



## INTERNET CULTURALE, THE NEW VERSION OF THE PORTAL IS NOW ONLINE

After extensive re-engineering and graphic restyling efforts, the completely re-designed version of [www.internetculturale.it](http://www.internetculturale.it), the Italian digital library portal, makes its online debut. The portal is a virtual location for searching bibliographic information and digital copies of all the types of material made available by the participating digital libraries.

In a matter of seconds, the search page provides information on about 20 million news items. Users can continue to navigate the site using filters, create their own personal library in the members' area, save their searches, send search results via email, etc. This information trove is composed of the various catalogue databases, such as the National Library Service (SBN - *Servizio bibliotecario nazionale*), along with specialised databases, such as the Census of Manuscripts in Italian Libraries (*Censimento dei manoscritti delle biblioteche italiane* - Manus), the National Census of 16th Century Italian Books (Edit16), and digital collections. The collections – about 60 of which are already online – make up the Digital Library, with an index of 650,000 records and over 8 million associated digital files. This archive is extremely rich in images, text files, and audio files. The latter in particular are made available by the Central Institute for Sound and Audiovisual Heritage (*Istituto centrale per i beni sonori e gli audiovisivi*), which makes 30-second samples available free of charge.

The portal, which has been online since 2005, was established with the goal of collecting and exhibiting the digitalization projects promoted by the General Directorate for Libraries and Cultural Institutes, within the framework of a broader effort to promote and disseminate the heritage of Italian libraries. Digitalization campaigns were coordinated by a steering committee, monitored by the Central Institute for the Union Catalogue of Italian Libraries (ICCU) using a shared methodology and standards, and were the focus of intensive efforts over the past several years. The ICCU has edited the portal since its first version; it has used its competences in the digital field to found the journal *Digitalia*, a unique publication in the cultural heritage sector.

Digitalization programmes have involved state libraries, the libraries of local authorities, and those of prestigious cultural institutes throughout Italy, in many cultural fields, including music, literature, science, cartography, and graphic materials. Between 2005 and 2008, these programmes have produced over 5 million digital files.

The exponential increase in data and the advance of new technologies have forced us to re-think and re-design the entire software architecture to give the portal a new-generation, powerful search engine and a new and improved website design.

Internet Culturale is an initiative of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, promoted by the General Directorate for Libraries, Cultural Institutes, and Copyright, and implemented and directed by ICCU.

Some of the digital collections in the **music** sector include musical manuscripts from the most valuable Neapolitan collections, including numerous autographs from the library of the San Pietro a Majella conservatory in Naples; musical manuscripts from the library of the Luigi Cherubini conservatory in Florence, the Girolamini Library in Naples, the library of the Roman Philharmonic Academy, the multi-media library of the Fondazione Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and the library of the Fondazione Rossini in Pesaro; the miniature choir books from the library of the Abbey of Montecassino; *Ars nova* fragments from the International Museum of Music in Bologna; miniature music books from Bologna's Archiginnasio; the miniature books of San Domenico held in Perugia's Biblioteca Augusta



di Perugia; the 17th century books on dances at the Court of Savoy from Turin's National Library; the collections of Gaetano Donizetti's manuscripts from the Mai Civic Library and from the Donizetti Museum in Bergamo; the collection of musical manuscripts by Vivaldi, Benedetto Marcello, Domenico Scarlatti, and Alessandro Stradella; and yet more manuscripts and autographs by Italian musicians, especially Verdi and Puccini, held in Italian state libraries and other institutions, such as Ricordi&Company's prestigious Ricordi Archive, which has made available over 8,000 images – of sheet music, preparatory sketches, fashion plates, graphic material, stage and performer photographs, letters, and various other documents - thanks to an agreement with the Ministry. Parma's *Casa della Musica* and the International Centre for Music Periodicals (CIRPeM - *Centro internazionale periodici musicali*) created the digital version of their extensive collection of Italian musical periodicals. Additionally, the Municipality of Parma has helped to research musical life in Parma and its ties to Giuseppe Verdi. In Lucca, a good degree of synergy was established between many of the city's institutions and the Ministry: the State Library, the Luigi Boccherini Music Institute, the State Archive, the Municipal Archive, and the National Committee for Celebrating Puccini joined together to launch digital collection projects dedicated to Giacomo Puccini and musical life in Lucca.

With regards to digital collections focusing on **geography and cartography**, mention must be made of the extensive digitalization efforts carried out by Venice's Biblioteca Marciana, encompassing works by Corelli, portraits, model ships, depictions of local costumes and mores, and various types of documentative and scientific illustrations. The collection includes works by G. Piranesi and Vasi. Another major initiative in this field is the collaborative effort with the Italian Geographical Society, which has achieved significant results, with the establishment of its own digital library.

With regards to **scientific material**, collaborative efforts with Florence's Galileo Museum have made available texts on the history of perspective and representation, and rare and valuable essays from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Other interesting collections are linked to Galileo Galilei. Along with his writings, there are important works for the history of mathematics and science in Italy, dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Finally, there are works by graduates of the Scuola Galileiana, most of which are held in Florence's Central National Library. The important collections of the National Library in Florence, which re-create the contents of Galileo's library, are also available. The digital periodicals library of the Italian Union of Mathematicians will soon be available.

In the field of **literature**, the following are available: the *Scrittori d'Italia* series, started in 1910, directed by Benedetto Croce, and published by Laterza in Bari, with which publisher an agreement has been signed to publish the books online. Florence's Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana made available the Plutei collection, comprising manuscripts from the Medici family's private collection along with texts in Latin and Greek. There is also an inventory of Italian Medieval libraries put together by the International Society for the Study of Medieval Latin Culture (Sismel - *Società Internazionale per lo Studio del Medioevo latino*).

The National Library in Florence has made a major contribution in this field, with its collection on the Bible in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, including printed volumes, interpretations, and censorship efforts. The collection intends to reflect the complexity of the history of the Bible and related discussions during the Renaissance. It is a multi-purpose instrument for studying the changes that affected the Bible during the crucial years between the end of the 15th century and the first few decades of the 17th.



Highlights include the 10th century "*Messale Ottoniano*", the library's oldest manuscript, the "*Palatino 556*" manuscript, and the so-called "*Lancillotto*" manuscript, wonderfully illustrated with over 300 pen drawings. The *Gran Tour* collection features many digitized texts on the Grand Tour in Tuscany, including manuscripts and printed books, travel books, memoirs, diaries, reports, and iconography from the Olschki, Palatino, and Magliabechiano collections of the National Library in Florence.

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