

An Olympic Mosaic

Multidisciplinary Research and Dissemination of Olympic Studies
CEO-UAB: 20 Years

Editors

Emilio Fernández Peña
Berta Cerezuela
Miquel Gómez Benosa
Chris Kennett
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Centre d'Estudis Olímpics
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona



Ajuntament de Barcelona

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The Management of Information and Documentation at a Research Centre Service: The CEO-UAB Information and Documentation Service (IDS)

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Given the challenge of the nomination of Barcelona as the venue for the XXVth Olympiad, the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) promoted the creation of the Olympic Studies Centre (CEO-UAB), a centre set up in mid 1989 to foster training, research and promotion in relation with the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games.

1. Origins and evolution

One of the first projects undertaken by CEO-UAB was the creation of its Information and Documentation Service (IDS), the first in Spain to specialise in the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games. At first, this service basically supported the research activities of CEO-UAB and the university itself. But its repercussion soon extended further than that and, from 1990 to the celebration of the 1992 Games, there was a continuous increase in its use by the most diverse of users: researchers, professors and students from other universities and research centres, both from in and outside of Spain; journalists; sports-people; visitors from other sports information services; people that were involved in some way with the Barcelona Games or who were simply interested in the Olympic phenomenon.

But as well as being a research instrument, the IDS in its early stages also did its own research – “Creation and management of a documentation centre on the Olympic Movement” (reference DEP 89/0835) – promoted by CEO-UAB itself and the Area of Documentation of the Department of Catalan Philology at the UAB; this received the support of the Interministerial Commission of Science and Technology and was undertaken from November 1989 to November 1992. The idea was to design an IDS that was specialised in the Olympic Movement and Olympic Games: to constitute a collection, apply the most appropriate documentary techniques to a specialised archive and to create different promotional products and services, all in consideration of the information and communication technologies of the time. By the end of the 1989-1992 period, the IDS was fully consolidated.

At first, the IDS was fundamentally conceived as a reference service, which could resolve any of its users’ information needs and/or guide them towards the most appropriate sources and resources. But the demands of researchers and other users in this primary stage, added to the fact that the state of technology was far from being able to offer the kind of services that modern-day documentation centres are able to offer, led to the redefinition of its objectives and the decision to opt for a mixed model:

the IDS would be a reference service that could satisfy and guide its users, but at the same time would constitute a collection that may not have been particularly large in quantitative terms, but that was highly specialised.

This collection was constituted on the basis of two core areas: on the one hand, the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Game – with a small presence of sport in general, as a complement – and on the other, the Barcelona Olympiad and its Games.

The first section contained monographs, some periodical publications, abundant grey literature, reference works, posters, etc. Special importance was given to official reports of the Olympiads since Rome 1960, material that was particularly hard to find in other libraries and documentation centres. Moreover, this block was gradually filled with audiovisual material on the modern Olympic Games.

The section on Barcelona'92 quickly became the most original and most requested. Currently, researchers seeking information on the candidature, the Olympiad and the Barcelona'92 Olympic Games will find a hugely important set of archives in the Barcelona Administrative Municipal Archive, provided by the Barcelona Olympic Foundation, and which contains bibliographic and administrative documentation from COOB'92, and also the foundation itself. But at that time, and until months after the summer of 1992, if a researcher sought documents on the event taking place, he or she had little option other than the CEO-UAB IDS, which received high value unpublished materials originating from the Olympic Office or COOB'92, among others.

CEO-UAB also received two press dossiers on paper (which were later microfilmed). The first was sent by COOB'92 over the period of duration of the organization and the Games, and contained news stories from some thirty Spanish newspapers. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) provided the second (the same dossier circulated by the IOC itself), in which the international press was scanned. At present, anybody can access newspaper articles online in a variety of ways, and although the idea of a paper-format press dossier may seem somewhat archaic, at the time it was material of unquestionable value.

As a specialised reference service, the IDS obtained the tools required to respond to a wide range of information needs. For example, it possessed different sports databases, reference works, bulletins on the latest acquisitions of different specialised centres and libraries around the world, and was able to make retrospective bibliographic searches. Also, researchers that were members of CEO-UAB could also use a selective information dissemination service.

The only weak point in the early years was that, for different administrative reasons, the collection did not form part of the UAB catalogue, but this issue would later be resolved.

During the Barcelona'92 Olympic Games, the IDS's activity was focused on offering a reference service to the Press Service for Unaccredited Media, a pioneer project in the history of the Olympic Games that involved the participation of CEO-UAB in collaboration with Barcelona City Council, the Barcelona International Press Centre, Fira de Barcelona and COOB'92. This service managed to cater for more than 2,300 consultations.

As we said earlier, at the end of the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, the CEO-UAB IDS had become a unique service in Spain. Thanks to the opportunities offered by new technologies and the diversification of the services on offer, it has now become a reference point in the international field of Olympic studies and documentation.

2. Collection management

The development of the collection and services after the Games has been marked, on the one hand, by the existence of, accessibility to and cooperation with other documentary sources on the Barcelona'92 Olympic Games, the Olympic phenomenon and sport, both in the Catalan and international spheres; and, on the other, by the research centre's own needs.

The documentary collection managed today by the IDS maintains much of its initial structure, and forms a specialised collection on the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games and has a special collection on the Barcelona'92 Olympic Games. The sporting section has continued to increase in size and importance, in particular in the fields of social sciences and humanities.

The IDS currently has more than 5,000 monographs, 124 periodical titles, 725 audiovisual materials, press dossiers, posters and photographs. The collection of periodicals includes academic journals on the field of sport, general sports and Olympic magazines and magazines published by sporting bodies. The audiovisual collection is mainly made up of materials used in the research done by the centre, in particular the broadcasts of Olympic ceremonies on different international television channels, and materials on the Olympic phenomenon.

Of the whole collection, the collection on Barcelona'92 are made up of 1,322 documents, of which 1,052 correspond to monographic works, 13 are periodical publications and 257 are audiovisual. Most of the documents correspond to materials published by COOB'92 and other bodies that were directly or indirectly involved in the organization of the Games, impact studies or other aspects related with the Games that were published by commercial publishers, and research and studies resulting from institutional commissions or grants.

To manage the collection, in 1995 CEO-UAB received the support of the Barcelona Olympic Foundation, by means of its research grants programme, which consisted of the cataloguing, publication and Internet access to the documentary fonds on Barcelona'92 by CEO-UAB. These archives were included in the UAB catalogue, forming part of the Collective Catalogue of the Universities of Catalonia (CCUC). The cataloguing started in 1995 and has been periodically continued, through the incorporation into the catalogue of what are considered to be the most significant documents.

The IDS has promoted cooperation with other sports libraries in Catalonia, Spain and the rest of the world. CEO-UAB is a member of the International Association for Sports Information and was a member of its Executive Council from 2007-2009.

3. The IDS: providing external and internal services

As for functions and services, these have been adapted to the characteristics and requests of external users, as well as the research centre's own needs. In terms of external services, after the Games it has offered reference and lending services, research visits and knowledge transfer services regarding Barcelona'92.

3.1. External services

The reference service caters for requests coming mainly from the academic, Olympic and sports worlds by means of regular mail, fax, telephone and e-mail. A study of the consultations made since 1994 reveals variations in the audience that have conditioned development strategies. The audience has become more diverse and international. Of the consultations, 85% were national around the time of the Barcelona'92 Olympic Games, but this figure had fallen to 19% in 2008, with an increase in international consultations, mainly from Europe. There has also been a logical decrease in the number of *in situ* consultations in the library and an increase in enquiries made via e-mail, which had reached 71% by 2008.

From a quantitative point of view, the number of consultations has been maintained, with a notable increase in enquiries in the years when editions of the Summer Games have been held. Thematically, enquiries about Barcelona'92 have lessened, while more general enquiries about the Olympic phenomenon have increased in number. There has been a certain equilibrium in the field of sport. Enquiries have been attended to in relation with PhD theses, articles in academic journals, consultancy reports, degree projects, as well as enquiries simply related to inquisitiveness, school lessons, commitments to the organisation of editions of the Olympic Games or for seeking out experts in the international field to help with specific issues.

As stated earlier, one of the main objectives of CEO-UAB since its creation has been the dissemination of the Olympic Movement and raising awareness of what the Barcelona'92 Olympic Games were and represented. Over the years, the IDS has also been consolidating a series of knowledge transfer services addressed both at the international university community and other agents involved in the organisation of sports events that seek knowledge on specific aspects of the organization of the Barcelona'92 Olympic Games.

Such documents on the Olympic Games form one of the main components of the legacy that was left for the community that hosted them, and offers a reference service that facilitates access to sources on the Games, including the official archive, analysis and impact studies, and contact with members of the organising committee and experts. It also collaborates with the institutions that were associated to Barcelona'92 through the organization of seminars and visits from delegations from candidate cities or host cities of the Olympic Games. The activities are carried out on an on-demand basis, are adapted to the needs of each collective, and are organized in collaboration with other bodies and experts in different fields.

It also offers the possibility for researchers to make research visits to the UAB – through inter-university cooperation programmes or by their own initiatives – and to benefit from its documentary services. Visitors can use CEO-UAB's facilities, can access a special lending service and receive guidance about other information services and sources of information that could be of use to them while they are visiting.

It should finally be added that the IDS also maintains a special weekend lending service for students and staff of the UAB itself.

3.2. Internal services

As for functions and services of an internal nature, the IDS can be considered a transversal service that supports the three functions or areas of activity of CEO-UAB: training, research and dissemination, as well as the management of institutional information and communication.

As for information management services applied to training, a special reference service is offered to students doing the training activities promoted by CEO-UAB and for the management of products to support Internet-based training.

The management of digital content consists of creating, managing, publishing and disseminating contents on digital supports, mainly the Internet. CEO-UAB has developed different projects in this area to support teaching activities conducted from the centre itself, which are gradually being provided to other educators in the international arena. The participation of the IDS in these projects varies, but it tends to play the role of project management, working in conjunction with the academic management responsible for the quality and coherence of the published content, and with the technical management in charge of the adaptation and/or development of technological tools. The responsibilities assigned to the information professionals involved in these projects include: general coordination, overseeing the procurement of originals, text editing, publishing material and, finally, promoting content.

With respect to information management services applied to research, these depend on the type of research project and can imply three levels of participation: documentary support; data management and exploitation; and research into Olympic information and documentation.

The first case refers to research projects of a theoretical nature, where the participation of documentation personnel is limited to the search for documentary sources of interest to the principal researcher and/or team. The main sources of information that are used to provide a response to these consultations depend on the degree of specificity of the consultation. The most common procedure involves presenting the result of the documentary search to the researcher, in particular those materials that are considered most adequate for the project, and indicating the type of accessibility to the original. As for the format for presenting the results, this is adapted to the researcher's needs, both in terms of the format of the bibliographic citation and of the format of the document.

IDS staff play a more active role in research projects whose methodology includes the management and exploitation of data using a database. Surveys of institutions and analyses of sample websites are examples that have required a database to facilitate data collection and analysis. In these projects, IDS staff actively join the research team, even intervening in the design of the information gathering process (definition of indicators and variables, and design of forms) and coordinating the design of the database, the standardised entering of data and the exploitation of the system.

Finally, in the research field, actions must be carried out regarding the management of information and documentation on the Olympic Games. Olympic documentation is a specialised area in the field of sports documentation that includes sources of information on the Olympic phenomenon, the management of the information generated through the organization of the Olympic Games, especially the Barcelona'92 Games, and the sources on an edition of the Olympic Games as part of the intellectual capital of the Olympic Movement.

4. A pioneering website on Olympism

With respect to the management of information to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge about the Olympic and sporting phenomenon, the main activities involving the IDS are the coordination and management of the institutional website, the Olympic Studies Portal, and projects for creating Olympic content online.

Even though the Internet's potential was not clear cut in 1995, CEO-UAB and the International Chair in Olympism made a decisive move by launching its first website in 1996, the *Olympic Documentation Highway*. At the IOC's request, its name was changed a few months later to something more descriptive (Olympic Studies Centre), in a context where Internet domains and names were still in a process of construction and regulation. Since that first initiative, every Internet-related action promoted by CEO-UAB has responded not only to the need to have an institutional presence on the Web, but also to the objective of facilitating the international Olympic community's access to knowledge on the Olympic phenomenon.

To that end, the CEO-UAB website has always maintained a structural corpus that, besides offering institutional information, encompasses services and content adapted to the needs of its principal target audience: international Olympic researchers. These services and content include a repository of documentary resources published by either the centre itself or third parties, a directory of institutions and experts in the field of Olympic studies, news (such as an academic events calendar and new publications) and a specialist consultation service. Since the website's launch, these services and content have been available in three languages: English, Spanish and Catalan.

Thanks to the Internet and its dedicated website, CEO-UAB has managed to offer a continuous service to its users worldwide. Since the launch of the original *Olympic Documentation Highway*, the website has been accessed from very diverse geographical locations and the number of visits has been constant throughout the day and night. The Internet has allowed the IDS to expand the audience it is able to serve and to create new experiences for bringing users closer to information and academic knowledge, thus minimising the time/space barrier and the delays between information production and its availability for consultation. An example of this was the space created during the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, where several of the centre's researchers present at those Games were able to offer first-hand information about their activities and experiences.

Historically, academic results have been marked by delays between the production and dissemination of knowledge through articles in journals and books, or participation in academic conferences. People who do not specialise in the field have also found it hard to get access to such knowledge. By means of its website, CEO-UAB has implemented several initiatives aimed at minimising these barriers. An example of this was the International Chair in Olympism's first online symposium, held in 1999, on the topic of Olympic volunteering. By means of the web pages for the symposium, it was possible not only to access the texts of sessions held in Lausanne, but also to participate in debates via a discussion board. There has been continuity in

the experience every year since then, through webcasts of conferences and seminars given by guest professors of the International Chair in Olympism. Other examples include the creation of a digital deposit for research documents published by the CEO-UAB research team, and the e-publication of monographs.

The various initiatives promoted over the years were consolidated in 2010 with the launch of the CEO-UAB Olympic Studies Portal, published in English, Catalan and Spanish. The aim of the Portal is to gather and disseminate knowledge on the Olympic phenomenon produced by the academic community worldwide. In addition, the Portal aims to offer tools that facilitate knowledge sharing and the identification of expertise, while having a greater social and user-participation orientation. The Portal has a social media vocation, and can be found on the main social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube), where it not only offers users an information service, but also encourages them to get involved.

Through these initiatives, the IDS has broken down physical barriers and expanded its collection, creating a digital library that contains a set of resources providing documentary content and tools to provide support to the members of the international university community with a need for information on the Olympic phenomenon. Users can find various collections published by the centre, as well as a large number of previously selected and classified external resources.

This Portal also incorporates the section “Who’s who in Olympic studies”, an evolution of the International Directory of Olympic Studies, a joint project of CEO-UAB and the IOC Olympic Studies Centre since 1995, which offers information on professors and researchers associated to the academic world and research centres that specialise in Olympic studies. Finally, news services are offered, such as the academic agenda, which provides information on events of an academic nature that deal with Olympic issues and bibliographic news, featuring bibliographic information on recently published academic books around the world on the Olympic Movement.

The Olympic Studies Portal will be complemented by a new joint project with the Barcelona Olympic Foundation called ‘Barcelona Olympic Memory’, the aim of which is to coordinate and disseminate documentary sources on the Barcelona’92 Olympic Games and Olympism in Catalonia. As part of this project, the Barcelona Olympic window is due to be launched in 2011. It is an Internet space that will gather and offer access to documentary sources on the Barcelona Olympic Games and the Olympic phenomenon in Catalonia.

IDS staff have also adopted a key role in the management of institutional information and communication. On the one hand, they establish the criteria for archiving the documentation generated by CEO-UAB’s activity, systematically register and store the information in reference to this activity in order to facilitate its retrieval later, and organise the information in accordance with the specific criteria of the document in which it is to be included. They also contribute to the establishment of tools and products to facilitate the centre’s internal and external communication.

5. Conclusion

As for the future strategy for the next few years, it is the IDS’s desire to promote the consolidation of the lines of activity developed over the last 20 years, and in particular the offer of knowledge dissemination and transfer services regarding the significance of the organisation of Barcelona’92, and the management of the intellectual capital generated by CEO-UAB’s research, training and dissemination activities.

This analysis of the evolution of the IDS shows how its functions have adapted to the dynamics of its environment within the research centre itself, the UAB and the Catalan and international sporting and Olympic context.

And we could not end this analysis without dedicating a few lines to the role of information professionals. In such a changing and dynamic environment, these have been required to develop skills that go beyond those that are traditional in the

management of documentary sources, which also include, among others, information and communication management, the management of intellectual property and the management of information projects. In this regard, the staff of the IDS, as a university research centre, must be able, on the one hand, to obtain, evaluate and store information, and at the same time, to organise it and systemise it coherently in order for it to be communicated both internally and externally, and by means of the most appropriate media. Moreover, they must be able to conduct the internal and external exchange of information in order to support decision making and problem solving. They must also be familiar with the regulations of intellectual property in order to contribute to the proper management of the exploitation of the organisation's intellectual property. Finally, they must be able to lead local or international information projects, and scientifically consider their area of action: the management of information and knowledge in the field of sport and the Olympic phenomenon.