Audiovisual Archives in Universities and Research Institutions

Call for papers

The International Council on Archives Section on University and Research Institution Archives (ICA-SUV) will hold its annual conference 13-16 July 2015 at the University of North Carolina’s Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library in Chapel Hill, N.C., USA. The program will address the increasing role that audiovisual archives play in documenting our institutions, societies, and cultures and explore the challenges posed by these archives in universities and research institutions. Despite growing recognition of the complexities of managing audiovisual archives and the urgency of tackling the challenges, few universities and research institutions have adequate resources to address the myriad difficulties faced by archivists grappling to preserve and facilitate the use of this valuable documentation. The conference will provide opportunities to discuss long-standing concerns about the preservation of and access to original media and to explore the opportunities and challenges that digital technologies present.

The Scientific Committee for the 2015 ICA-SUV Conference invites proposals for papers addressing any of the following themes and questions:

- The Preservation Challenge

Many institutions have focused on the preservation of paper and photographic-based archives and have built robust programs for these materials. Preservation of audio and moving image archives has not received the same level of attention and resources as these other archival materials; yet they are especially vulnerable to the fragility and rapid obsolescence of media, vulnerabilities which constrict the time frame for preservation. Digital technologies provide opportunities for preserving content, but quantities of material often outstrip technical capacity and costs frequently exceed available resources.
How can the profession persuade institutions to invest the resources needed for audiovisual preservation? What scientific work is needed on the composition and degradation of physical formats, conservation treatments, and playback technologies? Can science and technology—such as parallel transfer configurations for audio and robotic digitization workstations for video—increase production in digital preservation facilities? Which materials are most at risk and what criteria should be used to prioritize materials for reformatting? What facilities and environmental controls are needed to slow media degradation? How can in-house programs, outside services, and consortial arrangements support large-scale preservation digitization? How can the profession address the low availability of obsolescent playback equipment?

- The Discovery Challenge

The profession has established descriptive standards for enhancing discovery and transforming the use of textual and graphic archives. Expectations for discovery and use of audio and moving image archives can differ significantly from those for other archives, and the need in many cases for mechanical intervention in accessing them presents additional challenges.

Can existing and emerging archival descriptive standards and methodological approaches support discovery and access for audiovisual archives or is there a need to expand or complement them? What do we know or need to know about how users search for and discover audiovisual archives? What types of interoperability for discovery and use across repositories are needed? Are audiovisual archives oriented to the semantic web? How can the profession make intelligent use of linked open data? Can the profession provide adequate listening and viewing opportunities?

- The Rights Challenge

Intellectual property rights and widely variant international property laws define the framework within which audiovisual archives may be responsibly accessed and used. Multiple individuals or corporate entities may participate in the creative process, and accurate information about participants’ identities and roles is often difficult or impossible to find.
How are repositories and scholars negotiating the complex and often contradictory rights expressed in varying national legislation and regulation and international law? How can the public’s interest in hearing and viewing historical recordings, scholars’ interests in studying them, and creators’ rights to control their work be balanced fairly? How do current laws governing rights affect the ability of repositories to preserve audiovisual archives? Are there successful models for collaborations with producers and rights holders to increase long term preservation and broader access to historical materials? If so, what are the elements of a successful collaboration, and how can these successes be replicated? How do rights issues affect what archives can charge for reformatting and use of their audiovisual holdings?

- The Knowledge, Skills, and Capacity Challenge

Preserving, managing, and enabling discovery and use of audiovisual archives require staff with specialized training and skills, playback and reformatting equipment, and extensive information technology infrastructure. Only a limited number of outside services are able to meet these needs for archival repositories. Most institutions have such small quantities of audiovisual archives that they cannot justify investments in staff, equipment, and technical infrastructure needed to meet established and evolving professional standards.

What are the best existing strategies for repositories to follow? What are the barriers to greater availability of preservation services that could enable a more comprehensive program of professional care for audiovisual archives? How can limited funding best be applied towards increased staffing and technical capacity? What are the untapped sources for obtaining the necessary resources? Could we consider digital audiovisual heritage as the engine for new jobs opportunities and economic growth? How do we provide members of the profession at large with the necessary skills to manage audiovisual archives, especially when the market no longer provides this technical expertise?

Proposal Submission Guidelines

Proposals on the above themes for individual presentations or panels of no more than three speakers are welcome. Proposals must be submitted no later than 1 December 2014 and must include an abstract of each of the proposed papers, each speaker’s name, affiliation, postal address, email address, telephone number, and short professional biography.

- Abstract length is limited to 300 words or 2200 characters (including spaces).
- Proposals for a complete panel session will include a description of between 250 and 300 words for the session as a whole, in addition to an abstract for each presentation.
- Individual presentations should be planned for no more than 20 minutes.
- Proposals will be accepted in English and French and can be submitted as .doc, .rtf, .txt, or .pdf files.
- A committee will conduct a peer review of the proposals. Review guidelines are available at: www.library.illinois.edu/ica-suv/ReviewCommGuidelines.php
• If your proposal is accepted, a full text of each paper (10 to 12 pages) must be submitted by 28 April 2015 to facilitate preparation of the conference proceedings.

**Important Deadlines Dates**

• 13 October 2014 – Call for Papers published
• 1 December 2014 – Proposals due
• 15 January 2015 – Notification sent to proposers
• 28 April 2015 - Deadline for sending of the long texts of the communication (10 to 12 pages) to appear in the proceedings of the conference.

Abstracts should be submitted to the ICA-SUV 2015 Conference Scientific Committee via email to: szary@email.unc.edu

**Scientific Committee for the Conference**

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