BMB ON LINE: AN INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR PALEOGRAPHIC AND DIDACTIC RESEARCH

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BMB – origin and evolution

BMB experience started in 1991 to collect the quotations of Beneventan manuscripts in the literature (Beneventan manuscripts are medieval books written in the South Italy national script). People involved in this project were helped in writing their bibliographical cards from a MS-DOS program called BIBMAN.

The BMB Web site was firstly developed in 1997 with the main aim of:

a) making faster and easier for scholars the downloading of new bibliographic data about Beneventan manuscripts (nearly monthly),
b) encouraging the creation of a virtual community that could find in the site services new opportunities for improving their studies.

New elements were added to bibliographical data with the time:

a) an inventory of the shelfmarks of Beneventan manuscripts,
c) the news concerning newly found Beneventan items,
d) a selected list of links to the sites of libraries, institutions, research centers and portals involved in the study of Beneventan manuscripts.
In 2001 the need for a new software, to be used for the collection of the quotations, emerged and the authors thought that the Web could help them in finding the right solution for this problem.

If many scholars and researchers involved in manuscripts' studies still look at the Internet and at the Web as an extension of printed publishing or at most as a compromise with this ancient and well settled communication medium, in the authors’ opinion the time was come for a revolution in the use of the Web as an instrument for manuscripts' studies (virtual communities, learning and practice communities and cooperative research and learning communities).

From all the above remarks was born the authors' idea of the BMB on line Web site: an Information System that people could differently be allowed to store the quotations of Beneventan manuscripts and that could be freely queried from general users to obtain the information stored in it.
Persons entrusted with the task of collecting the quotations of Beneventan manuscripts are grouped in three categories:

1) the **contributors** accessing a special Web area for writing, modifying and deleting the bibliographic cards and the corresponding quotations of manuscripts etc.

2) the **scientific administrator/s** who can manage all the data in the database and write, modify and certify the bibliographic cards, this last operation being done only once because when a card is verified it can no more be accessed,

3) the **system administrator** who can do all operations including the modification or the deletion of certified cards
BMB – main features of the IS .2

People can freely access bibliographic cards by means of five different query pages:

a) the first one asks for the author's name and gives back him/her quotations,

b) the second and third ones ask for a manuscript (by means of its ID code or shelfmark) and give back all the quotations in the database for that manuscript,

c) the fourth one lets the user select one among the different contributors and gives back all the quotations made by that contributor,

d) the fifth and last one lets the user input one or more words or part of them concerning the title, the location, the collection etc. of a given publication and shows all the bibliographic records matching the query constraints and the corresponding quotations of Beneventan manuscripts.
The Faculty Center for ICT and on line teaching

_BMB on line_ is a useful instrument for paleographic research, but it is also an important tool for teaching innovation and didactic research which added to the other initiatives performed in the Faculty.

In 2003 the **Faculty Center for ICT and on line teaching** was authorized from the Faculty Council with the main aim of planning and developing didactic materials as follows:

1. *writing of HTML reference pages* with the links (open and free or protected by identification codes) to the materials the professors transmitted to the center or put in the Web site;
2. *planning and building of Web sites* for given disciplines and their didactic materials (suitably translated in HTML static or dynamic pages) together with the needed communication channels;
3. *carrying out of a special Web site* continuously monitoring the students' access to the didactic resources of a given discipline;
4. *development of Information Systems* suitable for both research and teaching.