

Thirteenth Meeting of the International Advisory Committee of the Memory of the World Programme

**UNESCO Headquarters, Paris (Bonvin Building, Room XVI)
24 to 27 October 2017**

Report from SCoT

REPORT FROM MoW Sub-committee on Technology (SCoT) 2015-2017

Current members of the committee:

Jonas Palm (chair, Sweden), George Boston (rapporteur, Great Britain), Fernando Osorio (Mexico), Dietrich Schüller (Austria), Lai Tee Phang (Singapore) and Kevin Bradley (Australia).

Major activities:

Workshop on A/V records in Seoul, Korea

In recognition of the need for greater awareness by national archival institutions on the worldwide urgency in migrating and digitising audiovisual records, SCoT members Dr. Dietrich SCHÜLLER and Dr Lai Tee PHANG conducted a workshop on the preservation of audio and video records at the International Council on Archives (ICA) Congress, in Seoul, Republic of Korea, September 2016. The half day programme included *Introduction to audiovisual (AV) archiving; Basic principles of audio and video preservation; Signal extraction from originals; and Planning and executing an AV digitisation programme.*

There was overwhelming interest: the 30-participant workshop was attended by over 70 participants. The discussions in the course of the workshop clearly indicated that many of the attendees have little experience in the preservation of audiovisual materials which increasingly become part of their collections. This workshop obviously filled a knowledge gap in the ICA community which suggests that in future events of ICA and IFLA such workshops, not covering only audiovisual, but also other topics of modern preservation technologies and strategies, should be arranged with priority.

Suggestion for workshop with emphasis on preservation and access

At the beginning 2016 SCoT came up with a suggestion for a 3-day core workshop on the issues of preservation and access. Subjects of the workshop were:

- Documentary Heritage: definition, collection, institutions.
- The MoW Programme, its history and aims.
- Role of the register.
- How the Programme is organised.
- Role of non-governmental organisations.
- How the international, regional, and national register sections relate to each other.
- Deterioration of traditional materials and preservation.
- Deterioration of and special requirements of machine readable documents (audio/visual and digital documents).

- Role of digitisation for access and preservation.
- Long-term preservation of digital information.
- How to draft a nomination.
- The criteria
- Restrictions on nominations.
- Organisation.
- The assessment and selection process.
- National MoW Committees.
- National organisation and funding.
- Policy and legislative measures.
- Regional and international cooperation.
- Cooperation with UNESCO.

The SCoT committee still emphasizes its interest to run or be involved in such a workshop, maybe run at different places.

Connecting OECD NEA RK&M project to MoW programme

The Chair of SCoT Jonas Palm is a working member of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency's Records, Knowledge and Memory across Generations-initiative (RK&M) working on how to preserve or how to relay information for 100 000 years about the whereabouts and contents, and the linked hazards, of nuclear waste repositories.

It is a huge challenge to preserve information about nuclear waste. Public opinions might influence policy- and decision-makers, the time scales are extremely long – “this is in the far future and we don't care”-attitudes - and political and geographical changes will happen.

By in some way connecting RK&M - a Memory *for* the World initiative - with the MoW programme may be one of many important ways ensure an increased and prolonged knowledge about the issue as well as giving yet another meaning to what Memory of the World Programme is about.

An article on the subject was published in UNESCO MoW SCEaR Newsletter No 1, 2016, with the title “Can the Memory of the World Programme Help to Make Information on Nuclear Waste Sustainable?” (written by Jonas Palm in co-operation with Claudio Pescatore, formerly of OECD NEA).

A preliminary meeting was held in March between MoW and OECD NEA in Paris and it was decided to continue discussion, which hopefully will be done in October 2017.

Activities of committee members

In November 2016 the Chair of SCoT together with Lothar Jordan (SCEaR), Vitor Fonseca (IAC), Helen Jarvis (IAC), Papa Momar Doc (Vice Chair IAC) Dianne Mackasill (IAC), Jan Bos (SCR) and Roslyn Russell (SCR) visited Macau and

Suzhou, China. In Macau the group participated in the Opening Ceremony of the Memory of the World Knowledge Centre-Macau and The Forum of Macau and UNESCO Memory of the World Programme. In Suzhou the group participated in “UNESCO Memory of the World Program & the Development of Archives Work”.

SCoT submitted its views on the MoW Programme in connection with the evaluation process of MoW.

SCoT member Fernando Ossorio is involved in a course being held in September at the Centro de Formación Regional CdF - Programa de educación para la conservación del patrimonio fotográfico – in Montevideo, Uruguay, under the auspices of UNESCO and MoW.

Improvement in nominations for the register 2017

In previous SCoT IAC reports the apparent lack of understanding to MoW programme’s preservation approach as a major roll has been addressed. The last report of 2013-2015 stated “Since there is a clause in the rules of MoW that an item may be taken away from the register if e.g. the preservation situation is found to be non-satisfactory, we believe this should be discussed again at the IAC meeting in Abu Dhabi, October 2015. The answers in the Nomination form vary substantially for questions 8 (Assessment of Risks) and 9 (Preservation and Access Management Plan). The preservation issue seems to be lost in the background in this programme.”

When reading the nomination forms of 2017 it seems the awareness of long-term preservation and preservation activities has increased significantly. It is very satisfactory to see that all but a handful of the 125 nominations bring up activities like digitization as a means to both minimize the use of originals and to increase dissemination in a concept where long term preservations of originals are emphasised.

Magnetic Tape Alert:

Presently, the dramatic vanishing of magnetic tape replay machines – audio and video, analogue and digital – is an enormous und widely underrated threat to the legacy of magnetic tape materials, recorded over the past 60 years, which have not yet been preserved by transfer of their contents to save digital repositories. To alert stake holders and governments, and to get a clear view on the magnitude of this problem, a survey was designed which Dietrich Schüller started with Joie Springer, and which had met SCoT's support. IASA, the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, is interested to cooperate and co-fund the project. The project is strongly recommended also by CCAAA, and it is our hope that, after several delays, funding from UNESCO (10.300 USD, i.e. 50% of the total costs) can eventually be effectuated.

UNESCO's support for this project appears to be inadequate as compared to other international associations or committees. Besides IASA, non-profit professional

associations like Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) had started such conversations since 2013 AMIA Conference. ICA's Photographic and Audiovisual Archives Group also plans to be more proactive in coming up with new initiatives in the coming year. If UNESCO MoW desires to assume or continue its leadership in preserving the memories of the world, it cannot continue to be passive in its support for SCoT.

Meetings and members:

Due to lack of funding SCoT has not been able to meet in person since 2012. It is a problem for the SCoT that funding is so modest. As the committee eventually has been geographically expanded, which was asked for for many years, with members from Europe, Central America, Australia and Asia, travel costs made it impossible for the committee to meet. This issue has to be taken seriously. The use of Internet communication has been tried but did not work very due to big differences in time zones among other things.

The present *rapporteur* George Boston has announced that he no longer can be available in this capacity. SCoT needs to find a new *rapporteur*.

Finally SCoT would like to emphasize (as we did in our comments for the evaluation in 2016) that MoW is about Safeguarding the Documentary Heritage, and, after so much energy absorption by the Register, SCoT is eagerly waiting in the starting blocks to work for the aim proper of Memory of the World.

Jonas Palm
Chair of SCoT

30 August 2017

PERSIST / SCoT Merger Vision:

As UNESCO established the *Memory of the World* Programme in 1992, there was soon a need for a technical advisory committee on preservation and digitization issues. The Sub-Committee on Technology was established and it has since reviewed recent developments in preservation and digitization, conducted workshops and prepared technical guidelines on preservation and digitization.

In a similar way the PERSIST Programme was established in 2013, dedicated to the identification of, access to and preservation of the world's digital heritage, with a vision that it will be accessible to future generations without barriers, permitting all to experience digital artefacts and the cultural values they represent.

These activities are both about preserving our cultural heritage. It is important for MoW to emphasize that the documentary heritage is not related to a special medium. Everything counts – paper, parchment, birch bark, photographs, movies, audio recordings *as well as* digital applications and information.

Thus a merger between PERSIST and SCoT would mean a strengthening of the preservation concept of MoW as well as prevent it from being looked upon as a programme dealing with “old things” but a programme in phase with time and for the future.

It is necessary that this is accepted and supported by the IAC in October so the work on how to merge the two can start a s a p.

Jonas Palm
Chair of SCoT

in co-operation with

David Fricker
Chair PERSIST Programme