# Books, Memory, and Territory: Carlo Alberto Digital Library

Anna Maria Marras

Dipartimento di Studi Storici, Università degli Studi di Torino, Torino, Italia

annamaria.marras@unito.it


Andrea Bolioli

Ricercatore indipendente, Torino, Italia
andrea.bolioli@gmail.com

## Abstract[1]

Websites and Digital Libraries can serve not only as platforms for consulting and viewing digital content but also as tools to create connections with the local area, providing a starting point for developing other inclusive and accessible projects and experiences. The Digital Library of Charles Albert's Library at Racconigi Castle (one of the Savoy royal residences in Piedmont) was established as part of the project "The Recovery of the Carlo Alberto Library: A Meeting Place Between the Public and Private Life of the Sovereign" (2018). Physical volumes are restricted from general access, being located within a dedicated library incorporated into a broader visitor tour. One of the main aspects of the project was to make the library's heritage digitally accessible through cataloguing, digitization, and the creation of a digital library. The aims of the project were both to create accessible and reusable multilingual digital content and to engage and broaden the local community.

**Keywords:** Digital libraries; Digitalization; User Experience; Cultural heritage; Collections

*Siti web e biblioteche digitali possono servire non solo come piattaforme per consultare e visualizzare contenuti digitali, ma anche come strumenti per creare connessioni con il territorio, fornendo un punto di partenza per sviluppare altri progetti ed esperienze inclusive e accessibili. La Digital Library della biblioteca di Carlo Alberto al Castello di Racconigi (una delle residenze reali sabaude del Piemonte) è stata realizzata nell'ambito del progetto "Il recupero della Biblioteca Carlo-Albertina, luogo di incontro tra la vita pubblica e privata del sovrano" (2018).*

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*I volumi cartacei si trovano nella biblioteca e non sono fruibili per la consultazione al grande pubblico. Uno degli aspetti principali del progetto è stato quello di rendere accessibile digitalmente il patrimonio della biblioteca attraverso la catalogazione, la digitalizzazione e la creazione di una biblioteca digitale. Gli obiettivi del progetto erano sia creare contenuti digitali multilingue accessibili e riutilizzabili, sia coinvolgere e ampliare la comunità locale.*

**Parole chiave:** Biblioteche digitali; Digitalizzazione; Esperienza dell'utente; Patrimonio culturale; Collezioni

## Introduction

Digital libraries have transformed the way information is accessed, stored, and shared [1]. Unlike traditional libraries, which are bound by physical constraints, digital libraries provide immediate access to vast collections of resources, overcoming geographical and logistical barriers. However, ensuring that digital libraries are both usable and accessible is critical to their effectiveness and inclusivity. A well-designed digital library must cater to diverse user needs, including those of individuals with disabilities, non-expert users, and people with varying levels of digital literacy. The IFLA/UNESCO Manifesto for Digital Libraries defines a digital library as "an online collection of digital objects, of assured quality, that are created or collected and managed according to internationally accepted principles for collection development and made accessible in a coherent and sustainable manner, supported by services necessary to allow users to retrieve and exploit the resources".[2] This definition emphasizes key elements such as accessibility, retrieval, and exploitation, which are central to the project discussed in this contribution. Ensuring content accessibility for users, not only in terms of platform interaction but also linguistically, is crucial for building a digital ecosystem that serves its target communities. Other definitions of digital libraries further highlight these aspects. For instance, the Digital Library Federation describes digital libraries as "organizations that provide the resources, including the specialized staff, to select, structure, offer intellectual access to, interpret, distribute, preserve the integrity of, and ensure the persistence over time of collections of digital works so that they are readily and economically available for use by a defined community or set of communities."[3] This definition underscores the importance of structured access and long-term preservation, aligning with the goals of creating an accessible and sustainable digital library.

This paper details a case study focusing on the Biblioteca di Carlo Alberto (https://www.bibliocarloalberto.it/), examining its inception, subsequent development, and potential trajectory for future evolution.

## Digital Library accessibility and user experience

Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which addresses accessibility, emphasizes that "to enable persons with disabilities to live independently

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[2] IFLA/UNESCO Manifesto for Digital Libraries: https://www.ifla.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/assets/digital-libraries/documents/ifla-unesco-digital-libraries-manifesto.pdf

[3] https://old.diglib.org/about/dldefinition.html

and fully participate in all aspects of life, States shall take appropriate measures to ensure equal access for persons with disabilities to the physical environment, transportation, information, and communications—including information and communication technologies and systems—as well as other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and rural areas." Digital accessibility can be defined as the ability of a website, mobile application, or digital document to be easily accessed, used, and understood by all individuals, including those with visual, auditory, motor, or cognitive disabilities [2]. Digitalization is one of the key steps in digital accessibility—a truly complex and multifaceted process that leads to the direct or indirect creation of digital content, which must then be preserved, managed, and made accessible, including through digital libraries [3].

Digital libraries have revolutionized information access by eliminating physical constraints and providing immediate access to extensive collections. However, the key challenge now is to ensure these digital resources are both usable and accessible, allowing everyone, regardless of digital skills or physical limitations, to benefit. Therefore, the central question is: how can we develop digital libraries that are intuitive, engaging, and inclusive? The solution involves integrating usability principles, accessibility standards, and innovative design strategies.

Usability in digital libraries refers to the ease with which users can navigate the interface, locate relevant content, and interact effectively with available services. An effective digital library should be intuitive to learn, efficient in use, and easy to re-engage with, even after prolonged inactivity. Despite this, many digital library platforms suffer from overly complex information architectures, inconsistent navigation patterns, poor mobile responsiveness, and inefficient search functionalities. These issues significantly hinder user satisfaction and engagement. To address such challenges, usability testing and user-centered design methodologies are essential. They enable the development of systems that align with users' cognitive models and expectations, ultimately improving both accessibility and the overall user experience.

Accessibility ensures that digital libraries are usable by individuals with disabilities. It extends beyond technical compliance measures such as adding alternative text to images or ensuring adequate color contrast. Rather, it involves designing inclusive experiences that accommodate a wide range of user needs, from those who use screen readers, to individuals with cognitive impairments, to users who rely on keyboard navigation. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) [4] provide clear recommendations for making digital content perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust. However, merely adhering to these standards is not sufficient. Accessibility must be embedded within the overall design philosophy of digital libraries to ensure seamless, equitable interaction for all users [4–5].

The Digital Library Accessibility Policy and Practice Guidelines[5] provide guidance for implementing accessibility best practices in digital libraries, emphasizing the need for policies and workflows that ensure equitable access to digital resources. Incorporating these principles ensures that digital libraries are not only repositories of information but also inclusive platforms that cater to the diverse needs of their user communities. A key aspect of digital libraries is their accessibility and usability. The Digital Library Accessibility and Usability Guidelines (DLAUG)[6] emphasize the importance of designing digital libraries that support blind and visually impaired users who rely on screen readers. Providing immediate feedback to users about their actions and

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[4] https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/

[5] https://guidelines.reuse.diglib.org/

[6] https://www.niso.org/niso-io/2021/05/digital-library-accessibility-and-usability-guidelines-dlaug

offering clear guidance in case of errors are also crucial components of an accessible digital library. Usability is an ongoing process that requires continuous iteration and improvement. Regular usability testing with real users[4], including observations, interviews, and surveys, helps identify issues and gather feedback for enhancements. The principles of user-centered design (UCD) and user experience (UX) are fundamental in developing digital libraries that are both accessible and user-friendly. UCD emphasizes designing systems based on the actual needs and behaviors of users, ensuring that digital libraries are intuitive and meet user expectations. This approach involves iterative testing and refinement, incorporating user feedback at each stage to enhance usability. As first emphasized in 1996 article "User-Centered Iterative Design for Digital Libraries" [6], involving users throughout the design process leads to more effective and user-friendly digital library interfaces.

UX focuses on the overall experience users have when interacting with a digital library, encompassing aspects such as ease of navigation, visual appeal, and the efficiency of information retrieval. A positive UX ensures that users can effectively and efficiently achieve their goals within the digital library, leading to higher satisfaction and increased usage [7].

A fundamental aspect of accessibility concerns the readability of texts, i.e. the level of complexity or simplicity of the descriptive and informative textual content presented to the users on the Digital Library website. We are therefore talking about the descriptions of the books and resources contained in the DL, the texts that introduce the DL in general, texts on specific topics relevant to the public, or texts that are part of the DL's storytelling. We are also referring to the way the metadata of digital resources is presented to users, such as which fields of the book records are displayed and how. We are not referring, therefore, to the readability of the books that are part of the DL, which is obviously very varied, e.g., the texts of a historical or specialist collection are obviously more complex than a collection of children's fairy tales.

The study of text readability has a long-standing tradition, which we will not revisit in this article. We will only provide references to the recent book by Giulia Lombardi "Capire i documenti" [8] on Italian language, the important article by Pitler and Nenkova [9] and the recent corpus for readability created by Crossley et al. [10] for English language. In summary, the readability of a text is based on three main components: the average length of sentences and words; the lexical component; the syntactic component. Short sentences and short words are generally more readable and understandable than long sentences or long words. The well-known GULPEASE readability index for the Italian language indeed considers these components. The lexical component pertains to the semantic content of vocabulary. This involves considering whether the language employs common or complex words, technical or specialized terminology, and archaic expressions. Regarding Italian, a text is simple and understandable if it primarily contains words from the basic Italian vocabulary (see for example the "Vocabolario di Base della lingua italiana" by Tullio De Mauro.[7] Finally, there is the syntactic component: a sentence with a simple syntactic structure, which does not contain many embedded subordinate clauses or ambiguous syntactic structures, is easier to read and understand. In addition to these components, there are also the dimensions of textual coherence and cohesion and other pragmatic dimensions, which we do not describe here.

There has long been a range of automatic tools and readability indices, as well as guidelines aimed at promoting clear and comprehensible writing across different domains. As for the Italian language, we can mention the READ-IT tool developed a few years ago by CNR-ILC [11].

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[7] https://dizionario.internazionale.it/

## The project

The private library of King Carlo Alberto is situated on the first floor of the Royal Castle of Racconigi. In 1832, Carlo Alberto commissioned architect Pelagio Palagi to expand and renovate the castle, resulting in the design of this library. Over time, particularly after 1930, the collection was enriched with volumes gathered by Umberto II of Savoy, culminating in an elegant mahogany study that is now part of the castle's tour. Between 2017 and 2018, a comprehensive restoration and revitalization project was undertaken for this library, funded by the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation. Titled "The Restoration of the Carlo Alberto Library: A Meeting Place Between the Sovereign's Public and Private Life," the initiative was conceived and executed by the Association Le Terre dei Savoia, in collaboration with the Castle of Racconigi (Piedmont Regional Museums Directorate). Beyond the physical restoration, the project introduced a digital library named the "Carlo Alberto Library," accessible at https://www.bibliocarloalberto.it/. Terre dei Savoia is an association of municipalities in the Piedmont region of Italy, spanning the provinces of Turin, Cuneo, and Asti. This area is renowned for its historical, cultural, and agricultural significance, as well as its stunning natural beauty. The Terre dei Savoia association is committed to promoting this territory through various initiatives, such as tourism promotion, the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, and support for sustainable economic development. The Castle of Racconigi is a historic residence located in Racconigi, in the province of Cuneo, Piedmont region of Italy. Its history began in the 11th century as a defensive structure, but it was under the House of Savoy that the castle experienced its period of greatest splendour, transforming into a sumptuous holiday residence. As outlined in the recent National Digitization Plan,8 an effective digitization project requires a clear definition not only of its various implementation phases but also of the methods intended to enhance and make accessible the produced content [3]. In the case of the Racconigi Castle Library project, a small digital library within a multilingual website was identified as the primary tool for communication, enjoyment, and sharing of digital content. The main activities carried out are briefly described below.

### Cataloging

The book cataloging was conducted according to the standards of the National Library Service (SBN) [12], starting from a preliminary pre-cataloging carried out in 2007-2008, consisting of approximately 4,900 records. Guidelines were established for the correction and integration of the pre-cataloging. Data cleaning and normalization were performed, including the elimination of records with empty fields or other non-standard values (e.g., "-"), and the normalization of abbreviations such as AA.VV., NN., S.l., S.n., etc. Authors' names were standardized according to SBN and/or VIAF standards, and publication dates were normalized. New records were created for volumes absent in the pre-catalog, reaching a total of 5,108 books.

The book catalogue is accessible on the website through a faceted search engine, i.e. through its OPAC (On-line Public Access Catalogue), which allows the public to access the information held in the catalogue with user-friendly search modalities. The detailed metadata of the bibliographic resource is displayed to the user in a dedicated detail sheet that contains the following fields: Bibliographic level, Document type, Title, Author, Language, Publisher, Date, Place, Size, Pages, Collocation, Shelf.

Instead of applying the Dewey Decimal Classification to the volumes, a semantic indexing of the content was produced using the Nuovo Soggettario [13] and other resources for metadata in line with the project's accessibility and internationalization goals. As is well known, the Nuovo

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8 https://digitallibrary.cultura.gov.it/il-piano/

Soggettario (NS) is the official indexing language used by the Italian National Bibliography (BNI) and most libraries in the National Library Service (SBN). It can be used to index the content of works in every disciplinary field and of any nature (texts, images, sounds, etc.), on various media (print, digital, etc.), within libraries, archives, media libraries, and other cultural heritage institutions [14]. It has been developed in compliance with the IFLA recommendations, and other international standards in the field of subject indexing. The main component of the NS is a general thesaurus available on the web since 2007[9], edited by the National Central Library of Florence. The thesaurus comprises nowadays (2024) approximately 73.800 terms and it is updated on a regular basis. The Linked Open Data version of NS thesaurus is published as a RDF/XML dataset in the Linked Open Data Cloud.[10]

Each bibliographic resource of the Carlo Alberto DL includes metadata related to the content of the works, encompassing both subjects from the Nuovo Soggettario and proper names of people and places discussed in the books. In the front-end user interface, we named this field "Topics" ("Argomenti" in Italian) instead of "Subjects" ("Soggetti" in Italian) both to assist the users and because it includes additional information beyond the values specified in the Nuovo Soggettario.

All metadata were translated into French and English following SBN guidelines (when available, the Library of Congress Subject Headings [15], and the linked data vocabularies of the Bibliothèque nationale de France [16]. When the Carlo Alberto DL was developed in 2017-2018, the linking of Italian, English and French bibliographic subjects wasn't yet at a mature stage. MACS project (Multilingual Access to Subjects) had already developed a multilingual subject access using concordances to the following subject headings: RAMEAU (Bibliothèque nationale de France), LCSH (British Library) and SWD (Deutsche National-Bibliothek and Bibliothèque nationale suisse), as described in Laundry 2016 [17]. But, as it is stated in (Riva, 2022) [18], perhaps too pessimistically, "Cataloguing has taken many steps towards greater internationalisation and inclusion, but one area remains stubbornly intractable: providing transparent access to users despite differences in language of descriptive cataloguing and language of subject access. [...] Yet providing access through metadata is supposed to be the role of the catalogue." Therefore, while developing the Carlo Alberto DL, the mapping between subjects in the three languages was carefully checked manually. We used NC thesaurus translations, when they were present (e.g., https://thes.bncf.firenze.sbn.it/termine.php?id=9228). Alternatively, we made a mapping between the monolingual subject headings. The result was a multilingual thesaurus of 644 terms in Italian, French and English.

In the end, a downloadable version in RDF Turtle format was created [19], following bibliographic Linked Open Data standards, using controlled vocabularies from Schema.org and Bibframe.

### Digitization

The project team, including the catalogue curators, selected a set of 60 volumes for digitization. The selection criteria were primarily based on the volumes' connections to the themes of the visitor routes of the Savoy residence and to the local area. Moreover, this selection was intended to serve as a pilot case for further developments.

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[9] http://thes.bncf.firenze.sbn.it/ricerca.php

[10] https://lod-cloud.net/dataset/bncf-ns

The volumes were digitized on-site at high resolution using an Atiz BookDrive planetary scanner. A total of 15,000 pages were digitized in TIFF format; automatic OCR was performed on all scanned pages, and JPEG copies at 300 dpi were created. Multi-page color PDFs with searchable text were then generated.

Unlike mass digitization projects of library volumes, selecting a relatively small subset of volumes was a choice driven not only by economic constraints but also by broader considerations regarding the project's purpose, which was not merely scanning books but enhancing a piece of cultural heritage and experimenting with a digitization process oriented towards online users and visitors to the Castle. Digitizing books went beyond simple scanning; it aimed to enrich cultural heritage and to experiment a new approach to digitization designed for online users and visitors to the Castle.

### The Full-text Search Engine

A full-text search engine was developed to query both the catalogue metadata and the texts of the digitized volumes. The search engine interface is available in three languages: Italian, English, and French. The search box features autocomplete: as the user begins typing a word, the engine displays the most frequent terms present in the catalogue.

The engine includes six facets, or filters, in the right column: Author, Date, Language, Publisher, Place, Subject/Topics. Results can be sorted by relevance or alphabetically by title, author, publisher, or chronologically. As we wrote previously, the detailed metadata of the bibliographic resource is displayed to the user in a dedicated detail card that opens when the user clicks on the book title.

For digitized books that underwent OCR, text analysis and indexing were performed, along with text mining and keyword extraction. Thus, the search engine allows searches within the texts of the works (like Google Books and Internet Archive). Word clouds of the extracted terms are visible on the individual book description pages. Regarding the usefulness of full-text search in digital libraries, we refer the reader to [20].

### Web Strategy

The multilingual website was developed using the WordPress CMS, ensuring accessibility to users in Italian, English, and French. The website's creation was guided by the Web Strategy framework designed by the Digital Cultural Heritage group of ICOM Italy [21], which provided a structured approach to digital communication and audience engagement. In this context, "web strategy" refers to a cohesive and integrated set of elements aimed at promoting the mission, visual identity, and brand awareness of an institution. This involves a strategic combination of various online tools and platforms, including the website itself, social media channels, and initiatives that foster participation and community building. The website's creation was guided by the Web Strategy framework designed by the Digital Cultural Heritage group of ICOM Italy. The framework consists of five levels and seventeen parameters, covering key areas such as planning, content production, and community engagement.

For the Project, the web strategy was specifically designed to reach a diverse audience, encompassing both visitors to the reading room and online (international) users, while also engaging local stakeholders who consider the Castle of Racconigi a shared cultural asset at the center of a broader cultural network, both locally and internationally. To achieve this goal, considerable effort was devoted to the careful drafting of textual content, ensuring accessibility and readability for all users. This was accomplished by aligning text to the left, using short and concise sentences, avoiding technical jargon, and favouring present-tense verbs to enhance

clarity and immediacy. Additionally, a meticulous SEO strategy was implemented to optimize page indexing through the careful selection of relevant keywords.

The website's visual design received significant attention, starting with the creation of a dedicated logo and customized icons for the reading pathways. The result is a coordinated and distinctive visual identity that not only represents the project itself but also reinforces its connection with related cultural initiatives. Beyond showcasing books, the website was also conceived as an interactive gateway to the places these books describe, fostering connections between literature, history, characters, and the local territory through interactive maps.

The website is structured into six main sections: Home, Library, Castle, Catalog, Books, Savoia Experience, and Contacts, with the later addition of a Podcast page. The homepage serves as the project's showcase, divided into three main areas: a prominent slider featuring images from the books to immediately capture users' attention, a central section highlighting reading pathways, and a structured navigation system guiding visitors through the platform's key content.

Each section has a distinct purpose. The Library page introduces the historical context of the library and provides an overview of the project. The Castle page is dedicated to thematic visitor itineraries, with the first available itinerary titled Private Life of a King. The Catalog page offers access to the book collection and an advanced search engine, while the Books section focuses specifically on curated reading pathways, which are detailed further in a dedicated section. Finally, the Podcast page, added later, is dedicated to the *Letture al Castello* (Readings at the Castle) project, expanding the platform's multimedia engagement and offering users an additional way to experience the castle's rich literary and historical heritage.

### Storytelling

Storytelling plays a fundamental role in cultural communication by narrating small stories, anecdotes, and incorporating graphic and visual elements that arouse curiosity and interest. Digital storytelling combines the art of storytelling with the use of digital media to create, collect, store, retrieve, find, share, and utilize stories captured in digital form [21]. Even catalog information and metadata can be made more narrative or provide elements upon which to build engaging stories or texts, as seen in projects like the "Digital Itineraries of Catalogo Generale dei Beni Culturali"[11] or in the European project "Narratives in Digital Libraries",[12] which, starting from Europeana, creates storytelling tools for audience engagement. Furthermore, as highlighted in her recent volume, Sara Dinotola [22] notes that storytelling can be a tool that, among other things, serves to "strengthen collaboration among the various protagonists of the cultural ecosystem," and in the case presented here, this was the main element upon which the strategy was built.

To construct a storytelling project, it's necessary to develop a specific strategy starting from some fundamental points:

[1] Identify the target audience: in this project, they are potential visitors and local communities, in addition to scholars and researchers, particularly those specializing in the library domain and in the history of the House of Savoy.

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[11] https://catalogo.beniculturali.it

[12] https://dlnarratives.eu/project.html

[2] Define objectives: to compile a catalogue of the volumes, promote the library and ensure its digital accessibility, develop new forms of communication, and contribute to increasing the number of visitors to the Castle

[3] Choose a theme: the identified themes are related to the subjects of the selected books, thematic visit paths, and the territory.

[4] Use the right media: in this project we created (or reused) written texts, images, word clouds, interactive maps, and podcasts published in a multilingual website.

The storytelling aimed at narrating a territory (the land of the House of Savoy), a historic place (the Savoy royal residence in Racconigi), a historical figure (Carlo Alberto), and his personal library, which he founded and used [23].

A key element of the digital project was the creation of interactive maps for the reading pathways. These maps serve as a dynamic tool for visualization and exploration, enriching the project's storytelling approach. A total of eight interactive maps were developed—one for each reading pathway—designed to connect books with significant locations related to the House of Savoy, historical figures, or themes explored in the texts. Each location is accompanied by a dedicated information card containing a brief description and an image. The maps function as evolving resources, continuously updated to foster a dynamic relationship between past and present, with the Castle of Racconigi and its library serving as the central point of connection.

The "Books" section provides access to 60 digitized volumes, which have been organized into eight thematic reading pathways: Carlo Alberto, House of Savoy, Childhood, Travels and Places, Satire and Society, Water and Silk, Plants and Cuisine, and the Piedmontese Language. These pathways, carefully selected following an initial review of all volumes, guide visitors through the reading habits of Carlo Alberto, his wife and children, and the later users of this intimate study. Through this curated selection, users gain insight into the cultural landscape of the era, highlighting intriguing details, aspects of private life, and themes connected to the local territory.

For each book, a dedicated page has been created, featuring:

[5] A description of the book's content

[6] A selected excerpt from the text

[7] An interactive word cloud with keywords extracted from the content

[8] An image gallery (for illustrated volumes)

Not all digitized books were published online. To encourage visitors to experience the Castle of Racconigi in person, half of the digitized collection can only be accessed in the castle's reading room, through digital devices (both tablets and PCs). This decision enhances the on-site experience and promotes new visiting opportunities.

Particular attention was given to the organization of content and the clarity of descriptive texts, designed to introduce potential readers to each book in just a few lines, sparking their curiosity. The 20 books available online have been published on Internet Archive,[13] the world's largest open-access digital library. The decision to use this platform was driven by the desire to share a portion of the collection with a wider audience, increasing the visibility of both the books and the castle's library while ensuring cost-effective and sustainable digital library management. A

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[13] https://archive.org/

similar approach was adopted for the Teca Digitale of the Academy of Sciences of Turin.[14] The Library of Carlo Alberto, housed within the Castle of Racconigi, has been transformed into an innovative space known as the Reading Room. Here, traditional bookshelves seamlessly connect with tablet screens, offering visitors an immersive experience. Books become not only objects of study but also gateways to new discoveries, providing inspiration for thematic itineraries and experiential visits within the castle and the surrounding territory.

### The Podcasts of the "Letture al Castello di Racconigi" Project

Building on the digitalization project and particularly the thematic pathways identified in 2022, the "Letture al Castello di Racconigi" initiative was created, specifically designed for children aged 8 to 10, and funded by the CRC Foundation. The main objectives of the project are to promote reading among young children, enhance the bibliographic heritage of the Carlo Alberto Library, and engage local schools.

Through sessions with the participating classes, students explored the book *Favole e novelle* by Lorenzo Pignotti,[15] one of the texts digitized as part of the project. From this starting point, the children created original fairytales because, as it's true that children enjoy familiar stories, it is equally true that they love to invent and create new ones.

The fairytales written by the students were transformed into podcasts and published on the project's website. The podcast format was chosen not only for its popularity in contemporary storytelling but also to ensure accessibility for visually impaired audiences. This aspect highlights the project's strong commitment to inclusion and accessibility—key values that are vital, especially in a museum context. By making the content available in various digital formats, the project not only fosters a deeper connection to cultural heritage but also broadens access to knowledge, making it possible for everyone, regardless of ability, to engage with and enjoy the material. This digital transformation has opened the door to other inclusive and educational projects, demonstrating the powerful potential of digital content to bridge gaps and create more inclusive, accessible spaces.

## Conclusions and future directions

The project's comprehensive approach not only preserves and disseminates cultural heritage but also fosters a deeper connection between the digital and physical realms, enriching the user experience and promoting ongoing engagement with the library's resources. As is well known, digitalization is the process of creating digital records that reproduce analogue artifacts. To enrich and expand this definition, we can add that digitalized materials form the foundation for further knowledge creation and enable the interpretation and enhancement of digital heritage, thereby enriching the user's knowledge experience.

In this project, the experiences offered to users, particularly the reading paths, originate from the study and research of relationships, connections, and dialogue between the territory, the history of the Savoy residence, and the subjects of the books in the library. Digital libraries can effectively promote user engagement, encourage active participation, promote a territory, and

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[14] https://www.accademiadellescienze.it/documenti

[15] https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/lorenzo-pignotti_(Dizionario-Biografico)

fosters new relationships with diverse communities. They also offer users opportunities to develop information skills by supporting independent research, critical analysis, careful evaluation, and the effective reuse of diverse information sources. Furthermore, they enhance awareness of how information is produced and assessed, ultimately facilitating the creation of new knowledge [24].

Adopting a digital perspective reveals a redefined notion of cultural experience, centred on fostering relationships between cultural institutions and their surrounding physical and digital territories and communities. Within this framework, digital libraries function as dynamic environments that go beyond mere access to knowledge, enabling interaction among users and promoting collaborative knowledge creation and dissemination.

By embracing a multidisciplinary approach [25], digital libraries integrate diverse fields of study, enabling richer interpretations and deeper engagement with cultural heritage. They contribute not only to the enrichment of individual and collective memory but also to a more inclusive and participatory knowledge ecosystem. Beyond preserving documentary memory, they capture the diverse imprints of reality, fuelling an ongoing cycle of knowledge creation that is both resilient and forward-thinking.

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