

PARTNER PROFILE: FCCN

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WEB EPHEMERALITY

Invented to exchange data between scientists, the web is now used to share publications and knowledge, with students from all educational backgrounds using it as their primary source of information. But how much of this will still be available in years to come?

It is estimated that 80% of web pages will be updated or disappear within 1 year. Even printed scientific publications suffer the effects of web ephemerality citing on-line resources that become unavailable. Professor Diomidis Spinellis observed that half the URLs cited in articles from the ACM and IEEE digital libraries published 4 years before were already inaccessible.

Many scientific ideas take years to be applied. Leonardo Da Vinci designed sketches that inspired inventions five centuries later. Nowadays, researchers communicate through the web. They share their work through blogs, interest groups or institutional sites. However, this knowledge may not be around to influence scientists in the future.

Besides losing important scientific and historical information, web ephemerality may also affect our personal memories, as people tend toward publishing them digitally and exclusively on the web. Broken links degrade the performance of popular web applications such as shared bookmarks, search engines and social networks.

The web needs preservation mechanisms to fight web ephemerality. Its information must prevail across time to transmit knowledge for future generations. Web archiving is the process of acquiring, storing, preserving and providing access to information published on the web. The Portuguese Web Archive project began in 2007. It is undertaken by the Portuguese NREN - Foundation for National Scientific Computing (FCCN) and aims to preserve web information of major interest to the Portuguese speaking communities.

Today the Portuguese Web Archive preserves 1 590 million files, archived from the web since 1996 (45 TB) which can be accessed through freely available full-text search service - www.archive.pt. Most information is in Portuguese, but users can also search the interface in English via translation tools such as Google Translate.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OVERVIEW:

The Portuguese Web Archive preserves and provides access to information published on the web of main interest to the Portuguese community. It provides a free and publicly available full-text search service over 1 billion web archived since 1996.

ABOUT THE NETWORK:

FCCN is the Portuguese National Research and Education Network, NREN. It is a private non-profit organisation that provides infrastructures and services to education, science, technology and culture institutions.

SERVICES:

The FCCN core activities are:

- Manage and operate high-performance Internet network for science, technology and social community organizations, the PIX, the main Portuguese Internet Exchange, the registry for the .PT top level domain
- Creating services to promote internet security, support the generation and dissemination of e-learning contents and enable advanced videoconference communications, to spread activity to areas relevant to stakeholders
- Leading national initiative to promote open access to scientific publications, providing an online service to host open access repositories and journals (RCAAP)
- Manage the national digital library that enables continuous access to subscribed scientific publications (b-on), and develop and manage a repository for educational, scientific and cultural videos (Zappiens.pt).

Find more at: www.fccn.pt