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on behalf of the CCAAA,
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Audiovisually yours!

Audiovisual media

**the 20th Century's
contribution to cultural heritage:**

Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Association
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The traditional way of documenting the past has, until recently in terms of the world's history, been primarily textual. It is possible today to examine original documents created thousands of years ago.

Imagine being able to travel five, or even ten centuries into the future and look back on the 20th century. From that vantage point you will realize the significance and impact that century has had impact on documenting the human heritage. It is a century will forever be remembered as the era when the audiovisual record of society and history was introduced – the beginnings of audiovisual documentation and therefore of audiovisual heritage.

Audiovisual media, however, is a two edged sword. On the one hand, recorded sound and image is a very powerful tool with more 'broad cultural influence and historical significance' (Green, 2006) than the written word alone have ever been. On the other hand, the durability of audiovisual media seems to be inversely proportional to its technical advancement. A 31st Century researcher will most likely not be able to study an analogue recording or video in its original form. The carriers will have decayed beyond playability, and even if they should survive, there most likely won't be any machines to play back their content. Content can, of course, be migrated to the digital

domain. However, the digital domain suffers the same malady of carrier decay and increasingly shorter cycles of obsolescence. The fate of audiovisual media is covered during this conference by Dietrich Schüller's in-depth paper on "Socio-technical and socio-cultural challenges of audio and video preservation" (Thursday 21. Feb. 2008 – put in link).
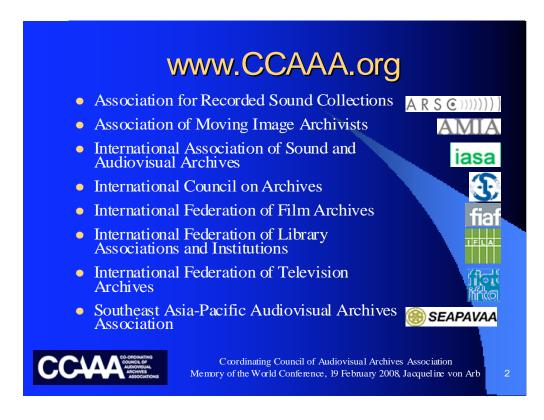
Audiovisual technology is still a young medium and it continues to symbolize the beginning of a new era in heritage documentation. New eras usually bring new challenges. The biggest of which, in this case, will be to manage a difficult paradigm shift, namely that of separating content from its physical carrier. This is primordial for the survival of AV-heritage over time. This new paradigm will also merge with, and affect, the more traditional text-based archiving, as it too moves into a digital domain. The challenge for today's heritage institutions is to give audiovisual content a new form of life, a migratory life.

That life, however, cannot just be shelved; it will need constant support and constant adaptation to whatever is the current technological status quo.

Our responsibility is to ensure that what is done today, in terms of preservation, includes with its planning a wealth of information and documentation that will be available to archivists and to society in the coming centuries that is until the 31st Century and beyond. Kevin Bradley's paper "Digital preservation: the need for an open source digital archive and preservation systems for small to medium sized collections" (Thursday 21.Feb.2008 – put in link) will present the concept of sustainable repositories. We need not only to create sustainable repositories, but also to provide the support for these repositories so that they can be implemented in all countries, preferably in a global network.

To meet those challenges, we need organizations like UNESCO and the CCAAA, as well as other platforms of advocacy, to be active, and even pro-active. We need the tools that they manage for the advancement of our common cause, tools such as the Memory of the World Programme and the World Day of Audiovisual Heritage (WDAH).

2. www.CCAAA.org

The community of audiovisual archivists is, at least partly, responsible for managing the critical situation of the audiovisual heritage. Archivists are split in a multitude of groups reflecting the different genres of audiovisual heritage (film, moving image in general, sound), sources of production (radio and TV, commercial and scientific production) and geographical particularities. In addition to the large and powerful organisations responsible for the written memory, ICA and IFLA, no less than 6 NGOs represent different – but also overlapping - areas of the audiovisual heritage.

At the end of the last century these organisations decided to cooperate more closely to amplify their voices, coordinate overlapping work and develop training strategies. Thus the CCAAA was established. Since then, a series of common initiatives have been undertaken mainly in the field of training, by organising workshops, training courses and symposia. An appeal for the protection of the audiovisual heritage of broadcast institutions has been supported and in certain occasions, the CCAAA has been used as our common voice when speaking to international organisations such as UNESCO and WIPO. Ray Edmondson's work "Audiovisual Archiving – Philosophy and Practice" is linked to CCAAA and is currently the only comprehensive description of all relevant aspects of audiovisual archiving.

"CCAAA represents the interests of worldwide professional archive organisations with interests in audiovisual materials including films, broadcast television and radio, and audio recordings of all kinds. Although predominantly working in the public sector, we reflect a broad range of interests across the broadcast media, arts, heritage, education and information sectors. The

The JTS – or **Joint Technical Symposium** – which gathers the experts from all the AV-associations every three years to share, monitor and influence technical developments and their impact on AV-archiving, is one example of a CCAAA initiative.

The **statement of repatriation of cultural archives** initiated by SEAPAVAA, was also subsequently approved by the CCAAA members.

And the most recent achievement is the establishment of the WDAH (1st one on 27.oct.2007):

3. World Day of Audiovisual Heritage

(Quoted from the CCAAA statement on the proposal for the WDAH, in 2005)

"CCAAA warmly welcomes the proposal for a <u>World Audiovisual Heritage Day</u> marking the 25th anniversary of the <u>Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images</u> and further, urges the strengthening and updating of this important instrument to reflect the rapidly growing extent of impact of audiovisual material in all aspects of communication and the arts. In the quarter century that has passed since the <u>Recommendation</u> there has been vast technological and structural change in the audiovisual field, including the emergence of digital media, and a broad recognition that the sound as well as the moving image heritage needs safeguarding. These needs now go well beyond the provisions of the 1980 <u>Recommendation</u>.
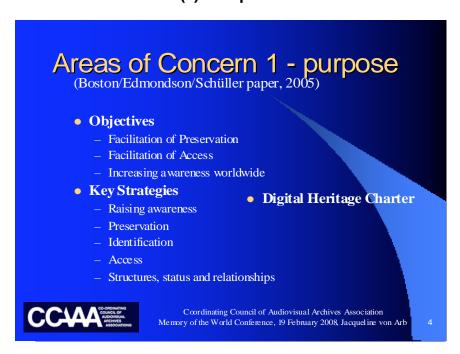
CCAAA accordingly proposes that the resolution on the <u>World Audiovisual Heritage Day</u> clearly recognises the requirement to update, and thus strengthen, the 1980 <u>Recommendation</u>."

"Proclaiming a day [does] not necessarily alleviate the challenges that AV collections face, but it would give those interested in AV issues a focal point during the year in which to raise the profile of the AV heritage and to grow the community of those interested in ensuring the long term preservation of the audiovisual heritage."

The AV Day can become a powerful tool – but demands a champion effort that presently cannot be fulfilled to its potential with only voluntary officers.

Let's move on to the CCAAA perspective on the Memory of the World Programme.

4. Areas of Concern (1) / Purpose

It is a necessary step for the health of any organization to occasionally stop, take a good assessment of its state and adjust its goals and strategies. It is commendable that an event such as this has been organized focusing on just this purpose and that the doors have been opened for such a process. The fact that so many have turned up from across the world is an accolade to the program's significance and to the belief that, with the program under our arms, we can make a difference.

A paper on Areas of Concern about the Memory of the World Programme was presented at the 2005 Li Jiang meeting by George Boston, Ray Edmondson and Dietrich Schüller (4-1). It was supplemented with comments from several ICA representatives.

These gentlemen emphasized that they submitted this paper as individuals, not as representatives of any association, to serve as a basis for discussion about the future of the Programme. The CCAAA, however, feels that this paper submits an in-depth analysis and well-founded views that the CCAAA wishes to reinforce and endorse. Although some progress has been made since then, the key points made are still valid. Let me reiterate them:

(4-2) Purpose of the Programme (three main objectives):

- The **facilitation of preservation** through practical assistance, training and linking sponsors with projects has been followed up by a few seminars and pilot preservation projects. We need to recognize the immense need for the sharing of expertise and thus the need to improve the funding for manpower to organize such events and projects and for attendance by those who need it.

- The **facilitation of access** to documentary heritage needs follow up from officers of the Programme.

- **Increasing the awareness worldwide** regarding the existence and significance of documentary heritage is usually left to the publicity that comes with a nomination. Much more could be done with support from the centre to produce literature, exhibition material and to coordinate promotional activity. Yet again, more work for the officers.

(4-3) Key Strategies to support these objectives (5)

- Identification: it takes more than just listing important funds into registers to achieve the aims of the programme
- Raising Awareness: The registers in themselves only a tool to raise awareness. Any tool needs to be actively used to be effective, e.g. with a marketing effort, which, if successful will generate funding and sponsorship. Marketing, however, has been more or less non-existent.
- Preservation: The listing of a collection in a register is not in itself sufficient to obtain funding or sponsorship. Such negotiations need

assistance from the centre in order to reach fruition, especially in the developing world.

- Access: the programme must do more to publicize the accessibility of material, as it has been shown that the public is willing to pay for copies of information.
- Structures, status and relationships: National commissions and NGO's cooperation and support are vital for the success of the Programme. The active nurturing of such relations, again, requires officers' time to achieve.

(**4-4)** The paper also recognizes the "Digital Heritage Charter" as a major tool in the programme's objectives, as both access and preservation rely heavily on digitization to achieve their goal.

The red thread running throughout this paper is that, while we all recognize the aims of the programme and the strategies to achieve them, there are too little resources, both in personnel and in monies to make the programme really effective.

5. **Areas of Concern (2) / Structure**

(5-0) The paper continues by evaluating the structure of the programme:

Areas of Concern 2 - structure
(Boston/Edmondson/Schüller paper, 2005)

- **IAC**
  – Corporate memory & assigned duties
- **Bureau**
  – Smaller and more active
- **IAC Subcommittees**
  – Transparency & revewable fixed terms
  – Geographic balance
  – Active marketing subcommittee
- **Secreariat: full-time with sufficient staff:**
  – Operations/seek and manage sponsorship / website / support subcommittees / publicity and publications / manage growing register / liaison, support, training of regional & national committees, and more….

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(**5-1) IAC**
There is a need to improve the IAC's corporate memory. Members should therefore be appointed for 6 years, a third leaving every year and the new ones attending a briefing tutorial.
Membership should involve commitment (as in tasks, communication between meetings, relating with their national/regional committees, etc).

(5-2) IAC Bureau
The Bureau should be smaller, appointed by the DG (not the IAC) and eligible for reappointment. It should also be much more active between the biennial meetings.

(5-3) IAC Subcommittees
We need a transparent appointment mechanism, a geographically representative membership and operation regulations for the members. The Chairs are to be ex-officio IAC members. And the marketing committee, crucial for the vitality of the programme, should be activated forthwith.

(5-4) Secretariat
It is an unsustainable situation that one single officer, who cannot even dedicate her full-time attention to the programme, is expected manage **all** the tasks mandated by the programme's objectives and activities (see enumeration on the slide). The programme will continue to grow and, for the secretariat to be effective, it has to be supported in an adequate manner: including staff and sustainable funding. In comparison, the intangible heritage programme has thirteen officers (2005).

6. Areas of Concern (2) / cont'd

Budget allocation and Management
To combat the lack of transparency and encourage efficient and responsible budget management, the MoW's biennial budget should be declared, advised upon by the IAC committee and tracked by the Bureau. Objectivity in travel funding and sufficient allocations for regional committees is also encouraged.

A Rolling Strategic plan
A rolling strategic plan would provide guidance for the bureau and the members. As a symbol of responsibility to the programme's constituents, it should therefore also be public. Goals and strategies should be set for sponsorship development, budgetary growth, structural growth, publicity strategy, etc., and the plan revised at each IAC meeting.

Rule of Law
The MoW "laws", or the General Guidelines are, amongst other things, there to ensure the credibility and integrity of the Programme. All actions within the programme should be consistent with them. This means that the Guidelines must be known, fully observed and implemented – changes can occur, but only through due process. De facto interpretations ought to be collected, published and then incorporated into revisions of the programme.
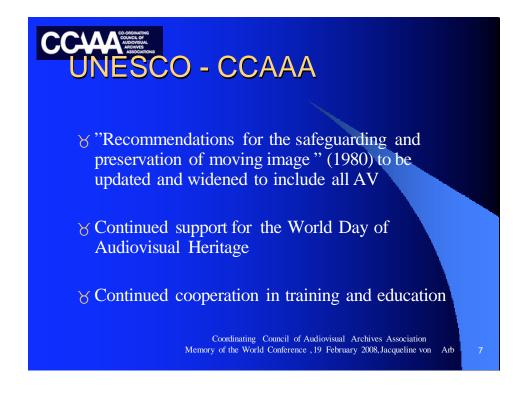
And finally, the **Regional committees'** operations need to be strengthened and supported, as they are the key to the development of functioning national committees.

Short Conclusion for the Areas of concern:
While the objectives of the Programme are noble and the strategies well-meant, the realities of our world society demand a much stronger engagement from the programme. This means that the pool of dedicated officers and their available resources need to be substantially strengthened.

5. Future plans for CCAAA in relation to UNESCO:

The main tasks to be focussed on will be:

8. Memory of the World - CCAAA

We are gathered here to cast a critical eye on the MoW as it stands today. But as the Boston-Edmondson-Schüller paper says, this is "not intended as a criticism of what has been done, but a plea to do MORE to achieve the aims of the Memory of the World Programme".

The CCAAA would like to join this congregation in discussing the areas of concern mentioned, as we believe these are STILL valid areas of concern:

- Long term planning, goals and strategies are essential guidance tools. They are the mind of the programme.
- The structure needs to be strong and clear, as a skeleton holding up a programme structure should be.
- Adequate funding and personnel resources are necessary to keep the wheels going, for without food and drink, the greatest hero is not much use.
- Transparency, and by transparency we mean not only in the ease of finding institutional documentation and understanding the program, but all the links in the chain need to be transparent and visible to the public. This will give the programme integrity.

In conclusion:

The Memory of the World programme gives us (the NGO's) an arena to reach beyond our sometimes nicely hedged world of heritage institutionalism. We are able to reach regular people with our cause, especially in today's society where all is "presumed preserved" because it's available on the internet and "presumed non-existent" if not found there… within 3 clicks.

We have now, in this week of self-assessment and redefining goals, an opportunity to pull together in the same direction.
Just as in the Chinese proverb that uses the example of the sticks, easily broken one by one, but unbreakable when held together– the CCAAA wishes to be one of those sticks, together with the other NGO's and UNESCO to make the Memory of the World a stronger and sounder programme.