



# Endangered Languages - Report

Peter Wittenburg  
The Language Archive - Max Planck Institute  
Nijmegen, The Netherlands

- still around 6500 languages spoken world-wide
- uneven distribution of diversity
- every week or two weeks one language is dying
  - Example: Wichita - just a handful elders (~70) are left
- of course languages are changing dramatically
- is there an erosion of structure?
- many revitalization programs but ...
  - very difficult to learn a polysynthetic language for example
  - a proper documentation is a pre-condition
  - documentation and revitalization is very time consuming (transcription: 1:35, translation: 1:25, ling. anal: 1:>100)

# Unesco Map

Country or area:

Name:

ISO 639-3 code:

Vitality:

Number of speakers between  and

R=revitalized: [more on vitality](#)

♪: vulnerable  
 ♪: definitely endangered  
 ♪: severely endangered  
 ♪: critically endangered  
 ♪: extinct

2471 language(s) correspond to your search - [reset criteria](#)

Satellite Hybrid **Terrain** Map

Atlantic Ocean  
Indian Ocean  
Pacific Ocean

POWERED BY Google  
5000 mi  
5000 mi  
y Ltd, MapIT, Mapbox, Mapbox, ORION-ME, PPWK, Tele Atlas, Transnavicom, ZENRIN - [Terms of Use](#)

List of languages:  
[!Gan!ne](#)  
['Ongota](#)  
[|'Auni](#)  
[|Gui](#)  
[|Xaise](#)  
[|Xam](#)  
[A'ingae / Cofan \(Colombia\)](#)  
[A'ingae / Cofan \(Ecuador\)](#)  
[A'tong](#)  
[Aasax](#)  
[Abaga](#)  
[Abai Sungai](#)  
[Abaza](#)  
[Abkhaz](#)  
[Acatepec Mazatec](#)  
[Achagua](#)  
[Aché](#)  
[Acheron](#)  
[Achi'](#)

# Increasing Awareness



- much more awareness after
  - D. Crystal's book "Language Death"
  - UNESCO study (80% of recordings are endangered)
- some large programs (digitization, documentation & archiving)
  - DOBES (Ger) ~70 languages worldwide
  - HRELP (UK)
  - AILLA, ELF (US)
  - PARADISEC (Aus)
  - "FUNAI" (Bra)
  - and many more incl. small initiatives
- collaboration in DELAMAN  
worldwide network of archives for language and music data

# DELAMAN

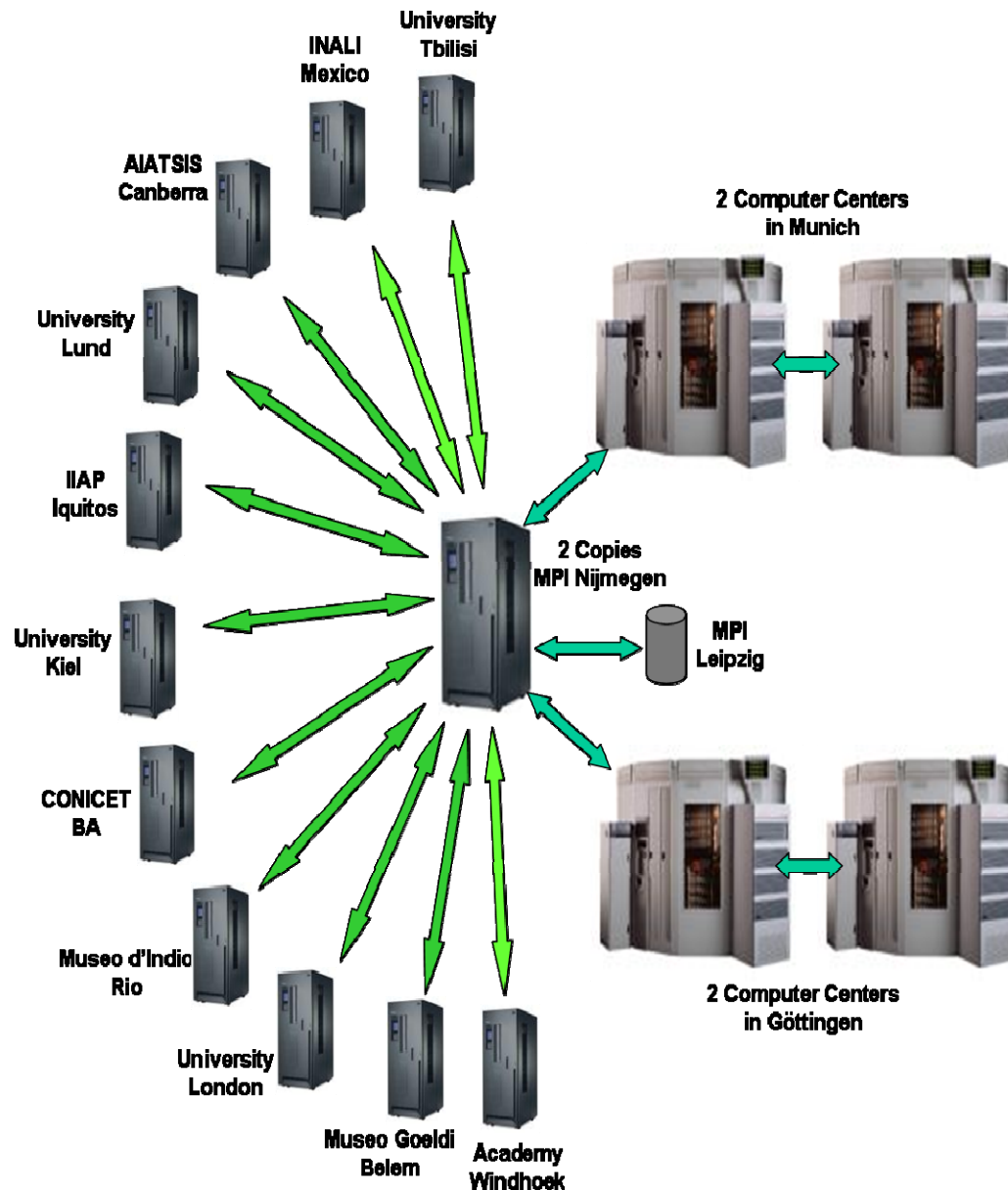


Alaska Native Language Center Archives (ANLC)  
Archive of Indigenous Languages of Latin America (AILLA)  
Archive of Maori and Pacific Music (AMPM)  
Archivos del Instituto de Investigaciones de la Amazonía Peruana  
Archivo de Lenguas Indígenas de Buenos Aires  
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)  
Archive of Indigenous languages and Cultures of Asia (AILCA)  
Archive of Maori and Pacific Music (AMPM)  
Digital Himalaya - Cambridge University and Cornell University  
DoBeS archive  
ELAR archive  
E-MELD Project  
Endangered Tibetan Music Project  
LACITO Archive  
Language Archives  
Leipzig Endangered Languages Archive  
MPI Language Archive  
National Anthropological Archives and Human Studies Film Archives  
Native American Languages at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History  
Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC)  
Rosetta Project  
Texas German Dialect Project Archive (TGDPA)  
University of California, Berkeley, indigenous language and music archives

# Issues of discussion

- how to do proper documentation
  - turn to primary data (AV) recording languages in their cultural background
- how to do proper long-term bit-stream preservation
  - all digital, authenticity, proper organization and metadata
  - change of fundamental principle
    - analog preservation rule: never touch carrier
    - digital preservation rule: regularly touch carrier
- how to "guarantee" long-term access
  - standards, proper organization and metadata (mJPEG2000 lossless - no concatenation effects)
- how to manage costs?
  - major cost factors: curation!!!, upload, access (500k€)
  - closely related with ensuring funding

# DOBES Example



- 4 full dynamic copies of all 50 Terabyte at remote CC
- 50 years guarantee
- costs: about 5.000 €
- in addition 11 regional repositories with dynamic copies of sub-collections and own enrichments
- more on the waiting list
- started REPLIX project for safe replication at logical level

# Summary

- world of languages is changing dramatically
- loosing diversity and all knowledge included in languages
- can question the stability of our minds and identities
- guess we know all this or?

*Mark Abley (Canadian Writer)*

*Each time we lose a language  
the ghosts who made use of it  
cast a new bell.*

*The voices magnify. Soon,  
listen, they'll outpeal  
the tongues of earth.*