

THE OCEANIC PORTAL FOR THE REGIONS OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: ITS DEVELOPMENT FOR CUBA

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ABSTRACT: The presence on the Internet of the scientific marine information in Cuba was dispersed or was nonexistent in spite of the existence of marine institutions that publish a great amount of information in printed format. To have a Portal makes it possible to identify and locate sources of information in marine science in which the subject fishing appears and is analyzed. An integrated, complete and efficient information service is now available to users anywhere in the world. The challenges institutions must assume include the development of the portal as well as the policies adopted to facilitate publishing in the portal the scientific production of their specialists. This paper describes promotion techniques to involve more users and authors in the use of this tool.

Keywords: portals, information services, fishing, Latin America, Caribbean.

Portals are important tools in the search for information on the Internet. They contain multiple sources relative to a selected subject. UNESCO has inaugurated several portals, Ocean Portal and the Portal for Africa.

At the beginning of 2003, UNESCO inaugurated for Latin America and the Caribbean a subset within its Oceanic Portal. The purpose is to promote the exchange of information and search within the community of specialists of sciences of the sea.

The portal is one of the tasks of project ODINCARSA (Ocean Data and Information Network). To date it has given access or it has stored more than 4,100 source of information pertaining to 36 countries, more than 34,300 visitors in a year.

Some services offered are to search by subject, a calendar of events, and allowing members to directly divulge their information according to the available information sources (Annex 1).

When this project was proposed in Cuba, there was a National Policy of Information which serves as guide for all activities. There did not exist a portal for sciences of the sea. Both aspects benefited the assimilation of this new product. The objectives of this policy are:

- To contribute to the development of a National Infrastructure of Information.
- To extend and to improve the production and distribution of information goods and services.
- To obtain the operation and maintained development of networks of contents national, regional, and international.
- To support the human resources.

The Portal has been welcomed in Cuba which is reflected by Cuba's third place standing as source of published information as well as third place in number of visitors received.

The process of incorporation of the sources was centralized in the beginning. This paper describes that time period although now that training has been completed each institution is responsible for promoting their own information.

We began by identifying, locating, publishing and linking source of information of sciences of the sea to build the contents. Once sources were identified and located, and prior to inclusion in the Portal, it was necessary politically to determine what each institution would offer to the portal. As it is observed (Annex 2), the obtained results show all the institutions agreed each one of the proposed items was important and would be included in the development.

Once the base was established, in consideration of the policies established by the institutions a new requirement was added to promote information. Although from the technical point of view it is only required to be member. In all the cases the spreading of an object with the revision on the part of the General Publisher culminates.

Together with selection and publication in the Portal a promotion system had to be established to announce additions and encourage use of the sources published in the portal. This system of promotion has different steps:

1. To send electronic mail to potential users inviting them to visit the portal.
2. To send the Bulletin of the Portal.
3. Interchange of Links and Discussion Lists.
4. To educate in the culture of the portal.
5. Surveys and/or interviews.

The strategy used in the publication of source information to the portal has been in the first place what is occurring during the year, the informative diversity and to obtain retrospection. The retrospection is necessary because it is used frequently like an evaluation indicator.

Some problems have been identified which have prevented a better development of the portal. They are:

- The connection: periods of time exist when some specialists do not have connection with a Service of Access to the Internet, or the connection has been slow.
- Culture of divulging: lack history of promoting items relating to science and technology.
- Digitizations: great amount of printed materials that although they have been approved for inclusion in the portal, there are not resources to digitize them.
- Limited storage: for each one of the sources the Portal has the limit of 2 megabytes, for books this space is insufficient.

Meaning for the librarians

- Gratuitous service, with the possibility of constructing it to the measurement of our necessities.
- To pass of information consumers to information producers.
- It covers the lack with the catalogue of the Library in Internet, at least for Cuban books.
- Your services arrive at more people of permanent form.
- To find what does not appear in the great systems of information dissemination.

The cooperation has been present in the aid to the countries that do not have publishers or in who its participation has not been constant such are the cases of: Belize, Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Dominican Republic.

Diversity of subjects, among them fishing. In order to find information on this subject it was necessary to use the ASFA (Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts) database which has 390 article references. The Portal only has 10 sources on the subject of fishing. Shortly this situation will change because a bibliography printed on the marine and fluvial resources of Cuba exists which was published in the years 1968, 1976 and 1982. Of the 2,700 references, 740 referred to fishing.

When this bibliography is digitized and located in the portal, any subject that occupies us will appear on the Internet.

	# of references	Total of references
ASFA 1970-2003	390	-
BIBLIOGRAPHY 1968, 1976,1982	740	2 700

Amount of references about fishing in ASFA and in the Cuban bibliography.

It is possible that the greater amount of scientific information relative to the subject has the Revista Cubana de Investigaciones Pesqueras, which we also hope shortly is on the Internet, as one already is Mar y Pesca (<http://www.cubamar.cu/marpesca/index.htm>) the divulging magazine of fishing. The development of Project ODINCARSA must improve this and any other subject.

Future

The training of other people has concluded, now each institution is responsible for promoting their information.

- To begin the promotion system: surveys and education of users.
- To take it to all the public, the education of the new generations has its presence in the subject the Ocean for Children. Nevertheless the publications or sites are few that appear in the network for children. This it is a way that we must begin to cross.
- To make the printed reviews to digital versions; 14 titles of printed journal of which 6 are actives. (Annex 4)

Conclusions

1. To continue reflecting the national events like workshops, meetings, etc because they have been the best treated subjects.
2. To invite to the investigators to scan their articles until the library has projects that finance the digitization of journals.
3. To design strategies that draw users who do not use the portal.

Recommendations

1. To continue tightening the relations with the authors and users.
2. Daily update.
3. To give priority to important subjects, sources that take step to others like bibliographies, the catalogues, and directories.

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Annex 1.

What may I find in the portal?

ARTICLES
AUDIO
CELEBRATIONS
CONFERENCES
OFFICIAL DECLARATION
COMPACT DISC
EXTERNAL DISCUSSION
DOCUMENT STRATEGY
EVENT
EXHIBITION
EXPERIMENTS
PHOTO
INSTITUTION
LEGAL INSTRUMENT
BOOK
DISCUSSION
BETTER PRACTICES
NEWS
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
PRIZES
PROJECTS
POINTS OF VIEW
WEB SITES
BUSINESS CARD
SUBJECT
VIDEOS

Annex 2

	ANC	CIEC	CIM	CIMAB	CIP	E. Marinos	IDO
Incorporation of the projects of national investigation	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
Journals published in printed version (digitization)	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
Incorporation of the regional projects of investigation and international	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
Articles of Cuban authors published in the foreigner	x	0	x	0	x	0	ND
Directory of experts	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
Promotion of the events	x	0	x	0	x	0	x

Subjects that conform the institutional policy

Institutions pertaining to the Oceanographic National Committee

ANC ACUARIO NACIONAL DE CUBA

CIEC CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIONES DE ECOSISTEMAS COSTERO

CIM CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIONES MARINAS

CIMAB CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIONES BAHIAS Y COSTAS

CIP CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIONES PESQUERAS

EMARINOS ESTUDIOS MARINOS

IDO INSTITUTO DE OCEANOLOGÍA

Legend:

X yes

ND no divulging

0 without librarian

Annex 3

INTERVIEW / SURVEY

- Thematic of work:

- Do you have used the Portal? Yes _____ Not _____
Why?

- In what project do you participate?

- What would you like to find?

- What you have not found?

Mention journals in which you have published your articles:

-Mention the name of some regional or international national event that is made periodically according to your profile of work:

- Seminar
- Congress
- Conference
- Meeting
- Workshop
- Symposium

- Are you subscribed to some discussion list? Yes _____ No _____
Which list(s)?

Annex 4

	Titles of journals	Year beginning and end	Printed Journals	Electronic Journals in the Portal
1	Avicennia	1993-	X	
2	Ciencias. Serie 8 Investigaciones Marinas	1972-1980	X	
3	Conozcamos el Mar	1998-	X	1998-
4	Contribuciones	1953-1974	X	
5	Estudios	1966-1967	X	
6	Informe Científico Técnico	1977-1992	X	
7	Mar y Pesca	1965-	X	2004-
8	Mar Caribe. Revista de la Mar	1993-1996	X	
9	Revista Cubana de Investigaciones Pesqueras	1975-	X	
10	Revista de Investigaciones	1973-1977	X	
11	Revista de Investigaciones Marinas	1980-	x	2003-
12	Reporte de Investigación del Instituto de Oceanología	1982-1992	X	
14	Serie Oceanológica	1968-1977	X	
15	Serie Oceanológica	2000-		2000-