

National Science Foundation
Workshop for
**Documenting Endangered
Languages**



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The Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America



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AILLA Durham, New Hampshire, October 2007

AILLA's Institutional context

✦ AILLA is a joint effort:

- ✦ Anthropology: Joel Sherzer (Director)
- ✦ Linguistics: Anthony Woodbury
- ✦ University Libraries Digital Initiative: Mark McFarland

University of Texas support

- ✦ 3/4 of archive manager's salary
- ✦ office and lab space in the secure main library building, including phone, internet connections, etc.
- ✦ the archive proper is maintained on library servers by the Digital Library Services Division.

Future development plans

- ✦ We are working with the development office to build an endowment fund that will fully support AILLA over the long term.
- ✦ We will continue to seek grants for short-term projects such as archiving specific collections.

State of the collection

- ✦ 2,000 resources
- ✦ 150 languages
- ✦ 18 countries
- ✦ ~ 1,000 hours of audio recordings
- ✦ ~ 16,000 pages of texts & images
- ✦ 55% public access

Archive users

- ✦ 80 depositors
- ✦ 1500 registered users
- ✦ Most are accessing mp3 files.
- ✦ Lots of linguists, Kunas, people with Spanish surnames.
- ✦ Many depositors accessing their own files.

Why people restrict access

1. They haven't taken the time to sort out the sensitive items. (most common)
2. To keep other researchers from using their data.
3. They haven't talked about archiving & public access with their consultants.
4. Rarely: because something is actually sensitive (gossip, personal history.)

Top 5 Wish List

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1. An endowment fund that will support us forever.
 2. A digital video format standard.
 3. A suite of audio fix-up tools for non-engineers, for e.g. crickets, wrong speed, quantization....
 4. An easy-to-implement standard for archiving complex objects (e.g. multimedia encyclopedias.)
 5. Quality metadata: clear labels, complete descriptions, & rational access policies.