

MEMORY OF THE WORLD -

Preserving our Documentary Heritage

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Abstract

The paper outlines the main features of "Memory of the World", a UNESCO Programme to safeguard endangered documentary heritage, democratize access to it, increase awareness of its significance and distribute, on a large scale, products derived from it. Criteria to list documentary heritage on the "Memory of the World" Register and to select projects are set out, together with a brief account of the Programme's technical, legal and financial framework.

A number of pilot projects are briefly described. They consist mainly in digitization programmes and a CD-ROM series featuring a selection of manuscripts from the National Library in Prague, the Radzivilí Chronicle in Saint Petersburg, medieval manuscripts concerning the symbolic figure Saint Sophia, patron saint of the capital of Bulgaria, a collection of Yemenite manuscripts including the Koranic fragments at Sana'a, a preservation project of astronomical manuscripts of Kandilli Observatory in Istanbul, a selection of manuscripts from the Egyptian National Library and another selection from Viinius University Library reflecting in turn medieval Arab and European scientific advancement, a few thousand photographs from the nineteenth century illustrating the history of some ten countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, an inventory of nineteenth century Latin American newspapers and their state of preservation and an ambitious project called "Memory of Russia".

For both individuals and peoples, memory is an integral part of existence.

The memory of the peoples of the world is of vital importance in preserving cultural identities, in linking past and present and in shaping the future. The documentary heritage in libraries and archives constitutes a major part of that memory and reflects the diversity of peoples, languages and cultures. But that memory is fragile.

A considerable proportion of the world's documentary heritage disappears through "natural" causes: acidified paper that crumbles to dust, leather, parchment, film and magnetic tape attacked by light, heat, humidity or dust. The cinema, for instance, is in danger of losing most of the works that have made it the art of the century. Thousands of kilometers of film could just fade away unless they are restored and preserved as soon as possible. Nitrate fires in France and Mexico, for example, have caused important losses.

As well as insidious causes of decay, accidents regularly afflict libraries and archives. Floods, fires, hurricanes, storms, earthquakes... the list is very long of disasters which are difficult to guard against except by taking preventive measures. The recent catastrophe in Japan immediately comes to mind. One thinks also of the earthquake which did such heavy damage to Japan in 1923, including the destruction of 700,000 volumes of the Imperial University Library in Tokyo. Among the losses were records of the Tokugawa Government and many manuscripts and old prints. Worldwide distress was also caused in 1966 in Italy when the river Arno flooded library basements in Florence. More than two million books suffered water damage and restoration is still under way.

It would take a very long time to compile a list of all the libraries and archives destroyed or seriously damaged by acts of war, bombardment and fire, whether deliberate or accidental. The Library of Alexandria is probably the most famous historical example, but how many other known and unknown treasures have vanished in China, Constantinople, Warsaw, or more recently in Cambodia, Bucharest, Saint Petersburg and Sarajevo? There are so many more, and sadly the list cannot be closed - not to mention holdings dispersed following the accidental or deliberate displacement of archives and libraries.

There is no help against the destructive forces of nature; you cannot stop an earthquake or a flood, but it is a sad reflection that the most grievous losses have generally been the result of human action, whether through neglect or through willful destruction.

Preservation and Access

Recognizing that urgent action was required to stem the disappearance of vast parts of the world's documentary memory, in 1992 UNESCO launched the "Memory of the World" Programme to protect and promote that heritage.

The first objective of the Programme is to ensure the preservation, by the most appropriate means, of documentary heritage which has world significance and to encourage the preservation of documentary heritage which has national and regional significance. A twin objective is making this heritage accessible to as many people as possible, using the most appropriate technology, both inside and outside the countries in which it is physically located.

Preservation of the documentary heritage and increased access to it complement one another. Access facilitates protection and preservation ensures access. For example, digitized materials can be accessed by many people and demand for access can stimulate preservation work.

Another element of the Programme is to raise awareness in the Member States of their documentary heritage, in particular aspects of that heritage which are significant in terms of a common world memory.

Finally, the Programme seeks to develop products based on this documentary heritage and make them available for wide distribution, while ensuring that the originals are maintained in the best possible conditions of conservation and security. High quality text, sound and image banks could be compiled and made available on local and global networks and reproductions could be derived in all sorts of forms such as compact discs, albums, books, postcards, microfilms, etc. Any proceeds from the sale of related products will then be ploughed back into the Programme.

Programme scope and structure

The scope of the Programme is, therefore, vast and involves a variety of partners, ranging from students, scholars and the general public to owners, providers and producers of information and manufacturers of end products. An International Advisory Committee for the "Memory of the World" Programme was appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO to guide the planning and implementation of the Programme as a whole and make recommendations concerning fund-raising, the allocation of funds and the granting of the "Memory of the World" label to the projects selected, including those not receiving financial support from the Programme. The Statutes of this Committee, approved by the Executive Board of UNESCO in May 1996, provide in particular for close co-operation with competent NGOs such as IFLA and ICA and stress the need to facilitate access to endangered documentary heritage by the greatest number, using state-of-the-art technology.

The IAC consists of 14 people appointed in their personal capacity by the Director-General of UNESCO. The IAC will normally meet every two years with the **Bureau**, consisting of the Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur, meeting more frequently to advise the Director-General between the main meetings.

The Committee held three meetings (Pultusk, Poland, September 1993 ; Paris, France, May 1995 and Tashkent, Uzbekistan, September, 1997). It recommended, at its first meeting that the concept of documentary heritage be extended to include, besides manuscripts and other rare and valuable documents in libraries and archives, documents in any medium: in particular, audiovisual documents, computerized recordings and oral traditions, the importance of which varies from region to region. In all these fields there is a need for protection, sometimes as a matter of urgency if we are to prevent collective amnesia and set up world cultural exchange.

The Programme should make governments and the public aware of the need to protect their documentary heritage, release potential for action, support the activities of professional, national, regional and international organizations and stimulate initiatives. We must be aware, however, that publicity will lead to a greater pressure for access. The more we succeed in gaining the public's attention, the more the demand will grow.

At the national level, it is recommended that a committee be appointed, firstly to identify the most significant documentary heritage, to select projects according to the criteria agreed upon and submit them to the International Advisory Committee and, thereafter, to follow them up. The committee membership should include experts able to make an active contribution to the projects and users' representatives. Persons submitting projects must ensure that the rights of the owners of the holdings or collections are

protected. In addition, each project will set up its own scientific committee of specialists to determine the general thrust of the project and to supervise its organization. "Memory of the World" National Committees have been set up in 27 countries (Albânia, Áustria, Belarus, Bulgária, Canada, Cape Verde, China, Colômbia, Croatia, Cuba, Finiand, Hungary, Lithuania, Malawi, Mauritània, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, Tanzânia, Thailand, Venezuela and Zaire) and others are considering the creation of such a Committee. Jordan and Syria have indicated that national institutions are already performing the role of National Committee.

Lastly, whenever the need arises, a regional committee may select projects of a regional nature, taking local characteristics into consideration, with a view to submitting them to the International Committee.

An example of efficient regional follow-up to the establishment of the Programme is the Experts meeting held in December 1994, in Kuala Lumpur for the definition of an Asian component of the "Memory of the World" Programme. Participants from 20 countries discussed problems facing custodians of national documentary heritage materials which are generally endangered because of neglect, adverse physical and climatic conditions, political instability...

The meeting agreed to take steps to ensure that Member States establish a mechanism at the national and regional levels to identify projects receivable under the "Memory of the World" Programme, as well as to establish individual country inventories of documentary heritage materials, prepare a programme for preservation and conservation of such materials, and promotion and marketing strategies to generate resources to finance the programme. The preservation of the Tibetan manuscripts and the palm leaf collections in various countries, were given priority.

Similar conclusions were reached by a Sub-regional meeting on the "Memory of the World", held in Budapest from 9 to 10 March 1995. The meeting was attended by participants from Áustria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. While digitization is a powerful tool to facilitate access and thereby help to preserve the originals, participants stressed that it has limits and could not replace conventional preservation work. During the meeting, a co-operative sub-regional project was designed. It is expected that the project will enable the participating institutions to test digitization techniques and equipment and assess the related financial, legal and dissemination aspects. A training session took place in this context in the National Library in Prague in November 1996.

A Regional Consultation on the Conservation, Preservation and Promotion of the documentary Heritage of Central Asia was held in Tashkent in September 1997, immediately before the meeting of the IAC. Representatives of the five Central Asian States - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - met to discuss improving their links with the Memory of the World Programme. During the meeting they also explored ways of working together for their mutual benefit. They are considering the formation of a loose co-operative regional scheme called 'Memory of Central Asia'.

The First International Conference on "Memory of the World" was held in Oslo from 3-5 June 1996. Some 150 delegates from 65 countries participated in the Conference, which highlighted the results achieved by the Programme and the need for regional and national plans for preservation and access. The Conference adopted a resolution urging all countries to establish "Memory of the World" Committees and to become active participants in the Programme. The Proceedings are available from UNESCO and can also be copied from its Web Site.

"Memory of the World" . -er

The participants in the Second Meeting of the International Advisory Committee, held in Paris in May 1995, agreed that a "Memory of the World" Register be developed. This Register will list all documentary heritage which has been identified by the Committee as meeting the selection criteria for world significance, similar in some ways to UNESCO's World Heritage List. However, the nomination and registration of documents under the "Memory of the World" label will have no legal or financial implications.

The "Memory of the World" Register, a compendium of documents, manuscripts, oral traditions, audiovisual materials, library and archive holdings of universal value, will be a significant document in itself, as well as an inspiration to nations and regions to identify, list and preserve their documentary heritage.

Individual countries are encouraged to set up their own documentary heritage registers in parallel to the "Memory of the World" Register. National registers identify the documentary inheritance of the nation. The national registers will increase awareness of the importance of the national documentary heritage and the need for a co-ordinated and integrated policy to ensure that endangered documentary heritage is preserved. Groups of nations like the Scandinavian countries or the Baltic States may compile regional registers to list documentary heritage which is integral to their collective memory.

A nomination form was sent out to all UNESCO's Member States and international professional associations, inviting them to identify documentary heritage nominated for the "Memory of the World" Register. In Tashkent, the IAC reviewed the first group of nominations for inclusion on the World Register. There were a total of 71 nominations from 33 countries. Of these nominations, 38 from 22 countries were considered to be of great significance and have been recommended for inclusion on the World Register. A further 18 nominations were recommended for inclusion on National or Regional Registers and the remaining 15 nominations have been referred to the Bureau for further investigation.

Selection criteria

Each register - World, Regional and National - must be based on clearly-defined criteria for assessing the cultural value of documentary heritage. Documentary heritage is of world significance if it has had a major influence on the history of the world, transcending the boundaries of a national culture; if it reflects in an outstanding way a period of momentous change in world affairs or makes an outstanding contribution to our understanding of the world at a particularly important time in its history; if it contains important information about a place which made a crucial contribution to major developments in world history or culture, if it has a special association with the life or works of a person or people who have made an outstanding contribution to world history or culture; if it gives particularly valuable information on an important subject or major theme of world history or culture; if it is an important example of an outstanding form or style, if it has outstanding cultural and social or spiritual value which transcends a national culture

In addition to these seven major criteria, two further criteria should be taken into account. These may enhance the world significance of documentary heritage, though they are not sufficient in themselves to establish its value: the significance of documentary heritage may be enhanced if it has a high degree of integrity or completeness or if it is unique or rare

The criteria will be tested by the International Advisory Committee and weighting factors will be developed to reflect the relative importance of the criteria. In Tashkent, the question of weighting the criteria differently for different types of documents was raised. For example, the documents collected by a figure of his/her lifetime may require more stringent assessment against Criterion 1 - Influence of the collection. Similarly, documentaries, films etc. need to be tested more thoroughly

against Criterion 5 - Subject/Theme - while Criterion 6 - Form and Style - may need to be applied more stringently for entertainment film. In many instances, the IAC may seek specific specialist advice from the appropriate NGO. Three Working Groups were set up to examine different aspects of the criteria and their application to specific circumstances.

The criteria for documentary heritage to be entered on National or Regional Registers are to be decided by the relevant National or Regional Committees. It is recommended, however, that the World Register criteria be used as a model. Restrictions on access to documentary heritage will not systematically prevent entry on a Register but may reduce the possibility of receiving support through the "Memory of the World" Programme.

Proposals for documentary heritage to receive resources through the Programme may be made by National and Regional Committees, Governments, NGOs, the International Advisory Committee or other Professional bodies in the country or region. Documentary heritage proposed for support will be of World Register status. Support will require the documentary heritage to meet criteria to be set by the International Advisory Committee. The Pultusk meeting recommended that some degree of priority be given to operations affecting several countries, national projects with a regional or international dimension and projects carried out in co-operation or in partnership, while not overlooking minorities and their cultures. Particular attention will be paid to reconstructing the memory of peoples in the case of collections or holdings that have been displaced or scattered.

The Committee recommended at its meeting in Tashkent for the first time that the use of the Memory of the World logo be granted to five projects for the duration of the project.

Pilot projects

The Programme has established several experimental pilot projects. These have resulted in a number of interesting CD-ROMs.

1) Prague

A digitization programme was launched by the National Library in Prague, in co-operation with a private firm, Albertina Ltd. A demonstration CD-ROM was first published in 1993, featuring some of the most precious manuscripts and other documents in the historic collections of the National Library, with annotations in Czech, English and French. In addition, a CD-ROM series has been starting with the release of the first two discs in early May 1995. Digitizing the most beautiful manuscripts and old prints of the National Library will facilitate access to these treasures without exposing the originals to heavy use, thus contributing to their preservation. In addition, while colours and ink react with paper, parchment, silk and other traditional media, digital information does not fade with the passing of time and could be easily transferred from CD-ROM to more durable media to come in the future.

2) The Rndzivil Chronicle

Written in old Russian, this monumental work reveals the history of Russia and its neighbors from the fifth to the early thirteenth century in pictures, representing events described in the manuscript with 1000 hundred colour illustrations. It is owned by the scholarly community

according to its ownership in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Radzivil, or Kenigsberg Chronicle, is the most ancient surviving example of the art of Russian illuminated chronicle. It is a fifteenth century copy of a thirteenth century archetype held by the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg (BAN). The Radzivil Chronicle's combination of text and illustration places this manuscript in the company of such acknowledged masterpieces as the Madrid copy of the Greek Illuminated Chronicle of Ioann Scilipa, the Vatican copy of the Bulgarian Translated Chronicle of Konstantin Manassia, the Budapest copy of the Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle, and the copies of the Big French Chronicles. Among these, the Radzivil is distinguished for the richness and quantity of its illustrations.

The increasing fragility of the original manuscript, together with its preeminence in the Russian literature, has left BAN to share a dilemma faced by libraries around the world charged with the care and wise use of cultural treasures. Handling of the Radzivil Chronicle, itself, must be restricted to preserve its material well-being. At the same time, the scholarly and scientific enterprise to which the Library is dedicated argues for access to this important document for serious research. This is why the Library has turned to a digital medium - to display the manuscript in full color while preserving the original. A prototype Photo CD is produced with the support of UNESCO and the Library of Congress, as a pilot project and a demonstration of the use of digital media in the service of preservation.

3) Saint Sophia

Devised by a group of Bulgarian and French writers, the "Saint Sophia" project is an attempt at a multimedia edition of Bulgarian manuscripts on an interactive compact disc. The disc evokes the symbolic figure of Saint Sophia, patron saint of Sofia, capital city of Bulgaria, in Bulgarian history, literature and civilization from the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries.

The documents selected include primarily the facsimile reproduction, in the form of digital images, of Bulgarian manuscripts, including the oldest one known: the eleventh-century *Book of Apostolic Epistles of Eni/ia*. They are supplemented by reproductions of illuminations, frontispieces and decorative motifs, and by photographs of various historical and archaeological sites. There are also printed transcriptions in Old Bulgarian of some manuscripts and their translations into modern Bulgarian, English where such translations exist, and French.

4) The Snn.Vn manuscripts

In 1972, after heavy rain, a section of the wall of the Great Mosque of Sana'a collapsed. Work on the roof brought to light manuscripts which had been concealed in the ceiling in ancient times. They are parchment and paper fragments representing approximately one thousand different volumes, the oldest of which date back to the first century of the Hégira. Most are extracts from the Koran and are of considerable interest for the linguistic, religious and paleographic study of the literature of the early centuries of the Hégira and of the Arabic language. The fortuitous and extraordinary discovery of these documents and their unique character make this find a remarkable event which will mobilize efforts and expertise on an international scale. Thanks to the active participation of Germany, a plan of work on the fragments was begun, which led to the construction of a House of Manuscripts, the restoration of some 12,000 fragments of parchment (out of 15,000), their storage, identification and classification and the training of Yemeni restorers and photographers.

Research work on illuminated fragments and on bindings was carried out with a grant from the Getty Institute. This work, together with papers read at congresses and articles in academic journals, shows just how remarkable the collection is. The Yemeni authorities concur in the view that the collection is the equivalent of a historic building of exceptional heritage quality. A UNESCO mission visited Sana'a at their request to consider including a pilot project on the Yemeni collections in the "Memory of the World" Programme.

A National Committee for the project has been set up to identify the most suitable documents. A demonstration disc based on a selection of manuscripts including some of the Koranic fragments has been published, in co-operation with the Regional Information Technology and Software Engineering Centre (RITSEC), Cairo, Egypt. This CD-ROM offers an introduction to the Arabic calligraphy illustrated by Yemenite manuscripts, especially the Koranic fragments. Descriptions and comments are provided in Arabic, English and French.

5) Memoria de Iberoamerica

The project, submitted to UNESCO by the "Asociación de Bibliotecas Nacionales de Iberoamerica" (ABINIA) is concerned, in its first stage, with protecting the nineteenth-century press published in Latin America and improving access to it for historians and interested members of the public.

ABINIA had previously organized a series of activities on the occasion of the Five Hundredth Anniversary of the Encounter between Two Worlds, in response to the desire to encourage appreciation of the documentary heritage of the Iberian world.

Among these activities was the compilation of a database indexing 90,000 books from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, a traveling exhibition and the reissue of the most important historical works in the context of the Five Hundredth Anniversary. The national libraries of twelve countries (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Peru, Portugal and Venezuela) are taking part in the project on the nineteenth-century press. It has led to the drawing up of a computerized inventory of some 6,000 newspaper titles and other press organs.

The second phase of the project is to arrange for the conservation of the listed collections and their transfer to microfilm and digital form with a view to exchanges between national libraries, the organization of exhibitions and special publications.

6) Manuscripts of Kandilli Observatory

The aim of this project is the preservation of a collection of about 1300 works on astronomy in three languages (Turkish, Persian and Arabic) held in the Library of Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute at Bogaziçi University in Istanbul.

UNESCO's contribution covered the preparation and publication of the catalogue of these manuscripts and the production of a CD-ROM consisting of the catalogue and sample pages from most of the manuscripts.

7) Memory of Russia

This project deals with preserving and improving access to the collection of XVth and XVIth Century Slavic manuscripts held by the Russian State Library in Moscow. It also includes the archives of many of the major Russian authors such as Dostoevsky and Pushkin.

8) African Postcards

The old postcards chosen for this project constitute a pictorial treasure and are related to the 16 countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These postcards are very rare because they are scattered in many countries, mostly in Europe. Only their presentation on a CD-ROM or a Web Site could bring them together, at least partially, under one theme or in an historical and geographical framework. The CD-ROM, prepared in collaboration with the Association Images et Mémoires and ICG-Mémoire Directe, features 3.000 postcards, which represents only a small part of the 50.000 which exist for the same period (1890-1930) and the same countries. This first achievement should show the way to even more sophisticated ones.

9) Treasures of Dar Al Kutub

This project, reproducing on CD-ROM a selection of precious manuscripts of the National Library in Cairo (Dar Al Kutub), **offers** a guided tour among the splendors of the Arab culture and its contribution to the enhancement of knowledge in numerous scientific fields.

10) Manuscripts of Vilnius University

This project is in many ways similar to the preceding one. It concerns collections of manuscripts, incunabula and old atlases kept at the Vilnius University Library and its aim is to illustrate, through a **series of** CD-ROMs and **on** Internet, European contributions to scientific advancement between the XVth and the XVIth century.

11) Photographic collections in Latin America and the Caribbean

The huge number **of** photographic collections scattered around the world led the promoters of this project to limit its scope, in a first stage, to Latin America and the Caribbean and to public collections of the XIXth century held in national archives and libraries.

Through the prints stored in the stocks, often in inadequate preservation conditions, it is the whole life of the nations which resurges with its important moments and the portraits of those who have influenced the course of history.

The coupling of a CD-ROM containing 3.000 to 5.000 prints illustrating the main stages **of** the history **of** some ten countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and of a presentation on the Web **of** a representative sample of images (video quality) with comments in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, will enhance the **value of** this fragile heritage, in danger of disappearing. It is hoped that this will then help libraries and archives to ensure that preservation **of** their photographic collections is a priority.

All these projects were funded under the UNESCO Regular Programme. A number of other projects were funded under the **Participatory Programme**. These include: the safeguarding of manuscripts **of** A. Smetana and Bedřich Smetana, held by the Museum **of** Czech Music in Prague; promotion of the arts in Armenia, Cuba and Poland, and **of** regional courses in Caracas, at the

for Preservation of Paper of the National Library of Venezuela and in Prague, at the Digitization Centre of the National Library of the Czech Republic; reproduction and repatriation in Antigua of historical records held in foreign repositories; publication of "Libro de los Pareceres de la Real Audiencia de Guatemala 1573-1655"; reproduction of the hand-written card file of the 11th-17th century Russian language to CD-ROM to promote access to this collection...

Some thirty other projects are under consideration. These include, for example, a project in Albania, the restoration and preservation of 7000 hours of audio materials of Chinese folk music, preservation of Tamil palm-leaf manuscripts in India, preservation of Vietnam film heritage, preservation of Lao manuscripts, preservation of a Jewish musical collection in Kiev, safeguarding of manuscripts of ancient cities in Mauritania... Extrabudgetary funding for some of these projects is being negotiated. This includes Norwegian funding for the preservation of and enhanced access to, the slave trade archives in Africa and funding from the European Union for the preservation and promotion of heritage collections in a number of Mediterranean countries. The last project will be implemented by the Centre de conservation du livre à Aries, France, in close co-operation with UNESCO.

Technical framework

From the examples mentioned above, it emerges clearly that the two basic principles which guide the "Memory of the World" Programme are the preservation of documents, holdings and collections and the democratization of access to them. The two principles are intrinsically linked, since access is conducive to protection and preservation ensures access.

The essential steps for carrying out any project in the "Memory of the World" programme are: selecting and preparing the documents, ensuring that they are placed in a suitable physical environment, photographing them where necessary, digitizing them, describing and annotating them, providing the staff to perform these tasks with appropriate ad hoc training where necessary, translating bibliographical descriptions where necessary, or even the texts themselves, and ensuring that the resultant product is distributed as widely as possible.

Provision has been made for the establishment of two sub-committees, the first to make regular assessments of the technology that might be used by the Programme and the second to study methods for marketing and selling the Programme's products throughout the world. The first Committee held four meetings devoted to preservation and digitization of documents. It reviewed recent developments in digitization and prepared technical guidelines with a table showing, for each type of carrier (texts and still images on the one hand and sound and moving images on the other hand) the recommended digitization standards for access. It was suggested that a programme of digitization of documents is the best compromise between the conflicting demands for wider access to collections and for greater protection of the documents.

The Sub-Committee also considered a draft recommendation that digital copies of manuscripts and old printed material under "Memory of the World" use the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML 2.0) as the basic presentation tool in order to provide the widest possible access. Through HTML discs can be searched using any Internet search software. The technology can also be adapted for use on other carriers (sound recordings, photographs, newspapers, etc.) and, of course, for documents placed on the World Wide Web.

As to the preservation of the originals, a 'Guide to Preservation Standards' which is available on the Web site provides a compilation of the most relevant standards. It covers the following sections:

Paper and other traditional materials (such as leather, parchment, palm-leaves...)

Photographic materials

Mechanical carriers (including phonograph cylinders, microgroove discs...)

Magnetic materials (such as magnetic tapes and disks)

Optical media (audio CDs, CD-ROMs, video discs, optical tapes, etc.)

Electronic publications (off-line and on-line publications)

Electronic records and virtual information (such as E-mail messages and personal computer files)

Each section introduces the general problem, draws the list of relevant standards, relating them to each other and pinpointing gaps, provides implementation guidelines and checks and discusses Third World issues such as climatic and financial conditions, grassroots and traditional preservation techniques and minimum standards.

Lastly, so that UNESCO can play its role to the full as co-ordinator and catalyst, three inventories in the form of regularly updated databases are being created in co-operation with IFLA, ICA and other competent professional bodies such as FID, FIAF, FIAT and LASA.

- 1) Inventory of library collections and archive holdings which have suffered irreparable destruction since 1900: This inventory, published as "Lost Memory - Libraries and archives destroyed in the twentieth century" (CII-96AVS/1), is an attempt to list major disasters that destroyed or caused irreparable damage to libraries and archives during the present century. Thousands of libraries and archives have been destroyed or badly damaged in the course of fighting during the two world wars, notably in France, Germany, Italy and Poland. War has also been the cause of untold destruction to libraries and archives more recently in former Yugoslavia and in many other countries. The document, prepared by J. van Alhada (ICA) and H. van der Hoeven (IFLA) lists lost documentary heritage in more than 100 countries. This inventory is not meant to be a sort of funerary monument but is intended to alert public opinion and sensitize the professional community and local and national authorities to the disappearance of archival and library treasures and to draw attention to the urgent need to safeguard endangered documentary heritage.
- 1) World list of endangered library collections and archive holdings To date more than 60 countries have proposed collections and holdings to be included in the list of endangered documentary heritage. The International Association of Sound Archives has conducted a survey carried out by George Boston, in the context of this exercise, that shows that the most endangered carriers are not necessarily the oldest. In the audio domain, substantial numbers of acetate discs and tapes are lost each year. All unique acetate recordings at risk need to be copied swiftly to a new format. A database called "Endangered Memory" is being constituted with answers to the questionnaire distributed since 1994. This database presently contains 125 answers from 59 countries
- i) Inventory of ongoing operations to protect documentary heritage: Documentary heritage has been lost in the past and will continue to disappear in the future. The aim of "Memory of the World" is to ensure that significant material is identified and saved. Today's technology enables us to identify the location of important documentary heritage and gain access to it. This inventory, prepared under contract with IFLA by Jan Lyall, lists major preservation activities currently in progress. The information in this document (CII-96AVS/7) was obtained through a questionnaire which was widely distributed in English, French, German, Japanese and Spanish, using the IFLA Preservation and Conservation (PAC) network. The survey was intended to collect information from libraries with collections of national significance in order to identify problems in various parts

of the world and to obtain a snapshot of current preservation activities. More than 200 responses were received and input into the computer. This database, as well as the previous one, running on CDS/ISIS, will be updated regularly and the data analysis facilitated by use of IDAMS, a statistical package developed by UNESCO and featuring an interface with CDS/ISIS. The two lists will constitute the indispensable basis for the Programme along with the "Memory of the World" Register.

Furthermore, in recognition of the impact of cinema on the world, it was decided, as part of the centenary celebration, to compile and publish, in the context of the "Memory of the World" Programme, a list of approximately 15 films each country considers to be representative of its most significant film heritage. This list is available at no cost from PGI under the title "National Cinematographic Heritage" (CII-95/WS/7).

Finally, UNESCO has published recently guidelines on the Programme's technical, legal and financial framework and its working structures. This text is to be available in all UNESCO official languages, free-of-charge, under the title "Memory of the World - General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage" (CII-95/WS-11).

Legal and financial context

Working in partnership in an international context means that a legal framework is an absolute necessity if "Memory of the World" is to be managed in a properly accountable manner. The framework must nevertheless remain sufficiently flexible to guarantee the originality of each project and take account of the diversity of national legislation.

It is essential that the rights of the owners of the collections and holdings in a project are respected and that the relationship between the owners and the technical and commercial partners is clearly defined, particularly with regard to the division of rights among the various parties, the allocation of rights of ownership to the images produced and the sharing of the profits from the sales of products made from images. It also seems clear, however, that excessive protection which might limit access to the documents would run counter to one of the Programme's fundamental principles. The International Advisory Committee recommended, at its second meeting, that UNESCO pay careful attention to legal questions affecting the intellectual heritage in the new context of increasing use of electronic storage media in libraries and archives, in particular to provide for freedom of access within the limits set by national and international legislation.

INFOethics, an International Congress on Ethical, Legal and Social aspects of Digital Information was held from 10 to 12 March 1997, in Monaco. The Congress proposed, in particular, the setting-up of an international commission on INFOethics, the launching, under the auspices of UNESCO, of a large-scale co-operative effort among all professions concerned with the archiving, preservation and conservation of digital information, an initiative that would result in the elaboration of a professional code of conduct; it stressed the importance of authors' moral rights in the new environment of global flow of digital information. UNESCO's objective here is to develop a scale of values in cyberspace, to reinforce the free flow of information and to head off any over-reaction that might lead to excessive regulations of the communication networks.

Finally, with regard to financial support, an international fund is being set up within UNESCO to finance some of the Programme's projects. These will include, as a priority, projects with a regional or international dimension. Other projects which meet the agreed criteria could use the "Memory of the World" label

without necessarily receiving aid from UNESCO or the fund. A UNESCO special account has been opened for the "Memory of the World" (Ref 406 INT 61).

Each "Memory of the World" project will be an entity in itself, especially as far as finance is concerned. While profit can never be a prerequisite for carrying out a project, each project must strike a financial balance between, on the one hand, the investment needed for digitizing, reproducing, and distributing products and for preparing the reproduced collections and holdings for conservation and, on the other, initial contributions from local or outside funds and royalties from possible sale of products. This balance will not be achieved without the participation of sponsors and technical and financial partners. The search for partners is an important, not to say decisive, phase of all "Memory of the World" projects.

The Sub-Committee on Marketing held its first meeting in Oslo, in July 1996. The Group outlined a fund-raising strategy for the Programme, together with a promotional and marketing plan and a legal framework. The meeting agreed that there was a possibility for "Memory of the World" to seek partnership with major companies active in creating and preserving memory and knowledge. It was also stressed that the Programme needed to be marketed first for the professions, through their associations and publications. The participants also suggested that famous writers and winners of literary prizes should be invited to rally the Programme and publicize its aims and achievements.

Conclusion

As soon as it was launched, the "Memory of the World" Programme began to arouse great interest. Requests for assistance, sometimes even appeals for help, regularly reach UNESCO. It is a daunting task and only the mobilization of all the parties concerned can translate declarations of intent into a vast world workshop to rescue, reproduce and disseminate endangered documentary treasures.

For further information please visit UNESCO's web site: <http://www.unesco.org/webworld>

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