

18th SEAPAVAA CONFERENCE

26-27 MAY 2014, VIENTIANE, LAO PDR

CONCLUSIONS OF SYMPOSIUM *“AV ARCHIVES: WHY THEY MATTER”*

- 1 AV archives and AV documents embrace so many aspects of life, not just entertainment. Think of the slogan “imagine a world without memories.” If we do not invest in AV archiving we are immeasurably poorer. But it is up to us to raise awareness.
- 2 We strive to recreate the original experience and context for users of our collections, but there is a difference between authentic re-creation and authentic idealised re-creation.
- 3 Cinema is the GOLDEN BOOK for recording national history.
- 4 For small archives, physical storage of collections – as opposed to digital storage – may be a practical necessity.
- 5 Good and relevant access programs, such as screenings and presentations, are essential affirmations that AV archives are using government funds productively.
- 6 The academic status of AV documents as authentic source materials for reference is still below that of traditional text documents. Without the advocacy work of AV archives this will not change.
- 7 Reconstructions of key films are essential to make them publicly accessible again, instead of them remaining as fragmentary research material. Ethical reconstructions depend ultimately on AV archives.

- 8 Branding: whether we realise it or not, every AV archive has a brand (logo, slogan, name, etc). Names are precious, because of the trust, sentiment and reputation which they evoke. Brands need to be managed effectively and wisely.
- 9 The UNESCO World Day for AV Heritage is a key annual event which all archives can use to promote our work. Its existence is, in effect, a statement by UNESCO about how much AV archives matter.
- 10 Advancing the archival profession sometimes means going against the grain, taking risks and even causing offence in pursuit of a better outcome.
- 11 Conventional archives are being complemented by “citizen archives” through iphones, PCs and social media. Yet social media cannot function as permanent archives. The legal conditions they impose often go unread but give their proprietors immense scope to use and control the uploaded material. They may strip out vital metadata. Whom do you trust?
- 12 Archive culture must engage and encourage, not be inward looking. Experiment! Be creative!
- 13 Orphan material is what falls through the cracks of conventional archiving policies. It is widening beyond traditional AV concepts.
- 14 What is really the “memory of the world”? It is the collective memories of people.
- 15 Legalities and ethics are two different things.
- 16 Users enhance metadata and should be able to add their comments on content.
- 17 In backing up to the cloud, it is wise to use open source exchange formats.
- 18 The integration of AV carriers with other media for physical management is not necessarily good policy.
- 19 There is a difference between cultural heritage and corporate assets. The latter will be maintained by corporate entities in their own interest. The former may have no significant revenue potential and will need to be maintained by public bodies.

- 20 Long term thinking – a requirement for permanent preservation – may be sacrificed to short term thinking by governments and other bodies. No archive is adequately funded or protected. The struggle is continuous.
- 21 Whether or not it suits our personal preference, we have no choice but to be advocates.

Do AV archives matter? Demonstrably the answer is “yes”.