

## AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS: THE BENEFITS OF NETWORKING AND CO-OPERATION

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### Introduction

Globalisation is everywhere: in our daily lives and, in economics – certainly, – in culture – well maybe. What about information preservation? During my term as Convenor of the Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA) I had many occasions to observe, how important networking was for the community of audiovisual archives. But I had also the strong feeling that the fragmentation of our already small group in 6 Associations limited its possibilities to act, weakened its position and made cooperation with the large sister NGOs of libraries, archives and museums difficult.

In fact, if you compare the figures of membership and financial turnover you can see that probably the whole group of audiovisual NGOs is smaller than each of the three NGOs in the heritage sector: IFLA (libraries), ICA (archives) and ICOM (museums).

It was probably for these reasons that at the end of the last century Crispin Jewitt, at the time president of IASA and director of the British Library Sound Archive, took the initiative to transform the former Round-Table of Audiovisual Archives into the more strongly structured Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations. Later, when he had become convenor of the CCAAA, he succeeded in associating the organisation with different international bodies such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation WIPO, the International Committee of the Blue Shield ICBS and UNESCO. In the case of UNESCO, CCAAA cannot have official status due to the fact that some of its members already have a formal relationship with the organisation. Later in 2008, CCAAA was invited by IFLA to join the LAMMS coordinating council, a group of 5 NGOs whose aim is to narrow the gap between the different heritage sectors.

In my paper I will try to show the benefits audiovisual archives stand to gain by co-operating in a larger network of heritage institutions and to also show the disadvantages which could result should they remain apart.

I suppose that most of you have already heard about Europeana, the European digital library. In Europeana you can find content from museums and art galleries, archives, libraries and audiovisual collections. At the moment, audiovisual documents represent less than 5% of the documents accessible through Europeana.

I think that you will agree with me that this does not really reflect the importance of audiovisual documents in the 21st century. This situation has two main causes: one is, the backlog in the digitisation and documentation of audiovisual materials and the second is the desperately anachronistic situation regarding copyright. Digitisation of moving images and sounds needs a lot of specialist skills, costs a lot of money and is still hampered – at least with regard to moving images – by the absence of reliable standards. Concerning copyright it is the multitude of rights linked to audiovisual works and their relatively young age which means that only a small portion of the documents is in the public domain.

I'll give you another example from Europe. The EU-funded project TAPE – Training for Audiovisual Preservation in Europe – which lasted from 2004-2008, conducted a large survey on the situation of audiovisual archives in 34 European countries. 143 archives, 81 libraries and 42 museums participated in the survey. A large majority of the participants complained about the lack of expertise, of adequate storage and of playback-equipment, about backlogs in cataloguing and the uncertainty about digitisation. This result shows at least some reasons for the under-representation of audiovisual material in Europeana.

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On a more global level, similar observations can be made when looking at UNESCO's Memory of the World programme. In June 2011, 45 new items were added to the World list. Only 4 of them represent audiovisual documents. There were other proposals for audiovisual holdings which were not successful due to the lack of adequate appraisal and suitable strategies for sustainable preservation and access.

In general, audiovisual materials have two major handicaps: they are – as shown by the TAPE survey – often poorly documented and therefore unknown; they are “hidden treasures”, the title of another survey conducted in the UK. The other is that their life expectancy is shortened by carrier breakdown and technical obsolescence. It is therefore technically and financially challenging to guarantee the long-time survival of the documents.

What opportunities are there for co-operation with international bodies and what benefits can result for the community of audiovisual archives?

I would like to discuss this topic with reference to the following organisations: UNESCO, ICBS, WIPO and LAMMS.

## UNESCO

In UNESCO audiovisual archiving belongs to the Information for all Programme (IFAP) in the Communication and Information Sector. It is the only programme exclusively dedicated to promoting universal access to information and knowledge. Amongst its five strategic priorities, information preservation is of particular interest to audiovisual archives. A working group has been set up to further the aim of this priority and it has put forward a list of 4 proposals for the Programme and Budget 2012-2013 of UNESCO: A World Report on Information Preservation, Safeguarding the Hidden Documents of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity, Open Source Software for Digital Preservation and Data Management and Promoting International Cooperation in Format Registries. All these proposals are of interest to the community of audiovisual archives which should play an active role in implementing these projects. [Meanwhile UNESCO could not implement these projects in the programme due to financial constraints.]

I already mentioned the Memory of the World Programme which is linked to IFAP. For this programme more and better proposals for audiovisual documents are needed. MoW is generally not known enough and lingers in the shadow of its greater sister the World Heritage Programme. NGOs of the audiovisual field could promote MoW among their own members and encourage them to make proposals for the MoW-list. They should also invite their Members to participate in the National Memory of the World Committees.

Besides the programmes of the CI Sector, other activities of UNESCO require the presence of the audiovisual archives community. Two conventions are of particular importance: The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of 2005 and the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage of 2003. In the Intergovernmental Committee of the latter we find only ICOM and ICOMOS as NGOs representing the heritage sector. I believe that the AV-NGOs should participate in the governing bodies of these conventions.

UNESCO also plays an important role in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) which took place in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005). It acts as facilitator in several action lines, some of which are of utmost importance to the av-community, namely “Access to information and Knowledge”, “Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local culture” “Media” and “Ethical dimension of the Information Society”. By participating actively in the follow-up process, AV archives could raise their profile on an international level and make their important role in the information society more visible.

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Of course, our NGOs should also play an active part in the General Conference of UNESCO which takes place every two years and it would be highly desirable for them to observe the debates of the Executive Board on items of particular interest for them.

The status of NGOs in UNESCO still needs to be improved. But we should not forget that UNESCO is an organisation of states and we must be aware that the representatives of the member states take the decisions. NGOs participate in the debate as observers representing professional expertise. It is therefore an important task for members of NGOs to keep in touch with their National UNESCO commissions and the diplomats representing their states in UNESCO and explain to them the importance and the needs of audiovisual archives.

### **The International Committee for the Blue Shield (ICBS)**

The Blue Shield is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross. It is the protective emblem specified in the 1954 Hague Convention (Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict) for marking cultural sites to protect them from attacks in the event of armed conflict.

The Blue Shield network consists of organizations dealing with museums, archives, audiovisual documents, libraries, as well as monuments and sites.

The International Committee of the Blue Shield, founded in 1996, comprises representatives of the five Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in this field:

the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) the International Council on Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA).

National Blue Shield Committees have been founded in several countries. The Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (ANCBS), founded in December 2008, is a body that coordinates and strengthens international efforts for specific action in the case of destruction in times of armed conflicts or natural disasters.

It is obvious that the audiovisual archives are endangered in the case of armed conflicts and natural disasters. Often broadcast archives are a specific target for bombing or looting in the case of international conflicts or civil war; and in the case of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes expert knowledge on how to rescue damaged audiovisual material is necessary.

Over the last months there were numerous armed conflicts and natural disasters where no contact could be established with institutions or persons in charge of the audiovisual heritage of the nations concerned. The network for this is simply missing. Again the international profile of audiovisual archives could be considerably raised if disaster preparedness and recovery became a permanent topic in the activities of international AV-organisations and if the organisations maintained a network of experts on the recovery of av material within the national Blue Shield organisations.

### **World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)**

WIPO, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, is a specialised agency of the United Nations. It is dedicated "to developing a balanced and accessible international intellectual property system, which rewards creativity, stimulates innovation and contributes to economic development while safeguarding the public interest." WIPO was established by the WIPO Convention in 1967.

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Thanks to the former Convenor of CCAAA, Crispin Jewitt, CCAAA has observer status in the Standing Committee for Copyright and Related Rights SSCR. This Intergovernmental Committee has been and still is discussing a topic which is of particular interest to the av-community: The exceptions and limitations of copyright for libraries and archives. Our colleagues from IFLA have drafted a treaty on this topic which will be discussed by SSCR during the next sessions. The situation of the AV-heritage in this discussion is complex mainly for two reasons: 1<sup>st</sup> because of the importance and complexity of the neighbouring rights of performers and producers and 2<sup>nd</sup> due to the fact that many producers of audiovisual documents –for instance broadcasters – also have archives. Public access to film and broadcast archives is a major problem for our profession. And, as it has been shown at the beginning of this paper, the uncertain situation in the copyright field is a major obstacle for the promotion of audiovisual archives through international access networks such as Europeana or the World Digital Library. But we must be aware that in WIPO only a network of organisations with strong relationships to national representatives can effectively influence the outcome of the debate. Experience shows that the right holders need a strong counterpart otherwise regulations will result which more and more hamper the necessary access to information and knowledge, particularly in the audiovisual field.

Another committee of WIPO also acts in a field of interest of the av-community: The International Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore a topic of particular interest for archives with audiovisual documents from linguistic and ethnographic research projects.

### **LAMMS co-ordinating council**

In November 2008 the former IFLA-President Claudia Lux convened for the first time the international organisations of Libraries, Archives, Museums, Monuments & Sites. Thanks to this initiative the LAMMS coordinating council came into existence.

The five international organisations for cultural heritage, IFLA (libraries), ICA (archives), ICOM (museums), ICOMOS (monuments & sites) and CCAAA (audiovisual archives) agreed to intensify cooperation between their organisations in those areas where libraries, archives, museums, monuments and sites have mutual interests and activities.

In the LAMMS group, the leadership of the international NGOs has formed a Coordinating Council to facilitate discussion on, to promote understanding of, and to foster cooperation on matters of common interest to the cultural heritage sector.

All parties recognize the importance of moving towards a mutual agenda to strengthen advocacy for the role and position of libraries, archives, museums, monuments and sites in the knowledge society of today and tomorrow, and to safeguard the world's cultural written, visual, and built heritage.

The focus of the LAMMS Coordinating Council currently lies in the following areas: Copyright and other legal matters, Political lobby, Preservation and protection of cultural heritage, Global digital libraries and Standardization.

The LAMMS initiative is strongly supported by several stakeholders, such as the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL) and the International Council for Scientific and Technical Information (ICSTI).

Through the LAMMS-platform the participation of the member associations in the International Museum Day 2011 (with the theme "Museum and Memory") was facilitated. This will hopefully be only the beginning of a series of future co-operations.

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## Conclusion

The networking and co-operation of Associations of audiovisual archives on an international level has to be improved. The role of the Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations CCAAA in this process must be redefined. My personal feeling is that the future lies in networking with other organisations in the heritage field as is already the case in ICBS and in the LAMMMS co-ordinating council. The fragmentation of the audiovisual community weakens it and makes it vulnerable. The organisation of the international scene of audiovisual archiving reflects in many ways the situation after World War II. But as we all know all the parameters of our work have since then completely changed. Preserving and giving access to the audiovisual heritage to-day has nothing or very little in common with the concepts of 50 years ago. Obsolescence is not only threatening many types of audiovisual documents; its is also threatening the current way of organizing audiovisual archiving on a global level. Specialised institutions like film- and sound archives and the archives of radio and television should not continue to live in *splendid* isolation. They have major responsibilities in the preservation of a substantial part of the memory of the last 130 years. Libraries, archives and museums have to be aware that the audiovisual part of their collections must be recognized as having the same level of value as the other parts of their holdings. Together they have to act in favour of an increased protection of the audiovisual heritage in the case of armed conflicts and natural disasters, for universal access to the contents while respecting the rights of authors, performers and producers and an effective long-term preservation for those documents which are of importance for the collective memory. These are the key elements of an agenda which can lead to the improvement in the status of audiovisual documents, holdings and collections and of audiovisual archiving as a profession with a high level of technical and ethical responsibility.

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## Names of organisations and their acronyms

Organisations of the United Nations:

### UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Communication and Information Sector (**CI Sector**)

Information for All Programme (**IFAP**)

Memory of the World Programme (**MoW**)

Culture Sector (**CLT**)

Convention of the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)

Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage (2003)

### WIPO

World Intellectual Property Organization

Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (**SCCR**)

Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, traditional Knowledge and Folklore (**IGC**)

Non-Governmental Organisations (**NGO**)

Libraries, Archives, Museums, Monuments and Sites

International Council on Archives (**ICA**)

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (**IFLA**)

International Council of Museums (**ICOM**)

International Council on Monuments and Sites (**ICOMOS**)

Audiovisual Archives Associations

Association for Recorded Sound Collections (**ARSC**)

Association of Moving Image Archivists (**AMIA**)

International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (**IASA**)

International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF)

International Federation of Television Archives (**FIAT-IFTA**)

Southeast Asia-Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association (**SEAPAVAA**)

Co-ordinating and umbrella organisations

Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (**CCAAA**)

ARSC, AMIA, FIAF, FIAT-IFTA, IASA, ICA, IFLA, SEAPAVAA

International Committee of the Blue Shield (**ICBS**)

CCAAA, ICA, ICOM, ICOMOS, IFLA

Association of National Blue Shield Committees (**ANCBS**)

Libraries, Archives, Museums, Monuments and Sites (**LAMMS**) Coordinating Council

IFLA, ICA, ICOM, ICOMOS. Observers: Conference of Directors of National Libraries **CDNL**, International Council for Scientific and Technical Information **ICSTI**