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**DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For  
Paleography Teaching and Research**

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# **DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – Index**

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## **Structure of the presentation**

- **Information systems for paleography research** >>>
- **Effects on the students involved in the management of data with the above systems** >>>
- **The web site “Teaching Materials for Latin Paleography” and the problem of information retrieval** >>>
- **The Digistylus information system** >>>
- **New paradigms for knowledge construction and paleography research** >>>

# DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – M.I.S. for paleography research

A. Cartelli, M. Palma – University of Cassino, Italy

## The site “Women and written culture in the Middle Ages”

It is an online information system with an underlying RDBMS which can manage information on manuscripts and women who wrote them.

Allowed people can access the restricted area to manage the data.

Different query pages (in Italian and English) are available

<http://edu.let.unicas.it/womediev/>



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the website 'Le Donne nel Medioevo'. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'http://edu.let.unicas.it/womediev/'. The website header includes the text 'Univ. di Cassino - Dip. di Filologia e Storia - Sc. di Spac. per conservatori di beni arch. e lib. della civ. medioevale' and 'Università degli Studi di Roma - "La Sapienza" Scuola speciale per archivisti e bibliotecari'. The main content area features a large image of two women sitting at desks writing, with the title 'DONNE E CULTURA SCRITTA NEL MEDIOEVO' overlaid. Below the image, there is a list of navigation options: 'Amministrazione della BASE DATI Area riservata', 'Interrogazione della BASE DATI Area pubblica', and 'Querying the Database Public Area'. At the bottom, there is a paragraph of text in Italian describing the project's goals and methodology.

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**Donne e cultura scritta nel Medioevo**

- [List of shelfmarks](#)
- [Query on manuscripts](#)
- [List of copyists](#)
- [Query on copyists](#)

**NOTICE**

*Women and written culture in the Middle Ages* aims at creating a database of women who left their names in manuscripts up to the fifteenth century. We intend to increase the names of copyists only, by excluding in this first stage illuminators and binders, who were also involved in book production. Our data are normally taken from secondary sources: we hope to reduce their concision and disparity by the direct inspection of manuscripts.

The query of the database can be performed as explained below:

- The first query type creates the list of all shelfmarks in the database including the origin and date of the manuscripts
- The second query type allows the use of one or more fields characterizing each manuscript (their meaning is better explained below). Users can also fill in the *shelfmark* and *text* fields of the query form with some partial data (i.e. only a word or a part of it)
- The third query type lists the names of women copyists in the database including their qualification and period of work
- The fourth query type allows the use of one or more fields characterizing each woman copyist

<b>Name</b>	Only the first name of the woman is reported (in Italian). Exceptions to this rule have been adopted only when the same names are to be found within one manuscript
<b>Qualification</b>	When it is known, a lay or a nun
<b>Date</b>	The exact year or the time interval during which the manuscript was written
<b>Place</b>	The place of origin of the manuscript in the language of its country

# DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – M.I.S. for paleography research

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## The site “BMB online”

It is an online information system with an underlying RDBMS which can manage information on the bibliography of Beneventan manuscripts.

Allowed people can access the restricted area to manage the data.

Different query pages are available

<http://edu.let.unicas.it/bmb/>



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the website 'BMB online'. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'http://edu.let.unicas.it/bmb/'. The website header includes the logo of the University of Cassino and the text 'FACOLTA' di LETTERE E FILOSOFIA' and 'DIPARTIMENTO di FILOLOGIA E STORIA'. The main content area features the title 'Scuola di specializzazione per conservatori di beni archivistici e librari della civiltà medievale' and 'Bibliografia dei manoscritti in scrittura beneventana'. There is a login section on the left with fields for 'Cod. ID' and 'Password', and a 'Conferma' button. The footer contains copyright information: '© 1997 per il sito WEB di A. Cartelli e S. Ruggiero' and 'Progetto e realizzazione base dati on line A. Cartelli Amministrazione scientifica del sito M. Palma, E. Russo'. A 'www VL Recommended' logo is also visible.

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## The *Open Catalogue* of the Manuscripts of the Malatestiana Library

By starting from the idea of the Open Catalogue discussed in 2003 the staff of the Malatestiana Library developed the system which is presented in another session of the conference.

<http://www.malatestiana.it/manoscritti/>



http://www.malatestiana.it/manoscritti/indexg.htm

Open Catalogue of the Malatestiana Manuscripts

Project

Texts

Manuscripts

Forum

News Newsletter

Credits Links

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Last updated: 11-03-2009, 04:30 PM

# DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – **Effects on students**

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The web sites and the underlying information systems were used for research and teaching and induced the following effects:

- people working on a given information system (students, professors, researchers etc.) showed the features of **communities of practices**, because: they identified themselves in the community, they had a common and shared commitment, they shared signs, symbols and strategies (i.e., the repertoire of the knowledge instruments of the community),
- the systems were good examples of **constructivist learning environments**, and helped students develop cognitive apprenticeship strategies,
- the features of **communities of learners (CoLs)** and **fostered communities of learners (FCL)** were detected in the classes working on the described systems,
- **new skills** (the ability for team work, the management of complex tasks and the raising of the individual's skills within the community) and **transversal competences** (computing skills and meta-cognitive apprenticeship strategies) were developed by students.



# DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – The “Teaching Materials” site and I.R. problem

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## The *web site* of Teaching Materials for Latin Paleography

It is made of three sections:

- Reproduction of manuscript pages with their transcriptions
- Texts/documents taken from paleographic literature
- Works in progress

<http://dida.let.unicas.it/links/didattica/palma/paldimat.html>





# DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – The “Teaching Materials” site and I.R. problem

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## Scripts - Topics

The image displays two screenshots of a web browser showing the 'Scripts - Topics' page. The left screenshot shows the 'lecture.html' page, and the right screenshot shows the 'testi.html' page. Both pages feature a circular graphic with the text 'Docenti ricerca' and a magnifying glass over the word 'Docenti'. The browser address bar shows the URL 'http://dida.let.unicas.it/links/didattica/palma/lecture.html' and 'http://dida.let.unicas.it/links/didattica/palma/testi.html'. The page content includes the University of Cassino logo and the text 'CENTRO DI FACOLTA' PER LE T.I.C. E LA DIDATTICA ON LINE'. The main content area lists the authors 'Antonio Cartelli - Marco Palma' and a list of topics: Beneventana, Cancelleresca, Carolina, Corsiva nuova, Gotica, Mercantesca, and Umanistica. A footer message reads 'Cliccare per inviare un messaggio al docente © 2002 del sito web A. Cartelli'.

# **DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – The “Teaching Materials” site and I.R. problem**

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## **Changes in students' behaviours**

During last years the following phenomenon was observed: the more the materials, the more the difficulties the students had in autonomously managing the study materials.

When only a few documents were available, the students read all the texts and autonomously transcribed almost all the plates; now (during the last course), the students mostly read only the texts the professor suggests in his lectures and limit themselves to the analysis of the plates they discuss in the class.

# DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – The “Teaching Materials” site and I.R. problem

A. Cartelli, M. Palma – University of Cassino, Italy

Question 1 – Some lines of folios in three manuscripts are reported below. Put them in the right chronological order and explain your choice.

A

Sed quotiens partes  
singulas ad legendū sumes. sep̄ reducere  
ad memoriā eā quā preposui cause ori  
ginē stude. Quia et p̄ beatū iob qui do  
lens dicitur. passiones dñi eiusq̄ corpo  
ris idest scē. ecclē designant. et amici ei  
hereticorū tenent sp̄ciem.

B

Qui cum sit p̄londor gl̄e. & figura sub  
stantie ei. portansq̄ omnia uerbo uir  
tutis sue. purgationē peccatorum faci  
ens. sedet ad dexteram maiestatis in  
excelsis. Tanto melior angelis effectus.  
quanto differimus p̄ illis nomen here  
ditauit.

C

Os quoniam reizenonir racer dotar ac confer  
soristui annua beate confertionir tollem  
marte locificat presta q̄rute callidahostir  
Incur nonēua fr̄cūit tate deuicta. per  
uenire ad gaucha ip̄rohiter cedente  
mere amur p̄erna. p̄dm̄ Sep̄oñl.

Out of 12 students attending the course only 8 answered the question (66,67%).

Their answers were as follows:

1 soon selected the right answer and gave a good explanation

3 more students first selected the right answer but no or a partial explanation followed

4 students made first a wrong choice, then selected the right answer (no explanation followed)

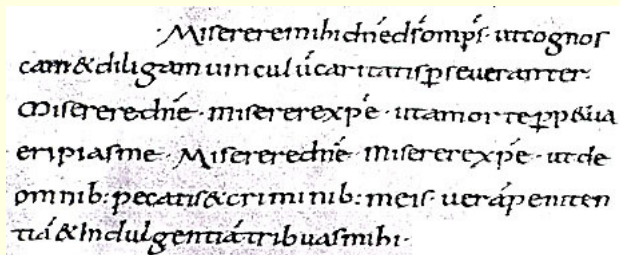
2 students opened the questionnaire but didn't answer

# DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – The “Teaching Materials” site and I.R. problem

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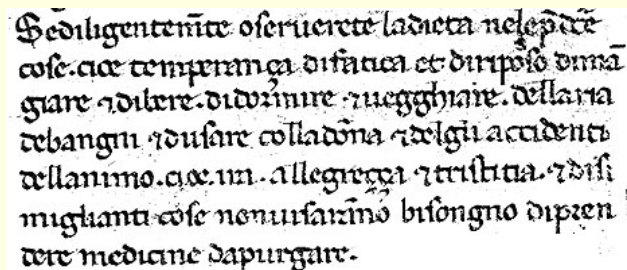
Question 2 – Some lines of folios in three manuscripts are reported below. Specify the writing style for each of them and explain your choice.

**A**



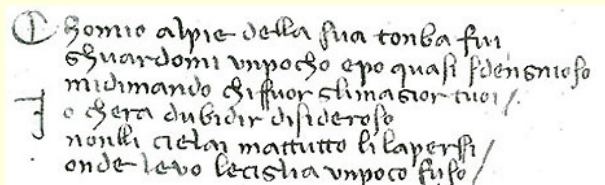
Miserere mihi dñe dñs omp̄: ut cognoscam & diligam uinculū caritatis p̄seueranter. Miserere dñe. miserere xp̄e. ut amor te pp̄tūa eripias me. Miserere dñe. miserere xp̄e. ut de omnib. peccatis & criminib. meis uerā penitentia & indulgentia tribuas mihi.

**B**



Sediligenter nite oseruete la dicta nelep̄tē cose. cioè temperança difatica et dirposō dñm agiare & dilere. didōmire & ueggħiare. dellana de bangnū & dufare colladōna & delgū accidenti dellanimo. cioè un. allegrezza & tristitia. & diti mighanti cose non uisatimo bisogno diprentere medicine dapurgare.

**C**



¶ homo alpie della sua tomba fin  
sguardomi un poco ep̄o quasi p̄dēns me so  
midimando chi fuor schinā sior tuer /  
fo chera dubidū disideroso  
non li aletay mattutto li la per si /  
onde levo letichia un poco fuso /

Out of 12 students attending the course only 3 answered to the question (25%).

Their answers were as follows:

1 soon selected the right answer and gave a good explanation

1 selected the right answer but gave only a partial explanation

1 made first a wrong choice then selected the right answer, but no explanation followed

1 student opened the questionnaire but didn't answer

# **DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – The “Teaching Materials” site and I.R. problem**

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## **Possible reasons for the changes in students’ behaviour**

- The increase in the quantity of materials in the site,
- The overestimation of the students’ knowledge and skills when they are requested to find information,
- The generational differences and the approach younger students have to technology.



# **DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – The Digistylus information system**

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## **Guidelines for the creation of the information system Digistylus**

Students must be the creators of the information on the site (they must organize and input into the system all the data concerned with the documents in the site).

The information in the database must be available to everyone who may be interested in it (by means of the web).

Any information the students put into the system must be approved by one or more scientific coordinators before being available on the web.

Special indices must be implemented in the system to let people measure the difficulty in the transcription of the plates.

A closed forum within the information system is needed to let students communicate among themselves and with the professor.

The evaluation of the students' work and the final score they obtain at the final examination must consider most part of the above elements.

# **DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – The Digistylus information system**

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Students are involved in the project at different levels.

**Individually:** by critically studying the basic topics of the discipline and writing the records in the database.

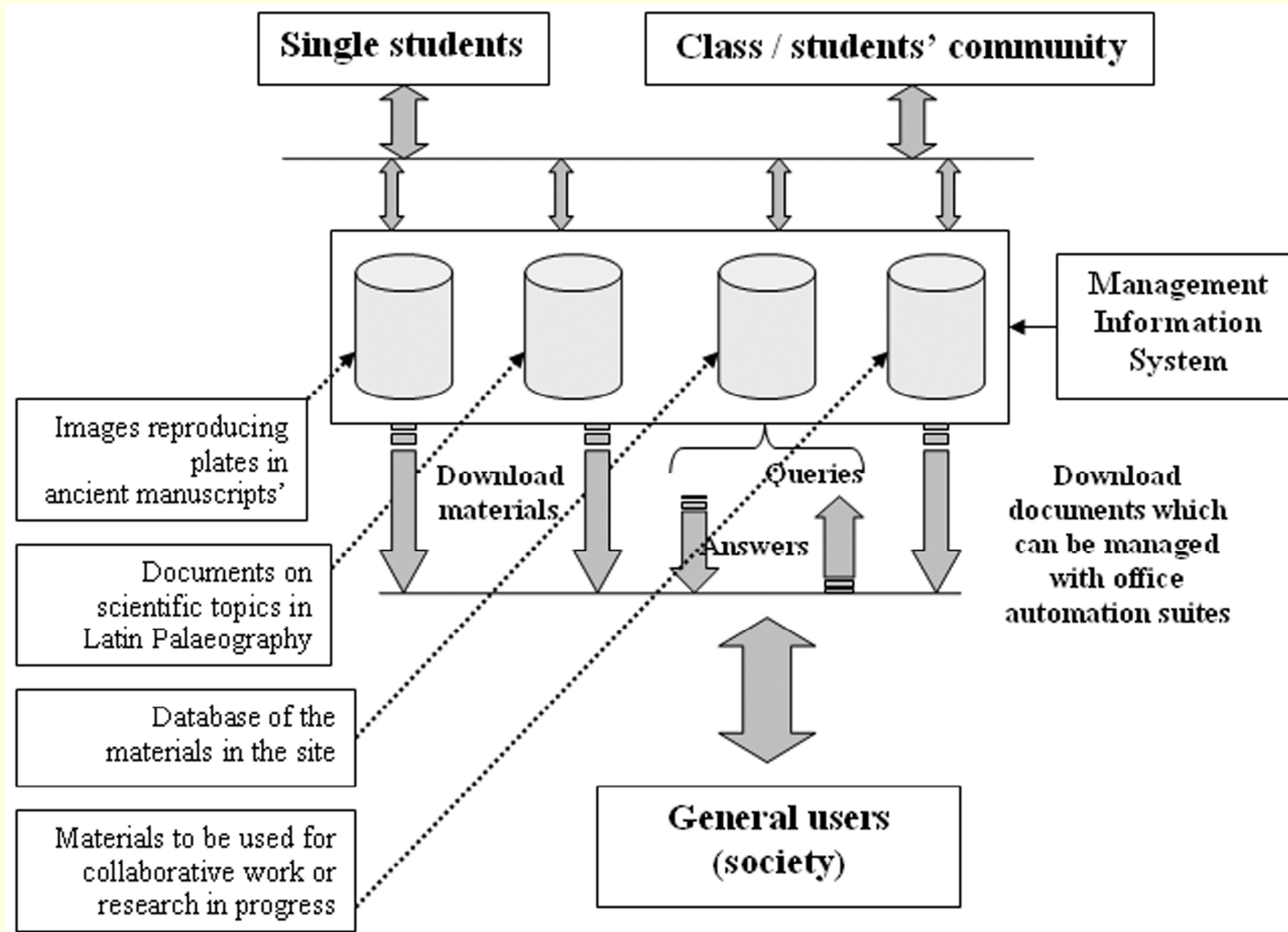
At a **community level** by adopting various strategies:

- a) the legitimate peripheral participation, helping the management of the community and including the weakest subjects,
- b) the implementation of practices with the ICT (Information Communication Technology), letting the system implement the processes people had to conform themselves to, and governing the management of the information acquisition, storing and validation,
- c) team competency learning, inducing the professor to act as a coach and assign to every student the best role according to his basic knowledge and skills.

**Socially:** by considering the utility of the information they produce for people not necessarily expert in Latin palaeography or in any other discipline concerning the study of ancient manuscripts.

# DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – The Digistylus information system

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# **DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – New paradigms for paleography research**

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## **Viewpoints for knowledge construction with the ICT**

By considering **individual strategies** knowledge is built in three different ways: a) by the autonomous interaction with real or virtual phenomena, b) by socially interacting with individuals in a community, c) by actively participating in the society they are immersed in.

From a **theoretical point of view** knowledge is an artifact of mankind and can still be thought of as made of three components: individual, community and social knowledge

# **DIGISTYLUS: An Online Information System For Paleography Teaching and Research – New paradigms for paleography research**

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## **Consequences for paleography research**

Knowledge construction is the result of the influence of all three components: individual, community and social. Planning and carrying out information systems for the management of information must consider all the components.

Implementation of the practices by means of MIS can be considered a new research paradigm because it forces students and general users to create information instead of finding it.

