

Folcloristas de Panamá: Using a WhatsApp Group as a Crowdsourcing Platform for Preserving Knowledge of the Past

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The ubiquity of smartphones has opened new opportunities for groups of people to exchange information in efficient ways. While not cutting-edge in technology, the resulting digital communities bring valuable contributions to heritage preservation in places without easy access to specialized crowdsourcing platforms.



One example of such communities is Folcloristas de Panamá, a WhatsApp group devoted to discussing a wide range of topics related to the past and the folklore of Panama. Even though it has not yet turned one year old, the community has had a significant impact on the cultural heritage community of Panama, as it has transcended the digital realm to become a formal association.

This work is an analysis of the group's origins, members' profiles, typology of content shared, internal conflicts and autoregulation mechanisms. The main goal is to explain the success of the group as a crowdsourcing platform and to

describe its impact in the real world, while encouraging a discussion about similarities and differences with comparable experiences elsewhere.



This is the third study in a series about crowdsourcing in digital folklore communities in Panama. The [first](#) was about PanamaTipico.com, a cultural heritage website, presented at the 2014 Digital Presentation and Preservation of Cultural and Scientific Heritage International Conference, held in Bulgaria. The second paper was about Chepo Cultura y Tradición, a Facebook fan page dealing with the collective memory of a town, presented in 2016 at Towards Digital Folkloristics International Conference, held in Latvia (not yet published).

Our work aims to understand the contribution of digital crowdsourcing communities to the preservation of the rich cultural heritage of Panama.