AILLA:The Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America
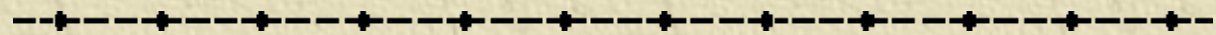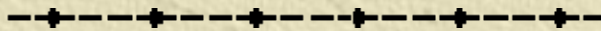
Heidi Johnson / The University of Texas at Austin

AILLA is a joint project of:

- Anthropology: Joel Sherzer
- Linguistics: Anthony C. Woodbury
- Digital Library Services: Mark McFarland

Acknowledgements

- Project begun in 2000 with funds from UT Austin College of Liberal Arts.

- Currently funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation.

www.ailla.utexas.org

- Pilot site launched March 2001.
- Permanent site launched Jan. 31, 2003.
- Parallel sites in English and Spanish.
- 49 languages from 12 countries.
- Recordings in a variety of genres, most accompanied by texts.

AILLA's Mission

- Preservation: irreplaceable recordings in endangered languages made on fragile analog media are digitized and permanently housed in our database.

- Access: valuable resources can be made available to everyone, especially indigenous people, over the Internet.

Preservation

* Archive housed on library computers, maintained by UT digital librarians.

* Secure computers, bottomless memory.

* Standard formats will be migrated forward as technologies evolve.

* Analog media sent to the Indiana Archive of Traditional Music (http://www.indiana.edu/~libarchm/)

What we preserve

- Multi-media resources:
  - Audio/video recordings
  - Texts, digital and manuscript
  - Photos, drawings, etc.
- Types of resources
  - Recordings of discourse in any genre
  - Transcriptions, translations, annotations, etc.
  - Literature, oral or written
  - Analyses, lexicons, notes, sketches, etc.

Formats

- Archival formats:
  - audio: PCM wav, 44.1 Khz, 16/24 bits
  - digital text: original format
  - manuscript, images: tiff
  - video: mp2 (not done yet)
- Presentation formats, free readers & players:
  - audio: mp3 (128 kbps)
  - text & images: pdf
  - video: not yet determined

Access I

- Bilingual interfaces are conformant with portability standards
- Add a Portuguese interface when funds permit.
- Multiple formats w/free readers/players:
  - Mp3: compressed, easy to download
  - Wav: uncompressed (huge!)
  - PDF: platform-independent text

Access II

- Internet cafes are springing up all over Latin America.
- Easier to get to and into than libraries and universities.
- AILLA will soon be able to ship CDs/DVDs with selected resources.
- Long range goal: a network of related archives throughout the region.

Why access is important

- Indigenous communities need these resources for language maintenance and revitalization programs.
- Speakers can use analyses of all kinds in documenting their own languages.
- Share data in collaborative projects, e.g. comparative study of Quechuan languages.

Metadata - catalog information

* Resource = a bundle of files, e.g. recording + annotations, in multiple formats

* Information about:
  * The depositor: contact info
  * Project, sponsor, contact info.
  * Participants: role, demographic data
  * Resources: provenance, formats, etc.
  * Content: context, genre, description
  * References: publications

Security: the graded access system

- Provides speakers and depositors finely-grained control over resources.

- Four levels:
    - 1: free public access
    - 2: automatic controls: password, time limit, conditions
    - 3: depositor control: users ask depositor for permission
    - 4: indigenous control: AILLA contacts indigenous person or group on user's behalf

Security II

- Access levels assigned to individual files.
- Depositors can change settings at any time.
- Depositor/indigenous control allows owner to know who is using their resources.
- Passwords allow fine or coarse control.
- Time limits: we recommend 5 years for student work

Future plans

- Package AILLA's software (database, search interfaces) for sharing.

- Organize offline distribution (CDs).

- Foster a multi-faceted network of archives, from "jukebox" to institutional.

- We welcome your suggestions!

Useful addresses

- AILLA: http://www.ailla.utexas.org
- Comments to ailla@ailla.org
- DELAMAN: http://www.delaman.org/
- IMDI: http://www.mpi.nl/ISLE
- OLAC: http://www.language_archives.org
- EMELD: http://emeld/.org

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Comments gladly received at

ailla@ailla.org

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