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Digitalization issues from archive's perspective: experiences, trends and prospects

Contemporary technology development has influenced professional, organizational and technical aspects of preserving, processing and ensuring availability of information sources, where, because of their uniqueness and significance archival records also belong. Accordingly, archival community fosters to spread public knowledge on archival sources and encourage easy access to archives on the international level. Expectations of public government, as well as broad social changes, also have significance for role shaping, goals planning and work strategy of state archives.

Globalization of contemporary information environment and international trends of involving of culture in all spheres of public life have impact on archives as well. For that reason archival programs in most countries are connected with information society development policy in general. Projects under the "culture and history" frameworks are mostly focused on „digital heritage“ and access to cultural heritage. Implementation and possibilities of contemporary technologies, especially digital one, lead to emphasis of common characteristics and similar problems of traditionally different heritage institutions. In that sense, libraries, archives, museums, documentation centers and similar institutions cooperate more and more in the creation of shared cultural facilities directed towards user and community within they operate, instead on institutions themselves and their specifics.

Contemporary trends and initiatives regarding archival cooperation in Europe aim to meet challenges facing archives as a result of the ongoing changes in society, economy and technology. This is why majority of projects encompass implementation of professional standards and practical technical solutions, as well as their integration and interoperability. During the last years Croatian State Archives was actively engaged in such activities in the framework of most significant currently running projects like APENet, ENArC and APEx while in the same time it built national archival information system that now comprises more than 500 institutions. ARHiNET system is part of the operational plan of the Government of the Republic of Croatia e-Croatia program and it is also awarded with a Good Practice label in the framework of the European eGovernment Awards 2009 for innovations in the area enabling administrative efficiency and effectiveness.

Issues concerning digitalization in archives mostly refer to technical problems, choosing records for digitization, its organization and presentation, as well as availability. This work will present Croatian State Archives experiences in that field and practice in managing digital content inside the ARHiNET system.