



Presentation of audiovisual materials TAPE Expert Meeting

Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen,
Berlin 24-25 January 2008



Education and Culture

Culture 2000

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Now that the internet is reaching maturity, the potential for audiovisual materials on the web is beginning to be realized. With more than half the Europeans regularly on the web, and 80% of them with broadband access,¹ watching internet tv and film downloads is becoming a regular activity in more and more homes. YouTube is among the three most popular sites in Europe², personalized radio is available through services like Last.fm, and the industry is already preparing for the next shift: the jump to the mobile web.

From a landscape dotted with individual institutional sites the web is developing into an open environment that offers services, information and experiences through which users move without paying much heed to where the information originates. What does the proliferation of websites offering music, streaming video and film mean for the heritage collections? How do these developments shape users' expectations? How can audiovisual archives make the most of this changing environment to increase access and use of their collections?

Large programmes to create access to audiovisual heritage, particularly for education, are under way in several countries. The Archival Sounds Recordings website of the British Library makes 12,000 audio recordings available for higher and further education. The Dutch Teleblik, with thousands of hours of television materials for all age groups, includes a tool to digitally cut-and-paste fragments for personal use.³ This fits in with the present interest in types of access that not only allow consultation but also re-use, an interest which is growing as a result of the Web 2.0 wave that now sweeps the internet landscape. Apart from offering materials on their own or related sites for narrowcasting, a number of broadcasters now have their own channel at YouTube with dozens or even hundreds of clips for people to share, by posting the clips themselves or links to them on their own websites.⁴ Most of this consists of fairly recent television programmes, but the Netherlands Institute of Sound and Vision for instance also posted historical films. Historical film has also been made available by the British Film Institute in the framework of the 'Creative Archive', a site the BBC set up with partners to encourage creative re-use of some of their materials by the public.⁵

For some this is the direction in which heritage institutions should be moving:

Media like Internet and digital television cannot and must not be reduced to a global archive, a static tomb for data, audio and video. It is up to those who assemble the content, the broadcast networks, the centers for video and media art, the libraries and museums, to create their own networked context within the abundance of content, in order to provide a valuable framework for education, communication and interaction, in order to build virtual spaces as seedbeds for the exploration of digital audiovisual languages and forms.⁶

The question arises to what extent collections dispersed over many different types of institutions can become part of this bright new world, as it is a steep task to reach the level of digitization and description that will be needed for this to happen. It requires not only digital conversion of analogue

¹ EU ICT Progress Report April 2008 <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/605>

² Based on data from Alexa May 2008 http://www.alexa.com/site/ds/top_500

³ Archival Sound Recordings URL: <<http://sounds.bl.uk/Default.aspx>>, Teleblik URL: <http://www.teleblik.nl>.

⁴ BBC Worldwide URL: <http://www.youtube.com/user/BBCWorldwide>; Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision URL: <<http://www.youtube.com/user/BeeldenGeluid>>; RAI URL: <<http://www.youtube.com/user/rai>>; Radio Televisión Española URL: <<http://www.youtube.com/user/rtve>>; ZDF URL: <<http://www.youtube.com/user/zdf>>.

⁵ See <http://creativearchive.bbc.co.uk/>.

⁶ Stoffel Debuysere, 'Culture intercom redux. Audiovisual media in a network culture.' *Content in Context. New Technologies for Distribution*, Netherlands Media Art Institute, n.d. (2005), pp. 54-55.

audiovisual holdings but also the development of hierarchical integrated information systems and production of massive amounts of metadata.

At the TAPE Expert Meeting at the Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen in Berlin the focus was on the different requirements of the different user groups. The speakers, representing a variety of institutions, shared their views on the position of audiovisual heritage institutions and the future of their collections. Fabrizio Nahum (Regesta) explained how web access has broadened the user group of the Istituto Luce, and how they are now responding to serve these new users. The first goal of their website was to support exploitation of the rich audiovisual content managed by Istituto Luce, and it was set up so that professionals (producers of documentaries, television or film producers, researchers) could find what they need for their work. Web access served its purpose for sales went up considerably, but non-specialists with an interest in history also discovered their collections. They have now restructured their information system so that they can provide access to end-users, for instance through cultural portals. Their experience shows that a new type of access resulted in the emergence of a new type of users which led to new demands –and this in its turn encouraged Istituto Luce to provide new types of access.

For Istituto Luce a strong, detailed and standardized catalogue is the backbone of their commercial activities, and the serious investments that went into building the catalogue will pay themselves back. For non-commercial organizations it may not be possible to reach this level of description and metadata. Yet it is possible that with extensive web access to their audiovisual collections they would also find new user groups, or rather: that new user groups would discover their collections. As appeared from the TAPE survey, many archives with audiovisual materials consider academic researchers their most important user group and do not regard the general public as an important audience. An archive is still very much a place where specialists come to consult materials.⁷ The cataloguing problems institutions experience are one of the obstacles barring access for a wide circle of users.⁸

Jürgen Keiper (Deutsche Kinemathek) presented an approach which relies on the new interaction between users and information that is characteristic of the web and that may help to provide access even when cataloguing is not optimal. For institutions the problem is that completing and standardizing the descriptions and correcting errors is immensely time consuming. For the user, the catalogue does not always provide the best entry to the collections. It was set up to provide a clear answer to a clear question: to find a specific film, for instance, or films of a specific director. On the web, however, users search by association: by following recommendations or tags added by others, without concerning themselves with the strictly defined structure of a database. The acquabrowser has been developed to guide this kind of searching, offering related terms in a kind of networked visualization. Institutions can respond to this intuitive searching and make use of it. When they make their descriptions available in an open environment that allows users to add information reflecting their associations and interpretations to the system, in the form of tags or recommendations, this input will help to build relationships between content. What is not in the database, could still be made searchable by relying on folksonomies.

That users do not always follow the ordering system imposed by the catalogue in searching for materials also became clear from the contribution of Gustav Deutsch, independent film maker. He provided a unique insight into the process of creating new films on the basis of found footage. As an experienced user of film archives, with very specific requirements, he finds catalogues and databases of any kind of limited help. His interest in *visual* content, in particular images that he needs for his work, does not result in the kind of question a catalogue can answer. He can do his work only by relying on a network of curators with extensive knowledge of the materials in their care and by direct access to the materials themselves. Sarah Jones (HATII, University of Glasgow) provided further illustrations of

⁷ 106 out of 326 respondents consider the general public not a (very) important user group, 222 out of 336 consider academic researchers a (very) important user group. See Edwin Klijn and Yola de Lusenet, *Tracking the reel world. A survey of audiovisual collections in Europe*, ECPA 2008, p.14.

⁸ For about a third of respondents cataloguing is the most urgent problem, 40% have uncatalogued materials and this they estimate to concern on average a third of their collections. See *Tracking the reel world*, p. 112

how artists work with archival materials to create new works and how they may even stimulate archival institutions to reflect on their own organization, priorities and procedures.

Sarah Jones' plea for more cooperation between archives and creators of new cultural productions echoed Julia Noordegraaf's (University of Amsterdam) examples of researchers working with archival film to provide new interpretations and new meaning of existing materials. The Filmmuseum in Amsterdam, which cooperates with the University for its MA programme on audiovisual preservation and presentation, sees a distinctive and lasting role for museums in providing context and interpretation. Mark Paul Meyer explained that the museum welcomes cooperation with artists and researchers to create the background and new views of historical film that add value for users and enhance their experience of older materials.

For researchers too the context and background are crucial for understanding recordings made during field work. Gerda Lechleitner (Phonogrammarchiv Vienna) spoke about their publication programme of CD-ROMs, which aims to make materials available with the rich context required to interpret the recordings made by ethnomusicologists and linguists. By publishing CD-ROMs, the Phonogrammarchiv can add a considerable amount of background information that is not contained in the database. They distinguish between publications of this kind and presentation on the web of the catalogue and short clips; the latter is done for searching and identifying materials, but cannot deliver the complete story that one needs to study in order to make full use of the recordings.

The Max-Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen takes a different approach in collecting linguistic recordings and extensive metadata from researchers in a distributed network of data archives. Paul Trilsbeek explained how a joint metadata system provides access to these resources, which combine background information and multimedia with the recordings. In this case it is not the archiving institution that presents the resources but the network of researchers themselves who by adding transcriptions, descriptions and annotations create a rich working environment –by researchers for researchers.

A few general points emerged from the discussions. On the whole, there was consensus that access to audiovisual collections can and should be increased by exploiting the potential of the web. With specific user groups, interaction can result in new creative works, new uses of materials, or better access. The users can also be contributors and it is important to recognize this. But this will not be achieved by just making collections available so that Google can find them and users can put clips on YouTube. The role of institutions extends to presenting material from their collections so that they can be fully understood and appreciated for what they are. Institutions do not just hold collections, they also have knowledge of the collections that they wish to transfer to users. Although digitization is a first requirement, institutions will invest also in providing context and additional background information.

This will make digitization worthwhile but also more labour intensive, and hence even more expensive than it already is. Where the funding will come from to make the transition to the web is as yet unclear, but it is safe to say that as long as it all depends on occasional project money, the move will be slow. The only possibility seems to lie in somehow generating income from re-use. Tiina Sailavuo (Pori Jazz Festival) sketched a possible model that creates a link between those holding content and high-tech industries that develop new applications and tools but do not own the content to make their products attractive (think of Apple getting content into its iTunes-store to promote the use of its iPod). The huge digitization project in the Netherlands, Images for the Future, has a funding model based on recovering the investment by licensing of content, for instance for educational use. Models like these, however, are not easy to implement in public institutions with a cultural task, which leads to the conclusion that things will have to change a lot more before they can really start to change.

Presentations

Julia Noordegraaf (Department of Media Studies, University of Amsterdam) discussed use of digitized audiovisual collections in an educational setting, particularly in the form of compilation films made with amateur footage, showing how small-scale projects undertaken with, for instance, artists and educational institutions, can be a means to showcase the potential of one's collection.

[See: PowerPoint slides](#)

Mark-Paul Meyer (Senior Curator Filmmuseum Amsterdam), about the museum's considerations on the eve of a huge digitization project: Beyond digitizing HOW? and WHAT?.

Fabrizio Nahum (Regesta, Italy) about how Istituto Luce is adapting its web presentation after several years' experience serving users on the web. [See: summary](#)

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Gerda Lechleitner (Phonogrammarchiv, Austrian Academy of Sciences) about the CD-edition (the complete historical collections 1899-1950) and discuss the rather conventional form of publication focusing on re-recording (digitisation), presentation and usability in the context of today's digital possibilities. [See: summary](#)

Gaby Wijers (Institute of Media Art Montevideo, Amsterdam) presenting examples of access and use of works by media artists in the digital environment. [See: summary](#)

Sarah Jones (Arts and Humanities Data Service – Performing Arts based at HATII, University of Glasgow) discussed reuse of archives from the perspective of the creative and performing arts. She questioned how the archive can be opened up to allow for a more creative reinterpretation of the records, and considered the value of artist residencies as a way of encouraging reuse by looking specifically at the work of Ruth Maclennan. [See: summary](#)

Gustav Deutsch (Vienna) presented his research for *Film Ist*, based entirely on analogue access and duplication.

Tiina Sailavuo (Pori Jazz Festival), on re-use of recordings of contemporary music in music archives, seen from the viewpoint of a private festival. [See: summary](#)

Michelangelo Staffolani (The British Library Sound Archive) spoke about experiences with the Archival Sound Recordings Project providing access to 12,000 sound recordings for educational use .

[See: summary](#)

Jürgen Keiper (Deutsche Kinemathek - Museum für Film und Fernsehen, Berlin) spoke about explorative and intuitive strategies for accessing audiovisual material, illustrated by faceted queries, integration of georeferences and folksonomies. [See: PowerPoint slides](#)

Paul Trilsbeek (Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics) talked about the digital archive for linguistic resources that the MPI started about 10 years ago, now containing more than 10,000 hours of audio and video material. Around this archive are components for depositing material, organizing the data, creating metadata descriptions and accessing archived resources in various ways.

[See: PowerPoint slides](#)

Rainer Rother and *Peter Schwirkmann* (Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen) Tour of of the museum and a demonstration of the *Programmalerie*, which provides access to 700 programs of German TV history (see: www.deutsche-kinemathek.de).

Special showing of *Film Ist (7-12)*, by *Gustav Deutsch* (independent film maker, Vienna), with an introduction of the artist (see also: www.canyoncinema.com/D/Deutsch.html).