ibiblio

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ibiblio.org

2000

Home to one of the largest "collections of collections" on the Internet, ibiblio.org is a conservancy of freely available information, including software, music, literature, art, history, science, politics, and cultural studies. ibiblio.org is a collaboration of the Center for the Public Domain and The University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill.

It's Not Your Average Library

The evolving Internet has created new opportunities to share knowledge. Imagine being able to walk into your local library and view, on demand, and without charge, not only every imaginable written text, but also music and poetry archives, African American authors, American history, sports statistics, philosophy of religion, Italian literature, large text database projects, software archives, and more.

Then imagine, in addition to being able to view the collection, you have the opportunity to critique it, expand it, or to create and manage a new collection in your own area of interest. While such a feat is physically and fiscally beyond the scope of even the largest and most extraordinary physical library, ibiblio.org achieves just such breadth and depth on the Internet.

Users in China studying American poetry or folk music can access ibiblio.org and find a vast collection of poems or songs. They can listen to the artist perform, read the biography, download sheet music, reference secondary criticism, and submit their own research papers to the collection. A veteran of World War II from anywhere in the world can access and contribute to the enthusiast-managed Pearl Harbor archives, joining the virtual dialogue on the topic.

The average municipal public library receives a few hundred visitors a week. ibiblio.org averages 3 million information requests per day, and the contributor-maintained collections are expanding daily. A free and vibrant exchange of ideas among a large community of contributors who share their knowledge across disciplines, ibiblio.org uses the open source model to encourage users to help shape the way information is managed and accessed in the 21st century.

Who and Why

ibiblio.org was formed as a collaboration between the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill's MetaLab, formerly known as SunSITE, and the Center for the Public Domain in September, 2000. At UNC-CH, ibiblio.org is supported by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, the School of Information and Library Science, and Information Technology Services. The collaboration has multiple components including, but not limited to, programs to:

  * Expand and improve the distribution of open source software;
  * Continue UNC's programs to develop an on-line library and archive;
  * Host and foster projects that expand the concepts of transparency and openness into new areas;
  * Create, expand, improve, publish, and distribute research on the open source communities;
  * Expand and improve the creation of and distribution of open source software and documentation;
  * Serve as a model for other open source projects.

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