web administrators allow us to place web links to our web sites and blogs and, when it is possible, we take a role on forums discussing history sources for the western part of Serbia.

Digitization and the changed role of librarians dealing with Local History Collections

Digitization has influenced and partially changed the everyday practice of librarians dealing with local history collections. That change encompasses the new dimension of local history and genealogy research in the public library, and also the different interaction with the users. We think librarians should no longer pay most of their attention to the publication of articles or bio-bibliographies in journals or to the provision of relevant information to users who only physically visit the library. There is now very demanding work online - providing information to virtual users. Librarians involved with digital preservation of local history collections should adopt a changed philosophy for the library profession – not just to preserve materials, but also to actively provide them to the users. Digitization issues like the sustainability of digital preservation projects (regarding the time current technologies in hardware and software will be in use) suggest that the best intellectual and financial return may be through increased access to digitized materials.[26] Local history librarians should pay more attention to information-communication technologies and use these in their work. This can be achieved through implementing blogs and wikis for greater interaction with the users. Blogs and wiki pages are an excellent way of promoting and explaining digital collections - such is the case with PLC. Of course, implementing new technologies and transferring one part of this work to the World Wide Web implies a new level of knowledge that must be connected with traditional work of selection and classification. But technology must serve librarians (not the opposite) and their efforts in creating and providing better services to our users or we could end up as professionals celebrating technocracy, far away from our public role.

During the 1980s public libraries in Serbia played a greater public role than in the 21st century, considering the number of users served or the amount of budget money allocated to them. There are many reasons why this occurred (crisis and isolation in the 1990s, budget cuts, staff shortages), but the point is that potential users are diverted away from the public libraries, since it appeared that these institutions were unable to respond to modern trends. Digitization of local history collections could be a quick and cost effective means of empowering libraries to overcome the digital divide in society and to increase the number of users.[27]

Various barriers to digitizing Local History Collections are preventing many institutions in Serbia adopting a role as trusted institutional repositories. The lack of time, money, staff, knowledge, and technical skills is just the most obvious. The Public Library in Čačak tackled most of these issues and successfully created different type of activities and services to those of a traditional vocation. Digitization projects in PLC have triggered developments in local history, oral history, family history, genealogy and other under-represented research disciplines. Creation of a central repository for digital documents including digital-born and digitized sources for local history, could be an initial step in organizing these fields. This is still in development, proving that one of the main issues in digital preservation today is sustainability. The public library, therefore, can and must become a trustworthy reference point for local history research in Serbia, in comparison to some disputable private projects undermining organized and scientific work (see

endnote No. 16) or some negative aspects of the Internet as a global information holder: concerns over reliability and quality (the many "quickie researchers" and false, misleading and unfounded information); fears about intrusions into privacy, and identity theft; commercialization etc.[28]

Besides the further development of *Digital Library*, the improvement of the metadata, the indexing system or the search engine, the Public Library in Čačak is planning to add to its digital preservation projects and to make them more comprehensive. More emphasis will be put on collaboration with other local institutions, historians, school libraries, and citizens. This is necessary for building a local network, which will serve as a platform incorporating all digitized local history resources in one place and the creation of an online repository for local history, the first of its kind in Serbia. It will contain digital documents, books, serials, photos, oral history, multimedia files, etc. In the local library, the existent practice and knowledge in the field of digitization, the organization of digital collections and information retrieval may be an excellent starting point for empowering other partners dealing with local history (museums, archives, galleries, schools). The experiences of PLC in the digitization of local history collections showed that a public library could be an academic partner also. Because libraries lead digital preservation initiatives in Serbia, while academic circles mostly stay away from digitization and genealogy with local history, libraries should take advantage and be regarded as equal partners in collaborative projects, providing academic institutions with their expertise, and practical knowledge in digitization and information research. Thus, the initial project in 2006 will have big payoff in reaching a broader section of the community by offering a free service and by ensuring the preservation of our national culture. It will also be a framework for the next steps, where there are plans to sustain the digitization activities by preserving local heritage in a "digital way" and thus to expand the library's capabilities for the future.[29]

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[1] George D'Elia et al., *The Impact of the Internet on Public Library Use: An Analysis of the Current Consumer Market for Library and Internet Services.* Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 53 (10), 2002, 807-808.

[2] For detailed survey results see <http://digital.cacak-dis.rs/digitalizacija/digital-collections-and-local-history-survey-results/>.

[3] This "advice" proved to be 100% correct, whenever a new collection or service has to be introduced: "The main requirement is a systematic approach to collection development. The first rule is to think small." See: Willie Nelms, *Using Local History and Genealogy To Build Library Support.* Library Journal, March 15, 1979, 686.

[4] Bogdan Trifunović, *Internet in Serbian libraries and Public Library Cacak's new web site* [in Serbian]. Glas biblioteke, Vol. 13, 2006, 13. < http://www.cacak-dis.rs/elektronska_izdanja/Glas_biblioteke_13/bogdan_trifunovic-novi_veb_sajt_biblioteke_cacak.html>.

[5] Kylie H. Veale, *A Doctoral Study of the use of the Internet for Genealogy.* Historia Actual Online, Num. 7, 2004, 7-9. < http://www.historia-actual.com/HAO/Volumes/Volume1/Issue7/esp/v1i7c2.pdf>.

[6] Svanhild Aabo, *The role and value of public libraries in the age of digital technologies.* Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 37 (4) December 2005, 205.

[7] Kay Schlumpf and Rob Zschernitz, *Weaving the Past into the Present by digitizing Local History.* Computers in Libraries, Vol. 27 Issue 3, March 2007, 10.

[8] Discussion is still on whether digitization is (digital) preservation of paper materials or not. Schlumpf and Zschernitz argue that it is not, but admit that many "use it as a way to preserve their items and to keep them from being handled". Kay Schlumpf and Rob Zschernitz, *Op. cit.*, 11.

[9] Bogdan Trifunović, *Digitalization of Local History Collections in Public Library "Vladislav Petkovic Dis" in Cacak: Digitalization of newspaper "Cacanski glas" (1932-1935)* [in Serbian]. Glas biblioteke, Vol. 14, 2007, 33. < http://www.cacak-dis.rs/elektronska_izdanja/Glas_biblioteke_14/btrifunovic-digitalizacija-zavicajnih.html>.

[10] Kay Schlumpf and Rob Zschernitz, *Op. cit.*, 11.

[11] Willie Nelms, *Op. cit.,* 687.

[12] The Digitization Center became an organizational part of PLC in January 2008, as the first of its kind among public libraries in Serbia. Its obligations span from running digitization projects and implementing new technologies in PLC to providing technical support to colleagues and patrons.

[13] Those statements are repeated a couple of times on our websites and blog and they are in accordance with the government's initiative for the development of the information society in Serbia. See: http://www.mtid.sr.gov.yu/ministarstvo/organizacija/sektor_za_informaciono_drustvo.166.html (website in Serbian).

[14] We would like to point out one more benefit - convincing sceptics among librarians that digitization actually has a practical utility.

[15] Anna Maria Mihalega and Edward A. Gallowey, *Your Collection Is Online and the Honeymoon's Over: Now What?* Computers in Libraries, Vol. 23 Issue 6, June 2003, 28.

[16] The "*Ask a Librarian*" service also showed some negative context of genealogy and family history. One user was interested in the relevancy and accuracy of two genealogy books published in Čačak. After librarians and historians reviewed those books it was concluded that they are plainly examples of misrepresented sources and false information, in an effort to "connect" two Nouveau Riche families from Čačak with their medieval roots.

[17] Anna Maria Mihalega and Edward A. Gallowey, *Op. cit.*, 29.

[18] Hillary Theyer, *Planning the Future of History: Making a Digital Historical Resource*. Computer in Libraries, Vol. 19 Issue 9, October 1999, 17.

[19] Bogdan Trifunović, *Modern Serbian Genealogy and a review of the Project Srdjevdan.org*. IFLA-GENLOC Newsletter 12, June 2008, 7-8 <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s37/news/genloc-Newsletter12-08.pdf>.

[20] Djordje Djurić, *Do we need local history today?* [in Serbian]. Spomenica Istorijskog arhiva Srem 2 (2003), Sremska Mitrovica, 2003, 10; Goran Miloradović, *Written traces of oral history* [in Serbian]. Mali čovek i velika istorija – istraživanja društvene istorije, Petničke sveske 52, Valjevo, 2002, 1-2; Goran Miloradović, *Unofficial version of the history* [in Serbian]. Usmena prošlost – istraživanja društvene istorije, Petničke sveske 55, Valjevo, 2004, 1-2.

[21] It is interesting that the Library of Congress announced in late March 2009 that it "*will begin sharing content from its vast video and audio collections on the YouTube and Apple iTunes web services as part of a continuing initiative to make its incomparable treasures more widely accessible to a broad audience*". In April 2009 YouTube channels of the LOC were started. < http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2009/09-055.html>, < http://www.youtube.com/user/LibraryOfCongress>.

[22] Mirko Drmanac, *Digital Preservation and Management of Audio and Video materials in Public Library Cacak: possibilities and perspectives of public libraries*. Presented at The Eighth National Conference "New Technologies and Standards: Digitization of National Heritage 2009", National Center for Digitization, Belgrade, April 15-16, 2009.

[23] Djordje Djuric, *Op. cit.*, 10.

[24] Digitizing Local History on a Budget: A PLA Talk Table < http://www.scls.lib.wi.us/mcm/programs/talktable_digitize.pdf>.

[25] Ibid. <http://www.scls.lib.wi.us/mcm/programs/talktable_digitize.pdf>;
See also: Arne J Arneson and David Timm, Content That Counts: How a University Library and a Public Library Digitized Local Content for the Web (presentation). Wisconsin Library Association, Annual Conference 2001 < http://www.scls.lib.wi.us/mcm/programs/digitize_pla_files/v3_document.htm>.

[26] See: Kay Schlumpf and Rob Zschernitz, *Op. cit.*, 10-11.

[27] "*Democratized access is the real payoff in electronic records and materials. It may be harder to preserve and organize digital materials than it is paper records, but, once that is accomplished, they can be made accessible to vastly greater numbers of people. To open up the archives and libraries in this way democratizes historical work.*" Roy Rosenzweig, *Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era*. American Historical Review, June 2003, Vol. 108 Issue 3, 756.

[28] Kylie H. Veale, *Op. cit.*, 10.

[29] "*By doing this, we're able to show the world a bit of local history, demonstrate the importance of digitization, and showcase the fact the libraries are at the forefront of technology.*" Cited from: Kay Schlumpf and Rob Zschernitz, *Op. cit.*, 15.