

SACHA - PORTAL: PLANS FOR AN ON-LINE INFORMATION CENTRE ON THE BASIS OF THE IAEA PROGRAM NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE

SACHA - PORTÁL: ON-LINE INFORMÁCIÓS SZOLGÁLTATÁS TERVEZET A NEMZETKÖZI ATOMENERGIA ÜGYNÖKSÉG KULTURÁLIS ÖRÖKSÉG VIZSGÁLATA TÁRGYÁBAN INDÍTOTT PROGRAMJA ALAPJÁN

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Abstract

On the initiative, and with the financial support of the International Atomic Agency (IAEA) a wide international program was launched for the application of nuclear techniques in the protection, and for the scientific analysis of cultural heritage. As part of this initiative, a project webpage was started within the RER 00034 program ("Enhancing the Characterization, Preservation and Protection of Cultural Heritage Artefacts", 2012-13). This dedicated webpage aimed at presenting partner institutions of the project and their results on the field of the application of nuclear techniques for arts and archaeology in the widest sense. The setting up of the webpage was financially supported by the IAEA and the technical and informatical background was provided by our Cypriot colleagues (Yiannis Parpottas and Demetris Kaolis). Acknowledging the usefulness of the webpage but also pointing at problems in contents, access and maintenance, on the closing meeting of the subsequent RER 0039 program ("Extending and Diversifying the Application of Nuclear Technology in Cultural Heritage") the project participants suggested an expert meeting to evaluate and possibly enhance the project webpage. The solution suggested is a complete re-organisation and extension of the webpage, from a specific project webpage to the level of a portal establishing contacts between analysts and heritage experts. We hope that SACHA-portal (Scientific Approaches to Cultural Heritage Artefacts) will be implemented during the current year (2016).

Kivonat

A Nemzetközi Atomenergia Ügynökség kezdeményezésére és támogatásával indított, a nukleáris technikák örökségvédelmi alkalmazásai tárgyú (RER 00034 számú) kutatási program részeként ("Enhancing the Characterization, Preservation and Protection of Cultural Heritage Artefacts", 2012-13) létrehozott egy dedikált weblapot a fenti projekt keretében működő partnerek (intézmények, kutatók és eredményeik) bemutatására. A weblap fenntartását anyagilag a NAÜ, technikailag a ciprusi kollégák (Yiannis Parpottas és Demetris Kaolis) vállalták fel. Elismerve a weblap hasznosságát, de figyelemmel tartalmi és gyakorlati problémákra, a 2015-ben záruló RER 0039 program ("Extending and Diversifying the Application of Nuclear Technology in Cultural Heritage") a weblap értékelésére és újragondolására szakértői tanácskozást szervezett, amelynek során a weblap formai és tartalmi megújítását, átalakítását javasoltunk. A folyamatnak még az elején járunk, reméljük hogy a 2016. év folyamán kialakítható lesz a címben jelzett SACHA-portal (Scientific Approaches to Cultural Heritage Artefacts).

KEYWORDS: SACHA-PORTAL, IAEA, CULTURAL HERITAGE, SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS

KULCSSZAVAK: SACHA-PORTÁL, IAEA, KULTURÁLIS ÖRÖKSÉG, TERMÉSZETTUDOMÁNYOS VIZSGÁLAT

Introduction

The International Atomic Agency had several projects for promoting the application of nuclear techniques in the field of preserving and analytically investigating objects of art and archaeology pertaining to cultural heritage in general. The details of the recent projects are shortly summarised by Zsolt Kasztovszky in the same volume (Kasztovszky 2016). One of the major achievements of the current RER projects (notably, RER 0034, "Enhancing the Characterization, Preservation and Protection of Cultural Heritage Artefacts", 2012-13), was the construction of a

website to promote dissemination of the results and enhance communication between project participants. The webpage operated between 2012 and 2015 at the RRL address <http://nuclculther.eu>. In the follow-up project, RER0039 ("Extending and Diversifying the Application of Nuclear Technology in Cultural Heritage", 2014-2015) it was determined that a task group should meet to improve the functionality of the website. This was partly necessary, because the project was terminating and the safe operation of the website could not have been guaranteed without financial supply of IAEA; moreover, we must admit that the

information presented by the web-site was rather uneven and of limited access.

Task-group meeting in Vienna

The main criticism on the RER 0034-0039 webpage was its limited impact. It was used as a „homework” by the more conscientious partners – and not used at all by the others. The contents were uneven and deficient. It shared the fate of many project webpages with the disadvantageous exception that it was not used even for organising intra-group events because the participants for the projects were selected from meeting to meeting, on the basis of application, by the national coordinators. The partners recognised that there is something wrong with this and blamed – as usual – the IT parts. Now, the informatical solution of any webpage cannot substitute actual contents and regular update. A living webpage is sustainable because it is necessary; it is answering some need on behalf of the community, smaller or larger.

On the occasion of the closing meeting of the RER 0039, these questions emerged again. As the partners were obviously interested in further collaboration beyond the actual project, a task group was formed to investigate the possibilities of continuing and improving the webpage. The task group meeting was held in the IAEA Centre in Vienna last year, 24-26th November 2015. The participants of the meeting were Velibor Andric (VINCA Institute of Nuclear Sciences), Matthew Grima (Heritage Malta), Anastasios Lagoyannis (IAEA), Katalin T. Biró (Hungarian National Museum). and Demetris Kaolis (IT-expert).

The results of the discussion and suggestions for further action were summarised in an official report submitted to IAEA (Andric et al. 2015). The main point was to extend scope and audience by raising the webpage to the level of a portal dealing with the interrelation of art, archaeology and science. This new portal-to-be was named SACHA as an acronym for *Scientific Approaches to Cultural Heritage Artefacts*. Its main objective is planned to be “merging science to cultural heritage”, to provide a forum for scientists, conservators, CH experts of various fields to find the best practice and easy and clear ways to deal with intricate

problems of interdisciplinary work in this field. The “task group” re-classified itself as an administrative committee to foster and manage this new portal. Realising the complexity of the problem, we suggested the convoking of a body of experts termed Scientific Committee. Main fields of scope were considered, in accordance with results and fields of interest within the RER projects. Suggestions were made for SC members.

What has happened since the Vienna meeting?

In fact, not too much – at least not as much as we would be happy to see. The former webpage (<http://nuclculther.eu>) was revoked and the new site (<http://sacha-portal.com/>) was opened, so far with the title page only. SC members were invited to join the idea from the main fields of archaeometry and conservation, and recently informed on their „group identity”. The main tasks and next steps for the AC were put forward and accepted.

So we can form a pessimistic and an optimistic view on SACHA and its future. The pessimistic view is that as we are all loaded more than enough with things to do anyway, and manage an interactive thematic portal is just one burden too much. The optimistic view is just to say that SACHA answers an existing need on behalf of analysts and CH experts and should be fostered and grown, hopefully used and living to the advantage of the field of archaeometry and conservation.

References

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