

**RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION OF, AND
ACCESS TO, DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE INCLUDING IN DIGITAL
FORM**

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

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1 BACKGROUND

The *Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form* was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in November 2015. It had been formulated through a sequence of experts' and states meetings.

While there have been previous UNESCO normative instruments that relate to aspects of the documentary heritage, this *Recommendation* is the first to embrace the field in its entirety. A partial list of these normative instruments is given at the end of the *Recommendation*.

The *Recommendation* provides a legislative basis for UNESCO's Memory of the World programme. It also provides for periodic reporting by Member States on how they are giving effect to its provisions.

These Implementation Guidelines deal with the practical application of the various provisions of the *Recommendation*.

In many place throughout this document, UNESCO's Memory of the World programme is referred to by its acronym MoW.

2 DEFINITIONS, CONCEPTS, PRINCIPLES, STANDARDS

Access is any form of use of a memory institution's collections, services or knowledge, and reference to related sources of information and the subject areas they represent. It can be *proactive* (initiated by the institution itself) or *reactive* (initiated by users of the institution). Up to date catalogues and finding aids are the foundation of efficient access. A subsequent stage may be the provision of copies of selected material created to the client's order or the creation of collection-based products (CDs, DVDs, downloads) to increase the universal availability of material; the digitization and delivery of material on-line; and exhibitions, lectures and presentations of all kinds.

Authenticity means that the documentary heritage is what it appears to be, and desirably that its identity and provenance have been reliably established. Copies, replicas, forgeries, bogus documents or hoaxes can, with the best of intentions, be mistaken for the real thing. Digital documents can be manipulated. The degree of completeness and originality matter. Some documents may exist in variant versions or exemplars of the same or differing antiquity.

Best practice is the method, technique or practice that has been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives because it produces the best results, or accords with a widely acknowledged standard. In the documentary heritage field it might, for example, refer to methods of preservation, collection management, cataloguing, digitisation, and access provision.

Document is an object comprising analogue or digital informational *content* and the *carrier* on which it resides. It is preservable and usually moveable. The content may comprise signs or codes (such as text), images (still or moving) and sounds, which can be copied or migrated. The carrier may have important aesthetic, cultural or technical qualities. The relationship between content and carrier may range from incidental to integral. For example, in a mediaeval manuscript or certain analogue disc sound recordings there is an intrinsic connection between content and carrier; for a video tape or digital file the connection may be more incidental.

Documentary heritage comprises those single documents – or groups of documents – of significant and enduring value to a community, a culture, a country or to humanity generally, and whose deterioration or loss would be a harmful impoverishment. The **significance** of a document may become clear only with the passage of time. For each state, its documentary heritage reflects its memory and identity, and thus contributes to determining its place in the global community.

Memory institution is a collective term which includes, but is not limited to, archives, libraries, museums and other educational, cultural and research organizations.

Open-source software is computer software with its source code made available with a license in which the copyright holder provides the rights to study, change, and distribute the software to anyone and for any purpose. Open-source software may be developed in a collaborative public manner. It generates a more diverse scope of design perspective than any one company is capable of developing and sustaining long term.

Preservation may be regarded as the totality of things necessary to ensure the permanent accessibility – forever – of documentary heritage with the maximum integrity. The preservation of documents is always an ongoing process. As collections grow, it becomes a cumulative process. Prevention is better than cure, but where necessary remedial steps have to be taken.

In the **analogue** realm, preservation may include a number of steps, such as conservation and restoration of the carrier, copying or migration of the content, maintenance of the document within an appropriate storage environment, and research and information gathering to support these activities. When content migration becomes essential, analogue carriers should be retained where they have continuing value as authentic originals, artefacts or information bearing objects.

In the **digital** realm, preservation may constitute a combination of policies, strategies and actions to ensure access to reformatted and born digital content regardless of the challenges of media failure and technological change. The goal of digital preservation is the accurate rendering of authenticated content over time.¹

At an elementary level, document preservation requires common-sense steps such as secure storage, an inventory system to keep the collection in order and allow retrieval, and – for digital documents – the backing up of files in multiple locations. But over time, and as collections grow, preservation becomes a more complex matter of specialist skills and infrastructure, best-practice ethics and standards, disaster preparedness, research and development.

UNESCO normative instrument Conventions, recommendations, charters and declarations adopted by UNESCO are collectively described as *normative instruments*. That is, they promulgate agreed standards of best practice which all member states are encouraged to follow. This includes the *Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form*.

¹ Adapted from the American Library Association medium definition of digital preservation (2007). There are multiple definitions of digital preservation, and they merit comparison.

3 IMPLEMENTATION

The **Recommendation** is arranged thematically under five topics: *identification, preservation, access, policy measures* and *national and international cooperation*.

These **Implementation Guidelines** are arranged in terms of *responsibility for action* by **governments, memory institutions** and **others**.

The Recommendation calls on member states (represented by their governments) to undertake a range of actions. Some of these actions are – and can only be – directly taken by governments. But most of the clauses in the Recommendation call on governments to encourage, empower, support and facilitate actions by other parties, such as memory institutions, their partners, private individuals, national Memory of the World committees and professional associations. Each has their role to play in the preservation and accessibility of the documentary heritage.

Under each heading there is a reference, in brackets, to the relevant paragraph number(s) in the *Recommendation*, so its actual provision can be checked.

A: GOVERNMENTS

As declared in paragraph 4.1 of the *Recommendation*, governments should consider documentary heritage as an invaluable asset. While it is unlikely anyone would disagree with that statement, it is easier to give it lip service than to put into practice. By its nature, preservation can always be off until tomorrow, in the face of more insistent and apparently urgent priorities. And that is what sometimes happens.

Whether governments create a supportive environment for the protection of their documentary heritage is a matter of sympathetic understanding, of choice and political will. It is much more than just the provision of budgets to institutions: it is a questions of enabling and responding to the energies and resources of the many people in the community to whom the national memory matters.

There are some things that only governments can do, and these are discussed below.

General support

- In the public interest, create a supportive, participatory, enabling and stable environment for all parties (1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2)

Governments are encouraged to set a supportive tone and framework within which the national documentary heritage sector can operate. Caring for the national memory is *fundamentally an investment in an asset, rather than an expense*. The heritage is something to be celebrated. A supportive mindset is not resource-dependent.

The promulgation of UNESCO normative instruments to ministries and institutions, and their translation into the domestic language where appropriate, is part of creating that environment.

A participatory, stable and enabling environment is essential to give confidence and empowerment to potential partners, sponsors and others who will support and invest in the sector in the public interest. It embraces civil society, private owners and the research community as well as official memory institutions. It sustains professional independence and public trust, and recognizes its place in the wider global professional context.

Governments do not work in a vacuum. In a supportive environment, they take into account the advice, knowledge and expertise of institutions and individuals involved in the field. What

is achieved may therefore be a result of the quality of advice received from stakeholders, and everyone's skills in advocacy and awareness raising.

- Applying international standards and curatorial best practice (2.4, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.5)

Public institutions are accountable to governments for their competent operation, and it is governments, through legislation or otherwise, who establish their mandates, governance and policy parameters.

International standards and best practice should be seen as a normative reference point. To say that all memory institutions should embrace best practice is not to say that instant perfection can be achieved. Probably no institution does, or can do, everything perfectly. It does mean that an awareness of best practice can guide any institution to do the best that current circumstances allow: if necessary, "buying time". It should be regarded as an aspirational goal, not a discouragement! Progressive steps involve doing what is possible now, with an eye on future achievement.

Infrastructure is resource dependent and may need to be developed over time, perhaps aided by partnerships and cooperation between institutions, sharing costs, facilities, processes and services.

Skills development and capacity building may be less economically constrained, involving combinations of training, mentoring, research, data exchange, study courses and visitation at local, national, regional and international levels. Professional associations and networks at each level, including the Memory of the World programme, provide the means for what is always a two-way process.

- Support memory institutions in establishing policies and standards by research and consultation, guided by internationally established norms (1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2)

All memory institutions have policies but they are not always set out to the same level of detail – if they are documented at all! Without a documented basis of policy and consequent procedures, there is a risk that decision making will be arbitrary, inconsistent and unaccountable. Policies provide guidance and constraint, and both are needed. Without them, the institution's constituency and the public at large has no basis for confidence that the institution is competently assembling or preserving its collection.

Policies need to be integral to the institution's culture: they are the 'rule of law' by which the institution works. They are not just public relations documents. They explain the

institution's stances, perspectives and intentions. Desirably they include a reference to the institution's mandate and mission, the invocation of relevant external authorities or reference points (such as UNESCO normative instruments – including this one – or standards and codes established by appropriate professional federations), an explanation of principles, and sufficient detail to avoid ambiguity.

Soundly based operational policies and standards are therefore essential to the competent functioning of memory institutions, as well as to their accountability to government and the public trust which they earn. Their development requires little expenditure, but it does require care, research and consultation. Good policies are living documents. They need to be updated regularly to stay practical and relevant.

Selection policies should be clear, non-discriminatory, and balanced across fields of knowledge, historic ears and artistic expression. Digital documents are fugitive and selection decisions may need to be made at or before the time of their creation.

Access policies and practices need to recognize the realities of preservation and the legitimate interests of rights holders, but should recognize that permanent accessibility of documentary heritage is the fundamental justification for the existence of every memory institution. Providing the means of discovery (for example catalogues, finding aids, metadata, websites) is an expression of access policy.

Preservation policy and standards should strive to reflect international best practice and standards developed by the profession for both the analogue and digital domains, and observing the relationship between content and carrier (see the definition of *documentary heritage*). Preservation is a never-ending task.

Legislation and mandates

To have the mandate, authority and governance structure to carry out their tasks with full public confidence and independence, national memory institutions need the backing of appropriate legislation. This may be institution-specific (for example, to formally constitute a national library or national museum) or activity-specific (for example, to require the timely transfer of records to a national archives). Legislation may also provide for such matters as copyright and the compulsory deposit of analogue or digital documents in memory institutions for the purpose of preservation.

Only governments can provide enabling legislation for the sector, and can enforce regulations. Documentary heritage should be considered an invaluable asset and this perspective should be applied to legislation, policies and agendas. (4.1)

The preservation and accessibility of the national documentary heritage needs the long term stability and predictability of continuing memory institutions underpinned by a legislative framework matched to the task, and updated as need be. The *Recommendation* calls on member states to do the following:

- Update relevant domestic legislation so that memory institutions are not inhibited or limited in their ability to take preservation action by the existence of access restrictions (2.5)

There can be valid reasons, under certain circumstances, for restricting public access to particular items of documentary heritage (3.5, 3.6) – such as privacy, security or considerations of commercial rights – but these should not impinge on the imperatives of preservation action by memory institutions. Legislation should guarantee the right of institutions to copy or conserve documents whenever, in their professional judgment, it is necessary for their survival and continued integrity. They should need no other clearance.

This action does not disadvantage the owners of commercial rights, or others in whose favour the restrictions are imposed. It simply affirms the right of preservation: the custodial institution is able to ensure that the document or its content will continue to exist.

- Provide legislative frameworks for memory institutions and ensure their necessary independence in preserving in preserving and providing access to documentary heritage so as to sustain public trust in the scope of material selected, and the way in which it is preserved (3.1) Promote and facilitate maximum inclusive access by empowering memory institutions... (3.2)

The provision of public access is the visible evidence of a memory institution's validity and usefulness to society. It is the justification of public expenditure on preservation, because preservation without the intent of accessibility is pointless. Where necessary, legislation should be enacted to guarantee the stability, continuity and professional independence of institutions and thereby inspire confidence in the building of collections and the quality of their custodianship. (3.1, 4.5)

Effective access to collections requires that the means of discovery be provided. (3.2, 3.3) This can take many forms: up-to-date catalogues, finding aids, person-to-person services, the digitization of content and the range of internet-based possibilities. These will be most effective if prepared in accordance with international standards. Access should be pro-active as well as reactive: outreach activities (3.3, 3.7) are limited only by imagination.

Governments should improve access by encouraging the development of new forms and tools of education and research on documentary heritage. (4.4)

- When updating or enacting legislation which impacts on access to documentary heritage, the potential for access should be maximised, while respecting the legitimate interests of rights-holders. Restrictions on access should be clearly defined and of limited duration, and underpinned by legislation or regulation (3.5, 3.6). Member states should promote public domain access (3.7) Copyright and legal deposit regimes should be periodically reviewed to make them fully effective (4.6)

Intellectual property laws are constantly updated at the national, regional and international level. Documents – especially audiovisual and literary works – which were once considered of little commercial worth have found new commercial potential in the digital domain. National legislation should seek a fair balance between legitimate interests of right-holders and the fundamental right of access to the public memory.

Access is often inhibited by confusion over the copyright status of collections or individual documents. Rights are regularly sold and re-sold, and may also be region or country-specific. But they are always of limited duration. Nothing remains under copyright in perpetuity. By legislation, governments should encourage memory institutions to provide access when the ownership of rights is in doubt, assuming reasonable effort has been made to trace current rights holders.

They should promote access to material that is in the public domain. Hence, there should be no artificial limit on such access, and the use of public licensing and open access mechanisms provide effective means of managing this.

Statutory deposit regimes are the best way to ensure that memory institutions can acquire and preserve the documentary heritage. Selection is always necessary, and that should be carried out by the institution in accordance with its formal selection policy.

- Member states are encouraged to recognise the long term need for new investment in the preservation of different types of originals in analogue format, in digital infrastructure and skills, and to adequately endow memory institutions. (4.1)

Governments are the primary provider of budgets and resources to memory institutions, and they determine the context in which the institutions and their capacities grow and earn public trust and support. Taking a long term view, and adopting a strategy and agenda around which partnerships and cooperative ventures can be built is desirable.

Memory institutions, and the protection of the asset of the national memory, are a cost to government. It is a cost that will tend to grow rather than diminish. That said, there is probably no such thing anywhere in the world as an over-endowed memory institution. There is, and always will be, a need for institutions to manage their resources well.

Analogue and digital preservation are complementary. One does not necessarily replace the other. There have been regrettable instances where analogue originals were destroyed after digitisation before the practical, economic and philosophical issues were understood. It is sometimes mistakenly assumed that keeping digital surrogates is always cheaper than maintaining analogue originals. Investment in both is essential. Analogue documents involve the expense of physical storage and management. Digital storage has a different but ongoing cost equation, as the files have to be periodically refreshed while the hardware and software environment continually evolves.

- Member states should encourage the development of open source software and access to proprietary codes on a non-profit basis (4.7, 4.8)

Rapid development of software and hardware has already made parts of the digital documentary heritage inaccessible. Unless the proprietary codes and keys are permanently available to memory institutions, they cannot ensure the preservation and permanent accessibility of the relevant documents. Government intervention may be necessary to ensure that such arrangements are reached with the owners of the codes.

The development and use of internationally recognized open source software is a better solution for managing digital documentary heritage, and governments have a role in obtaining the cooperation of software and hardware developers in extracting data and content from proprietary technologies.

Identification and preservation status of documentary heritage

- Member states are encouraged to identify documentary heritage at potential or imminent risk and draw it to the attention of competent bodies. (1.3, 2.7, 5.5)

Potential or imminent risk can take many forms, including inadequate storage and management of collections, visible deterioration of documents, degradation of digital data, vulnerability to theft and the lack of disaster preparedness. Through good collection management an overview of material at risk can be maintained. Governments should

encourage memory institutions and private owners to be vigilant, to raise awareness, and to share tasks and facilities which play to their strengths.

In some cases, corrective action by the custodial institution itself, or by other memory institutions in the same country, will be appropriate. But there will be times where the expertise required or the cost involved may require some broader action on a government-to-government or wider international level. Finding an appropriate partner may take some diligent searching at times, but international professional organisations offer networks through which assistance can be sought. What is crucial is that the need is made known, so that the professional community has a chance to respond.

Solutions may range from physical conservation and restoration to a digitisation project, a staff exchange, crowd sourcing to raise funds or simply an exchange of relevant information.

It should be remembered that nominating to a Memory of the World register can be a logical step to take in drawing attention to significant documents that are at risk.

- Member states should take all appropriate measures to safeguard their documentary heritage from danger (5.4)

Beyond the usual contingency plans of individual memory institutions are wider threats to documentary heritage such as armed conflict, political upheaval and natural disasters. To the best of their ability, member states have a duty of care to be vigilant in trying to anticipate and prepare for such eventualities. At the same time, governments should refrain from acts likely to damage documentary heritage, or diminish its value or accessibility, whether intentionally or by neglect. Circumstances which cause a reduction of the resourcing or the skills base of memory institutions are part of this equation.

- Private and local institutions and individuals holding valuable collections need public encouragement and support. Where practical, encourage research communities and private owners to care for their own documentary heritage in the public interest (1.3, 4.3)

Apart from the national memory institutions, academic, religious, cultural and other non-government organisations hold and care for significant collections of documentary heritage. So do private individuals, who have often developed considerable depth of expertise in the field of their specific interest.

Private collections of books, sound recordings, photographs and other documents may be commonplace but there always some that are of major importance. The private papers of notable personalities can also be part of a nation's documentary heritage, as a number of such inscriptions on various Memory of the World registers testify. The risk inherent in all private collections is that when their creator dies, the collections can be dispersed, lost or destroyed unless there is some prior arrangement to provide for their future.

Private collections have always been a part of the spectrum. To the extent that they are self-resourced, this lessens the financial burden on governments. But the role they play needs to be publicly recognised as a legitimate part of the custodial community, and integrated into the larger national task of preservation and access.

The wider view

- Member states should encourage consistency of best practice across memory institutions. This may include nationwide coordination and sharing of tasks. (2.4, 2.7)

Cooperation, sharing and coordination among memory institutions are practical goals and governments should take the lead in bringing them about. It may involve establishing networks, instigating training, ensuring the rationalisation and best use of existing facilities for the greatest benefit. Institutions will vary in their skills, capabilities and emphases. Nationwide coordination and sharing of tasks, based on their existing roles and strengths, will maximize their effectiveness and also encourage a consistent approach to best practice and general awareness raising.

Prevention is better than cure. Risk management can minimise the likelihood of degradation to collection items; good housekeeping systems and good security minimise the possibility of theft or misplacement. Disaster planning means imagining what can go wrong, and preparing for that eventuality, however unlikely. Fire, flood, earthquake, electrical faults, systems failure and structural collapse are among the hazards of maintaining collections; all of these have occurred in the past in memory institutions in various parts of the world. Disasters come unexpected, and they can happen in the best run institutions.

- Member states are invited to develop training and capacity building schemes as appropriate to ensure identification, preservation and access to documentary heritage (1.5)

The skills and capacities needed to manage collections and provide access services are in a state of constant development, requiring both in-house training and mentoring, and participation in formal training courses. Some courses or workshops may be available or can be developed within member states: in other cases, involvement in international summer schools, workshops, on-line tutorials or campus-based graduate and post-graduate courses may be the right option. International and regional NGOs (non-government organisations) within the memory professions often set accreditation standards and may also offer or recommend the courses by which they can be achieved.

Professional literature is generally written in the most widely spoken languages. This places practitioners in other language groups at a disadvantage. Where needed, translating key texts into the national language is a task that needs to be supported by governments.

- Member states are encouraged to take a global view of the needs of memory institutions, beyond the practicalities of infrastructure, and encourage logical partnerships and cost sharing (2.4, 2.8, 3.4, 4.2, 5.1)

A memory institution is more than its infrastructure. It is a collection surrounded by skilled and motivated staff who know it, and are building and servicing it. It is also an entity surrounded by a community of users and supporters.

Memory institutions are a global network, and the skills and competencies which they nourish and on which they rely are represented by a range of international professional associations, many of them formally recognized by UNESCO (See Annex 4) . It is in these forums that international standards and best practice are developed, that training courses and research projects evolve, and that exchanges of personnel and equipment are established. Member states are invited to encourage this involvement and its two-way benefits.

Public-private partnerships, sponsorships, cost-sharing arrangements and other forms of mutual assistance can develop at international and national levels and member states are encouraged to pursue such arrangements so long as they are responsible and equitable.

The reconstitution of dispersed collections and the exchange of documents between countries of shared heritage (5.3) – sometimes a legacy of past colonization - is encouraged. Digitisation allows such tasks to be undertaken without affecting the ownership of originals.

- Support memory institutions' participation in the development of international standards for preservation, and encourage them to link with appropriate

professional associations to enhance and share their technical knowledge. Support the development of academic curricula (2.8, 2.9)

It is a truism that no institution is an island. The development of international standards is an ongoing, cooperative task. It takes time and effort and may involve travel and other costs to attend international meetings. It will certainly involve electronic contact and networking with peers in other countries, which is now so much easier than it used to be.

Government should support the membership and involvement of memory institutions and their staffs in the relevant national, international and regional professional associations, many of which have formal links with UNESCO.

The memory professions embrace several academic disciplines, including librarianship, archival science, materials conservation, information technology, audiovisual archiving, marketing and museum curatorship, in addition to the broad sweep of historical and cultural studies. At a time of rapid change, governments should support the ongoing development of academic curricula, including the crucial area of digital preservation. The use of relevant UNESCO normative instruments as reference points is part of this picture, and if they are not already available in their national language(s) governments should initiate their translation.

Memory of the World

- Member states are encouraged to establish Memory of the World committees and national registers (4.10, 5.6)

Where they are not already in place, member states are encouraged to establish national MOW committees which in turn can establish national registers of significant documentary heritage. Committees can bring together participants from various sectors of the memory institution community and encourage synergies, coordination and awareness raising, and can undertake training and other projects. The national committees, in turn, can link to the global programme and its forums. They can, where appropriate, encourage the translation into the national language of the *Recommendation* and these Guidelines, along with other relevant UNESCO and professional publications.

It is the policy of MOW to monitor the preservation status of all documentary heritage inscribed on the International MOW Register on a cyclical basis, a regime which can also beneficially be applied to regional and national MOW registers. (4.9).

- Member states should encourage nomination of significant documentary heritage to national, regional or international Memory of the World registers as a means of raising awareness (1.4)

Typically, nominations are submitted by the custodial institutions holding the documentary heritage concerned. But there are many advantages in inscription and sometimes institutions need to be encouraged to take the step. Help and mentoring is available through the programme for those who are compiling nominations for the first time. The MOW website is the starting point for enquiries, and request of this kind will be followed up.

- Member states should enhance the visibility and accessibility of documentary heritage through the outreach activities and publications of the Memory of the World programme (3.7)

The visibility of documentary heritage created by inscription on Memory of the World registers, based on the registers' on-line presence and promotion in books, social media, exhibitions and elsewhere, is a continuing and effective means of drawing public attention to significant documents, encouraging research and publicity.

But outreach can take many forms, as discussed elsewhere in these Guidelines. Governments and memory institutions can engage with their national Memory of the World committees to raise public awareness and promote visibility.

B: MEMORY INSTITUTIONS

Governments do not work in a vacuum. In practice, they must take into account advice, information and the expertise of institutions and individuals involved in the field. What is achieved may therefore be a result of the quality of advice received from stakeholders, especially memory institutions. The *Recommendation* sets out the following activities which are the responsibility of memory institutions.

Identification and preservation status of documentary heritage

- Collections should be managed to ensure preservation and accessibility over time (1.1, 1.3, 2.7, 5.4, 5.5)

In practice, it is memory institutions who identify and select documentary heritage for preservation, who care for collections, who provide access, who identify and manage risk and who advise governments on the resources needed for their work. It is institutions who identify what documentary heritage is at risk, whether through physical or digital degradation, poor storage, vulnerability to theft, potential armed conflict or otherwise. When necessary it is the institutions which bring these concerns to the attention of government.

Good management is based on sound, published selection and preservation policies, guided by international standards, and developed through research and community consultation. It is no longer a matter of just keeping in the collection the key documents : contextual material, including social media, is also important. Criteria must be non-discriminatory, neutrally balanced with respect to knowledge fields, artistic expressions and historic eras. They should especially take into account the inherently temporary nature of digital documents.

Preservation

- Preservation is an ongoing process, both preventative and remedial, requiring the management of both analogue and digital objects (2.1 to 2.9, 4.1, 4.7)

*Nothing has ever **been** preserved. It is only **being** preserved.*

Preservation is a much-misused term. Sometimes it is employed as another word for “storage”. At other times it is an alternate term for “copying”. Such uses are misleading.

In reality, preservation is a never-ending process, encompassing collection organization and management, conservation and restoration techniques and procedures, a variety of digital and analogue technologies, and the continual development and application of the relevant science and skills. In this field, international standards are constantly evolving: best practice should be known and applied or, at the very least, aspired to and worked towards. Active involvement in appropriate professional associations is the key to maintaining current awareness as well as contributing to ongoing development.

Preservation practice should be based on curatorial values including authenticity, integrity and reliability. Accordingly, analogue carriers should be retained where they have continuing value as authentic originals, artefacts or information bearing objects. For digital documents, decisions are best made before the point of creation and acquisition, to maximize management options. New investment in both realms should be sought when it is needed.

There are many definitions for *preservation* in the literature and in the internet. Some of them distinguish between short term, medium term and long term preservation. The sense in which it is used in these Guidelines is made clear in the list of definitions.

Access

- The provision of access is visible evidence and justification of public expenditure on preservation (3.1 to 3.7, 4.4, 4.7)

There is no point in preservation unless it leads to access. Public trust in memory institutions is sustained by access: the scope of material in its collections, the way it is preserved, and its professional independence.

In the “digital age”, avenues for access are multiplying. Catalogues and finding aids are essential, but they are supplemented now by a host of digital options: searchable on-line content, downloads, social media. It is crucial for memory institutions to have a web presence, including a portal to their own collections. As researchers increasingly seek instant responses, it is easy for some to assume that if it isn’t on the internet, it doesn’t exist. Catalogues and finding aids, whether analogue or digital, should be structured to international standards so they can be machine readable, globally searchable and linkable.

The digitisation of content enables remote research and democratisation of access and is therefore strongly encouraged. However, on-site research involving person-to-person discussion and advice, and the inspection of original analogue documents will always be a necessary service and will need to be provided under conditions that do not place the preservation of the documents at risk.

While access can be reactive – responding one-on-one to researchers, for example – the possibilities for pro-active access are limited only by imagination: exhibitions, travelling presentations, radio and television programs, publications, screenings and festivals, consumer products, streaming, social media, lectures, educational programs, special events, tours. Exhibitions and presentations can travel on circuits; publications can be both digital and analogue; image and sound content can be streamed.

A crucial feature in much pro-active access is the proper contextualisation of documents so that they can be accurately understood and appreciated in the context of their time, their current condition and the manner of their presentation. This can range, for example, from explanatory text in an exhibition catalogue or on a consumer product, to spoken introductions at film screenings and festivals.

There can be a range of legitimate reasons for making a document partially or even – for a time – completely inaccessible, and they might include the need to undertake conservation measures or to protect the commercial privileges of a copyright owner. Other reasons could include privacy or security. These arrangements should be clearly defined and of limited duration, however.

The authority of a memory institution to apply such restrictions should be underpinned by national legislation or regulation, which would include a mechanism by which a potential user could appeal against a restriction. If the document is *permanently* restricted, what is the point of preserving it?

By definition, the provision of access requires financial and staff resources. In some circumstances these might be partially offset through the imposition of service charges, where permitted by the institution's mandate, which might – for example – reimburse the cost of creating copies of material prepared to order for a researcher. Where commercial use is to be made of public domain material, the custodial institution might levy a royalty charge - on the principle that the public purse should be recompensed when commercial benefit is derived from the use of a publicly owned resource. Nevertheless, the arrangements should be consistent with the inherent right of access as set out in UNESCO's constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and similar instruments.

Capacity building

- Develop awareness-raising and capacity building measures and policies, including promoting research as well as training for documentary heritage professionals (2.4, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 5.1, 5.2)

The documentary heritage field is one of life long learning for practitioners. Knowledge and technology are constantly developing. One cannot afford to get left behind.

It is true that opportunities vary from country to country. On one level, university courses in archival science, museology, librarianship and audiovisual archiving are offered in my locations around the world. Some courses are campus-based, some are on-line, but they usually involve the payment of fees. The field has a large literature, but most is written in English, French or Spanish and is therefore accessible only to those with relevant linguistic ability.

Fortunately, however, there are more diverse possibilities. The various professional associations run summer schools and workshops in various locations around the world that help to build core competencies, and entering into a discussion with them might lead to the development of a workshop tailored to the situation in a particular country. Various, these associations offer both institutional and personal membership and produce useful publications. UNESCO National Commissions and national Memory of the World Committees can often play a facilitating role.

At an institutional or personal level, informal international visitation builds practitioner networks which lead to the exchange of skills and ideas and can develop into a sustaining asset over time. Some institutions practice staff exchanges, which not only build personal capacity but broader cultural understanding. The internet, email and social media make it easy to foster these exchanges, as well as to encourage personal research – so much information is now readily available through dedicated websites and simple on-line searching. There is no need to be alone.

If one has the capacity to do it, translating a professional publication (such as a UNESCO manual) into one's own language provides a great service to compatriots, opening up that information to build their capacities.

Emerging technologies

- Embrace current and emerging technologies in a constantly changing environment (1.2, 2.2, 2.4, 3.2, 4.7,4.8, 5.5)

The “digital age” has affected countries and memory institutions differentially. In some countries internet usage is high and digital record keeping is well advanced. In other countries this has yet to happen. The need to become conversant with digital technology is universal, but the management of analogue heritage remains, as does the need to discern where digital records should replace their analogue counterparts – and, just as importantly, where they should not.

The digital environment requires strategic choices in selection, acquisition, preservation and access and gives rise to issues such as the importance of international compatibility of systems and standards, access to proprietary codes, and the need – as far as possible – to standardize on open source software.

Partnerships

- Activities may be facilitated by partnerships, including public-private ones, that allow sharing of costs , facilities and services (2.2, 3.4, 4.2)

No memory institution is an island. It is usually true that well designed partnerships make economic and practical sense, achieving together what would be harder for individual institutions to achieve separately.

It makes sense to share skills, facilities and funds in a field where there is often not enough of all three to go around! There are many successful examples of partnerships (see case studies) though it is important that the partners plan the arrangement effectively, so that respective inputs are agreed at the outset, and anticipated outcomes are established.

Public-private partnerships, in which commercial entities or foundations join with a memory institution to fund or facilitate a project, can also be very successful. If designed with a win/win outcome, both parties are able to meet their corporate objectives and each sees a benefit. For a commercial entity, that benefit may be in the form of positive publicity through association with a public good, and - depending on legislation in the country concerned - there may be tax or other benefits.

Such partnerships do need to be negotiated carefully and equitably. There must be a net benefit to both parties, and the public image and standing of the partner needs to be compatible with the reputation and principles of the memory institution. Such arrangements also should be of finite duration and fully documented, so that the public institution does not find itself under a continuing obligation to the partner once the project is over and the benefit to the institution has ceased.

Private institutions and collections

- Private and local institutions and individuals holding valuable collections need public encouragement and support as well as adequate visibility in national directories (1.3, 4.3)

Private individuals and institutions have a role in caring for the documentary heritage. Their holdings are kept at no cost to governments, and their work, over time, tends to feed in to the activities of memory institutions. This may happen, for example, when a private collector dies and has bequeathed his or her holdings to a public institution. But it places the onus on memory institutions to identify such collections in a timely way and cultivate relations with their owners to ensure the bequest is implemented.

History societies, academic institutions, places of worship and other religious organisations are among those who can amass major collections of manuscripts, books and audiovisual materials over time. Such collections are usually valued and appreciated by their owners, and there is a continuity of custodianship and care, although insufficient funding and the lack of adequate housing for the collections may be an issue. The contents of the collections may or may not be publicly accessible.

Yet their existence and continuity may be seen as a public benefit that is not a cost to the state or the taxpayer. By listing them in national directories, a fuller picture of the national documentary heritage is developed. Collectors with a passion for a particular field can be very effective in accumulating holdings of significance, and may do so with considerable subject and curatorial knowledge.

Nomination to a Memory of the World register

- Identify and nominate significant documentary heritage to national, regional or international Memory of the World registers as a means of raising awareness (1.4, 5.6)

Nominating documentary heritage to a register requires some work in preparing the nomination form, but if the nomination is successful and the heritage is inscribed it confers a number of benefits.

It publicly affirms the significance of the document or collection of documents and makes them better known. They become part of the visible continuum of documents that have had a substantial impact on cultures and societies. Inscription encourages accessibility and attracts publicity. It carries the symbolic weight of UNESCO certification and the right to use the MoW logo. The stature of the documentary heritage and the custodial institution benefits by association with the inscriptions already on the registers.

Sometimes inscription can help to attract sponsorship and funding to protect heritage under threat. Sometimes it has the effect of making the documentary heritage more secure. There are cases on record where inscription has even saved an entire archival institution from closing and being dismantled.

C: OTHERS

National Memory of the World Committees

- Member states are encouraged to strengthen their cooperation with the Memory of the World programme through their memory institutions by establishing national Memory of the World committees and registers (5.6)

Memory of the World committees are forums for the national documentary heritage sector, bringing together experts of different backgrounds from across the sector (see the formal description below).

The membership and activities of each committee reflects the institutional structures and skills base of the country concerned, so each committee is unique in style. Activities vary, but examples include the following:

- Promoting best practice standards (2.3), including running workshops and translating manuals and technical publications
- Advocacy, outreach and awareness raising. This can take many forms, including media publicity, lectures, publications, articles in the popular and professional press, conference presentations and exhibitions (3.7)
- Promote UNESCO normative instruments (charters, declarations, recommendations and conventions) and programmes (such as the PERSIST initiative on digital documents) to government and memory institutions as guides and reference points, and as a means of fostering appropriate domestic legislation.
- Stage public events on UNESCO international “days” (see list below) and during national festivals and events which focus on documentary heritage and national memory
- Establish and operate a national Memory of the World register. This involves setting up a continuing mechanism for receiving and assessing nominations in accordance with the programme’s *General Guidelines*. This can have cumulative advocacy benefits, as examples in various countries have already shown. Documentary heritage inscribed on the register can be monitored over time to ensure that it is being adequately preserved.

A national MoW Committee is automatically part of the global MOW network and the mutually supportive relationships which arise from this. It provides international contacts

which can help the country's memory institutions develop their own international relations.

Professional associations and heritage programs

- Encourage cooperation with international and regional professional associations, institutions and organisations (5.2) and networking activities and national, regional and international levels (2.9)

International cooperation and networking is important for governments and memory institutions, but it is also vital at an individual level. Most international and regional professional associations welcome individual members, and no matter where one lives in the world it is possible through the internet, email and social media to be actively involved in exchanging experiences, learning from one's peers, absorbing new information from the association's literature and, in turn, contributing to discussions and debates. Individuals can take responsibility for their own professional development.

In most countries there are national associations for institutions and individuals involved in the memory professions, and these can not only be avenues of learning and growth, but also of advocacy for the development of the documentary heritage sector, including the provision of resources and the updating of legislation.

Participation in formal training courses, whether in one's own country or overseas, or the benefits of travel to other institutions to observe and study their working methods, may be costly and therefore not readily available to everyone, but vigilance can often be rewarded with opportunities.

Awareness raising, visibility and outreach

- Raise awareness of the urgency of timely preservation action, develop awareness raising and capacity building measures and policies, enhance visibility and accessibility (2.4, 3.7)

Documentary heritage can be news! Awareness raising, publicity and outreach can take many forms, and events can be led by governments, institutions, private organisations, MoW committees or individuals or combinations of these. Sometimes it's a matter of utilising the opportunities provided by an anticipated event; sometimes institutions and

even individuals can make their own opportunities. The following is a small selection of possibilities:

- *Anniversaries* According to one professional association, the Archivist's First Law of Outreach is "human beings are unable to resist celebrating any anniversary divisible by twenty five."² Something about anniversaries captures imagination, and since they can be anticipated they can be prepared for. It may be the anniversary of an institution, a document, a piece of legislation, a historical event or an important individual, but anniversaries attract attention and publicity.
- *Cultivate media attention* For the most part, memory institutions are good news, though experience suggest that they are often too self-effacing to spread the news! The work they do is intrinsically fascinating; interesting additions to collections are ready made news items; exhibits and publications are all potentially newsworthy. An institution that has media visibility is in a stronger position to argue for more resources than one which is invisible.
- *Hold inscription ceremonies* Every presentation of certificates of inscription to a Memory of the World register – whether national, regional or international – is a potential media event, and wise institutions take full advantage of their possibilities.
- *Publications* From the humble information brochure to the most elaborate coffee table book, publications are awareness raisers. An effective format – utilized by various Memory of the World committees and others – is the simple give-away bookmark, highlighting an item of documentary heritage. Products based on collection items raise awareness, provide access and can be financially profitable. Regular newsletters (hard copy or electronic) keep stakeholders informed.
- *Volunteers* Almost any job that is done for financial remuneration in a memory institution can be done by the right volunteer. Just as people willingly donate their time to a range of community organisations such as schools, hospitals, religious communities, social service organisations, they will also donate their time to memory institutions – if they are asked! Volunteer programs need to be organized and managed. They not only add to an institution's resource based, they provide a community of supporters.
- *Friends organisations* Many memory institutions are supported by Friends organisations. These are usually not-for-profit associations that can run public events, raise funds, prepare exhibits, support a publication programme, or be a lobbying force.

² *Advocating Archives* ed. E F Finch, Society of American Archivists and Scarecrow Press, 2003 (p 66)

Annex 1

CASE STUDIES

THE COOK ISLANDS PROCLAMATION

The Cook Islands is a small Pacific country which is now independent but which was colonised by Britain towards the end of the 19th century. Its foundation document – the proclamation declaring the British protectorate over the islands – was signed in 1891.

The document was nominated to the Asia Pacific Regional Memory of the World Register in 2013, following development of the nomination at a MOWCAP workshop in Cambodia that year. It was inscribed on the Register in 2014.

The nomination process identified the fact that document was brown with age and crumbling, and was in urgent need of conservation treatment. No facilities for such treatment were available on the Cook Islands, so any restoration work would need to be done in another country. Nor were there any funds to pay for such work.

The task was not a particularly unusual one, and could have been carried out by the conservation laboratory of any large memory institution overseas. But it was not anyone's particular responsibility to come forward, pick up the task and pay for it.

The solution lay with the national Memory of the World committees of Australia and New Zealand. Together with the regional UNESCO office in Bangkok, they collaborated to raise the funds. The document was hand-carried to Auckland, New Zealand, where the restoration and framing work was carried out at the Auckland Public Libraries service. It was then returned to the Cook Islands Library and Museum Society, whose curator was flown to Auckland to collect the restored document and take it home.

This case study is an example of the entrepreneurial role which national MoW Committees can play in situations where there is no obvious host for urgent task.

THE GREAT FLOOD OF BANGKOK

During October 2011 unusually heavy rain in Northern Thailand drained south and caused extensive flooding of the city of Bangkok.

The Film Archive of Thailand, the national body charged with preserving the nation's film heritage, occupies a complex of several buildings on the outskirts of the city. Its museum, administration, work spaces and storage vault are located in what was once a rice field. As the flood waters peaked, staff members sandbagged the storage vault to hold the flood waters back. They stood vigil overnight to ensure that the sandbag wall was not breached. Had water flooded into the vault, parts of the collection could have been irreparably damaged.

The high water mark for the Archive arrived on 27 October, which also happens to be the date of UNESCO's annual World Day for Audiovisual Heritage. So staff at the Archive turned a threat into an opportunity.

They invited television news crews to record their efforts. As a subject, it was excellent television – active and visual, and sending an emotive message. And all the Archive staff were wearing T shirts promoting the UNESCO World Day.

Media visibility can and should be planned for. But not everything can be planned in advance. When opportunity knocks, it is there to be seized.

THE LAST FILM SEARCH

Much of the world's film heritage from the first half of the 20th century is lost or missing. This is often called the "nitrate era", when professional films were made on cellulose nitrate film stock, a formulation that is flammable and subject to decay.

On 27 October 1981 – coincidentally, long before the UNESCO World Day for Audiovisual Heritage was proclaimed – the National Film Archive of the National Library of Australia officially launched a nationwide search for this early film. It proved a model for other countries seeking to retrieve missing heritage.

Australia is a big country. Rural towns are scattered and sometimes remote. A field officer travelled the land, with car and caravan, on a literal treasure hunt. He had a backup colleague at the Canberra "base". His arrival in each locality was pre-publicised through the local radio, TV and newspaper and his contact details made known. On arrival, he was interviewed by the media, responded to enquiries and proactively searched likely locations (such as closed up picture theatres) or sought out promising individuals. The Canberra base followed up on the contacts made once the field officer moved on.

The field officer travelled for 18 months and the Search proved very successful, yielding many discoveries. Among the finds were fragments of *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906),

now inscribed on the International Memory of the World Register as the world's first feature film. As it progressed, the Search captured the nation's imagination, garnering large amounts of free publicity and ultimately resulting in two one-hour television specials. There were positive political consequences from the raised public awareness, too, including an increase in the Archive's budget.

There were probably many ingredients in the project's success, including an emotive and self explanatory name with a simple message, a memorable slogan ("nitrate won't wait"), and the romantic idea of a national treasure hunt that tapped into popular sentiment. An accompanying paperback book, *Australia's Lost Films*, was published by the National Library and sold well. Public awareness about how much of Australia's film heritage was missing was increased, and the media were kept constantly informed as new "finds" came to light and could be shown on television news. Of course, the project was based on a conviction that the material was there, and only waiting to be found – a conviction which proved correct.

Importantly, the project was a public-private partnership. It was funded entirely by commercial sponsors who decided that being publicly associated with such an obviously beneficial project was a good thing. The relationships established continued into subsequent projects organised by what later became a separate institution - the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia.

Significantly, the sponsor funding provided only for the direct running costs of the project. There was no budget for publicity. The profile the Search achieved came entirely from "free" publicity in the press, on radio and television.

THE JOSE MACEDA COLLECTION

Inscribed on the International MOW register in 2007, the collection of Prof. Dr. Jose Maceda comprised 1760 hours of audio tape recordings, plus associated photographic and written records, covering the traditional music of the Philippines and surrounding nations of South East Asia. It embraces many musical styles that have since changed or vanished entirely, because of social evolution and globalisation.

Housed at the University of the Philippines in Manila, the collection was physically endangered because of the lack of climate controlled storage. But it also faced the even larger danger of technological obsolescence, due to the analogue recording formats that

had been used. The entire collection needed to be digitised for both preservation and access, but the custodians lacked the necessary funds.

In 2007 the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences won the Memory of the World Jikji Prize. It donated the prize money towards the digitisation of the collection, and this gesture was followed by other support. The outcome was a two-year digitisation programme carried out at the University by local technicians, mentored by the Phonogrammarchiv.

An excellent example of the supportive relationships created through the Memory of the World network, the collection is now safeguarded in digital form for the future.

Annex 2

UNESCO international days

The United Nations General Assembly designates a number of "International Days" to mark important aspects of human life and history. United Nations Specialized Agencies, including UNESCO, also proclaim World Days. UNESCO thus celebrates UN International Days related to its fields of competence, in addition to the other World Days, proclaimed by the Organization's governing bodies or other institutions.

For full information check <http://en.unesco.org/celebrations/international-days>.

The International Memory of the World website provides access to inscriptions grouped under their relevant Days.

Some UNESCO World Days that relate to documentary heritage are:

13 February

World Radio Day

21 February

International Mother Language Day

21 March

World Poetry Day

23 April

World Book and Copyright Day

30 April

International Jazz Day

3 May

World Press Freedom Day

8 September

International Literacy Day

28 September

International Day for the Universal Access to Information

27 October

World Day for Audiovisual Heritage

Third Thursday in November

World Philosophy Day

Annex 3

NATIONAL MEMORY OF THE WORLD COMMITTEES

National Memory of the World committees are autonomous entities operating at a national level. To be entitled to use the MoW name and logo, they must be accredited by their UNESCO National Commission.

Committees vary in their roles and range of activities. Operating a national MoW register is one of those possibilities, and some countries have quite substantial registers.

There is no rigid organizational model. Whether highly formalized and structured, or more informal in approach, the essence of a committee is that it is a gathering of experts from across the documentary heritage field in its country. Members may serve as individuals, or as representatives of memory institutions or cultural authorities, or a combination of both. In some countries, for local reasons, the UNESCO National Commission may explicitly chose to exercise the functions of a national MOW committee.

Whatever the model, a national committee would normally be expected to meet the following parameters:

- An operational link with, and demonstrated support of, its UNESCO National Commission, as well as its regional MoW Committee (if there is one)
- Membership which reflects the country's geographic and cultural character, the important cultural groups, and the relevant knowledge and expertise.
- Written terms of reference and rules, including the basis of membership and succession
- Ability to discharge their role. This may include funding and support, links to major memory institutions and government bodies
- A commitment to awareness raising through regular reporting to the National Commission

Annex 4

LIST OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS – THE INTERNATIONAL PEAK BODIES

International Council on Archives (ICA)

www.ica.org

The global forum for archival institutions, associations and archivists. ICA's structure includes a number of regional subsets, each with their own programmes. An international ICA congress is held every four years. There are several classes of individual and organisational membership.

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

www.ifla.org

The main global forum for institutions and professional associations within the library and information services field. There are several classes of individual and organisational membership. There is an annual conference.

International Council of Museums (ICOM)

www.icom.org

The worldwide forum for museums, related organisations and individual practitioners. It has a structure of national committees and offers both individual and organisational memberships.

Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA)

www.ccaaa.org

The global forum for professional associations within the audiovisual archiving field. Its constituent associations each offer various categories of membership. Its website is a portal to the websites of the individual associations.

Annex 5

SOME USEFUL REFERENCES

Annex 6

REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION BY MEMBER STATES

The *Recommendation* provides that Member States should report to UNESCO General Conference, by the dates and in a manner to be determined by it, on the action they have taken to give effect to the *Recommendation*.

The reportable topics set out below, drawn from Section 3A of these Guidelines, could be the basis of a questionnaire:

General support:

Has the *Recommendation* and other relevant normative instruments been promulgated to appropriate ministries and institutions? (Section 1)

(Where appropriate) Have they been translated into the national language(s)?

What consultation mechanisms does the government maintain with stakeholders in the documentary heritage sector? (1.2)

What major capacity-building has taken place within the sector? (2.4)

Do all national memory institutions have published collection development, preservation and access policies? What policies have been developed recently? (1.1)

Legislation and mandates:

What legislation does your government have in place to:

- define the authority, mandate, independence and governance structure of your national memory institutions? (3.1, 4.5)
- guarantee the ability of memory institutions to take unhindered preservation action on documents in their collections? (3.5 to 3.7)
- Support memory institutions providing access to material whose copyright status cannot be clarified? (3.5 to 3.7)
- Ensure statutory deposit of documents in memory institutions? (4.6)

Has government net funding of national memory institutions (in recent years) increased or decreased? By how much? (4.1)

What long term investment in analogue and digital documentary preservation has been made? (4.1)

What encouragement has been given in the development of open source software and access to proprietary codes by memory institutions? (4.7, 4.8)

Identification and preservation status of documentary heritage

What documentary heritage has been identified as at potential or imminent risk? What action has been taken? (1.3, 2.7, 5.5)

What arrangements are in place to protect the documentary heritage from danger? (5.4)

What practical support has been given to private collections of documentary heritage? (1.3, 4.3)

The wider view

What specific steps have been taken to encourage consistency of best practice, coordination and sharing of tasks among memory institutions? (2.1, 2.7)

What training schemes have been developed? (1.5)

What is the level of involvement of national memory institutions in international professional associations and networks? (2.8, 2.9)

Memory of the World programme

Is there a national Memory of the World committee? If not, what plans exist to establish one? (4.10, 5.6)

What recent nominations have been made to Memory of the World registers? (1.4)

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Writer's note: The above list of questions should be regarded as indicative only. The framing of a questionnaire would be a careful task. It would involve simplification of the questions and the inclusion of explanatory material.