THE UNIVERSALIZATION OF THE CONCEPT AND LEGAL INSTRUMENTS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE FACE OF PRESENT DAY SPACE-TIME CONFIGURATIONS: THE CONTRIBUTION OF NEW MEDIA♣

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Abstract

The development of this paper is inspired by the following apparent paradox identified in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity: although the globalization process (facilitated by the surge of new information and communication technologies) represents a challenge to cultural diversity, it should be considered an opportunity for dialogue between different cultures and civilizations. As such, the objective is to contemplate the potentials of universalization of the concepts and guidelines contained in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity in the face of the space-time configurations of today. In guiding the efforts of our research, it is hypothesized that new digital technologies, Web media in particular, socialize cultural diversity and contribute to the universalization of heritage documents in the scope of all humanity. According to the hypothesis, the following methodological procedures are adopted: 1) the concept of diversity is traced in seven heritage documents which direct and indirectly cite that concept (this tracing is referenced in the bibliography and is related to other concepts); 2) the above mentioned paradox is explored and analyzed, focusing on the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity as the proposed hypothesis; 3) the potentials that Web presents to the universalization of the concept and guidelines contained in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity are identified and analyzed; 4) the pertinence of the formulated hypothesis is verified, and Web is designate as a fundamental means for the diffusion of cultural diversity and heritage documents in current planetary configurations of time and scale.

Key Words: *globalization, cultural diversity, web media*

1. Introduction

The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity calls for societies to recognize the plural character of their identity in the scope of other societies of equal plurality. Furthermore, although the process of globalization—driven by a surge of new

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communication and information technology—represents a challenge in the way of cultural diversity, it should also be considered an opportunity for dialog across cultures and civilizations.

This apparent paradox attributed to globalization inspired the process of our research. The objective is to contemplate the potentials of the universalization of the concepts and guidelines contained in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity in the face of present day space-time configurations. In this sense, it is considered that such configurations allow the worldwide diffusion of cultural goods and services in all its forms.

In order to give direction to attempts at analysis, our research begins with the hypothesis that new digital technologies, more specifically web media, socialize cultural diversity and contribute to the universalization of patrimonial texts in the scope of all of humanity.

The fulfillment of the objective and the verification of our hypothesis were made possible by the following methodological procedures: To begin with, the concept of diversity is traced in seven heritage documents which directly and indirectly cite that concept. (This tracing is referenced in the bibliography and is related to other concepts). The patrimonial documents are those signed by UNESCO and published by this agency and also by the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Patrimony (IPHAN). The documents researched are as follows: World Heritage Convention (1972), Mexican Declaration (1982), Washington Charter (1987), Paris Recommendation (1989), Nara Conference (1994), Brasilia Charter (1995) and, lastly, the Charter of Mar del Plata (1997), in which the paradox inspiring this paper has been outlined.

Secondly, the above mentioned paradox is explored and analyzed, focusing on the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity as the proposed hypothesis. Then, the potentials of the Web to universalize the concepts and guidelines contained in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity are identified. Lastly, this trajectory allows us to verify the relevance of the formulated hypothesis and designate Web as a fundamental means of spreading cultural diversity and heritage documents through the new planetary configurations of time and scale.

2. Tracing Cultural Diversity throughout Heritage Conventions

In patrimonial terms, sustaining cultural diversity is one fundamental motive for the compilation of the World Heritage List, instituted at the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Although the Convention took place in 1972, it did not become ratified until 1975 when twenty nations signed its terms of adhesion. Another important date in the history of the Convention is 1976, when the World Heritage Committee and the World Heritage Fund were created.

According to UNESCO (2004a), the Convention of 1972 resulted in the idea that the earth's natural and cultural resources were bequeathed to everyone for the benefit of all, implicating a shared responsibility. UNESCO proclaims itself as a pioneer in the demonstration of such an idea. However the text of the 1972 Convention had not yet mentioned, at any point, the term "cultural diversity".

The French historian Jean-Pierre Halévy (UNESCO, 2004), emphasized the fact that the Nubia Campaign, a preservation project to safeguard the Great Temple of Abu Simbel, gave birth to the Convention. Launched in Egypt in 1960, the project's objective was to move the temple to higher ground in order to avoid its flooding by the waters of

Aswan, and to relocate twenty-two monuments and architectural complexes, over the course of twenty years. This was to be the first of a series of international campaigns that would include the preservation of the following landmarks: Moenjodaro (Pakistan), Fez (Morrocco), Katmandu (Nepal), Borobudur (Indonesia) and the Acropolis (Greece).

According to Halévy, the Convention initially sought to institute a list of cultural masterpieces and natural landmarks considered to be coming under the threat of "progress" (quotations Halévy's). After this initial effort, the World Heritage Committee developed a more comprehensive, all inclusive list, as described in this excerpt by the French historian:

> Little by little the Committee became aware a list based on the safeguarding of urban architectural masterpieces gave privilege to dominant cultures and a certain monumental idea of heritage. Between 1992 and 1994 the Committee resolved to adopt a 'global strategy' for a more balanced list that would be representative of all cultures. **Afterall, isn't the greatest masterpiece of Humanity its cultural diversity?** [emphasis by the authors] (2004, p. 16).

By the time of the Mexican Declaration, a document resultant of the 1982 World Conference on Cultural Politics, the term "cultural diversity" had already appeared, and was being directly correlated with "cultural identity". The two terms were considered to be congruent; furthermore, the Declaration maintained: "The universal cannot be postulated in abstract for any single culture, it emerges from the experience of all the world's peoples as each affirms its own identity" (IPHAN, 2006, p.2).

Understanding that societies recognize themselves through the values in which they find a source of creative inspiration contained in cultural heritage, the Mexican Declaration links this cultural heritage to cultural identity: "Preservation and appreciation of its cultural heritage, therefore enable a people to defend its sovereignty and independence and hence affirm and promote its cultural identity" (IPHAN, 2006, p.4). Cultural heritage, cultural identity and cultural diversity arise, therefore, as elements of a gradual process and constituents of the culture of humanity.

The Washington Charter of 1987, International Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas, considers cultural diversity (without, however, actually mentioning the words), when it affirms: "All urban communities, whether they have developed gradually over time or have been created deliberately, are an expression of the diversity of societies throughout history" (2003b). It's also worth noting, the link expressed therein between diversity and the historical attributes of the world's cities.

The Paris Recommedation, Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, was adopted by UNESCO in 1989. The Recommendation linked knowledge, respect, conservation and diffusion of culture to the understanding of cultural diversity. Prior to the age of the Internet, the document warned:

> Preservation is concerned with protection of folk traditions and those who are the transmitters, having regard to the fact that each people has a right to its own culture and that its adherence to that culture is often eroded by the impact of the industrialized culture purveyed by the mass media (2007a, p.4).

In order to avoid such a risk, the Recommendation lists several suggestions for the safeguarding of traditional and popular culture. The first pays respect to the introduction of traditional and popular culture in educational programs: "thus promoting a better understanding of cultural diversity and different world views, specially those not reflected in the dominant culture" (2007a, p. 4) [emphasis by the authors].

The preoccupation with the phrases "industrialized culture" and "dominant culture" should be emphasized, as if there were an industrially active and all-pervasive

culture and, perhaps, because of this, hegemonic. These considerations are evidenced because they are interesting to what will be presented to follow, when the analysis of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity encounters new media forms.

The Nara Document on Authenticity, drafted in 1994 at the Nara Conference on Authenticity in relation to the Convention on World Heritage, reason that the defense of cultural diversity is essential for human development. It's presented in the fifth preamble, under the title "Cultural diversity and heritage diversity", with the following text:

> The diversity of culture and heritage in our world is an irreplaceable source of spiritual and intellectual richness for all humankind. The protection and enhancement of cultural and heritage in our world should be actively promoted as an essential aspect of human development (2003b, s/p).

The Nara Document on Authenticity explains in its sixth preamble that, in the case of cultural conflict, respect for cultural diversity implores the recognition of the legitimacy of the cultural values of all involved parties.

The Charter of Brasilia, the 1995 Regional Document on Authenticity of the Southern Cone Countries, recognizes the various heritages present in the people of Latin America—more specifically natives of the Southern Cone countries—and promotes respect and inclusion of all. Moreover, the charter asserts that respect for people's differences in heritage, is an example of respect for cultural diversity (2003).

The Charter from Mar del Plata on Intanglible Heritage, *Documento do Mercosul*, 1997, presents two considerations relative to cultural diversity and globalization that are of special interest to the aim of this article. They are the following:

> Convinced that the process of integration explicitly stated in Mercosul, which expresses our people's real aspirations of a better life, must sustain itself through the diversity of cultural systems and sub-systems;
>
> Sharing the preoccupation with the consequences that cultural identities may eventually suffer in an overpowering process of globalization that seeks to label them as mere economic and financial prospects (2007b, p.1).

Furthermore, before establishing the principles for cultural integration, the document expresses a belief that the then forthcoming millennium (century XXI) would be a time of "unity of diversity". Among these principles, two are of special interest for the scope of this article: The second, relative to the idea that integration is linked to the acceptance of cultural plurality in the section covered by Mercosul; and the third, expressing the concept around globalization in this paper. They are transcribed below:

> 2) Said integration must accept the plurality of the different cultures of the region as a positive fact and an enricher of our world vision and of the development of human personality.
>
> 3) The concept of integration assumes the exchange and complementarity of distinct parts among themselves, so that they can resist the temptation to uniform our people with a single cultural model, which is expressed in an ideological deformation that in some cases receives the label globalization (2007b, p.2) [emphasis by the authors].

Despite the overstating of globalization in the second excerpt, the two principles cause a seeming contradiction of one another. The first excerpt encourages the acceptance of plurality of cultures to facilitate integration. The second, while reinforcing the first principle in its promotion of exchange between distinct parts, disagrees that, among the facets of globalization, its main goal is to make the most varied cultures visible. The reasoning is that, considering globalization as a uniforming process makes it an adversary to plurality, an impediment to cultural diversity. The duplicity of principles brings forth

the apparent paradox that will later be illustrated by the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

3. Globalization and cultural diversity in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

Although the term "cultural diversity" did not officially emerge at the 1972 Convention, culture has played an essential role in UNESCO's policies since its inception on November 16th, 1945 (UNESCO, 2007d). The agency considers the cultural dimension essential for the success of a model of sustainable development that envisions future generations and the integration with nature. Furthermore, aware that culture is a driving force of many industries, UNESCO recognizes it as an agent in generating income and in mitigating poverty.

In its defense of cultural diversity, UNESCO compares the importance of the concept of culture to the role that biodiversity plays in nature. In this sense, the organization understands that the primordial mode of preserving the processes of renovation and cultural exchange is to stimulate and protect cultural diversity. These processes are recognized by the organization as fundamentals for mutual comprehension, and for a peaceful coexistence among individuals and groups of different origins and cultural identities (2004a). It was in this spirit, and to urge actions to strengthen cultural diversity, that UNESCO adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. The Declaration is a model synthesis, in conceptual terms, of UNESCO's concept of culture. From its first preambles, the idea of culture in the Declaration can be detected, as evidenced in the argument below:

> Reaffirming that culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to an art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs (GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO, 2001, s/p).

In this document, a note appears following the above-stated reaffirmation explaining that the definition of culture expressed therein is in accord with the conclusions of the following events: World Conference on Cultural Politics (MONDIACULT, Mexico, 1982); World Commission of Culture and Development (Our Creative Diversity, 1995); Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Politics for Development (Stockholm, 1998). Therefore, it demonstrates the character of conjunction in the definition above, as well as its synthesizing effect.

The Declaration was approved at the 31st meeting of the General Conference of UNESCO, the first large ministerial-level meeting after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 on New York's World Trade Center. The introductory text of the Declaration on UNESCO's website prefaces the document as a counterpoint to the event. The introduction emphatically describes the Conference as "an opportunity for States to reaffirm their conviction that intercultural dialogue is the best guarantee of peace and to reject outright the theory of the inevitable clash of cultures and civilizations". The final paragraph of the same text states definitively:

> The Declaration, which sets against inward-looking fundamentalism the prospect of a more open, creative and democratic world, is now one of the founding texts of the new ethics promoted by UNESCO in the early twenty-first century (2007).

Moreover, the text points out that an instrument with such breadth as the Declaration was a first for the international community. Furthermore, it was evidenced that this document "raises cultural diversity to the level of 'the common heritage of

humanity', [...], and makes its defense an ethical imperative inseparable from respect for the dignity of the individual". The introduction also emphasizes that cultural diversity cannot be understood as static heritage, but as a "process that guarantees the survival of humanity". It is equally highlighted that the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity seeks to avoid segregation and fundamentalisms. Thus, its goal is in accordance with the message of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Otherness, plurality and identity are important concepts in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. The Declaration implores every individual to recognize all forms of otherness as well as the plurality of one's own identity, within societies that are equally plural. Its introduction affirms that:

> Only in this way can cultural diversity be preserved as an adaptative process and as a capacity for expression, creation and innovation. The debate between those countries which would like to defend cultural goods and services "which, as vectors of identity, values and meaning, must not be treated as mere commodities or consumer goods", and those which would hope to promote cultural rights has thus been surpassed, with the two approaches brought together by the Declaration, which has highlighted the causal link uniting those two complementary attitudes: one cannot exist without another (UNESCO, 2007).

Both cases emphasized above demonstrate that worldwide diffusion of cultural goods and services, in all the forms they assume, is a powerful factor in the process of understanding and in the potential rewards of cultural diversity. Made available on the Web, cultural diffusion gains greater permeability being, in this form, increased worldwide. In its prologue, the Declaration presents an argument relevant to this reality and considers cultural diversity in the context of globalization—a phenomenon linked to the rapid development of new information technologies, as described below:

> Considering that the process of globalization, facilitated by the rapid development of new information and communication technologies, though representing a challenge for cultural diversity, creates the conditions for renewed dialogue among cultures and civilizations (GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO 2001, s/p) [emphasis by the authors].

It should be noted that the globalization process is qualified with two different connotations: as a challenge (in the face of cultural diversity) and as an opportunity (for the renewal of cross-cultural dialog). New technologies are considered facilitators in the globalization process. It is significant, therefore, that the process of globalization be named as challenge to cultural diversity, and not the information universalized by new technologies and media. This contradiction is relevant considering the fact that present day technologies are the most powerful instruments in the rejuvenation of dialog, designated by the text as one of the advents conditioned by globalization.

Above appears an apparent paradox: that in which globalization represents a challenge in the face of cultural diversity, yet at the same time is considered an opportunity for dialogue across cultures and peoples. From this point forward, taking the paradox into question, we begin to analyze the potentials of universalization of the concepts and guidelines of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, in the face of new space-time configurations that make the worldwide diffusion of cultural goods and services possible in all its forms. Among the most recent configurations we focus specifically on Web media. Web media includes the sources from which the heritage documents studied in this article came. The Declaration itself is analyzed below.

4. Potentials of Universalization of the Concepts and Guidelines of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

Article 2 — From cultural diversity to cultural pluralism, considers present day diversified societies. Furthermore, it predicts the essential need for "harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together". Article 2 concludes with its definition of cultural pluralism as the agent that "gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indissociable (sic) from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life".

One may deduce from the second article that it is insufficient for cultures to be diverse, varied or different from one another; all cultures, each one plural within itself, must maintain dialogue, interaction, democratic unity as well. Most importantly, it is vital for cultures to be properly visualized in their plural manifestation—in the largest scope possible: that of the entire planet.

Article 3 — Cultural Diversity as a Factor in Development, states the definition of cultural diversity in its title. An integral factor in development, cultural diversity is understood "not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence". Furthermore, Article 3 states that cultural diversity increases the number of choices available for everyone, by which, it may be concluded, the quality of a person's choice is equally increased. But, in order to actually exercise these possibilities of choice—ostensibly amplified by cultural diversity—it is necessary that they be differentiated and compared. Thus, it is imperative that the options of choice be accessible in the largest scope possible.

The fourth article is headed by the title *Human Rights as Guarantees of Cultural Diversity*. As alluded to in the title, the article declares that the defense of cultural diversity "is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity". As justification for such a defense Article 4 continues: "(The defense of cultural diversity) implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples." Article 4 forbids the invoking of cultural diversity for the purpose of violating or limiting a person's human rights. Therefore, it is necessary that there be a balance in the presentation of information pertaining to these cultures on a global scale, without the prevalence of some cultures over others. In this way, it's possible to guarantee a balanced understanding among different cultures.

We conclude, therefore, that the above cited articles presuppose a wide diffusion of the most varied cultures that, plural as they are defined, cannot do without accessibility to equally plural channels. This, however, has not yet been achieved—as seen in the existence of cities, including those listed as World Heritage, in which the use of the Web is still incipient, and cities whose diffusion through electronic media is minimal. The sixth article, whose title is Towards Access for All to Cultural Diversity, insists upon equality in the conditions of accessibility, in the following terms:

> While ensuring the free flow of ideas by word and image, care should be exercised so that all cultures can express themselves and make themselves known. Freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity (GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO, 2001).

Researchers disagree about the ideas related to the spread of cultural diversity. In the opinion of information and communication sciences professor, Armand Mattelart, "globalization does not exist without the dismantling of public regulations", he writes; this signifies: "the establishment of a legal field propitious for the extension of the scope of commodities" (2005, p.91).

Mattelart's description of this field included an "increasing visibility of few businesses which adapt, as much internally as externally, their computerized administration to the dimension of world markets". It reflects, therefore, the post-Ford age of industry that Mattelart describes as a process that "crosses geographical scales, from local to global, the spheres of activities [...], the conception, production and the logistics of distribution". In this context, the professor considers that "the collective worth of a product is found in close attention to the demands (customization) made possible by information technologies". Furthermore, according to Mattelart, these technologies allow the standardized production of diversity (2005, p.91).

In this sense, only cultures with securely consolidated cultural industries become diffused. This notion is considered by the professor in the transcription below.

> If there is a confluence moving towards a 'global lifestyle', it's because consumers internalize a symbolic universe since the end of the World War II by public announcements, through films, through TV programs, but specially those that come from the United States, explicitly promoted as vectors of a new universalism (2005, p. 93).

Mattelart compromises (citing Costa & Bamossy, 1995) that, at the end of the phase of megafusions of the first generation of global networks, it was believed that businesses should manage diversity, which presupposes linking the local level to global level. This is what the Japanese denoted as *glocalization*, writes the professor. The phenomenon is demonstrated by the adaptation of advertising spots by major name brands such as Coca-Cola, in operation of imaginary nationals and of different acculturations of globalization references. As an example, the professor cites well known cities like Peking, Moscow, São Paulo and Paris.

If large scale cities differ as to what aspects capture the public's attention, one may guess just how dissimilar interpretations might be in small cities replete with cultural traditions—the example of Olinda (Brazil), with its folklore, and Old Rauma (Finland), with its craftsmanship and pottery.

However, folklore, craftsmanship, and other fruits of local and regional traditions—distinct as they are from varied cultures and civilizations, must be understood and treated in a special way. UNESCO recognizes them as such and, in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, makes a defense of cultural goods as follows.

> Article 8 – Cultural Goods and Services: Commodities of a Unique Kind
>
> In the face of present-day economic and technological change, opening up vast prospects for creation and innovation, particular attention must be paid to the diversity of the supply of creative work, to due recognition of the rights of authors and artists and to the specificity of cultural goods and services which, as vectors of identity, values and meaning, must not be treated as mere commodities or consumer goods (GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO, 2001, s/p) [emphasis by the authors].

Olinda and Old Rauma are cities endowed with sites dedicated to the diffusion and understanding of cultural goods. In this way, their cultural goods are displayed on the planetary scale of the cultural industry of information. Thus, they follow, in part, the goal of the Declaration's tenth article: Strengthening Capacities for Creation and Dissemination Worldwide.

In the face of current imbalances in flows and exchanges of cultural goods and services at the global level, it is necessary to reinforce international cooperation and solidarity aimed at enabling all countries, especially developing countries and countries in transition, to establish cultural industries that are viable and competitive at national and international level (GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO, 2001, s/p).
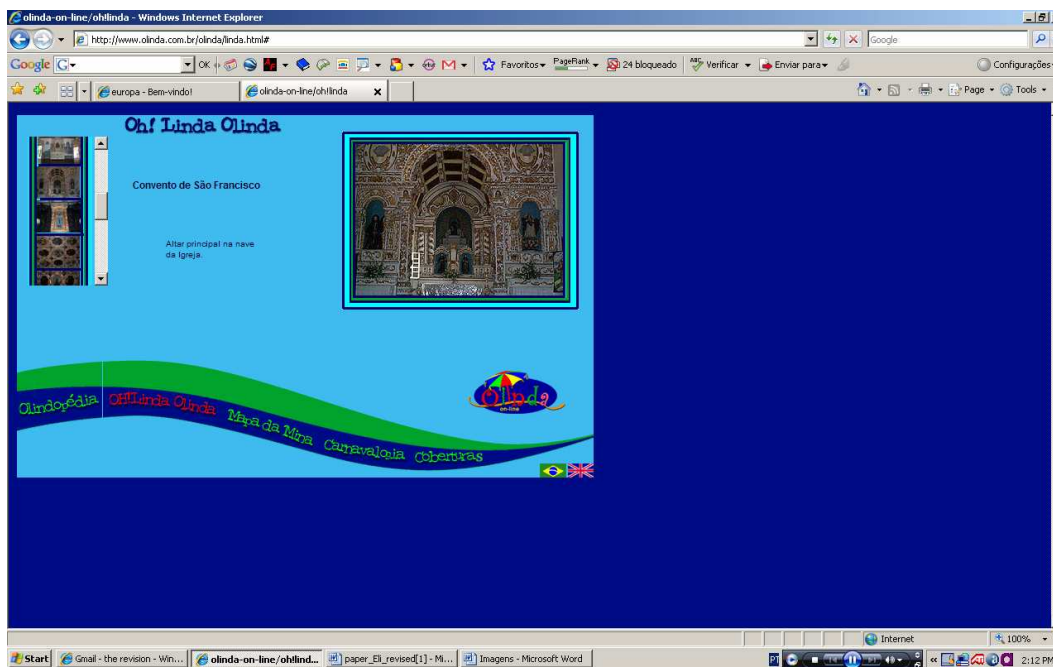

Figure 1: accessible at http://www.olinda.com.br/olinda/linda.html# Accessed on June, 11th, 2007.
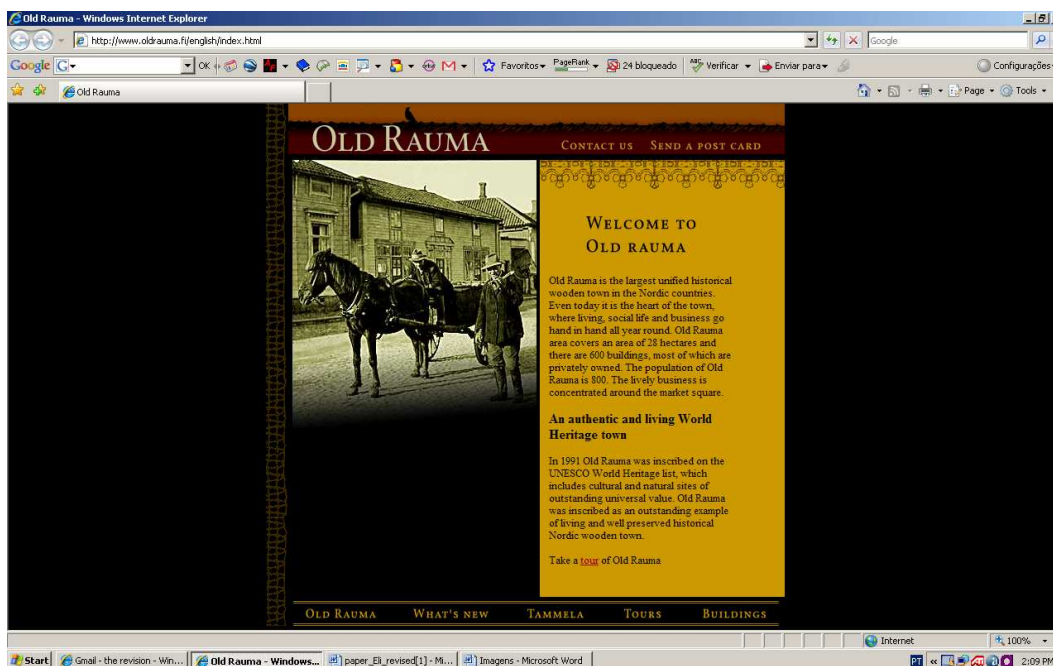

Figure 2: accessible at http://www.oldrauma.fi/english/index.html .Accessed on June, 11th, 2007.

We consider that they fulfill, in part, because the sites pertaining to these cities are electronic media transmitted in a worldwide network, the result of a cultural industry that was not created in national contexts of these cities. The network in with they circulate, the Web, is a product of a cultural industry that pre-existed and was consolidated well before these cities were transported in a virtual environment. Notwithstanding, the diffusion of these sites via the Web may serve to strengthen their nascent cultural industries. In this sense, as seen in the last article consulted and the rest that are herein studied, it can be

confirmed that the Web facilitates the potentials of the planetary diffusion of cultural diversity predicted in the Declaration.

5. Web Media as a Fundamental Means for the Diffusion of Cultural Diversity and Heritage Documents

The Mexican Declaration of 1982 already considered new technologies—those that can be included as Web media—in their power to diffuse the contents of cultural diversity, as can be understood in the paragraphs transcribed below.

> Free circulation and a wider, more balanced diffusion of information, of the ideas and knowledge that constitute the principles of a new world order of information and communication, assume the right of all nations, not only to receive but also to transmit cultural, educational, scientific and technological contents.
>
> Modern means of communication should facilitate an objective body of information about the cultural tendencies of different countries, without hurting creative freedoms and the cultural identity of nations (2006, p.6).

It's important to note that the Mexican Declaration was also the first document among those researched for this paper to use the term "cultural diversity". It's of great interest that the then new concept of cultural diversity was already linked to new technologies, as in its recognition of the potentials of these technologies to increase the range of cultural diversity. Consecrated by the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001, the concept was later confirmed in a 2005 document reinforcing the Declaration of 2001— Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The Convention of 2005 is the most recent among heritage documents dedicated to the subject of cultural diversity. Among its principles, the seventh is the *Principle of Equal Access*. Respect for equal access to the diversity of original cultural expressions of the whole world, and access for all cultures to means of diffusion in the valorization of cultural diversity and mutual understanding. In this sense, Article 12—*Promotion of International Cooperation* predicts: "promote the use of new technologies, encourage partnerships to enhance information sharing and cultural understanding, and foster the diversity of cultural expressions" (UNESCO, 2007c, p. 11). This convention was ratified by Brazil in 2007.

6. Conclusion

Various heritage documents, particularly the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity—which maintains that cultural diversity increases one's range of choices—reflect an important characteristic of the Web: that of being an essentially relative means of information distribution. This enables not only the understanding of cultural diversity, but the accommodation of values from different cultures. Replete with historic information, the Web allows fast access to various sites of different cities simultaneously, so that they may be seen in relation to one another. Thus, the Web provides the various informations, interests and demands of all.

A technology that allows for the access to a multiplicity of channels at the same time, the Web permits varied simultaneous interactions, for example: two people located in different countries may maintain instant communication together online, listening to an online radio, watching a video or reading a text. The Web is, therefore a vehicle of the permeability of information and of simultaneous communication. The Web has opened myriad doors in the creation of new vehicles, the most recent of which is RSS. (RSS is a

way of distributing information by the Internet, such as news or current events. In this way, when information of user interest is published, the RSS user is immediately notified, without having to navigate to the actual site from which the information came).

For all of this, it's possible to consider the Web, with its wide range of media (sites, blogs, tags, among others yet to come), as the fundamental means for the diffusion of cultural diversity in its plurality of expressions. And, as such, according to the formulated hypothesis, the Web socializes cultural diversity and contributes to the universalization of heritage documents in the scope of all of humanity.

In conclusion, we understand that the Web is a valuable tool in information and cultural politics, and we want to recommend that Web be elected as the main tool for the diffusion of cultural diversity and for the universalization of heritage documents in the scope of all of humanity.

Finally, it should be said that the heritage documents cited in this article were all researched on the Web, on the websites of IPHAN and UNESCO. Using these electronic sources, the only document we did not succeed in accessing was the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Politics for Development (Stockholm, 1998).

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